Technical Report
UI Claimants Overview

An Initial Analysis of South Carolina's Population of Insured Unemployed, 2006 – 2008

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This study represents an initial analysis of the set of Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimant data received from the South Carolina Employment Security Commission on February 27th, 2009. The dataset includes 663,708 claims for Unemployment Insurance in South Carolina between January 1st 2006 and December 31st 2008, representing 490,637 individuals.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study represents an initial analysis of the set of Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimant data received from the South Carolina Employment Security Commission on February 27th, 2009. The dataset includes 663,708 claims for Unemployment Insurance in South Carolina between January 1st 2006 and December 31st 2008, representing 490,637 individuals. Of these 663,708 claims, 394,787 received at least one UI benefits payment. Examination of this data and subsequent implementation of programs designed from its findings will allow South Carolina to 1.) use current data to measure progress; 2.) create programs to solve known problems, not assumed issues; and 3.) better allocate state resources to programs that will more efficiently deliver solutions.

Introduction

Between 2006 and 2008, 11% of South Carolina's population—or 490,637 individuals—filed at least one claim for Unemployment Insurance. These individuals represent a comprehensive dataset of those who lost employment and filed a claim for UI. Each individual did not necessarily receive payment of benefits. Of 663,708 claims filed between 2006 and 2008, 268,921 did not receive UI benefits (98,860 of these were deemed ineligible, 3,019 were withdrawn, and the remaining are unknown). The claims follow highly seasonal patterns, with large spikes in filings in January of each year and smaller spikes in filings in July of each year.

Education: High school graduates (or equivalent) make up the majority of UI claims. A greater number of postsecondary attendees are claimants than are high school dropouts. Unfortunately, education data was missing for 25% of claims. Of individuals for whom educational data was collected,

- 19.2% did not complete high school,
- 49.3% had a high school diploma or equivalent,
- 31.4% had at least one year of post-secondary education.

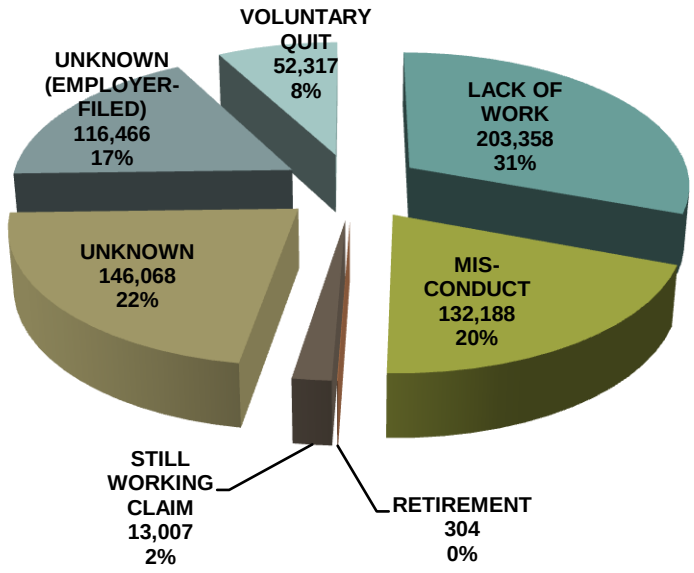
Demographics: The largest percentage of UI claimants fall within the 21 to 30 year old age range, representing 24.1% of individuals and 22.6% of claims. Ages are unknown for 21.7% of claims and appear miscoded for a handful of others (e.g.-1 to 10 year olds). Of the claims with unknown age, 116,282 (80.7%) are filed by employers.

Caucasian males participate at higher rates than Caucasian females. Conversely, African-American males participate at lower rates than African-American females. Of 490,637 individuals,

- 240,197 were female, and
- 249,279 were male.

Reason For Separation

Figure E-1. South Carolina Unemployment Insurance Claims Reason for Separation, 2006 – 2008



Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data
Note: The Unknown category was segmented by filing method.

For each claim filed, the reason the claimant seeks UI is to be documented. Of the 663,708 claims filed in South Carolina between 2006 and 2008,

- 31% were filed for Lack of Work,
- 20% were filed for Misconduct,
- 8% were filed by an individual who voluntarily quit,
- 2% did not yet have a reason for separation, as the Employment Security Commission was Still Working on the Claim, and
- 39% did not record the information.
    - Of these Unknown reasons for separation, 116,466 were employer-filed claims, representing 44% of the total Unknown reasons for separation.

Industries and Occupations

No single industry or occupation dominates claims for Unemployment Insurance. Instead, a wide variety of industries and occupations are represented, indicating variety in the approaches needed to address unemployment. Industries with the most claims include:

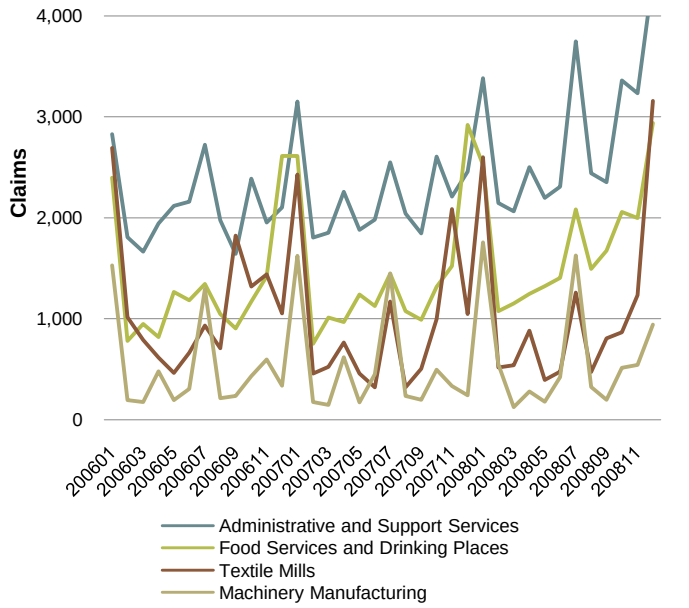
- Administrative & Support Services (including temporary staffing agencies): 13.0%
- Food Services & Drinking Places: 8.1%
- Textile Mills: 5.7%
- Specialty Trade Contractors: 5.3%
- Machinery Manufacturing: 3.0%
- Unknown: 10.5%

Occupations with the most claims include:

- Production: 13.2%
- Sales: 7.9%
- Construction: 6.6%
- Food Preparation: 6.4%
- Office/Administrative: 6.0%
- Unknown: 34.1%

Seasonality: Subsectors in the manufacturing, food and hospitality, tourism, and construction-related industries exhibit particularly high seasonal trends in UI claims. Industries with both the highest volume of claims and the highest seasonal patterns are shown in Figure E-2.

Figure E-2. South Carolina Unemployment Insurance Claims Filed by Month by Industry, 2006 – 2008



Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

"Job-Attached" Temporary Claims

In South Carolina, 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 facility closures, after which the claimant will return to work. Claims filed by employers for these temporary furloughs make up 18.6% of claims.

- South Carolina is one of only a handful of states that still allow employers to file UI claims for employees.
- Employer-filed claims typically lack all information about the individual claimant with the exception of gender, race, and often industry. This lack of information largely precludes accurate analysis of the entire population of UI claimants in the state.

Seasonality: Due to the seasonality of temporary plant and facility closings (usually in January and July), employer-filed claims follow seasonal patterns more so than other claims.

Industries: Manufacturing industry subsectors have the highest incidence of employer-filed claims (Table E-1).

Temporary Claims Filed by Claimants: In addition to employer-filed claims, a number of claims filed by the

claimant are temporary, or "job-attached," as well. An accurate gauge of the extent of all temporary furloughs is not currently possible, as the current UI system does not collect data to indicate which individuals are truly still attached to a job.

Table E-1. South Carolina UI Employer-Filed Claims by Industry, 2006 – 2008

Industry	Claims		%
	Total	Employer	Employer
Textile Mills	37,844	24,794	66%
Machinery Mfg	19,576	12,126	62%
Apparel Mfg	5,752	3,493	61%
Electrical Equipment, Appliance, Component Mfg	3,858	1,970	51%
Leather & Allied Product Mfg	58	29	50%

Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Duration

Individuals filing for South Carolina Unemployment Insurance benefits are typically eligible to receive benefits for a maximum of 26 weeks. However, certain federal extension programs are available that extend benefits beyond this time period.

Characteristics associated with longer UI duration include industry, separation reason, and age.

- Industry sectors with the longest average claim duration include Information (19.7 weeks), Financial Services (18.9 weeks), and Education (18.3 weeks). Sectors with the shortest average duration were Transportation/Warehousing (15.0 weeks), Entertainment (13.4 weeks), and Manufacturing (12.0 weeks). Shorter durations by industry are driven, in part, by seasonality or temporary furloughs.
- Separation reasons with the longest average duration are Lack of Work (17.3 weeks) and Misconduct (17.4 weeks). The shortest average duration was for Employer-filed claims (4.6 weeks).
- Average duration increases by age (followed by a sharp drop for claimants over age 90).

