

State of Vermont  
Department of Labor  
Office of the Commissioner

5 Green Mountain Drive  
P.O. Box 488  
Montpelier, VT 05601  
[labor.vermont.gov](http://labor.vermont.gov)

[telephone] 802-828-4301  
[fax] 802-828-4181

To: Vermont General Assembly  
From: Commissioner's Office, Department of Labor  
Date: March 23, 2021  
Subject: Unemployment Insurance Weekly Update

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## GENERAL

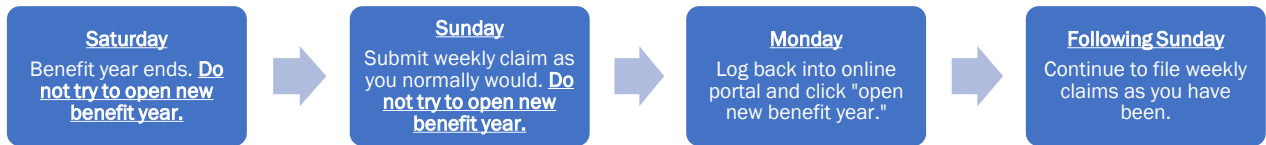
### Opening a New Benefit Year

- Many claimants are approaching the one-year anniversary of having submitted their initial application for unemployment, which starts the 12-month long “benefit year.” At the end of that year, claimants must open a new benefit year so the Department can redetermine eligibility and issue a new weekly benefit amount (WBA). Because of language passed in S.110, claimants will not see a decrease in their weekly benefit amount even if they have been out of work for the last year.
  - For claimants who open a new benefit year and are able to requalify for benefits, and do not see a decrease of \$25 or more in their benefit amount, will be able to receive regular UI benefits under their new benefit year.
  - For claimants who open a new benefit year and are able to requalify for benefits, but see a decrease of \$25 or more in their weekly benefit amount, they will be able to continue receiving Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) at the original benefit amount, and their new benefit year not begin until they exhaust their PEUC benefits.
  - For claimants who open a new benefit year but do not due to a loss of income during the 2020 calendar years, they will be able to continue receiving Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) at the original benefit amount. When they exhaust their PEUC benefits, their benefits will end until they return to work and earn enough wages to make them eligible for unemployment benefits.
- As claimants are identified by the system as needing to open a new benefit year, they will receive an email from the Department outlining the steps below. A sample of the email that has already been sent to claimants who need to open a new benefit year can be found here: <https://conta.cc/3IB3Hf8>
  - **Steps to opening a new benefit year:**
    1. The first day you can open a new benefit year is 24-hours after the benefit year end date. (Reminder: Benefit years always end on a Saturday, so they first day you can file is the following Sunday, but not before you file your final weekly claim under the old benefit year)
    2. Be sure to file your last weekly claim of the old benefit year BEFORE you open a new benefit year. If you submit your last weekly claim after you open a new benefit year, this will result in system error and delay the processing of your claim.
    3. The day after you submit your weekly claim, log back into your Portal and click “open a new benefit year.” This will take you to the unemployment insurance application to complete. Link: <https://vermont.force.com/DOLClaim/s/claim-submit-846397>
    4. Your new UI benefit amount will be calculated by the Department and mailed to you. This will indicate your new benefit amount for the next 12 months. Even if your benefit amount on your monetary determination is \$0.00, you will still receive benefits. This indicates that you no longer qualify for regular UI but can continue receiving PEUC. You will continue to receive the same

benefit amount calculated during 2020. (Processing of your claim can take up to 5-7 business days.)

5. To file your first weekly claim on your new benefit year for the next benefit week, simply log into the UI claimant portal and continue filing.
6. Continue filing for each week you are unemployed.

