



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Virginia Employment Commission

Ellen Marie Hess
Commissioner

6606 West Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23230

Post Office Box 26441
Richmond, Virginia 23261-6441

For Release: January 26, 2021

Contact: Timothy Aylor, Senior Economist
Economic Information & Analytics Division
(804) 786-3976 or (804) 786-7496

Follow us on Twitter, <http://twitter.com/VirginiaLMI>.

The Virginia unemployment rate rose to 4.9 percent in December while total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 800

— The recent changes in these measures reflect the effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and efforts to contain it. —

RICHMOND— Virginia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate edged slightly upward 0.1 of a percentage point in December to 4.9 percent, which is 2.2 percentage points above the rate from a year ago. According to household survey data in December, the labor force increased by 1,017, essentially unchanged, to 4,288,955, as the number of unemployed residents increased by 4,459. The number of employed residents fell by 3,388 to 4,079,547. Virginia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate continues to be below the national rate, which was unchanged at 6.7 percent.

Virginia nonagricultural wage and salary employment, from the monthly establishment survey, rose by 800 jobs in December to 3,910,000. November's preliminary estimate was revised upward by 600, adding to that month's job gains. In December, private sector employment increased by 7,000 jobs to 3,211,300, while public sector payrolls decreased by 6,200 jobs to 698,700.

Employment rose in five of eleven major industry sectors and declined in six. The largest job gain during December occurred in **trade and transportation** with an increase of 5,600 jobs to 658,900. The second largest increase occurred in **manufacturing** (+4,400 jobs) to 233,400. Other increases included **construction** (+1,900 jobs) to 214,400, **information** (+800 jobs) to 65,700, **miscellaneous** (+100 jobs) to 194,800. The largest decrease occurred in **government** (-6,200 jobs) to 698,700. The decreases occurred in state government (-3,200 jobs), local government (-2,800 jobs), and federal government employment December (-200 jobs). **Leisure and hospitality** employment fell by 3,500 jobs to 345,100 over the month.

(more)

Toll Free: 1 (866) 832-2363
E-Mail: customerservice@vec.virginia.gov

VRC/TDD VA Relay 711
Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

Nonfarm Employment in Virginia* Seasonally Adjusted

Industry	Employment			November 2020 to December 2020		December 2019 to December 2020	
	December 2020	November 2020	December 2019	Change	% Change	Change	% Change
Total Nonfarm	3,910,000	3,909,200	4,087,900	800	0.0%	-177,900	-4.4%
Total Private Sector	3,211,300	3,204,300	3,355,900	7,000	0.2%	-144,600	-4.3%
<i>Goods-Producing</i>	454,900	448,700	454,500	6,200	1.4%	400	0.1%
Mining	7,100	7,200	7,800	-100	-1.4%	-700	-9.0%
Construction	214,400	212,500	203,100	1,900	0.9%	11,300	5.6%
Manufacturing	233,400	229,000	243,600	4,400	1.9%	-10,200	-4.2%
<i>Service-Providing</i>	3,455,100	3,460,500	3,633,400	-5,400	-0.2%	-178,300	-4.9%
Private Service-Providing	2,756,400	2,755,600	2,901,400	800	0.0%	-145,000	-5.0%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	658,900	653,300	659,500	5,600	0.9%	-600	-0.1%
Information	65,700	64,900	68,700	800	1.2%	-3,000	-4.4%
Finance	210,300	210,800	214,600	-500	-0.2%	-4,300	-2.0%
Professional and Business Services	757,300	757,800	775,100	-500	-0.1%	-17,800	-2.3%
Education and Health Services	524,300	525,500	563,400	-1,200	-0.2%	-39,100	-6.9%
Leisure and Hospitality Services	345,100	348,600	417,400	-3,500	-1.0%	-72,300	-17.3%
Miscellaneous Services	194,800	194,700	202,700	100	0.1%	-7,900	-3.9%
Government	698,700	704,900	732,000	-6,200	-0.9%	-33,300	-4.5%
Federal Government	186,600	186,800	182,200	-200	-0.1%	4,400	2.4%
State Government	149,800	153,000	162,000	-3,200	-2.1%	-12,200	-7.5%
Local Government	362,300	365,100	387,800	-2,800	-0.8%	-25,500	-6.6%

*Current month's estimates are preliminary.

From December 2019 to December 2020, the VEC estimates that establishments in Virginia lost 177,900 jobs, a decrease of 4.4%. In December, the private sector recorded an over-the-year loss of 144,600 jobs, while employment in the public sector lost 33,300 jobs.

Compared to a year ago, on a **seasonally adjusted** basis, ten out of eleven major industry divisions experienced employment decreases. The largest over-the-year job loss occurred in **leisure and hospitality**, down 72,300 jobs (-17.3%). The next largest over-the-year job loss occurred in **education and health services**, down 39,100 jobs (-6.9%). **Government** experienced the third largest over-the-year job loss of 33,300 jobs (-4.5%). Within government, there were decreases in state government employment (-12,200 jobs) and local government employment (-25,500 jobs). Federal government experienced an increase in employment (+4,400 jobs). **Professional and business services** employment declined by 17,800 jobs (-2.3%). **Manufacturing** lost 10,200 jobs (-4.2%) while **miscellaneous** shed 7,900 jobs (-3.9%). Other losses were in **finance**, down 4,300 jobs (-2.0%); **information**, down 3,000 jobs (-4.4%); **mining**,

(more)

down 700 jobs (-9.0%); and **trade and transportation** down 600 jobs (-0.1%). The sole increase occurred in **construction**, up 11,300 jobs (+5.6%).

