

ODU's Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy: Virginia's Labor Market Shows Signs of Improvement as Both Initial and Continued Claims Fall

10,100 Virginians file initial unemployment claims; continued claims decline to 201,616.

Norfolk, VA – (September 17, 2020) – Newly released nonseasonally adjusted data from Virginia's Employment Commission show that 10,100 Virginians filed an initial unemployment claim for the week ending Sept. 12, a decrease of 1,035 from the previous week. For the week ending Sept. 12, continued claims decreased by 15,869 to 201,616.

“For the fourth consecutive week, the number of Virginians receiving some form of unemployment benefits declined by more than 15,000,” said Dominique Johnson, research associate at the Dragas Center. “In the last month, the number of continued claims in Virginia has declined by more 63,000. While this could be a positive sign that workers are being rehired or finding new jobs, it is also possible that many of these workers have exhausted their benefits. Virginia provides unemployment benefits for up to 26 weeks. Thus, workers who have received their maximum weekly benefit since the crisis began in mid-March have exhausted their state benefits for the year. The Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) program provides an additional 13 weeks of benefits for those who have exhausted their state benefits. It is therefore likely initial claims under this program could rise in the coming weeks.”

For the United States, more than 1.4 million Americans filed an initial unemployment claim either through a regular state program (790,021) or the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program (658,737). Approximately 29.8 million Americans received some form of unemployment assistance for the week of Aug. 29, an increase of 98,456 from the previous week and approximately 28 million more than the same week in 2019.

“More than 1.4 million Americans filed an initial claim for unemployment benefits last week. While declining slightly from the previous week, this marks the 26th consecutive week, exactly half a year, that initial claims were greater than the worst week of the Great Recession,” said Robert McNab, director of the Dragas Center. “More than 29 million Americans, approximately 18.5% of the civilian labor force in August, received some form of unemployment benefits for the week of Aug. 29, highlighting the continuing challenges facing the national economy as we move into fall.”

Note 1: Advance claims are not directly comparable to claims reported in prior weeks. Advance claims are reported by the state liable for paying the unemployment compensation, whereas previous weeks' reported claims reflect claimants by state of residence. In addition, claims reported as "workshare equivalent" in the previous week are added to the advance claims as a proxy for the current week's "workshare equivalent" activity.

Note 2: For the nation, we use data from the U.S. Department of Labor on unemployment claims. We use data from the Virginia Employment Commission and the U.S. Department of Labor for unemployment claims and labor market statistics at the state, city and county level.

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About the Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy:
The Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy in the Strome College of Business at Old Dominion University undertakes a wide range of economic, demographic, transportation and defense-oriented studies. For two decades, the Center and its predecessors have produced the highly regarded State of the Region Report for Hampton Roads and economic forecasts for the region. If you would like more information, please contact Robert M. McNab (831-917-2455, rmcnab@odu.edu) or Dominique Johnson (757-506-1565, d1johnson@odu.edu).

About Old Dominion University:

Old Dominion University is Virginia's entrepreneurial-minded doctoral research university with more than 24,000 students, rigorous academics, an energetic residential community and initiatives that contribute \$2.6 billion annually to the Commonwealth's economy.

Table 1
Headline Unemployment Rates (U3)
March 2020 - July 2020
US, Virginia, Virginia Cities and Counties

