

Highlights



The Employment Security Commission (ESC) processed a total of 841,306 Weeks claimed for Unemployment Insurance in January 2009, up 6.6 percent from December (789,562) and up 87.2 percent from January a year ago (449,442).

December's statewide Insured Unemployment Rate (IUR) at 4.8 percent rose above the December's 4.3 percent, and was above the 2.5 percent of January a year ago.

There were 158,659 State UI Initial Claims (excluding Interstate Liable, UCX and UCFE) filed in January 2009, up 1.8 percent from the prior month's total of 155,913. Compared with January 2008 (98,062), Initial Claims' volume increased 61.8 percent.

North Carolina has one of the lower duration rates of Weeks claimed for Unemployment Insurance benefits. During the third quarter of 2008, the average duration was 13.9 weeks for North Carolina while the national average remained unchanged at 15.3 weeks. During the same quarter, states with lower duration weeks were; South Dakota, 11.0 weeks; North Dakota, 11.3 weeks; Georgia, 11.8 weeks; Nebraska, 11.9 weeks; Alabama, 12.1 weeks; Iowa, 12.3 weeks; Idaho, 12.5 weeks; Virginia, 12.8 weeks; Indiana, 12.9 weeks; New Hampshire and Wyoming, 13.1 weeks; Colorado, 13.4 weeks; Washington, 13.5 weeks; Arkansas, Mississippi and Wisconsin, 13.6 weeks; Hawaii, South Carolina and Tennessee, 13.7 weeks; and West Virginia, 13.8 weeks

During January 2009, 7 counties reported a decrease in the IUR and 92 counties reported an increase with 1 remaining unchanged. When comparing current rates to January 2008, 1 county reported a decrease in the IUR and 99 counties reported an increase. Counties with the lowest rates in January 2009 were Orange, 1.57 percent; Durham, 1.79 percent; Wake, 2.37 percent; Watauga, 2.61 percent; and Mecklenburg, 2.76 percent. Counties with the highest rates in January 2009 were Caswell, 16.34 percent; Graham, 13.55 percent; Alexander, 13.43 percent; Perquimans, 13.37; and Stokes, 12.87 percent.

The Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund balance was at \$25,169,194 on January 31, 2009. Since January 1, 2009 the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund has decreased \$164,993,585. In January, the Employment Security Commission collected \$41,360,196 in Unemployment Insurance taxes assessed to employers. The Federal Loan had a zero balance, and the State Reserve Fund had a balance of \$26,415,187 on January 31, 2009.

As of December 31, 2008, there were 202,450 covered employers in the state.

ESC Finance and Budget reports that claimants in January 2009 were paid \$201,536,951 in unemployment benefits. The weekly average payment per claimant without earnings was \$296.68, an increase of 1.9 percent from the prior month (\$291.14). This average increased 6.0 percent from January 2008 (\$279.84). Claimants receiving first payments in January totaled 75,163, a 24.4 percent increase from December (60,422) and a 101.1 percent increase from the January 2008 level (37,374). Claimants exhausting benefit rights numbered 14,954, for a decrease of 3.0 percent from December's volume (15,409) and an increase of 66.0 percent from the January 2008 volume (9,010).

New and renewed job applications taken in January by ESC local offices totaled 26,418, up 17.0 percent from December's volume (22,581) and up 17.3 percent from January 2008 (22,524).

Individuals placed in January by ESC local offices totaled 2,099, down 22.1 percent from December's volume (2,694) and down 57.8 percent from January 2008 (4,979).

A total of 2,264 non-farm placements occurred in January 2009. This represented a 12.4 percent decrease since December 2008 (2,585) and down 58.6 percent from January 2008 (5,473). A breakout showing the characteristics of applicants placed includes: women, 44.5 percent; veteran, 14.0 percent; minority, 48.1 percent; UI claimants, 50.6 percent; applicants under 22, 12.6 percent; males over 21, 47.6 percent; and, disabled, 11.4 percent.