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**ACHIEVEMENT:** Development and implementation in April 1991 of the first unemployment insurance call center in the United States.

For over 50 years, unemployed workers had to travel to a local office, fill out forms, and wait in line to file an initial claim for unemployment insurance benefits. This entire process could take hours and required transportation costs. Some claimants had to make subsequent visits to a local office to resolve issues related to the reason for their separation from work.

When Colorado centralized claims filing services and provided them by telephone in 1991, it was a sweeping departure from long standing procedures. Subsequent experience and research has shown that “remote” claims services by telephone, and now increasingly via the Internet, provide improved customer service at lower cost than delivery of those services in person; the incidence of fraud and non-fraud overpayments is no higher than with in-person filing; and, according to some studies, unemployed workers who were embarrassed to file claims in person were filing by telephone.

Other states studied Colorado’s experience, and delegations from many states visited the Denver call center to observe how it worked. During the mid to late 1990s, with encouragement from the U.S. Department of Labor via grants for remote claims implementation, many other states implemented telephone claims. Today, the telephone and Internet are the standard methods by which states provide claims services.