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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: January 26, 2021
Subject: Unemployment Insurance Weekly Update

GENERAL

- The Department has created an “Adjudications” page on its website that includes information for claimants who are in the adjudications process (what adjudications means, why they are there, what they can expect, etc.). Additionally, claimants continue to receive an email when their claim is sent to adjudications and are provided with general information about the process. The adjudications webpage can be found at <https://labor.vermont.gov/unemployment-insurance/claims-adjudication-process>.
- The Department has created an “Appeals” page on its website that includes information for claimants who are in the adjudications process (how does the appeals process work, what are their rights, what they can expect, etc.) Additionally, claimants continue to receive a follow up email when their appeal is received. We have also updated the information on the email response to provide more information for the claimant. It is important to note that both claimants and employers have appeal rights under the law. The appeals webpage can be found at <https://labor.vermont.gov/unemployment-insurance/appealing-ui-claim-determinations>.
- Since the passage of the CARES Act Extension legislation, we have seen an uptick in fraudulent claims being filed. Especially, claims involving stolen identities. Vermonters should remain vigilant and if they believe they have been the victim of identity theft resulting in a fraudulent claim being filed using their personal information, they should either contact our UI Fraud Tip Line at 802-828-4104 or submit an online fraud report at <https://labor.vermont.gov/form/report-ui-fraud>. It is important to note that our fraud unit handles thousands of claims each week making impossible for them to contact every individual who files a report. Individuals should expect to hear back from the Department only if more information is needed. After submitting a report to the Department, our team will review the report and stop any illegitimate claims. Victims of UI fraud are not held liable for any benefits that are paid to the fraudulent filer, nor will the fraudulent claim impact their credit score/report. For individuals who have fallen victim to identity theft, more information can be found at the Federal Trade Commission's website (<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/>). Additionally, individuals can file an identity theft report online with the FTC at <https://www.identitytheft.gov/>.

- The Department is currently working towards issuing 1099G tax documents to unemployment insurance recipients. This process has taken much longer this year due to the large number of new programs that were implemented this past. Because these new programs reside on multiple platforms, claimants are likely to received multiple 1099G documents from the Department, depending on how many different programs they were eligible for (e.g., UI, PEUC, FPUC, PUA, LWA, \$1,200, VSTS). Claimants should continue to monitor their email and the Department’s website for additional updates.
- The Department has launched a new UI Newsfeed for the public to monitor regular updates about program information, alerts, notices, and more. This newsfeed can be found on the homepage of the Department’s website, as well as at <https://labor.vermont.gov/unemployment-insurance/ui-updates>.
- CARES Act Extension Provisions:
 - The new CARES Act legislation extends PUA and PEUC benefits by 11 weeks for eligible claimants. Claimants will be able to receive these extended benefits through the benefit week ending April 10, 2021; however, no new PEUC or PUA claims will be accepted after March 14, 2021. Individuals who had previously exhausted their benefits under either the PEUC program or the Extended Benefits program, and are still unemployed, can log back into their UI claimant portal and resume filing beginning January 3, 2021.
 - The FPUC program was also reinstated with the passage of this Act and claimants do not need to take any additional action in order to receive the new FPUC benefit of \$300 per week.
 - This legislation also created what is called the Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation (MEUC) program, which affords claimants filing in regular UI or PEUC, but who also have earned more than \$5,000 in self-employed wages for the previous tax year, to be eligible for an additional \$100 weekly benefit. This additional benefit is on top of both the base benefit and the \$300 FPUC payment. While this program is optional for states, Vermont has chosen to enroll in this benefit program for Vermonters.
 - USDOL has also announced that States will be able to pay benefits for the week ending 1/2/21. This means that there will be no “lost week” or lapse in benefits for PUA or PEUC individuals who were still in filing status for the benefit week ending 12/26/20. With that, the Department is working to implement the changes to both its legacy mainframe system as well as its PUA system. Eligible claimants may see a delay in their ability to file, but they will be able to receive benefits for the week of 12/27/20 – 1/2/21.

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.

- If an active claimant in the PUA program is unable to file for the benefit week ending (BWE) 12/26/20, it is likely because they have received the maximum number of weeks of the program under the original CARES Act. The CARES Act extension begins this week and eligible PUA claimants who have exhausted their original benefits will be able to file for the BWE 01/02/21 once the program has been updated with the federal changes. The new CARES Act extension does not cover the BWE 12/26/20 for PUA claimants who have already exhausted their benefits.

