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Amber Shultz, Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

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Governor Laura Kelly Announces Next Steps for Unemployment Insurance Technology Modernization

~ *KDOL requests proposals for new system* ~

TOPEKA – Today, Governor Laura Kelly announced a major step forward in the effort to modernize the state’s Unemployment Insurance (UI) system at the Kansas Department of Labor (KDOL). The agency issued its request for proposal (RFP) for modernizing the over 40-year-old computer system.

“When I learned that the previous Administration abandoned efforts to modernize the state’s unemployment computer system in 2011, I immediately tasked the agency with reviving its modernization plans,” **said Governor Laura Kelly**. “Unfortunately, the pandemic hit, and the antiquated technology was unable to keep up with the record volume of claims. Today, we are taking a major step in fixing our broken system. We will finish what other Administration’s failed to do.”

Prior to the pandemic, at Governor Kelly’s direction, KDOL staff traveled to states that had modernized their unemployment systems to learn from them how Kansas could build a system that would more efficiently serve claimants and businesses. In the past year, the agency has dedicated a specialized team to complete and expedite the modernization plan, incorporating the findings and best practices from these states.

“The RFP process is the next major step in our effort to modernize,” **said Secretary Amber Shultz**. “We plan to expedite this process as much as possible. Over the past year, we have been able to stabilize our underlying systems which were not equipped to handle the volume of pandemic-related claims or the complexity of the new federal programs. The stabilization efforts worked and will help to speed modernization implementation once a vendor is selected.”

When Governor Kelly took office in 2019, one of her top priorities for the Department of Labor was to modernize the agency’s archaic mainframe UI IT system. However, when the state faced record-high unemployment due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the agency was forced to temporarily suspend its modernization efforts in order to focus on stabilizing the decades old system.

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Today, the system has largely been stabilized and is paying out legitimate claimants in the traditional state unemployment program and new federal benefit programs. Since March 15, 2020, KDOL has paid out over 4.2 million weekly claims totaling over \$2.8 billion between regular unemployment and the federal pandemic programs.

The Kansas Legislature is considering Governor Kelly's \$37.5 million budget request to replace KDOL's aging system.

"We are on target to modernize this antiquated system," **said Governor Kelly.** "While we navigate the procurement process, we also need the legislature to fund this critical upgrade. It will not be cheap—fixing a system that has been neglected for 40-plus years never is—but failing to act is not an option. I will continue working with the legislature to get this critical project done. We owe it to the people of Kansas."

The RFP, published on Thurs., April 1, has the event number EVT0007951. A high-level timeline KDOL has presented publicly on previous UI IT modernization projects can be found [here](#). A graphic outlining the next steps of KDOL's IT modernization project can be found [here](#).

S For more information, or to apply for unemployment benefits, go to www.GetKansasBenefits.gov.

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