

# COVID-19: UNEMPLOYMENT UPDATE



Data and Information current as of April 16, 2020

By Leslie Rubin and Stephanie Bryant  
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/olo

## UNEMPLOYMENT AND COVID-19

Thousands of Maryland workers have lost jobs due to the current global coronavirus epidemic. This document provides information about current federal, State, and local unemployment data.

## NEW UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS

For the week of April 11, 2020, Maryland UI claims fell by 46,000 from the prior week, to 61,770 claims – the first decline in the number of new claims in five weeks. Montgomery County claims fell by 6,200, to 9,548 claims (down 39% from the prior week). The US data in the table for past weeks reflect revised numbers from the Labor Department.

Note that 24 states, including Maryland, are not yet able to accept or process UI claims from newly-eligible workers (i.e., independent contractors/gig workers) because their IT systems are not yet configured to accept those claims.

Data Release. The U.S. Department of Labor release initial jobless claims data on Thursdays at 8:30 am. OLO will routinely update this report when new data are released.

Week of 2020	US (SA)	MD (NSA)	MoCo*
<b>April 11</b>	<b>5,245,000</b>	<b>61,770</b>	<b>9,548</b>
April 4	6,615,000	108,508	15,751
March 28	6,867,000	83,536	9,384
March 21	3,307,000	42,334	3,941
March 14	282,000	3,852	256
March 7	211,000	2,090	195

\* Initial state data

SA=seasonally adjusted NSA=not seasonally adjusted

Sources: U.S. and Maryland Departments of Labor

<https://www.dol.gov/ui/data.pdf>

<https://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/uicounty.shtml>

## UPDATE ON UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS IN MARYLAND

- **Additional \$600 per week federal benefit payments begin in Maryland.** Beginning tomorrow, eligible recipients will begin receiving the additional \$600 per week in unemployment benefits through the federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation program – part of the CARES Act.  
<https://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/unemployment.shtml>
- **Maryland is in the process of updating its IT system to accept claims from independent contractors/gig workers.** The Maryland Department of Labor’s website indicates that its IT system is still not set up to process unemployment claims from workers who previously did not qualify for unemployment benefits – such as independent contractors and gig workers. Many other states are in the same situation.  
<https://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/uicaresfaq.pdf>
- **Federal guidance on whether some gig workers qualify for UNEMPLOYMENT benefits is unclear.** Guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Labor to states on implementing the CARES Act could be interpreted narrowly to exclude certain gig workers. Senate Democrats sent a letter to the Labor Secretary on April 13, 2020 stating that the intention of the CARES Act was to cover gig workers and asks for clarification from the Department. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/business/economy/coronavirus-gig-unemployment.html>; <https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/041320%20PUA%20Guidance%20Letter%20to%20Scalia.pdf>; <https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/coronavirus/>