



Department of Labor

Office of Workers' Compensation Programs: Division of Energy

Employees Occupational Illness Compensation

2020 Action Plan

Who are we?

The Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, Division of Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation (DEEOIC) administers the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA).

EEOICPA is a program set up by Congress to provide compensation and medical benefits to employees of the Department of Energy (DOE), its contractors and subcontractors, and/or their survivors, who became ill as a result of their work at specified Federal nuclear weapons facilities or certain uranium mines from the early 1940's till the present.

Workers and/or their survivors file claims for monetary and/or medical benefits, and must qualify for all benefits sought in accord with the EEOICPA and Federal regulations. DEEOIC is fairly unique, as we have a very limited set of "customers" which can be further categorized into three primary groups: "claimants," claimant "authorized representatives," and "medical providers."

Division of Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation (DEEOIC)

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|--|--------------|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Program Benefits and Eligibility | File a Claim | Claim Status | Energy Document Portal | Medical Bill Portal | File a Home Health Care Claim (EE-17A) | Impairment | Wage Loss | Forms |
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Filing a claim for benefits under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA)

Are you filing a claim as a current or former covered employee under the EEOICPA?

Step-by-step guide to filing a Claim for Employee Benefits

The steps outlined here are intended as a "quick-start" guide for workers and former workers.

Step 1: Complete the application form titled, "Employee Claim for Benefits under the EEOICPA" (form [EE-1](#)).

Step 2: Complete the form titled, "Employment History" (form [EE-3](#)).

Step 3: Include any copies of supporting [medical and employment documentation](#) along with your application. DO NOT SUBMIT ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS.

Step 4: You have two Options to submit your claim Form. Submit Form by [mail](#) or with [Resource Center assistance](#). There are 11 [Resource Centers](#) located across the country. The Resource Centers provide assistance either in person or over the phone.

How do we deliver value to the public?

Occasion

An elderly individual with a severe pulmonary disease states that they worked for more than 20 years at a facility covered under the EEOICPA. Feeling that the illness is related to his employment at a covered facility, the individual seeks to file a claim under the EEOICPA, but has extremely limited mobility and rarely leaves his home. This is an increasingly common occurrence as the claimant population is often older and sicker.

The claimant worker has now filed with DEEOIC and received a development letter for additional supporting documentation and evidence from the claims examiner. Additionally, the claimant has requested information regarding the adjudication status of his claim and clarification about what was requested in the development letter.

The claimant's initial claim for the pulmonary disease has been denied for benefits due to a lack of employment documentation. The individual now seeks information on what claim records are in the DEEOIC claim file so that they may pursue the claim further by way of reconsideration or reopening.

High-Impact Service

Individuals wishing to file a claim with the EEOICPA must submit claim forms with a 'wet' signature. Claim forms need to be sent to claimants and we await the signed copy in return, or the claimant may submit the form in person at one of our 11 resource center locations, strategically located around the country. Once the signed copy is received, the claim is established.

DEEOIC's website provides a significant amount of useful links to help move a claim through the development and adjudication process. These include, but are not limited to, links to the statute, Federal regulations, and claim procedures that staff are required to follow. Claimants can also call a DEEOIC toll free number and talk to their claims examiners or a Resource Center employee to obtain information on claims status or to clarify questions about development letters. All inbound calls are initially answered by contractor Resource Center staff who assist to the extent possible, and if necessary take messages or transfer calls to appropriate claims or medical bill processing staff.

Under the Privacy Act, DEEOIC currently provides claimants with one free copy of the claim file in either paper or electronic format. This can be labor intensive and expensive for the DEEOIC. Additionally, requests for file information often takes a lengthy period of time to process, especially if a paper copy is requested.

Offering

By utilizing electronic claim filing, with identity proofing and digital signatures, claimants will no longer need to rely on the postal system and DEEOIC, and will be able to establish claims quicker. The ultimate goal is to provide both monetary and medical benefits as soon as possible to qualifying claimants.

DEEOIC issues decisions accepting or denying the claim. DEEOIC strengthens the adjudicatory consistency. DEEOIC strives to properly develop and enhance quality assurance, create uniform training through the division, and remove regional jurisdictional lines.

The DEEOIC is developing budget and work plans to implement a claimant access portal allowing claimants and their Authorized Representatives to view their case files over a secure internet portal. DEEOIC seeks to maximize the ease with which claimants can view/obtain information in the case file. This will lead to greater transparency and provide the claimants with the means to quickly access case records with no cost or additional time constraints on the claimant.

Where could we improve?