Standard Unemployment Insurance Series

(Covered Employees)



Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Series

(Independent Contractors, Sole Proprietors, Self-employed, and Other)



Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation

(Additional \$300 Benefit to Claimants in All Programs)



- Claimants who are able to do so, should be actively looking for work while collecting UI benefits. Vermont’s official work search is currently suspended, it is likely to be reinstated in the coming weeks. Employers across the state are reporting job availability in a number of sectors and industries and are actively hiring for a variety of positions. Prior to the Pandemic, UI claimants were required to conduct three official work inquiries each week in order to be eligible for benefits.
- Our Workforce Development team is actively providing outreach and services to unemployed Vermonters to assist with re-employment. More information about the Department’s employment and re-employment efforts can be found online at www.labor.vermont.gov/jobs.

CLAIMS

- Our weekly numbers continue to show an increase in the number of initial claims be filed. This is believed to be part of the seasonal shift in employment. Traditionally, the week of Thanksgiving is the Department’s busiest week of the year for the UI Division.
- Claimants filing for unemployment continue to receive a weekly jobs newsletter with highlighted job opportunities available across Vermont. **January 25th Jobs Newsletter can be found at: <https://conta.cc/3pozaSU>**

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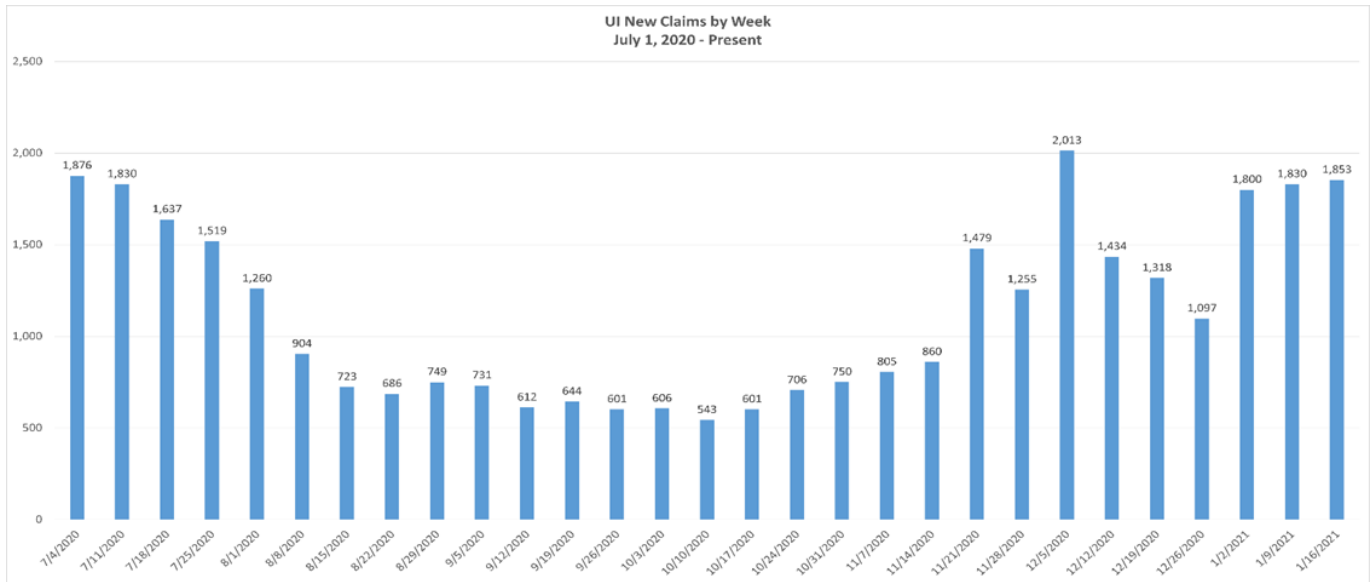


Figure 1

Continued Claims Filed							
Week Ending	12/5	12/12	12/19	12/26	1/2	1/9	1/16
Regular UI	11,983	11,909	11,913	10,088	12,194	12,506	13,257
PEUC	9,825	9,833	9,724	8,589	8,055	10,310	12,742
EB	885	977	1,116	909	473	98	94
PUA	8,694	8,675	8,577	8,390	3,338	8,429	8,610
Total	31,342	31,394	31,330	27,976	24,087	31,343	34,703

