

Joblessness drags on as assistance dries up

Initial claims for unemployment compensation have been rising since mid-October, when they hit the lowest mark since the pandemic began. Vermont's 860 new claims in the second week of November were filed before renewed restrictions closed bars and limited restaurant hours. According to the Vermont Chamber of Commerce, these orders affect approximately

| LATEST BLS DATA - NOVEMBER 20, 2020 | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| | OCT 2020 | SEP 2020 | OCT 2019 |
| Labor Force | 320,724 | 322,951 | 340,685 |
| Employment | 310,544 | 309,116 | 332,422 |
| Unemployment | 10,180 | 13,835 | 8,263 |
| Unemployment Rate* | 3.2% | 4.3% | 2.4% |

12,000 Vermont workers.

* The unemployment rate does not capture all out-of-work Vermonters. [Details here.](#)
 Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Long drought

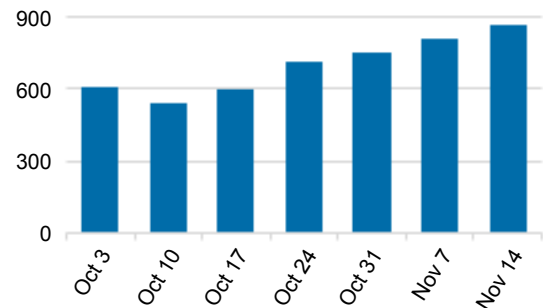
By mid-November, nearly 10,000 Vermonters—half of the 20,000 receiving unemployment—were jobless for half a year or longer. They have exhausted the 26 weeks of traditional unemployment benefits and now receive state or federal extended benefits. The federal benefits, known as Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), add 13 weeks of coverage, to which the state may append 13 weeks more. But absent Congressional action, PEUC will sunset at the end of December. Without this assistance, or the \$600 extra weekly federal payments that ended in July, many workers will have a hard winter.

Gender gap

Unemployment claims for both women and men spiked in April as schools and businesses shut. Yet men's claims fell to pre-pandemic levels in October, while seven times more women were unemployed that month than in March. This is not because women workers predominate in the hardest hit industries; hotels, restaurants, and retail employed men and women equally before the pandemic. Rather, it's likely that many women cannot work because they are doing most of the care left to families by child care and school closures.

Unemployment claims rose before new restrictions

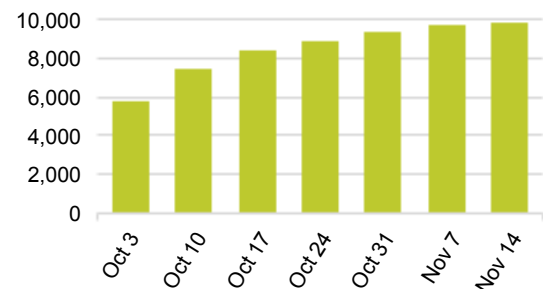
Weekly unemployment insurance initial claims, Oct-Nov 2020



Data source: Vermont Department of Labor
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Almost 10,000 Vermonters were jobless 6 months or more

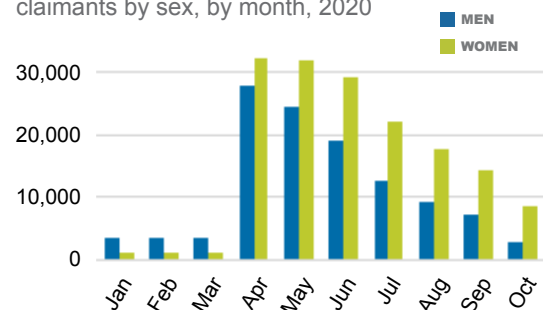
Vermonters receiving extended unemployment benefits by week, Oct-Nov 2020



Data source: Vermont Department of Labor
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The pandemic hit women workers hardest

Traditional unemployment insurance claimants by sex, by month, 2020



Data source: Vermont Department of Labor
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