

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:** February 2, 2021  
**Subject:** Unemployment Insurance Weekly Update

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## GENERAL

- **1099 Misprint and Improper Data Release Incident:**
  - The Department was made aware on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, that some of the 1099G tax documents that had been mailed out to claimants did not match the claimant's information. In some cases, the name and mailing address did not match on the front of the envelop and in other cases, the name and social security number on the inside did not match the recipient's information. We also believe there may be instances where individuals may have received another claimant's name and social security number. The full press release can be found at <https://labor.vermont.gov/press-release/department-labor-provides-update-1099-g-tax-form-ongoing-issue>.
  - Claimants also received an email from the Department today, which can be found at <https://conta.cc/3oINa8O>.
  - Important 1099-G Incident Response Information:
    - If an individual receives a 1099 letter from the Department and the name and address on the front do not match, they should not open the 1099. The Department will mail them further instructions for returning the 1099.
    - If an individual receives a 1099 letter from the Department and the name and address on the front do match, but when they open the 1099, the information on the inside does not match their information, they should hold onto the 1099. The Department will mail them further instructions for returning the 1099.
    - If there is even the possibility that an individual's confidential information was improperly released, the Department will mail them instructions for protecting their identity and how to enroll in consumer protection services through the Department.
    - The Department will be issuing additional guidance to these populations later today/tomorrow along with next steps.
    - This issue does not impact an individual's claim or benefits. This issue is specific to the printing and mailing of 1099 tax documents.

- No incorrect tax information has been shared with the State or Federal tax departments, nor the IRS. The Department will ensure that correct 1099 tax information is sent to the tax departments and IRS for proper tax reporting.
  - All claimants will receive a new 1099G tax document from the Unemployment Insurance Division.
- 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/>.
- 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.

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- 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.
- 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](http://www.labor.vermont.gov/jobs).

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## 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. **February 2<sup>nd</sup> Jobs Newsletter can be found at <https://conta.cc/3am0pXP>.**