Figure 2

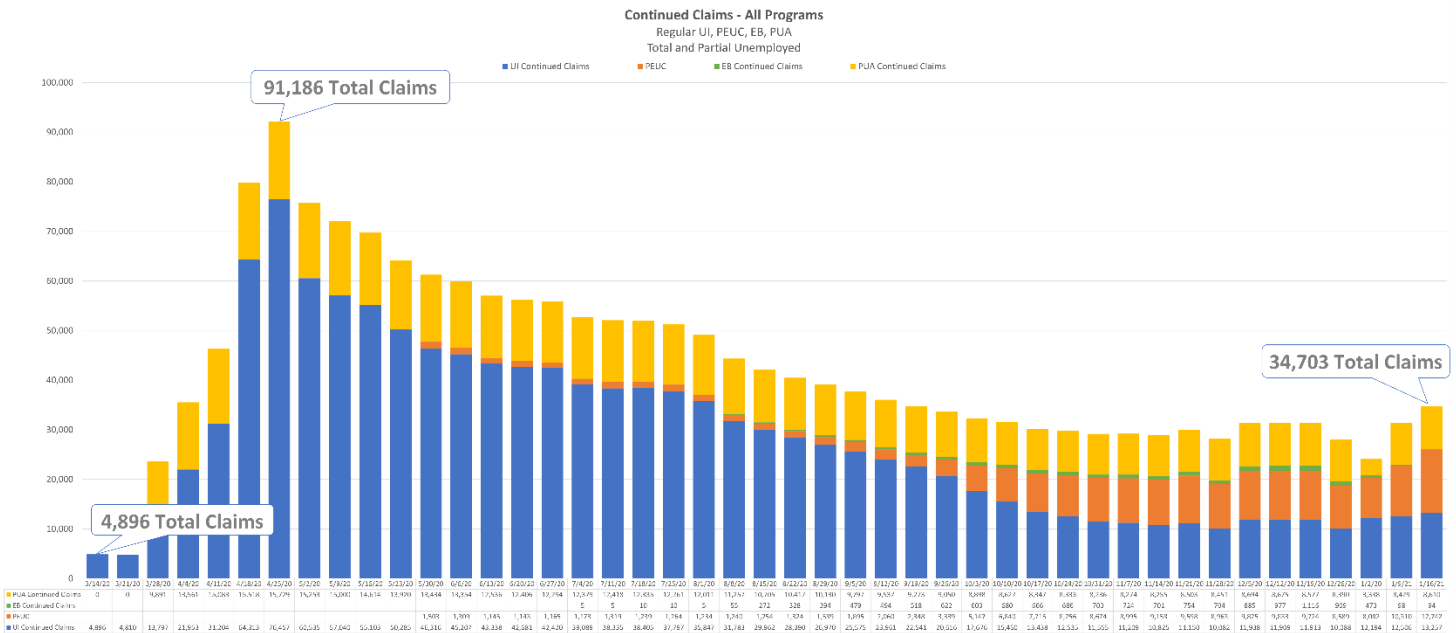


Figure 3

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UI Continued Claims by Filing Week BWE 1/16/21

