

Unemployment Insurance Claimants: 2009 Review

An Analysis of South Carolina's Population
of Insured Unemployed, January–
December, 2009

Division of Research
Labor Market Information Group
South Carolina Department of Commerce

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This study represents an analysis of the set of Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimant data received from the South Carolina Employment Security Commission in February 2010. The dataset includes 303,235 new claims for Unemployment Insurance in South Carolina between January 1st 2009 and December 31st 2009, representing 324,961 individuals.



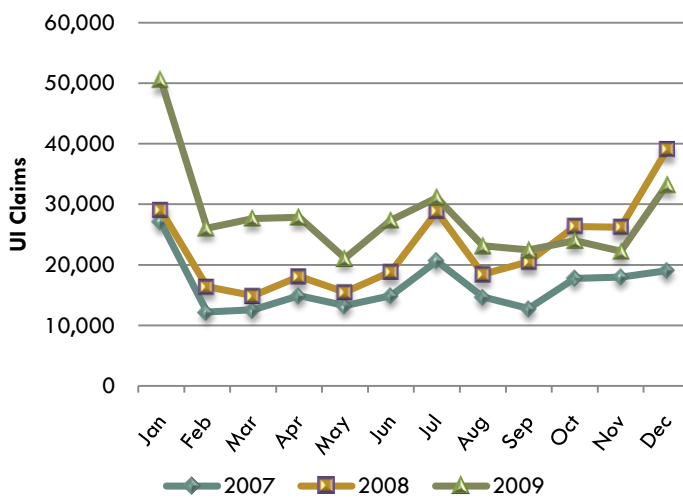
OVERVIEW: South Carolina's Unemployment Insurance Claimant Population

According to Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimant data received from the South Carolina Employment Security Commission (ESC) in February 2010, 336,360 new claims were filed for Unemployment Insurance in South Carolina between January 1st and December 31st 2009, representing 324,961 individuals.

Total Claims

volume of claims increased in late 2008. Recently, monthly claims have fallen compared to the number of claims filed in the previous year, as shown in Table 1-1.

Figure 1-1. South Carolina New Unemployment Insurance Claims Filed by Month, 2007-2009



Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

The Unemployment Insurance system in South Carolina experienced the following activity between January 1, 2009 and December 31, 2009. Repeat claimants are defined as claimants who filed at least one previous claim within the preceding two years.

- ▶ **New Claims:** 336,360
- ▶ **Unique Claimants:** 324,961
- ▶ **Repeat Claimants:** 63,130

Figure 1-1 exhibits the seasonal nature of UI claims, with large spikes in filings in January of each year and smaller spikes in filings in July of each year coinciding with temporary plant closings and seasonal industries.

Prior to the nationwide economic downturn, claims followed a fairly regular seasonal pattern and remained relatively constant year to year. While the seasonal trend continued, the

Table 1-1. South Carolina New UI Claims Filed by Month, 2007-2009

| Month | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | % Increase 2007-2009 |
|-------|---------|---------|---------|----------------------|
| Jan | 26,913 | 28,935 | 50,255 | +86.7% |
| Feb | 12,231 | 16,402 | 26,044 | +112.9% |
| Mar | 12,557 | 14,911 | 27,666 | +120.3% |
| Apr | 14,912 | 18,098 | 27,869 | +86.9% |
| May | 13,263 | 15,504 | 21,073 | +58.9% |
| Jun | 14,926 | 18,847 | 27,358 | +83.3% |
| Jul | 20,619 | 28,821 | 31,100 | +50.8% |
| Aug | 14,668 | 18,444 | 23,138 | +57.7% |
| Sep | 12,799 | 20,516 | 22,448 | +75.4% |
| Oct | 17,749 | 26,323 | 24,012 | +35.3% |
| Nov | 17,956 | 26,194 | 22,272 | +24.0% |
| Dec | 19,006 | 38,874 | 33,125 | +74.3% |
| Total | 197,599 | 271,869 | 336,360 | +70.2% |

Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Age

Table 1-3. South Carolina UI Claimant Age, 2009 vs. 2008

| Age Range | 2008 | | 2009 | |
|------------------|----------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| | Claimants | % | Claimants | % |
| 1-10 | 7 | 0.0 | 5 | 0.0 |
| 11-20 | 12,699 | 4.7 | 15,005 | 4.5 |
| 21-30 | 63,769 | 23.5 | 77,121 | 22.9 |
| 31-40 | 50,076 | 18.4 | 62,154 | 18.5 |
| 41-50 | 48,748 | 17.9 | 60,580 | 18.0 |
| 51-60 | 32,230 | 11.9 | 42,993 | 12.8 |
| 61-70 | 8,683 | 3.2 | 13,142 | 3.9 |
| 71-80 | 1,271 | 0.5 | 1,889 | 0.6 |
| 81-90 | 191 | 0.1 | 237 | 0.1 |
| 91+ | 329 | 0.1 | 300 | 0.1 |
| Missing-Claimant | 18,368 | 6.8 | 16,153 | 4.8 |
| Missing-Employer | 35,498 | 13.1 | 46,781 | 13.9 |
| Total | 271,869 | 100 | 336,360 | 100 |

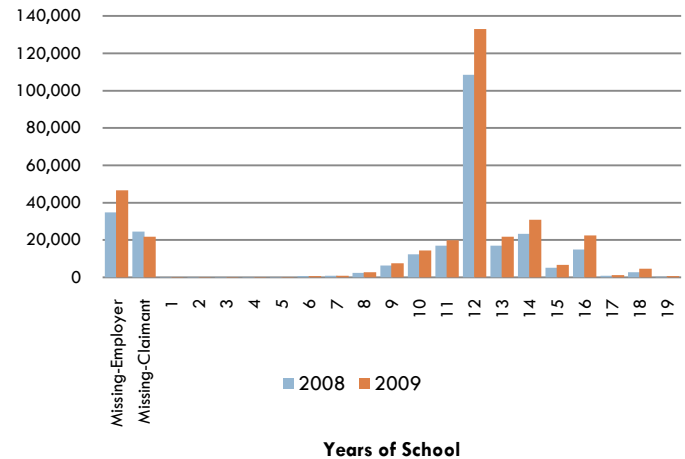
Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

The largest percentage of new UI claimants fell within the 21 to 30 year old age range, representing 22.9% of claimants in 2009 compared to 23.5% of claimants in 2008. The percentage of claimants with unknown ages was 18.7%, down from 19.8% in 2008.

