

To: Vermont Legislature
From: Michael Harrington, Labor Commissioner
Date: October 20, 2020
Subject: Unemployment Insurance Weekly Update

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

General

- The Unemployment Insurance Division has begun sending a Jobs newsletter to all claimants filing for benefits. These newsletters highlight employers with available jobs from across the state. Below are the last three newsletters.
 - [Monday, October 19, 2020](#)
 - [Monday, October 12, 2020](#)
 - [Tuesday, October 6, 2020](#)

Lost Wage Assistance Program (LWA)

- The Lost Wage Assistance Program provided eligible claimants with an additional \$300 per week benefit for the weeks ending August 1, August 8, August 15, August 22, August 29 and September 5. Most eligible claimants have received payment for the first three weeks at this time. **The first batch of payments for the latter three weeks was processed yesterday, October 19, and claimants will likely receive payment within 5 to 7 business days. Claimants will continue to receive email communication from the Department when their payment has been processed. There was not an additional certification required by claimants to receive payment for the final three weeks of the program.** More information about the LWA program can be found online at: <https://labor.vermont.gov/unemployment-insurance/lost-wage-assistance-program>.
- If claimants have not completed their LWA certification yet, they may do so by contacting our UI Claimant Assistance Center at 1-877-214-3332. However, claimants should be aware that this program will only be able to provide the benefit until funding is exhausted. The UI Claimant Assistance Center is unable to provide information on payment eligibility and/or payment status at this time. Additional information regarding payment processing and when claimants can expect their LWA payment has been posted on our website and will continue to be updated to reflect payment processing going forward: <https://labor.vermont.gov/news/lost-wage-assistance-program-payment-update>.

Unemployment Extended Benefits

- Vermont has officially triggered off High Extended Benefits (effective the benefit week ending October 10). **At this time, claimants receiving traditional UI are eligible to receive 26 weeks of regular UI benefits, 13 weeks of Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (CARES Act Program) and 13 weeks of Extended Benefits. Once all 52 weeks of benefits have been exhausted, claimants are likely not eligible to continue to file for benefits. Additionally, PUA claimants are able to receive benefits through the end of the calendar year. Any PUA benefits beyond the week ending December 26th will require congressional approval.**
- **The Department has begun notifying claimants of their filing status via email (in addition to mailing a notice) providing them with information on reemployment services offered by the Department.**

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.

Claim Issues

- Claimants that contact the Claimant Assistance Center with an issue that cannot be resolved within 24-hours will be moved to the Inquiry Tool and a specialist will be assigned to their case for expedited resolution. The Claimant Assistance Center can be reached at 877-214-3332.
- With the UI “busy season” approaching, there have been some changes made to how mass claims are being processed this year as a result of elevated claim levels. Additional content and materials will be available to claimants and employers later this week. Employers and claimants can find more information on our website: <https://labor.vermont.gov/unemployment-insurance>. To assist claimants and employers through the layoff season this year, the Department will be holding virtual town hall style events to provide claimants with information on unemployment benefits (including the changes in processing as a result of COVID) and employers with information on benefit charging, required forms, as well as a general Q&A for employers.

UI Fraud

- Individuals who believe a fraudulent claim has been filed using their personal information should notify the Department of Labor at 802-828-4101. This line is exclusively for fraud reports. More information about fraud and the ability to submit online reports is available at: <https://labor.vermont.gov/ui-fraud>.

Claims Adjudications and Appeals

- Our team of factfinders has launched successfully. This effort is designed to expedite the adjudications process by increasing the speed in which claim determinations can be made. Additionally, the Department has hired more staff in both the adjudications and appeals units to accelerate the processing of contested claims.

