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Iowa's Labor Force Participation Rate Increases to 66.3 Percent in November Unemployment Rate Edges to 3.1 Percent as 1,600 Iowans Enter the Workforce

DES MOINES, IOWA – Iowa's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased to 3.1 percent in November, and the state's labor force participation rate rose to 66.3 percent amid a strong influx of new workers. Meanwhile, the U.S. unemployment rate increased to 4.2 percent in November.

"The bright spot in November's report was that 1,600 Iowans came back to the labor force in search of a job," said Beth Townsend, Executive Director of Iowa Workforce Development. "This is a welcome sign for Iowa in terms of our economic stability and growth, as well as for employers who currently are trying to fill over 50,000 open jobs. Now that we are past the election, we hope to see more hiring, more Iowans returning to the workforce, and increased growth overall."

With the influx of work seekers, the number of unemployed Iowans increased to 53,000 in November from 51,000 in October.

The total number of working Iowans fell to 1,632,600 in November. This figure is 400 lower than October and 20,900 lower than one year ago.

Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment

Iowa employers added 400 jobs in November, raising total nonfarm employment to 1,599,300 jobs. This gain is the first since June and was largely the result of hiring within public schools (the majority out of 1,200 local government jobs added). Leisure and hospitality and manufacturing also increased hiring. These gains were tamped down by drops in professional and business services and trade and transportation. Overall, private industry shed 1,100 jobs in November while government (a sector that includes federal, state, and local political subdivisions, as well as schools, universities, and public hospitals) added a total of 1,500 jobs.

Leisure and hospitality led all private sectors in jobs added in November (+700 jobs). Arts, entertainment, and recreational industries fueled this gain as accommodations and food service industries decreased slightly (-200 jobs). Nondurable goods factories gained 500 jobs in November. This hiring was heaviest in food production and animal processing factories. Conversely, professional and business services led all private sectors in losses in November (-1,200 jobs). Administrative support and waste management industries lost the most (-500 jobs) between October and November. Finally, trade and transportation decreased by 700 jobs. These losses were split between retail trade and transportation and warehousing industries.

Compared to a year ago, total nonfarm employment is up 4,000 jobs, fueled by hiring within private service industries and government. Health care and social assistance has added the most jobs (+4,900 jobs). Health care and social assistance alone gained 3,600 jobs annually. Leisure and hospitality has increased by 4,600 jobs. Job growth has been evident in both accommodations and food services and arts, entertainment, and recreational industries. Alternatively, manufacturing has lost the most jobs annually (-5,200). These losses are largely within nondurable goods factories. Smaller losses were evident in professional and business services (-3,100 jobs). Administrative support and waste management industries shed the most jobs from one year ago (-1,900 jobs).

Employment and Unemployment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

	November 2024	October 2024	November 2023	Change from October 2024	November 2023
Civilian labor force	1,685,700	1,684,100	1,705,800	1,600	-20,100
Unemployment	53,000	51,000	52,300	2,000	700
Unemployment rate	3.1%	3.0%	3.1%	0.1	0.0
Employment	1,632,600	1,633,000	1,653,500	-400	-20,900
Labor Force Participation Rate	66.3%	66.2%	67.4%	0.1	-1.1
U.S. unemployment rate	4.2%	4.1%	3.7%	0.1	0.5

Nonfarm Employment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

	November 2024	October 2024	November 2023	Change from October 2024	November 2023
Total Nonfarm Employment	1,599,300	1,598,900	1,595,300	400	4,000
Mining	2,100	2,100	2,200	0	-100
Construction	83,500	83,500	83,400	0	100
Manufacturing	222,000	221,700	227,200	300	-5,200
Trade, transportation and utilities	309,900	310,600	310,000	-700	-100
Information	18,200	18,300	18,300	-100	-100
Financial activities	106,500	106,400	108,600	100	-2,100
Professional and business services	142,400	143,600	145,500	-1,200	-3,100
Education and health services	241,100	241,400	236,200	-300	4,900
Leisure and hospitality	147,300	146,600	142,700	700	4,600
Other services	56,500	56,400	55,900	100	600
Government	269,800	268,300	265,300	1,500	4,500

Unemployment Insurance Claims for Iowa

	November 2024	October 2024	November 2023	% Change from October 2024	November 2023
Initial claims	11,841	10,270	12,770	15.3%	-7.3%
Continued claims					
Benefit recipients	14,109	14,743	9,617	-4.3%	46.7%
Weeks paid	35,763	42,025	29,381	-14.9%	21.7%
Amount paid	\$19,211,660	\$22,775,707	\$14,785,708	-15.6%	29.9%

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 November 2024 will be posted to the IWD website on Friday, December 27, 2024. Statewide data for December 2024 will be released on Friday, January 24, 2025.