The level of employer-filed claims largely affected the amount of missing data provided with each claim. Of the 62,934 claimants with unknown age in 2009, 74.3% were employer-filed claimants. According to the South Carolina Employment Security Commission, even if a claim switches from employer-filed to self-filed, the claimants age information is not entered into the unemployment benefits system. Thus, some of the claims with missing data that are classified as claimant-filed may have originally been filed by employers.

Education

Figure 1-2. South Carolina UI Claimant Educational Attainment, 2009 vs. 2008



Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data
Note: Unknown values coded as zero (0)

Educational attainment was not collected for 20.3% of new claimants in 2009, down from 21.8% in 2008. Again, employer filings were largely responsible for the missing data. Of the claimants with unknown education levels in 2009, 46,589 (68.2%) claimants were filed by their employers. In 2008, 58.7% of claimants with unknown education levels were filed by their employers.

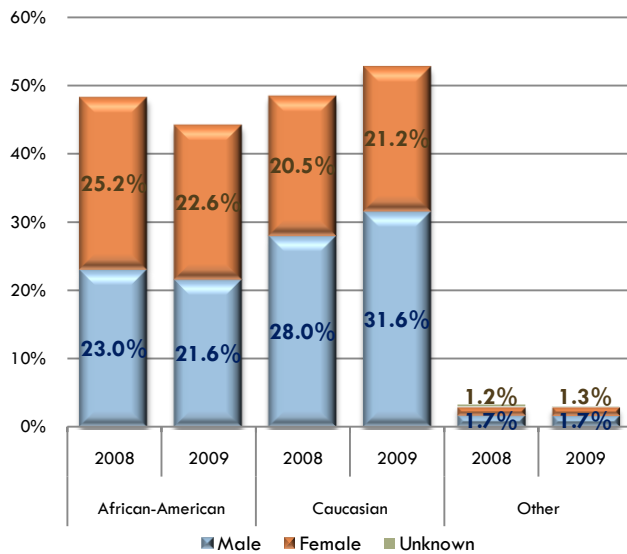
Of 268,061 individuals for whom educational data was collected in 2009,

- ▶ 17.4% had not completed high school (down from 18.8% 2008),
- ▶ 49.6% had a high school diploma or equivalent (down from 51.0% in 2008), and
- ▶ 32.9% had at least one year of post-secondary education (up from 30.2% in 2008).

This overall increase in educational attainment among UI claimants reflects the degree to which the current economic downturn has impacted workers even in higher skilled industries.

Gender and Race

Figure 1-3. South Carolina New UI Claimant Gender and Race, 2008 vs. 2009



Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

The percent of African-Americans filing new claims for UI in the 2009 was somewhat smaller than that of Caucasians. In 2008, the percent of claimants who were African-American was roughly equal to the percentage of claimants who were Caucasian.

Caucasian males filed the largest percentage of claims (31.6%) in 2009, which reflects that the economic downturn impacted this demographic particularly hard. The percentage of filers who were African-American and male declined slightly between 2008 and 2009. African-American females participate at slightly higher rates than African-American males while the converse is true for Caucasian filers.

Gender and race were unrecorded for very few individuals in 2008 or 2009.

Of filers in 2009,

- ▶ 184,453 were male, and
- ▶ 151,717 were female.

Filing Method

Table 1-4. South Carolina New UI Claims Method of Filing, 2008 vs. 2009

| Filing Method | 2008 | | 2009 | |
|----------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| | Num | % | Num | % |
| Unknown | 1,347 | 0.5 | 484 | 0.1 |
| Employer-Filed | 37,764 | 13.9 | 49,326 | 14.7 |
| Claimant-Filed | 232,758 | 85.6 | 286,550 | 85.2 |
| Total | 91,387 | 100 | 76,666 | 100 |

Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Claims can be filed by the individual claimant or by the employer of the claimant. Employer-filed claims are referred to as “job-attached,” as most of them are filed for temporary closures after which the claimant will return to work.

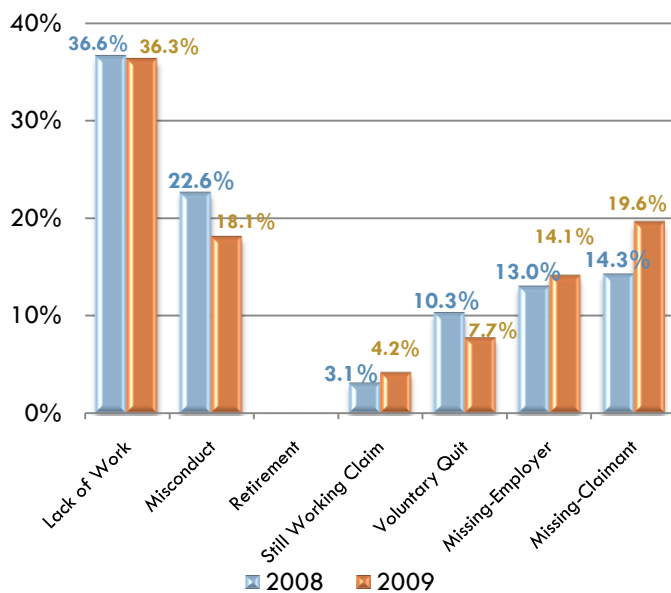
14.7% of claims were filed by employers in 2009, up from 13.9% in 2008. December is often associated with a higher number of employer-filed claims due to regularly scheduled facility closings.

Due to state UI limitations, not all temporary furloughs can be filed by the employer, thus a number of temporary claims were filed by the claimant directly. No indicator in the UI system currently exists to distinguish between claims that are “job-attached” versus permanent job loss.

Accurately measuring the number of job-attached claims is further complicated by the fact that a claim that is originally employer-filed can be re-filed by a claimant without an indicator in the dataset to indicate that this change has occurred.