Exhaustion: Of those receiving any benefits, nearly 7% use the state's maximum 26 weeks while another 13% use available extensions beyond this time.

Recidivism (Repeat Claimants)

Approximately 35% of all individuals filing a claim between 2006 and 2008 filed more than one claim. Filing repeat claims is highly correlated with work in seasonal occupations that experience temporary fluctuations in labor demand. Industries with the highest percentage of repeat claims include:

- Manufacturing: 39.8%
- Administrative Support/Waste Management (including temporary staffing agencies): 31.5%
- Food Services: 29.0%

Employer-filed claims tend to be associated with repeat usage of UI. Repeat filings by filing method are as follows:

- Employer-filed: 70.4% repeat claim filings
- Employee-filed: 40.9% repeat claim filings

Repeat claims tend to fall with age and years of education, as experience and skills accumulate.

Geographic Variations

The Workforce Investment Areas (WIAs) do not possess extreme differences in the demographic characteristics (age, race, gender) of their claimants.

- Areas with the highest levels of educational attainment are urban areas, including Greenville, Midlands, and Trident WIAs.

Certain WIAs have high concentrations of seasonal industries which may contribute to their greater likelihood of having repeat claimants.

- The percent of first-time claims citing manufacturing as their industry were highest in the Worklink (30.6%) and Upper Savannah (34.7%) WIAs.
- Coastal areas of Waccamaw (12.6%), the Lowcountry (13.9%), and Trident (10.7%) had the highest percentage of claimants in construction.
- First-time claimants in the Administrative Support/ Waste Management industries were concentrated in Greenville, the Upstate, and Worklink WIAs.
- A large percentage of the Waccamaw claimants reported being in the highly seasonal Entertainment industry.

Data Utilization

This paper represents an initial analysis of the unemployment insurance claimant data for the state of South Carolina. Following is a sampling of areas in which this data can be employed most effectively by the South Carolina Department of Commerce (SCDOC). The current nature of the data allows it to be extracted and analyzed rapidly at the end of the month, followed by implementation of corrective procedures early in the next.

Economic Development: The SC Department of Commerce can analyze UI claimant data to facilitate economic development activities in the following ways:

- ***Identify High-Skilled Workforce Availability:*** SCDOC can identify geographic concentrations of out-of-work individuals within highly-demanded occupations to recruit new companies to areas of South Carolina with an available skilled workforce.
- ***Target Areas of Permanent Job Loss***: SCDOC can rapidly identify industries or geographic areas that have experienced a permanent decrease in employment (identified by claimants who apply due to Lack of Work). Pinpointing these targets will allow SCDOC to identify urgent needs within the state and focus on appropriate recruitment solutions unique to a certain geographic area or industry.

Workforce Development: UI claimant data can be utilized by the SC Department of Commerce Workforce Development Division in the following manners:

- ***Identify Areas Requiring Retraining*:** Geographic concentrations of individuals within occupations with waning or non-existent demand signal opportunities for Workforce Development to target worker retraining efforts. Furthermore, it highlights opportunities for joint involvement of the SC Technical Colleges and the Department of Education Adult Education to address skills gaps and needs.
- ***Target Education Programs*:** UI claimant data can distinguish geographic concentrations of non-high school graduates which could signal the need to include GED coursework into workforce training.
- ***Target Areas of Non-Permanent Job Loss*:** Concentrations of claimants whose jobs were lost due to Misconduct or Voluntary Quit may indicate the need to offer differentiated training programs. For instance, programs that offer “soft” skill training may be more critical to claimants dismissed for Misconduct than would be trade skill education.

Economic Analysis and Forecasting: Developing statistical algorithms to parse and analyze current data on a monthly basis will provide rapid feedback. With these results, the following activities can be undertaken by the SCDOC:

- ***Augment Monthly Economic and Employment Data***: Unfortunately, a paucity of regular economic and employment data exists by which counties and municipalities can gauge performance and develop future plans. The unemployment rate is the widest-used indicator, primarily due to its regularity, timeliness, and coverage of small areas. However, reliable estimates with narrow margins of error are problematical at the county level, being better suited for long-term trend analysis rather than as an instantaneous gauge of unemployment activity. UI claimant data is, however, a source of timely, accurate information at state and local levels. It records activity for all individuals, as it is not a survey based on a sample of the population. SCDOC can partner with localities to provide and interpret this data in conjunction with other sources so that localities can develop their own solutions based on timely, accurate data.
- ***Improve Economic Forecasting***: Immediate feedback on monthly changes and deviations from trends will allow identification of variations that are seasonal or expected versus which ones indicate an authentic change in activity. For instance, tourist areas may see sharper seasonal swings in claimants than other areas. This regular analysis will provide the ability to know what to expect, when to expect it, and how to respond and account for it. SCDOC can partner with economists and researchers to use this data to improve econometric models of the state economy and better account for swings in Unemployment Insurance claimants each month, better understanding seasonal trends and temporary claims.

All of these activities, however, depend upon the ability of the UI claims data to provide complete, accurate data. Currently, missing data accounts for 21.7% of ages, 25% of educational attainment; 39% of reason for separation; 34% of occupations; and 10.5% of industries. UI claims data will be useful only if collection methods are improved and enforced to minimize the large amounts of missing and incomplete data on each claim.

Next Steps

In order to utilize this data to its fullest, the following plans are required.

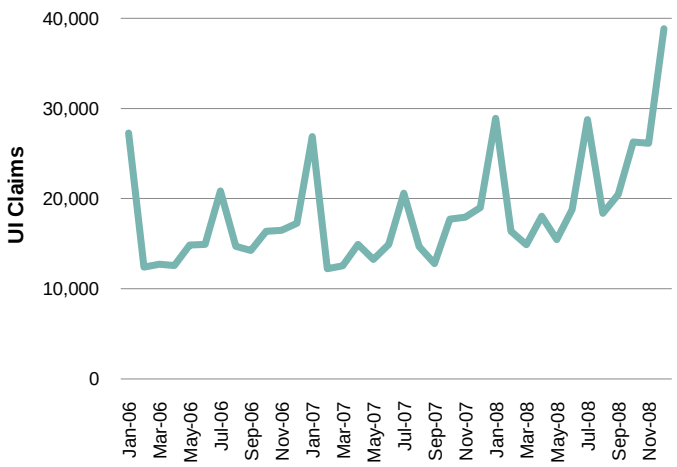
- ***Improve Data***: All agencies involved in unemployment in South Carolina need to partner together to find ways to improve data collection and entry. The large amount of incomplete data severely hampers the ability to accurately assess progress and develop appropriate changes. In particular, given the large number of employer-filed claims within the state (18.6% of all claims), these claims must be required to submit the same information as those filed by the claimants themselves.
- ***In-Depth Analysis***: The results provided in this paper represent a preliminary overview of the UI claimant data that is available in South Carolina. Further detailed analysis will focus on developing detailed profiles of various types of claimants that can be used to target interventions that are effective.
- ***Comprehensive, Wide-Reaching, Monthly Reporting***: On a monthly basis, a wide-reaching, comprehensive reporting system will be developed to deliver timely data to state agencies, academic institutions, economists, and researchers for the following purposes:
  - Workforce Training and Development,
  - Economic Development and Recruiting,
  - Academic Research, and
  - High-Level Overviews for Policy Makers.
- ***Synchronized Response***: Most importantly, the sharing of this data represents the initial stage of a synchronized effort of all agencies responsible for unemployed, job creation, and workforce training. Utilizing results as input into program development, coordinating business processes, and eventually operating on the same software will allow faster movement of individuals back into the job market, more efficient use of state funds, and the growth of state economic output and employment.

OVERVIEW: South Carolina's Unemployment Insurance Claimant Population

This study provides detailed analysis of the set of Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimant data received from the South Carolina Employment Security Commission on February 27th, 2009. The dataset includes 663,708 claims for Unemployment Insurance in South Carolina between January 1st 2006 and December 31st 2008, representing 490,637 individuals. These individuals represent a comprehensive dataset of those who lost employment and filed a claim for UI. Each individual did not necessarily receive payment of benefits. Of 663,708 claims filed between 2006 and 2008, 268,921 did not receive UI benefits (98,860 of these were deemed ineligible, 3,019 were withdrawn, and the remaining are unknown). The purpose in analyzing this data is threefold: 1.) to identify the UI population in the state; 2.) to reveal trends affecting the application, delivery, duration, and exhaustion of UI benefits; and 3.) to utilize findings to pinpoint areas in which further investigation and follow up may be required.

Total Claims

Figure 1-1. South Carolina Unemployment Insurance Claims Filed by Month, 2006 – 2008



Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

The Unemployment Insurance system in South Carolina experienced the following activity between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2008:

- **Claims**: 663,708
- **Unique Claimants**: 490,637

On average, 18,436 claims were filed each month. 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.