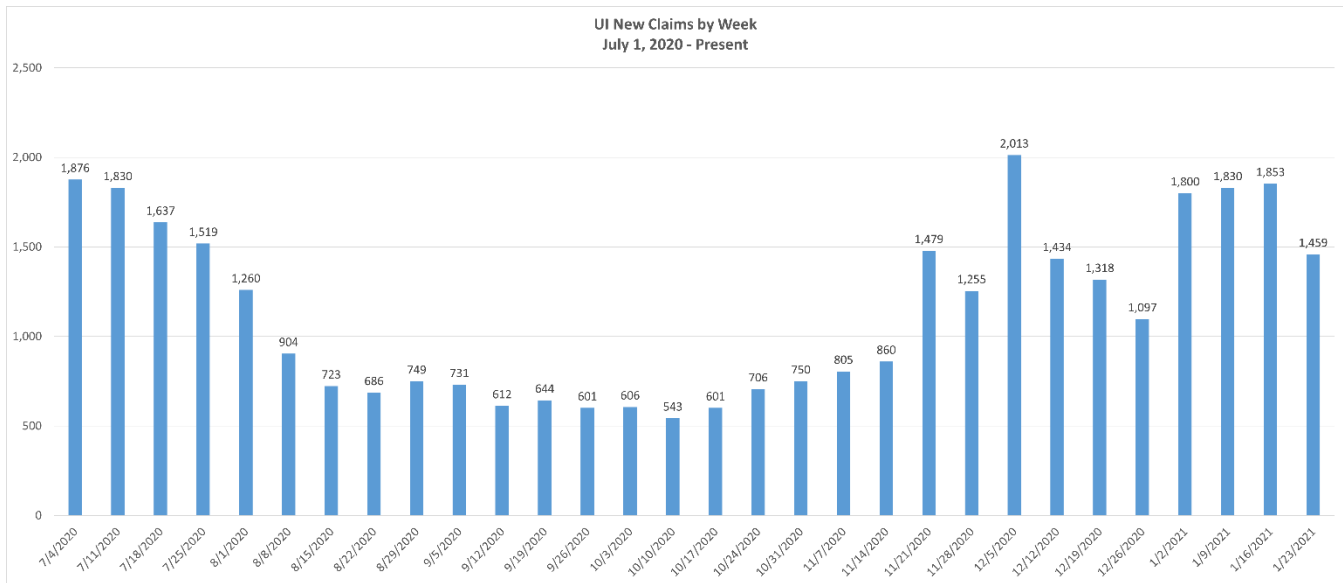


Figure 1

Continued Claims Filed							
Week Ending	12/12	12/19	12/26	1/2	1/9	1/16	1/23
<b>Regular UI</b>	11,909	11,913	10,088	12,194	12,506	13,257	<b>12,908</b>
<b>PEUC</b>	9,833	9,724	8,589	8,055	10,310	12,742	<b>12,409</b>
<b>EB</b>	977	1,116	909	473	98	94	<b>62</b>
<b>PUA</b>	8,675	8,577	8,390	3,338	8,429	8,610	<b>8,607</b>
<b>Total</b>	31,394	31,330	27,976	24,087	31,343	34,703	<b>33,986</b>

Figure 2

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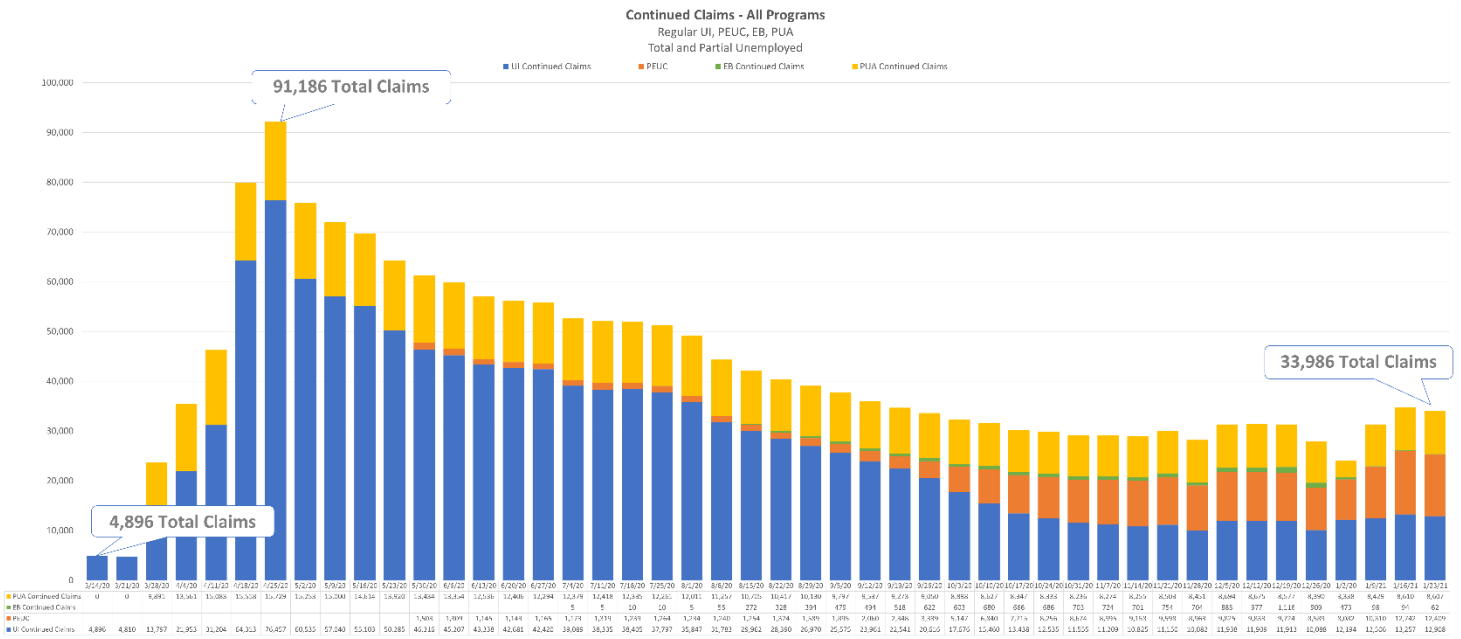


