

**To:** Vermont Legislature  
**From:** Michael Harrington, Labor Commissioner  
**Date:** August 11, 2020  
**Subject:** Unemployment Insurance Weekly Update

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

### **Unemployment Insurance General Updates**

- As of yesterday, August 10, the initial UI claim application was re-posted to the Department's website to ensure we continue to offer multiple points of entry into the UI system for Vermonters. The online application was removed from the Department website for a period of seven days. This downtime was used to better evaluate the level of fraudulent filing that was occurring daily. Some new anti-fraud mitigation steps have already been implemented, while others are scheduled for implementation.
- The Bennington Battle holiday on Monday, August 17 will impact weekly benefit payment processing for some claimants, resulting in a one-day delay in payment processing. Additional information on the impacts will be posted on the Department website, social media, and emailed to claimants. The UI Claimant Assistance Center will be open on Monday for regular business hours (8:00am – 5:30pm).

### **Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation**

- The Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) program that added an additional \$600 to each weekly benefit amount has ended. However, claimants who are in adjudications or appeals and are determined eligible, even if after July 31, will receive the FPUC benefit for each eligible week in which the program was implemented.
- On Saturday, August 8, the President issued a memorandum which included a section relating to unemployment insurance. Specifically, allowing a supplemental benefit to eligible claimants in addition to their calculated state weekly benefit amount. Staff have been reviewing the requirements for this supplemental benefit and are developing the necessary steps for processing this additional payment.

### **Unemployment Extended Benefits**

- The Department has implemented the high Extended Benefits program which will provide an additional 20 weeks of benefits to eligible UI claimants, but only after regular UI and PEUC benefits are exhausted. This program, while live, is still being reviewed and adjustments are being made as necessary.

### **Claim Issues**

- The Department is expanding its use of the Claimant Inquiry Tool. Now when claimants contact the call center, if an issue cannot be resolved within 24-hours, the issue is logged in the Tool and a UI specialist is assigned the case. Constituents/Claimants with UI related claim issues should be encouraged to first call the claimant assistance line at 877-214-3332.

*The data presented in this publication represents unofficial information collected from a variety of sources, and is being provided in order to ensure transparency, the freedom of information, and a well-informed public. While it is accurate to the extent ascertainable by the Department at the time of publication, it has not been subject to inspection or validation, and does not constitute verified employment data for the purposes of required reporting and formal release. This data is for the sole purpose of informing the public and shall not be recreated or reposted in any way, without this disclaimer. The information provided herein is not related in any way to the certified data provided to the U.S. Department of Labor.*

### **UI Fraud**

- Individuals who believe a fraudulent claim has been filed using their personal information should notify the Department of Labor at 802-828-4101. This line is exclusively for fraud reports. More information about fraud and the ability to submit online reports is available at: <https://labor.vermont.gov/ui-fraud>.

### **Claims Adjudications and Appeals**

- The Department continues to expand its adjudications and appeals capacity when/where possible. Additionally, we have onboarded additional staff, are utilizing staff from other divisions and departments, and are reviewing options for contracted services. We have, and will continue to, review the adjudications and appeals processes, and have already identified areas in which we can increase communication to claimants to ensure they are aware of their status within the appeals and adjudications system.

### **Reimbursable Employer Charge Relief**

- On August 3<sup>rd</sup> the President signed S.4209, which will provide immediate relief for reimbursable employers. Instead of reimbursable employers being required to pay 100% of their UI liabilities upfront, just to be reimbursed half, this bill allows reimbursable employers to only pay 50% of their liability.

## APPENDIX

### Popular Links:

- [Click here for PUA general information](#)
- [Click here for PUA FAQs](#)
- [Click here for PUA application video demonstration](#)
- [Click here for unemployment general information](#)
- [Click here for frequently asked questions](#)
- [Click here for Return to Work Frequently Asked Questions](#)