Reason For Separation

Figure 1-4. South Carolina New UI Claims by Reason for Separation, 2008 vs. 2009



Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

The percent of new claims with missing (“other”) reason for separation increased from 27.3% in 2008 to 33.7% in 2009. Of the 336,360 claims filed in South Carolina in 2009, the reasons documented for unemployment were as follows:

- ▶ 36.3% were filed for Lack of Work, down 0.3 percentage points from 2008,
- ▶ 18.1% were filed for Misconduct, down 4.6 percentage points from,
- ▶ 7.7% were filed by an individual who voluntarily quit, down from 10.3% in 2008,
- ▶ 4.2% were partial claims for individuals who worked less than their customary hours of work, and
- ▶ 33.7% of claims did not have any information recorded, up 6.4 percentage points from 2008.
 - ▶ Of these missing reasons for separation, 47,433 were employer-filed claims, representing 41.8% of the total missing reasons for separation.

Key Points

Central findings from calendar year 2009 include the following points:

- ✓ The total number of claims filed in 2009 increased 23.7% compared to 2008 as a result of weak economic activity.
- ✓ Educational attainment of claimants in 2009 was slightly higher compared to those in 2008, and a majority of claimants had at least 12 years or more of education.
- ✓ Lack of Work accounted for 36.3% of claims filed in 2009. Misconduct and Voluntary Quit together accounted for 33%, up substantially from 2008. Separation reasons were missing from the ESC dataset for 33.7% of claims.
- ✓ Claims filed by employers for temporary furloughs made up 14.7% of claims filed in 2009, up from 13.9% in the previous year.

INDUSTRIES & OCCUPATIONS: 2009 Trends

Industrial and occupational distributions were relatively similar from 2008 to 2009, but the volume of claims increased. Manufacturing and Construction industries made up the majority of claims in 2009, as well as historically high UI-participating industries such as Administrative and Support Services (which includes temporary staffing firms).

Claims by Industry

Table 2-1. South Carolina New UI Claims by Industry, 2008 vs. 2009

| Industry | 2008 | | 2009 | | % Change |
|------------------------------------|----------------|------------|----------------|------------|--------------|
| | Num | % | Num | % | |
| Administrative and Support Svc. | 35,128 | 12.9 | 36,104 | 10.7 | -16.9% |
| Food Service and Drinking Places | 21,027 | 7.7 | 28,434 | 8.5 | 9.3% |
| Specialty Trade Contractors | 15,602 | 5.7 | 19,337 | 5.7 | 0.2% |
| Transportation Equipment Mfg. | 8,880 | 3.3 | 13,732 | 4.1 | 25.0% |
| Textile Mills | 12,769 | 4.7 | 12,014 | 3.6 | -24.0% |
| Machinery Manufacturing | 7,467 | 2.7 | 10,977 | 3.3 | 18.8% |
| Professional, Scientific, and Tech | 7,386 | 2.7 | 10,350 | 3.1 | 13.3% |
| Fabricated Metal Product Mfg. | 6,032 | 2.2 | 9,847 | 2.9 | 31.9% |
| General Merchandise Stores | 6,065 | 2.2 | 8,061 | 2.4 | 7.4% |
| Merchant Wholesalers, Durable | 4,641 | 1.7 | 7,080 | 2.1 | 23.3% |
| Construction of Buildings | 5,592 | 2.1 | 7,057 | 2.1 | 2.0% |
| Accommodation | 5,889 | 2.2 | 6,663 | 2.0 | -8.6% |
| Educational Services | 4,305 | 1.6 | 6,478 | 1.9 | 21.6% |
| Ambulatory Health Care Svc. | 3,871 | 1.4 | 5,077 | 1.5 | 6.0% |
| Nursing and Residential Care | 3,829 | 1.4 | 4,876 | 1.4 | 2.9% |
| Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers | 4,180 | 1.5 | 4,719 | 1.4 | -8.8% |
| Social Assistance | 3,589 | 1.2 | 4,461 | 1.3 | 3.9% |
| Plastics and Rubber Products Mfg. | 3,196 | 1.2 | 4,470 | 1.3 | 13.0% |
| Food and Beverage Stores | 3,369 | 1.2 | 4,461 | 1.3 | 7.0% |
| Heavy and Civil Engineering Con. | 3,927 | 1.4 | 4,231 | 1.3 | -12.9% |
| Gasoline Stations | 3,507 | 1.3 | 4,015 | 1.2 | -12.9% |
| Truck Transportation | 3,563 | 1.3 | 3,943 | 1.2 | -10.6% |
| Credit Intermediation and Related | 2,826 | 1.0 | 3,698 | 1.1 | 5.8% |
| Real Estate | 2,926 | 1.1 | 3,497 | 1.0 | -3.4% |
| Unknown | 26,909 | 9.9 | 28,781 | 8.6 | -13.6% |
| Total | 271,869 | 100 | 336,360 | 100 | 23.7% |

Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Industries from which the majority of UI claims were initiated are shown in Table 2-1. Industries with the highest number of claims include Administrative and Support Services (which includes temporary staffing firms), Food Service and Drinking Places, Manufacturing subsectors, Construction subsectors, and Retail subsectors.