- **Recommended Timeline to Opening a New Benefit Year Without Delays:**



### American Rescue Plan

- The American Rescue Plan (ARP) signed into law by the President on March 11 and includes provisions to extend various Unemployment Insurance programs:
  - **Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)** was created in March 2020 as a program for individuals not typically eligible for regular unemployment insurance to file for and receive benefits (e.g. self-employed, independent contractors, etc.). This program has been extended until September 6, 2021. The benefit week ending September 4, 2021 will be the final week claimants are able to file in the PUA program.
  - **Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)** was also created in March 2020 as an extension program for claimants who exhausted their regular unemployment insurance benefits but remained unemployed. The ARP extends the number of weeks an individual may receive in the PEUC program from 24 to 53 weeks if they exhaust their regular UI benefits.
  - **Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)** has also been extended through the benefit week ending September 4, 2021. Claimants will receive an additional \$300 benefit which will be added directly to their state weekly benefit payment.
  - **Reimbursable Employers:** The ARP increases the federal reimbursement rate for non-profit and municipal governments from 50% to 75% for the amounts of compensation paid for weeks of unemployment beginning after March 31, 2021, and ending on or before September 6, 2021.
  - **Unemployment Insurance Tax Exemption:** The first \$10,200 in 2020 unemployment benefits are exempt from federal income tax for households with incomes below \$150,000 per year. This tax exemption is under the jurisdiction of the IRS. Claimants may find more information about the exemption on the IRS website here: <https://www.irs.gov/faqs/irs-procedures/forms-publications/new-exclusion-of-up-to-10200-of-unemployment-compensation>

### 1099 Processing Incident

- Once a claimant has received and reviewed all of their 1099 documents, if they still feel that the information provided on the forms is incorrect, they can submit a 1099 correction request form. If a claimant needs a new 1099 or never received a 1099, they can also request to have the Department reissue their 1099. Individuals who receive a 1099 from the Department but never filed for unemployment benefits should file a fraudulent 1099 report with the Department immediately. All information regarding 1099 requests can be found at <https://labor.vermont.gov/request-1099-correction>.

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## Recapture Update

- As of March 7<sup>th</sup>, the Department had recaptured 61% (approximately 57,600 returned out of 94,800) of all original 1099s that were delivered to the post office.

## Identity Protection Update

- The State has contracted with Identity Theft Guard Solutions, Inc (IDX) to provide identity protection service to claimants. This protection will cover claimants for a minimum of 12-months. Notices were mailed to all 2020 claimants on Thursday, February 18. Claimants have until May 18, 2021 to register with IDX for credit monitoring services, which are retroactive to the date of the incident (January 29, 2021).
- As of March 22, 2021, 11,573 individuals (11.7% of population) had enrolled in ID protection. Claimants have until May 19, 2021 to enroll. The industry average for enrollment is 10% of the affected population.



## Vermont Department of Labor Status Report



Mailing Data	
Final Mailing Count:	98,719
Returned as Undeliverable:	1,333
Remailed:	

Call Activity				Enrollments		
	Calls In	Calls Out	Total Calls	Call Center	Website	Total Enrollments
Week 1						
2/18/2021	0	0	0	0	0	0
2/19/2021-2/21/2021	4	0	4	1	0	1
Week 2						
2/22/2021	23	0	23	10	74	84
2/23/2021	28	0	28	18	77	95
2/24/2021	25	0	25	12	74	86
2/25/2021	73	0	73	38	212	250
2/26/2021-2/28/2021	118	0	118	81	1607	1688
Week 3						
3/1/2021	343	0	343	203	1208	1411
3/2/2021	249	1	250	148	1316	1464
3/3/2021	190	2	192	110	765	875
3/4/2021	250	0	250	116	1011	1127
3/5/2021-3/7/2021	198	8	206	113	1532	1645
Week 4						
3/8/2021	143	2	145	71	383	454
3/9/2021	105	2	107	55	296	351
3/10/2021	88	6	94	53	223	276
3/11/2021	48	8	56	23	209	232
3/12/2021-3/14/2021	56	5	61	29	496	525
Week 5						
3/15/2021	70	1	71	38	217	255
3/16/2021	48	0	48	24	150	174
3/17/2021	39	1	40	22	99	121
3/18/2021	29	2	31	13	100	113
3/19/2021-3/21/2021	28	2	30	13	234	247
Week 6						
3/22/2021	24	2	26	15	84	99
3/23/2021			0			0
3/24/2021			0			0
3/25/2021			0			0
3/26/2021-3/28/2021			0			0
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>2179</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>2221</b>	<b>1206</b>	<b>10367</b>	<b>11573</b>

