



For Immediate Release

Media Contact: communications@iwd.iowa.gov

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Iowa Workforce Development reports initial unemployment insurance claims filed for week of February 14 - 20, 2021

DES MOINES - The number of initial unemployment claims in Iowa, filed between Sunday, Feb. 14, and Saturday, Feb. 20, was 5,457, a decrease of 531 from last week's adjusted numbers. There were 4,932 initial claims by individuals who work and live in Iowa, and 525 claims by individuals who work in Iowa and live in another state. The number of continuing weekly unemployment claims was 49,597, an increase of 2,634 from the previous week. November through February are typically the months IWD sees the most unemployment claims, driven by increased claims in construction, agriculture, landscaping and manufacturing due to seasonal layoffs. For the week ending Feb. 20, 2021, nearly 64.5% of claimants indicated their claims were not COVID-19 related, which is a decrease from 68.8% the previous week.

The U.S. Department of Labor adjusted last week's initial claim number to 5,988 (a decrease of 332) and continuing claims to 46,963 (a decrease of 651 for a total decrease of 983 overall). Iowa Workforce Development relies upon the weekly data released by the U.S. Department of Labor to report its numbers and as such, adopts the revisions to the previously published data.

The new Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) extended benefit programs have been implemented and payments are being issued. IWD will automatically enroll all Iowans who are in current reporting status. If you were unemployed or working reduced hours as of December 27, 2020, or after and you have not been filing a weekly continued claim, you will need to reactivate your claim. You may do so online at <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/file-claim-unemployment-insurance-benefits>. If you are unable to file a claim online, you may contact Iowa Workforce Development Customer Service at 1-866-239-0843 and a representative will assist you. We appreciate your patience as we worked to implement the new programs created under the second stimulus bill.

Beginning March 8, 2021, IowaWORKS centers and satellite offices will be providing limited in-person services to assist customers with work search activities and basic employment assistance. Services will include assistance with job searches, applications, resume preparation,

and other services to help Iowans with their employment needs. Individuals should telephone their local office first to schedule an appointment as walk-in services may be limited in order to follow social distancing recommendations. Workshops and classes will not be offered at this time. Customers with questions regarding unemployment insurance benefits should continue to contact the IWD call center at 1-866-239-0843 or email uicclaimshelp@iwd.iowa.gov to obtain information about their claims.

For the week ending Feb. 20, 2021, unemployment insurance benefit payments totaled \$16,612,317.55. The following industries had the most

- Construction (1,125)
- Manufacturing (1,120)
- Industry Not Available - Self-employed, Independent Contractors, etc (747)
- Retail Trade (343)
- Health Care & Social Assistance (298)

A total of \$31,129,500 in FPUC benefits was paid, which include retroactive payments and reauthorized payments that went into effect on Dec. 27, 2020. Since April 4, 2020, a total of \$1,737,837,133 in FPUC benefits has been paid.

A total of \$4,653,555 was paid in PUA benefits. Since April 13, 2020, a total of \$206,835,605.54 in PUA benefits has been paid.

A total of \$14,589,166.63 in benefits has been paid in PEUC benefits this week. Since May 27, 2020, a total of \$223,730,209.37 in PEUC benefits have been paid. The increase in PEUC and FPUC benefits paid this week reflects the number of Iowans who have been paid under the second PEUC program created by Congress in the second stimulus act, that was implemented on February 16, 2021.

Claimants receiving unemployment are required to perform weekly work searches. Those who will be required to begin work searches will be notified by IWD. We have also posted updates on our website regarding this requirement. There are currently almost 74,000 job openings at <https://www.iowaworks.gov>. Not all claimants will be required to begin work searches, including for example, those who are receiving PUA benefits due to a medical condition or lack of childcare.

Employers are required to notify their employees about Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits in accordance with Iowa Administrative Code Section 871-22.19. The requirement ensures that workers are aware of the benefits they may be eligible for if they become unemployed or experience a reduction in hours.

Employees and employers who have questions regarding returning to work should review the Frequently Asked Questions for each group on our website. Assistance for employers can be found here: <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/covid19-information-employers>

Employees can find assistance here: <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/covid19-information-workers>

For more information on the total data for this week's unemployment claims, please visit <https://www.iowalmi.gov/unemployment-insurance-statistics>

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