Claims by Occupation

Table 2-2. South Carolina New UI Claims by Occupational Group, 2008 vs. 2009

| Occupation | 2008 | | 2009 | | % Change |
|----------------------------------|----------------|------------|----------------|------------|--------------|
| | Num | % | Num | % | |
| Production | 52,250 | 20.7 | 64,045 | 19.0 | -8.0% |
| Sales | 25,534 | 9.4 | 34,033 | 10.1 | 7.7% |
| Food Preparation/Serving Related | 21,983 | 8.1 | 29,467 | 8.8 | 8.3% |
| Construction/Extraction | 21,496 | 7.9 | 26,044 | 7.7 | -2.1% |
| Office/Administrative Support | 17,481 | 6.4 | 20,754 | 6.2 | -4.0% |
| Transportation | 14,970 | 5.5 | 16,788 | 5.0 | -9.4% |
| Management | 11,994 | 4.4 | 15,370 | 4.6 | 3.6% |
| Building/Grounds Maintenance | 9,636 | 3.5 | 10,870 | 3.2 | -8.8% |
| Installation/Maintenance/Repair | 8,631 | 3.2 | 10,592 | 3.1 | -0.8% |
| Healthcare Support | 6,725 | 2.5 | 8,745 | 2.6 | 5.1% |
| Business/Financial Operations | 5,168 | 1.9 | 6,753 | 2.0 | 5.6% |
| Education/Training/Library | 3,386 | 1.2 | 5,589 | 1.7 | 33.4% |
| Personal Care | 3,624 | 1.3 | 4,730 | 1.4 | 5.5% |
| Architecture/Engineering | 2,373 | 0.9 | 4,311 | 1.3 | 46.8% |
| Healthcare Practitioners | 2,838 | 1.0 | 3,946 | 1.2 | 12.4% |
| Protective Service | 2,470 | 0.9 | 3,090 | 0.9 | 1.1% |
| Computer/Mathematical | 2,027 | 0.7 | 2,779 | 0.8 | 10.8% |
| Art/Design/Entertainment/Sports | 1,491 | 0.5 | 2,115 | 0.6 | 14.7% |
| Farming/Fishing/Forestry | 1,570 | 0.6 | 1,580 | 0.5 | -1.7% |
| Community/Social Sciences | 1,171 | 0.4 | 1,735 | 0.5 | 19.8% |
| Legal | 983 | 0.4 | 1,162 | 0.3 | -4.5% |
| Military | 835 | 0.3 | 1,140 | 0.3 | 10.4% |
| Life/Physical/Social Science | 272 | 0.1 | 412 | 0.1 | 22.4% |
| Unknown | 48,961 | 18.0 | 60,310 | 17.9 | -0.4% |
| Total | 271,869 | 100 | 336,360 | 100 | 23.7% |

Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

17.9% of UI claims were missing or had unclassifiable occupational information in 2009, down from 18.0% the previous year. Claims continue to be dispersed across a variety of occupations.

- Production: 19.0%
- Sales: 10.1%
- Food Preparation/Serving: 8.8%

Employer-Filed Claims

Table 2-3. South Carolina New Employer-Filed UI Claims by Industry, 2008 vs. 2009

| Industry | 2008 | | 2009 | |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | Num | % | Num | % |
| Mining | 168 | 39.0% | 291 | 55.5% |
| Textile Mills | 6,679 | 52.3% | 6,343 | 52.8% |
| Wood Product Mfg. | 827 | 33.8% | 802 | 33.1% |
| Paper Mfg | 495 | 47.6% | 1,042 | 53.8% |
| Fabricated Metal Prod. | 2,370 | 39.3% | 4,085 | 41.5% |
| Machinery Manuf. | 3,947 | 52.9% | 5,317 | 48.4% |
| Apparel Manufacturing | 709 | 38.5% | 529 | 29.4% |
| Electrical Equipment | 625 | 44.1% | 1,643 | 54.4% |
| Transportation Equip. | 2,789 | 31.4% | 6,139 | 44.7% |
| Primary Metal Mfg. | 212 | 17.9% | 815 | 33.2% |
| Plastics and Rubber Products | 631 | 19.7% | 1,472 | 32.9% |
| Printing and Related | 155 | 21.0% | 287 | 28.2% |

Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Table 2-3 displays all of the industries (classified according to NAICS codes at the 3-digit level) for which employer-filed claims make up at least 25% of the total claims filed in 2009. Manufacturing sectors make up the majority of industries heavily utilizing employer-filed claims. Overall, the rate of employer-filed claims increased slightly in 2009 compared to 2008, although it decreased in some industries.

Key Points

Central findings regarding industry and occupational interaction in UI in 2009 include the following points:

- ✓ The overall incidence of employer-filed claims was slightly higher in 2009 compared to 2008.
- ✓ Administrative and Support Services (which includes temporary staffing) made up the highest group of claims for a single industry with 10.7% of the total claims filed. In 2008 this industry accounted for 12.9% of claims.
- ✓ Production occupations made up the largest percentage of claims in 2009 (19.0%), down from 20.7% in 2008.

“JOB-ATTACHED” CLAIMS: 2009 Trends

In South Carolina, claims filed by the employer of the claimant are referred to as “job-attached.” This type of claim is typically temporary and seasonal, experiencing spikes in January and July. Employer-filed claims were up slightly in 2009 compared to 2008.

Overview

Table 3-1. South Carolina New UI Claims by Method of Filing, 2008 vs. 2009

| Filing Method | 2008 | | 2009 | |
|----------------|----------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| | Num | % | Num | % |
| Unknown | 1,347 | 0.5 | 484 | 0.1 |
| Employer-Filed | 37,764 | 13.9 | 49,326 | 14.7 |
| Claimant-Filed | 232,758 | 85.6 | 286,550 | 85.2 |
| Total | 271,869 | 100 | 336,360 | 100 |

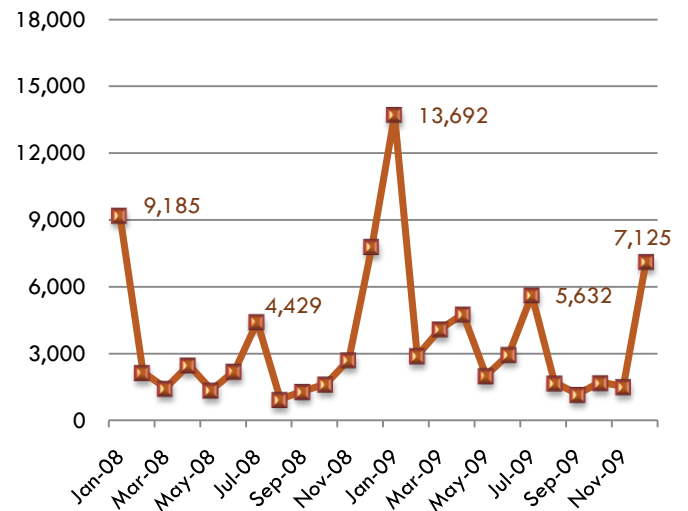
Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

In 2009, 14.7% of new claims were employer-filed, up 0.8 percentage points from the year prior. Some difficulties exist in maintaining an accurate count of employer-filed claims, namely that data in the UI system changes daily. For instance, a claim that was once employer-filed may switch to employee-filed as time goes on and the employer ceases to continue filing the claim. Thus, the number of employer-filed claims will under-represent the true number of claims originally filed by employers.