## Claimant Work Search

- Claimants who are able to do so, should be actively looking for work while collecting UI benefits. While the State's work search is currently suspended due to COVID-19, employers across the state are reporting job availability in a number of sectors and industries and are actively hiring for a variety of positions.

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- 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 <https://labor.vermont.gov/jobs>.
- Claimants filing for unemployment continue to receive a weekly jobs newsletter with highlighted job opportunities available across Vermont. ([March 22, 2021 Newsletter](#))

## CLAIMS

Continued Claims Filed							
Week Ending	1/30	2/6	2/13	2/20	2/27	3/6	3/13
Regular UI	13,241	13,150	12,834	12,295	12,087	12,195	11,691
PEUC	12,706	13,232	13,547	13,358	13,860	13,735	14,208
EB	64	52	44	40	29	19	33
PUA	8,713	8,739	8,801	8,650	8,761	8,745	8,809
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,391</b>	<b>35,173</b>	<b>35,226</b>	<b>34,343</b>	<b>34,737</b>	<b>34,694</b>	<b>34,741</b>

Figure 1

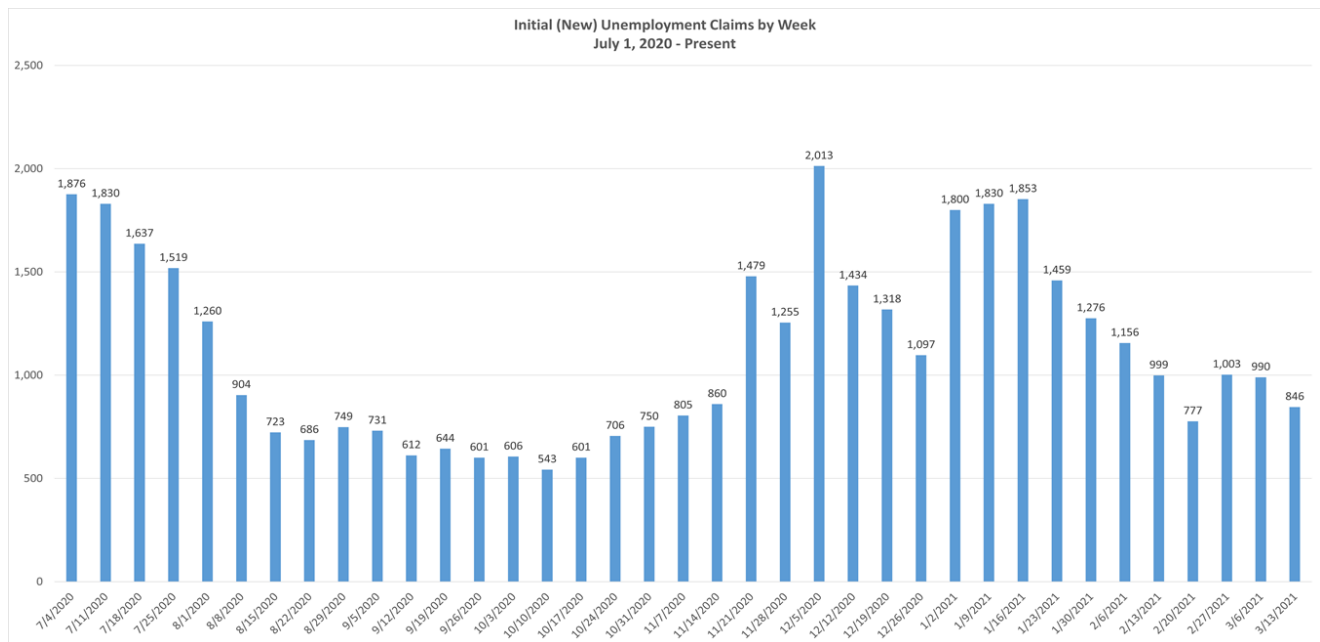


Figure 2

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Continued Claims - All Programs

