Star Award

Group Award – AD&M

FDCM nominates the AD&M team who provided exceptional service for fraud-related issues including identity theft and fraud overpayments.

After the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, TWC received hundreds of thousands of unemployment benefits claims filed by identity thieves. When the true owner of the Social Security number (SSN) needs to file a legitimate unemployment claim, the ID theft claim must be moved to a pseudo-SSN. The process of moving the claim data, and in some cases, an overpayment of benefits, to the pseudo-SSN is arduous and time consuming. For each pseudo-SSN, the information from the invalid (ID fraud) claim needed to be moved to the pseudo-SSN one data table at a time. This extremely complicated and detailed level of work was completed for each pseudo-SSN move for over a year. This process is made more difficult when the SSN contains both the ID theft claim and a legitimate claim filed by the true SSN owner. Staff in AD&M spent 4-6 hours per SSN to separate the bad claim from the SSN while retaining the valid claim. Because this involved working directly with data tables in the benefits system, the work had to be completed by systems analysts and programmers who had the experience and knowledge of how to work inside the File-Aid system.

In November 2022, Ms. Sharla Roberts created a new automated process for moving the claim data. This new process updated the claims tables to allow staff to focus on moving the claimant table information to the pseudo-SSN. The revised process also produces a report to identify those tables that need staff to make the manual updates because it is not possible to make the changes using the new automated process. This helped the AD&M analysts to address the specific tables that need manual adjustment rather than having to manually review approximately 160 tables one-by-one. This new process addresses about 85% of the tables needing to be updated and significantly reduces the time spent on the pseudo moves. The time spent working these pseudo-SSN moves went from 4-6 hours to an average of 15 minutes, each. Between the FDCM and UI divisions, 3,373 victims of identity fraud were identified as needing their records updates. These updates were completed, before the 2022 IRS Form 1099's were mailed, by utilizing the automated solutions and working hundreds of hours of overtime (500+ hours) during the latter part of 2022 (October-early January). These changes insured that the victims would not receive a 1099 for payments made to a fictitious person and TWC would not report to the IRS that the victim was in receipt of 1,000's of dollars they would be responsible for paying taxes on.

Staff are also working on improving the information provided by the death records cross match to filter the data so that it is useful for TWC's use. Currently, the data is not provided in a manner that can be used.

The following staff are responsible for the hundreds of regular and overtime hours spent to address these issues. In addition to doing their normal jobs, staff put in the additional time to complete this work. Therefore, FDCM proudly nominates them for a STAR award.

- Sharla Roberts – Coded the ID theft moves application for complicated pseudo moves and the CARES/ARPA overpayments

- Rine Everett – Coded an automated script to use the existing screens to perform basic pseudo moves
- Brandi Cordell and Rine Everett – Documented and tested all the ID theft requirements and results
- Beatriz Silva – Trained 15+ staff how to complete the ID theft moves
- Michael Weaver – Documented and tested all CARES/ARPA related overpayments
- Rolando Tovar (Contractor) – Coded, and is currently coding, all FPUC overpayments
- David Leandro, Joseph Henry, Retha Madison, Denise Williams, and Rebecca Roberts – Completed manual identity theft moves