

# **Unemployment Claims Data Summary for the Southwestern Pennsylvania Region**

Periods covering January 2020 to August 2021

October 8, 2021



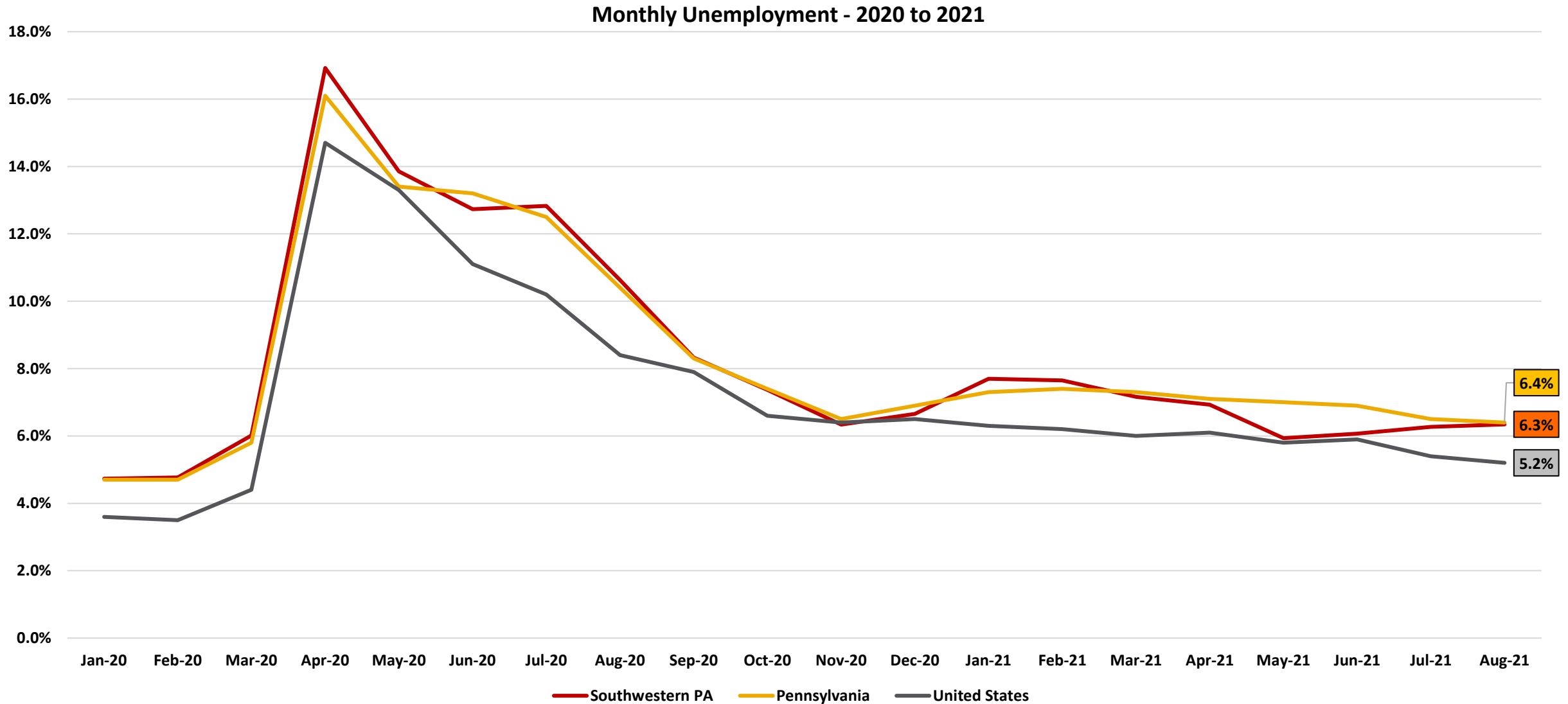
**Pennsylvania Economy League  
of Greater Pittsburgh**