Regular UI, PEUC, EB, PUA  
Total and Partial Unemployed

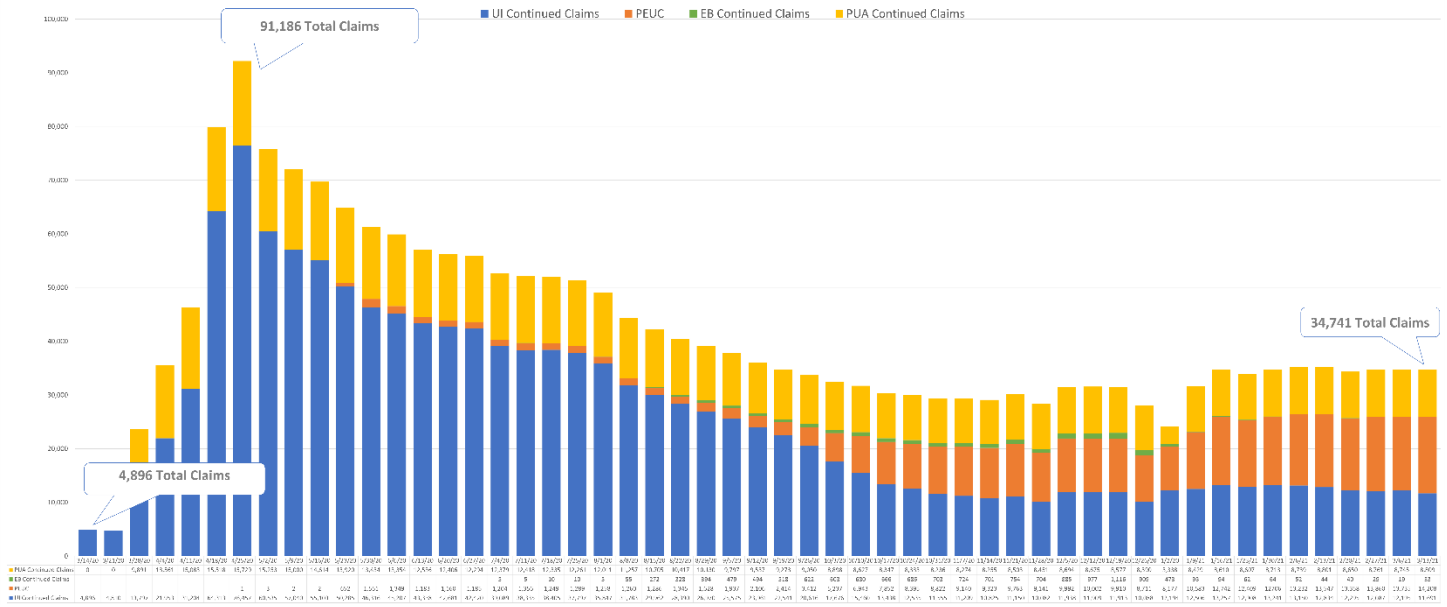


Figure 3

PAYMENTS

Claims Payment Processing						
Week Ending	All UI Claims Paid	All UI Payments	PUA Claims Paid*	PUA Payments	Total Payments Issued	Trust Fund Balance
January 16	23,338	\$7,954,465	9,206	\$5,715,889	\$13,670,354	\$237,021,103
January 23	23,195	\$7,827,257	7,736	\$4,762,209	\$12,589,466	\$233,645,327
January 30	23,499	\$7,911,766	8,595	\$5,296,654	\$13,208,420	\$231,866,628
February 6	24,476	\$8,389,274	8,564	\$5,273,597	\$13,662,871	\$230,211,298
