

NEWS RELEASE

For Statewide Distribution



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Iowa's Unemployment Rate Increases Slightly to 2.7 Percent

DES MOINES, IOWA – Iowa's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased slightly to 2.7 percent in December. The state's jobless rate was 2.4 percent one year ago. The U.S. unemployment rate remained at 3.5 percent in December.

"Given the holidays and weather in December, it was not surprising to see a slight increase in the unemployment rate. Still, Iowa's workforce grew by 4,400 jobs in December and has grown by 64,900 since the previous December," said Director Beth Townsend, Iowa Workforce Development. "We continue to have more jobs than people to fill them and programs like Future Ready Iowa will help Iowans get the training they need for high-demand occupations and employers to find the talent pipeline they continue to need."

The number of unemployed Iowans increased to 47,200 in December from 46,200 in November. The current estimate is 6,800 higher than the year ago level of 40,400.

The total number of working Iowans increased to 1,716,100 in December. This figure was 4,400 higher than November and 64,900 higher than one year ago.

Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment

Iowa's total nonfarm employment trended down in December and shed 3,100 jobs. This is the second consecutive month that firms trimmed payrolls following a loss of 2,300 jobs in November. Goods producing sectors were lifted by unusual hiring in the construction sector, but private services declined again this month. Government lost 900 jobs in December but remains up 2,000 jobs versus one year ago.

Manufacturing posted the largest loss in December (-1,400) and has now pared jobs in six consecutive months following a recent high in June. Durable goods factories have been most affected with 1,900 jobs shed over the past three months. Professional and business services were down in December (-1,200) due primarily to cutbacks in professional, scientific, and technical services. This decline follows a drop of 900 jobs last month. Truck transportation looked especially weak in December and transportation, warehousing, and utilities combined shed 1,400 jobs. On the other hand, construction posted an unusual increase in activity to end the year (+1,500). Most of these gains were in specialty trade contractors. Despite losses in October and November construction has generally been positive through much of the year. Leisure and hospitality also fared well to end the year (+1,200). Growth was split between entertainment and accommodations and food services.

Over the past twelve months, total nonfarm employment has edged down (-2,400). Trade, transportation, and utilities leads all sectors with 3,300 jobs shed. These losses are nearly even between retail trade and transportation and warehousing. Professional and business services have also been trending down recently (-2,900) with administrative support and waste management positions being most affected. Both financial services and manufacturing have shed 1,600 jobs annually. Alternatively, those sectors that have advanced compared to last December are construction (+4,500), other services (+1,500), and leisure and hospitality (+300).

Employment and Unemployment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

	December 2019	November 2019	December 2018	Change from	
				November 2019	December 2018
Civilian labor force	1,763,300	1,757,900	1,691,600	5,400	71,700
Unemployment	47,200	46,200	40,400	1,000	6,800
Unemployment rate	2.7%	2.6%	2.4%	0.1	0.3
Employment	1,716,100	1,711,700	1,651,200	4,400	64,900
U.S. unemployment rate	3.5%	3.5%	3.9%	0.0	-0.4

Nonfarm Employment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

Total Nonfarm Employment	1,591,000	1,594,100	1,593,400	-3,100	-2,400
Mining	2,400	2,300	2,600	100	-200
Construction	81,400	79,900	76,900	1,500	4,500
Manufacturing	226,500	227,900	228,100	-1,400	-1,600
Trade, transportation and utilities	310,700	311,900	314,000	-1,200	-3,300
Information	21,000	20,800	21,700	200	-700
Financial activities	107,700	107,800	109,300	-100	-1,600
Professional and business services	140,100	141,300	143,000	-1,200	-2,900
Education and health services	234,300	235,300	234,700	-1,000	-400
Leisure and hospitality	145,300	144,100	145,000	1,200	300
Other services	59,300	59,600	57,800	-300	1,500
Government	262,300	263,200	260,300	-900	2,000

Unemployment Insurance Claims for Iowa

	December 2019	November 2019	December 2018	% Change from	
				November 2019	December 2018
Initial claims	30,805	17,463	22,799	76.4%	35.1%
Continued claims					
Number of claimants	30,331	19,433	26,605	56.1%	14.0%
Weeks paid	88,046	54,367	82,560	61.9%	6.6%
Amount paid	\$35,184,401	\$21,751,911	\$31,987,365	61.8%	10.0%

Visit www.iowalmi.gov for more information about current and historical data, labor force data, nonfarm employment, hours and earnings, and jobless benefits by county.

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MEDIA ALERT: Local data for December will be posted to the IWD website on Tuesday, January 28, 2020. Statewide and local data for January 2020 will be released on Monday, March 16, 2020.