South Carolina is one of nine states that still allows employers to file UI claims for employees. All other states require employees to self-file. Employees on temporary furloughs are counted by the US Department of Labor as unemployed in monthly statistics.

Employer-Filed Claims

Figure 3-1. South Carolina Employer-Filed New UI Claims by Month, 2008 – 2009



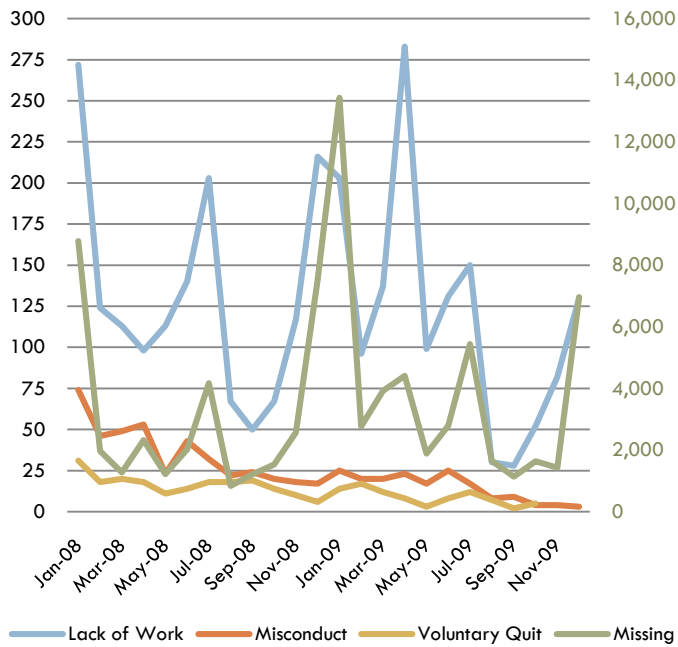
Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Employer-filed claims follow highly seasonal patterns, with sharp increases in “job-attached” claims in January. The number of claims in 2009 increased in absolute terms (30.6%) compared to 2008 and represented a higher percentage of claims filed (13.9% vs. 14.7%).

- ▶ Employer-filed claims increased 49.1% in January 2009 compared to the same month in 2008.
- ▶ The number of employer-filed claims began to fall in the last third of 2009 compared to 2008.

Employer-Filed Reason for Separation

Figure 3-2. South Carolina New Employer-Filed Claims by Reason for Separation, 2008 – 2009



Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Figure 3-2 shows the seasonality of claims for employer-filings by reasons for separation. As previously discussed, employer-filed “job-attached” claims are highly seasonal. There are large spikes in activity in January and July of each year which are the typical periods for maintenance shutdowns in manufacturing.

Key Points

Primary conclusions for 2009 include the following points:

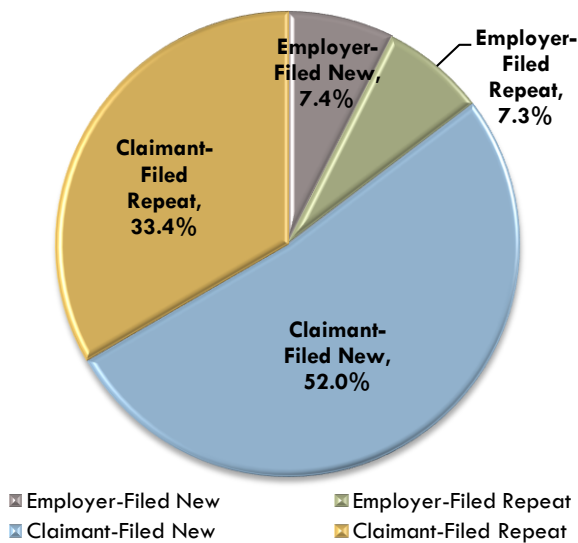
- ✓ 2009 had slightly higher levels employer-filed claims than the previous year.
- ✓ Historically, the first quarter of the year has more employer-filed claims than the second quarter, which also occurred in 2009.

REPEAT CLAIMANTS: 2009 Profiles

In 2009, an increase occurred in repeat claimants (defined as a claimant who filed a claim in the two years prior to their current claim). Approximately 40.6% of claims were repeat claims in 2009 compared to 39.5% in 2008. The industries with the largest percentage of repeat claimants in 2009—Manufacturing, Administrative Support/Waste Management (which includes temporary staffing firms), and Mining/Extraction—were comparable to 2008. Claims were more likely to be repeat claims if they were filed by employers.

Overview

Figure 4-1. Repeat Versus First-Time Claimants, 2009



Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

In 2009, a total of 336,360 claims were filed for unemployment benefits. Approximately 40.6% of these claims were filed by an individual with at least one other claim in the previous two years. The total number of repeat claims rose from 106,852 in 2008 to 136,451 in 2009.