February 13	24,231	\$8,201,345	9,382	\$5,656,278	\$13,857,623	\$228,073,511
February 20	24,051	\$8,124,670	7,851	\$4,764,568	\$12,889,238	\$224,265,194
February 27	24,353	\$8,308,811	8,460	\$5,187,084	\$13,495,895	\$220,634,570
March 6	24,532	\$8,257,067	8,800	\$5,265,854	\$13,522,921	\$216,886,619
March 13	<b>25,932</b>	<b>\$8,125,362</b>	<b>8,809</b>	<b>\$5,039,666</b>	<b>\$13,165,028</b>	<b>\$213,374,056</b>

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

Figure 4

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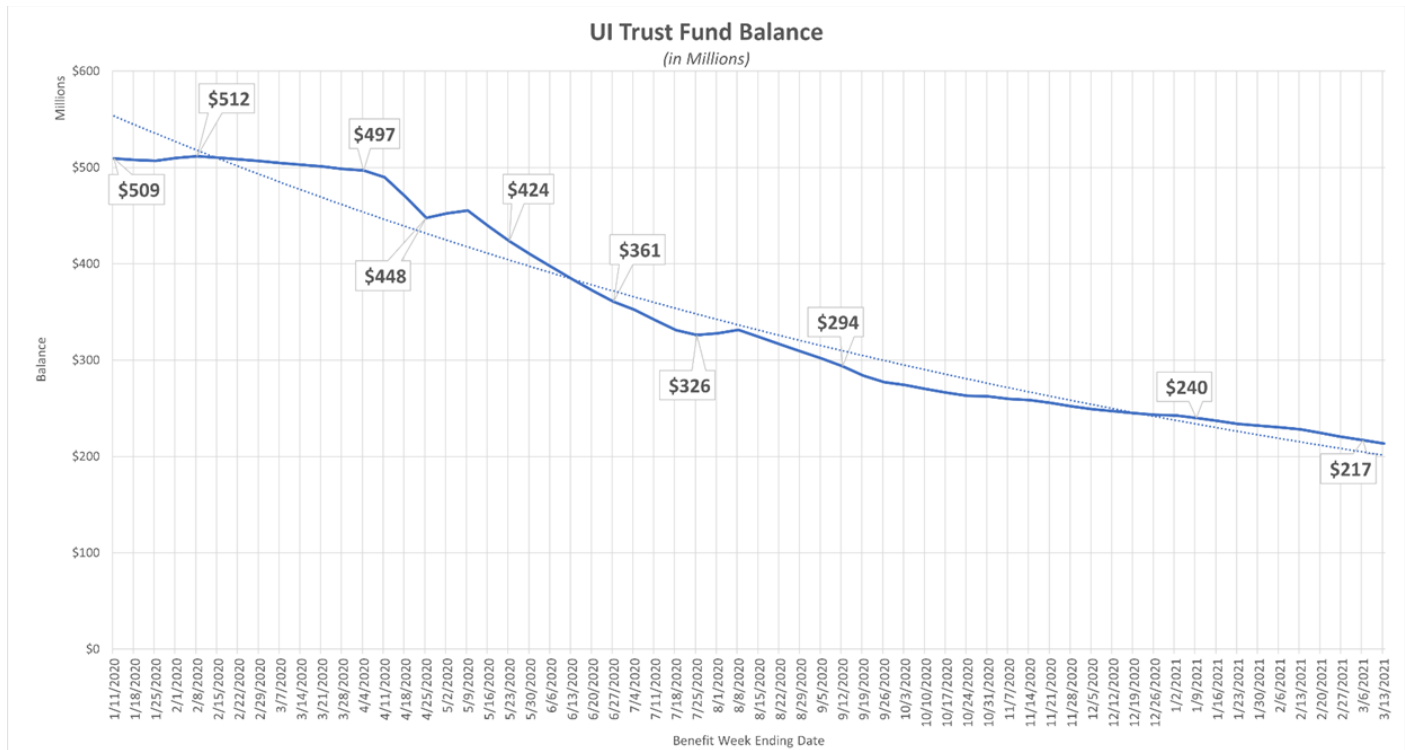


