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Department of Labor
Office of the Commissioner

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To: Vermont General Assembly
From: Commissioner's Office, Department of Labor
Date: May 11, 2021
Subject: Unemployment Insurance Weekly Update

During the benefit week ending May 1, there were 33,904 weekly claims filed. This is an increase of 1,343 over the previous benefit week. During the week ending May 1, \$11,297,069 in benefits were paid out to claimants.

As of May 9, the work search requirement has been reinstated for claimants. This means, claimants are required to engage in work search activities to report on their weekly claim filing next week. This week, claimants should create a Vermont Job Link account which can be done anytime before submitting their weekly claim. Claimants also should complete their three job searches to report next week.

Valid Job Search Activities

Claimants who are required to complete their weekly job search can use any of the following methods to be counted as a valid job search.

- Applying for a job you are reasonably qualified for.
- Contacting your former employer to see if they are able to bring you back to work (as a reminder, you can only use that employer as one contact within a 5-week period).
- Inquiring about an open position or a job posting that results in an application for work.

Invalid Job Search Activities

The work search is intended to help claimants return to work by contacting employers directly. To maximize their opportunity to rejoin the workforce, the activities below may not be used as valid job searches.

- Applying for the same job more than once in a five-week period.
- Browsing online job boards without applying.
- Calling a business and asking if they are hiring without discussing a specific position.
- Posting your resume on an employment website. For this to be valid, you must submit an official job application or job inquiry for it to be considered valid.
- Creating a Vermont Job Link account.

Work Search Exemptions

Claimants filing in the regular UI, PEUC and PUA program are required to complete a work search each week unless they meet one of the below circumstances. Claimants will be asked if they meet any of the below circumstances and if they answer "yes" will not need to submit their work search activities.

- You have a verified return-to-work date within 10 weeks of filing your *initial* claim.
- You are currently self-employed, an independent contractor or a sole proprietor filing in PUA.
- You have been instructed by a healthcare provider to quarantine due to COVID-19.*

- You have been instructed by a healthcare provider to not return to work because you have a serious health condition and returning to work at this time poses a significant health risk due to COVID-19.*
- You are the primary caregiver for a child whose childcare is unavailable as a direct result of COVID - 19.*
- You are the primary caregiver for a child who is attending virtual or remote school as a direct result of COVID-19.*
- You are caring for a family member who has been instructed by a health care provider to quarantine due to COVID-19.*

(*Claimants may be required to provide documentation to verify you meet this exemption.)

Work Search Weekly Claim Information

When claimants file their weekly claim, they will be required to report the following work search information (unless exempt):

- The date the claimant contacted the business/employer.
- The type of work the claimant would be completing.
- The employer's name.
- The employer's address.
- The name of the individual the claimant communicated with.
- The method of contact (e.g. phone, email).
- The result of the contact.

Important Work Search Requirements

- If their employer plans to bring the individual back but has not provided a verified return-to-work date within 10 weeks of submitting the initial claim, claimants must complete the work search requirement each week.
- If claimants typically use the automated claims filing line to submit your weekly claim, they will need to begin filing using the online claimant portal. If the claimant has a significant hardship that prevents them from filing online, they will need to contact the Claimant Assistance Center to have someone review and validate your specific circumstance.
- If they are working part-time, they will still be required to complete the work search requirement, but part-time work may count as one of their job contacts. Claimants can continue to work part-time and search for additional part-time work to return to full time work status.