Repeat Claimants by Industry

Table 4-1. Percent Repeat Claimants by Industry, 2008 vs. 2009

| Industry | % 2008 | % 2009 |
|---|--------|--------|
| Administrative Support (includes temp staffing) | 46.8% | 50.4% |
| Manufacturing | 52.0% | 48.1% |
| Food Services | 41.6% | 44.3% |
| Mining-Extraction | 18.1% | 44.1% |
| Agriculture/Hunting | 43.4% | 43.6% |
| Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation | 35.0% | 43.1% |
| Construction | 35.0% | 40.6% |
| Other Services | 36.3% | 37.8% |
| Transportation/Warehousing | 32.9% | 37.6% |
| Real Estate/Leasing | 27.0% | 35.1% |
| Healthcare | 34.8% | 34.8% |
| Management | 36.7% | 33.7% |
| Professional Services | 30.2% | 33.5% |
| Wholesale Trade | 29.0% | 33.2% |
| Retail Trade | 28.5% | 32.2% |
| Public Administration | 28.4% | 31.2% |
| Educational Services | 35.1% | 29.0% |
| Information | 22.8% | 27.2% |
| Finance/Insurance | 21.9% | 26.0% |
| Utilities | 21.2% | 24.9% |

Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Seasonal industries and industries with high turnover rates had higher numbers of individuals filing for benefits more than once in the past two years. In 2009, the three industries with the highest percentage of repeat claimants were comparable to those with the highest percent in 2008. Manufacturing and Administrative Support (includes temporary staffing) industries had the highest number of repeat claimants in both years. The Mining and Extraction industry had a significantly higher percentage of repeat claims in 2009 than 2008. Educational services had the largest decrease in repeat claims from 2008 to 2009.

Filing Method

Figure 4-2. Percent Repeat UI Claims by Filing Method, 2009 vs. 2008

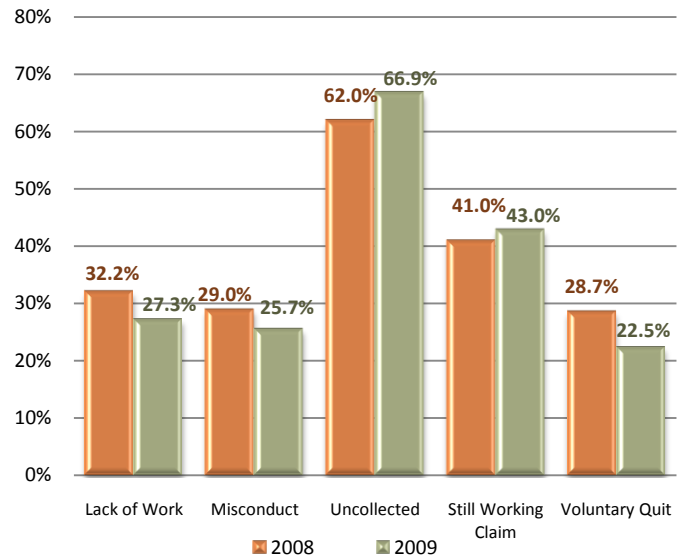


Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Large differences exist in the tendency to file a repeat claim by filing method. In 2009, claims that were employer-filed were repeat filings 49.5% of the time while 39.1% of employee-filed claims were repeat claims. In 2008, the difference by filing method was more pronounced with 55.4% of employer-filed claims having at least one previous new claim in the prior two years while 36.9% of employee-filed claims were considered to be repeats.

Reason for Separation

Figure 4-4. Percent Repeat UI Claims by Separation Reason, 2009 vs. 2008



Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Of all claims filed in 2009 with an uncollected (missing) separation reason, 66.9% were from claimants with a claim in the past two years. This is significantly higher than the percent in 2008. A slightly lower percentage of claims filed in 2009 were repeat claims citing Lack of Work as their reason for separation (27.3%). Employer-filed claims are more likely to be both repeat claims and more likely to have a missing (“other”) reason for separation. This may partially explain the high percentage of repeat claims in this category.

Age and Education Levels

Table 4-3. Percent Repeat Claims by Age and Education, 2009 vs. 2008

| Age | Percent Repeat 2008 | Percent Repeat 2009 |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| < 18 years | 4.0% | 5.0% |
| 18-24 years | 27.8% | 29.9% |
| 25-40 years | 36.3% | 39.8% |
| 41-55 years | 37.5% | 40.8% |
| 56-65 years | 35.8% | 40.0% |
| > 65 years | 35.0% | 39.8% |
| Unknown | 57.4% | 50.0% |
| Educational Attainment | | |
| 0: Unknown | 49.5% | 45.0% |
| 1-8: No High School | 39.1% | 40.9% |
| 9-11: Some High School | 39.1% | 42.2% |
| 12: High School Graduate | 39.7% | 43.1% |
| 13-15: Some College | 32.8% | 36.2% |
| 16+: College Graduate+ | 23.3% | 25.7% |

Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Repeat claims peaked in the prime working age groups between 25 and 65 years. The percentage of repeat claims was lowest among new workers less than 18 years old who have not accumulated enough experience to use the system more than once. A large percentage of claims with unknown ages were repeat claimants. In 2009, 50% of all “unknown” age claims were made by repeat claimants.

Educational attainment exhibits an inverted U-shaped trend in relation to repeat claims: as education increases, the percent of repeat claims first increases and then decreases. Claimants with 12 years of education (high school degree) exhibit the largest percentage of repeat claims at 43.1%. Those with a bachelor’s degree or higher have significantly lower percentages of repeat claimants. This finding suggests that as skill or experience increases, the probability of repeated spells of unemployment decreases.

The percentage of repeat claims in 2009 with an unknown level of educational attainment (45.0%) was lower than in 2008 (49.5%). Employer-filed claims are not required to report educational attainment or age.

Key Points

Central findings regarding repeat claims for 2009 include the following points:

- ✓ Employer-filed claims tended to have a strong association with repeat spells of UI.
- ✓ Approximately 41% of individuals filing a new claim for UI in 2009 had filed at least one other new claim in the previous two years.
- ✓ The likelihood of being a repeat claimant appears to be related to both age and educational attainment. Those in their prime working ages had a higher percentage of repeat claims, and those with lower levels of education also tended to have greater numbers of repeat claims.
- ✓ Those with missing reasons for separation also appear to be more likely to have filed a repeat claim in the past two years.

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREAS (WIAs): 2009

Overview

Accounting for differences in population, the Upstate WIA had the largest number of claimants in 2009. Sizable differences exist in the percentage of each WIA's workforce involved in seasonal industries such as Manufacturing, Construction, and Entertainment. Nearly every area saw an increase in the number of claims compared to 2008.