Age

Table 1-1. South Carolina Unemployment Insurance Claimant Age Ranges, 2006 – 2008

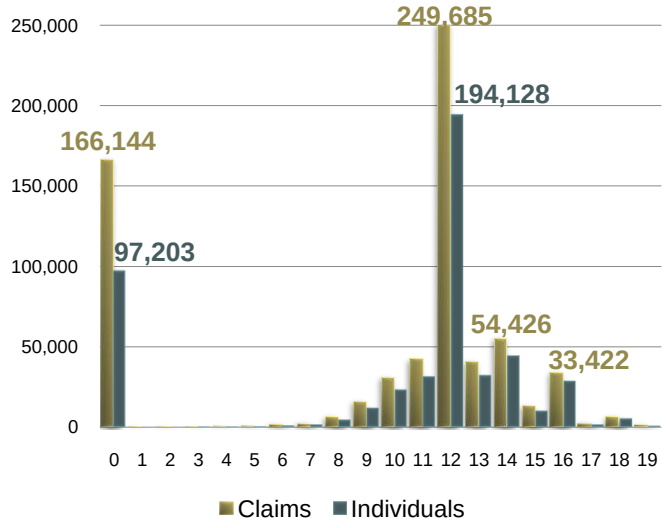
	Claims		Individuals	
Age Range	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
UNKNOWN	144,050	21.7	80,031	16.3
1-10	289	0.04	243	0.1
11-20	12,920	2.0	11,571	2.4
21-30	150,162	22.6	118,109	24.1
31-40	123,447	18.6	97,281	19.8
41-50	119,275	18.0	93,140	19.0
51-60	83,054	12.5	65,462	13.3
61-70	26,282	4.0	21,414	4.4
71-80	3,656	0.6	2,928	0.6
81-90	500	0.1	395	0.1
91+	73	0.01	63	0.01
Total	**663,708**	**100**	**490,637**	**100**

Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

- The largest percentage of UI claimants fall within the 21 to 30 year old age range, representing 24.1% of individuals and 22.6% of claims.
- Ages are unknown for 21.7% of claims and appear miscoded for a handful of others (i.e.-1-10 year olds).
  - Of the claims with unknown age, 116,282 (80.7%) are filed by employers.

Education

Figure 1-2. South Carolina Unemployment Insurance Claimant Educational Attainment, 2006 – 2008

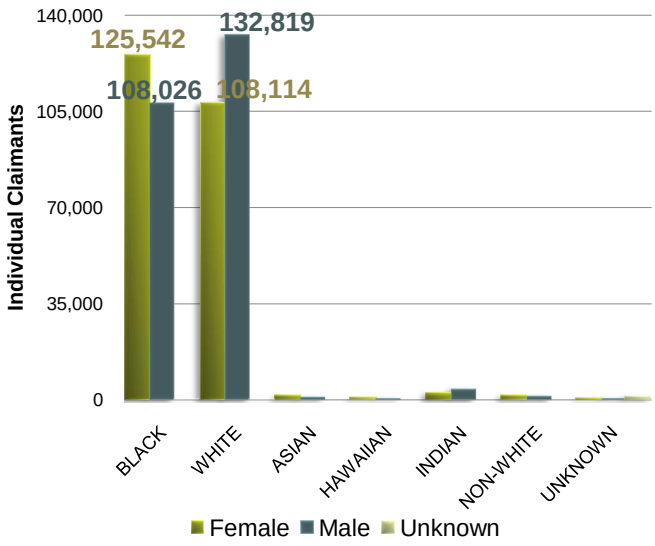


Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data
Note: Unknown values coded as zero (0)

- Educational attainment is not collected for 25% of claims and 19.8% of individuals.
  - Of the claims with unknown education levels, 116,112 (70%) are claims filed by employers.
- Of 393,434 individuals for whom educational data was collected,
  - 19.2% did not complete high school,
  - 49.3% had a high school diploma or equivalent,
  - 31.4% had at least one year of post-secondary education.

Gender and Race

Figure 1-3. South Carolina Unemployment Insurance Claimant Gender and Race, 2006 – 2008



Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

- Caucasian males participate at higher rates than Caucasian females.
- Conversely, African-American males participate at lower rates than African-American females.
- Gender and race was unrecorded for 0.24% of individuals.
- Of 490,637 individuals,
  - 240,197 were female, and
  - 249,279 were male.

Filing Method

Table 1-2. South Carolina Unemployment Insurance Claim Method of Filing, 2006 – 2008

Filing Method	Claims		Individuals	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
UNKNOWN	2,510	0.4	682	0.1
Employer Filed	123,302	18.6	68,264	13.9
Strike	81	0.01	79	0.02
Claimant Filed	537,815	81.0	421,612	85.9
Total	**663,708**	**100**	**490,637**	**100**

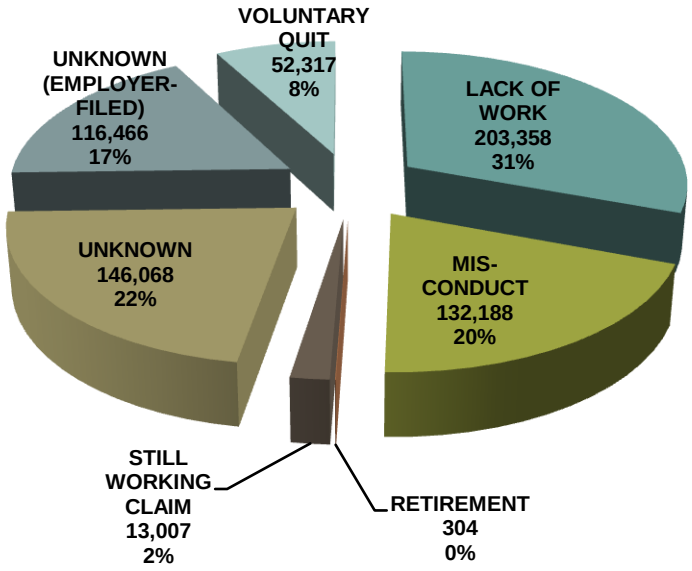
Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

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.

- 18.6% of claims are filed by employers for temporary shutdowns, representing 13.9% of individual claimants.
- Due to state UI limitations, not all temporary furloughs can be filed by the employer, thus a number of temporary claims are 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.

Reason For Separation

Figure 1-4. South Carolina Unemployment Insurance Claim Reason for Separation, 2006 – 2008



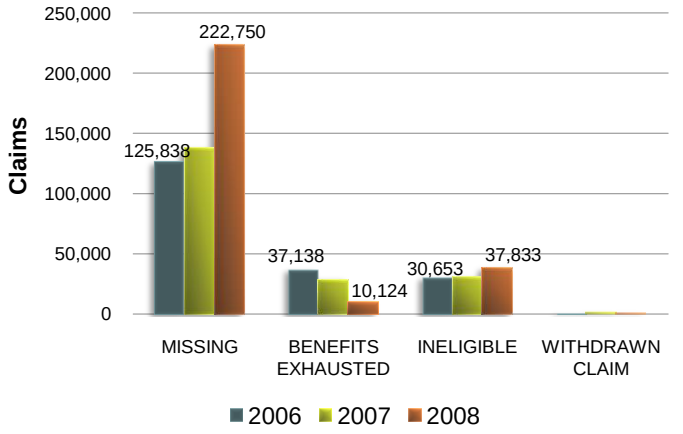
Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data
Note: The Unknown category was segmented by filing method.

For each claim filed, the reason the claimant seeks UI is to be documented. Of the 663,708 claims filed in South Carolina between 2006 and 2008,

- 31% were filed for Lack of Work,
- 20% were filed for Misconduct,
- 8% were filed by an individual who voluntarily quit,
- 2% did not yet have a reason for separation, as the Employment Security Commission was Still Working on the Claim, and
- 39% did not record the information.
  - Of these Unknown reasons for separation, 116,466 were employer-filed claims, representing 44% of the total Unknown reasons for separation.

Termination of Benefits Reason

Figure 1-5. South Carolina Unemployment Insurance Claim Termination Reason, 2006 – 2008



Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

A UI claim can be terminated for one of three reasons—benefits are exhausted, the claimant is ineligible, or the claim is withdrawn by the claimant. Otherwise, the UI system does not track when a claim ends, as the claimant simply ceases to reapply for UI benefit payments.

Due to the right-censored nature of the dataset (i.e. some individuals who filed most recently still had active claims as of 12/31/2008 at which time the dataset ends), missing values are much more likely for claims filed in 2008. Likewise, Benefits Exhausted values are much more likely for claims filed in 2006.

- 73% of claims had Missing reason for termination. By year, these percentages were:
  - 64.6% missing in 2006,
  - 69.6% missing in 2007, and
  - 82.1% missing in 2008.
- Benefits were exhausted in 11.4% of claims. By year:
  - 19.1% exhausted in 2006,
  - 14.5% exhausted in 2007, and
  - 3.7% exhausted in 2008.
- Ineligible claims totaled 14.9%. By year:
  - 15.7% ineligible in 2006,
  - 15.4% ineligible in 2007, and
  - 13.9% ineligible in 2008, (although the total number of ineligible claims rose in 2008).