Links and Resources:

- [UI Work Search \(including FAQs\)](#)
- [Report UI Fraud](#)
- [Opening a New Benefit Year](#)
- [Report a Refusal to Return to Work](#)
- [UI "How-To" video library \(applying for benefits, reopening a claim, submitting weekly claims\)](#)
- [Workforce Development services \(online job board, workshops, events, and local staff\)](#)
- [Vermont Job Link](#)
- [CARES Act UI Extension FAQ](#)
- [UI Updates Page \[Newsfeed\]](#)
- [Appealing UI Claim Determinations](#)
- [UI Adjudications Process](#)
- [1099-G Incident Page](#)

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UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIM

Continued Claims Filed								
Week Ending	3/13	3/20	3/27	4/3	4/10	4/17	4/24	5/1
Regular UI	11,691	11,074	10,548	10,041	11,407	11,594	11,522	12,595
PEUC	14,208	13,981	12,307	9,912	10,352	10,699	10,670	10,826
EB	33	19	6	6	6	5	5	3
PUA	8,809	8,714	8,700	8,766	8763	9,412	10,364	10,480
Total	34,741	33,788	31,561	28,725	30,528	31,710	32,561	33,904

Figure 1

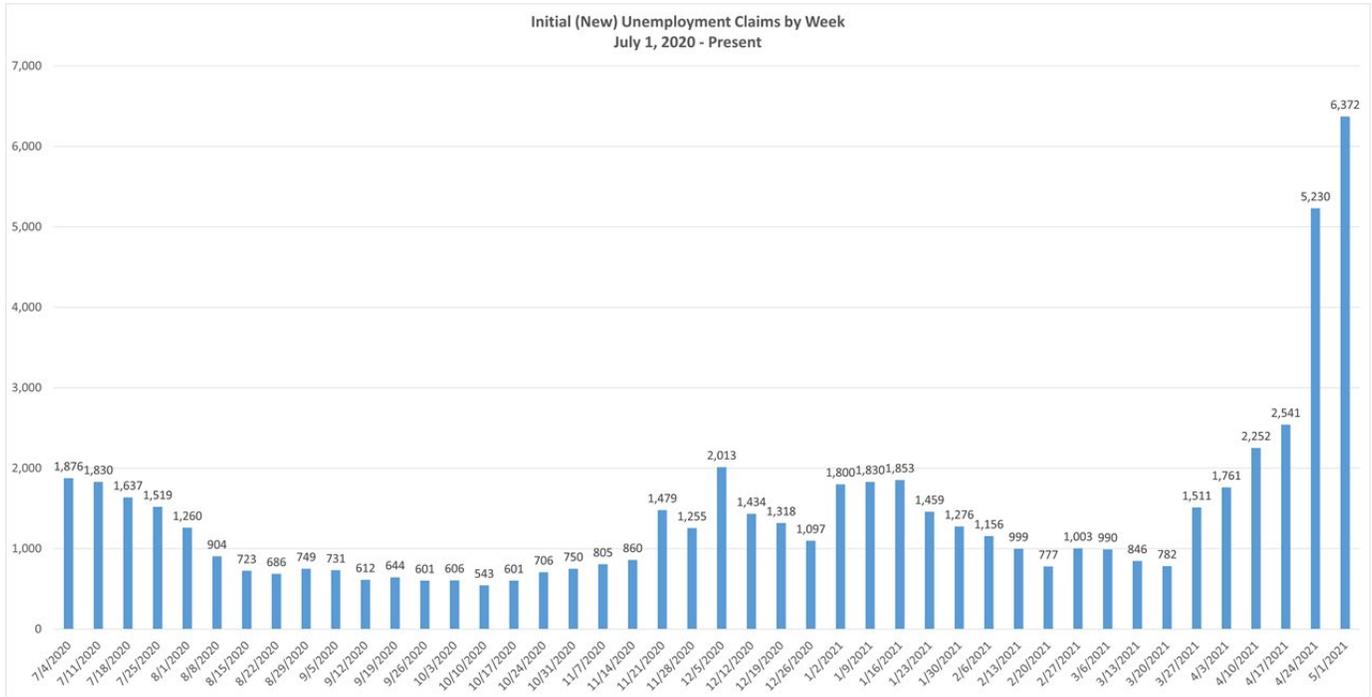


Figure 2

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Continued Claims - All Programs
Regular UI, PEUC, EB, PUA
Total and Partial Unemployed

