



INDUSTRY

State government

CHALLENGE

Digitization for remotely processing unemployment claims

SOLUTION

Iron Mountain InSight® Essential Edition

Digitization

Records management

Record storage

Disposition

VALUE

- › Keeps employees safe
- › Faster, more efficient claims processing
- › Paid out \$29 billion in benefits to citizens since the beginning of the pandemic

CASE STUDY

DIGITIZATION HELPS COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA REMOTELY PROCESS UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS

IRON MOUNTAIN INSIGHT® SUPPORTS EFFORTS TO KEEP OPERATIONS RUNNING AND WORKERS SAFE

The economic downturn spurred by the COVID-19 outbreak caused workers across the nation to file an unprecedented number of unemployment claims. In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Department of Labor & Industry went from receiving 1,000 unemployment claim requests a week to 27,000 in one day. By June 2020, the department had received more than two million submissions due to the pandemic's adverse impact on businesses.

As the spread of COVID-19 prompted a surge in mass telework, department decision-makers looked for ways to continue operations while protecting their staff from a virus that very few people understood. With most Pennsylvania government employees working from home, unemployment claims adjusters could not easily receive and access documents being mailed in to their offices from citizens.

These highly specialized claims adjusters were handling many unemployment claims that included "exceptions," which means the unemployment office needs more information from the filer to process the claim. A significant amount of this information is paper-based and required manual entry into a mainframe system. With limited on-site staff, unemployment adjusters could not get this information quickly or effectively to determine claims for citizens who needed them.

PARTNERING WITH IRON MOUNTAIN

Department decision-makers turned to Iron Mountain, which provided a vital digital service that allowed Pennsylvania's Department of Labor & Industry's nearly 200 employees to remotely process unemployment claims.

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania officials brought in Iron Mountain to:

- Securely transport paper records from six service center locations throughout the state to Iron Mountain Record Centers, incorporating proven chain of custody procedures
- Index and incorporate associated metadata for inventory and accounting purposes
- Securely store physical records
- Give employees the ability to view and search digitized records within Iron Mountain InSight® Essential Edition, a cloud platform that serves as a centralized, digital repository of the information. Unemployment staff can then access that information electronically, from remote locations
- Give employees access to a web-based portal to make record transfer requests and to manage records more efficiently
- Destroy records, as required by state retention schedules

TRANSITIONING FROM PEN AND PAPER TO ELECTRONIC PROCESSES

Iron Mountain's capabilities helped the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Department of Labor & Industry be more efficient and effective in serving their citizens, enabling staff to turn around the review of unemployment claims faster and get citizens the benefits they needed during this time. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the state has paid out \$29 billion in claims. The volume of claims has been the main challenge, and as a result, the state has ramped up more employees to answer phone calls and manage chat bots. Iron Mountain is now producing over 1.7 million images per month for Pennsylvania. The department has also been able to effectively clear out a backlog of claims.



HOW IT WORKS

Iron Mountain InSight® Essential Edition is a subscription-based solution that combines scanning of physical documents and digital storage in a secure cloud repository

accessible through Iron Mountain Connect™, a web-based customer hub.

Leveraging optical character recognition (OCR) technology through Google Cloud Vision API, the contents of documents are completely searchable by text or index, available for many file types and in 50+ languages. Once the physical documents are digitized, personnel can securely store, search, and access them in a modern, secure cloud storage repository.

Digital documents stored in other repositories can also be ingested to have all documents together for centralized visibility and access. Electronic information is encrypted and then transmitted across a secure network, with access restricted by encryption keys owned and managed by a client. Role-based permissions enable authorized users to access only the information that they need, wherever and whenever they need it.

"Whenever an organization launches a new IT system, change management needs to be involved. Our unemployment adjusters embraced this new system and new way of doing business – accessing information electronically, scanning documents into a repository, reading documents online – to ensure we were providing the services that our citizens needed most. I am proud of our team for taking the initiative and really stepping up during this unusual and unpredictable time."

- Nsungwe Shamatutu, Director,
Office of Unemployment
Compensation Service Centers,
Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry

The department engaged with Iron Mountain in April of 2020 and, in less than a month, the program was up-and-running. The main benefits have been keeping the operations running and employees safe, while also being able to provide benefits to citizens faster. The InSight® Essential Edition platform has also served as a bridge from the older, paper-based system to a new, modernized online system.

CONCLUSION

Iron Mountain has enabled the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Department of Labor & Industry to take the next step in its digital transformation journey by allowing authorized users to search for, retrieve, and share the information they need 24/7, from any location. Department officials recognized that their specialized workforce needed the right tools to continue operations and process benefits, while at the same time, adhering to health guidelines to remain safe. This digital transformation effort can serve as a best practice for other state and local governments looking to provide better services to citizens.

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ABOUT IRON MOUNTAIN

Iron Mountain Incorporated (NYSE: IRM) provides information management services that help organizations lower the costs, risks and inefficiencies of managing their physical and digital data. Founded in 1951, Iron Mountain manages billions of information assets, including backup and archival data, electronic records, document imaging, business records, secure shredding, and more, for organizations around the world. Visit the company website at www.ironmountain.com for more information.