

# Unemployment Update

December 6, 2021



## Arkansas's Labor Economy Remains Strong

- State unemployment rate is 3.7% (Oct.); National rate is 4.2% (Nov.)
- Arkansas labor force is 1,353,559, of which 1,303,039 are employed and 50,520 are unemployed.
- All metro areas in the state are showing job gains; Jonesboro and Fayetteville have higher employment levels than *before* the pandemic.
- Durable goods manufacturing employment is a significant bright spot for the state – up 6.5% compared to pre-pandemic levels.
- Leisure and hospitality employment is up 6.7% since last year, but still trails pre-pandemic levels (-9.8%).



## COVID UI Claims – Key Stats

• Peak Initial UI Claims – April 3, 2020	62,086
• Last Week's Initial UI Claims	1,453
• Peak Continued UI Claims – May 9, 2020	122,522
• Last Week's Continued UI Claims	8,001
• Peak Web Page Visits – April 2020	3.7M Visits
• Web Page Visits – October 2021	172K Visits
• Total Benefits Paid Since Onset of Pandemic	\$3.4B



# Claims Pending in Adjudication

	<u>11/28/20</u>	<u>11/27/21</u>	
Claims Pending 0-29 Days	5,373	1,792	-67%
Claims Pending 30-60 Days	7,688	2,543	-67%
Claims Pending 61-90 Days	7,898	2,456	-69%
Claims Pending More Than 90 Days	5,533	1,583	-71%
<b>Total Claims Pending in Adjudication</b>	<b>26,492</b>	<b>8,374</b>	<b>-68%</b>
Appeals Pending	7,836	3,888	-50%
Claims Cleared from Backlog Past 12 Months		102,631	
Issues Cleared from Backlog Past 12 Months		169,859	
Claims Issues Resolved in Claimants' Favor		21%	



## Non-Charge of UI Claims

- Act 153 of 2021 and Governor Hutchinson's executive order gave DWS the authority to exclude pandemic-related UI charges in calculating an employer's UI contribution rate.
- DWS has already waived charges from Q2 of 2020 to mitigate effects on 2021 rates.
- 2022 employer contribution rates will be determined based on claims from 7/1/2020 – 6/30/2021.
- Q3 and Q4 2020 still included a high number of pandemic UI claims.
- DWS will exclude \$115M in charges from Q3 and Q4 2020 in calculating 2022 rates.
- UI trust fund balance remains healthy at \$825M.