Steps

Customer Steps

Name and describe the main steps that a person takes to use the service, left to right, start to finish.

Service System

Describe the channels, roles, and tools from your agency or partners.

Pain Points

Describe the highest priority problems to solve

1: Before interacting with DEEOIC

Claimant determines that they need to see exactly what documents are in the claim file for purposes of furthering their claim. Under the Privacy Act, the DEEOIC will provide one copy of the claim file free of charge. The request can be for a paper copy or an electronic copy (CD). Claimants cannot easily confirm if a document they submit is in the case file if in paper format, but electronic formats are searchable and indexed.

The DEEOIC keeps copies all claim documents or evidence received from any source.

Many times a claimant requests a copy of the claim file that is needed in situations where time is of the essence. Obtaining a paper or electronic copy frequently takes more time than desired and the claimant may suffer due to the occasionally lengthy wait time. In addition, the next time a document is added to the case file, the records the claimant receives become out-of-date.

2: During main transaction

Claimant sends a letter to DEEOIC requesting either a paper or CD copy of the claim documents.

Depending on the size of the claim file, the request for a copy can be very labor intensive and expensive, both costs for contractor labor hours, ink/paper (if paper copy), and mailing.

A delay in processing the request for a copy of the claim file can mean time lost for the claimant to effectually move the claim forward so that benefits can be obtained.

3: Secondary service interaction

In case of a delay, the claimant frequently calls to the appropriate district office for status information.

Paper copies or a CD is submitted to the requestor.

Delays in processing the request for claim documents can cause more angst and ill will between the claimant and the program.

What will we do?

Purpose

*Why did your agency undertake this project?
What does it hope to achieve, in specific performance indicators, if possible.*

What is the problem?

1. Providing a copy of the claim file can take time when time is of the essence.
2. For the Program, providing claim copies can be labor intensive and expensive, as many files are extremely large.

Desired future state?

DEEOIC is looking to provide claimants direct access to their electronic case document file.

Any measurable indicators and targets?

If funded, DEEOIC is working with another OWCP agency to re-use their claimant portal and develop a secure data interchange between it and the two systems necessary before the end of FY2021.

Approach

Describe the timeline and work plan to achieve that purpose. If this is an ongoing initiative, describe your progress.

Process, methods, and expertise?

This project is a continuation of the 2019 Action Plan. The plan has multiple dependencies including budget, external entities, and internal IT modernization efforts to assure success.

Timeline, stage gates and dates?

Critical Activities and Milestones:

1. Develop and assure budgetary dollars are available for both the IT portal and the multi factor claimant access capabilities (FY 2020)
2. Attain or modify an IT contract to develop or modify a portal for claimant access (FY 2020)
3. Contract or access a contract for multi-factor claimant authentication capabilities (FY 2020)
4. Implement real time data interchange between systems and the portal (FY 2021)
5. Change DEEOIC systems security certification to include public facing access through the secure portal (FY 2021)
6. Implement the portal for access (FY 2021)

Resources

Describe the stakeholders involved, financial and human capital dedicated to the work, and any partners contributing to the work.

Who is responsible?

DEEOIC Leadership, two IT contract vendors, Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO)

Who is contributing to the project?

Division of Federal Employees Compensation (DFEC), who is allowing us to re-use their claimant portal, Employees Compensation Operations & Management Portal (ECOMP).

Estimated budget allocated to the work:
\$2.1 million

What are we proud of this year?

Service Improvement

Who is the user and what was the problem?

When claimants or their Authorized Representatives call to ask a question or receive a claims status update, they can experience wait times in excess of 20 minutes.

What did you build / improve? What does it do for the public or how you deliver your mission? What was the resulting impact?

DEEOIC management identified a problem in having a few federal staff answering phone calls, so we used existing contracts to move those calls to capable contractors improving response times substantially. We have created a National call queue which allows contractors trained in our claims process to take all incoming calls, assuring that when anyone calls our program, calls are answered in a timely manner.

Additionally, through listening to our stakeholders, we further improved the process to increase the effectiveness of call transfers to claims staff.

Any lessons for other agencies emulating this work?

Stakeholders may be vocal about change; however, they are the customers and can provide insight into the success/failure of the change. DEEOIC partnered with stakeholders to improve the call process. This includes creating new coding in our case management system and providing 'warm' transfers to our claims staff, further improving customer service and response times.

We now provide seamless call intake and handoff to our claim staff, reassigning federal staff whose primary responsibilities include answering phones to other critical duties.

Wait times reduced to under 5 minutes and stakeholders can be confident they will reach someone when they call.