Figure 3

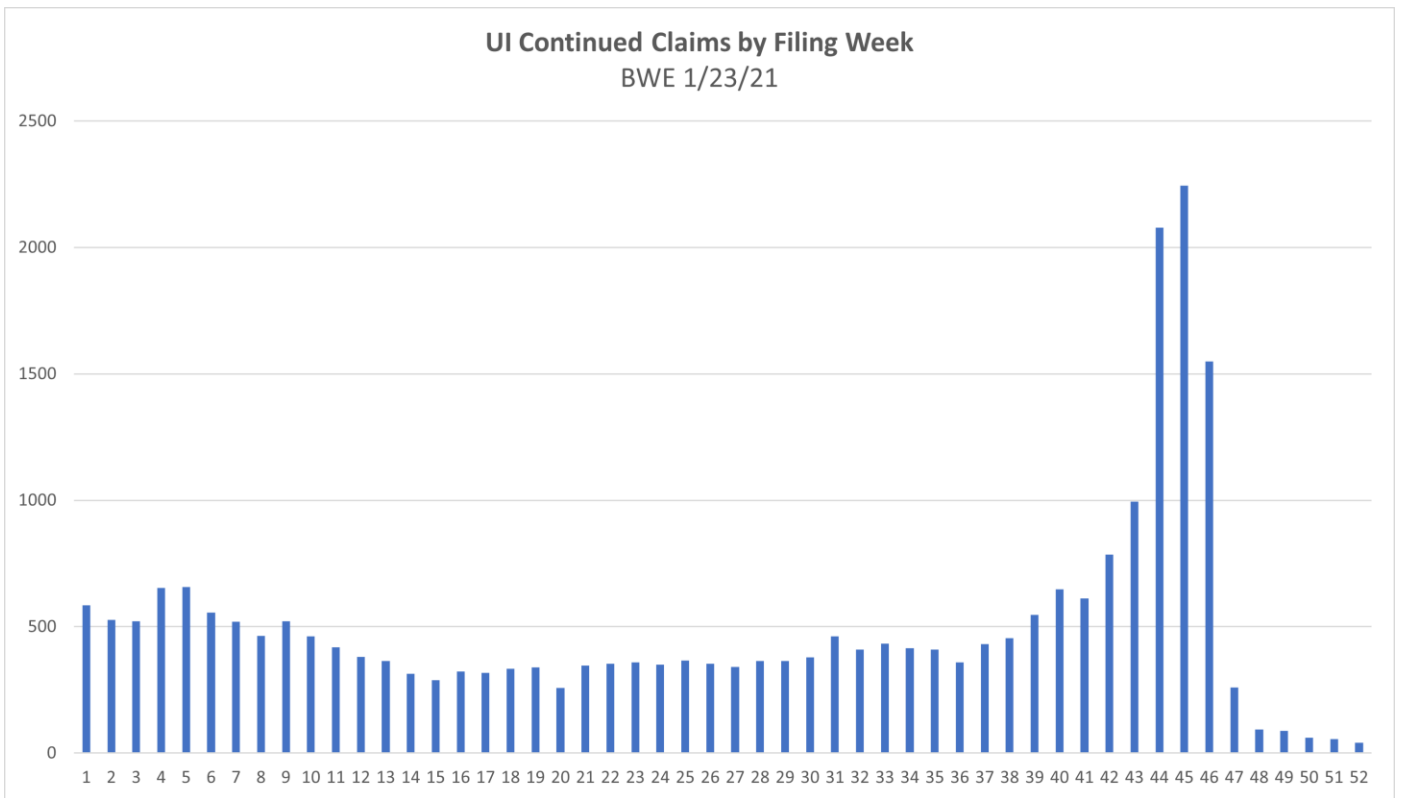


Figure 4

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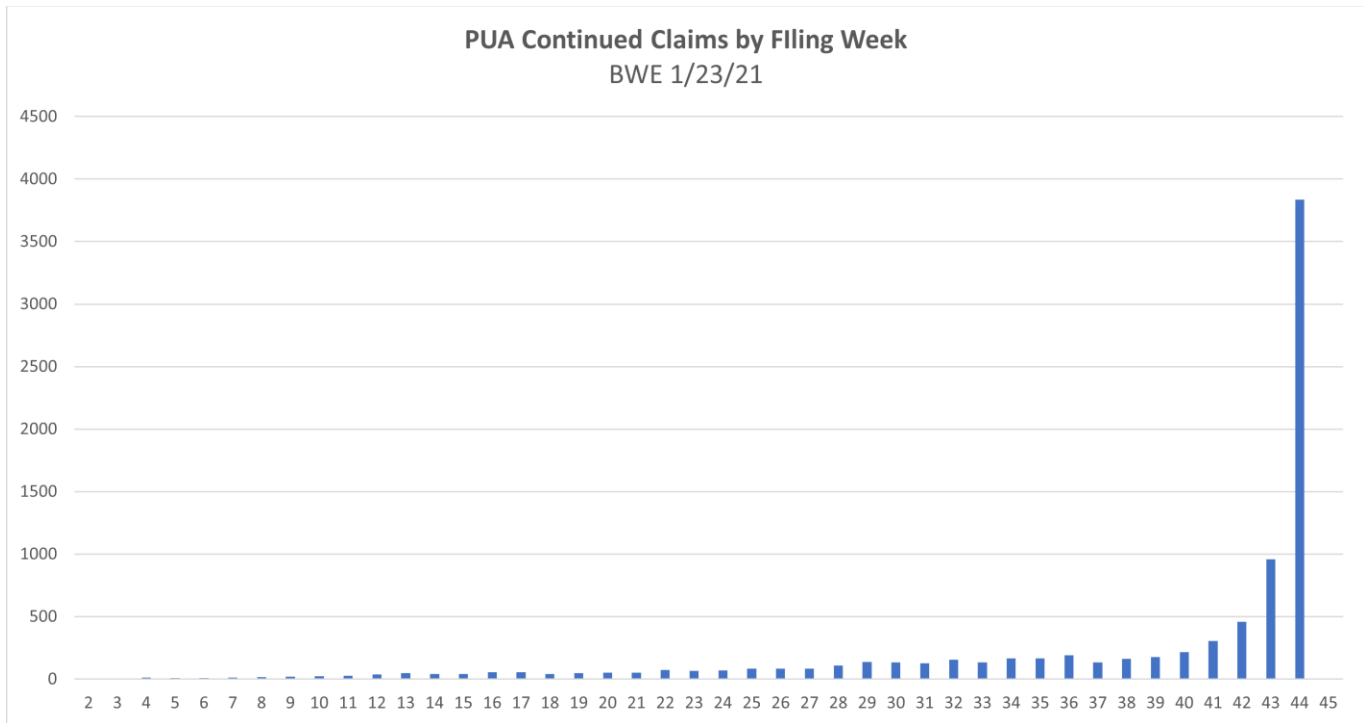


Figure 5

## 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 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
January 23	<b>23,195</b>	<b>\$7,827,257</b>	<b>7,736</b>	<b>\$4,762,209</b>	<b>\$12,589,466</b>	<b>\$233,645,327</b>

