

To: Vermont Legislature
From: Michael Harrington, Interim Labor Commissioner
Date: May 22, 2020
Subject: Unemployment Insurance Daily Update

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

Current Week Priorities

1. Finalize last round of PUA system updates related to correct payment methodology
2. Implement Pandemic Extended Unemployment Compensation Program
3. Implementation of a single constituent management solution to reduce duplication
4. Resolve outstanding PUA claimant issues

On-going Priorities

- Continue to resolve claimant issues and get them paid
- Continue to increase training for call-center staff
- Close the gap between calls made and calls answered

Accomplishments and Milestones

- 10,133 UI claims were paid on May 20th for a total payment amount of \$10,077,302
- 535 PUA claims were paid on May 20th for a total payment amount of \$1,532,578
- **2,973 UI claims were paid on May 21st for a total payment amount of \$3,346,885**
- **574 PUA claims were paid on May 21st for a total payment amount of \$1,573,678**

Ongoing Activities

- Creating additional technical assistance and training materials for Maximus Call Center agents and improving call escalation process with Maximus Call Center agents.
- **Implementation of the Constituent Relationship Management tool for UI and PUA claimant inquiries**

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.
- Created an automated email that PUA claimants will receive when each weekly claim is being processed for payment with a rough timeline for receiving the payment.
- VDOL staff are calling through the 790 ineligible claimants to verify information and correct any issues.

Extended Benefits

- Per federal guidance, individuals who have exhausted their benefits must first utilize Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) before being placed on Extended Benefits (EB). PEUC provides an additional 13 weeks of benefits to claimants who have exhausted their regular UI benefits.

Communications

- Updating FAQs for PUA and regular UI
- More than 10,000 PUA claimants were emailed 5/19 to remind them they can finish the PUA application. More than 25,000 are in the PUA system but only 15,000 have completed the application. This was the second email they received from VDOL.
- PEUC communications. Press release, social posts, letters, phone calls and website updates.

Call Center Functions Update

- 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.
- The recording and monitoring of the Maximus Call Center for call quality has already resulted in corrective action being taken by the vendor.
- **Thursday's call attempts were 4114. All Maximus calls were offered spots in the queue. The average wait time on the Maximus line was 26 seconds. On May 20th the average wait time on the Maximus line was 32 seconds, and on May 19th the average wait time on the Maximus line was 1 min 36 seconds.**
- **All UI lines will be transferred to Maximus as of Monday, May 25th. Staff will remain on the GMP line until May 29th to serve as overflow support.**

Unresolved/Unique Populations

- PUA claimants with payment calculation issues remaining. This is a technical issue that requires the vendor MTX to resolve. Update on the payments: We have resolved the 3 issues remaining that are impacting a group of PUA claimants. Once the file is reconciled, payments will be released.
- UI claimants serving penalty weeks for having committed UI fraud
- PUA claimants who are ineligible based on their application and/or weekly filings
- PUA claimants with pending adjudication stop-payment issues
- UI claimants in formal UI Adjudication. There are fewer cases in adjudication now than prior to COVID
- Claimants eligible for Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (extended benefits)

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.
- PUA claimants deemed ineligible because they answered questions incorrectly and would like to update their response. VDOL is assisting these cases and updating as necessary.
- PUA claimants who are eligible but cannot access the PUA application because on their initial application their information was submitted incorrectly (date of birth is most common).

