



# NEWS RELEASE

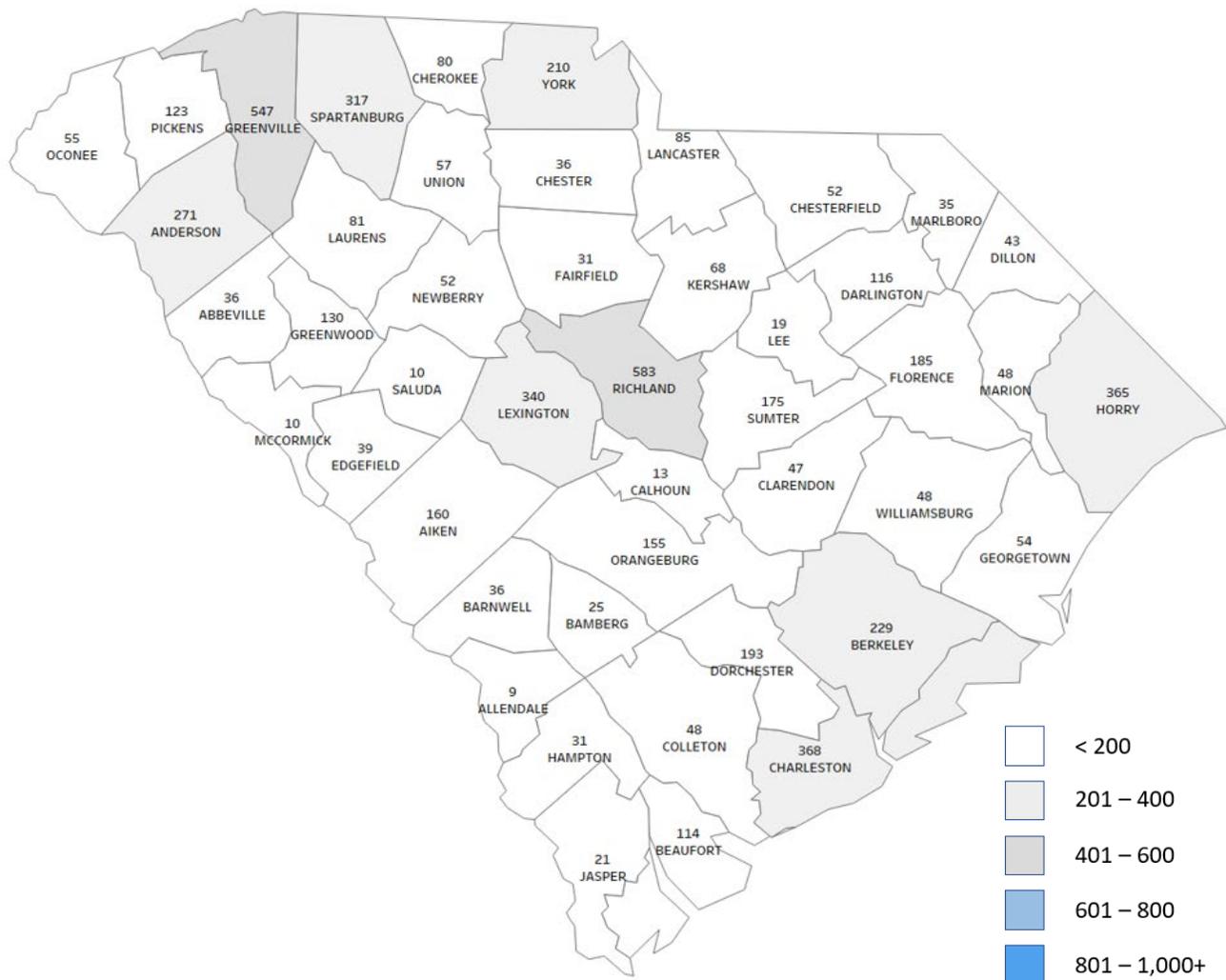
**Media Contact:**  
Heather Bianche

**For Immediate Release**  
8:35 a.m. August 13, 2020

## South Carolina Initial Unemployment Insurance Claims Data Week Ending August 8, 2020

**Initial Claims:** For claim week ending August 8, 2020, the number of South Carolinians who filed their initial claim for unemployment insurance benefits is 5,921, a **decrease** of 2,988 initial claims from the week prior. This brings the initial claims total to 712,449 received since mid-March.

### County Map (Intrastate)





SC Department of Employment and Workforce

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“A new milestone has been reached as initial claims numbers come in under 6,000 new filers this week. However, to keep things in context, this is still three times higher than the weekly totals we were experiencing in the weeks prior to the COVID-19 pandemic fully affecting South Carolina,” states executive director Dan Ellzey.

“We know that South Carolinians are anxiously waiting for details about this weekend’s memorandum signed by President Trump that would provide additional benefits for eligible claimants. While we do not yet have guidance from the Department of Labor on how to implement this program, we do know several things. First, there will be additional funds added to an eligible claimant’s weekly benefit amount. Second, the payments will be made retroactive to claim week ending August 1, 2020. For that reason, it is critical for claimants to continue certifying each week that they are unemployed to ensure any back pay owed to them is processed without delay,” continued Ellzey.

“Due to the expected guidance requiring coding changes to our system, we do want claimants to understand that it will likely take several weeks before any additional retroactive benefits will be paid out. Until then, claimants will receive their weekly benefit amount for each week they’re found eligible for. We are also asking claimants to only call our call center staff for specific claims related questions. At this time, our staff do not have any more information than what we are providing here. Assisting with this request will help maintain manageable call wait times for other claimants who need claims specific assistance over the phone,” continued Ellzey.

“In the meantime, our agency is continuing to add resources and customer service opportunities to help individuals and employers. In response to the high call volume on Mondays and Tuesday, DEW has extended the hours of the call center on those days from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. We have also added more Spanish-speaking agents to the call center to help individuals who may have language barriers, and we will continue to look for opportunities to work through this crisis,” concluded Ellzey.

### **Agency Responsiveness:**

- From March 15, 2020 to August 11, 2020, the agency has paid more than \$3.75 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)**

**\*\*NEW 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.*

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*\*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.*

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