



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Iowa's Unemployment Rate Increases to 3.7 Percent in March

DES MOINES, IOWA – Iowa’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased to 3.7 percent in March. The state’s jobless rate was 2.7 percent one year ago. The U.S. unemployment rate rose to 4.4 percent in March.

“The unemployment rate in March only reflects the very beginning of the impact of the substantial increase in unemployment claims we have seen since March 16th, however the more reflective month will be April,” said Director Beth Townsend, Iowa Workforce Development. “While there were more unemployed than March 2019, there were 1.67 million Iowans employed last month. The more Iowans who remain employed throughout should help reduce the economic impact and hopefully assist in a faster recovery period when the economy begins to reopen. There are dozens of employers looking for workers now and those who are temporarily unemployed are encouraged to check these out at: www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov”

The number of unemployed Iowans jumped to 63,500 in March from 49,300 in February. The current estimate is 16,700 higher than the year ago level of 46,800.

The total number of working Iowans decreased to 1,665,300 in March. This figure was 38,100 less than February and 12,300 lower than one year ago.

Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment

Total nonfarm employment in Iowa shed 3,500 jobs in March. While some decline in payrolls was anticipated this month, the majority of the loss associated with efforts to contain the Coronavirus will not be evident until April's estimates. Private service industries continue to trend down in Iowa's economy and have shed a combined 5,600 jobs over the past twelve months. Goods-producing sectors trail last year's mark (-1,900) due to durable goods factories trimming staff over uncertainty. Government shed jobs in March (-400), yet remains up slightly versus last March (+400).

Accommodation and food services posted the biggest movement in March—a loss of 1,600 jobs. This was an early symptom of firms laying off staff early in response to the Coronavirus. This sector had fared well stretching back to last summer and is still up 800 jobs versus last year. Health care pared jobs in March (-1,100) with many of the jobs lost being in social assistance and medical offices. Durable goods manufacturing again trimmed jobs in March (-800). This drop is the fourth in the last five months, but the decline is partially offset by a gain of 400 jobs in nondurable goods shops. Retail trade shed 200 jobs, although staffing levels are expected to drop in April as many non-essential businesses furlough employees. Small gains this month included construction (+200), financial activities (+200), and professional and business services (+100), which saw hiring in administrative and support services being hindered by cutbacks in professional, scientific, and technical services.

Over the past twelve months, Iowa has lost 7,100 jobs. Trade, transportation and utilities has shed 4,100 jobs with transportation and warehousing trimming the most jobs (-2,400). There is evidence that this sector should increase over the next few years thanks to new warehousing and distribution industries arriving in the state and increasing consumer reliance on delivered goods. Manufacturing is down 3,100 jobs with all of the loss being centered in durable goods shops. Annual growth has been highest in other services (+1,700) and construction (+1,400).

Employment and Unemployment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

	March 2020	February 2020	March 2019	Change from February 2020	March 2019
Civilian labor force	1,728,800	1,752,600	1,724,300	-23,800	4,500
Unemployment	63,500	49,300	46,800	14,200	16,700
Unemployment rate	3.7%	2.8%	2.7%	0.9	1.0
Employment	1,665,300	1,703,400	1,677,600	-38,100	-12,300
U.S. unemployment rate	4.4%	3.5%	3.8%	0.9	0.6

Nonfarm Employment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

Total Nonfarm Employment	1,577,800	1,581,300	1,584,900	-3,500	-7,100
Mining	2,400	2,500	2,600	-100	-200
Construction	78,200	78,000	76,800	200	1,400
Manufacturing	223,200	223,600	226,300	-400	-3,100
Trade, transportation and utilities	307,100	307,300	311,200	-200	-4,100
Information	20,400	20,600	21,700	-200	-1,300
Financial activities	110,300	110,100	109,700	200	600
Professional and business services	137,300	137,200	139,300	100	-2,000
Education and health services	233,700	234,700	235,400	-1,000	-1,700
Leisure and hospitality	144,700	146,300	143,500	-1,600	1,200
Other services	59,300	59,400	57,600	-100	1,700
Government	261,200	261,600	260,800	-400	400

Unemployment Insurance Claims for Iowa

	March 2020	February 2020	March 2019	% Change from February 2020	March 2019
Initial claims	126,040	9,747	9,685	1193.1%	1201.4%
Continued claims					
Number of claimants	46,383	35,887	35,571	29.2%	30.4%
Weeks paid	122,636	123,936	117,730	-1.0%	4.2%
Amount paid	\$49,038,061	\$51,706,748	\$47,763,210	-5.2%	2.7%

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.

MEDIA ALERT: Local data for March 2020 will be posted to the IWD website on Tuesday, April 21, 2020. Statewide data for April 2020 will be released on Friday, May 22, 2020.

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Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request for individuals with disabilities.

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