



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on May 7, 2020

Nearly 34M Unemployment Claims Filed Since March 1

Though new unemployment claims are dropping week-to-week, they still number in the millions and continue to show the devastating blow from the Chinese Virus and the ensuing national panic and lockdown.

Americans filed another 3.1 million claims last week, which brings the total since March 1 to nearly 34 million.

That is more than 10 percent of the American population. And barring a release from the stay-at-home and business-closure orders, more people will lose jobs and file for unemployment even if the total number declines week to week.



The Numbers

[The latest figures from](#) the federal Department of Labor show that 3.169 million Americans filed for benefits, a 17.4-percent drop from last week's revised figure of 3.846 million.

The unemployment rate for the week ending April 25 was 15.5 percent.

Since March 1, 33.946 million Americans have filed for benefits (numbers are in thousands):

March 7 — 211
March 14 — 282
March 21 — 3,307
March 28 — 6,867
April 4 — 6,615
April 11 — 5,237
April 18 — 4,442
April 25 — 3,846
May 2 — 3,169

As for the states, Vermont supplanted Michigan as hardest-hit among those with the 10 jobless rates for the week ending April 18. The figure for some remained steady, but three worsened considerably from the previous week.

West Virginia's went from 14.4 percent to 21.9, Rhode Island's from 16.7 to 20.4, and New York's from 14.4 to 17.2. Nevada's jumped to 19.9 percent from 16.8

Georgia and Puerto Rico joined the list of 10 highest unemployment rates:

Vermont — 25.2
West Virginia — 21.9
Michigan — 21.7
Rhode Island — 20.4
Nevada — 19.9



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Connecticut — 18.7
Puerto Rico — 17.9
Georgia — 17.3
New York — 17.2
Washington — 17.1

Some states again posted large gains in new claims for the week ending April 25.

Washington — 56,030
Georgia — 19,562
New York — 14,229
Oregon — 12,091
Alabama — 8,534

Others enjoyed major decreases:

California — 203,017
Florida — 73,567
Connecticut — 69,767
New Jersey — 68,173
Pennsylvania — 66,698

Other Numbers

As [The New American reported](#) earlier this week, other numbers aren't much better.

Alexander Bick and Adam Blandin of Arizona and Virginia Commonwealth universities, [who are compiling](#) data with online surveys, delivered some grim news in their latest report dated April 24: The employment rate dropped from 72.7 percent to 55.8 percent from March 14 through April 18, which means 34 million jobs were lost. That figure comports with the 33.9 million unemployment claims filed since March 1.

From the week ending March 14, through the time covered in their latest report, American adults worked 29 percent fewer hours, the professors reported.

Bick and Blandin did deliver some good news: The unemployment rate of 20.2 percent in the week ending April 4 dropped to 16.2 percent for the week ending April 18.

Bad as the numbers seems, the two observed that not everyone who receives unemployment benefits is actually unemployed:

Many individuals who are receiving UI are actually classified by our survey as not in the labor force, rather than unemployed. 24% of the nonemployed are unemployed, 33% are not in the labor force but report wanting a job, and 44% are not in the labor force and do not want a job. Only about half of those currently approved for or receiving UI are classified as unemployed, while the remaining half are classified as not in the labor force.

Bick and Blandin will release another report next week.

In Perspective

Unemployment claims versus [state populations](#) put the numbers in perspective.

Claims now far exceed the population of any one of the country's 10 most-populous states except California, population 39.5 million, but including Texas, population 28.9 million.



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They also exceed the combined populations of New York and Pennsylvania; or Georgia, North Carolina, and Michigan; or Massachusetts, Tennessee, Indiana, Missouri, and Maryland.

Adding the populations of 10 or even 15 states in some cases would mean everyone in the state had applied for unemployment.

And, again, unemployment claims exceed 10 percent of the U.S. population of 330 million.

They also exceed the populations of all but the [world's 41 most-populated countries](#), which means more Americans have filed for unemployment than the number of people living in Peru or Venezuela.



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R. Cort Kirkwood is a long-time contributor to The New American and a former newspaper editor.



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