

To: Vermont Legislature
From: Michael Harrington, Labor Commissioner
Date: October 6, 2020
Subject: Unemployment Insurance Weekly Update

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

Lost Wage Assistance Program (LWA)

- Regular UI claimants have continued to submit their responses to the self-attestation question required under the LWA program. We will continue to issue payments regularly as claimants complete the attestation. Eligible claimants will receive \$300 for each week in which they are eligible. Claimants who do not have internet access but need to complete the attestation should contact the UI Call Center at 1-877-214-3332. More information about the LWA program can be found online at: <https://labor.vermont.gov/unemployment-insurance/lost-wage-assistance-program>
- Claimants are able to complete their LWA certification by contacting the UI Call Center but it is important to note that because this benefit is being administered outside of our UI systems, the Call Center is unable to provide status updates on payment eligibility and/or payment status. 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>
- Claimants who were able to complete their COVID certification through the online portal and were found eligible have had their LWA payment processed and mailed to them. We are working through the file of individuals who certified their LWA weeks through our Claimant Assistance Center, and expect to be issuing payments to eligible claimants by the end of this week, or early next week.

Unemployment Extended Benefits

- The Department has implemented the high Extended Benefits program which will provide an additional 20 weeks of benefits to eligible UI claimants, but only after regular UI and PEUC benefits are exhausted.
- The State of Vermont will officially trigger off of High Extended Benefits at the end of this week (benefit week ending October 10). Claimants impacted by this programmatic shift have been notified by the Department. Additionally, the Department will begin sending communication to claimants as they begin to exhaust their 13 weeks of state extended benefits program.

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.
- As we approach our “busy season” with regular seasonal layoffs, we are tailoring messaging specific to claimants who will likely need to reopen their claim (rather than reapply), which will mitigate the number of claim issues and hopefully expedite processing. The pre-COVID high unemployment season typically begins in November and runs through March each year. **Additionally, we are reviewing historical call center data to ensure the UI Call Center is adequately staffed to handle the expected uptick in claims being filed, reopened and general questions.**

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.

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)

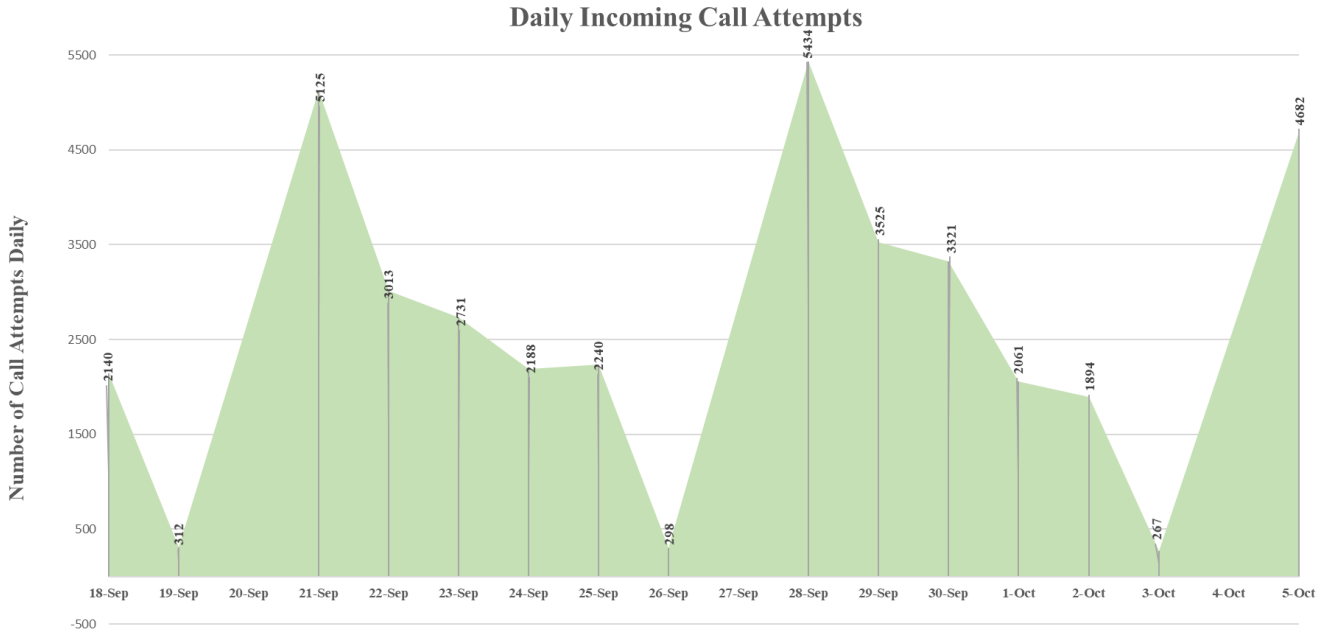
*Numbers as of Tuesday, October 6, 2020		
Total Initial Claimants Filed	121,453	Total Number of Initial Claimants.
Initial Claimants Eligible for UI	82,248	Number of claimants eligible for UI.
Initial Claimants Eligible for UI - Paid	75,010	Number of claimants who are receiving, or have received, UI benefits.
Initial Claimants Eligible for UI - Not Paid	7,238	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	\$252,393,573	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 6, 2020		
Claimants Potentially PUA Eligible	30,868	Total number of claimants that could complete the PUA application and are in the system
Claimants in PUA – Filed	23,476	# of claimants who have completed the PUA application
Claimants in PUA – Filed & Eligible	19,344	# of eligible claimants
Claimants in PUA – Filed & Ineligible	4,054	# of ineligible claimants
Claimants Eligible for PUA - Filed and Paid	18,458	# of eligible claimants receiving PUA benefit.
Claimants in PUA -Filed and Not Paid	886	# 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	\$202,949,689	Total amount of PUA benefits paid

