# Unemployment Claims Data Summary for the Southwestern Pennsylvania Region

Periods covering January 2020 to October 2021
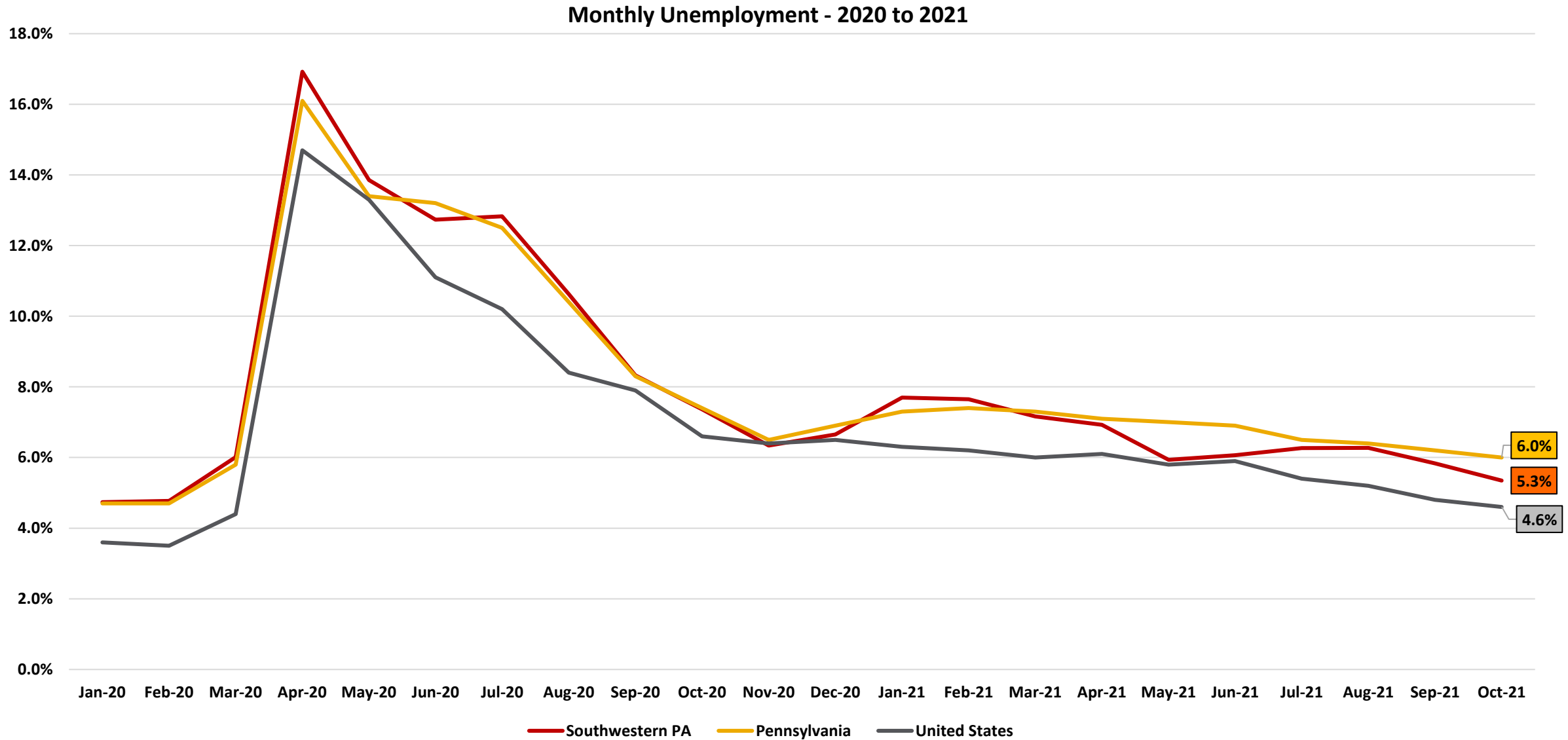
## December 9, 2021