	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020
U.S.	4.4%	14.7%	13.3%	11.1%	10.2%
Virginia	3.3%	10.6%	9.4%	8.5%	8.0%
Accomack	4.8%	9.8%	9.2%	8.1%	6.9%
Albemarle	2.8%	9.1%	7.9%	7.6%	7.2%
Alleghany	4.4%	11.5%	9.0%	8.8%	8.1%
Amelia	3.6%	9.8%	7.9%	7.3%	7.4%
Amherst	3.8%	9.6%	7.6%	7.2%	6.9%
Appomattox	4.3%	9.4%	7.7%	7.3%	7.1%
Arlington	2.2%	7.0%	6.1%	5.9%	5.7%
Augusta	2.9%	8.4%	6.7%	5.9%	5.3%
Bath	3.1%	20.5%	15.8%	14.3%	9.7%
Bedford	3.5%	9.9%	7.6%	6.6%	6.0%
Bland	4.0%	11.5%	8.2%	7.4%	6.4%
Botetourt	3.0%	8.6%	7.4%	6.1%	5.4%
Brunswick	5.3%	10.4%	10.0%	9.9%	10.2%
Buchanan	8.1%	14.1%	10.8%	10.9%	11.1%
Buckingham	5.2%	10.3%	9.4%	9.6%	9.4%
Campbell	3.8%	10.2%	8.4%	7.8%	7.4%
Caroline	3.7%	11.0%	9.4%	9.0%	8.3%
Carroll	5.8%	16.1%	11.1%	9.8%	8.7%
Charles City	3.9%	10.2%	9.3%	9.4%	8.2%
Charlotte	4.6%	8.3%	6.9%	7.1%	6.6%
Chesterfield	3.1%	10.7%	8.8%	8.2%	7.5%
Clarke	2.8%	8.2%	7.1%	6.2%	5.7%
Craig	3.4%	10.1%	8.4%	6.7%	6.1%
Culpeper	3.2%	9.1%	7.7%	6.6%	6.1%
Cumberland	3.4%	9.2%	8.0%	8.1%	8.1%
Dickenson	7.3%	12.0%	9.4%	9.2%	9.2%
Dinwiddie	3.8%	9.6%	8.5%	8.3%	8.1%
Essex	4.5%	11.1%	9.5%	8.6%	8.3%
Fairfax	2.6%	10.2%	8.8%	8.1%	7.5%
Fauquier	2.8%	8.8%	7.2%	6.4%	5.7%
Floyd	3.5%	11.1%	8.3%	6.8%	6.0%
Fluvanna	2.8%	9.2%	7.9%	7.6%	6.7%
Franklin	3.6%	9.5%	8.1%	7.4%	6.7%
Frederick	2.8%	9.5%	7.6%	6.6%	5.8%

Giles	4.5%	13.0%	10.5%	8.4%	7.3%
Gloucester	3.0%	10.2%	8.0%	7.3%	6.7%
Goochland	3.0%	8.9%	7.1%	6.6%	6.0%
Grayson	5.1%	10.8%	7.5%	6.8%	6.3%
Greene	2.6%	9.6%	7.8%	7.5%	6.7%
Greensville	3.9%	8.4%	8.7%	8.7%	8.4%
Halifax	4.9%	10.7%	8.6%	8.4%	8.1%
Hanover	2.8%	9.0%	7.3%	6.5%	6.0%
Henrico	3.2%	11.1%	9.5%	9.0%	8.6%
Henry	4.0%	12.8%	10.5%	9.6%	9.3%
Highland	3.8%	6.3%	5.6%	5.2%	4.2%
Isle of Wight	3.2%	8.5%	7.1%	6.6%	6.3%
James City County	3.2%	13.7%	11.1%	9.8%	8.8%
King and Queen	3.1%	7.7%	6.7%	6.5%	6.3%
King George	3.2%	7.6%	6.3%	6.0%	5.5%
King William	3.3%	9.7%	7.9%	7.2%	6.7%
Lancaster	7.0%	11.3%	9.1%	8.6%	7.6%
Lee	5.0%	10.9%	8.8%	8.1%	7.4%
Loudoun	2.6%	9.9%	8.4%	7.7%	7.0%
Louisa	3.1%	8.9%	7.6%	7.1%	6.5%
Lunenburg	3.4%	7.6%	6.6%	6.8%	6.3%
Madison	2.5%	7.1%	5.8%	5.1%	4.5%
Mathews	3.5%	8.9%	6.6%	6.2%	5.6%
Mecklenburg	4.8%	10.9%	9.2%	8.7%	8.2%
Middlesex	3.3%	9.0%	7.2%	6.7%	5.7%
Montgomery	3.4%	9.3%	7.7%	6.7%	6.1%
Nelson	3.2%	9.8%	8.3%	7.8%	6.9%
New Kent	2.6%	8.9%	6.9%	6.8%	5.8%
Northampton	5.7%	11.6%	10.9%	9.8%	9.2%
Northumberland	7.0%	9.7%	7.6%	7.2%	6.8%
Nottoway	3.2%	7.5%	6.4%	6.4%	6.3%
Orange	3.3%	9.8%	8.3%	7.4%	6.5%
Page	5.8%	14.0%	11.7%	9.6%	7.5%
Patrick	4.6%	14.1%	8.9%	7.5%	6.9%
Pittsylvania	4.3%	12.7%	9.1%	7.9%	7.7%
Powhatan	3.0%	9.6%	7.6%	6.8%	5.9%
Prince Edward	4.6%	9.5%	8.2%	8.2%	8.1%
Prince George	3.8%	10.0%	8.8%	8.6%	8.4%
Prince William	3.0%	11.3%	10.1%	9.2%	8.6%
Pulaski	5.9%	17.1%	12.7%	9.8%	9.0%
Rappahannock	2.9%	8.3%	6.7%	5.9%	5.4%