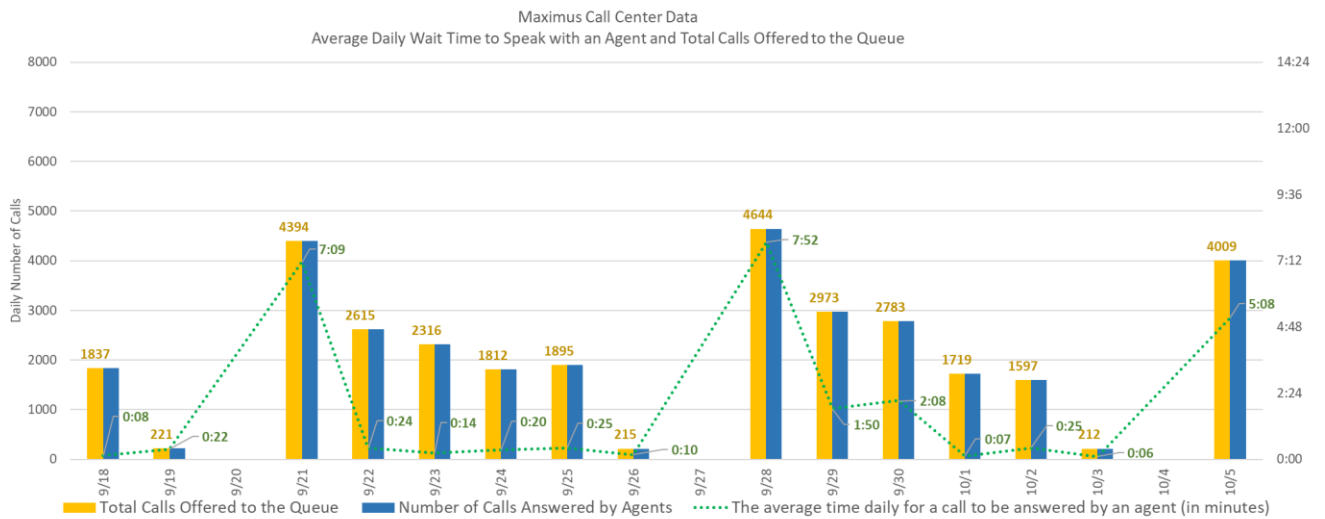
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Figure 1.1



*Counts include both answered and unanswered calls, multiple attempts from the same phone number and calls terminated by caller in the automated interactive voice response system