### Traditional Unemployment Insurance (TUI)

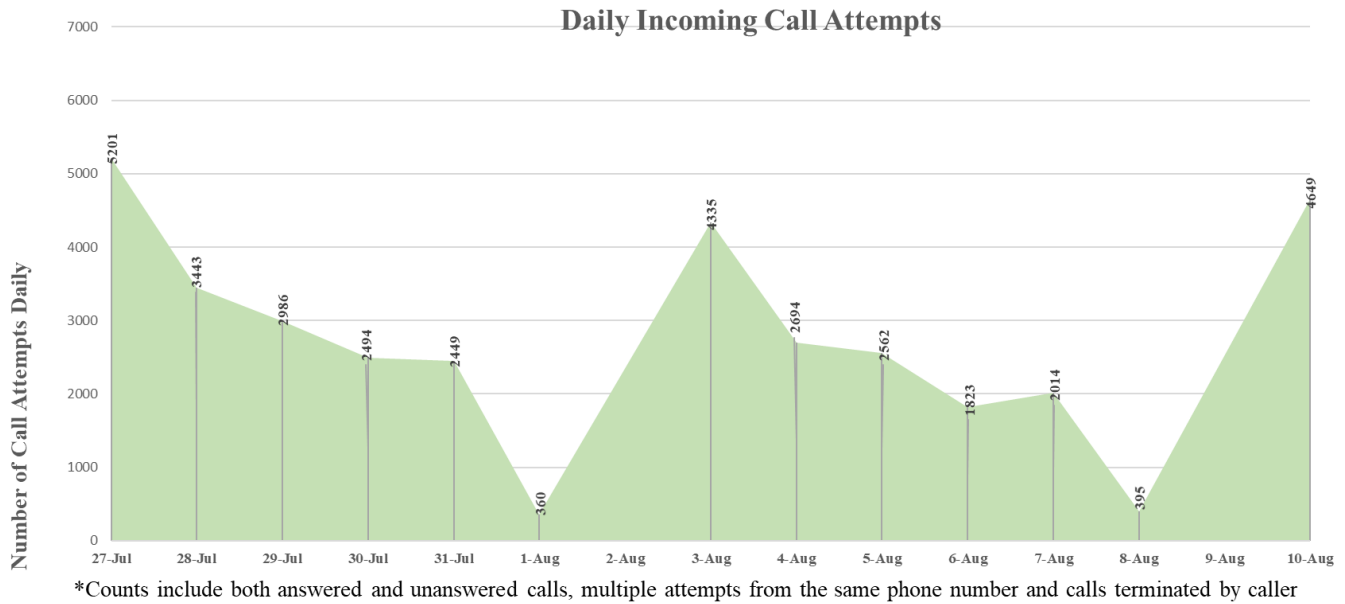
*Numbers as of Tuesday, July 28, 2020		
Total Initial Claimants Filed	<b>118,175</b>	Total Number of Initial Claimants.
Initial Claimants Eligible for UI	<b>80,542</b>	Number of claimants eligible for UI.
Initial Claimants Eligible for UI - Paid	<b>73,132</b>	Number of claimants who are receiving, or have received, UI benefits.
Initial Claimants Eligible for UI - Not Paid	<b>7,410</b>	Number of claimants who meet basic eligibility thresholds, and who either have issues on their claim or <b>are no longer filing.</b>
UI Trust Fund Balance	<b>\$303,612,454</b>	Trust Fund balance can fluctuate due to benefit payments, earned interest, employer contributions, and federal reimbursements. (Note: Balance as of 3/1/2020 <b>\$506,157,247</b> )

### Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)