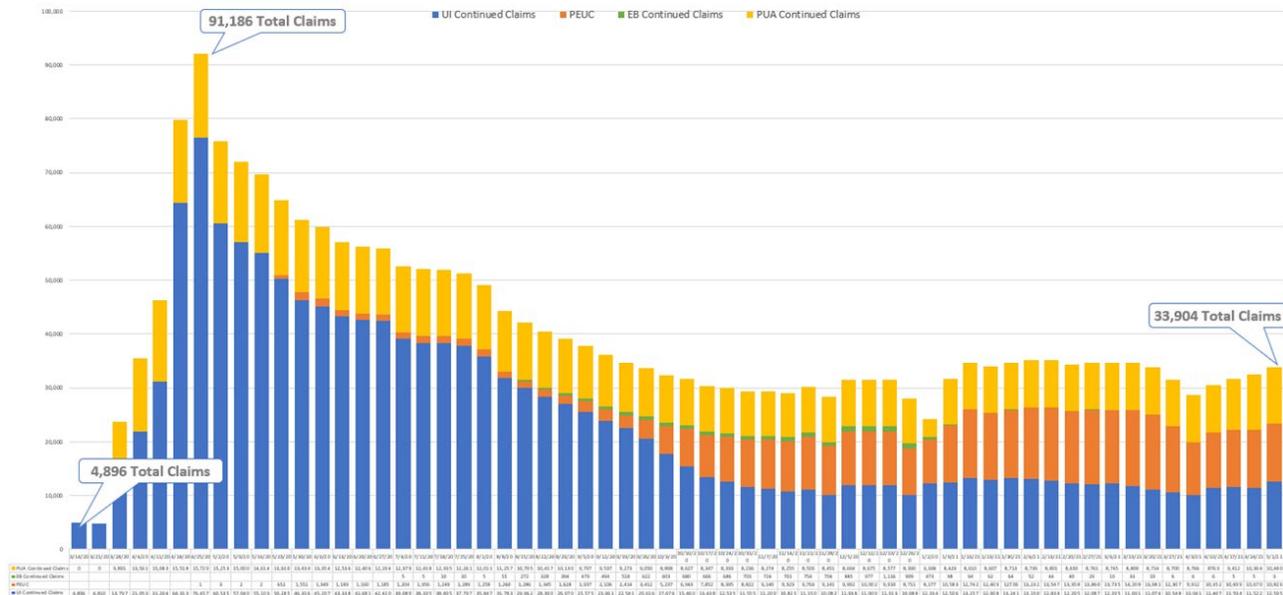


Figure 3

BENEFIT PAYMENTS

Claims Payment Processing						
Week Ending	All UI Claims Paid	All UI Payments	PUA Claims Paid*	PUA Payments	Total Payments Issued	Trust Fund Balance
March 20	24,024	\$7,955,310	8,501	\$5,280,981	\$13,236,291	\$210,031,857
March 27	21,747	\$7,237,175	8,761	\$5,314,230	\$12,551,405	\$206,917,566
April 3	18,546	\$6,141,499	8,330	\$5,342,378	\$11,483,877	\$205,787,117
April 10	19,350	\$6,663,758	8,765	\$4,248,179	\$10,911,937	\$203,340,379
April 17	19,843	\$6,776,296	9,687	\$6,862,060	\$13,638,356	\$201,307,270
April 24	19,696	\$6,643,846	9,289	\$6,479,552	\$13,123,398	\$199,587,137
May 1	20,027	\$6,790,786	6,914	\$4,506,283	\$11,297,069	\$221,440,383

*Only identifies payments issued and may include multiple benefit weeks being paid to one claimant.

