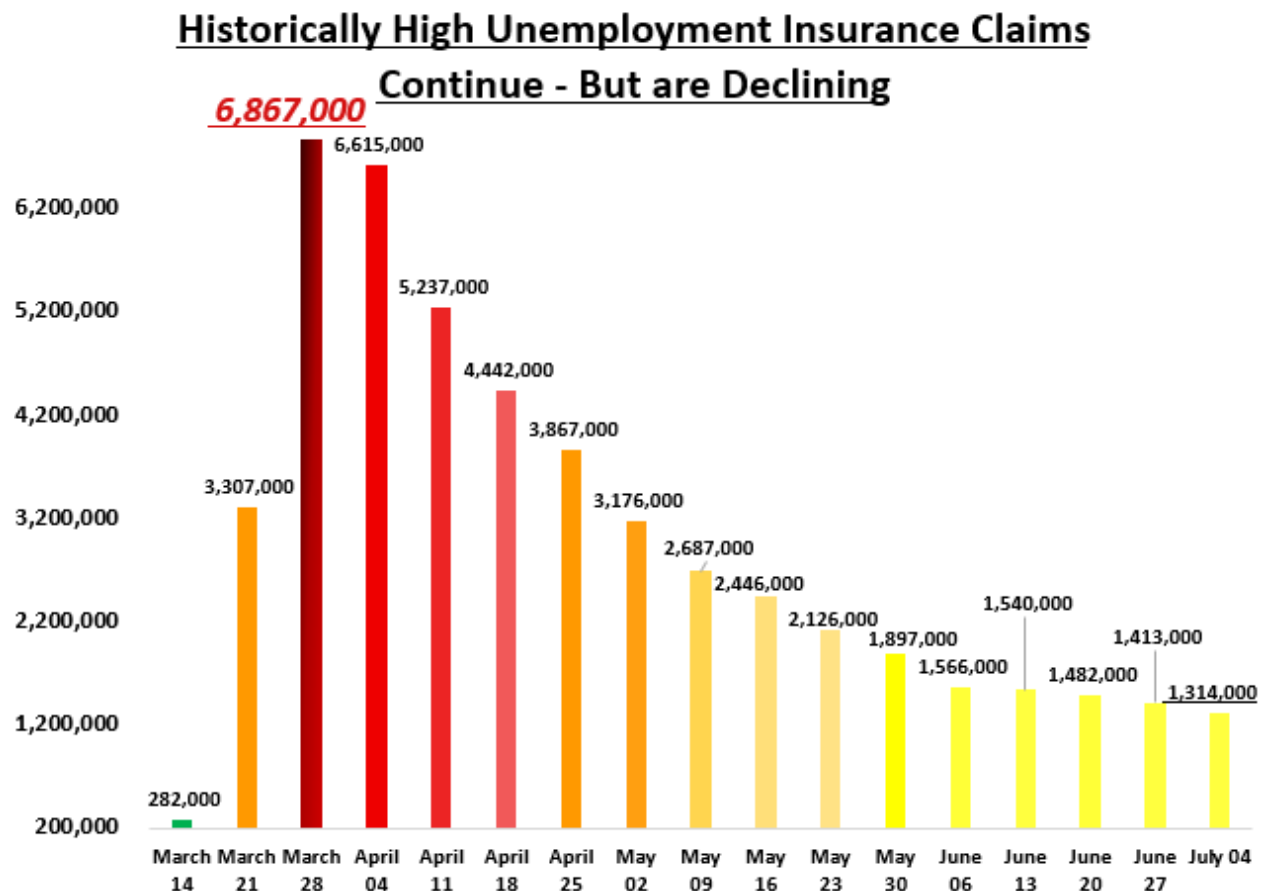


1.3 Million Americans Filed for Unemployment Last Week

Unemployment claims remain stubbornly high despite the improving economy. The Department of Labor [reports today that initial unemployment claims](#) were more than 1.3 million for the week ending July 4. That is 99,000 less than the previous week.

This is 16 straight weeks that claims have exceeded a million. Claims peaked in the week of March 28 at nearly 7 million, and they are down substantially since then. Total claims since mid-March are now just shy of 50 million.