Richmond	3.6%	7.3%	6.2%	6.5%	5.9%
Roanoke	3.1%	9.8%	8.2%	7.0%	6.3%
Rockbridge	3.2%	9.4%	7.9%	6.9%	6.3%
Rockingham	2.8%	9.7%	8.0%	6.9%	5.8%
Russell	5.7%	10.8%	8.6%	8.5%	8.0%
Scott	4.0%	9.8%	7.3%	6.7%	6.1%
Shenandoah	3.1%	9.5%	8.2%	7.0%	6.1%
Smyth	4.7%	10.7%	9.1%	8.8%	7.8%
Southampton	3.3%	6.9%	6.4%	6.3%	6.2%
Spotsylvania	3.3%	11.1%	9.2%	8.3%	7.7%
Stafford	3.1%	9.9%	8.4%	7.8%	7.3%
Surry	3.9%	9.3%	7.5%	7.8%	7.3%
Sussex	5.2%	10.3%	10.7%	11.0%	11.0%
Tazewell	5.6%	12.5%	9.9%	9.5%	9.6%
Warren	3.2%	11.1%	9.0%	7.8%	7.1%
Washington	3.9%	10.8%	8.2%	7.9%	7.1%
Westmoreland	4.5%	8.6%	7.5%	7.5%	6.7%
Wise	6.0%	11.9%	9.1%	9.4%	9.2%
Wythe	5.2%	17.2%	12.2%	9.9%	8.6%
York	3.0%	10.4%	8.5%	7.9%	7.0%
Alexandria city	2.5%	9.9%	8.7%	8.3%	7.8%
Bristol city	4.4%	15.3%	11.0%	10.2%	9.7%
Buena Vista city	2.9%	8.7%	7.2%	6.6%	6.4%
Charlottesville city	2.6%	10.8%	9.5%	9.3%	8.9%
Chesapeake city	3.3%	10.2%	8.9%	8.3%	8.1%
Colonial Heights city	3.4%	11.5%	9.7%	9.3%	9.2%
Covington city	6.3%	16.0%	13.8%	13.6%	12.2%
Danville city	6.3%	16.0%	12.7%	11.8%	11.8%
Emporia city	5.1%	13.0%	14.5%	14.4%	15.1%
Fairfax city	2.5%	10.1%	8.7%	8.1%	7.4%
Falls Church city	2.3%	5.8%	4.9%	4.9%	4.6%
Franklin city	4.2%	9.6%	9.5%	10.7%	11.9%
Fredericksburg city	3.7%	12.1%	10.5%	9.7%	9.4%
Galax city	6.3%	17.3%	10.5%	9.8%	8.9%
Hampton city	4.4%	13.4%	12.0%	11.5%	11.3%
Harrisonburg city	3.6%	11.2%	10.9%	9.4%	8.2%
Hopewell city	4.9%	14.7%	13.9%	14.2%	14.7%
Lexington city	4.9%	10.3%	8.9%	9.2%	8.6%
Lynchburg city	4.3%	12.1%	10.2%	9.7%	9.4%
Manassas city	3.0%	10.9%	9.8%	9.0%	8.6%
Manassas Park city	2.9%	11.6%	10.5%	9.9%	9.1%

Martinsville city	5.0%	16.9%	14.7%	14.3%	14.5%
Newport News city	4.2%	13.9%	12.6%	12.0%	11.7%
Norfolk city	4.0%	13.3%	11.9%	11.6%	11.9%
Norton city	5.4%	12.4%	9.8%	10.2%	9.8%
Petersburg city	6.6%	16.7%	17.2%	17.9%	19.1%
Poquoson city	2.9%	8.0%	6.1%	5.7%	5.1%
Portsmouth city	4.4%	12.8%	12.2%	12.4%	13.0%
Radford city	4.5%	11.5%	10.0%	9.0%	8.5%
Richmond city	3.8%	14.2%	12.5%	12.2%	12.3%
Roanoke city	3.7%	12.8%	11.6%	10.6%	10.4%
Salem city	3.4%	10.8%	9.1%	7.8%	7.2%
Staunton city	3.1%	11.3%	9.4%	8.6%	7.7%
Suffolk city	3.5%	9.7%	9.0%	8.8%	8.7%
Virginia Beach city	3.1%	12.2%	9.7%	8.5%	7.8%
Waynesboro city	3.3%	11.2%	9.6%	8.8%	8.2%
Williamsburg city	4.7%	15.0%	12.6%	11.6%	10.0%
Winchester city	3.3%	11.2%	9.4%	8.2%	7.5%

Source: Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and Dragas Center for Economic Analysis and Policy.