Technical Note

UI claims data can be modified up to seven years from the time the claim is filed, thus the total number of claims filed in a given year or month or other specified time period can change from day to day. According to the SC Employment Security Commission, the most common three reasons the file date of a claim can change are as follows:

Appeals: A claim filed at some earlier date and deemed ineligible could end up in an appeals process. If the appeals process is successful, either months or years later, the claim's file date could change.

Responsible Employer Changes: The liable employer may not be determined at the time the claim is filed. Once the liable employer is readjusted, claim's file date could change, often moving from one month to another.

Wage Records Disputes: Sometimes variations occur in the wage reported by the employer and wage reported by the employee. Sometimes it is a simple mistake that can be corrected. Other times, it may be that the employer is consistently under-representing wages (in which case action needs to be taken). Regardless, it can cause the claim's file date to be updated.

Key Points

Central findings include the following points:

- ✓ Due to the high level of missing information, all agencies involved in unemployment need to partner together to find ways to improve data entry.
- ✓ High school graduates (or equivalent) make up the majority of UI claims. More postsecondary attendees are claimants than high school dropouts.
- ✓ Lack of Work accounts for 31% of claims filed. Misconduct and Voluntary Quit account for 28%.
- ✓ Claims filed by employers for temporary furloughs make up 18.6% of claims.

INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS: Trends Shaping UI Claims

Claims for unemployment insurance vary widely by industry and occupation, with some industries producing many more claims than others. Also, several industries exhibit highly seasonal correlation in claim incidence, with peaks occurring in January and July followed by troughs in the following month.

Claims by Industry

Table 2-1. South Carolina Unemployment Insurance Claims by Industry, 2006 – 2008

Industry	Claims		Claimants	
	Number	%	Number	%
Administrative & Support Services	86,071	13.0	61,694	12.6
Food Services & Drinking Places	53,849	8.1	38,769	7.9
Textile Mills	37,844	5.7	21,701	4.4
Specialty Trade Contractors	35,299	5.3	26,733	5.5
Machinery Manufacturing	19,576	3.0	10,810	2.2
Transportation Equipment Mfg	17,897	2.7	13,620	2.8
Professional, Scientific, Technical Svcs	15,835	2.4	12,863	2.6
General Merchandise Stores	14,637	2.2	11,712	2.4
Accommodation	14,371	2.2	10,209	2.1
Fabricated Metal Product Mfg	13,449	2.0	9,858	2.0
Construction of Buildings	12,825	1.9	10,059	2.1
Textile Product Mills	12,473	1.9	6,825	1.4
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	10,800	1.6	8,569	1.8
Educational Services	10,210	1.5	8,401	1.7
Ambulatory Health Care Services	9,855	1.5	8,441	1.7
Nursing & Residential Care Facilities	9,739	1.5	8,038	1.6
Social Assistance	9,153	1.4	6,335	1.3
Gasoline Stations	8,992	1.4	7,115	1.5
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	8,884	1.3	7,518	1.5
Heavy & Civil Engineering Construction	8,788	1.3	6,388	1.3
Plastics & Rubber Products Mfg	8,290	1.3	5,755	1.2
Food & Beverage Stores	8,007	1.2	6,642	1.4
Truck Transportation	7,539	1.1	6,109	1.3
Credit Intermediation & Related	7,369	1.1	6,274	1.3
UNKNOWN	69,900	10.5	52,102	10.6

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); Hospitality subsectors (Food, Accommodations); Manufacturing subsectors; Construction subsectors; and Retail subsectors.

Claims by Occupation

Table 2-2. South Carolina Unemployment Insurance Claims by Occupational Group, 2006 – 2008

Occupation	Claims		Claimants	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Production	87,598	13.2	59,886	12.2
Sales	52,288	7.9	42,952	8.8
Construction/Extraction	43,668	6.6	33,290	6.8
Food Preparation/Serving	42,231	6.4	32,722	6.7
Office/Administrative Support	39,990	6.0	32,533	6.6
Transportation	30,382	4.6	23,395	4.8
Management	26,789	4.0	23,620	4.8
Building/Grounds Maintenance	20,538	3.1	15,000	3.1
Installation/Maintenance/Repair	17,217	2.6	13,840	2.8
Healthcare Support	15,174	2.3	12,301	2.5
Business/Financial Operations	11,775	1.8	9,916	2.0
Personal Care	7,670	1.2	6,071	1.2
Education/Training/Library	7,051	1.1	5,410	1.1
Healthcare Practitioners	6,529	1.0	5,657	1.2
Protective Services	5,638	0.9	4,540	0.9
Computer/Mathematical	4,682	0.7	3,970	0.8
Architecture/Engineering	4,537	0.7	3,907	0.8
Art/Design/Entertainment	3,203	0.5	2,677	0.6
Community/Social Science	2,743	0.4	2,253	0.5
Farming/Fishing/Forestry	2,661	0.4	2,011	0.4
Legal	2,232	0.3	1,959	0.4
Military	2,170	0.3	2,052	0.4
Life/Physical/Social Science	681	0.1	567	0.1
MISSING	226,261	34.1	150,108	30.6
Total	**663,708**	**100**	**490,637**	**100**

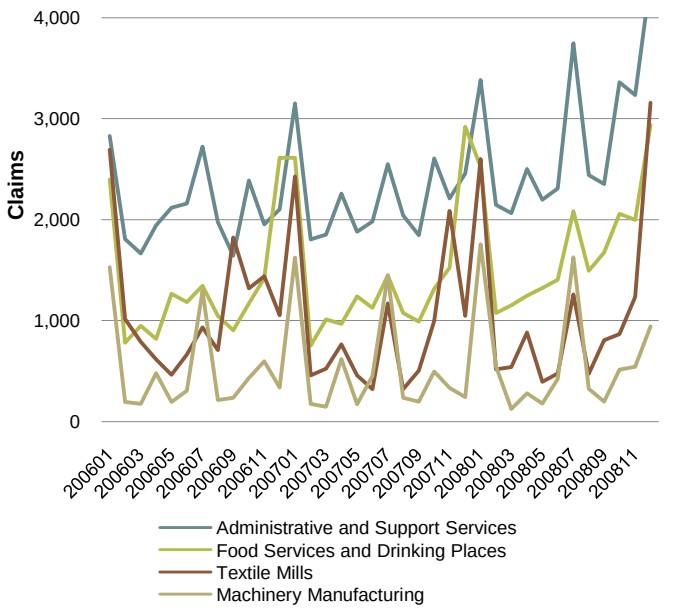
Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

34% of UI claims were missing occupational information. Rather than being concentrated in a single occupation, claims were dispersed across a variety of occupations.

- Production: 13.2%
- Sales: 7.9%
- Construction: 6.6%
- Food Preparation: 6.4%
- Office/Administrative: 6.0%

Seasonality of Claims by Industry

Figure 2-1. South Carolina Unemployment Insurance Claims Filed by Month, 2006 – 2008



Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Some industries exhibit seasonal trends in UI claim filing, particularly experiencing peaks during January and July of each year. Figure 2-1 displays the four industries with both the highest volume of claims and the highest seasonal patterns. Industries with the largest percentage peak-to-trough change in claims are shown in Table 2-3.

Table 2-3. South Carolina Average Peak-to-Trough Monthly Difference in Claims Filed, 2006 – 2008

Industry	Claims	Avg. Peak-to-Trough Monthly Difference
Machinery Manufacturing	19,576	449.2%
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	17,897	271.8%
Textile Product Mills	12,473	474.2%
Food Manufacturing	7,107	237.2%
Apparel Manufacturing	5,752	545.4%
Transit & Ground Passenger Transportation	1,616	296.3%
Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, Related	1,302	397.0%
Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation	242	1300.0%
Air Transportation	210	461.5%
Museums, Historical Sites, & Similar	132	246.7%

Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Employer-Filed Claims

Table 2-4. South Carolina Unemployment Insurance Employer-Filed Claims by Industry, 2006 – 2008

Industry	Claims		% Employer
	Total	Employer	
Textile Mills	37,844	24,794	66%
Machinery Mfg	19,576	12,126	62%
Apparel Mfg	5,752	3,493	61%
Electrical Equipment, Appliance, Component Mfg	3,858	1,970	51%
Leather & Allied Product Mfg	58	29	50%
Petroleum & Coal Products Mfg	171	84	49%
Transit & Ground Passenger Transport	1,616	769	48%
Nonmetallic Mineral Product Mfg	5,327	2,334	44%
Fabricated Metal Product Mfg	13,449	5,849	43%
Primary Metal Mfg	2,865	1,194	42%
Food Mfg	7,107	2,955	42%
Textile Product Mills	12,473	5,145	41%
Transportation Equipment Mfg	17,897	7,378	41%
Paper Mfg	2,453	978	40%
Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional Orgs	4,303	1,636	38%
Mining (except Oil & Gas)	662	235	35%
Scenic & Sightseeing Transportation	242	84	35%
Wood Product Mfg	5,513	1,911	35%
Chemical Mfg	6,052	2,073	34%
Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, & Related	1,302	442	34%
Administration of Environmental Quality Programs	367	121	33%
Computer & Electronic Product Mfg	3,224	1,053	33%
Printing & Related Support Activities	1,710	529	31%
Heavy & Civil Engineering Construction	8,788	2,295	26%
Plastics & Rubber Products Mfg	8,290	2,116	26%
Miscellaneous Mfg	2,679	641	24%
Forestry & Logging	1,626	352	22%
Food Services & Drinking Places	53,849	10,902	20%

Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Claims filed by employers vary widely according to industry. Table 2-4 displays all industries (classified according to NAICS codes at the 3-digit level) for which employer-filed claims make up at least 20% of the total claims filed between 2006 and 2008. Manufacturing sectors make up the majority of industries heavily utilizing employer-filed claims.