An affiliate of the Allegheny Conference

# Key Takeaways

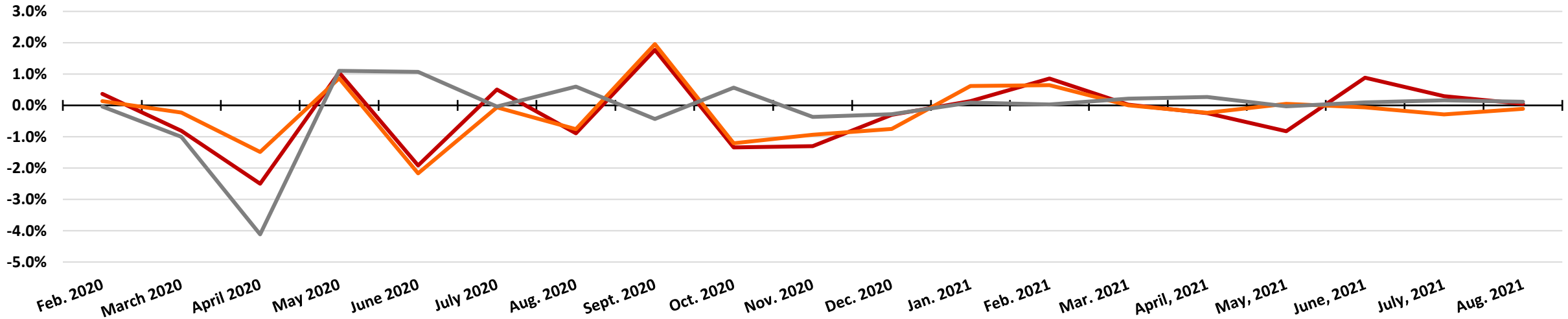
- The unemployment rate in Southwestern Pennsylvania increased slightly in August for the third consecutive month and is now comparable to the state average. Meanwhile the national rate dropped for the second consecutive month and is now 5.2%.
- The Labor Force did not increase in Southwestern Pennsylvania, while it registered only minimal changes in Pennsylvania and nationally. Statewide, the Labor Force dropped for the third consecutive month.
- The number of unemployed individuals in the region also grew in August for the third consecutive month, albeit at a much slower rate than the previous two months. Conversely, the number of unemployed individuals fell both statewide and regionally.
- In past months the gap between the region's February 2020 unemployment rate and the current month was smaller than the U.S. or state. In August, however, the 1.6 percentage point gap was comparable to the U.S. and state. Unemployment rates vary by county from a low of 5.6% in Butler County to a high of 9.0% in Fayette County.
- Continuing unemployment claims have dropped to levels to not seen since the pandemic began, with a four-week average in mid-September of just 21,845. They totaled just 24,011, the week ended September 25th. 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 9/25/21, the top five most impacted industries are Construction; Administrative and Waste Services; Transportation and Warehousing; Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting; and Manufacturing.
- Unemployment is not affecting demographic groups equally, and the 35-44 age segment and Black population are suffering more.

While the unemployment rate in the United States and Pennsylvania have been on a slow downward trajectory since early 2021, the rate in Southwestern Pennsylvania has increased from 5.8% in May to 6.3% in August. While this remains slightly below the state, it is now more than a full percentage point higher than the national rate.