Figure 5

## CALL VOLUME

Call Volume Summary			
Average Agents	Average Calls Per Day	Average Length of Call	Average Hold Time
145	2,399	9:10	1:34

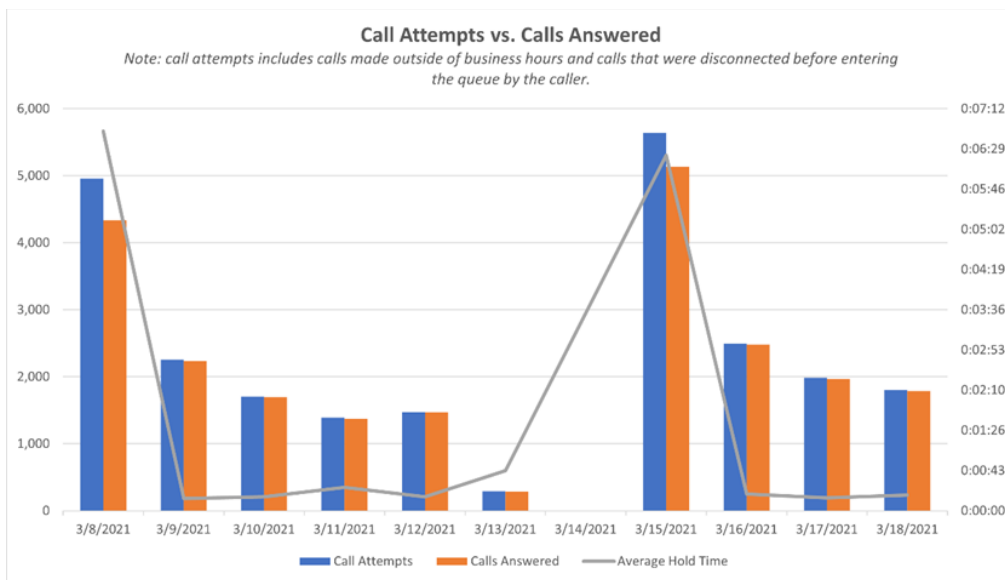


Figure 6

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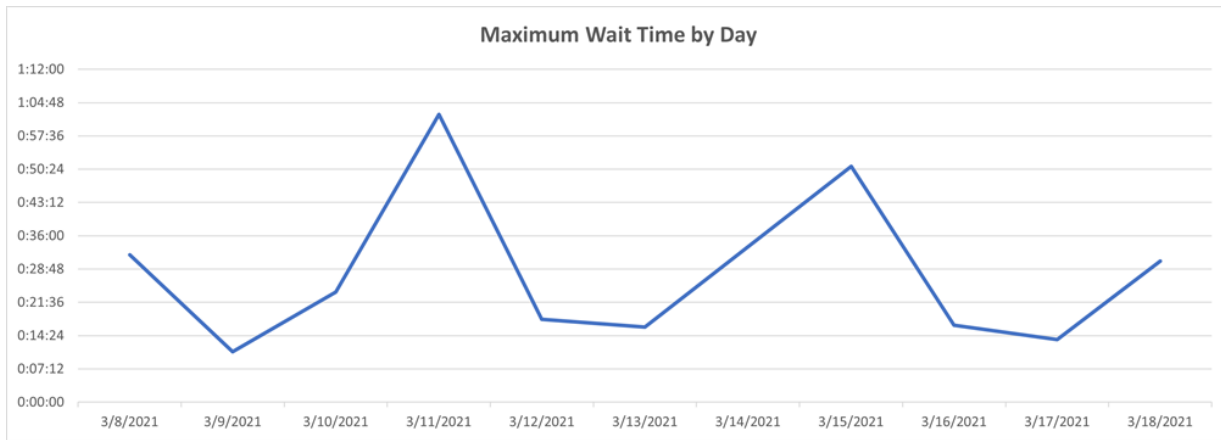