Figure 1.2



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Figure 2.1

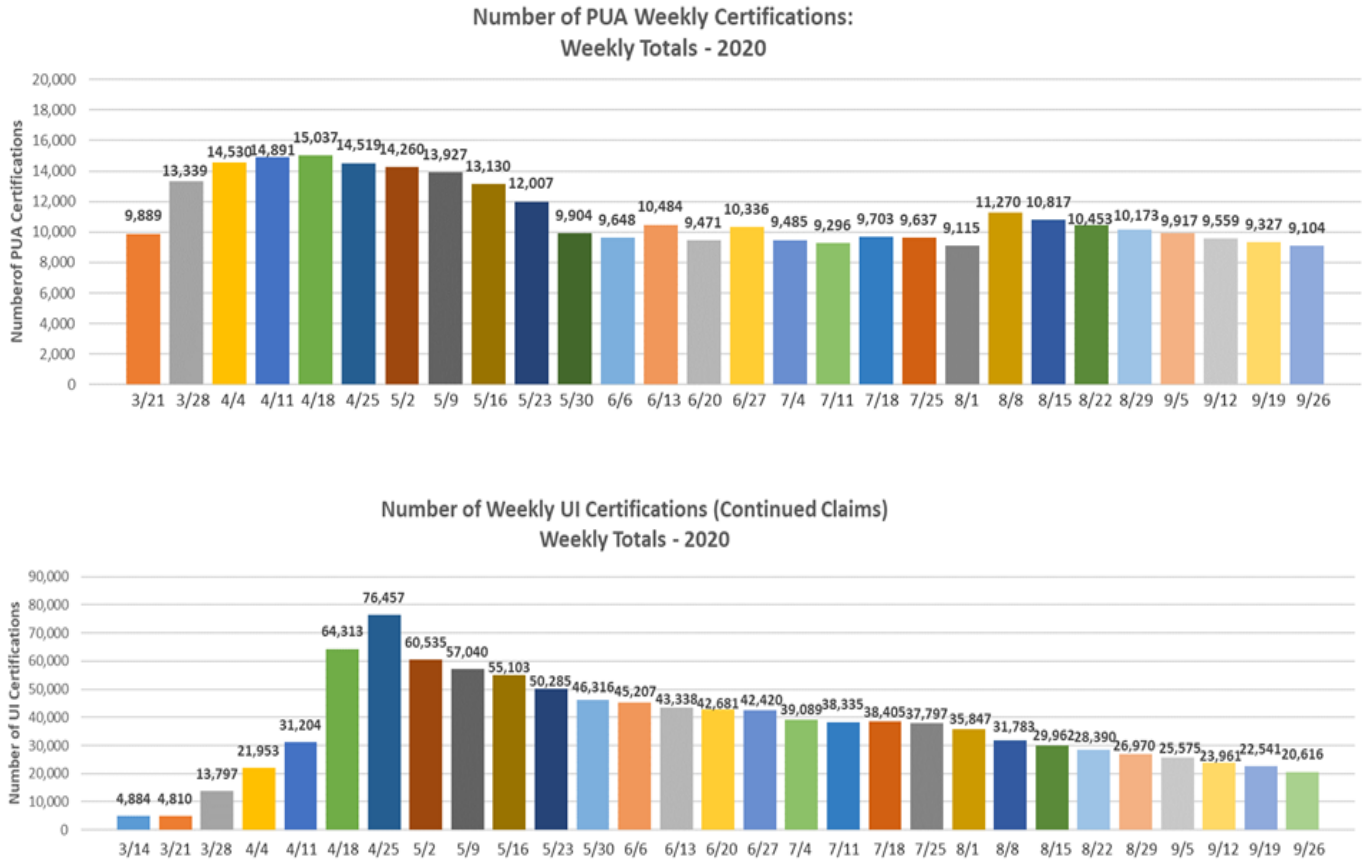
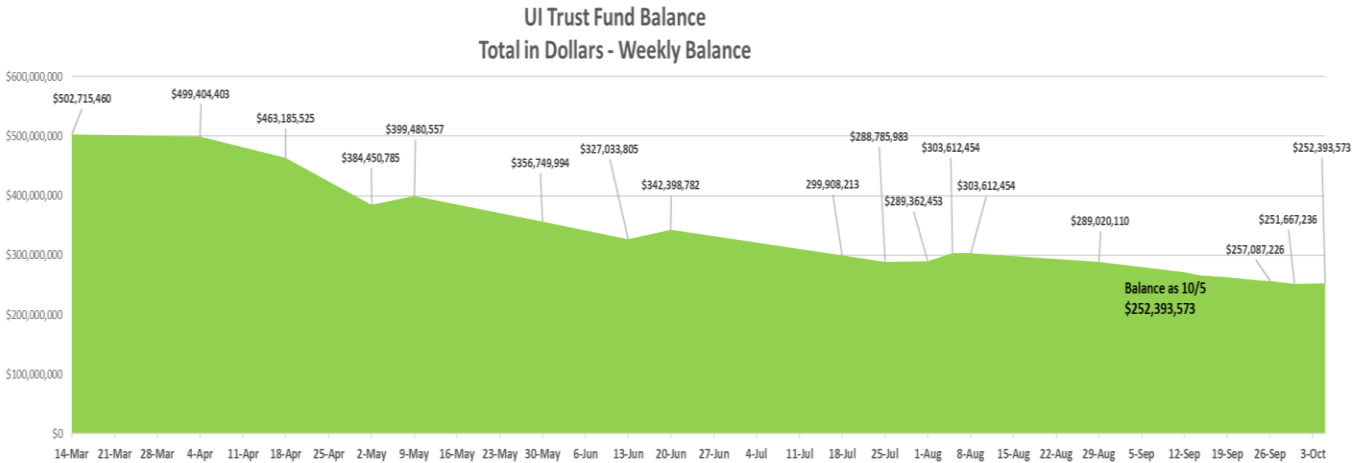


Figure 2.2



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