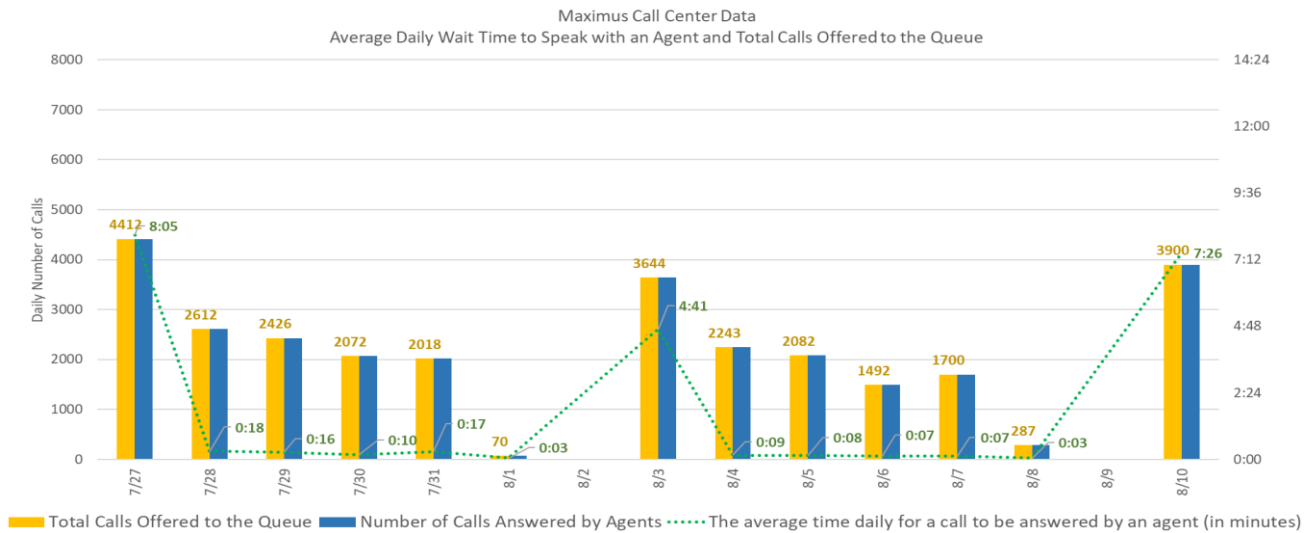
*Numbers as of Tuesday, August 4, 2020		
Claimants Potentially PUA Eligible	<b>31,689</b>	Total number of claimants that could complete the PUA application and are in the system
Claimants in PUA – Filed	<b>23,109</b>	# of claimants who have completed the PUA application
Claimants in PUA – Filed & Eligible	<b>20,304</b>	# of eligible claimants
Claimants in PUA – Filed & Ineligible	<b>2,805</b>	# of ineligible claimants
Claimants Eligible for PUA - Filed and Paid	<b>18,015</b>	# of eligible claimants receiving PUA benefit.
Claimants in PUA -Filed and Not Paid	<b>2,287</b>	# 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>\$180,420,408</b>	Total amount of PUA benefits paid

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**Figure 1.1**

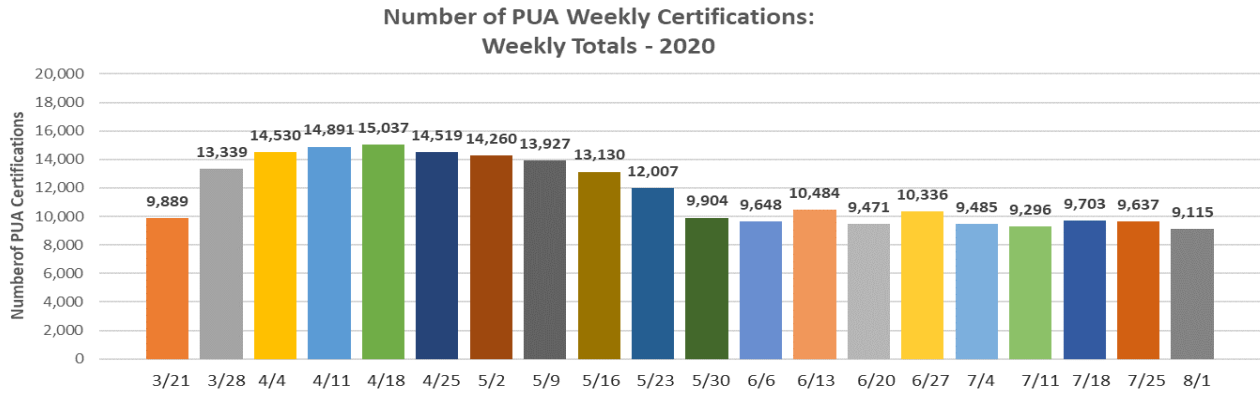
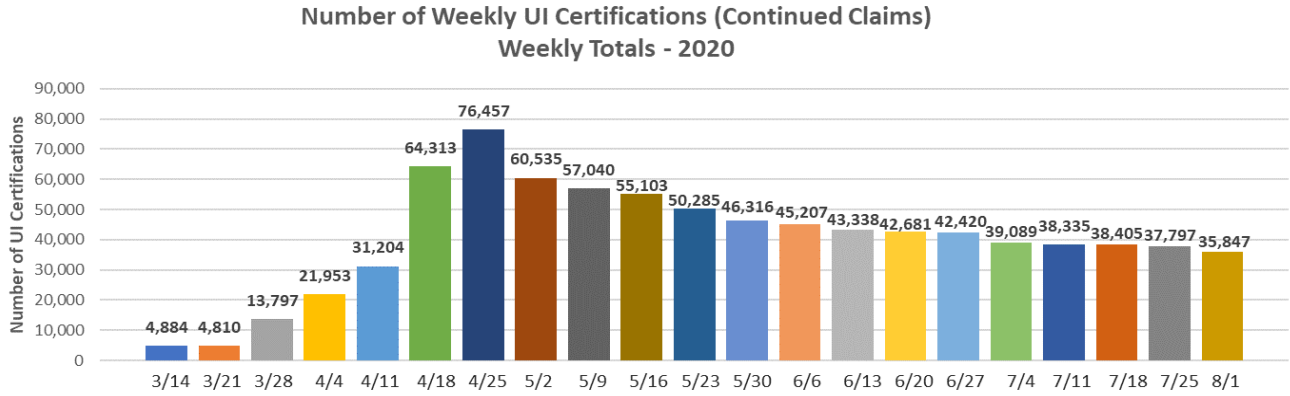


