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NJ Sees Uptick in Initial Unemployment Claims, Awaits Rules to Implement Federal Relief Extension

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 31, 2020

TRENTON – The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development saw an expected post-holiday increase in unemployment claims driven by seasonal workers, and it received word from the US Department of Labor (USDOL) that there would be no lapse in COVID-related federal benefits available through a new stimulus bill signed the day after pandemic programs expired, affecting an estimated 500,000 New Jerseyans.

Initial weekly unemployment claims totaled 20,460* for the week ending Dec. 26 -- an increase of 2,849 claims over the prior week -- with the total number of initial claims for benefits now approaching 1.9 million since mid-March. Nearly \$20.5 billion in benefits have been distributed to workers in need. Of those currently claiming benefits, most have received more than \$10,000 in benefits, and roughly a third have received more than \$20,000.

Enactment of the Continued Assistance to Unemployed Workers Act of 2020 on Sunday means residents collecting Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) or Pandemic Extended Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) are eligible to continue receiving benefits for 11 additional weeks, through March 13, and should continue to certify for benefits weekly according to the schedule. The supplemental benefit known as Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) was also renewed for 11 weeks, through March 13, but at a rate of \$300/week; the original program expired in July.

“Though there are still a lot of details needed from the USDOL to begin the work of implementing these new programs, we were thrilled to hear there would be no gap in benefits for residents currently receiving federal assistance,” Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo said. “We see from the sheer volume of new unemployment claims that this pandemic continues to affect significant numbers of workers, many who are unemployed for the first time in their lives.”

The Department also reported on Thursday that the minimum wage in New Jersey is set to increase to \$12/hour on Jan. 1, part of a multi-year legislative phase-in to a \$15 minimum wage for most workers.

Click the images below to view them full-size.

Here are the week-by-week totals of new unemployment claims:



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NJ adds jobs in July; 7th consecutive months of gains. [nj.gov/labor/lwdhome/...](https://nj.gov/labor/lwdhome/)

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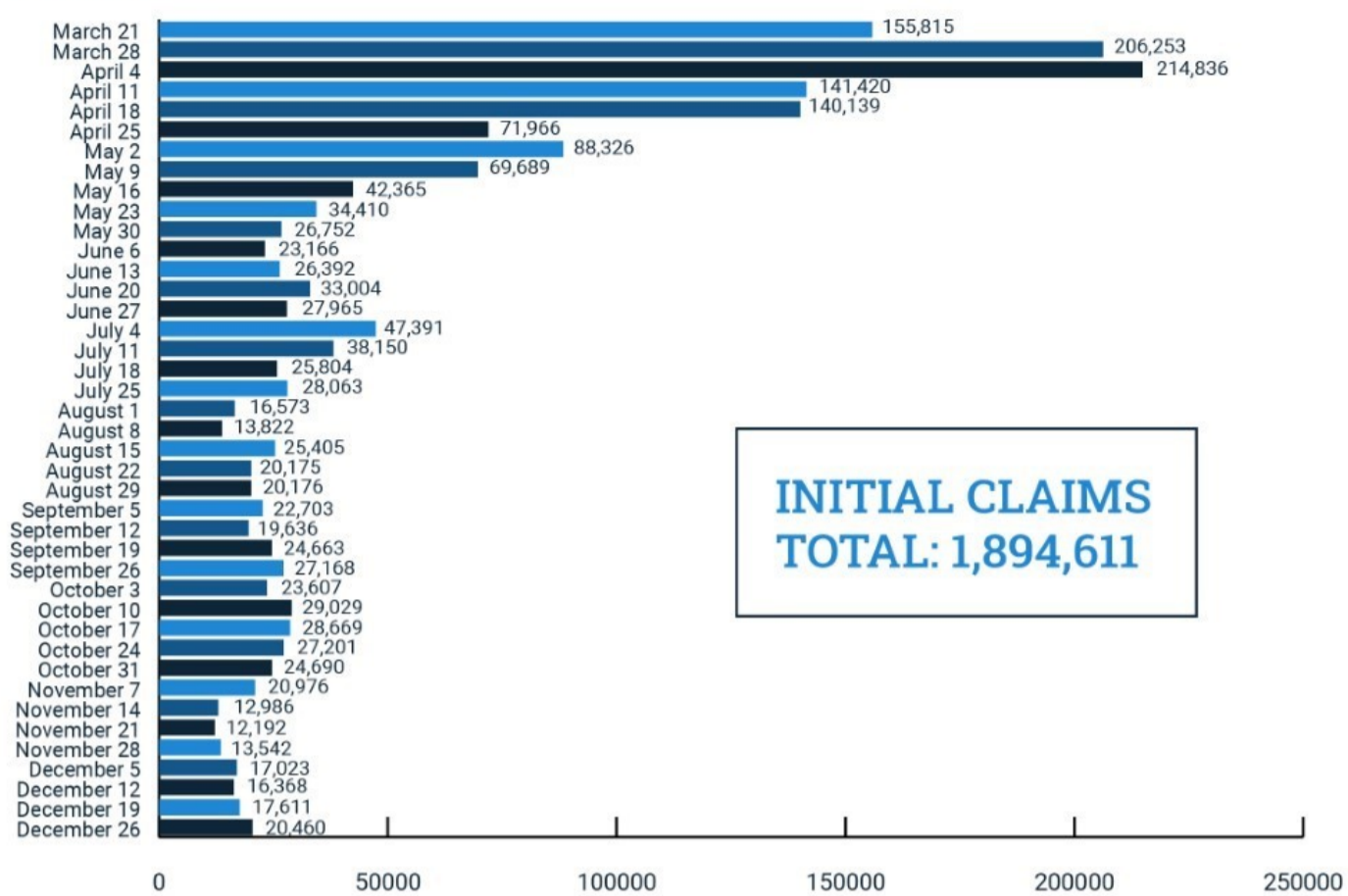
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As of the latest reporting, more than \$33 billion in unemployment benefits have been sent to Garden State workers. With federal benefits set to expire on September 4, we encourage everyone to check your email and visit MyUnemployment.nj.gov for updates and available resources.



