

**To:** Vermont Legislature  
**From:** Michael Harrington, Interim Labor Commissioner  
**Date:** May 11, 2020  
**Subject:** Unemployment Insurance Daily Update

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This report includes both new and continuing efforts. New information is in **RED**.

#### Current Week Priorities

1. Finalize payment process system update for PUA, and initiate payments.
2. Identify and prioritize enhancements for the PUA system.
3. Finalize program requirements for Pandemic Extended Unemployment Compensation Program and the existing federal Extended Benefits Program

#### On-going Priorities

- Continue to mass-resolve low-level code issues that created stop-payments (move more Vermonters through the system and get them paid) Code 06, 64, 66, 81 are being cleared daily for claimants that have a weekly benefit amount (WBA) > 0; much fewer issues are needing to be cleared daily
- Continue to improve and clarify PUA application, process, and communication
- Continue public messaging and overall communications
- Legislative Action Team (LAT) working through the constituent management spreadsheet with support from VDOL staff
- VDOL adjudications is providing daily lists of claimants to the Salesforce vendor who need to be flipped from ineligible to eligible in PUA

#### Previous Accomplishments and Milestones

- Constituent Management tool has completed initial testing phases and will proceed to production. The tool will be ready for implementation this week
- First round of payments were processed for claimants in overpayment. They will begin to receive FPUC benefits going forward, with their weekly benefit amount continuing to offset their overpayment balance.

#### Ongoing Activities

- Continuing to improve the chatbot provided by Maximus on the VDOL website to be more robust and regularly updating with additional information.

#### New Activities

- Population of approximately 9,000 claimants not monetarily eligible for regular UI were pushed to the PUA system today. Claimants will be notified tomorrow to begin filing in new system.
- Processing PUA payments for claimants who filed weekly claim certifications back to May 1 after technical corrections were made to the payment system.  
Translating regular UI and PUA FAQ documents into 11 languages.

### **Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)**

- VDOL Staff continue to work and clear adjudication issues on initial claims and any associated issues, so far, the staff are able to resolve PUA issues within 36-48 hours.
- PUA support for staff and training on issues, VDOL is in final stages of creating a training and is creating an onboarding plan for PUA (and general UI). These individuals will be PUA Program Super Users and will assist both internal and vendor resources as an escalation resource.

### **Communications**

- Claimants impacted by PUA payment processing issue were notified of the issue via email. **Claimants will be emailed again once final testing is complete and timeline for payments are clear.**
- Translated VOSHA workplace safety training into 11 languages.
- Updating FAQs for PUA and regular UI to answer some of the new claimant questions. This will help reduce the number of calls into the call centers.

### **Call Center Functions Update**

- Maximus is on track to have 200 agents in queue by May 13<sup>th</sup> and 300 agents in queue by May 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Maximus call center is recording each claimant interaction for quality assurance. Load balancing will occur across Maximus call queues and across the entire system, including supplemental line.
- **Contract amendment is being circulated to address expanded capacity identified above.**

### **Unique Populations**

- Regular unemployment claimants serving penalty weeks because of a fraudulent determination from a past claim.
- Regular unemployment claimants with overpayment balances whose benefit amount is currently being used to offset their balance. This is currently being corrected by VDOL staff manually because there is no way to mass clear the stop payment.

### **Top Claimant Issues**

- Regular unemployment claimants unable to file weekly claims because their claim is still being adjudicated.
- Regular unemployment claimants unable to receive weekly benefits because they have a fraudulent code on their UI claim and are serving penalty weeks.
- Regular UI claimants calling back to check status of their claim to make sure issues have been resolved on their claim the day after speaking to a representative. This is likely because changes are not in real time but are updated overnight when the system processes.
- PUA claimants deemed ineligible because they answered questions incorrectly and would like to update their response. Claimants unable to complete application (PUA or regular UI) because they do not have an email address. VDOL is working with state agency partners to address this issue.

APPENDIX

**Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Additional Information**

- [Click here for PUA general information](#)
- [Click here for PUA FAQs](#)
- [Click here for PUA application video demonstration](#)

**Regular Unemployment Insurance Additional Information**

- [Click here for unemployment general information](#)
- [Click here for frequently asked questions](#)

**Claims Data as of May 10, 2020**

<b>Total Initial Claims</b>	<b>88,079</b>	Total number of initial claims since 3/1/2020.
Initial Claims with no Eligibility Determination	8,802	Initial claims without eligibility determination for UI or PUA. A subset of this population does not, and will not, qualify for UI or PUA.
<b>Unemployment Insurance</b>		
Initial Claimants Eligible for UI	<b>62,085</b>	Number of claimants eligible for UI
Initial Claimants Eligible for UI - Paid	<b>54,827</b>	Number of claimants who are receiving UI benefits
Initial Claimants Eligible for UI - Not Paid	<b>7,258</b>	Number of claimants who meet basic eligibility thresholds but have significant issues that require review and resolution prior to payment. This also includes individuals who have since returned to work and are no longer filing. Roughly 4,500 of these individuals have never filed a weekly claim.
UI Trust Fund Balance	<b>\$399,480,557</b>	As of 5/5/2020 (Note: Balance as of 3/1/2020 \$506,157,247)
<b>Pandemic Unemployment Assistance</b>		
Initial Claimants Eligible for PUA	<b>17,219</b>	Total number of claimants that could complete the PUA application and are in the system
Initial Claimants Eligible for PUA - Filed	<b>12,189</b>	# of eligible claimants who have completed PUA application
Initial Claimants Eligible for PUA - Filed and Paid	<b>8,623</b>	Number of eligible claimants receiving PUA benefit.
Initial Claimants Eligible for PUA -Filed and Not Paid	<b>3,566</b>	Number of claimants that have a payment pending, issue on weekly claim to resolve, or have returned to work and are not filing.
Total PUA Benefits Dispersed	<b>\$33,558,023</b>	Total amount of benefits paid

**Labor.Vermont.Gov Homepage Chatbot**

VERMONT OFFICIAL STATE WEBSITE

STATE OF VERMONT  
**Department of Labor**

REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

**TRAINING: Protecting the Safety and Health of Workers**

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**Pandemic Unemployment Assistance - APPLY NOW!**

If you are self employed, or were not previously eligible for unemployment insurance benefits, click here for more on benefits NOW AVAILABLE

<p><b>Establish your Initial Claim for Benefits</b></p> <p>Complete the online initial application for benefits</p>	<p><b>File your Weekly Claim for Benefits</b></p> <p>CLICK HERE to submit a weekly claim, or file by calling</p>	<p><b>PUA - File Your Weekly Claim</b></p> <p>PUA Claimants CLICK HERE to file a weekly claim</p>
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**Department of Labor News**

- 01 JULY 2020 Pre-Release: Unemployment Claims Back Must Accommodate Work
- 30 APRIL 2020 Pre-Release: Department Asks Employers for Quarterly Wage Reports; Offers Flexibility for

**Conversation**  
CONNECTING TO AGENT

Thank you for contacting the Vermont Department of Labor. Please choose from the following options:

I'm an employee

Please choose from the following options:

- Regular Unemployment Benefits
- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)**
- Something else

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