Figure 4

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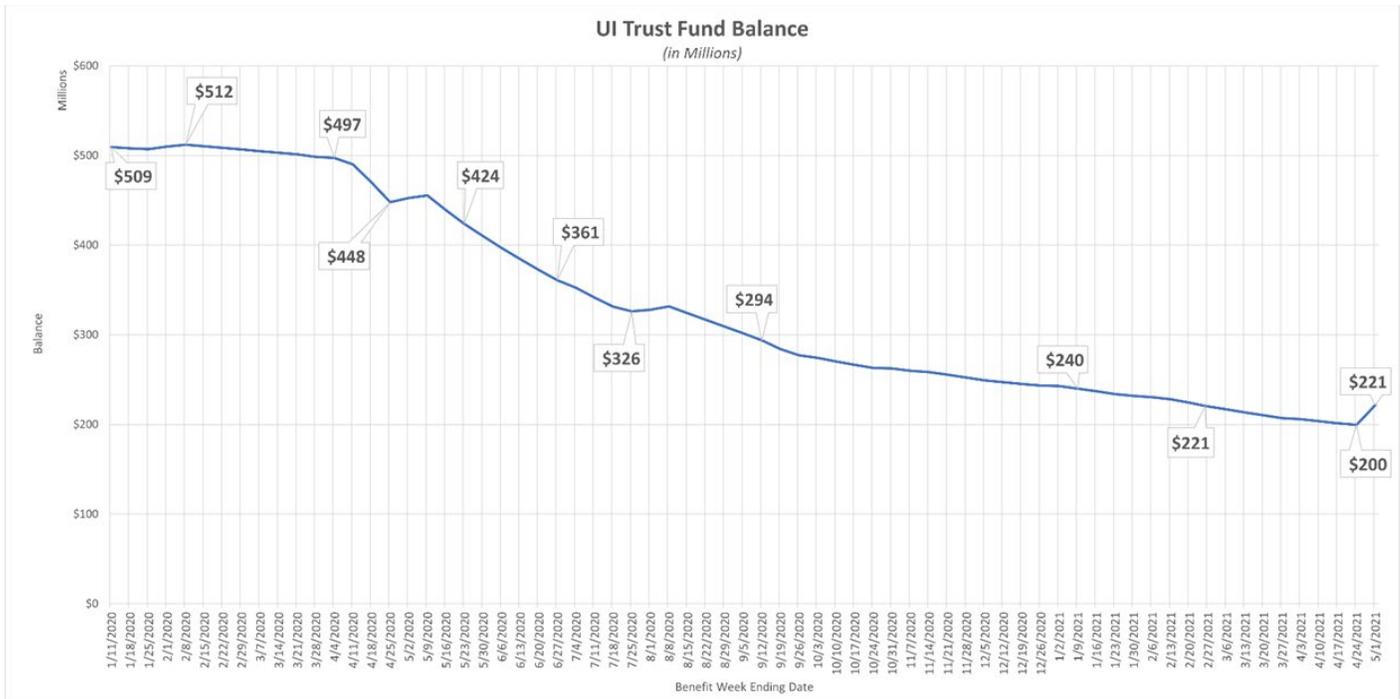


Figure 5

*the increase in the UI Trust Fund balance is attributed to Q1 contributions made by employers.

CALL VOLUME

Call Volume Summary			
Average Agents	Average Calls Per Day	Average Length of Call	Average Hold Time
111	3,588	11:44	8:49

