



NEWS RELEASE

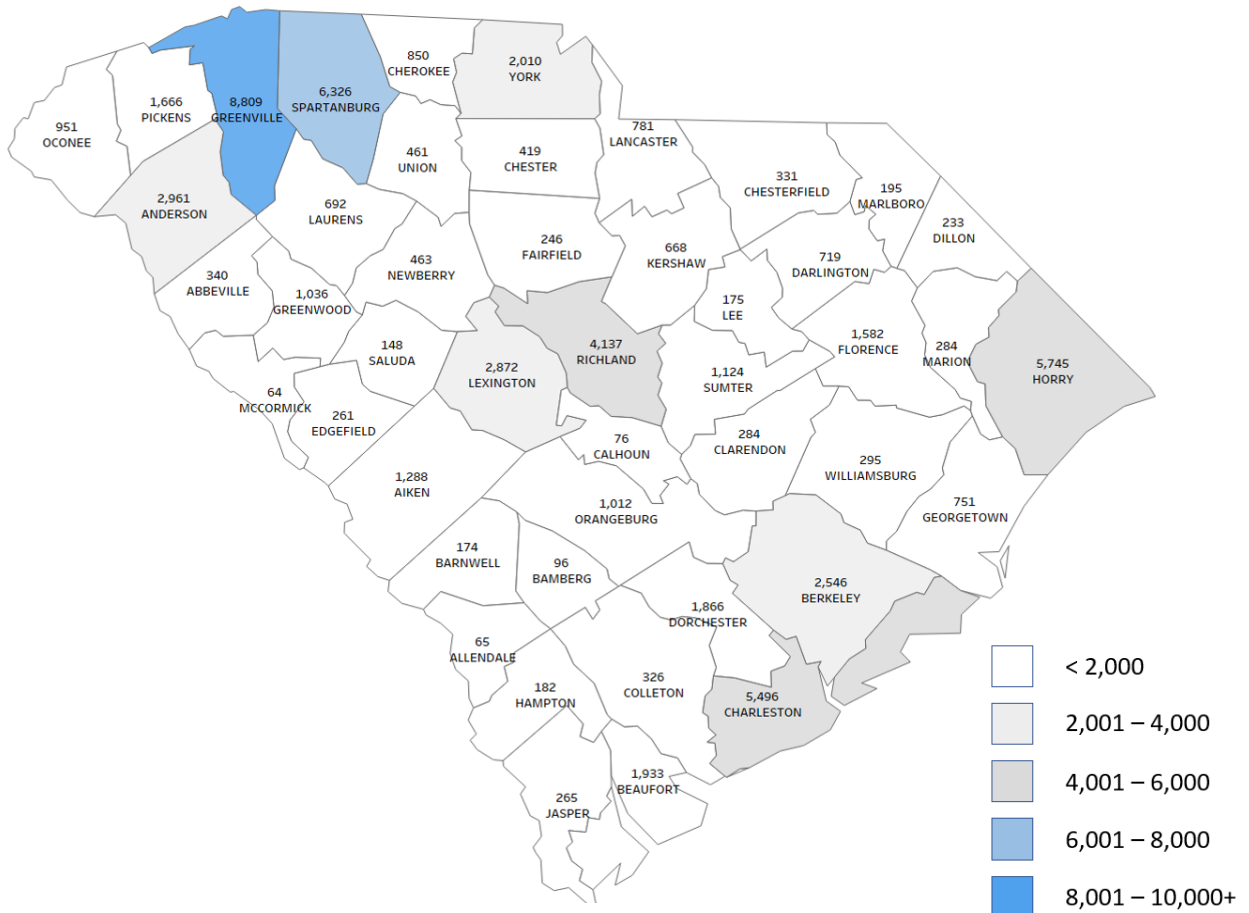
Media Contact:
Heather Bianca

For Immediate Release
8:35 a.m. April 30, 2020

South Carolina Initial Unemployment Insurance Claims Data Week Ending April 25, 2020

Initial Claims: In the week ending April 25, 2020, the advance figures for South Carolina initial claims* are 65,159, a decrease of 7,957 initial claims from the week prior. This is the second week of a reported decrease in initial claims since the COVID-19 pandemic began in March of this year. This means that there were 65,159 individuals who both live and work in the state of South Carolina who filed an initial claim during the claim week, April 19, 2020 - April 25, 2020. This is the data you will see reflected in the county information below.

County Map (Intrastate)





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“For the second week in a row, we have had a significant decline in the number of individuals filing initial claims for unemployment. From a high of 87,686 two weeks ago, the 65,134 new claims this week this week reflect a drop of 22,552 claims. While this apparent trend is good news, the fact remains that we have a record number of unemployed people. We want everyone to know that we are doing everything we can to simplify the system and help people successfully navigate the claims process.

“Earlier this week, we announced extended hours for our call center. Additionally, we have increased the number of people answering phones from 49 to over 450. We are also working with the call center provider to make the system more efficient and productive. In regard to the benefits portal itself, our vendor has been revising the wording of questions in an attempt to eliminate issues. In the past six weeks, over 400,000 people have filed initial claims. While we think we are making progress in the handling of claims, we want everyone to know that we are doing everything in our power to assist people in obtaining benefits and are preparing to help people find jobs when the economy turns around,” said Dan Ellzey, S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce Executive Director.

Agency Responsiveness Actions:

- Since March 15, 2020, the agency has paid more than \$585 million 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.
- Agency leadership has participated in more than 75 town halls, presentations, webinars, phone or video news interview, and Q&A sessions to help explain the UI process and answer questions from individuals and employers. A few of these are available on the SC DEW YouTube page.
- New, extended call center hours are 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday and 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. on Saturday so people can connect with one of our team members at **1-866-831-1724**. Please understand, you may be transferred to another team member depending on the complexity of your issue.
- The **Chatbot** feature on the dew.sc.gov website has been a success and will continue to grow and become more intuitive. 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.*