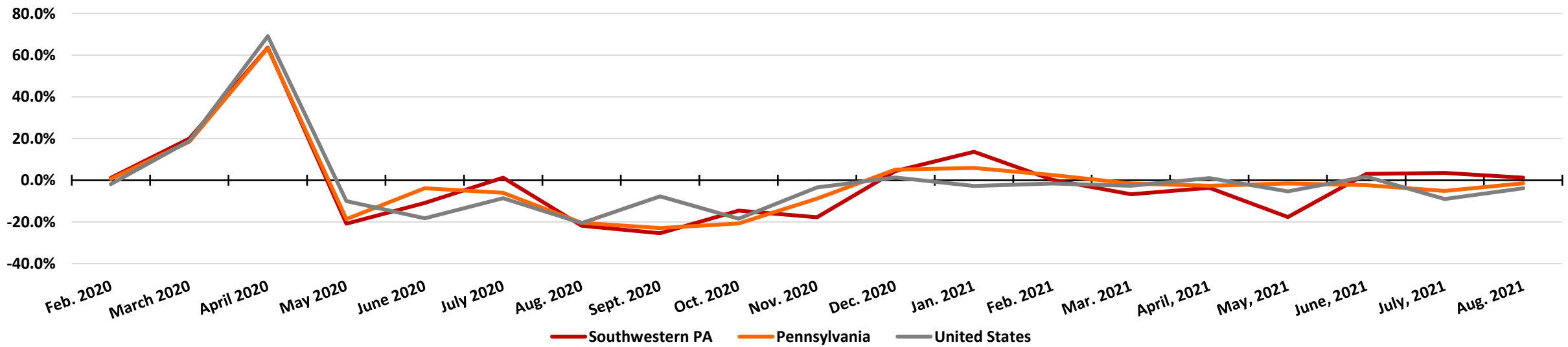


The Labor Force did not grow between July and August at a regional, state and national level. However, while the number of unemployed individuals nationally and in the state fell from the previous month, they increased by 1.2% in the region. Although the number did increase, it grew at a slower pace than June or July.

**Month to Month Change in Labor Force - February 2020 to August 2021**



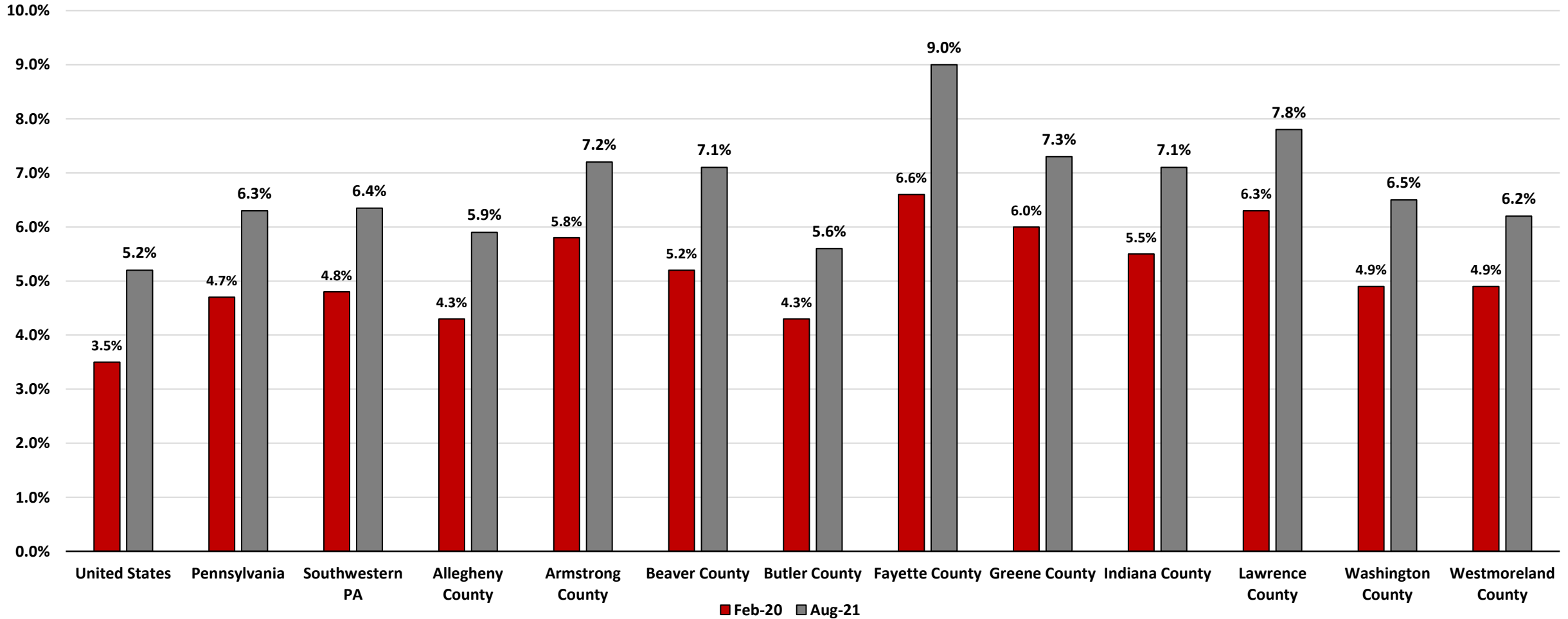
**Month-to-Month Change in Unemployed - Feb. 2020 to August 2021**



Source: BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics; Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry

In past months, the gap between the region's February 2020 unemployment rate was smaller than the U.S. or state, In August, the 1.6 percentage point gap is now comparable to the U.S. and state. The gap between the last pre-pandemic unemployment rate and the current one is smallest in Butler, Greene and Westmoreland Counties (1.3 percentage points, a level larger than previous months) and largest in Fayette County (2.4). Unemployment rates vary by county from a low of 5.6% in Butler County to a high of 9.0% in Fayette County.