**Figure 1.2**

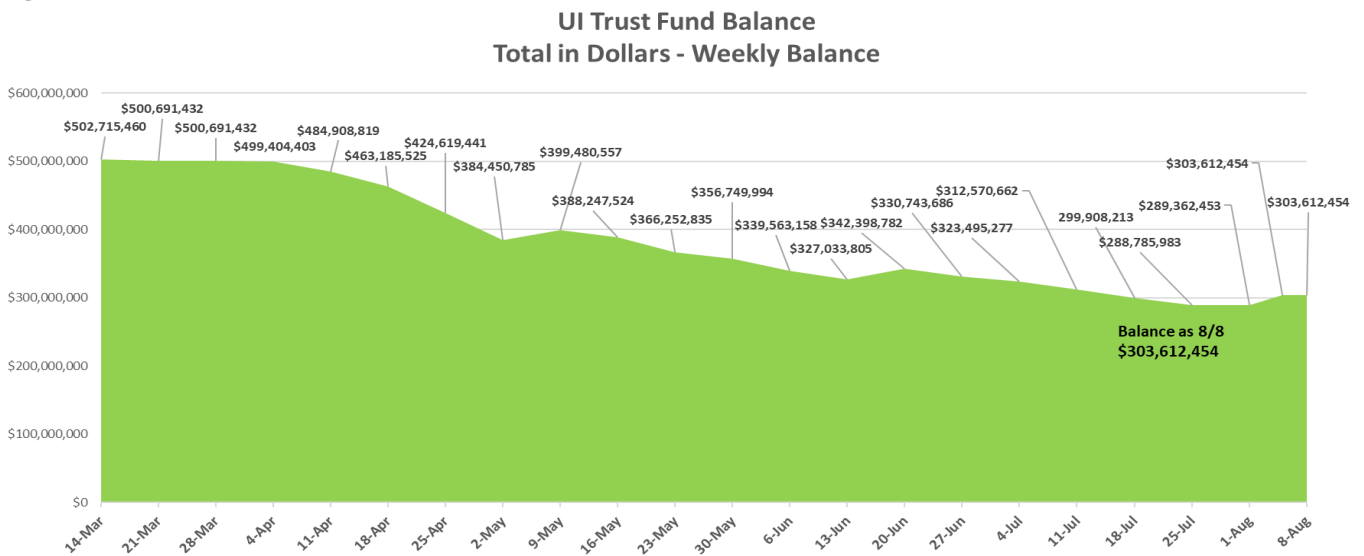


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**Figure 2.1**



**Figure 2.2**



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