

Summary: USBR Employee Wrongfully Obtained Unemployment Insurance/Pandemic Unemployment Assistance

Report Date: August 15, 2023

Report Number: 22-0319

The OIG initiated this investigation based on our review of unemployment insurance (UI) data, including Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) information, that we received from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). Specifically, we reviewed the data to determine whether any U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) employees fraudulently obtained UI or PUA. We identified Christopher Edington as a U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) employee who applied for and received both UI and PUA while he was a full-time Federal employee.

We found that, from March 2020 through April 2021, Edington received \$28,524 in combined UI and PUA benefits while he was a full-time USBR employee. His initial application and weekly self-certifications identified him as unemployed and did not indicate any reportable earnings.

On April 6, 2023, Edington pleaded guilty to one misdemeanor count of violating 18 U.S.C. § 641, "Theft of Public Money." On June 27, 2023, Edington was sentenced to 36 months of probation and to pay \$28,524 in restitution.

This is a summary of an investigative report we provided to the USBR Director.