Distribution by WIA

Figure 5-1. South Carolina Workforce Investment Areas

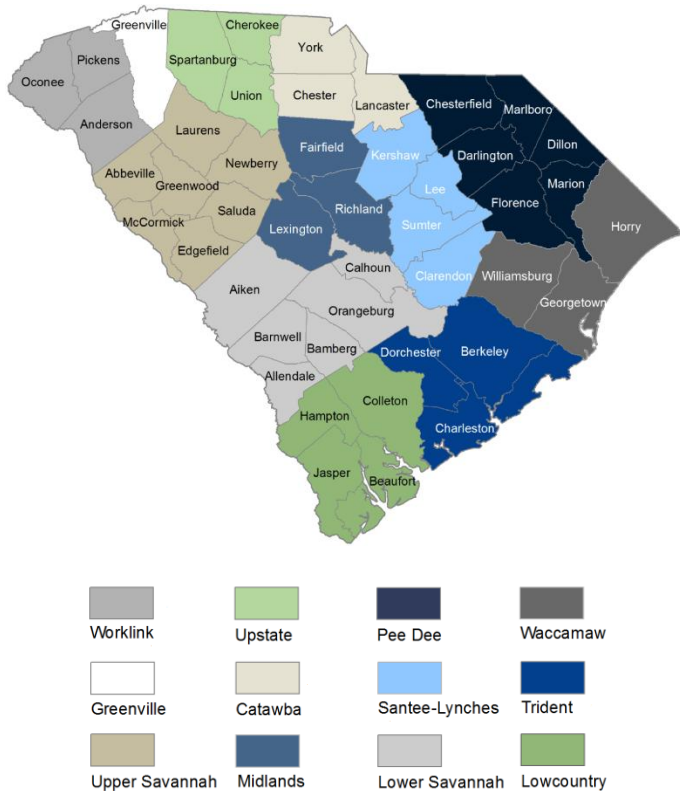


Table 5-1. New UI Claimants as a Percentage of Population by WIA, 2008 vs. 2009

| WIA | 2008 Population | 2008 % of Pop. | 2009 % of Pop. |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Upstate | 362,804 | 7.3% | 9.1% |
| Waccamaw | 353,201 | 7.1% | 8.5% |
| Pee Dee | 335,958 | 7.5% | 8.4% |
| Upper Savannah | 255,721 | 6.6% | 8.0% |
| Lower Savannah | 307,616 | 7.0% | 7.9% |
| Worklink | 371,014 | 6.1% | 7.6% |
| Santee Lynches | 216,089 | 5.9% | 7.1% |
| Greenville | 438,119 | 4.8% | 6.6% |
| Midlands | 635,954 | 5.0% | 6.2% |
| Trident | 644,506 | 4.5% | 6.2% |
| Catawba | 325,979 | 4.6% | 5.6% |
| Lowcountry | 232,839 | 4.0% | 5.3% |

Source: US Census Bureau County Population Estimates and Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

9.1% of the Upstate WIA's population filed a claim for unemployment insurance in 2009. The Upstate WIA also had the highest percentage of its population file at least one claim in 2008. Most WIAs experienced a slight increase in the percentage of its population filing claims between 2008 and 2009. Lowcountry had the lowest percentage of population filing a claim in 2009.

South Carolina has twelve Workforce Investment Areas as displayed in Figure 5-1. Table 5-1 shows the Upstate WIA had the highest percentage of its population file at least one claim during 2009.

Claims by WIA

Table 5-2. New UI Claims by WIA, 2008 vs. 2009

| WIA | 2008 Claims | 2009 Claims | % Change |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| Trident | 29,141 | 39,976 | 37.2% |
| Midlands | 31,647 | 39,656 | 25.3% |
| Upstate | 26,641 | 33,030 | 24.0% |
| Waccamaw | 25,096 | 29,977 | 19.4% |
| Greenville | 20,893 | 29,056 | 39.1% |
| Pee Dee | 25,143 | 28,145 | 11.9% |
| Worklink | 22,744 | 28,122 | 23.6% |
| Lower Savannah | 21,682 | 24,161 | 11.4% |
| Upper Savannah | 16,880 | 20,518 | 21.6% |
| Catawba | 15,112 | 18,376 | 21.6% |
| MISSING | 14,993 | 17,625 | 17.6% |
| Santee Lynches | 12,689 | 15,284 | 20.5% |
| Lowcountry | 9,208 | 12,434 | 35.0% |

Source: US Census Bureau County Population Estimates and Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

The Trident WIA had the most claims in 2009 while the Midlands had the most claims in 2008. Every WIA experienced an increase in claims over 2008. Greenville (39.1%), Trident (37.2%), and Lowcountry (35.0%) all experienced the largest increase in claims between 2008 and 2009.

Key Points

Main points regarding geographic distribution of claims in 2009 included the following points:

- ✓ In, 7.1% of South Carolina's population applied for UI at least once.
- ✓ The Greenville WIA had the largest percent increase in the number of claimants using the UI system in 2009, increasing 39.1% compared to 2008.
- ✓ The Pee Dee experienced the smallest percent increase in claims between 2008 and 2009.
- ✓ Differences in demographic and industrial variables between the WIAs exist which can influence the extent to which the population uses the UI system.

BENEFITS RECEIVED: 2009 Trends

While 336,360 new claims for Unemployment Insurance were filed in 2009, only 207,246 of these claims received at least one week of benefit payments (61.6%). This percentage is lower compared to 2008, in which 65.2% of claims received at least one benefit payment. Right-censored data may affect these results, as the most recently filed new claims may not have yet had a final determination of their eligibility completed, thus biasing percentages lower. Significant differences in the percentage of claims receiving benefits exist when comparing method of filing, WIA of residence, separation reason, and demographic characteristics.

Claims Receiving Benefit Payments

Table 6-1. New UI Claims Receiving Benefits by Quarter

| Quarter | Claims Filed | Claims Receiving 1+ Benefit Payment | Percent Receiving Benefits |
|---------|--------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2008Q1 | 60,248 | 37,594 | 62.4% |
| 2008Q2 | 52,449 | 33,044 | 63.0% |
| 2008Q3 | 67,781 | 42,719 | 63.0% |
| 2008Q4 | 91,391 | 63,794 | 69.8% |
| 2009Q1 | 103,965 | 74,110 | 71.3% |
| 2009Q2 | 76,300 | 49,106 | 64.4% |
| 2009Q3 | 76,686 | 43,482 | 56.7% |
| 2009Q4 | 79,409 | 40,548 | 51.1% |

Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Only 61.6% of the claims filed in the 2009 received at least one week of benefit payment. This level is somewhat lower than the percentage of claims receiving benefits in 2008 (65.2%).

