SC Department of Employment and Workforce

NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact:
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For Immediate Release
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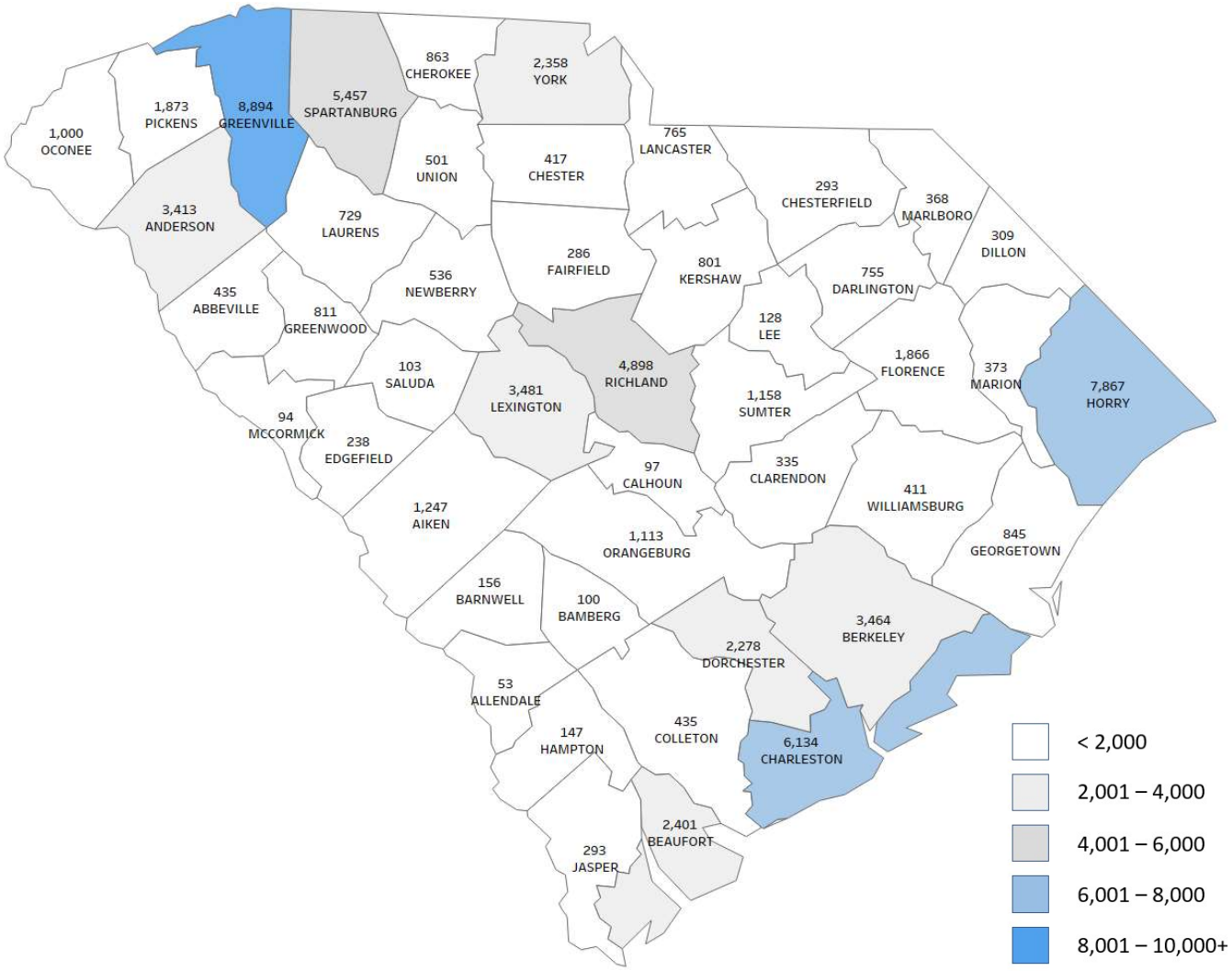
South Carolina Initial Unemployment Insurance Claims Data
Week Ending April 18, 2020

Initial Claims: In the week ending April 18, 2020, the advance figures for South Carolina initial claims* are 73,116, a decrease of 14,570 initial claims from the week prior. This is the first decrease recorded in initial claims since the COVID-19 pandemic began in March of this year. This means that there were 73,116 individuals who both live and work in the state of South Carolina who filed an initial claim during the claim week, April 12, 2020 - April 18, 2020. This is the data you will see reflected in the county information below.

County Map (Intrastate)



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"Our agency is heartened to see the first decrease in initial claims after so many weeks. We hope that this will begin to set a downward trend as individuals who have already filed continue to receive their benefits through this crisis and other claimants receive their funds through some of the additional federal programs we are still implementing," said Jamie Suber, S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce Chief of Staff. "We know that, as a state, we still have much to accomplish before we begin to feel a sense of normalcy, but our agency is actively responding to the needs of individuals and businesses as we work through this together."

Agency Responsiveness Actions:

- The agency has paid more than $351 million in a combination of state UI benefits and the CARES Act $600 contribution.
- Over the last five weeks, these payments were made in support of the 341,730 initial claims received.
- Additional programs are being implemented in the system to begin paying federal funds through Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation.
- The agency's call center has been increased by 856 percent. CSRs are working 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday, to help with claims questions. Additionally, staff continue to work extended hours each weekday and through weekends making outbound calls to service the needs of fellow South Carolinians.
- If you are self-employed, a contractor, gig workers, file a 1099 and have already filed for unemployment insurance – you will receive a notification via email or through text messaging (if you opted for SMS texts) with next steps. If you are determined eligible, your funds will be paid retroactively.
- A **Chatbot** feature has been added to the website to help answer unemployment and COVID-related questions. This enhancement is robust with information about the UI process, federal funds provided through the CARES Act, employer filing and more.
- You can also visit the COVID-19 Resource Hub, dew.sc.gov website or our social media platforms for updated information.

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About the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce

The S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce is putting South Carolinians to work. The agency has four missions: (1) workforce development; (2) free job match employment services; (3) unemployment insurance; and (4) labor market information. All four missions contribute to workforce development. The agency is dedicated to advancing South Carolina through services and programs that meet the needs of our businesses, jobseekers and those looking to advance their careers.

**An initial claim is a claim filed by an unemployed individual after a separation from an employer. The claimant requests a determination of basic eligibility for the UI program. When an initial claim is filed with a state, certain programmatic activities take place and these result in activity counts including the count of initial claims. The count of U.S. initial claims for unemployment insurance is a leading economic indicator because it is an indication of emerging labor market conditions in the country. However, these are weekly administrative data which are difficult to seasonally adjust, making the series subject to some volatility.*