

To: Vermont Legislature
From: Michael Harrington, Interim Labor Commissioner
Date: May 4, 2020
Subject: Unemployment Insurance Daily Update

This report includes both new and continuing efforts.

On-going Priorities:

- The Incident Command and Incident Response Teams meet throughout the week to set priorities and objectives for the week, and for each day.
- Continue to mass-resolve low-level code issues that created stop-payments (move more Vermonters through the system and get them paid) Code 06, 64, 66, 81 are being cleared daily for claimants that have a weekly benefit amount (WBA) > 0; much fewer issues are needing to be cleared daily.
- Continue to transition unique populations into the PUA system. These populations applied for regular UI, are likely ineligible, but are likely PUA eligible. These populations require specific protocols for integrity purposes before activating them in the PUA application.
- Continue to improve and clarify PUA application, process, and communication.
- Continue a steady pace of messaging. Update FAQs, emails, socials media, press releases, VTAlerts, etc.

Major Accomplishments

- SmartPayables contract was executed today allowing the first round of PUA checks to be mailed. Over 7,000 weekly claims were paid today.
- Legislative Action Team (LAT) – LAT Team Leaders (Rep. Stephanie Jerome and Rep. Scott Beck) and DOL staff have finalized the constituent management process. Trainings were conducted over the weekend and Monday for legislators that offered to help. 21 Representatives and 2 Senators are assisting DOL in this effort.

Other Accomplishments

- The team is working on additional requirements for a constituent management portal to assist with claimant issues. The target is this system running later this week.

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)

- Staff worked on making claimants PUA Eligible in Salesforces based on adjudication, a list of 160 claimants were worked today.
 - 151 were flipped in the PUA system today or they were already in PUA and receiving benefits. An additional seven will be uploaded overnight.
- Updated Part-Time work calculations were tested over the weekend and moved to production

- Reviewed online application, requested updates to language to MTX to improve user experience and understanding the questions on the application.
- VDOL Staff continue to work and clear adjudication issues on initial claims and any associated issues, so far, the staff assigned can keep up with the issues 36 hour resolve timeline.
- PUA support for staff and training on issues, VDOL is working on creating a training & onboarding plan for PUA (and general UI). These individuals will be PUA Program Super Users, and will assist both internal and vendor resources.
- MTX changed the status on approximately 430 initial claims to change the answer on the telework question. Most claimants have interpreted the question incorrectly, subsequently answering it wrong. An e-mail was sent to this population notifying them of the system change, which will change them from ineligible to eligible.
- Working with Dept. of Taxes on data exchange to use tax data to verify income. Dept. of Tax will be sending data points to VDOL and will work with Alex Ibey on the file transfer process to and from PUA.

Communications

- Chatbot functionality is implemented with Maximus, this would provide chatbot functionality for the call center that can also be used by VDOL on the department website. This feature will eventually lead to real-time chat functionality and call-back.
- E-mails sent for telework status change
- FAQs were updated and will be posted to the website tonight
- Released information regarding Return [to Work requirements](#).

Call Center Functions:

- GMP Call Center was able to handle 87% of the incoming calls today. Additionally, at times, they have seen space in their queues and hold times are under 5 minutes.
- Maximus Call Center is reallocating resources after last week and this weekend. Originally, their CSRs (Customer Service Representatives) were split between General Assistance and PUA; however, over the past few days, the number of calls coming into the PUA lines has been low. They have begun to transition available staff to the general assistance line to manage the high call volume. Training continues to help build a strong knowledge base so that CSRs can resolve a variety of claim issues.