Weekly totals of new unemployment claims

WEEK ENDING:



Here is the breakdown of weekly benefits payments to eligible New Jersey workers:

Weekly breakdown of payments (in millions)

Week Ending	New Jersey Unemployment Insurance (UI)	Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)	Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)	Pandemic Extended Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)	Extended Unemployment Benefits (EB)	Lost Wages Assistance (LWA)
March 21	\$47.4	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
March 28	\$57.9	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
April 4	\$89.8	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
April 11	\$140.7	\$154.8	NA	NA	NA	NA
April 18	\$179.7	\$238.8	NA	NA	NA	NA
April 25	\$211.1	\$296.3	NA	NA	NA	NA
May 2	\$171.7	\$291.1	\$27.1	NA	NA	NA
May 9	\$244.7	\$502.4	\$51.6	NA	NA	NA
May 16	\$239.7	\$414	\$55.6	NA	NA	NA
May 23	\$236.2	\$596.9	\$112.3	NA	NA	NA
May 30	\$242.7	\$553.5	\$87.7	NA	NA	NA
June 6	\$255.5	\$635.2	\$56.6	\$56.6	NA	NA
June 13	\$244.5	\$573.8	\$60.7	\$46.5	NA	NA
June 20	\$248.9	\$626.1	\$86.6	\$37.4	NA	NA
June 27	\$240.4	\$559.7	\$73.5	\$31.7	NA	NA
July 4	\$202.9	\$536.1	\$71.7	\$31.8	NA	NA
July 11	\$208.5	\$521.3	\$69.1	\$24.4	\$2.2	NA
July 18	\$209.3	\$524.5	\$65.2	\$22.7	\$3.9	NA
July 25	\$197.7	\$526.2	\$77	\$25.7	\$4.8	NA
August 1	\$192.1	\$513.5	\$74.7	\$33.7	\$6.5	NA
August 8	\$202.6	\$200.8	\$86.1	\$20	\$6.2	NA
August 15	\$175	\$95.3	\$77.8	\$23.7	\$7.1	NA
August 22	\$167.3	\$70.3	\$52.1	\$20.4	\$6.7	NA
August 29	\$171.1	\$64.4	\$79.7	\$20.9	\$7.2	NA
September 5	\$129.3	\$56.4	\$84.4	\$20.7	\$8	NA
September 12	\$152.9	\$39.7	\$87.6	\$21.2	\$8.7	NA
September 19	\$137	\$31.4	\$85.3	\$22.6	\$9.6	NA
September 26	\$127.2	\$35.5	\$89.5	\$25.5	\$10.1	NA
October 3	\$111.9	\$23.2	\$82.7	\$33.8	\$10.4	NA
October 10	\$102.8	\$29	\$89	\$45.4	\$11.3	NA
October 17	\$88.5	\$20.5	\$84.5	\$50.8	\$11.8	NA
October 24	\$81.7	\$18.2	\$85.3	\$56.2	\$12.5	\$1,146.5
October 31	\$76.3	\$16.8	\$85.3	\$58.3	\$12.8	\$88.9
November 7	\$72.5	\$13.2	\$83.2	\$59.7	\$12.8	NA
November 14	\$68.2	\$12.9	\$85.1	\$61.9	\$13.6	\$56.2
November 21	\$65.6	\$12.4	\$85.6	\$62.4	\$14.7	\$33.3
November 28	\$63.1	\$9	\$83.9	\$62.1	\$13.5	\$1.3
December 5	\$61.1	\$16.2	\$80.5	\$59.1	\$12.8	NA
December 12	\$66.1	\$12.2	\$91.6	\$66.9	\$16.7	NA
December 19	\$61.3	\$11.3	\$86.3	\$62.3	\$16	\$19.4
December 26	\$52.4	\$8.2	\$78.5	\$50.3	\$15.7	NA
TOTAL BENEFITS PAID	\$6,075.3	\$8,860.9	\$2,713.4	\$1,214.7	\$255.6	\$1,345.6

NA: Benefit not applicable during the indicated weeks.

PUA and PEUC were authorized by Congress under the CARES Act through Dec. 26, then extended under the Continued Assistance to Unemployed Workers Act through March 13, 2021. The maximum eligibility for PUA is now 57 weeks. PEUC now provides up to 24 weeks of additional benefits to those who exhaust 26 weeks of state unemployment. Extended benefits (EB) adds a final 20 weeks of benefits. The renewed FPUC benefit is a \$300/week unemployment supplement for anyone collecting unemployment in any amount. Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) was funded by FEMA and provided six weeks of supplemental benefits to people unemployed Aug. 1 through Sept. 5 due to COVID.

For more information on state or federal unemployment programs, visit myunemployment.nj.gov.

Visit New Jersey's jobs portal here: jobs.covid19.nj.gov.

For national unemployment data, visit <https://www.dol.gov/ui/data.pdf>. For archived NJ claims data, visit <https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/DataDashboard.asp>.

**This represents the final number for the week ending Dec. 26. The number listed for New Jersey by the US Department of Labor – 18,452– is based on advanced reporting.*

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