(Appendix Below)

APPENDIX

Helpful Links:

- [Click here for general LWA information](#)
- [Click here for LWA payment information](#)
- [Click here for Unemployment Insurance and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance information](#)

Traditional Unemployment Insurance (TUI)

*Numbers as of Tuesday, October 20, 2020		
Total Initial Claimants Filed	122,101	Total Number of Initial Claimants.
Initial Claimants Eligible for UI	83,059	Number of claimants eligible for UI.
Initial Claimants Eligible for UI - Paid	75,817	Number of claimants who are receiving, or have received, UI benefits.
Initial Claimants Eligible for UI - Not Paid	7,242	Number of claimants who meet basic eligibility thresholds, and who either have issues on their claim or are no longer filing.
UI Trust Fund Balance	\$242,830,465	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 (PUA)

*Numbers as of Tuesday, October 20, 2020		
Claimants Potentially PUA Eligible	32,330	Total number of claimants that could complete the PUA application and are in the system
Claimants in PUA – Filed	23,621	# of claimants who have completed the PUA application
Claimants in PUA – Filed & Eligible	19,375	# of eligible claimants
Claimants in PUA – Filed & Ineligible	4,124	# of ineligible claimants
Claimants Eligible for PUA - Filed and Paid	18,571	# of eligible claimants receiving PUA benefit.
Claimants in PUA -Filed and Not Paid	804	# 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	\$207,429,758	Total amount of PUA benefits paid

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Figure 1.1

Daily Incoming Call Attempts

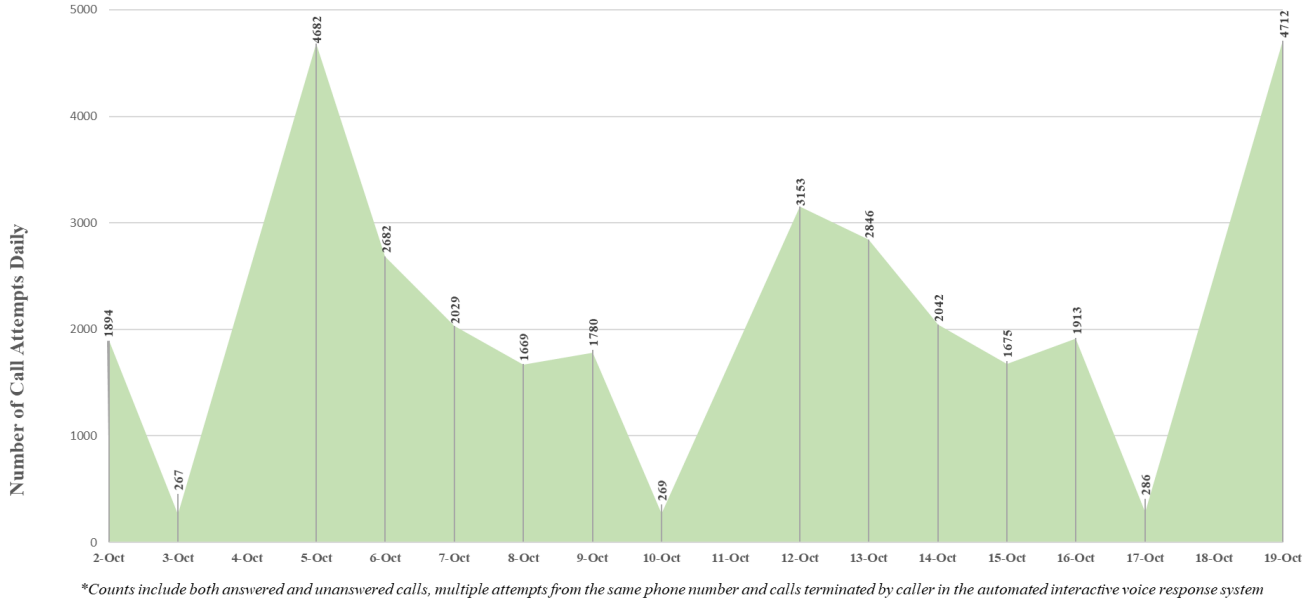
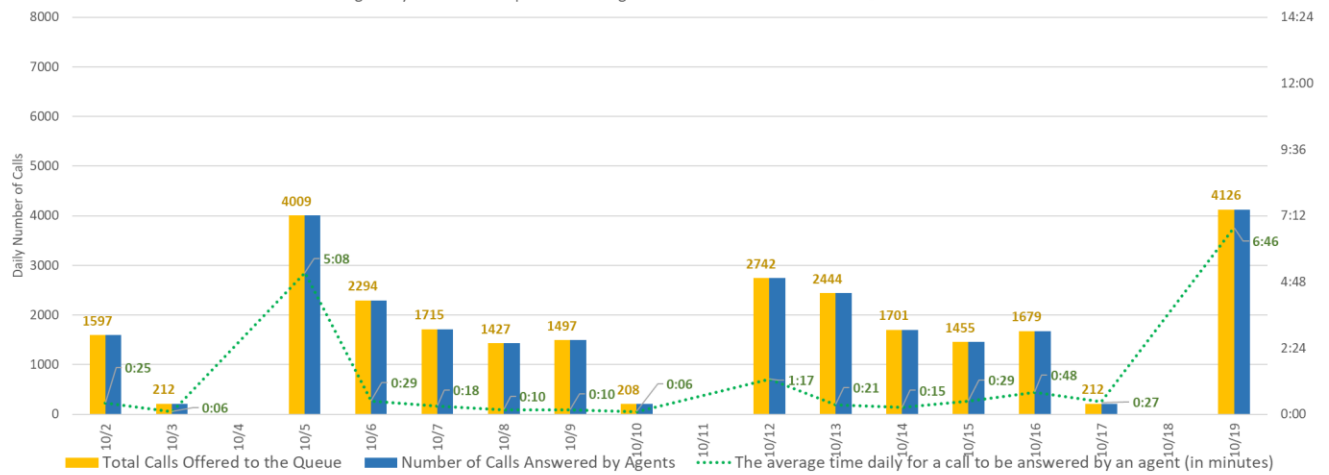