Data

- ADS met with VDOL UI SME to help define groups of claimants for ease of reviewing the data and determining how to move certain populations, so they are being served properly. Three populations were identified today and will be reviewed by UI
- VDOL working on call center metrics so that all call centers are reporting universal data
- Of the 8300 claimants that received the \$1,200.00 checks
 - 1036 are not currently receiving benefits
 - 264 have not yet filed a weekly certification

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Additional Information

- [Click here for PUA general information](#)
- [Click here for PUA FAQs](#)
- [Click here for PUA application video demonstration](#)

Regular Unemployment Insurance Additional Information

- [Click here for unemployment general information](#)
- [Click here for frequently asked questions](#)

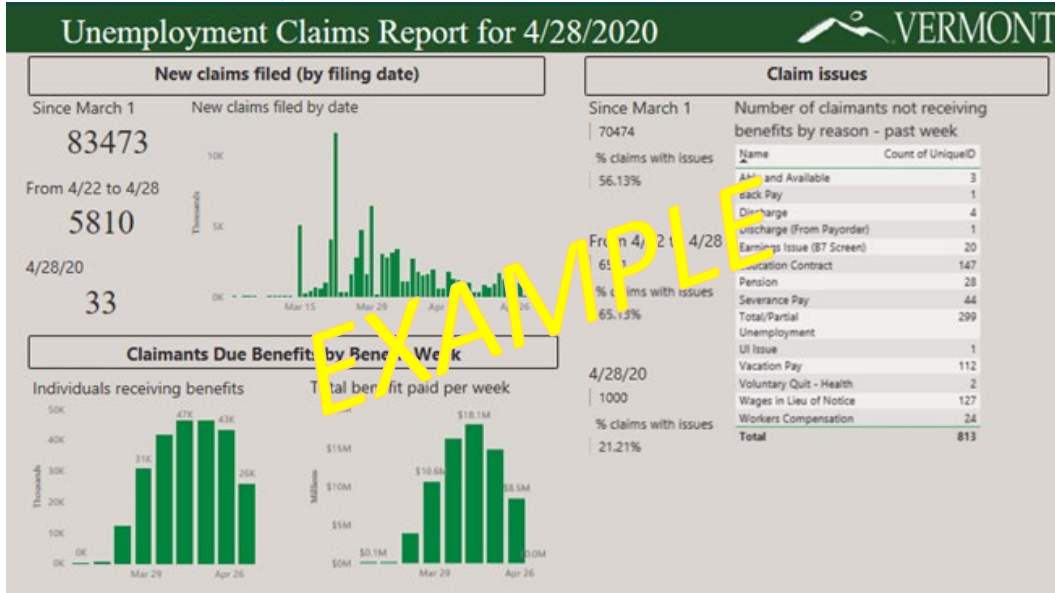
Claims Data for May 1, 2020

Initial Claims	84,796	Total number of initial claims since 3/1/2020.
Initial Claims with no Eligibility Determination	10,344	Initial claims without eligibility determination for UI or PUA. A subset of this population does not, and will not, qualify for UI or PUA.
Unemployment Insurance		
Initial Claimants Eligible for UI	58,598	Number of claimants eligible for UI
Initial Claimants Eligible for UI - Paid	50,705	Number of claimants who are receiving UI benefits
Initial Claimants Eligible for UI - Not Paid	7,893	Number of claimants who meet basic eligibility thresholds but have significant issues that require review and resolution prior to payment. This also includes individuals who have since returned to work and are no longer filing.
UI Trust Fund Balance	\$382,468,593	As of 5/1/2020 (Note: Balance as of 3/1/2020 \$506,157,247)
Pandemic Unemployment Assistance		
Initial Claimants Eligible for PUA	15,854	Total number of claimants that could complete the PUA application and are in the system
Initial Claimants Eligible for PUA - Filed	10,504	# of eligible claimants who have completed PUA application
Initial Claimants Eligible for PUA - Paid	8,310	Number of eligible claimants receiving PUA benefit.
Initial Claimants Eligible for PUA - Not Paid	2,194	Number 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	\$26,719,999	Total amount of benefits paid

APPENDIX

Claim Dashboard: The data team continues to work on the Power BI Claims Dashboard, providing metrics for the department to analyze and track UI Claims.

(Data below is an example and not accurate)



Call-center Dashboard: The data team continues to work on the Power BI Call-center Dashboard, for the department to track and analyze call-center data and trends.

(Data below is an example and not accurate)

