Unemployment Claims Data Summary for the Southwestern Pennsylvania Region

Periods covering January 2020 to November 2021

January 6, 2022
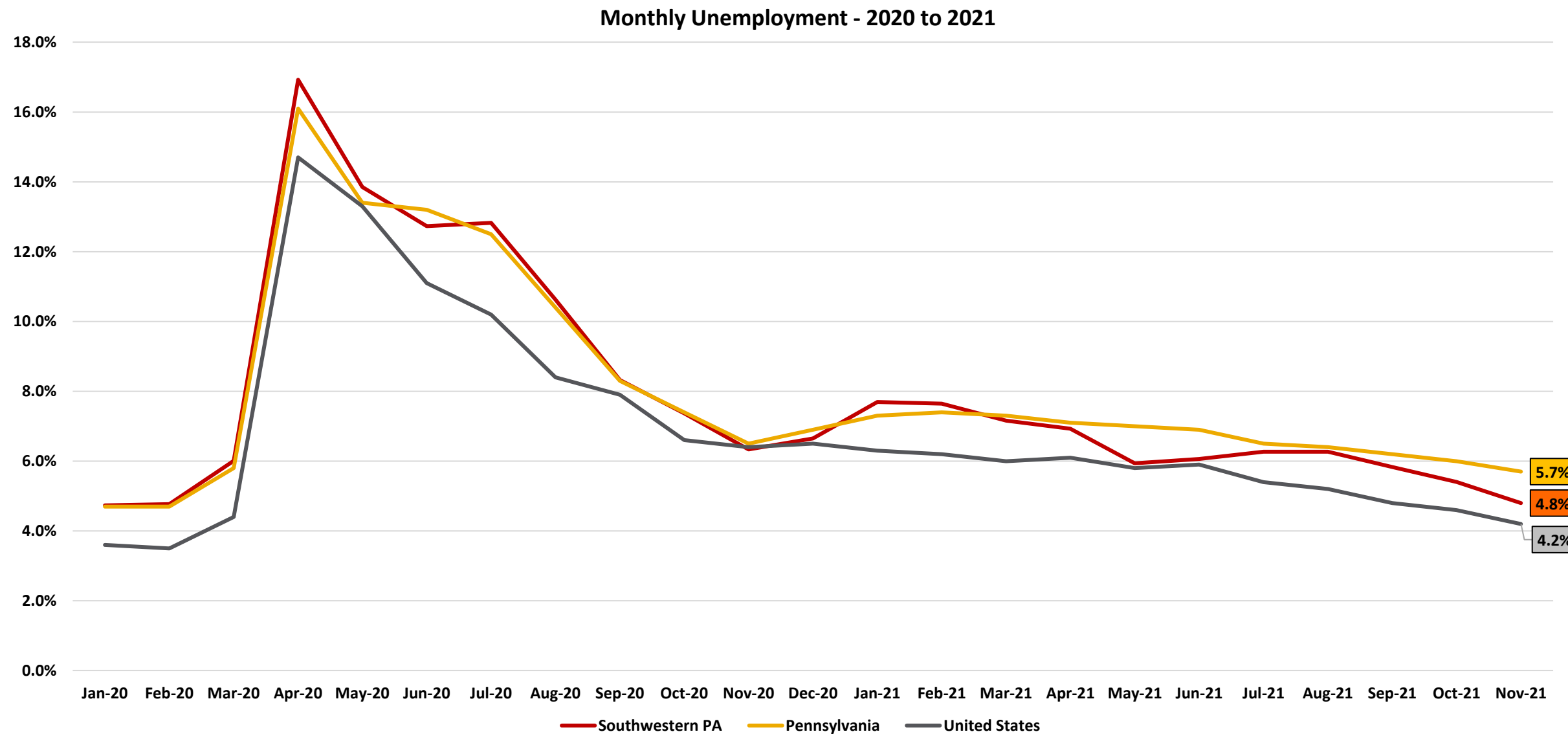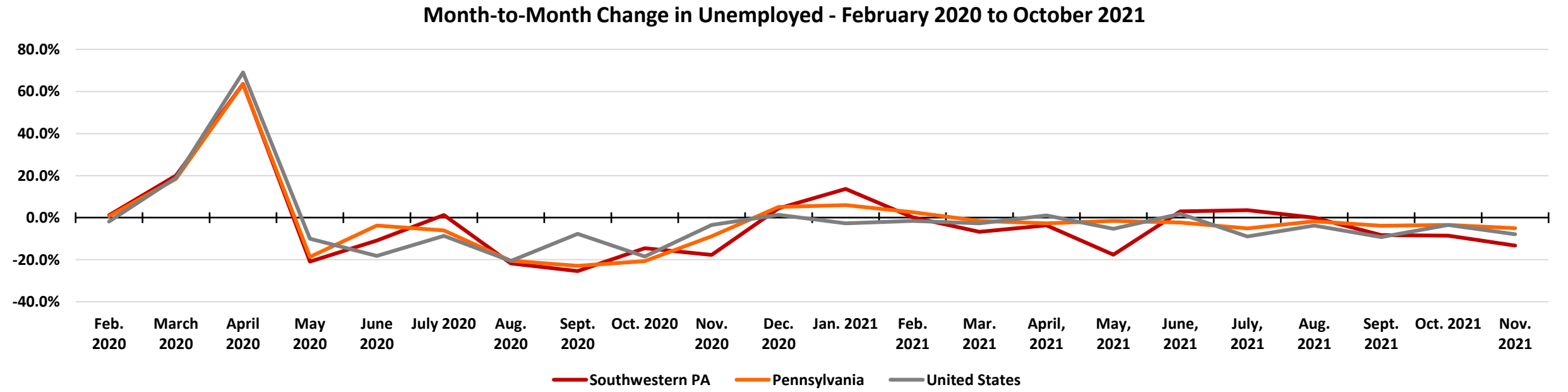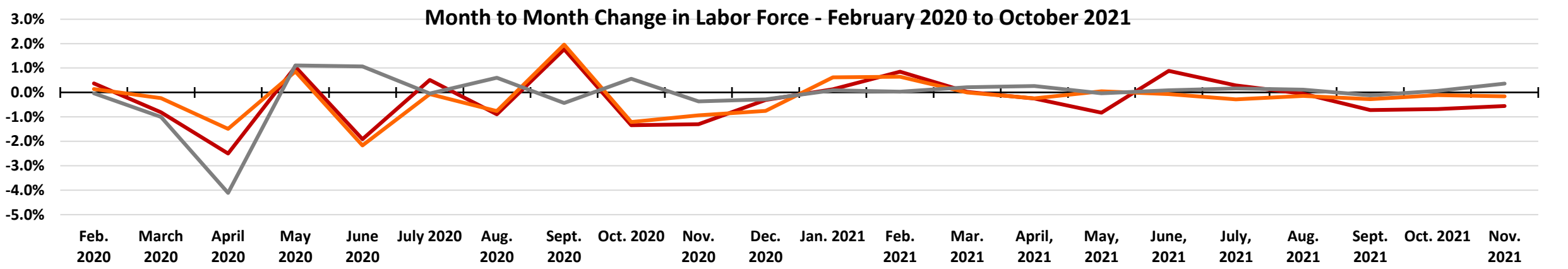
Key Takeaways