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

Figure 6

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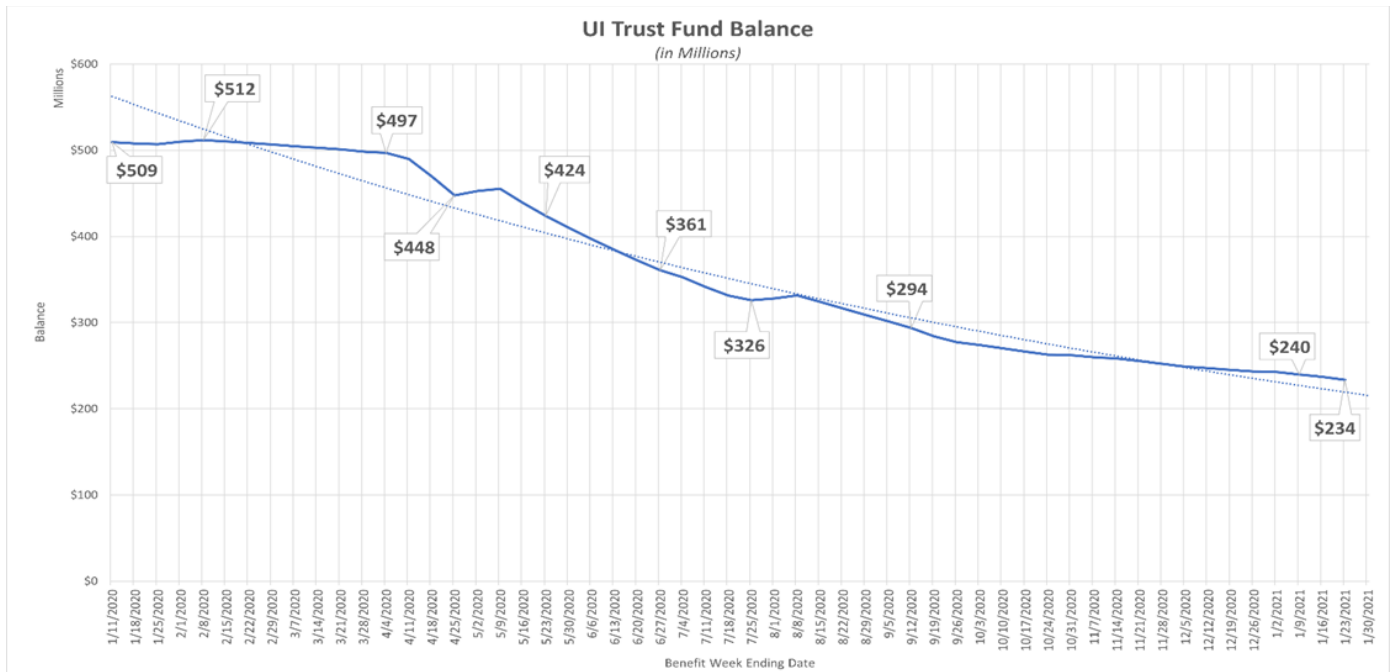
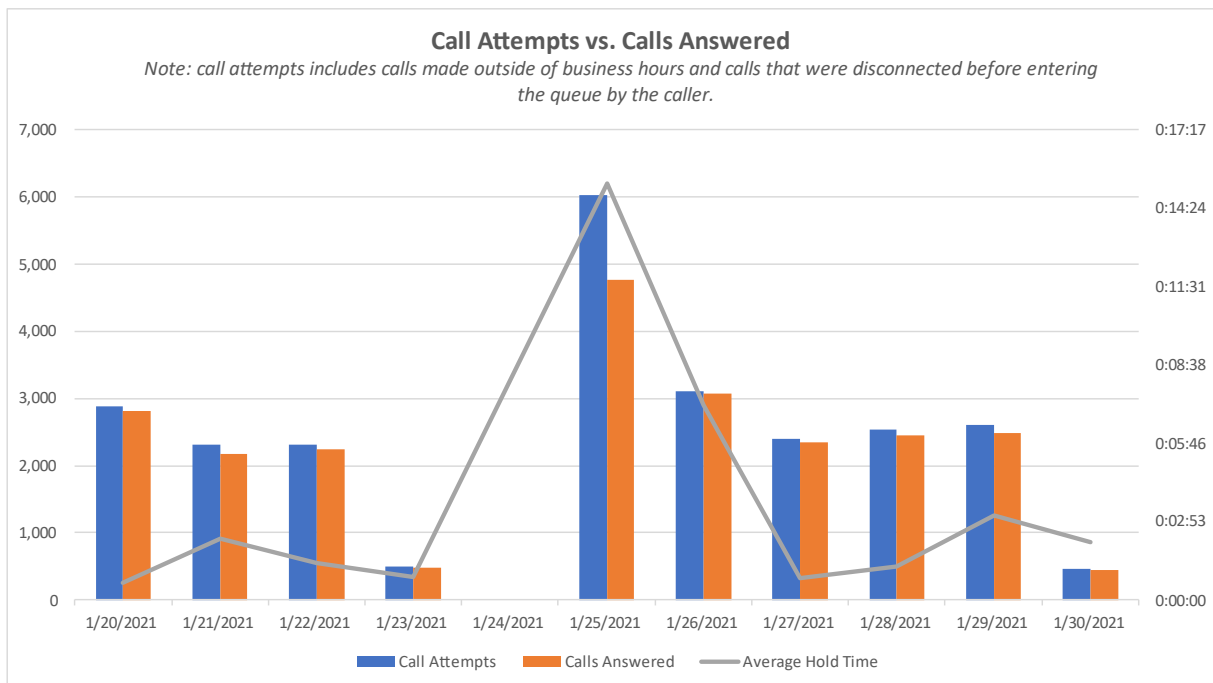