These numbers may be somewhat biased, as claims originally filed in the final quarters of 2009 may ultimately receive a payment in the following year. A lag can exist between the month the claim was filed and when the first payment occurs.

Benefit Payments by Separation Reason

Table 6-2. New UI Claims Receiving Payment by Separation Reason, 2008 vs. 2009

| Separation Reason | 2008 Percent | 2009 Percent |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Lack of Work | 79.0% | 77.5% |
| Misconduct | 61.5% | 57.8% |
| Still Working Claim | 65.2% | 60.8% |
| Voluntary Quit | 21.4% | 16.7% |
| Missing/Uncollected | 66.2% | 57.0% |

Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Those citing Lack of Work as the reason for separation had the highest percentage of claims receiving benefits (77.5%) in 2009. This percent is slightly down from the 79.0% of Lack of Work claims receiving benefits in 2008. Those who voluntarily quit, who are many times not eligible for UI benefits, received benefits 16.7% of the time in 2009. Overall claims received benefits at a lower rate in 2009 compared to 2008, although this finding may reflect a censoring of data and not an actual reduction in claims paid.

Benefit Payments by Filing Method

Table 6-3. New UI Claims Receiving Payment by Filing Method, 2008 vs. 2009

| Filing Method | 2008 Percent | 2009 Percent |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Employer | 67.5% | 62.5% |
| Claimant | 64.8% | 61.5% |

Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Employer-filed claims have historically been paid at a higher rate than those filed by the claimant on his/her own behalf. This trend held in 2009 with 62.5% of employer-filed claims receiving at least one week of benefits compared to 61.5% of claims filed by the employees. This gap narrowed compared to 2008.

Benefit Payments by WIA

Table 6-4. New UI Claims Receiving Payment by WIA, 2008 vs. 2009

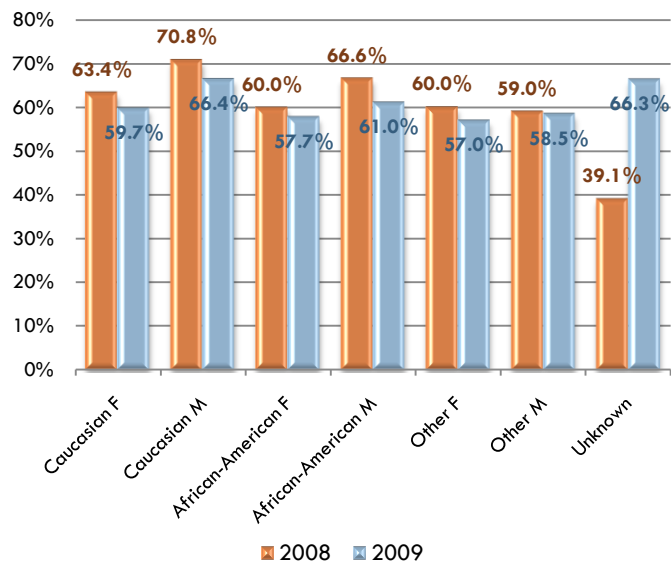
| WIA | 2008 Percent | 2009 Percent |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Catawba | 68.8 | 65.2 |
| Santee Lynches | 67.6 | 64.7 |
| Worklink | 67.6 | 64.7 |
| Upstate | 69.9 | 64.1 |
| Waccamaw | 70.1 | 64.1 |
| Upper Savannah | 66.2 | 64.0 |
| Greenville | 65.4 | 63.1 |
| Pee Dee | 65.9 | 60.9 |
| Trident | 60.7 | 59.6 |
| Lowcountry | 67.2 | 59.5 |
| Lower Savannah | 62.6 | 59.3 |
| Midlands | 54.8 | 54.5 |
| MISSING | 69.2 | 62.5 |

Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Table 6-4 shows the percent of claims receiving at least one week of UI benefits broken out by WIA of residence. In both 2008 and 2009 the Midlands WIA had the lowest percent of claims receiving benefits. In 2009, the Catawba WIA had the highest percent receiving benefits (65.2%) while in 2008 it was the Waccamaw WIA (70.1%). Overall benefit receipt was generally lower in 2009 compared to 2008, most likely due to censoring of data.

Benefit Payments by Gender and Race

Figure 6-1. New UI Claims Receiving Payment by Gender and Race, 2008 vs. 2009



Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Some differences exist between across gender and race in terms of the percent of claims receiving benefits (Figure 6-1). Of claimants with known genders, Caucasian males tend to have the highest percent of claims receiving benefits in 2009 (66.4%), followed by African-American males (61.0%). Females receive benefits at a lower rate than their male counterparts (59.7% for Caucasian females and 57.7% for African-American females). Across most gender and racial groups, the percent receiving benefits was lower in 2009 compared to 2008 most likely due to data censoring.

Key Points

Main points regarding the percent of claims receiving benefits in 2009 are provided as follows:

- ✓ Right-censored data may affect the rate of benefit payment on new claims, as the most recently filed new claims may not have yet had a final determination of their eligibility completed.
- ✓ In 2009, 61.6% of claims filed received at least one week of benefits (as of February 28th 2010).
- ✓ The reason for separation and method of filing both tend to have an effect on the percent of claims

receiving benefits. Employer-filed claims received benefits at a slightly higher rate than claimant filed claims. As would be expected, those citing Lack of Work as their separation reason also received benefits at a higher rate than other reasons.

- ✓ Slight differences appear to occur in the rates of receiving benefits based on geographic location. The Midlands WIA had the lowest percentage of claims receiving benefits in 2009 and 2008. The Catawba WIA had the highest percentage of claims receiving a payment in 2008, while the Waccamaw had the highest percentage in 2008.