- The unemployment rate in Southwestern Pennsylvania has decreased steadily since August and in November was 4.8%, just 0.6 percentage points higher than the nation and 0.9 points below the state. While the region continues to trail the national unemployment rate, the gap is the smallest its been since June.

- The region's Labor Force fell for a third straight month and is now at its lowest level since July 1990. Nine of the ten largest one month drops in labor force in the past 30 years have occurred since February 2020.

- The number of unemployed individuals in the region has also been seeing significant decreases, falling -13.3% in November well above the state and nation. Given that employment in Southwestern Pennsylvania was essentially flat between October and November, the drop in the unemployment rate is being driven by people leaving the labor force.

- In November, the unemployment rate in the region (4.8%) was the same as it was in February 2020. While there is little difference in the February 2020 and November 2021 unemployment rates in most counties in the region, it actually fell below pre-pandemic levels in Greene, Lawrence and Westmoreland Counties. However, the November unemployment rates continue to exceed the nation in all counties except for Butler, the Fayette County having the highest rate.

- Continuing unemployment claims remain below levels not seen since the pandemic began. 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 12/25/21, the top five most impacted industries are Construction; Administrative and Waste Services; Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting; 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

Labeled end values: 5.7%, 4.8%, 4.2%

1/6/22

The region's Labor Force fell for a third straight month in November, falling -0.6%, on top of -0.7% drops in both in September and October and is at its lowest level since July 1990. In fact nine of the ten largest one month drops in labor force in the past 30 years have occurred since February 2020. The number of unemployed individuals in the region has also been seeing significant decreases, falling -13.3% in November well above the state and nation. Given that employment in Southwestern Pennsylvania was essentially flat between October and November, the drop in the unemployment rate is being driven by people leaving the labor force.

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

1/6/22

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Unemployment Rate Comparison - February 2020 vs. November 2021
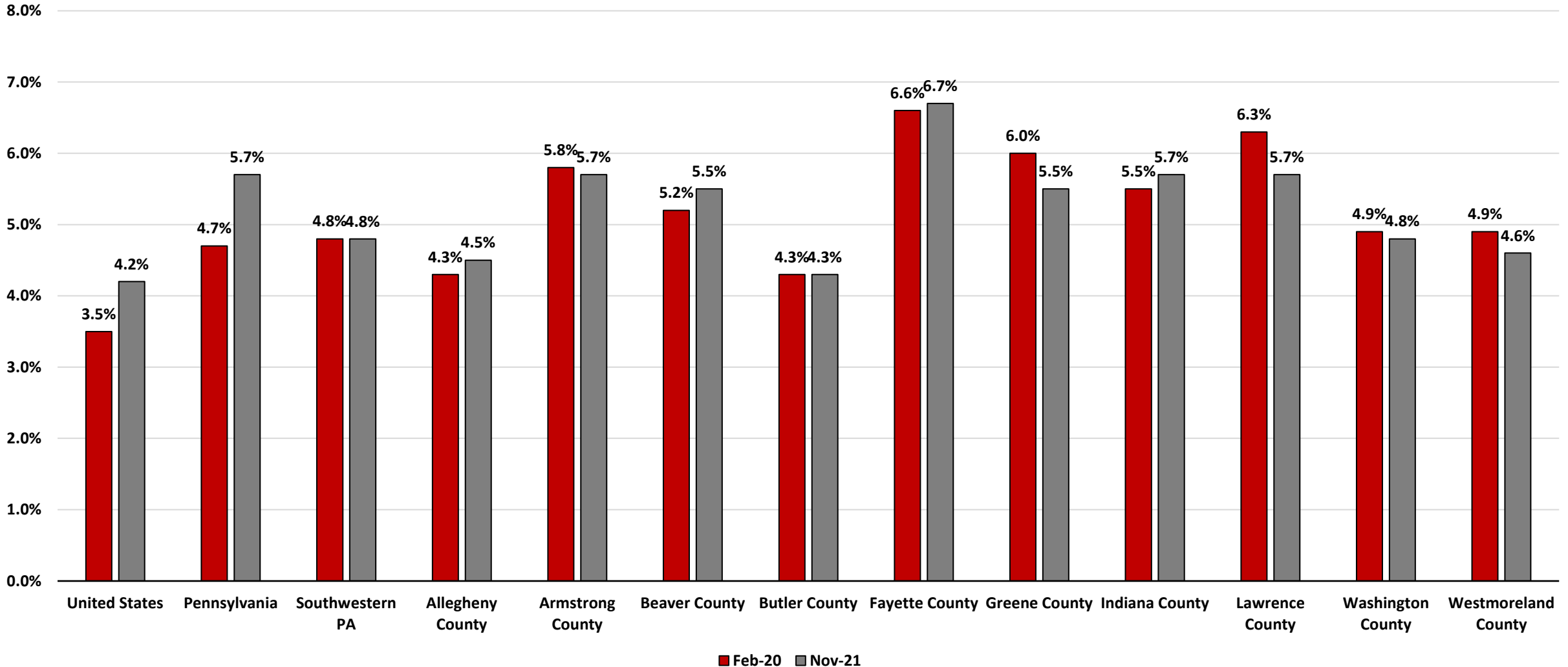
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Southwestern Pennsylvania Continuing UC Claim Trends
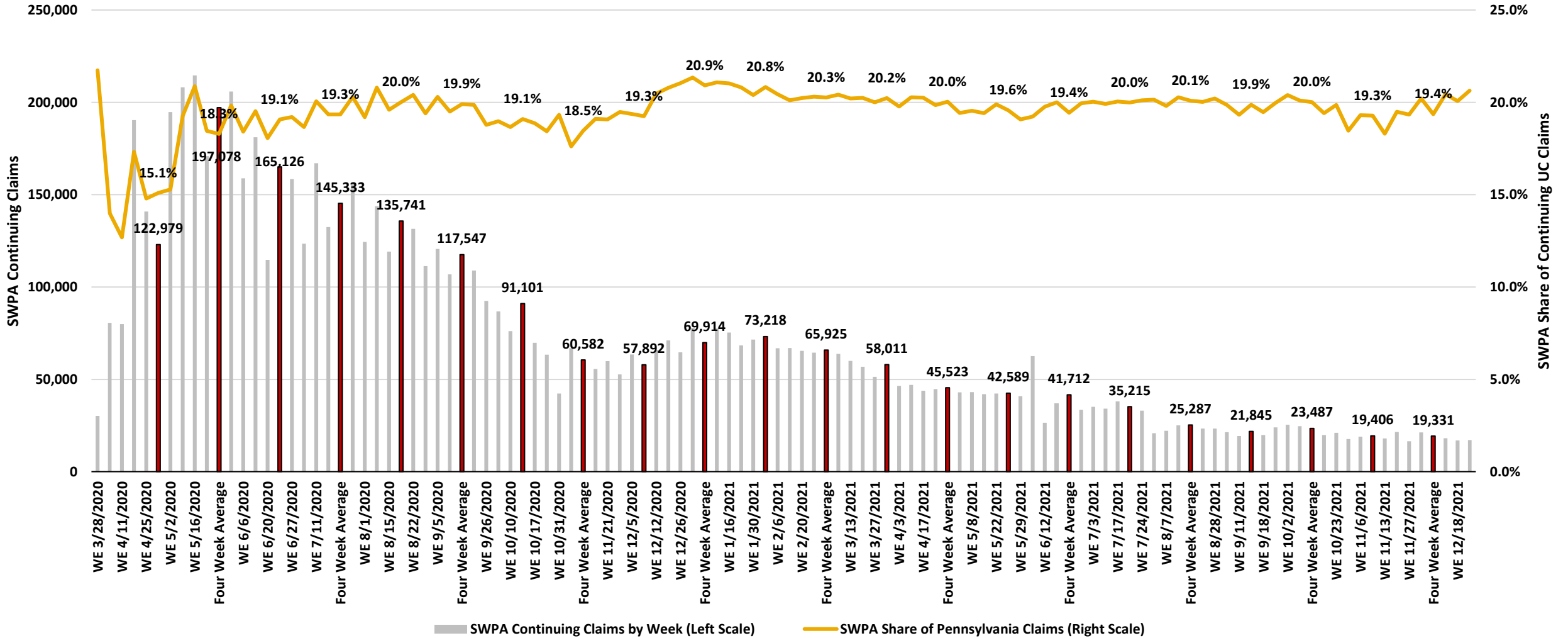
Legend: SWPA Continuing Claims by Week (Left Scale) — SWPA Share of Pennsylvania Claims (Right Scale)