**Pennsylvania Economy League of Greater Pittsburgh**

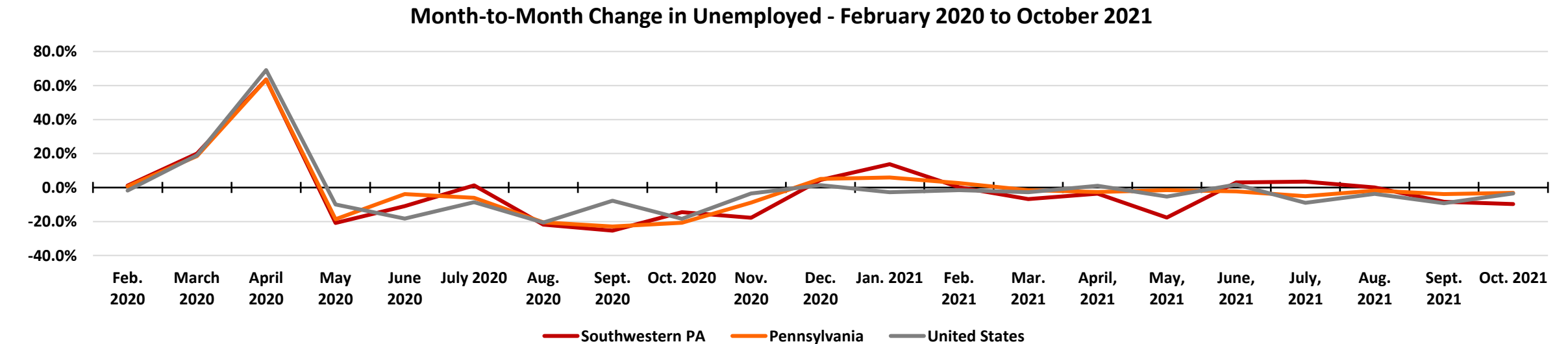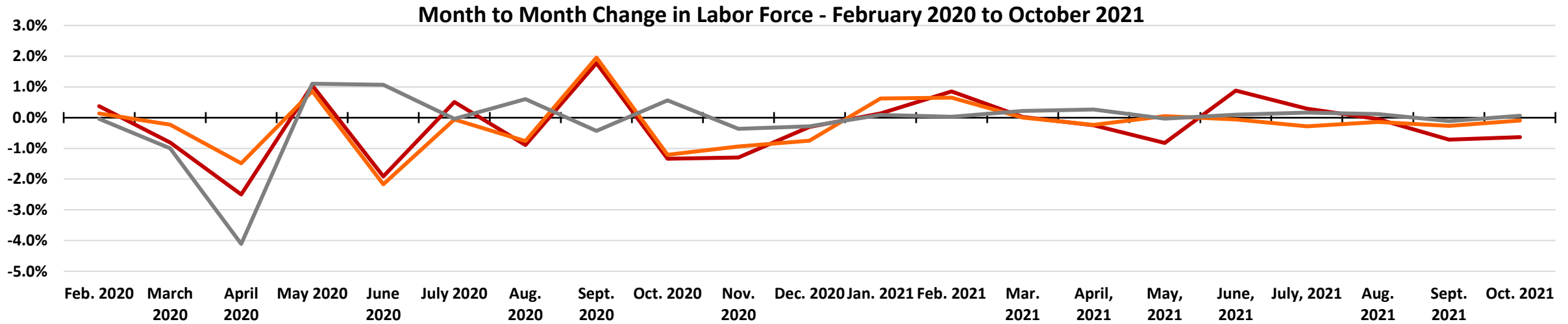An affiliate of the Allegheny Conference

# Key Takeaways

- After slowly increasing during the summer, the unemployment rate in Southwestern Pennsylvania has been dropping throughout the Fall and is now just 5.3%, below the state for the eighth consecutive month.  While the region continues to trail the national unemployment rate, the gap is the smallest its been since July.

- The region's Labor Force fell for a second straight month in October, falling -0.6%, on top of a -0.7% drop in September.  These are two of the largest month-to-month decreases on record and the region's labor force is at its lowest level since November 1990 (1,247,000). Meanwhile the state and nation were essentially flat.

- The number of unemployed individuals in the region has also been seeing significant decreases, falling -9.7% in October and -8.3% in September.  The 66,700 people reporting as unemployed in the region in October is a pandemic era low.  The percentage drop in unemployed individuals was nearly three times the drop reported by the state and nation.

- In October, the gap between the region's February 2020 unemployment rate was 0.5 percentage points, less than half the gap in the U.S. or state.  The gap between the last pre-pandemic unemployment rate and the current one is largest in Armstrong County (1.0 percentage points) while it is below the regional average in four counties including Greene, Lawrence and Washington Counties.  However, the October unemployment rates each county exceed the national average ranging from a low of 4.9% in Allegheny and Butler Counties to a high of 7.5% in Fayette County.

- Continuing unemployment claims remain below levels not seen since the pandemic began but did fall dramatically with the expiration of enhanced unemployment benefits as they were already quite low.  The region's drop continues to parallel the state as Southwestern Pennsylvania's share has remained consistent in the 19% to 20% range since the beginning of the year.