APPENDIX

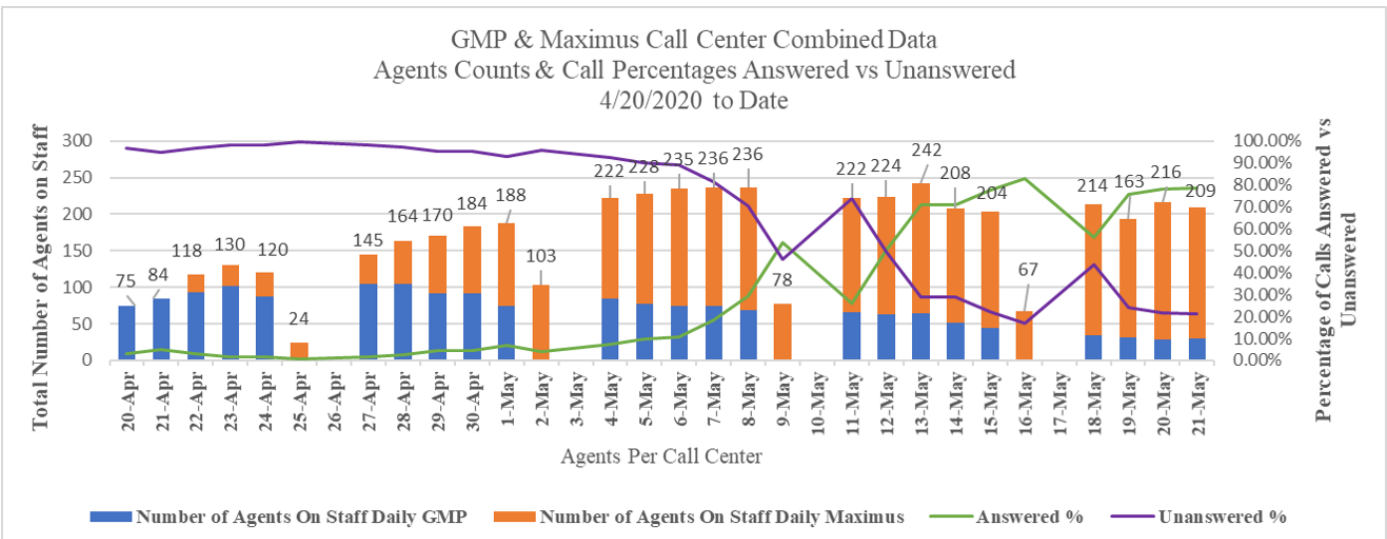
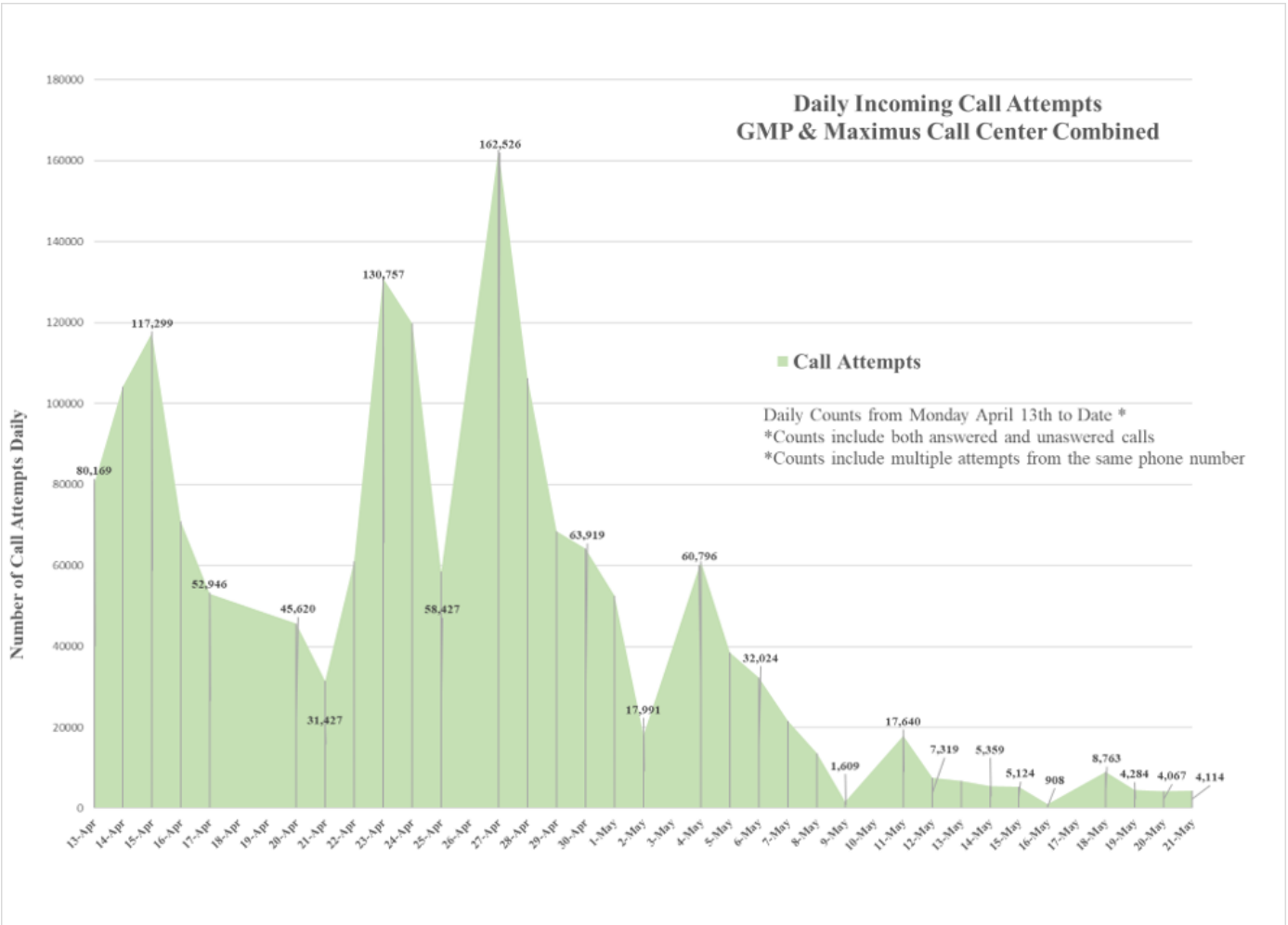
Popular Links:

- [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](#)

Total Initial Claims	97,783	Total number of initial claims since 3/1/2020.
Initial Claims with no Eligibility Determination	1,753	Initial claims without eligibility determination for UI or PUA. A subset of this population does not, and will not, qualify for UI or PUA.
Unemployment Insurance		
Initial Claimants Eligible for UI	70,138	Number of claimants eligible for UI
Initial Claimants Eligible for UI - Paid	63,100	Number of claimants who are receiving UI benefits
Initial Claimants Eligible for UI - Not Paid	7,038	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 (as of 5/11)	\$366,252,835	Trust Fund balance can fluctuate due to benefit payments, earned interest, employer contributions, and federal reimbursements. (Note: Balance as of 3/1/2020 \$506,157,247)
Pandemic Unemployment Assistance		
Claimants Potentially PUA Eligible	25,892	Total number of claimants that could complete the PUA application and are in the system
Claimants in PUA - Filed	16,600	# of claimants who have completed the PUA application
Claimants in PUA – Filed & Eligible	15,823	# of eligible claimants
Claimants in PUA – Filed & Ineligible	763	# of ineligible claimants
Claimants Eligible for PUA - Filed and Paid	13,949	# of eligible claimants receiving PUA benefit.
Claimants in PUA -Filed and Not Paid	1,874*	# 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	\$72,512,272	Total amount of PUA benefits paid

**Includes pending payments due to PUA system update*

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



* "Unanswered Calls" represents calls outside of normal business hours and hang ups