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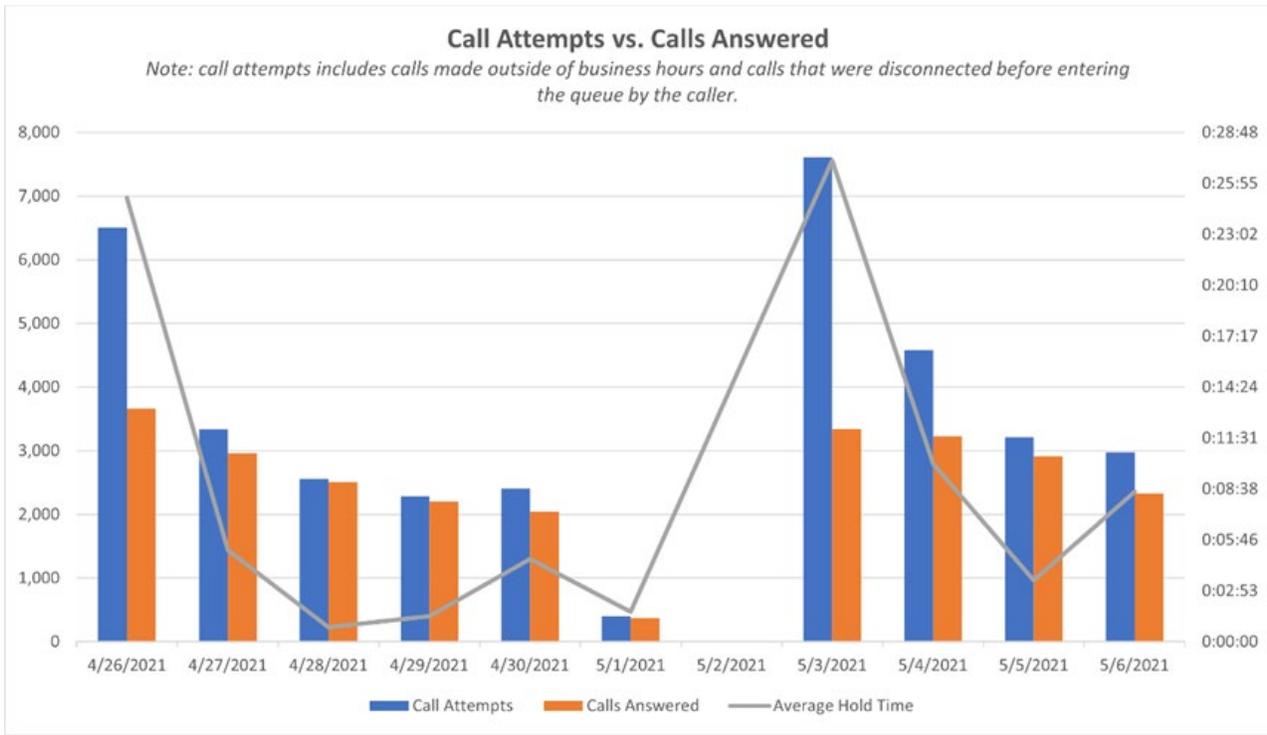


