



NEWS RELEASE

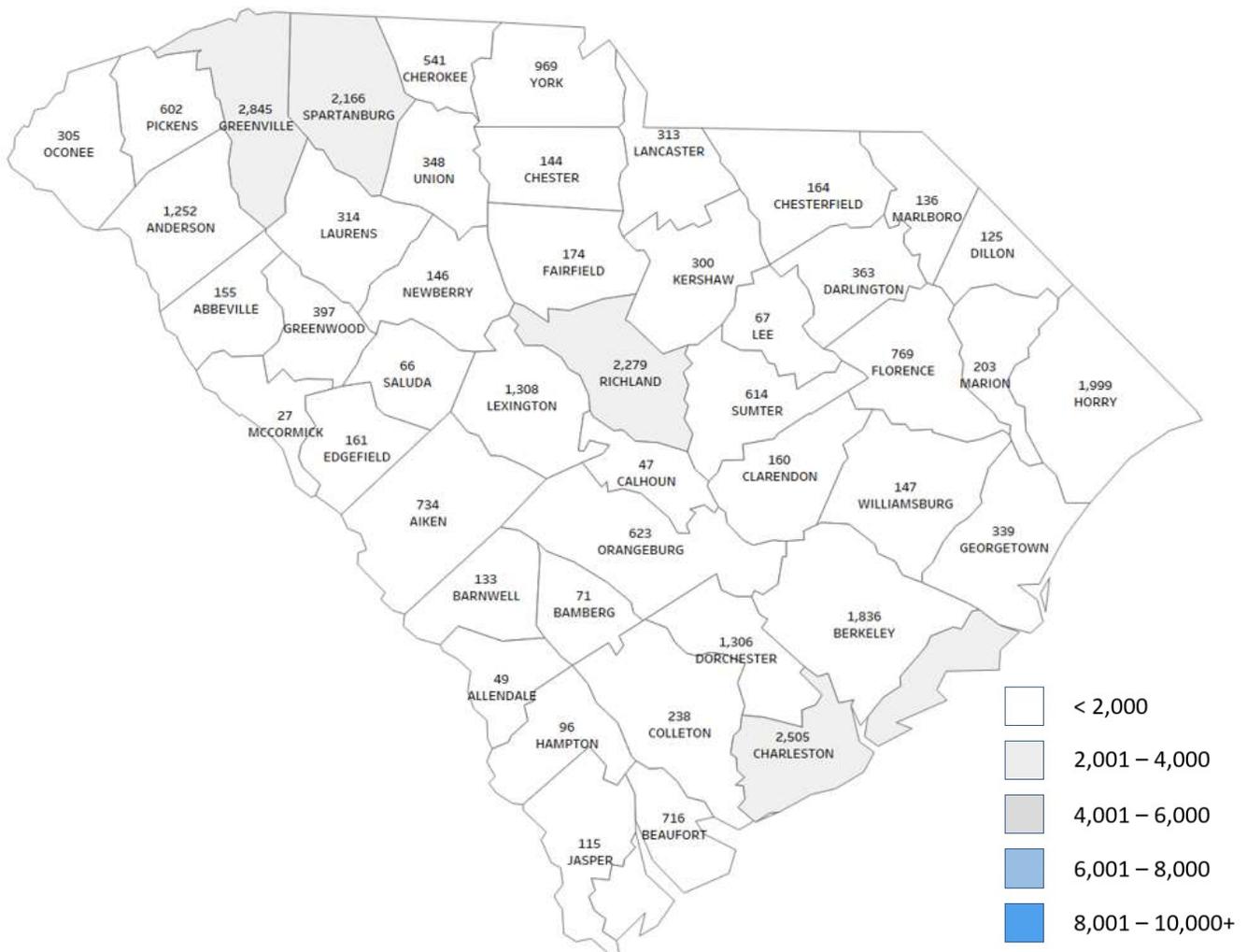
Media Contact:
Heather Bianca

For Immediate Release
8:35 a.m. May 21, 2020

South Carolina Initial Unemployment Insurance Claims Data Week Ending May 16, 2020

Initial Claims: For claim week ending May 16, 2020, the number of South Carolinians who filed their initial claim for unemployment insurance benefits is 29,446, a *decrease* of 3,067 initial claims from the week prior. This means that there were 29,446 individuals, who both live and work in the state of South Carolina, filed an initial claim during the claim week, May 10, 2020 – May 16, 2020.

County Map (Intrastate)





SC Department of Employment and Workforce

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“Throughout the duration of this crisis, our priority is processing claims and backdating payments appropriately. We want to reassure all claimants that if and when they are found eligible, critical payments will be paid to them. Since the pandemic began in March of this year, we have received 515,595 initial claims for unemployment and paid out more than \$1.35 billion dollars. Additionally, we are close to launching our third and final federal program, Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation, which will be available to South Carolinians who exhaust their 20 weeks of unemployment insurance benefits and are still unemployed,” said Dan Ellzey, Executive Director, S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce.

“We are prepared to help both employers and claimants navigate the unemployment system during and as they transition back to work. These are trying times and it will take an all hands-on-deck approach from every single resident to reboot our state’s economy.”

Agency Responsiveness:

- From March 15, 2020 to May 19, 2020, the agency has paid more than \$1.35 billion in a combination of state UI benefits, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (for the self-employed and others) and the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (\$600 per week) program.
- Our call center staff is consistently answering more than 80,000 phone calls each week. We will continue to operate this week on an 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. schedule Monday – Friday. Saturday’s hours will be 8 a.m. – Noon. The number to call is 1-866-831-1724.
- The **Chatbot** feature on the dew.sc.gov website continues to improve thanks to your input. If you have FAQ type questions about the UI process, federal funds provided through the CARES Act, employer filing, etc., we ask you to try the Chatbot before calling to avoid the wait.

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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.*
