Legislative District Dashboard: Technical Notes

Background

The information in this report is based on weekly claims submitted by Illinois workers for state (non-Federal) regular unemployment benefits.

Regular unemployment insurance is a state-operated insurance program designed to partially replace lost wages when a person is out of work. Like fire, accident, health and other types of insurance, it is for an emergency: when someone is temporarily or permanently out of a job, or working less than full time because of lack of work. The program for regular unemployment benefits ensures that, those who meet the eligibility requirements of the law will have some income while looking for a job.

Concepts and Definitions

Reference period – The information in each month's report reflects a four-week average ending in the week of the 12th of the prior month. The results in this report are compiled from claims activity related to regular unemployment benefits in the week ending March 14, 2014 (that includes the 12th of March) and the three immediately prior weeks of data (from February 15 to March 7). A four-week average removes some of the volatility in claims activity that can occur from one week to the next. The inclusion of the week of the 12th in the reference period is consistent with other major labor market statistical series, such as employment and unemployment data.

New certifications – individuals who certify for regular unemployment benefits either with a new claim (first certified claim within a one-year period) or a transitional claim (existing certified claim that extends from one benefit year to the next) in the reference period. The payment status of these claims can be either suspended, paid, not paid, waiting week or penalty week.

Total claimants – individuals who are certified for regular unemployment benefits in the reference period. The payment status of these claims can be either suspended, paid, not paid, waiting week or penalty week.

Average duration collecting regular UI benefits – number of weeks that claimants remain certified for regular unemployment benefits. This measure is estimated only for individuals who continue as certified from one week to the next. The maximum is 26 full weeks in a one-year period.

Education – claimant's highest level of completed education. This information is not required.

Age –claimant's age as estimated from their date of birth. This information is required.

Race –claimant's race (categories based on the 2010 Census). This information is not required.

Ethnicity – claimant's ethnicity (categories based on the 2010 Census). This information is not required.

Military status –claimant's veteran status. This information is not required.

Job status- Illinois employers submit employment and earnings for each worker on a monthly report to the Illinois Department of Employment Security. These records are matched to UI claimant records to produce re-employment outcomes for claimants. Job counts with fewer than 4 workers are suppressed to protect confidentiality.

Monthly earnings- Employers report total earnings for each employee on the monthly report to IDES. These earnings can vary greatly from one individual to the next depending on type of job and hours worked. Because of this variability, both average and median earnings are calculated. In addition, monthly earnings may be significantly lower in some demographic groups than in others simply because of the concentration of part-time workers. Monthly earnings that represent fewer than 8 workers are suppressed to protect confidentiality. Average earnings that are more than double median earnings for the same demographic group is also suppressed.

Methodology

Place of residence coding- The information in each report reflects the claims activity of residents in that district. The IDES address locator uses vendor software and reference data, from Navteq and the U.S. Census Bureau, to geocode the claimants' place of residence. This locator matches to a local street or Zip+4 on 95 percent of Illinois claimant addresses. Of the remaining addresses, the locator matches an additional four percent using the five-number Zip code or the city address field. The final one percent of claimant addresses are not geocoded, and, consequently, are excluded from the legislative reports. In addition, individuals who worked in Illinois, but reside in another state (out-of-state residence), are also excluded. The legislative districts in these reports reflect the new boundaries that were implemented in January 2013 based on the 2010 Census block regions.