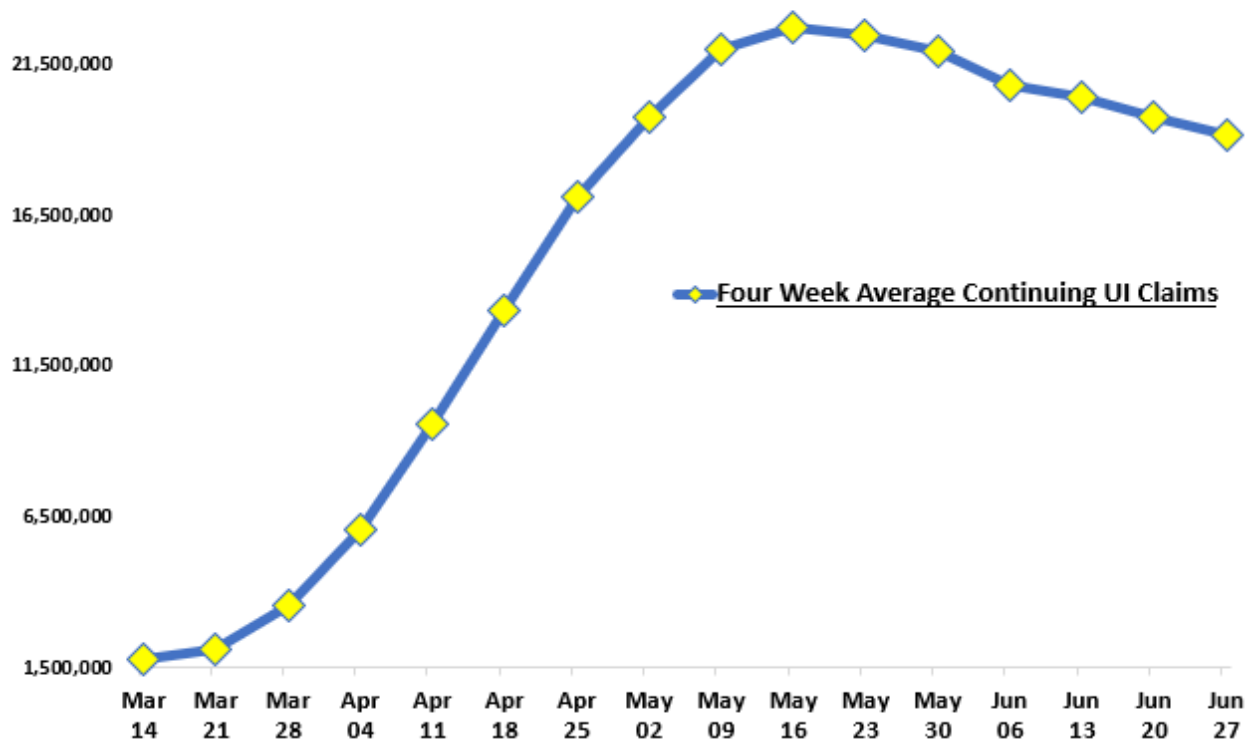


It is disappointing that claims are not falling more quickly. Although the worst is behind us, initial unemployment claims tell many Americans are still losing their jobs. This is the case even though we are four months into the COVID-19 crisis, and the Great Pause is unpausing. Clearly, the fallout from the virus will be with us awhile.

Since businesses are also rehiring and bringing workers back, it is important to look at continuing claims too. Continuing claims subtract out those no longer claiming benefits, presumably because they have gone back to work.

Continuing claims fell to just over 18 million for the week ending June 27. That was almost 700,000 fewer than the week before. The four-week moving average is now slightly more than 19 million, down 636,000 from the week before. It is down more than 3.5 million from its peak in mid-May.

Continuing Unemployment Claims Are Falling Slowly



The labor market is better than it was, but recovery is slow. With the virus resurging, the pace of recovery is likely to slow further. Unemployment claims are unlikely to rise in future weeks, but they may persist at these historically elevated levels the virus is better contained and economic reopening can pick up.

—Curtis Dubay, Senior Economist, U.S. Chamber of Commerce