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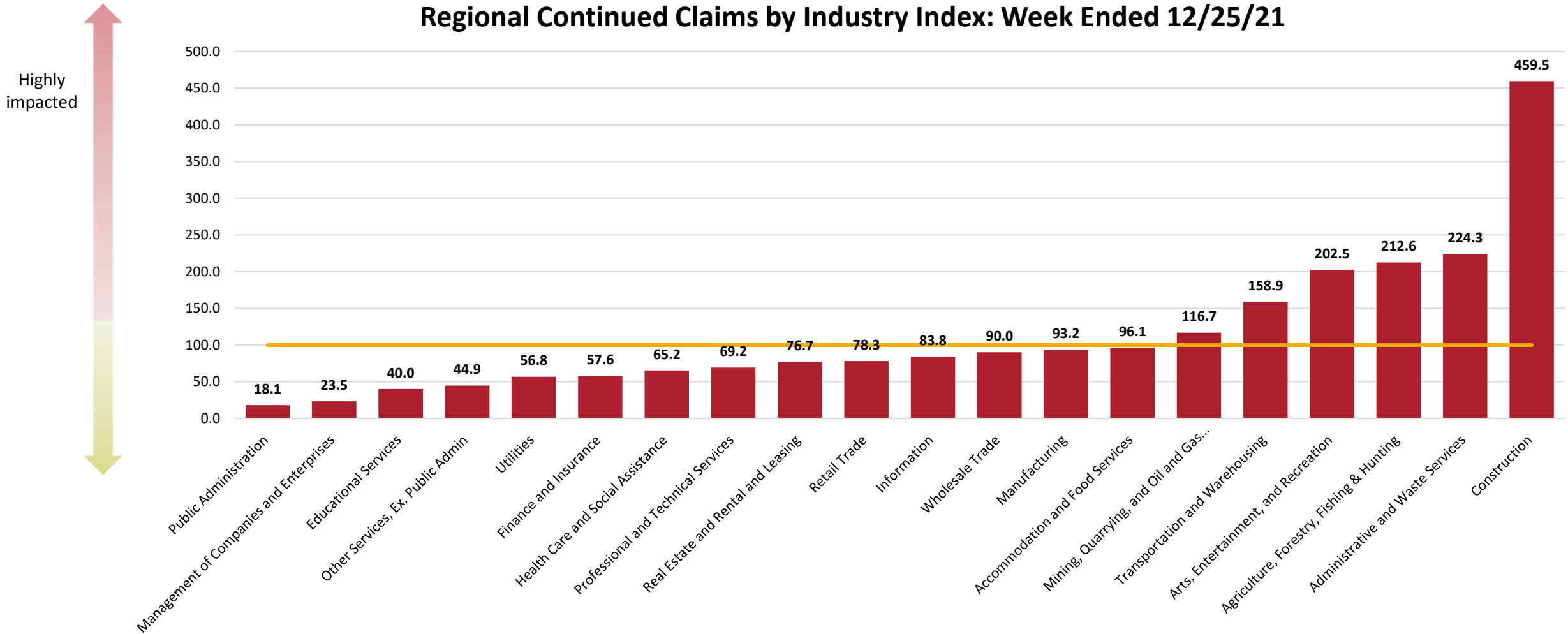By comparing percentage of claims to percentage of employment by industry, we can determine which industries are disproportionally impacted. A value above 100 indicates that the industry is highly impacted. Regionally, the top five most impacted industries are Construction; Administrative and Waste Services; Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting; 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 12/25/21

