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Iowa's Unemployment Rate Falls to 4.0 percent in September

DES MOINES, IOWA – Iowa's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped to 4.0 percent in September, down from 4.1 percent in August and 4.7 percent one year ago. The U.S. unemployment rate fell to 4.8 percent in September.

The labor force participation rate remained steady at 66.8 percent.

"Iowa's economy is continuing its steady climb out of the pandemic," said Beth Townsend, Director of Iowa Workforce Development. "More and more people are finding work, while the number of initial unemployment claims continues to fall. The 7,176 initial claims in September represent a more than 68 percent drop from a year ago and the second lowest monthly number Iowa has seen over the past 20 years. Going forward, it's imperative that we do everything possible to ensure these positive trends continue."

The total number of unemployed Iowans decreased to 66,100 in September from 68,000 in August. The current estimate is 10,000 lower than it was last year at this time.

Meanwhile, the total number of working Iowans increased to 1,594,400 in September. This figure is 1,900 higher than August and 37,600 higher than one year ago.

Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment

Iowa employers added 7,000 jobs to their payrolls in September, more than offsetting the loss of 3,700 jobs in August. Hiring was particularly strong in trade, accommodations and food services, and manufacturing. Where private industry has been the catalyst for job gains over the past 12 months, government hiring has been sluggish. State government shed 2,000 jobs in September and is now down 1,900 compared to last year.

Retail trade added the most jobs in September (+2,400) and has now added jobs in four consecutive months despite a rough start to 2021. This may be early evidence of a strong holiday shopping season similar to last year. Manufacturing also fared well in September (+1,900), with hiring particularly strong in agriculture and construction machinery manufacturing. Leisure and hospitality recovered some of its August loss by adding 1,700 jobs. Most of the hiring in September stemmed from jobs gained in eating and drinking establishments. Financial activities have been flat through much of 2021 but did gain 900 in September. This sector previously had been unchanged since June. September's relatively light job losses were led by administrative support and waste management (-1,100). Education and health care services posted the only other private sector losses, shedding a combined 400 jobs.

Iowa total nonfarm employment is now 36,100 jobs ahead of where it was last year. Leisure and hospitality has gained the most jobs (+13,800), fueled by hiring within accommodations and food services. Manufacturing is up 8,900 jobs, with durable goods factories outpacing non-durable goods shops. After September's gain, retail trade now rests 5,200 jobs above last year's mark. Annual job losses have been limited to health care and social assistance (-1,100); management of companies and enterprises (-600); and information (-400).

Employment and Unemployment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

	September 2021	August 2021	September 2020	Change from August September	
				2021	2020
Civilian labor force	1,660,500	1,660,500	1,632,800	0	27,700
Unemployment	66,100	68,000	76,100	-1,900	-10,000
Unemployment rate	4.0%	4.1%	4.7%	-0.1	-0.7
Employment	1,594,400	1,592,500	1,556,800	1,900	37,600
U.S. unemployment rate	4.8%	5.2%	7.8%	-0.4	-3.0
Nonfarm Employment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data					
Total Nonfarm Employment	1,538,200	1,531,200	1,502,100	7,000	36,100
Mining	2,200	2,200	2,300	0	-100
Construction	74,700	74,700	73,800	0	900
Manufacturing	223,300	221,400	214,400	1,900	8,900
Trade, transportation and utilities	307,900	304,100	301,700	3,800	6,200
Information	18,300	18,100	18,700	200	-400
Financial activities	110,600	109,700	109,400	900	1,200
Professional and business services	134,700	135,400	132,200	-700	2,500
Education and health services	222,000	222,400	221,300	-400	700
Leisure and hospitality	133,300	131,600	119,500	1,700	13,800
Other services	56,500	56,200	55,100	300	1,400
Government	254,700	255,400	253,700	-700	1,000

Unemployment Insurance Claims for Iowa

	September 2021	August 2021	September 2020	% Change from August September	
				2021	2020
Initial claims	7,176	7,754	22,890	-7.5%	-68.7%
Continued claims					
Benefit recipients	11,673	15,229	72,738	-23.4%	-84.0%
Weeks paid	43,795	53,530	257,231	-18.2%	-83.0%
Amount paid	\$17,623,448	\$20,269,114	\$84,483,435	-13.1%	-79.1%

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 September 2021 will be posted to the IWD website on Tuesday, October 26, 2021. Statewide data for October 2021 will be released on Friday, November 19, 2021.