- Regionally, for the week ended 11/27/21, the top five most impacted industries are Construction; Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting; Administrative and Waste Services; Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation; and Transportation and Warehousing.

- Unemployment is not affecting demographic groups equally, and the 35-44 age segment and Black population are suffering more.

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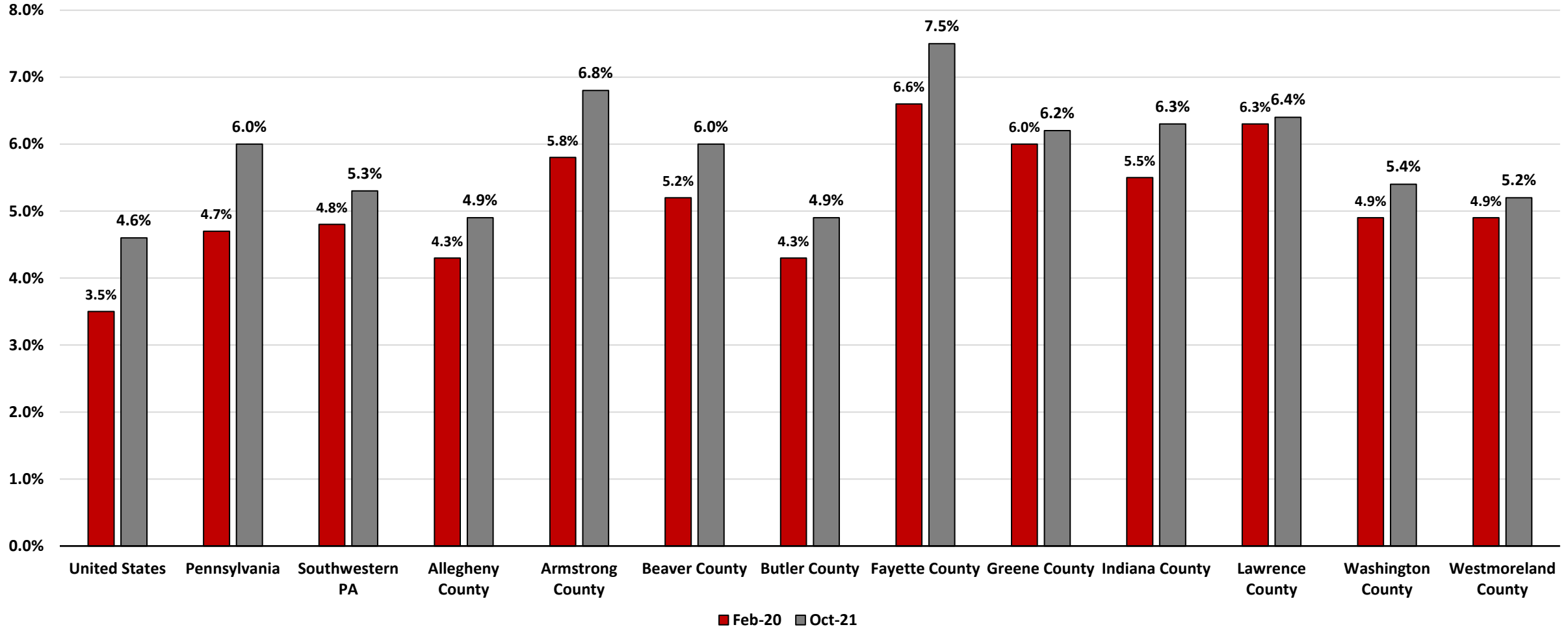


**Monthly Unemployment - 2020 to 2021**

Legend: Southwestern PA · Pennsylvania · United States

Data labels: 6.0%, 5.3%, 4.6%

12/9/21

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Month to Month Change in Labor Force - February 2020 to October 2021