Key Points

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

- ✓ Subsectors in the manufacturing, food and hospitality, tourism, and construction-related industries exhibit highly seasonal trends in UI claims.
- ✓ Manufacturing industry subsectors have higher incidence of employer-filed claims.
- ✓ No single industry or occupation dominates claims for Unemployment Insurance. Instead, a wide variety of industries and occupations are represented, indicating variety in the approaches needed to address unemployment.

"JOB-ATTACHED" CLAIMS: Temporary Claims

In South Carolina, 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 facility closures, after which the claimant will return to work. South Carolina is one of only a handful of states that still allow employers to file UI claims for employees. Due to the seasonality of plant and facility closings, employer-filed claims follow seasonal patterns more so than other claims.

Overview

Table 3-1. South Carolina Unemployment Insurance Claim Method of Filing, 2006 – 2008

	Claims		Individuals	
Filing Method	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
UNKNOWN	2,510	0.4	682	0.1
Employer Filed	123,302	18.6	68,264	13.9
Strike	81	0.01	79	0.02
Claimant Filed	537,815	81.0	421,612	85.9
Total	**663,708**	**100**	**490,637**	**100**

Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Between 2006 and 2008, 123,302 claims (or 18.6% of all claims) were employer-filed. 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 flip to employee-filed as time goes on and the employer ceases to continue filing the claim. Thus, the number of employer-filed claims may under-represent the true number of claims originally filed by employers.

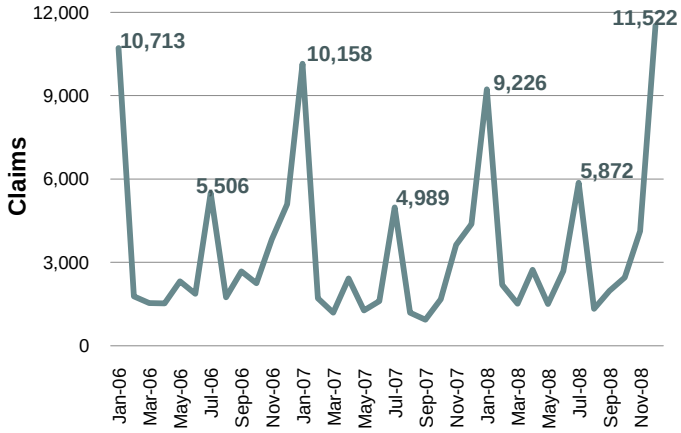
Although 18.6% of claims were employer-filed, this number represents only 13.9% of individuals, indicating a larger percentage of multiple claimants exist within this population.

South Carolina is one of only a few states that still allow 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 typically lack all information about the individual claimant with the exception of gender, race, and often industry. This lack of information largely precludes accurate analysis of the entire population of UI claimants in the state.

Employer-Filed Claims

Figure 3-1. South Carolina Employer-Filed UI Claims by Month, 2006 – 2008



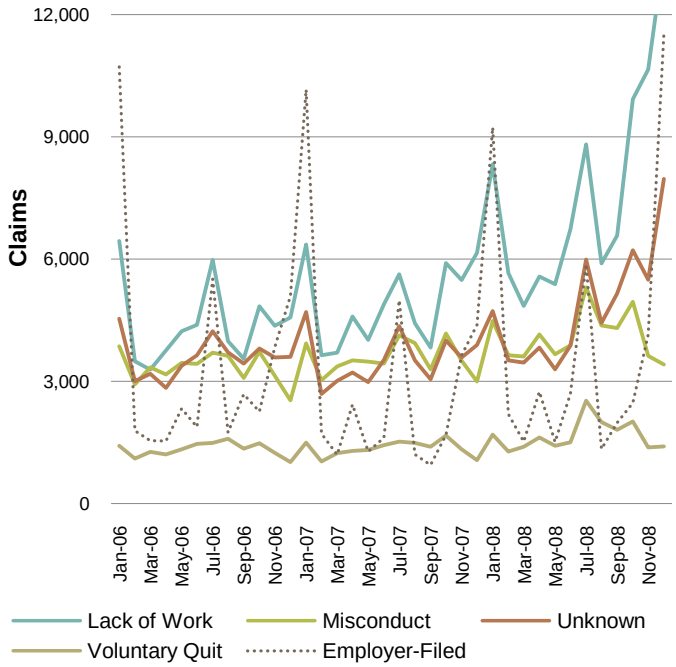
Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Employer-filed claims follow highly seasonal patterns, with sharp increases in "job-attached" claims in January and smaller increases in July, both corresponding with temporary facility closings.

- During January, employer-filed claims account for an average of 36.2% of claims filed.
- During July, employer-filed claims account for an average of 23.3% of claims filed.

Reasons for Separation

Figure 3-2. South Carolina UI Claims Filed by Reason for Separation by Month, 2006 – 2008



Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Due to state UI limitations, not all temporary furloughs can be filed by the employer, thus a number of temporary claims are 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.

Figure 3-2 shows, however, the corresponding nature of seasonal spikes in employer-filed claims with seasonal spikes in claims filed due to Lack of Work, strongly indicating the absorption of some of the temporary "job-attached" claims in this category. Additionally, corresponding spikes in the Unknown, Misconduct, and (to some extent) Voluntary Quit categories are further indicative that the reason for separation may be either miscoded or misrepresented by claimants, but certainly affected by "job-attached" claimants.

Key Points

Primary conclusions include the following:

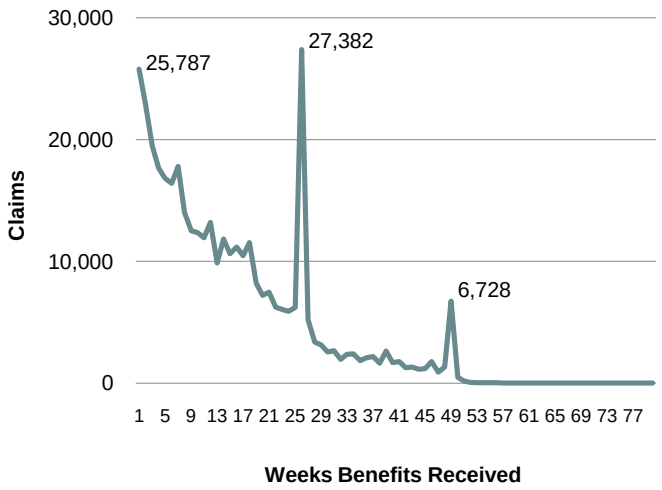
- ✓ Claims that are classified as "job-attached" are exceptionally seasonal in nature.
- ✓ A high percentage of "job-attached" claims exists—not just employer-filed alone—but also in other categories. An accurate gauge of the extent of all temporary furloughs is not currently possible, as the current UI system does not collect data to indicate which individuals are truly still attached to a job.

DURATION: Key Trends in Length of UI Claims

Individuals filing for South Carolina Unemployment Insurance benefits are typically eligible to receive benefits for a maximum of 26 weeks. However, certain federal extension programs are available that extend benefits beyond this time period. Of 663,708 claims filed between 2006 and 2008, 268,921 did not receive UI benefits (98,860 of these were deemed ineligible, 3,019 were withdrawn, and the remaining are unknown). The duration of claims not receiving benefits is zero (0). The average UI claim that receives benefits does so for 15 weeks. Between 2006 and 2008, the maximum number of weeks a claim received benefits was 81 weeks.

Overview

Figure 4-1. Duration of South Carolina UI Benefits Received, 2006 – 2008



Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Excluding claims that have durations of zero, the average number of weeks benefits were received has increased in each of the three-year periods:

- **2006**: 14.2 weeks
- **2007**: 17.1 weeks
- **2008 (Q1 & Q2)**: 19.4 weeks

Figure 4-1 shows the spike in number of claims receiving benefits at 26 weeks (the maximum number of state weeks) and at 49 weeks (the end of the initial 13 week federal benefits extension). While no significant differences occur in average duration by race, females do receive benefits approximately four additional weeks, on average, than males.