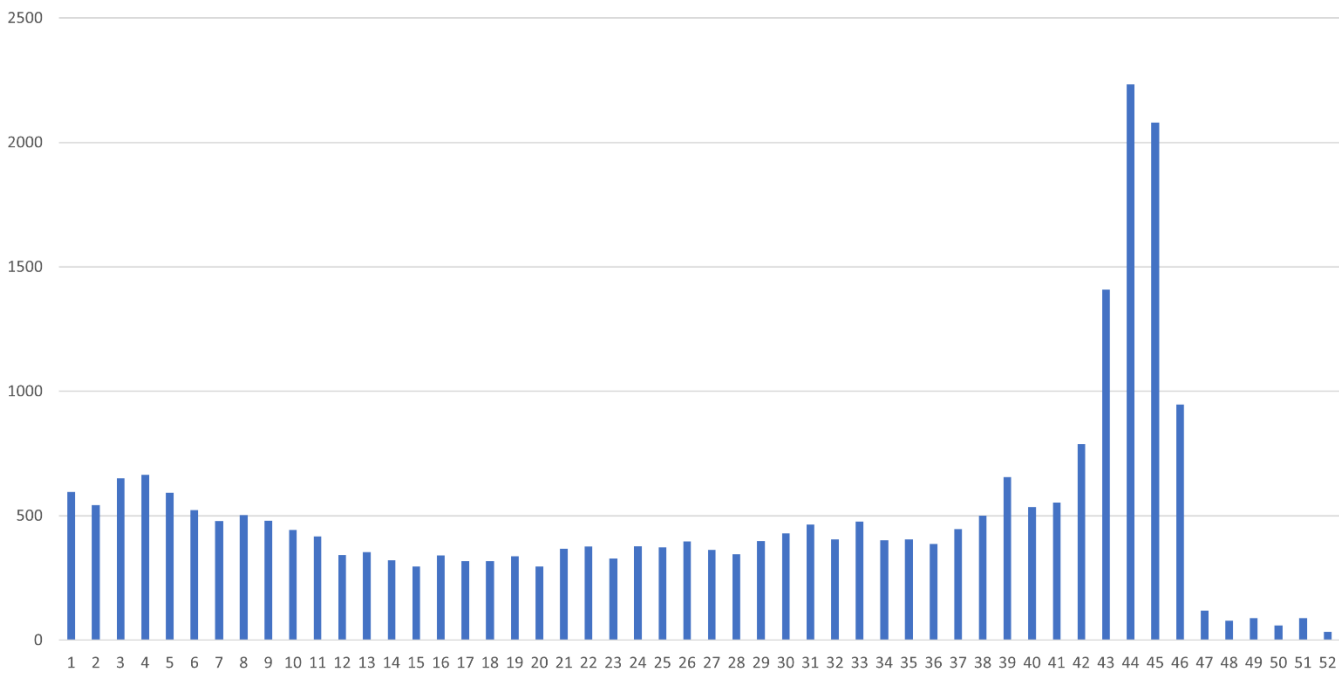


Figure 4

PUA Continued Claims by Filing Week BWE 1/16/21

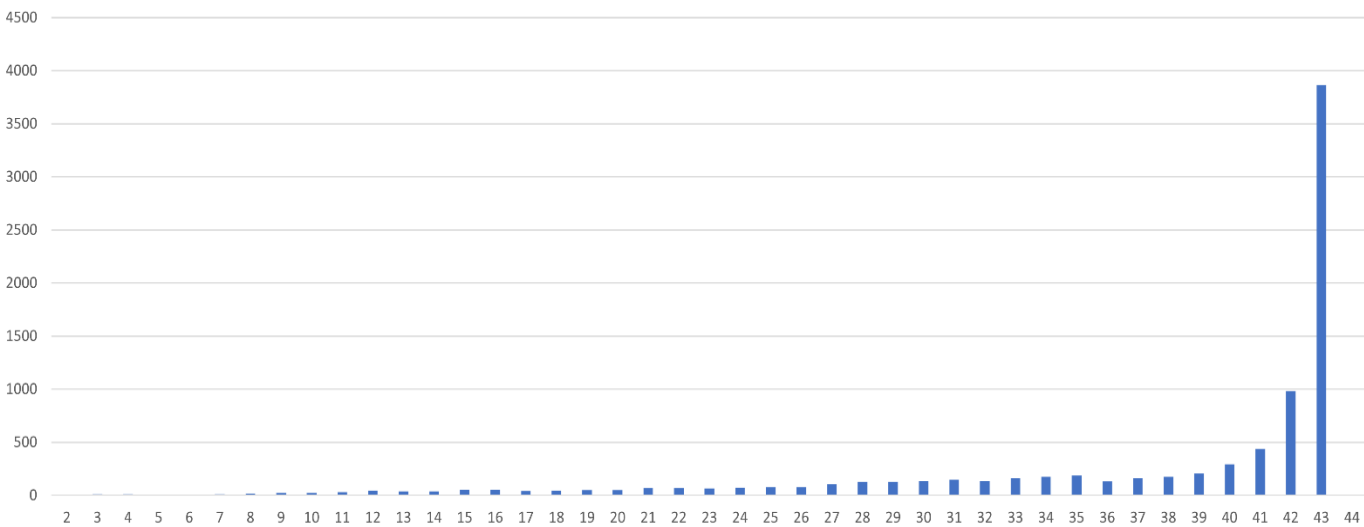


Figure 5

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PAYMENTS

- In total, the Vermont Short Term Supplemental (VSTS) benefit program paid out more than \$14.6MM to more than 33,500 claimants.
- In total, the Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) program paid out over \$56MM to more than 35,000 claimants.

