**Ames**

Employment in the Ames metropolitan statistical area (MSA) rose slightly from a revised total of 50,400 in February to 50,700 in March. This was a small but welcome increase, as employment declined between February and March in four of the last five years. The increase in employment was broadly represented in the local economy. The goods-producing sector added 100 positions over-the-month, or 1.5 percent. State government also added 100 positions, or 0.7 percent. Finally, the private-service providing sector added 100 positions, or 0.5 percent. Federal and local government were unchanged.

Despite the monthly increase, employment in the MSA was still somewhat depressed in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. The number of employed persons declined from 54,900 in March 2020 to 50,700 in March 2021, a reduction of 7.7 percent. State government suffered the largest annual decline in employment, at 10.4 percent. There were 1,800 fewer individuals employed in the sector than the year prior. The private service-providing sector shrunk by 9.4 percent, with employment falling from 24,600 in March 2020 to 22,300 in March 2021. This decline of 2,300 positions was the largest numeric change in the area. Local government experienced a modest loss of 200 positions, or 3.9 percent. Federal government was unchanged. The goods-producing sector bucked the trend and added 100 positions annually, a gain of 1.5 percent.

**Cedar Rapids**

Employment in the Cedar Rapids metropolitan statistical area added 600 jobs in March giving the area its first jobs gain of the year after a downward revision to the February employment level. Employment now stands at 135,100. All gains were in service-providing industries as employment in goods-producing industries was unchanged.

Professional and business services, leisure and hospitality, and government each added 200 jobs. The additional government jobs were all in local government. Trade, transportation and warehousing gained 100 jobs, all in the transportation, warehousing and utilities sub-sector. Information pared 100 jobs as did manufacturing, although durable goods manufacturing added 200 jobs.

Over the year, area employment remains down by 9,000 jobs. The value is 6.25% below the March 2020 (pre Covid-19) level. The area has regained slightly more than 43% of the jobs lost due to the effects of Covid-19 restrictions. Leisure and hospitality, which suffered the greatest employment loss of all sectors in April 2020, continues to struggle to bring employment levels back to the pre Covid-19 level. Nearly 58.5% of the jobs lost have been recovered, but the industry remains 18.64% below the March 2020 level. Employment in educational and health services is down 1,400 (-6.33%) jobs from one year ago. Manufacturing employment is 1,200 (-6.03%) below one year ago. Professional and business services has 800 fewer jobs (-5.44%) in the same period and information is down 15.15% which represents 500 jobs.

**Des Moines/West Des Moines**

# Establishments in the Des Moines Metro added 5,300 jobs in March raising total nonfarm employment at 360,600 jobs. This monthly gain is historically high and was fueled by a substantial hiring surge in construction (+3,200). Over half of this increase stemmed from specialty trade construction. These industries were hampered in February when winter storms temporarily halted projects. Leisure and hospitality experienced a modest gain of 600 jobs, an amount seasonally expected given this time of year and good news as eating and drinking establishments increase staffing levels to accommodate more demand for services. Retail trade advanced by 500 jobs. This is also excellent news as hiring isn’t typical expected during this month. Administrative support and waste management experienced a seasonal gain (+700) and was partially fueled by employment services. Government added 400 jobs at the local level due mainly to education. Losses in March were generally light with the exception of health care and social assistance, down 400 jobs versus February.

# Compared to last March, total nonfarm employment is down 10,200 jobs. Most of this loss stems from private services (-9,900). This deficit continues to wane, but may not disappear until after leisure and hospitality industries reopen to pre-pandemic levels. This sector trails by 5,400 jobs in the Des Moines area. Full-service restaurants alone trail last March by 1,700. Education and health services also remain markedly down (-3,700), approximately half of the April 2020 quarantine levels. Alternatively, finance and insurance has added jobs even during the pandemic (+700). This sector was driven by particularly strong hiring in insurance carriers and related services. Administrative support and waste management has also expanded annually thanks to hiring over the last two months (+700).

# Dubuque

Establishments in the Dubuque Metro added 1,100 jobs in March. This monthly gain is historically large and lifts the total number of jobs to 58,200 jobs. The increase was generally due to a surge in activity within construction, although manufacturing also boosted staffing levels in March. Overall, goods producing industries gained 800 jobs. Private services added 300 jobs, somewhat average given this time of year. Government changed little compared to February.

Annually, Dubuque trails by 1,800 jobs, although this deficit is steadily shrinking. With this month’s gain, goods producing industries is now up annually by 200 jobs. On the other hand, private services still trail by 1,800 jobs and government is down 200 jobs at the local level.

**Iowa City**

Employment in the Iowa City metropolitan statistical area (MSA) increased from a revised total of 93,300 in February to 94,000 in March. This was the area’s largest monthly increase in employment between February and March in five years. However, the increase was narrowly represented in the local economy, with most of the gain occurring in the goods-producing sector, which added 500 positions. The private service-providing sector added 200 positions over-the-month; unfortunately, employment was unchanged in accommodation and food services, an industry which has been severely hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic. The number of employees in the government sector was unchanged, with offsetting changes in state government (-100 positions) and local government (+100 positions).

Employment in the MSA was still recovering from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, despite the monthly increase. There were 6,600 fewer employed persons in March compared to the year prior, a 6.6 percent contraction. The private service-providing sector suffered a 9.2 percent decline, with employment falling from 51,200 in March 2020 to 46,500 in March 2021. Much of this loss was focused in the accommodations and food services industry, which cut an astounding 1,900 positions, or 21.1 percent, from its workforce over-the-year. Other areas experienced more modest losses, such as professional and business services (-300 positions) and retail trade (-200 positions). Employment in the government sector (-1,700 positions) was also significantly depressed, with major reductions in state government (-1,300 positions) and local government (-500 positions). The goods-producing sector (-200 positions) was only slightly underwater from year-to-year.

**Sioux City**

# Employment in the Sioux City MSA is up 700 jobs from February, bringing total nonfarm employment to 83,300. The change for the month is slightly above the five-year average February-to-March change but well above the change for the same period in the past two years.

# Trade, transportation and warehousing added 300 jobs, with only 100 of those jobs in retail trade establishments. Leisure and hospitality gained 200 jobs and, as a percent of jobs in the sector, is faring better than most other metro areas at -11.11% (900 jobs) from one year ago. Manufacturing and government each added 100 jobs. Professional and business services, the only industry with an over-the-month employment loss, trimmed 300 jobs.

# Overall, area employment remains down 4,300 jobs (-4.91%) from one year ago. Only one sector has gained employment from one year ago, professional and business services, with 100 additional jobs. Sectors with job losses include government (-500), trade, transportation and warehousing (-300), and manufacturing (-300), as well as the aforementioned leisure and hospitality.

# Waterloo/Cedar Falls

The Waterloo/Cedar Falls metropolitan statistical area total nonfarm employment added 1,100 jobs from February and stands at 85,400. The value remains 4,300 jobs short of the March, pre- Covid-19 curtailment effort level.

Manufacturing added 200 jobs, all in durable goods manufacturing. Leisure and hospitality also gained 200 jobs. Professional and business services and government each added 100 jobs. Trade, transportation and warehousing shed 200 jobs and educational and health services trimmed 100 jobs.

Over the year, government remains 1,100 jobs below the March 2020 level. Employment in educational and health services is 900 below one year ago. Other sectors with reduced employment include leisure and hospitality (-700), trade, transportation and warehousing (-500), professional and business services (-200) and manufacturing (-100). There were no over-the-year gains in any sector, although the non-durable goods sub-sector added 300 jobs.