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Iowa's Unemployment Rate Decreases to 3.5 Percent in December

DES MOINES, IOWA – Iowa's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell to 3.5 percent in December, down from 3.7 percent in November and 3.7 percent a year ago. The U.S. unemployment rate dropped to 3.9 percent.

The total number of unemployed lowans decreased to 57,900 in December, down 3,800 from November.

The total number of working lowans increased to 1,604,800 in December. This figure is 5,200 higher than November and 45,200 higher than one year ago.

The labor force participation rate increased slightly to 66.9 percent.

"Growth and recovery continue throughout Iowa, with positive trends across many sectors of our state's economy," said Beth Townsend, Director of Iowa Workforce Development. "More than 45,000 lowans joined the employed last year as Iowa reignited its focus on job growth and getting citizens back to work. We intend to build on this momentum this year by using our Reemployment Case Management and other improvements to help more and more lowans find new careers in 2022."

Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment

Iowa establishments added 11,700 jobs in December, ending the year on a high note with job gains in each of the last four months. Additionally, firms showed signs of gaining momentum in the second half of the year with 29,200 jobs added in the final six months. The December gain did include striking manufacturing workers returning to the production lines following a corresponding drop in durable goods production in November. Private industries were responsible for all of the jobs added this month, as government was unchanged versus last month but has added 7,100 jobs since last December.

Manufacturing added the most jobs in December (+6,100) as strikers returned to work. Virtually all of the movement was within durable goods, although nondurable goods factories added 100 jobs. Construction advanced for the second straight month and has now risen by 2,000 jobs since October. This sector has generally trended down throughout the year, but gains were seen over the past six months. Both wholesale and retail trade advanced again, with 2,300 jobs combined added in December. Both sectors have provided strong evidence that consumers and businesses are increasing demand for goods, with both industries steadily advancing since May and adding 14,000 jobs. Smaller sector gains in December included accommodations and food services (+1,000) and other services (+600). Job losses were light this month and included professional, scientific, and technical services (-500) and finance and insurance (-400). This month's decline marks the third consecutive decline for this sector.

Annually, total nonfarm employment increased by 41,200 jobs over the past 12 months. Leisure and hospitality continued their recovery in December and finished the year up 19,600 jobs or 16.7 percent, easily the highest of any super sector. Manufacturing is up 6,500 jobs with healthy growth in both durable and non-durable goods industries. Retail trade has been lifted by strong hiring in 2021 and has helped fuel a gain of 5,600 jobs in trade, transportation, and utilities. Losses have occurred in administrative and waste management industries (-1,800) and construction (-1,600).

Employment and Unemployment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

	December 2021	November 2021	December 2020	Change from	
				November 2021	December 2020
Civilian labor force	1,662,700	1,661,300	1,619,400	1,400	43,300
Unemployment	57,900	61,700	59,900	-3,800	-2,000
Unemployment rate	3.5%	3.7%	3.7%	-0.2	-0.2
Employment	1,604,800	1,599,600	1,559,600	5,200	45,200
Labor Force Participation Rate	66.9%	66.8%	65.3%	0.1	1.6
U.S. unemployment rate	3.9%	4.2%	6.7%	-0.3	-2.8
Nonfarm Employment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data					
Total Nonfarm Employment	1,554,600	1,542,900	1,513,400	11,700	41,200
Mining	2,300	2,300	2,400	0	-100
Construction	76,300	75,200	77,900	1,100	-1,600
Manufacturing	224,700	218,600	218,200	6,100	6,500
Trade, transportation and utilities	313,800	310,800	308,200	3,000	5,600
Information	18,300	18,200	18,500	100	-200
Financial activities	110,000	110,400	109,600	-400	400
Professional and business services	135,100	135,100	136,400	0	-1,300
Education and health services	223,200	223,000	220,600	200	2,600
Leisure and hospitality	137,300	136,300	117,700	1,000	19,600
Other services	57,800	57,200	55,200	600	2,600
Government	255,800	255,800	248,700	0	7,100

Unemployment Insurance Claims for Iowa

	December 2021	November 2021	December 2020	% Change from	
				November 2021	December 2020
Initial claims	17,762	9,982	38,918	77.9%	-54.4%
Continued claims					
Benefit recipients	17,573	9,665	43,988	81.8%	-60.1%
Weeks paid	61,696	29,593	155,078	108.5%	-60.2%
Amount paid	\$26,730,595	\$12,513,463	\$56,995,557	113.6%	-53.1%

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 2021 is available on the IWD website. Statewide and local data for January 2022 will be released on Monday, March 14, 2022.