Total Nonfarm Employment in Virginia* Seasonally Adjusted

Area	Employment			November 2020 to December 2020		December 2019 to December 2020	
	December 2020	November 2020	December 2019	Change	% Change	Change	% Change
Virginia	3,910,000	3,909,200	4,087,900	800	0.0%	-177,900	-4.4%
Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford MSA	73,500	75,300	78,200	-1,800	-2.4%	-4,700	-6.0%
Charlottesville MSA	120,400	119,000	122,200	1,400	1.2%	-1,800	-1.5%
Harrisonburg MSA	65,800	65,900	69,900	-100	-0.2%	-4,100	-5.9%
Lynchburg MSA	98,200	98,600	104,800	-400	-0.4%	-6,600	-6.3%
Northern Virginia MSA	1,463,700	1,468,300	1,530,400	-4,600	-0.3%	-66,700	-4.4%
Richmond MSA	662,100	660,600	693,400	1,500	0.2%	-31,300	-4.5%
Roanoke MSA	156,400	156,000	161,800	400	0.3%	-5,400	-3.3%
Staunton-Waynesboro MSA	52,900	53,000	52,100	-100	-0.2%	800	1.5%
Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, Virginia/North Carolina MSA	771,100	770,700	798,000	400	0.1%	-26,900	-3.4%
Winchester, Virginia/West Virginia MSA	61,900	61,200	66,400	700	1.1%	-4,500	-6.8%

*Current month's estimates are preliminary.

Seasonally adjusted total nonfarm employment data is produced for ten metropolitan areas. In December, five metropolitan areas experienced over-the-month job gains while five experienced losses over-the-month. The largest absolute job increase occurred in Richmond (+1,500 jobs). The next largest absolute job gain occurred in Charlottesville (+1,400 jobs), followed by Winchester (+700 jobs). Other increases include Roanoke (+400 jobs), and Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News (+400 jobs). Northern Virginia experienced the largest absolute job loss, down 4,600 jobs. Other over-the-month job losses occurred in Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford (-1,800 jobs), Lynchburg (-400 jobs), Harrisonburg (-100 jobs), and Staunton-Waynesboro (-100).

Over-the-year, **seasonally adjusted** total nonfarm employment decreased in nine of the ten metropolitan areas. The Northern Virginia metropolitan area experienced the largest absolute job loss, down 66,700 jobs (-4.4%). Richmond ranked second, with a loss of 31,300 jobs (-4.5%). Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News ranked third with a decline of 26,900 jobs (-3.4%). Other over-the-year job losses occurred in Lynchburg (-6,600 jobs), Roanoke (-5,400 jobs), Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford (-4,700 jobs), Winchester (-4,500 jobs), Harrisonburg (-4,100 jobs), and Charlottesville (-1,800 jobs). Staunton-Waynesboro added 800 jobs and was the only metropolitan area with a positive change over the year.

(more)

NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED DATA

Virginia's **unadjusted** unemployment rate increased 0.2 percentage point in December to 4.7 percent, and was up 2.3 percentage points from a year ago. Compared to a year ago, the number of unemployed increased by 91,225, household employment decreased by 257,477, and the labor force decreased by 166,252. Virginia's not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate continues to be below the national unadjusted rate, which rose by 0.1 percentage points in December to 6.5 percent.

Compared to last month, the December **unadjusted** workweek for Virginia's 155,900 manufacturing production workers increased by 0.5 hours to 41 hours. Average hourly earnings of private-sector production workers increased by \$.27 to \$21.40 in December and average weekly earnings rose \$21.63 to \$877.40.

Technical note: Estimates of unemployment and industry employment levels are obtained from two separate monthly surveys. Resident employment and unemployment data are mainly derived from the Virginia portion of the national Current Population Survey (CPS), a household survey conducted each month by the U.S. Census Bureau under contract with BLS, which provides input to the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program (often referred to as the "household" survey). Industry employment data is mainly derived from the Current Employment Statistics (CES) survey, a monthly survey of approximately 18,000 Virginia businesses conducted by BLS, which provides estimates of employment, hours, and earnings data broken down by industry for the nation as a whole, all states and most major metropolitan areas (often referred to as the "establishment" survey). Both industry and household estimates are revised each month based on additional information from updated survey reports compiled by the BLS. **For national figures and information on how COVID-19 affected collection of the BLS establishment and household surveys in December, refer to the BLS [December 2020 Employment Situation](#) press release for details.**

The statistical reference week for the household survey this month was the week of December 6-12, 2020.

The Virginia Employment Commission plans to release the December local area unemployment rates on Wednesday, February 3, 2021. The data will be available on our website www.VirginiaWorks.com.

The January statewide unemployment rate and employment data for both the state and metropolitan areas are scheduled to be released on Monday, March 15, 2021.