Highly impacted

Industry	Index
Public Administration	18.1
Management of Companies and Enterprises	23.5
Educational Services	40.0
Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	44.9
Utilities	56.8
Finance and Insurance	57.6
Health Care and Social Assistance	65.2
Professional and Technical Services	69.2
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	76.7
Retail Trade	78.3
Information	83.8
Wholesale Trade	90.0
Manufacturing	93.2
Accommodation and Food Services	96.1
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas...	116.7
Transportation and Warehousing	158.9
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	202.5
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	212.6
Administrative and Waste Services	224.3
Construction	459.5

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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 and 45-54 age segments. By race, the Black population is disproportionally impacted compared to other demographic groups.

Regional Continued Claims by Age

	Week ended 12/25/21	Indexed
16-19 *	2.6%	44.0
20-24	5.1%	83.3
25-34	19.4%	147.9
35-44	19.4%	170.8
45-54	19.3%	147.5
55-64	21.5%	142.0
65 and older	8.6%	43.8
Unknown	4.1%	N/A
Grand Total	17,163	

* Used 15 – 19 age group from American Community Survey

Regional Continued Claims by Race

	Week ended 12/25/21	Indexed
Black	11.1%	143.6
Hispanic	1.3%	76.8
Pacific Islander or Asian	0.7%	30.2
Unknown	7.7%	N/A
White	78.8%	90.4
Grand Total	17,163	

Regional Continued Claims by Sex

	Week ended 12/25/21	Indexed
Female	36.1%	70.4
Male	63.9%	131.1
Grand Total	17,163	

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

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