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UI Claimant Data Sheds Light on COVID's Workforce Impacts *Asians, Hispanics, Blacks, Younger Workers Struggled*

Asians and Hispanics were among the hardest hit initially by the COVID-19 pandemic, Blacks have been the slowest to recover, and workers ages 20-24 and 65 and older were the most adversely affected at the outset, according to a review of northeast Indiana unemployment insurance (UI) claimants during the first year of the pandemic.

The claimant review was conducted by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and Northeast Indiana Works, the region's nonprofit workforce development organization. Two key benchmarks were utilized: percentage changes in claimants between the second quarter of 2019 and the second quarter of 2020 (when the effects of the pandemic on workers were most acute) and the second quarter of 2020 and the second quarter of 2021 (when public safety precautions were relaxed).

Among the northeast Indiana findings:

- UI claimants among Asians rose 11,846 percent and 2,648 percent among Hispanics between second quarter 2019 and second quarter 2020.
- UI claimants among Blacks declined just 9 percent between second quarter 2020 and second quarter 2021. That was by far the lowest recovery percentage among ethnic and racial groups.
- UI claimants in the 20-24 age group increased 4,896 percent and 3,681 percent among those 65 and older between second quarter 2019 and second quarter 2020.
- Female workers were more adversely affected than males. UI claimants among females rose 2,468 percent between second quarter 2019 and second quarter 2020 and 1,926 percent among males.
- The less education a worker had the more likely they were to be affected by pandemic-related workforce changes. UI claimants among those with an eighth-grade education or less rose 6,491 percent between second quarter 2019 and second quarter 2020; grades 9-11, 2,195 percent; high school graduates or the equivalent, 2,073 percent; and post high school, 2,066 percent.

- The food and accommodations industry was hit hardest initially (a 7,228 percent increase in UI claimants between second quarter 2019 and second quarter 2020); construction fared best initially with just a 382 percent increase in claimants; the percentage of claimants in manufacturing remained highest of all industries throughout the first year of the pandemic (37 percent in second quarter 2020 and 20 percent in second quarter 2021); and the industry identified as management of companies and enterprises was the only industry to register an increase in the percentage of claimants in 2021 compared to 2020.

“Although not surprising, the interesting aspect of the claimant information is that the pandemic was an equal opportunity juggernaut,” said Edmond O’Neal, president and CEO of Northeast Indiana Works. “Every worker group and industry was significantly affected by pandemic-related changes in regional workforces.”

About Northeast Indiana Works: Northeast Indiana Works, the region’s workforce development board, provides public and private financial and employment resources to businesses and individuals for education and skills training to meet the needs of regional industries. The nonprofit sets policy for how public and private funds are utilized to support talent development. It also operates and staffs the 11 county-based WorkOne Northeast career centers in the region. Individuals and companies may access resources and services by visiting or calling WorkOne in their county. To find your local WorkOne, log on to www.neinworks.org