Month-to-Month Change in Unemployed - February 2020 to October 2021

Southwestern PA    Pennsylvania    United States

12/9/21

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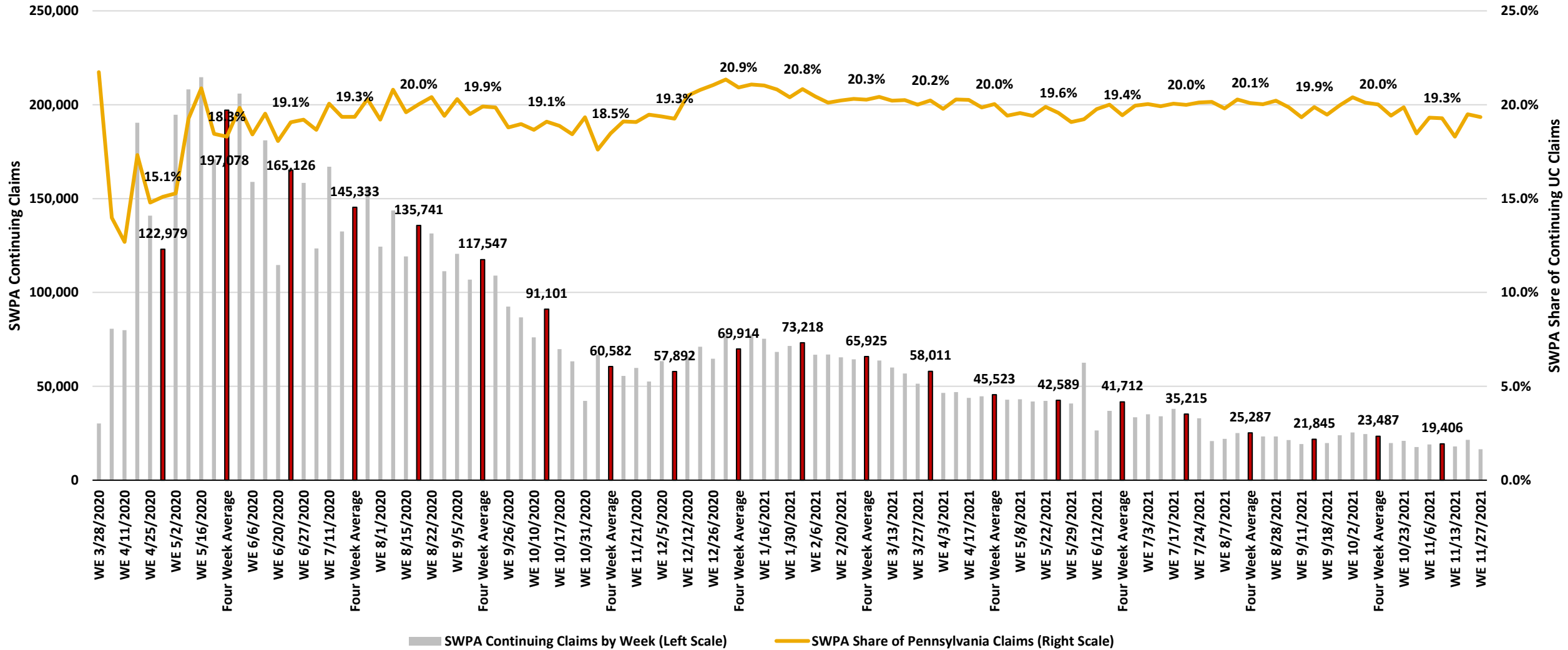


Unemployment Rate Comparison - February 2020 vs. October 2021

12/9/21

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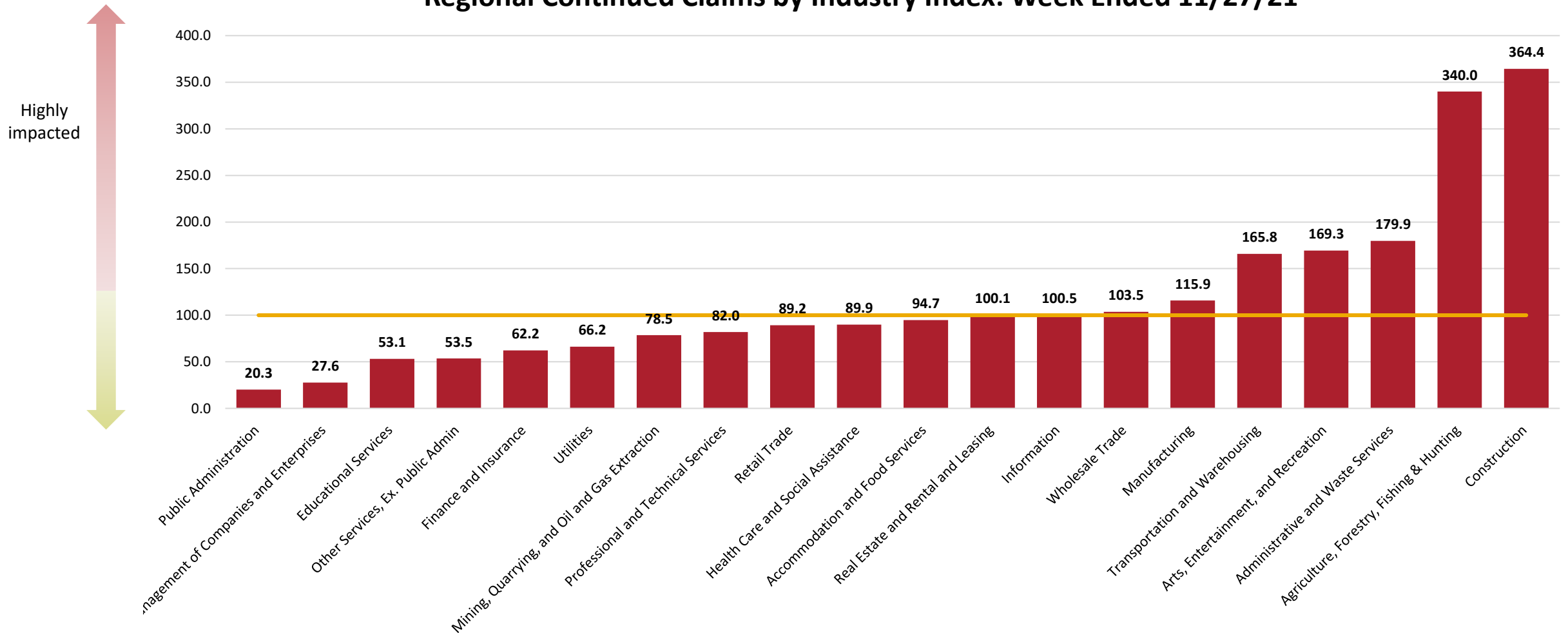
## Southwestern Pennsylvania Continuing UC Claim Trends



