

Testimony of Adela Perez-Guzman
Before the Committee on Labor and Workforce Development
Council of the District of Columbia
Public Hearing Regarding:
Oversight of the Department of Employment Services
September 16, 2020

Good morning/afternoon. My name is Adela Perez-Guzman, and I am here today because I would like to share my story about applying for unemployment benefits.

I first applied for unemployment insurance in March of this year. The process was very difficult and took a very long time. First, I could not get into contact with the office over the phone. Then, the technology was difficult to use. I had to go to different places to try to submit my application and was not receiving help.

After I applied for unemployment insurance, it took a long time for Department of Employment Services to respond to my application. It took at least three weeks before I heard back from the office at all.

My experience with the Department of Employment Services has impacted me in the following ways. It caused a lot of stress while I was waiting to hear back and to receive benefits. In the end, it worked out. But the truth is that for some time my husband and I did not know how we were going to pay for food or rent for us and our family. We were lucky to receive help from other people including the woman who owns our building, but I don't know what else we would have done.

The Department of Employment Services can improve its services to workers, like me, by responding more quickly to the people applying and treating the applicants more personally during the application process. Doing those things would have improved the process for me.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony about my experience with the Department of Employment Services.