

Questions and Answers about the Characteristics of Unemployment Insurance Claimants by State and County report

What is the Characteristics of Unemployment Insurance Claimants by State and County report?

This report describes the social and economic characteristics of a sub-set of total unemployed living in Illinois and each of the 102 Illinois counties who certified for continued weekly Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits for the data reference period in each month (usually the week including the 12th).

What portion of total unemployed are not included in the Unemployment Insurance Claimants by State and County report?

The report **excludes** unemployed who:

- Were ineligible for regular UI program benefits due to monetary or non-monetary reasons (reasons due to separation)
- Exhausted their regular UI program benefits
- Claimed weeks of extended UI program benefits
- Claimed weeks of regular UI benefits but reported partial earnings (and thus were classified as employed)
- Had their regular UI benefits suspended or not paid because they were not available, able or actively looking for work during the data reference period
- Claimed weeks of regular UI benefits from a state bordering Illinois and classified as a commuter claimant

How can the Characteristics of Unemployment Insurance Claimants by State and County report be used for analyzing the local labor market?

Although the report does not include data for all unemployed, it can be used to better understand the demographic and economic characteristics of unemployed at the local level. Potential users of the report include economic developers, workforce development professionals and local organizations that want to target resources to assist unemployed persons.

Why do some data cells include asterisks?

Asterisks are included in some data cells to meet state data disclosure and confidentiality requirements, as per Illinois law

Questions and Answers about the Characteristics of Unemployment Insurance Claimants by State and County report (continued)

What do the unclassified and not available categories in the occupation portion of the report include?

The number and type of UI claimants in the unclassified totals changed effective with the occupational characteristics published for the January 2014 data reference period. Prior to January 2014, the unclassified totals in the characteristics report included claimants who were exempt from the job search requirements under the Employment Service. These exempt claimants were not required to have an occupation code that conformed to the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code system. Examples, of claimants who are exempt from the Employment Service job search requirement include union members, seasonal workers, workers hired through union halls, workers with reduced hours and those with return to work dates.

Beginning in late December 2013 (and first reported for the January 2014 data reference period) all claimants who filed for unemployment benefits in Illinois were given the option of selecting an occupation, even if they were not required to meet the Employment Service job search requirement. The change in occupational code assignment procedures in January 2014 significantly reduced the number of UI claimants in the unclassified category. The remaining claimants reported under unclassified included those who filed for UI benefits prior to the change in procedures and not assigned an SOC occupational code.

The not available category includes Illinois residents who claimed unemployment benefits through the interstate program. Interstate claims are filed against other states. Many states either do not assign occupation codes to non-resident claims or assign occupation codes that do not conform to SOC coding structure.

Why do the UI continued claims totals fluctuate monthly?

The continued claims totals included in the report are not adjusted for seasonal changes in the economy that occur around the same time each year. For example, the total number of continued claims reported for the Construction industry tends to increase sharply beginning in December as employers cutback on road construction projects due to inclement weather. Users of the report should compare claims for the same month in each of the years (e.g. December 2010 vs. December 2009) to limit the influence of seasonality in their analysis.