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

For the week ending August 15, workers filed 51,432 initial UI claims (NSA) in our three-state region — more than the prior week’s 42,691 (revised), but far below the historic peak of 599,446 (revised) for the week ending March 28.

However, workers also filed 60,044 initial Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) claims for the week ending August 15 in our three states (Pennsylvania accounted for 41,264 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 111,476 for the week ending August 15, 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:
- rose to 1,809 from 1,760 (revised) in Delaware;
- rose to 24,646 from 13,837 (revised) in New Jersey; and
- fell to 24,977 from 27,094 (revised) in Pennsylvania.

For the week ending August 8, continued UI claims in our three-state region fell to 1,054,636 (NSA) — from the prior week’s 1,135,638 (revised).

Compared with the prior week, continued UI claims across our three states:
- rose to 38,846 from 36,026 (revised) in Delaware;
- fell to 419,173 from 426,519 (revised) in New Jersey; and
- fell to 596,617 from 673,093 (revised) in Pennsylvania.

For the week ending August 1, workers in the three-state region also filed continued claims in these special programs:
- 1,366,778 PUA claims (Pennsylvania accounted for 961,675 of these PUA claims; see note), and
- 92,931 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 1 remained at 2.6 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 August 15, workers filed 891,510 initial UI claims (NSA) — more than the prior week’s 838,734 (revised). Workers also filed 542,797 initial PUA claims for the week ending August 15 — for a total of 1,434,307 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 8 fell to 14,265,344 (NSA) from the prior week’s 15,201,342 (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 1, a total of 28.1 million continued claims were filed from all programs, including:

- 11.2 million PUA claims, and
- 1.3 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 edged up to 74.6 for the week ending August 9. The index has risen in 14 of the past 15 weeks. 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 -22.0 for the week ending August 9. 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.

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