Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claims for the Three-State Region

For the week ending September 5, workers filed 45,507 initial UI claims (NSA) in our three-state region — fewer than the prior week’s 46,808 (revised), and far below the historic peak of 599,446 (revised) for the week ending March 28.

However, workers also filed 51,880 initial Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) claims for the week ending September 5 in our three states (Pennsylvania accounted for 45,951 of these PUA claims; see note on the next page). The PUA program provides benefits for workers who are not eligible for regular UI benefits.

Initial UI claims plus initial PUA claims were 97,387 for the week ending September 5, 2020. Prior to the pandemic, the 52-week average of initial UI claims was about 24,000 for the week ending March 14.

Compared with the prior week, initial UI claims across our three states:
- fell to 1,468 from 1,577 (revised) in Delaware;
- rose to 21,991 from 20,348 (revised) in New Jersey; and
- fell to 22,048 from 24,883 (revised) in Pennsylvania.

For the week ending August 29, continued UI claims in our three-state region rose to 1,006,228 (NSA) — from the prior week’s 1,004,469 (revised).

Compared with the prior week, continued UI claims across our three states:
- rose to 33,578 from 31,974 (revised) in Delaware;
- fell to 386,937 from 410,830 (revised) in New Jersey; and
- rose to 585,713 from 561,665 (revised) in Pennsylvania.

For the week ending August 22, workers in the three-state region also filed continued claims in these special programs:
- 1,220,189 PUA claims (Pennsylvania accounted for 817,299 of these PUA claims; see note), and
- 101,238 Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) claims. The PEUC program provides additional weeks of benefits for workers whose regular benefits have expired.

Total continued UI claims for the week ending August 22 fell to 2.3 million compared with a 52-week average of about 200,000 for the week ending March 14.
Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claims for the U.S.

For the week ending September 5, workers filed 857,148 initial UI claims (NSA) — more than the prior week’s 837,008 (revised). Workers also filed 838,916 initial PUA claims for the week ending September 5 — for a total of 1,696,064 initial claims. The 52-week average of initial UI claims was about 215,000 for the week ending March 14. Initial UI claims set a historic peak of 6,211,399 (revised) for the week ending April 4.

Continued UI claims for the week ending August 29 rose to 13,197,059 (NSA) from the prior week’s 13,142,587 (revised). The 52-week average of continued UI claims was just 1.7 million for the week ending March 14. However, for the week ending August 22, a total of 29.6 million continued claims were filed from all programs, including:

- 14.6 million PUA claims, and
- 1.4 million PEUC claims.

Continued UI claims typically fall slowly from recession peaks. During the Great Recession, continued UI claims peaked at 6.5 million and about five years passed before continued UI claims returned to pre-recession levels.

Note:
PUA claims data for any given week may include backdated claims from prior weeks.

Source:
Initial and continued (UI) claims are gathered by individual states and are typically released on Thursday mornings at 8:30 a.m. by the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor.

https://www.dol.gov/ui/data.pdf

Useful Resource:
Rinz, Kevin. “Understanding Unemployment Insurance Claims and Other Labor Market Data During the COVID-19 Pandemic”
https://kevinrinz.github.io/covid19_labordata.pdf
ASA Weekly Staffing Index

The ASA Weekly Staffing Index rose to 77.2 for the week ending August 30. The index has risen steadily since hitting a low of 59.6 for the week ending April 26. The index continued to track above the record low levels that spanned much of the latter half of 2009.

The year-over-year change in this index was -18.1 for the week ending August 30. The year-over-year change has slowly narrowed since late June (at -26.6), after rebounding more quickly from a low of about -36.5 in late April through early May. The year-over-year change in this index was -8.0 points for the week ending March 15.

Note: This index is highly seasonal (see below). To aid visual comparisons, the upper chart depicts 52 weeks for key years.

Sources:
The ASA Staffing Index tracks weekly changes in temporary and contract employment and is typically released on Tuesday mornings. The index is generated from a survey of U.S. staffing firms by the American Staffing Association.

americanstaffing.net/staffing-index
americanstaffing.net/index