Figure 7

## CLAIMANT ASSISTANCE CENTER

Call Volume Summary			
Average Agents	Average Calls Per Day	Average Length of Call	Average Hold Time
128	2,513	12:01	4:47



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Figure 8

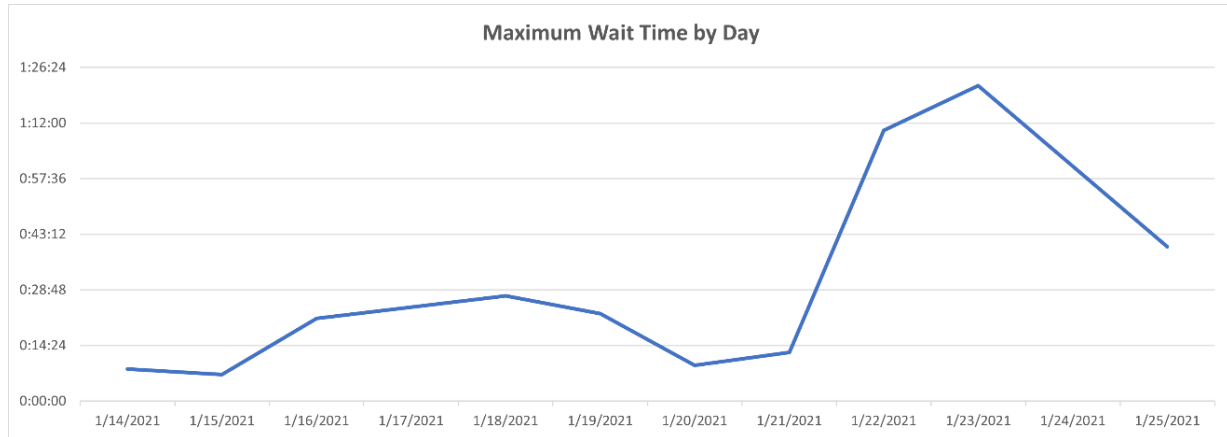


Figure 9

## 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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