

To: Vermont Legislature
From: Michael Harrington, Interim Labor Commissioner
Date: May 28, 2020
Subject: Unemployment Insurance Daily Update

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

Current Week Priorities

1. Launch of Constituent Relationship Management Tool
2. Resolution of UI/PUA claimant issues (including stop-payment issues and adjudications)
3. Implementation of UI Fraud Unit

On-going Priorities

- Continue to resolve claimant issues and get them paid
- Continue to increase training for call-center staff
- Continue to improve responsiveness to, and communication with, claimants

Accomplishments and Milestones

- 27,449 UI claims were paid on May 26th for a total payment amount of \$26,005,976
- 2,526 PUA claims were paid on May 26th for a total payment amount of \$3,316,767
- 9,825 UI claims were paid on May 27th for a total payment amount of \$9,466,482
- 732 PUA claims were paid on May 27th for a total payment amount of \$1,432,877

Ongoing Activities

- Creating additional technical assistance and training materials for Maximus Call Center agents and improving call escalation process with Maximus Call Center agents. **Planning daily meetings with Maximus agents to increase their level of knowledge and assistance with claimants.**
- **The Constituent Management Tool had its soft launch yesterday and inquiries have already been submitted. Staff will be resolving and responding to claimants directly. The tool will be made available to the broader public in the coming weeks.**
- Investigating fraudulent cases in both PUA and regular UI, which has seen an uptick in Vermont and across the country. Some fraudulent activity is committed by individuals intentionally misrepresenting material facts and information, and other cases have been the result of stolen identities. An Unemployment Insurance Fraud Unit will also be developed to respond to this increase in need.

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 doing call-backs to 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.
- Claimants who have exhausted their regular UI benefits are being put into the PEUC program daily to continue filing claims for the additional 13 weeks.

Communications

- Ongoing notification for various programs, FAQs, social media, and other.

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.
- All UI lines have been transferred to Maximus. Staff will remain on the GMP line until May 29th to serve as overflow support.
- **Wednesday's call attempts were 3,943. Of the calls made to the line, 99% of callers were offered spots in the queue. The average wait time on the Maximus line was 17 seconds. We are seeing the largest number of incoming calls occurring between 8am-8:30am. During this time, it is possible that a caller might be sent to the overflow queue or the call may not connect.**

Unresolved/Unique Populations

- PUA claimants with payment calculation issues remaining.
- 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 and/or appeals process.

Top Claimant Issues

- Regular unemployment claimants unable to file weekly claims or receive weekly benefits because their claim is still being adjudicated or 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	99,376	Total number of initial claims since 3/1/2020.
Initial Claims with no Eligibility Determination	1,996	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	71,115	Number of claimants eligible for UI
Initial Claimants Eligible for UI - Paid	64,266	Number of claimants who are receiving UI benefits
Initial Claimants Eligible for UI - Not Paid	6,849	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	\$360,475,599	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	26,265	Total number of claimants that could complete the PUA application and are in the system
Claimants in PUA - Filed	17,218	# of claimants who have completed the PUA application
Claimants in PUA – Filed & Eligible	16,551	# of eligible claimants
Claimants in PUA – Filed & Ineligible	649	# of ineligible claimants
Claimants Eligible for PUA - Filed and Paid	14,764	# of eligible claimants receiving PUA benefit.
Claimants in PUA -Filed and Not Paid	1,787*	# 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	\$86,054,861	Total amount of PUA benefits paid

**Includes pending payments due to PUA system update*

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