Figure 7

## FRAUD

- UI Fraud Homepage: <https://labor.vermont.gov/ui-fraud>
- Report UI Fraud: <https://labor.vermont.gov/form/report-ui-fraud>
- Federal Trade Commission: <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/>
- Report Identity Theft: <https://www.identitytheft.gov/>
- Enroll in Free ID Protection (UI Claimants): <https://response.idx.us/vermont/>

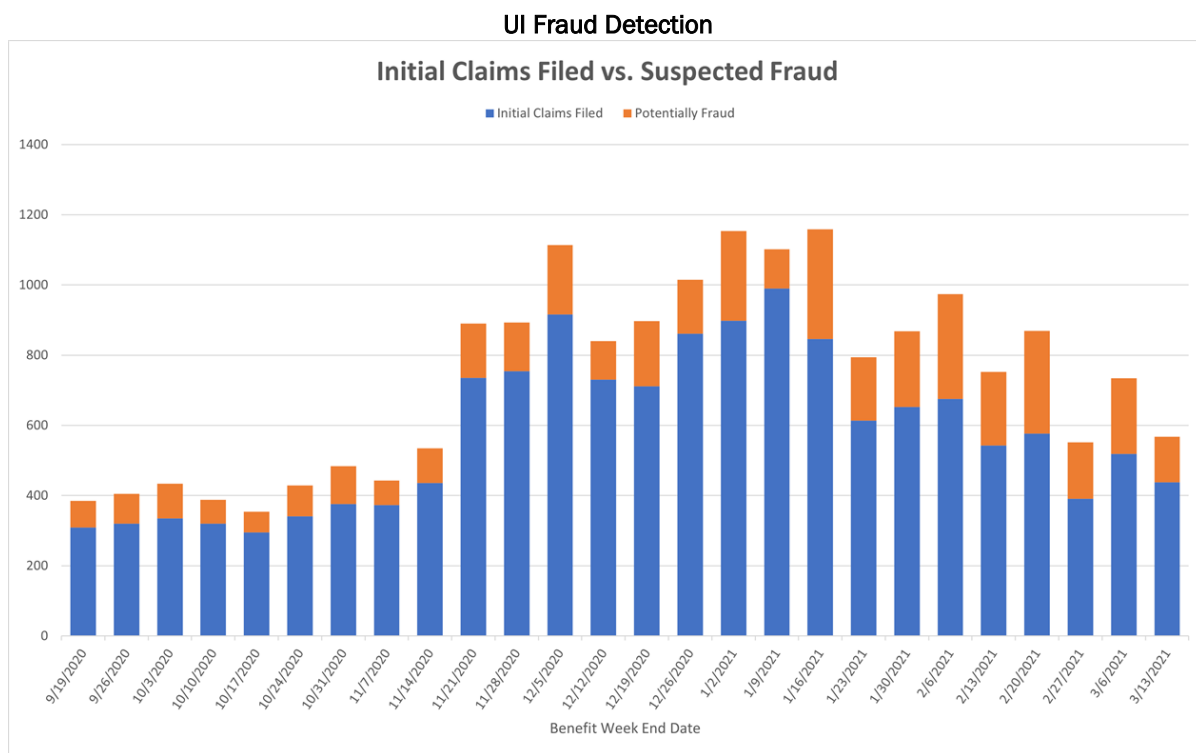


Figure 8

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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 \[Newsfeed\]](#)
- [Appealing UI Claim Determinations](#)
- [UI Adjudications Process](#)
- [1099-G Incident Page](#)
- [1099-G Incident FAQs](#)

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