Claims Payment Processing						
Week Ending	All UI Claims Paid	All UI Payments	PUA Claims Paid*	PUA Payments	Total Payments Issued	Trust Fund Balance
December 5	21,870	\$7,451,856	8,211	\$2,638,931	\$10,295,096	\$249,016,877
December 12	21,160	\$7,206,483	8,126	\$2,367,865	\$9,574,348	\$247,023,458
December 19	21,019	\$7,072,397	8,264	\$2,691,133	\$9,763,530	\$245,080,698
December 26	18,837	\$6,112,174	5,273	\$2,571,462	\$8,683,636	\$243,202,289
January 2	18,797	\$6,459,827	1,258	\$1,017,026	\$7,476,853	\$242,681,331
January 9	21,615	\$7,393,515	13,641	\$7,511,281	\$14,904,796	\$239,890,508
January 16	23,338	\$7,954,465	9,206	\$5,715,889	\$13,670,354	\$237,021,103

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

Figure 6

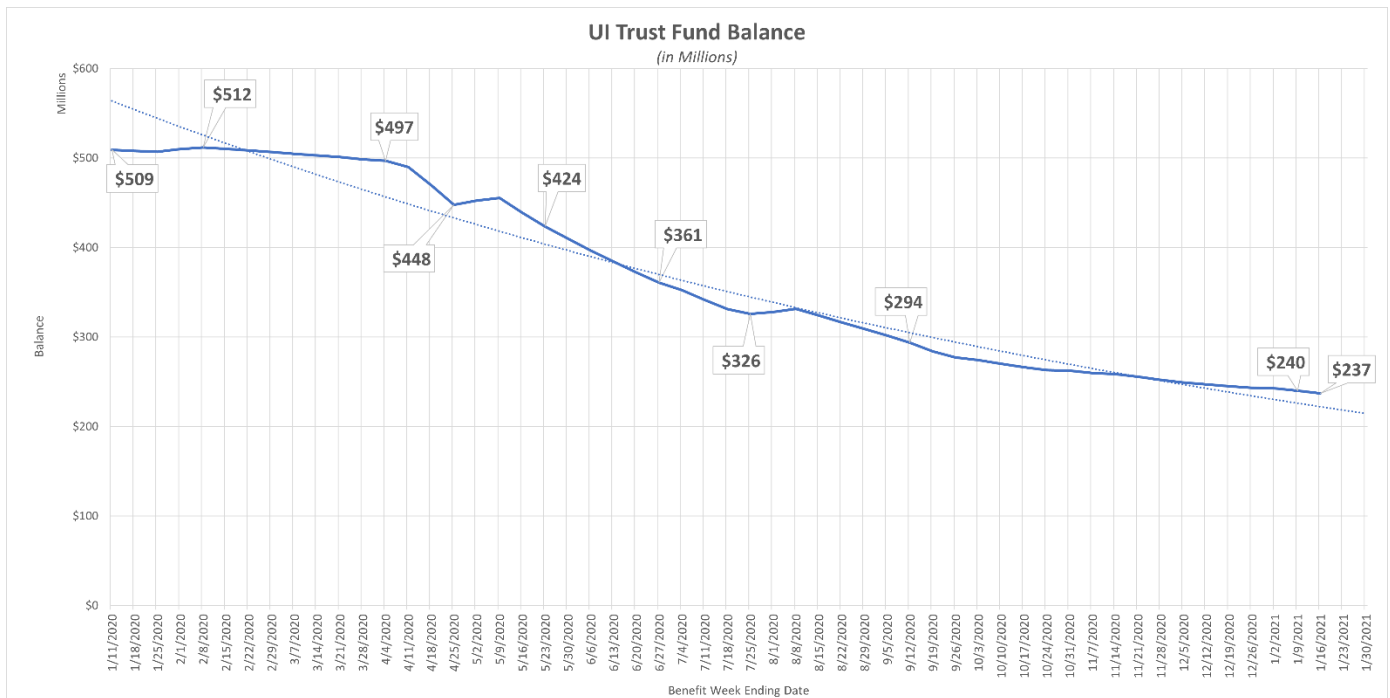


Figure 7

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Call Volume Summary			
Average Agents	Average Calls Per Day	Average Length of Call	Average Hold Time
123	2,571	13:11	4:11