Figure 6

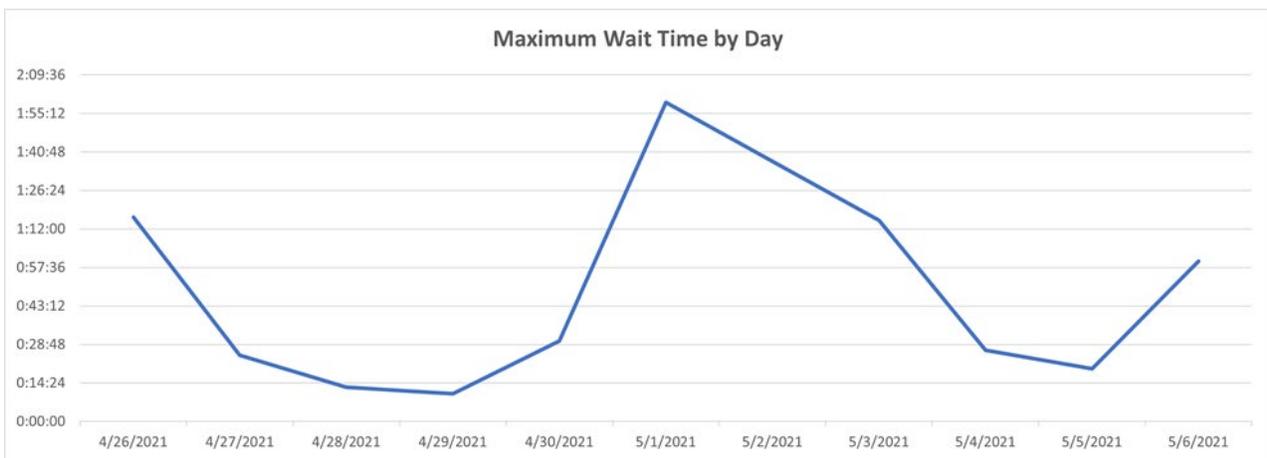


Figure 7

FRAUD DETECTION

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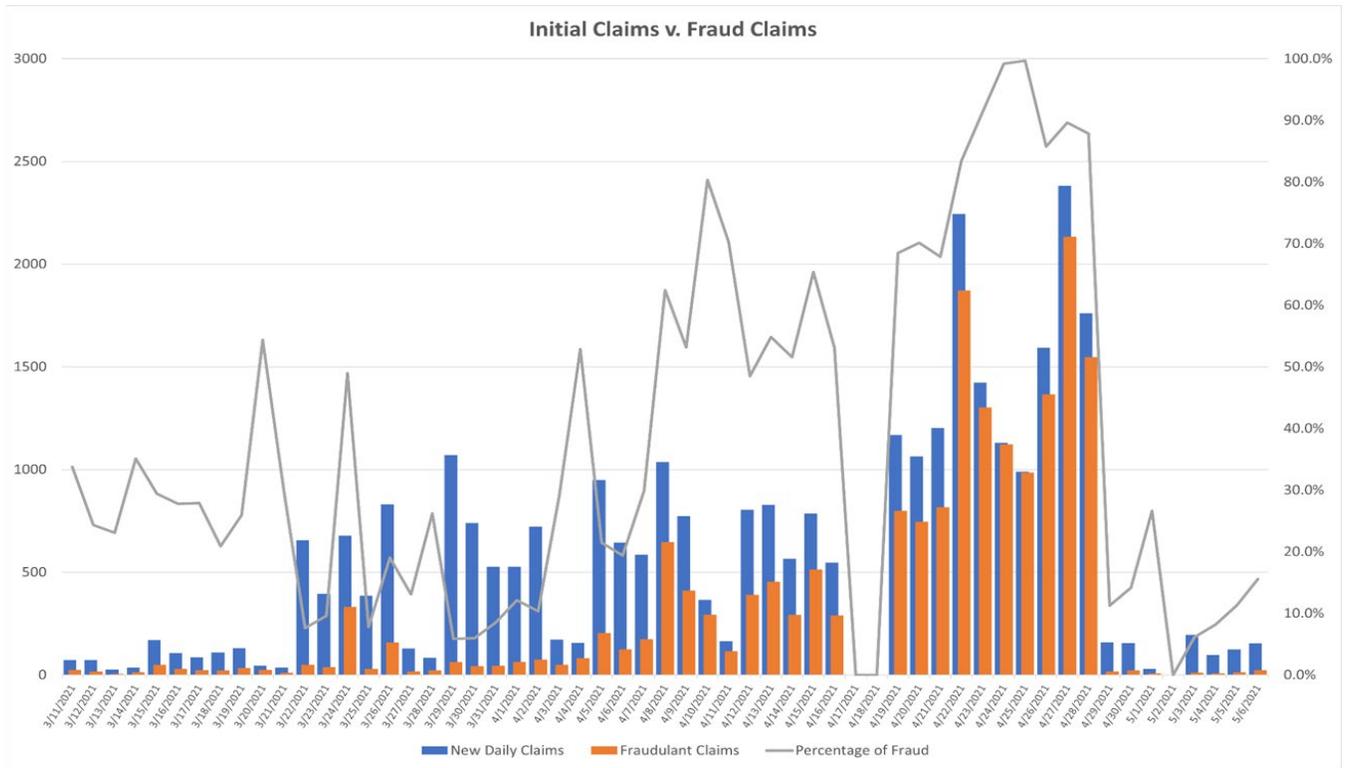


Figure 8

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