SWPA Continuing Claims by Week (Left Scale)

SWPA Share of Pennsylvania Claims (Right Scale)

12/9/21

By comparing percentage of claims to percentage of employment by industry, we can determine which industries are disproportionally impacted. A value above 100 indicates that the industry is highly impacted. Regionally, the top five most impacted industries are Construction; Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting; Administrative and Waste Services; Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation; and Transportation and Warehousing. Unlike other industries, Construction is impacted by seasonal slowdowns.



**Regional Continued Claims by Industry Index: Week Ended 11/27/21**

Highly impacted

| Industry | Value |
|---|---|
| Public Administration | 20.3 |
| Management of Companies and Enterprises | 27.6 |
| Educational Services | 53.1 |
| Other Services, Ex. Public Admin | 53.5 |
| Finance and Insurance | 62.2 |
| Utilities | 66.2 |
| Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction | 78.5 |
| Professional and Technical Services | 82.0 |
| Retail Trade | 89.2 |
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 89.9 |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 94.7 |
| Real Estate and Rental and Leasing | 100.1 |
| Information | 100.5 |
| Wholesale Trade | 103.5 |
| Manufacturing | 115.9 |
| Transportation and Warehousing | 165.8 |
| Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation | 169.3 |
| Administrative and Waste Services | 179.9 |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting | 340.0 |
| Construction | 364.4 |

12/9/21

By comparing percentage of claims to percentage of population by segment, we can determine which groups are disproportionally impacted. A value above 100 indicates that the group is highly impacted. By age, the 35-44 age segment is the most impacted, followed by the 25-34 age segment. By race, the Black population is disproportionally impacted compared to other demographic groups.

| Regional Continued Claims by Age | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Week ended 11/27/21 | Indexed |
| 16-19 * | 4.5% | 76.0 |
| 20-24 | 4.8% | 78.8 |
| 25-34 | 17.8% | 136.2 |
| 35-44 | 17.3% | 152.1 |
| 45-54 | 15.7% | 120.3 |
| 55-64 | 17.8% | 117.5 |
| 65 and older | 7.6% | 38.8 |
| Unknown | 14.4% | N/A |
| Grand Total | 16,523 | |

* Used 15 – 19 age group from American Community Survey

| Regional Continued Claims by Race | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Week ended 11/27/21 | Indexed |
| Black | 12.4% | 159.9 |
| Hispanic | 1.3% | 72.4 |
| Pacific Islander or Asian | 0.6% | 27.2 |
| Unknown | 10.1% | N/A |
| White | 75.3% | 86.3 |
| Grand Total | 16,523 | |

| Regional Continued Claims by Sex | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Week ended 11/27/21 | Indexed |
| Female | 43.7% | 85.2 |
| Male | 56.3% | 115.5 |
| Grand Total | 16,521 | |

Two data points did not report sex and are therefore not included

Report produced by the Pennsylvania Economy League of Greater Pittsburgh, an affiliate of the Allegheny Conference

Data sources include the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry Center for Workforce Information and Analysis and Bureau of Labor Statistics

For more information, please contact Jim Futrell at jfutrell@alleghenyconference.org