Industry

Table 4-1. Mean Claim Duration by Industry, 2006 – 2008

Industry	Claims	
	Average Duration	Percent of Claims
Information	19.7	0.7%
Financial Sector	18.9	1.8%
Education	18.3	1.5%
Management	18.2	0.2%
Government	17.4	1.2%
Real Estate	17.2	1.4%
Trade	17.0	12.9%
Healthcare/Social	16.7	5.2%
Professional Services	16.5	2.4%
Extraction/Utility	16.3	0.2%
Farming/Agriculture	16.3	0.6%
Construction	16.2	8.6%
Admin Support/Waste Mgmt	16.2	13.2%
Personal Services	15.9	2.1%
Transportation/Warehousing	15.0	2.5%
Entertainment	13.4	11.2%
Manufacturing	12.0	23.9%
Unknown	16.3	10.5%
Total	**15.0**	**100%**

Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

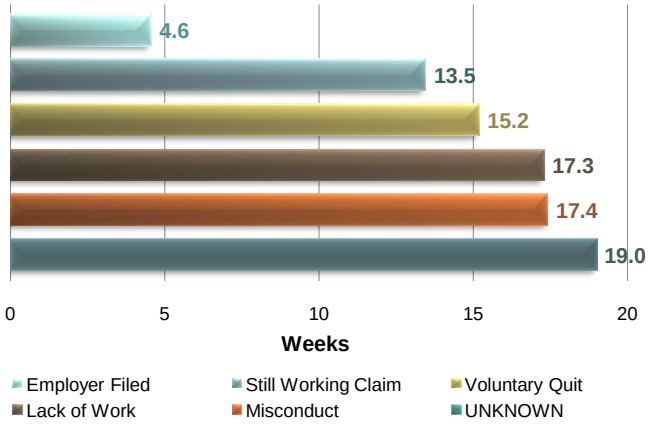
Industries with the longest average duration (excluding claims with duration of zero) include:

- **Information:** 19.7 weeks
- **Financial Services**: 18.9 weeks
- **Education**: 18.3 weeks

Table 4-1 shows the percentage of all claims in each industry group as well as their average duration in weeks.

Reason for Separation

Figure 4-2. South Carolina UI Mean Claim Duration by Reason for Separation, 2006 – 2008

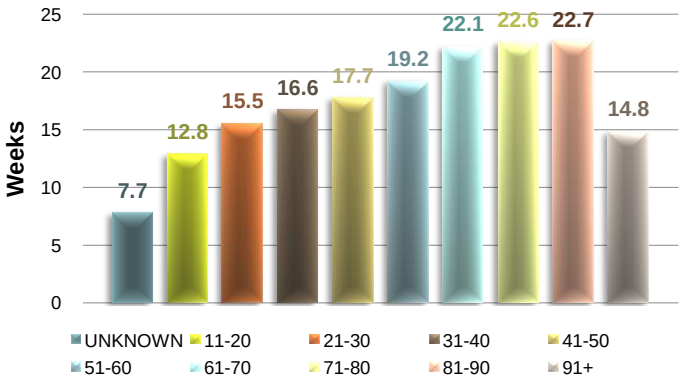


Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data
Note: The Unknown category was segmented by filing method.

Unknown claims (not including employer-filed) have the longest mean duration at 19 weeks. Those reporting misconduct as their reason for separation had the second longest average duration at 17.4 weeks. Employer-filed claims had the shortest average duration at 4.6 weeks.

Age

Figure 4-3. South Carolina UI Mean Claim Duration by Age Group, 2006 – 2008

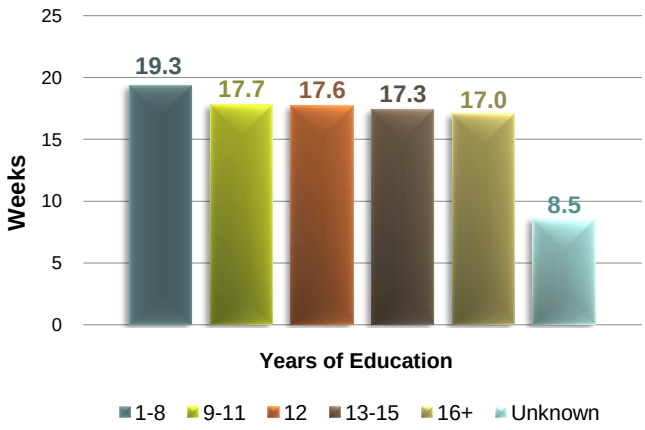


Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Average duration of UI benefits receipt increases with age, dropping off after 91 years. Those whose age is unknown have the lowest duration in weeks (80.7% of unknown ages are employer-filed claims).

Educational Attainment

Figure 4-4. South Carolina UI Mean Claim Duration by Educational Attainment, 2006 – 2008



Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Average duration does not appear to be significantly impacted by educational attainment except for those with very low levels of education and for those in which education is unknown.

- **1-8 years of education:** 19.3 weeks
- **Unknown education**: 8.5 weeks
  (70% of claims with unknown education are filed by employers.)

Key Points

Key findings include the following:

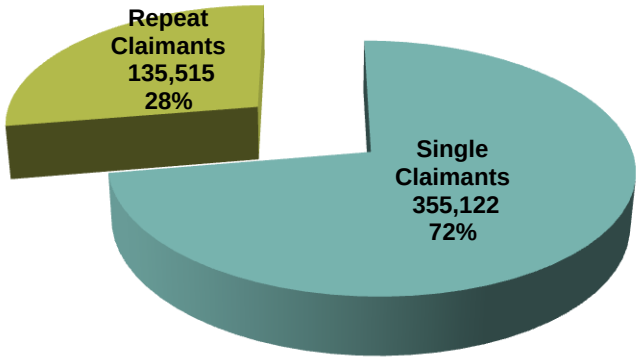
- ✓ Of those receiving any benefits, nearly 7% use the state's maximum 26 weeks while another 13% use available federal extensions beyond this time.
- ✓ Seasonal industries do not appear to be as likely to have long durations on UI.
- ✓ Certain characteristics are associated with longer UI duration including industry, separation reason, and age.

RECIDIVISM: Profiles of Repeat Claimants

Recidivism is defined as repeated or habitual relapse into a particular state. Two primary explanations describe why some claimants repeatedly file for UI benefits. The first group includes individuals who have trouble maintaining jobs due to personal characteristics or who work in industries with high rates of job creation and destruction. The second group includes workers in certain industries known for seasonal fluctuations in demand. This group may expect to experience these temporary layoffs on a regular or semi-regular basis. Industry and filing method tend to be the best predictors of recidivism.

Overview

Figure 5-1. Repeat Versus Single Claimants, 2006 – 2008



Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Between 2006 and 2008 a total of 490,637 individuals filed for unemployment benefits. Approximately 72% of these individuals filed only one claim during that period while another 28% filed more than one claim (Figure 5-1).

Repeat Claimants by Industry

Table 5-1. Single Versus Repeat Claimants by Industry

Industry	Percent Single	Percent Repeat
Manufacturing	60.2%	39.8%
Administrative Support/Waste Mgmt	68.5%	31.5%
Food Services	71.0%	29.0%
Agriculture/Farming	71.8%	28.2%
Construction	74.0%	26.0%
Missing	74.4%	25.6%
Other Services	76.2%	23.8%
Transportation/Warehousing	76.4%	23.6%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	77.0%	23.0%
Wholesale Trade	78.3%	21.7%
HealthCare	80.3%	19.7%
Public Administration	81.0%	19.0%
Retail Trade	81.1%	18.9%
Professional Services	81.2%	18.8%
Educational Services	81.6%	18.4%
Real Estate-Leasing	81.8%	18.2%
Management	81.8%	18.2%
Utilities	84.4%	15.6%
Finance/Insurance	84.9%	15.1%
Information	85.4%	14.6%
Mining-Extraction	85.5%	14.5%

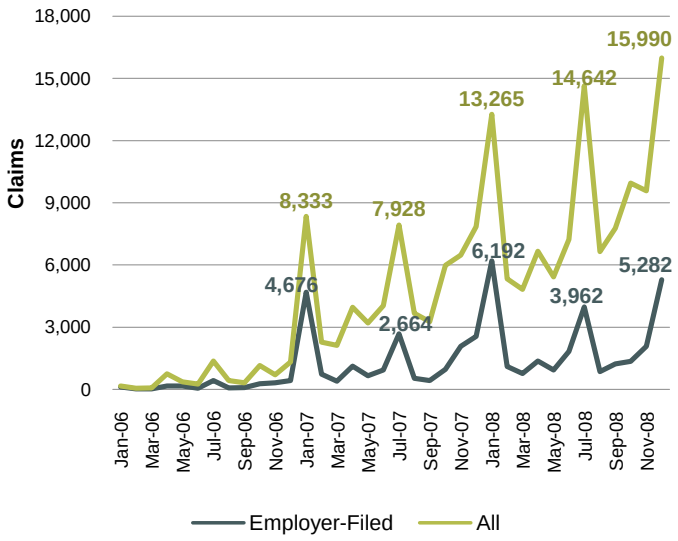
Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Seasonal industries and industries with high turnover rates have higher numbers of individuals filing for benefits more than once in the three year period. Industries with the highest percentage of repeat claimants include:

- **Manufacturing**: 39.8%
- **Administrative Support/Waste Management** (including temporary staffing agencies): 31.5%
- **Food Services**: 29.0%

Seasonality of Repeat Claims

Figure 5-2. Repeat Claims by Month Filed



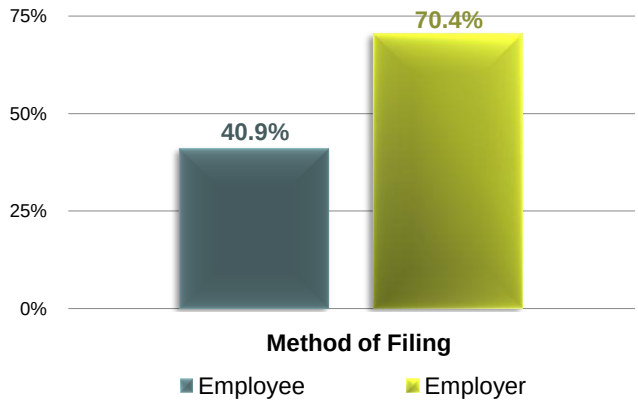
Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Repeat claims follow highly seasonal patterns, with sharp increases in repeat claims being filed in January and July, both most likely corresponding with temporary facility closings. Employer-filed claims for temporary furloughs closely follow the same seasonal pattern.

- During January 39% of all claims were filed by individuals with at least one prior claim in the three-year period.
- During July, 46% of all claims were filed by individuals with at least one prior claim in the three-year period.

Filing Method

Figure 5-3. Percent Repeat Claims by Filing Method

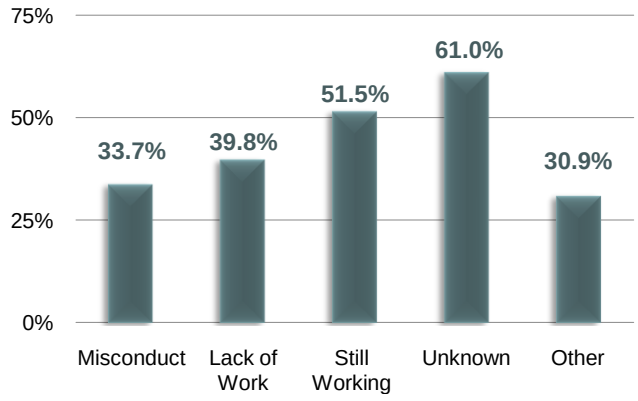


Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Large differences exist in the tendency to file a repeat claim by filing method. Those with an employer-filed claim have repeat filings 70.4% of the time compared to only 40.9% of the time for employee-filed claims.

Reason for Separation

Figure 5-4. Percent Repeat Claims by Separation Reason



Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

Over three-fifths of claims filed with the separation reason of “Unknown” are repeat claims. 44% of unknown claims are filed by employers, which have a higher incidence of repeat claims. Voluntary Quit and Retirement (Other) are the separation reasons least likely to be repeat claims.

Age and Education Levels

Table 5-2. Percent Repeat Claims by Age and Education

Age	Percent Repeat
<25 years	57.6%
26-44 years	40.6%
45-54 years	41.9%
55-64 years	39.5%
65+ years	38.0%
Unknown	37.1%
Educational Attainment	
1-8 years	40.6%
9-11 years	43.5%
12 years	43.2%
13-15 years	36.5%
16+ years	27.4%
Unknown	64.8%

Source: Commerce analysis of ESC UI Claimant data

While those less than 25 years old are more likely to have more than one claim filed in the three-year period, the percentage of individuals with more than one claim tends to decline with age.

The tendency to file multiple claims also declines with years of education. Those with unknown years of education (70% of which are employer-filed) have the highest percentage of repeat claims.

Key Points

Central findings regarding repeat claims include the following:

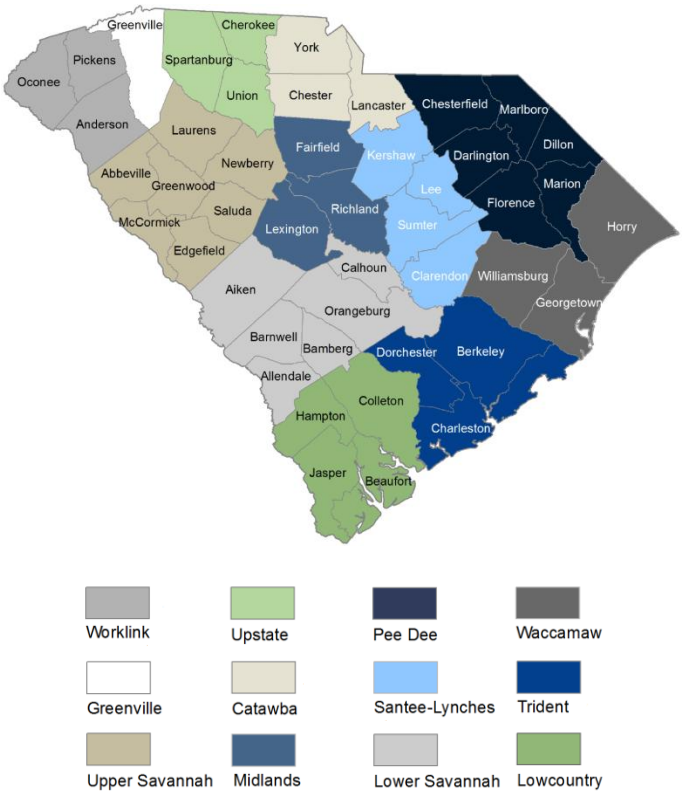
- ✓ Filing repeat claims is highly correlated with work in seasonal occupations that experience temporary fluctuations in labor demand. Better coding of data may allow for a more in-depth analysis of those experiencing "temporary" furloughs and layoffs.
- ✓ Employer-filed claims tend to be associated with repeat spells of UI.
- ✓ Repeat claims are negatively correlated with both age and years of education. As experience and skills accumulate, the length of time receiving UI benefits decreases.
- ✓ About one-third of all individuals filing a claim between 2006 and 2008 have more than one claim.

GEOGRAPHIC VARIATIONS: Workforce Investment Area (WIA)-Level Examination of Claims

Accounting for differences in population, the Pee Dee WIA had the largest number of unique claimants in the sample period. Sizable differences exist in the percentage of each WIA's workforce involved in seasonal industries such as manufacturing, construction, and entertainment. Demographic characteristics are fairly consistent across WIAs in terms of average age, gender, and years of education.

Distribution by WIA

Figure 6-1. South Carolina Workforce Investment Areas



South Carolina has twelve Workforce Investment Areas as displayed in Figure 6-1. Table 6-1 shows that although the Midlands WIA had the largest number of unique claimants (60,952), after accounting for populations in each area, the Upstate WIA had the highest percentage of their population file at least one claim during the period 2006-2008.

Table 6-1. Claimants by WIA, 2006-2008

WIA	Claimants	2008 Population	% of Pop.
Pee Dee	44,263	335,958	13.2%
Upper Savannah	32,983	255,721	12.9%
Upstate	46,044	362,804	12.7%
Lower Savannah	38,500	307,616	12.5%
Waccamaw	41,418	353,201	11.7%
Santee-Lynches	23,529	216,089	10.9%
Worklink	39,350	371,014	10.6%
Midlands	60,952	635,954	9.6%
Catawba	29,235	325,979	9.0%
Greenville	38,687	438,119	8.8%
Trident	54,162	644,506	8.4%
Lowcountry	16,534	232,839	7.1%
MISSING	24,980	--	--
Total	**490,637**	**4,479,800**	**11.0%**

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

Table 6-1 shows that although the Midlands WIA had the largest number of unique claimants (60,952), after accounting for populations in each area, the Pee Dee WIA had the highest percentage of their population file at least one claim during the period 2006-2008.

WIA Characteristics

- Most WIAs have more male claimants than female claimants. However, there are larger numbers of female claimants in the Midlands and Trident areas.
- The Worklink and Greenville WIAs have higher percentages of Caucasian claimants while the Midlands, Santee-Lynches, Pee Dee, and Lower

Savannah service significantly higher percentages of African-American claimants.

