

New unemployment claims in US top 6.6 million amid coronavirus pandemic

The coronavirus outbreak continues to take a brutal toll on American workers with new jobless claims hitting a record high for the second week in a row.

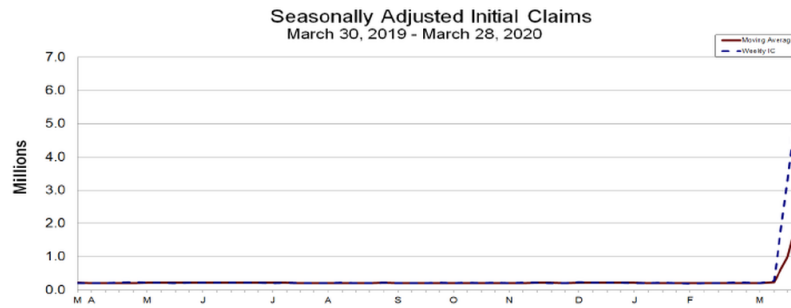
The US Labor Department on Thursday reported that seasonally adjusted initial jobless claims surged to more than 6.6 million for the week that ended March 28.

The increase comes after more than 3.3 million Americans filed for unemployment benefits in the week that ended March 21 as businesses closed and many cities and states issued stay-at-home orders in an attempt to slow the spread of the coronavirus.



This means that 10 million Americans in total have filed for unemployment in the past two weeks. In sharp contrast, just 282,000 Americans filed initial jobless claims for the week that ended March 14.

Many states reported layoffs in the food services and retail industries, as well as in manufacturing, transportation and other industries impacted by COVID-19.



COVID-19 has rapidly spread across the globe. The World Health Organization on March 11 declared the outbreak a pandemic. As of Thursday morning, there were more than 216,000 cases of coronavirus in the US and more than 5,100 deaths. Globally, more than 952,000 people have become infected and more than 48,000 of them have died.

In late March, Congress passed a \$2 trillion economic stimulus package that aims to dampen the economic blow caused by the pandemic. In addition to payments of up to \$1,200 for most adults, the package includes help for the unemployed and for people with student loans, as well financial support for small businesses.

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