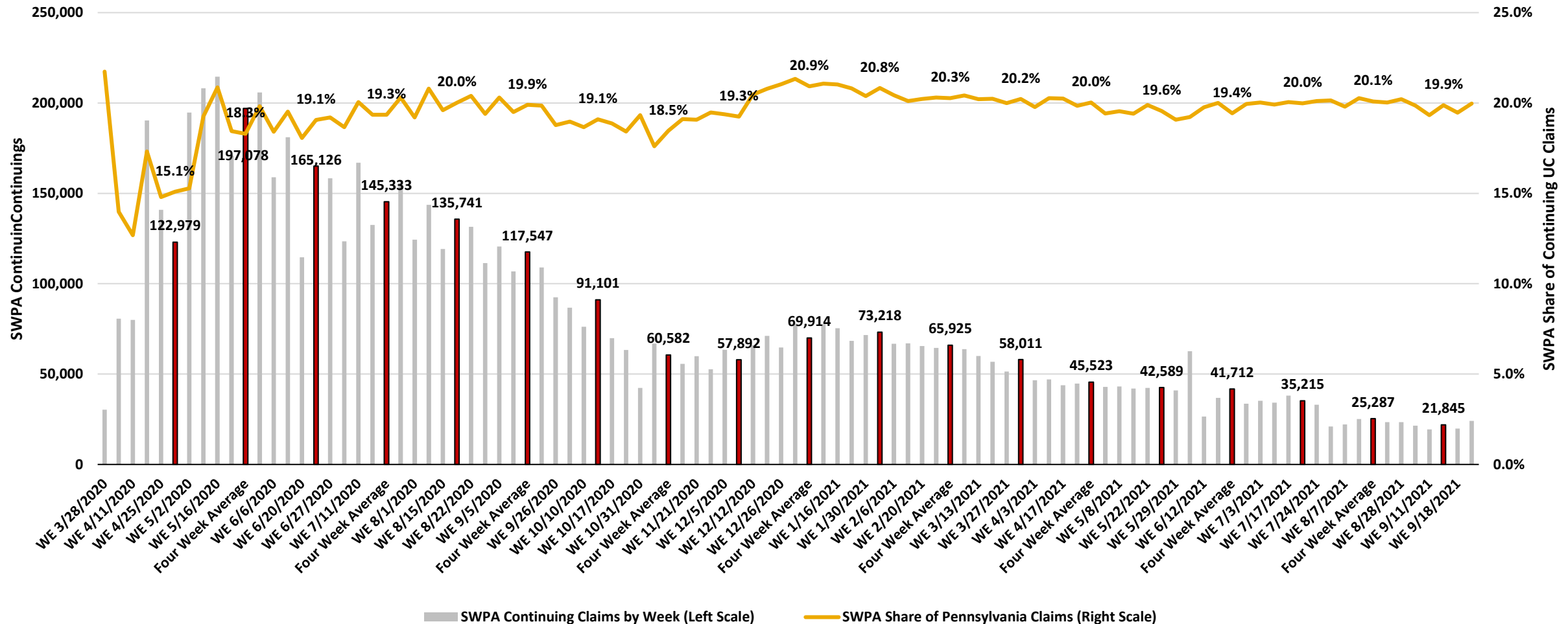
**Unemployment Rate Comparison - February 2020 vs. August 2021**



Source: BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics; Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry

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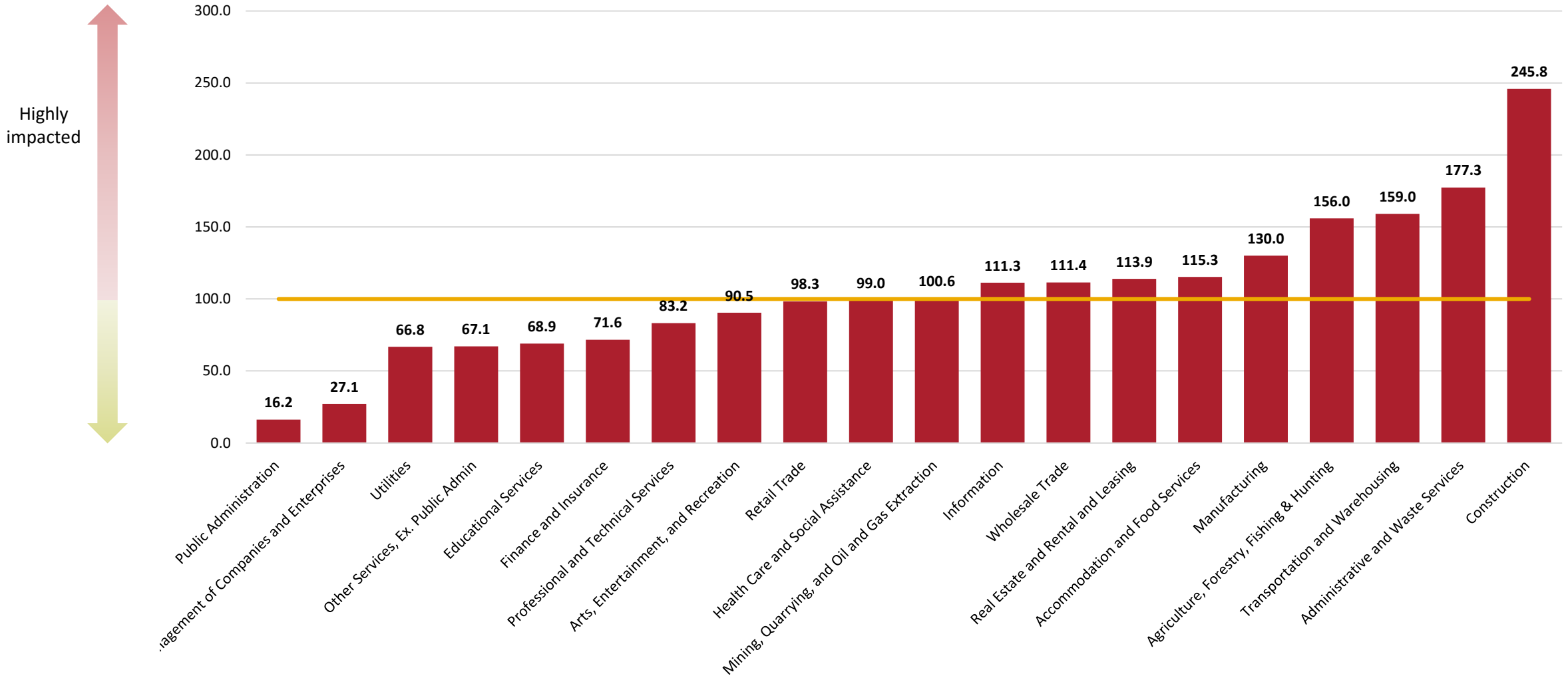
### Southwestern Pennsylvania Continuing UC Claim Trends



Source: Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry

By comparing percentage of claims to percentage of employment by industry, we can determine which industries are disproportionately 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; Transportation and Warehousing; Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting; and Manufacturing. Unlike other industries, Construction is impacted by seasonal slowdowns.

### Regional Continued Claims by Industry Index: Week Ended 9/25/21



By comparing percentage of claims to percentage of population by segment, we can determine which groups are disproportionately 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 45-54 segment and 25-34 segment. By race, the Black population is disproportionately impacted compared to other demographic groups.

Regional Continued Claims by Age		
	Week ended 9/25/21	Indexed
16-19 *	2.2%	36.4
20-24	4.6%	75.9
25-34	19.7%	150.5
35-44	22.4%	197.1
45-54	19.8%	151.6
55-64	20.7%	136.7
65 and older	8.4%	42.8
Unknown	2.1%	N/A
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>24,011</b>	
* Used 15 – 19 age group from American Community Survey		

Regional Continued Claims by Race		
	Week ended 9/25/21	Indexed
Black	12.2%	157.7
Hispanic	1.5%	85.2
Pacific Islander or Asian	0.8%	37.5
Unknown	12.7%	N/A
White	72.4%	83.1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>24,011</b>	

Regional Continued Claims by Sex		
	Week ended 9/25/21	Indexed
Female	48.6%	94.8
Male	51.4%	105.5
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>24,011</b>	



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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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