Figure 1.2

Maximus Call Center Data
Average Daily Wait Time to Speak with an Agent and Total Calls Offered to the Queue



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Figure 2.1

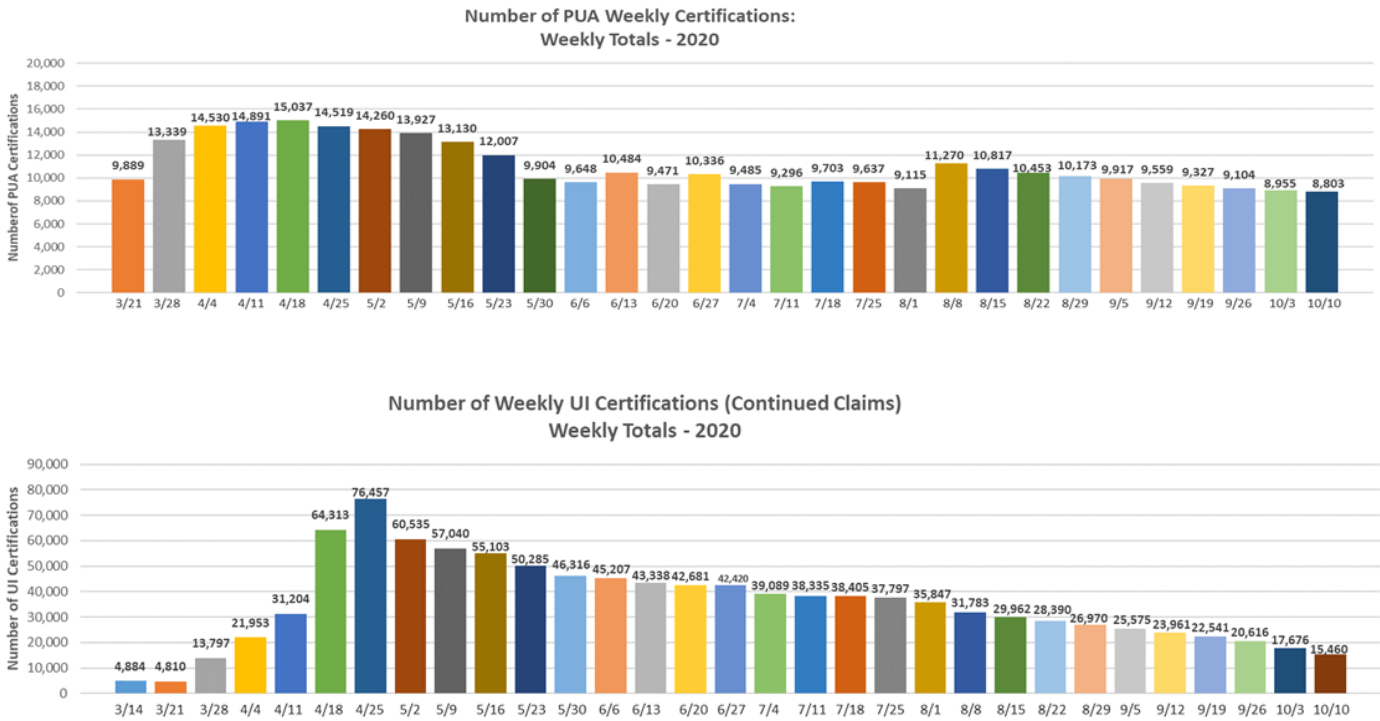
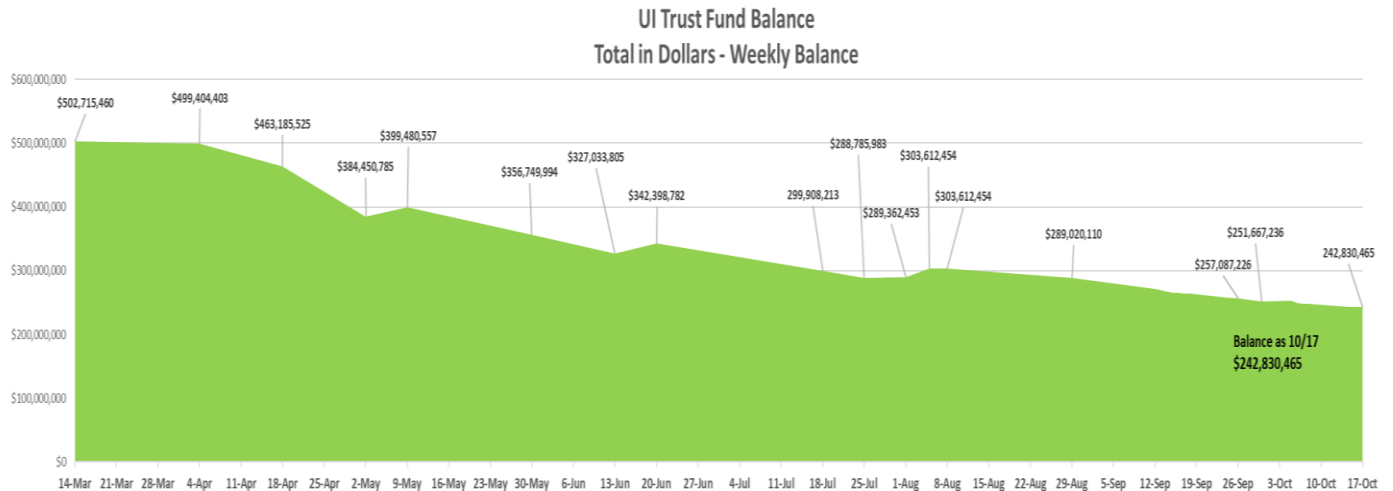


Figure 2.2



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