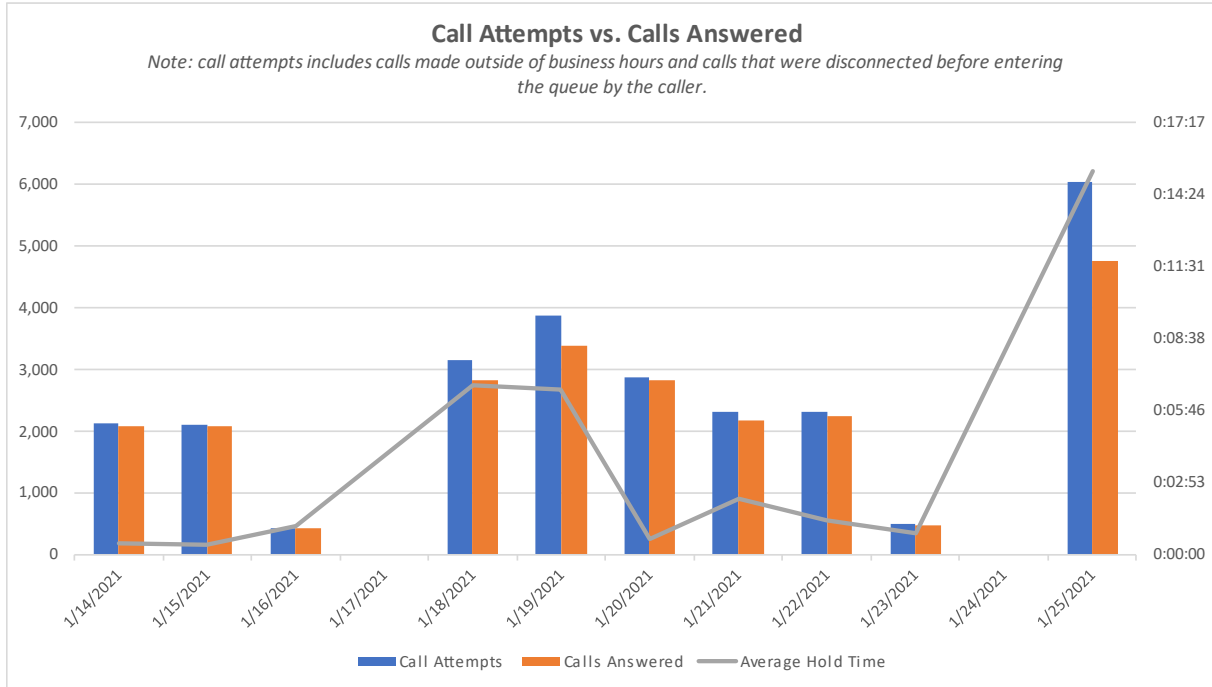


Figure 8

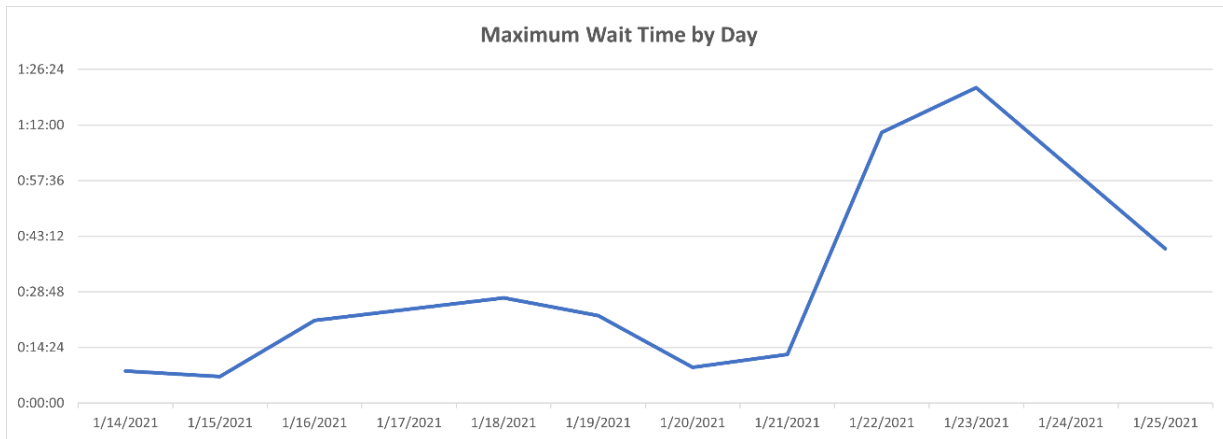


Figure 9

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OTHER RESOURCES

- [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 \[Newsfeed\] \(NEW\)](#)
- [Appealing UI Claim Determinations \(NEW\)](#)
- [UI Adjudications Process \(NEW\)](#)

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