- High numbers of employer-filed first claims include Worklink (24.2%), Upstate (22.1%), and Upper Savannah (24.2%) WIAs, possibly related to higher concentrations of manufacturing industries in these areas that have temporary layoffs on a regular, or semi-regular, basis.
- Areas with the highest levels of educational attainment are urban areas, including Greenville, Midlands, and Trident WIAs.
- The percentage of first-time claims citing manufacturing as their industry were highest in the Worklink (30.6%) and Upper Savannah (34.7%) WIAs. Coastal areas of Waccamaw (12.6%), the Lowcountry (13.9%), and Trident (10.7%) had the highest percentage of claimants in construction.
- First-time claimants in the Administrative Support/ Waste Management industries were concentrated in Greenville, the Upstate, and Worklink WIAs. A large percentage of the Waccamaw claimants reported being in the highly seasonal Entertainment industry.

Key Points

Main points regarding geographic distribution of claims are provided as follows:

- ✓ Between 2006 and 2008, 11% of South Carolina's population applied for UI at least once.
- ✓ The WIAs do not have extreme differences in the demographic characteristics (age, race, gender) of their claimants.
- ✓ Certain WIAs have high concentrations of seasonal industries which may contribute to their greater likelihood of having repeat claimants.

CONCLUSION

This paper represents an initial analysis of the Unemployment Insurance claimant data for the state of South Carolina. Examination of this data and subsequent implementation of programs designed from its findings will allow South Carolina to 1.) use current data to measure progress; 2.) create programs to solve known problems, not assumed issues; and 3.) better allocate state resources to programs that will more efficiently deliver solutions.

Key Findings

Initial findings of the dataset of Unemployment Insurance claimants in South Carolina between 2006 and 2008 yield a number of important conclusions.

Extent of Use: Between 2006 and 2008, 11% of South Carolina's population filed at least one claim for Unemployment Insurance.

Incomplete Information: A high level of information is missing or uncollected on UI claims. Much of this incomplete information is a result of employer-filed claims, which are only required to provide very basic information on individual claimants—typically only gender, race, and often industry. This lack of data impedes a full, accurate, and comprehensive analysis of the population of UI claimants, both statewide and at local levels.

Education: High school graduates (or equivalent) make up the majority of UI claims. More postsecondary attendees are claimants than high school dropouts.

Reasons for Separation: Lack of Work accounts for 31% of claims filed. Misconduct and Voluntary Quit account for 28%. 39% of claims did not have any reason listed for losing employment and were, thus, recorded as Unknown. Of these Unknown reasons for separation, 116,466 were employer-filed claims, representing 44% of the total Unknown reasons for separation.

Job-Attached Claims: Claims filed by employers for temporary furloughs make up 18.6% of claims. Claims that are classified as "job-attached" are exceptionally seasonal in nature. There exists a high percentage of "job-attached" claims—not just employer-filed alone—but also in other categories. An accurate gauge of all temporary furloughs is not currently possible, as the current UI system does not collect data to indicate which individuals are truly still attached to a job.

Industries: Subsectors in the manufacturing, food and hospitality, tourism, and construction-related industries exhibit highly seasonal trends in UI claims. Manufacturing industry subsectors have higher incidence of employer-filed claims.

No single industry or occupation dominates claims for Unemployment Insurance. Instead, a wide variety of industries and occupations are represented, indicating variety in the approaches needed to address unemployment.

Duration: Certain characteristics are associated with longer UI duration including industry, separation reason, and age. Of those receiving any benefits, nearly 7% use the state's maximum 26 weeks while another 13% use available extensions beyond this time. Seasonal industries do not appear to be likely to have long durations on UI.

Repeat Claims: About one-third of all individuals filing a claim between 2006 and 2008 have more than one claim. Filing repeat claims is highly correlated with work in seasonal occupations that experience temporary fluctuations in labor demand. Employer-filed claims tend to be associated with repeat usage of UI. Repeat claims are negatively correlated with age and years of education, as experience and skills accumulate.

Geographic: The WIAs do not have extreme differences in the demographic characteristics (age, race, gender) of their claimants. Certain WIAs have high concentrations of seasonal industries which may contribute to their greater likelihood of having repeat claimants.

Utilization of Data

As part of their guidance for use of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds, the US Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) stated, "ETA encourages states to

assess (unemployment) claimants through the use of statistical profiling models using claimants' characteristics, as known from their initial UI claim."

This section provides a sampling of areas in which this data can be employed most effectively, primarily as performance metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of existing programs and in profile development to target appropriate interventions to corresponding populations.

Develop Detailed Statistical Profiles: Statistical methods can be used to develop profiles, enumerating characteristics of individuals with greater likelihoods of the following activities:

- Exhausting UI benefits,
- Remaining on UI for long periods of time, and
- Applying for UI benefits repeatedly.

In order to develop such profiles, however, complete information for each UI claim is required. Currently, missing data accounts for 21.7% of ages, 25% of educational attainment; 39% of reason for separation; 34% of occupations; and 10.5% of industries.

Target Populations With Most Effective Interventions: By understanding the profiles of various UI claimant types, specific interventions can be developed to most effectively assist various types of claimants to return to sustainable employment. Some examples are as follows.

- **Repeat Claims**: Individuals experiencing first-time job loss will require different forms of assistance or monitoring than those who have received UI benefits multiple times in the past.
- **Recruitment**: Geographic concentrations of individuals within highly-demanded occupations provide key opportunities for the South Carolina Department of Commerce to sell locations within the state to new companies seeking to locate in South Carolina.
- **Training**: Geographic concentrations of individuals within occupations with waning or non-existent demand signal opportunities for Workforce Development to target worker retraining efforts. Furthermore, Technical Colleges and Adult Education can be consulted on skills gaps and needs.
- **Education**: Geographic concentrations of non-high school graduates could signal the need to include GED coursework into workforce training.
- **Permanent Job Loss**: Industries or areas that have experienced permanent decrease in employment (identified by claimants who apply due to Lack of Work) indicate opportunities for recruitment of new companies or retraining of individuals where applicable.
- **Non-Permanent Job Loss**: Concentrations of claimants whose jobs were lost due to Misconduct or Voluntary Quit indicate that soft skill training may be more critical than other trade skill education.

Quickly Identify Outliers and Trends: Developing statistical algorithms to parse and analyze current data on a monthly basis will provide rapid feedback on deviations from trends, allowing policy makers to identify which variations are seasonal or expected versus which ones indicate an authentic change in activity. For instance, tourist areas may see sharper seasonal swings in claimants than other areas. This regular analysis will provide the ability to know what to expect, when to expect it, and how to respond and account for it.

Such ongoing analysis will also allow spotting new trends faster, and methods can also allow for easier pinpointing of fraud or system-gaming practices quickly. Finally, coincident analysis allows data to be extracted and analyzed at the end of the month, followed by implementation of corrective procedures early in the next.

Augment Monthly Economic and Employment Data: Unfortunately, a paucity of regular economic and employment data exists by which counties and municipalities can gauge performance and develop future plans. The unemployment rate is the widest-used indicator, primarily due to its regularity, timeliness, and coverage of small areas. However, each county does not participate in the Current Population Survey sample each month. Thus their unemployment rates are model driven, making reliable estimates with narrow margins of error problematical. County unemployment rates are, therefore, best suited for long-term trend analysis rather than as an instantaneous gauge of unemployment activity. UI claimant data is, however, a source of timely, accurate information at state and local levels. It records activity for all individuals, as it is not a survey based on a sample of the population. Again, such data will be useful if collection methods are improved and enforced to minimize the large amounts of missing and incomplete data on each claim.

Improve Economic Forecasting: Researchers can use this data to improve econometric models of the state economy and better account for swings in Unemployment Insurance claimants each month, better understanding seasonal trends and temporary claims.

Next Steps

In order to utilize this data to its fullest, the following plans are required.

Improve Data: All agencies involved in unemployment in South Carolina need to partner together to find ways to improve data collection and entry. The large amount of incomplete data severely hampers the ability to accurately assess progress and develop appropriate changes. In particular, given the large number of employer-filed claims within the state (18.6% of all claims), these claims must be required to submit the same information as those filed by the claimants themselves.

In-Depth Analysis: The results provided in this paper represent a preliminary overview of the UI claimant data that is available in South Carolina. Further detailed analysis will focus on developing detailed profiles of various types of claimants that can be used to target interventions that are effective.

Comprehensive, Wide-Reaching, Monthly Reporting: With this data scheduled to be delivered each month, a wide-reaching, comprehensive reporting system will be developed to deliver timely data for the following purposes:

- Workforce Training and Development,
- Economic Development and Recruiting,
- Academic Research, and
- High-Level Overviews for Policy Makers.

Furthermore, the information will be distributed to a wide reaching audience, including

- State Agencies, including the Department of Commerce (for both Workforce Development and Economic Development divisions), Department of Education, Office of Research and Statistics, etc.,
- South Carolina Technical College System,
- Economists, and
- Academia and Researchers.

Synchronized Response: Most importantly, the sharing of this data represents the initial stage of a synchronized effort of all agencies responsible for unemployed, job creation, and workforce training. Utilizing results as input into program development, coordinating business processes, and eventually operating on the same software will allow faster movement of individuals back into the job market, more efficient use of state funds, and the growth of state economic output and employment.