



NEWS RELEASE

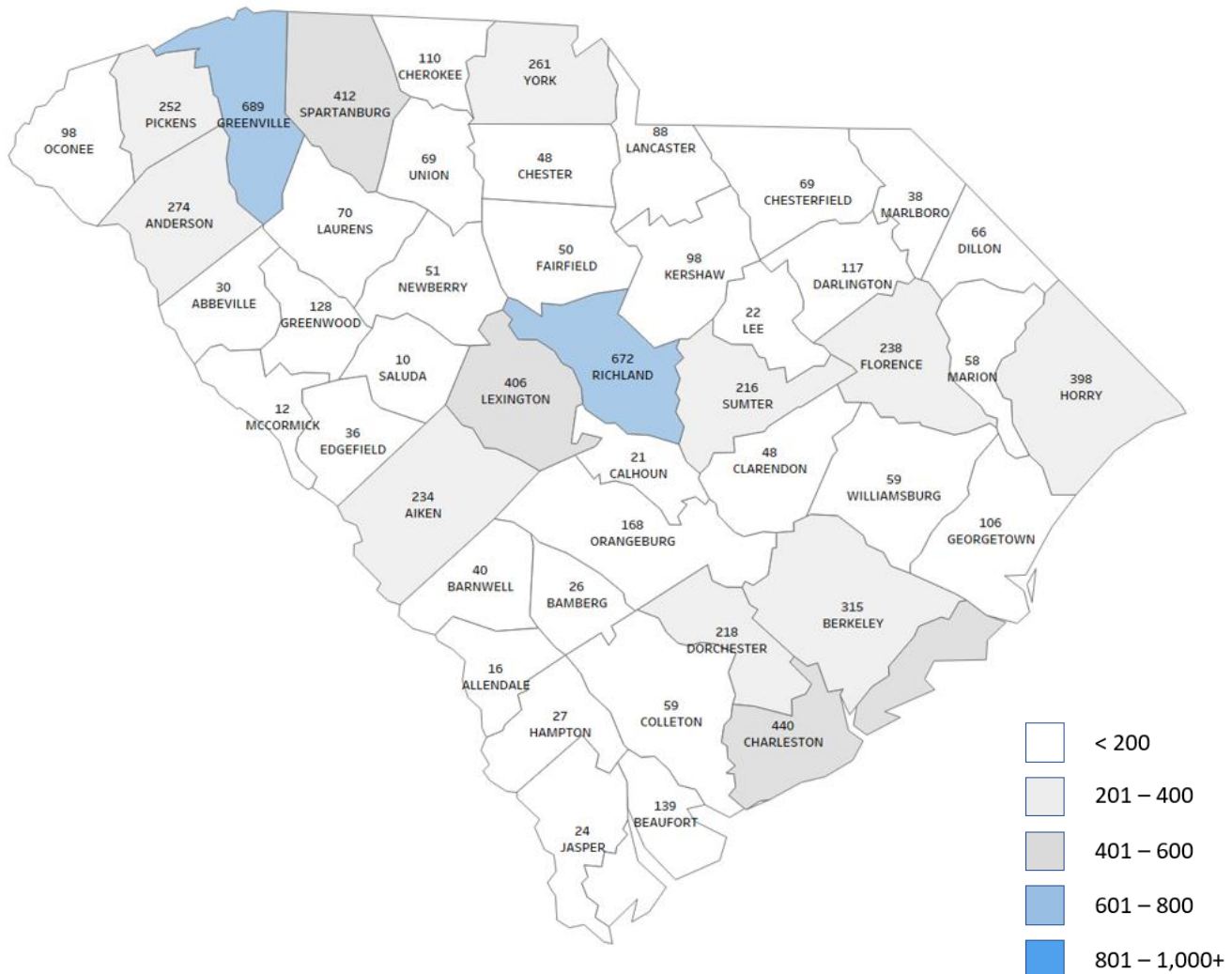
Media Contact:
Heather Biance

For Immediate Release
8:35 a.m. August 20, 2020

South Carolina Initial Unemployment Insurance Claims Data Week Ending August 15, 2020

Initial Claims: For claim week ending August 15, 2020, the number of South Carolinians who filed their initial claim for unemployment insurance benefits is 7,255, an **increase** of 1,334 initial claims from the week prior. This brings the initial claims total to 719,704 received since mid-March.

County Map (Intrastate)





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“Although this week’s initial claims data exhibited an uptick, fluctuation of claims data is common. Our teams have reviewed the available information and there is no significant singular event that can account for the increase. As we continue an overall downward trend in the numbers, it might present a more accurate picture to begin to look at initial claims data month-over-month rather than slight changes in week-over-week numbers. For instance, the four-week period from claim week ending June 27 to claim week ending July 18 saw 67,248 initial claims; however the most recent four-week period from claim week ending July 25 to claim week ending August 15 saw 34,279 initial claims – nearly half of the number for the prior month’s time,” states executive director Dan Ellzey.

“Our agency is continuing to look for additional ways we can provide resources and assistance to claimants through the claims process. Our dedicated call center staff are working extended hours on Monday and Tuesday to help on the highest call volume days and we have launched a brand new claim status tracker within the MyBenefits portal that allows claimants to see their status in real time. Claimants can find this claim tracker by logging into their portal and selecting the *Claim Status* tab at the top of their screen. This is just one additional way we are continuously looking for ways to improve our processes to help those looking to us for answers,” concludes Ellzey.



Agency Responsiveness:

- From March 15, 2020 to August 18, 2020, the agency has paid more than \$3.81 Billion in a combination of South Carolina UI benefits, **Pandemic Unemployment Assistance** (for the self-employed and others), the **Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation** (\$600 per week) program, the **Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation** (extension of benefits for 13 weeks) program and **Extended Benefits** (Additional 16 weeks of benefits after PEUC).

Call center hours (1-866-831-1724)

****EXTENDED HOURS** MONDAY AND TUESDAY 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.**

Wednesday - Friday 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Saturday 8 a.m. - NOON

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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.*