

What do the Unemployment Insurance Claims Figures Measure?

Statistics on the number of insured unemployed are collected as a byproduct of Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs. Workers who lose their jobs and are covered by these programs typically file claims, which serve as notice that they are beginning a period of unemployment. Claimants who qualify for benefits are counted in the insured unemployment figures. However, they only represent a portion of the total unemployed.

These data are not used to measure **total unemployment** because they exclude several important groups. The insured unemployed excludes unemployed workers who have exhausted their benefits; new entrants or reentrants to the labor market; disqualified workers whose unemployment is considered to have resulted from their own actions (misconduct on the job) rather than from economic conditions; and otherwise eligible unemployed persons who do **not** file for benefits.

In terms of employed workers, the principal groups not covered by the UI programs are self-employed workers, unpaid family workers, workers in certain non-profit organizations, and other, primarily seasonal, worker categories.



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