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About Initial and Continued Unemployment Insurance Claims Data

Initial Claims

An initial claim is a claim filed by an unemployed individual after a separation from an employer. The claimant requests a determination of basic eligibility for the unemployment insurance (UI) program. When an initial claim is filed with the state, certain programmatic activities take place and these result in activity counts including the count of initial claims. The count of initial claims for unemployment insurance is a leading economic indicator because it is an indication of emerging labor market conditions. However, these are weekly administrative data which are difficult to seasonally adjust, making the series subject to some volatility.

Continued Claims

A person who has already filed an initial claim and who has experienced a week of unemployment then files a continued claim to claim benefits for that week of unemployment. Continued claims are also referred to as insured unemployment. The count of continued weeks claimed is also a good indicator of labor market conditions. Continued claims reflect the current number of insured unemployed workers filing for unemployment insurance benefits. While continued claims are not a leading indicator (they roughly coincide with economic cycles at their peaks and lag at cycle troughs), they provide confirming evidence of the direction of the economy.

Sources

Weekly initial claims and monthly continued claims by worker characteristics, county, industry, and occupation are from the Program for Measuring Insured Employed Statistics (PROMIS), a joint program between the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Oregon Employment Department.

Weekly initial claims and weekly continued claims are from the U.S. Department of Labor based on data provided by the Oregon Employment Department.