New Mexico's Unemployment Insurance Claims Totals: Gradually Declining but Still Elevated
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Massive job loss associated with the national recession of 2007–2009 dramatically increased applications for unemployment insurance benefits in New Mexico in recent years. Mounting layoffs prompted surges in initial claims (first-time filings) and continued claims (weekly certifications) that have only partially abated from peak levels. The chart below displays weekly totals for the two series from January 2005 through the first week of August 2012. The initial claims data are presented as four-week moving averages to reduce volatility in the series. Continued claims counts are for regular unemployment insurance benefits only.

The initial claims total averaged 1,065 while ranging from 743 to 1,599 between January 2005 and September 2008, before effects of the national downturn rapidly increased the count to a high of 2,571 for the week ended January 31, 2009. The total dropped sharply later in the year (the not seasonally adjusted totals typical peak each January and June) but remained well above pre-recession levels through the most recent observation. Initial claims counts averaged 1,733 between the weeks ended August 1, 2009, and August 4, 2012, while ranging from 1,425 to 2,257.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration
Notes: Initial claims totals are four-week moving averages; continued claims totals are for regular unemployment insurance only.
Continued claims counts averaged 11,791 in ranging from 9,476 to 14,288 between January 2005 and September 2008, when, following the pattern of initial claims, the total sharply increased to a high of 32,766 for the week ended June 20, 2009. The continued claims total declined more steadily than that of initial claims through the most recent observation, but remained above the 20,000 threshold.

The U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration releases state-level weekly unemployment insurance claims data each Thursday at 6:30 a.m. Mountain Time at http://ows.doleta.gov/unemploy/claims.asp.