

# PRESS RELEASE

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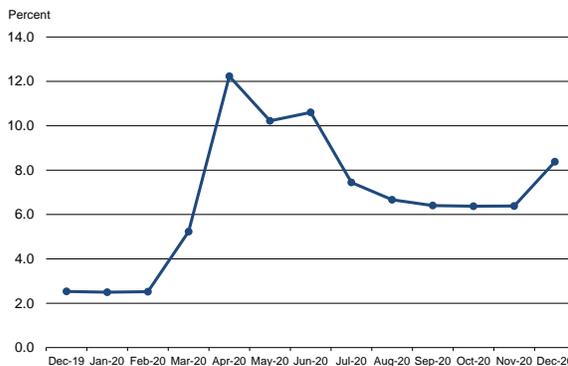
## For Immediate Release

Date: January 22, 2021/ 8:00 A.M.  
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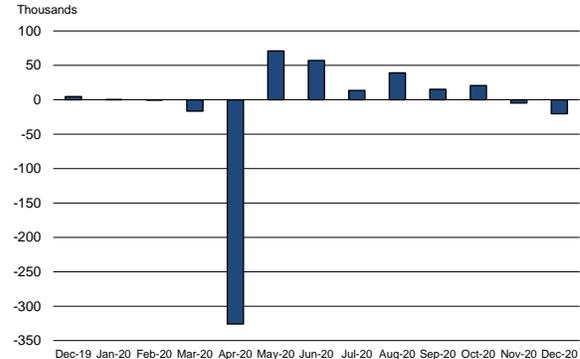
## Colorado Employment Situation – December 2020

### Nonfarm Payroll Jobs Decline by 20,300 in December; Unemployment Rate Increases to 8.4%

Colorado unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted  
December 2019 - December 2020



Colorado nonfarm payroll employment over-the-month  
change, seasonally adjusted, December 2019 -  
December 2020



## Household survey data

According to the survey of households, Colorado's seasonally adjusted **unemployment rate** increased in December to 8.4 percent. The national unemployment rate was unchanged from November at 6.7 percent.

*Other highlights from the household survey:*

- Colorado's **labor force** grew by 42,400 in December to 3,212,600. The labor force participation rate increased by eight-tenths of a percentage point to 69.0 percent. The share of Coloradans participating in the labor force reached its highest level since February, when it was 69.4 percent.
- The **number of individuals employed** in Colorado decreased by 24,400 in December to 2,943,400, which represents 63.3 percent of the state's 16+ population. Colorado's employment-to-population ratio is relatively flat since September.
- The **Colorado counties** with the highest unemployment rates in December were: Pueblo (11.3%), Huerfano (11.0%), Gilpin (10.6%), Costilla (10.1%), and Clear Creek (9.6%). County-level unemployment rates are not seasonally adjusted and are directly comparable to Colorado's December unadjusted rate of 8.2 percent.

## Establishment survey data

**Nonfarm payroll jobs** in Colorado declined by 20,300 from November to December for a total of 2,662,600 jobs, according to the survey of business establishments. Private sector payroll jobs decreased by 20,600, while government added 300 jobs. With December job losses, Colorado has gained back 191,500 of the 342,300 nonfarm payroll jobs lost between February and April. That translates to a job recovery rate of 55.9 percent, which marginally exceeds the U.S. rate of 55.6 percent.

*Other highlights from the establishment survey:*

- **November estimates** were revised up to 2,682,900, and the over the month change from October to November was a loss of 4,700 rather than the originally estimated decrease of 6,900 (monthly revisions are based on additional responses from businesses and government agencies since the last published estimates).
- **Private industry sectors with significant job gains** in December were: trade, transportation, and utilities (~10,200), professional and business services (~5,100), education and health services (~1,100), and construction (~1,000). Significant over the month private sector **job loss** occurred in leisure and hospitality (~36,100).
- **Since December 2019**, nonfarm payroll jobs have decreased 150,900, with losses totaling 120,100 in the private sector and 30,800 in government. The largest **private sector job losses** were in leisure and hospitality (~91,500), education and health services (~16,700), and other services (~8,000), and Colorado's **rate of job loss** over the past year is -5.4 percent, compared to the U.S. rate of -6.2 percent.
- Over the year, the **average workweek** for all Colorado employees on private nonfarm payrolls decreased from 33.8 to 33.3 hours, while **average hourly earnings** rose from \$31.00 to \$31.18, over a dollar and thirty cents more than the national average hourly earnings of \$29.81.

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All Colorado estimates from the establishment and household surveys, including greater geographic detail, are available at: <http://www.colmigateway.com>. Estimates for all states and the nation are available at: <http://www.bls.gov>.

The **January 2021 Colorado Employment Situation** will be released at 8:00 AM on Monday, March 15, 2021. Revised statewide estimates for 2020 and 2019 and some updated local information will also be released. The full schedule of release dates for calendar year 2021 estimates is available at <http://www.colmigateway.com>.

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## **Technical Notes**

This release provides information on industry employment and labor force statistics for December 2020, the most current estimates available from the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment. The reference period for the establishment and household surveys was the pay period or week that includes the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month. Therefore, this release provides an estimate of Colorado's employment situation during a rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases across the state, which initiated heightened business activity restrictions in several counties, primarily for bars, restaurants, and gyms. For Colorado unemployment insurance claims activity and related statistics, visit [www.colmigateway.com](http://www.colmigateway.com). For information regarding impacts to Bureau of Labor Statistics data collection and processing during the pandemic, go to [www.bls.gov/bls/bls-covid-19-questions-and-answers.htm](http://www.bls.gov/bls/bls-covid-19-questions-and-answers.htm).

The unemployment rate, labor force, labor force participation, total employment and the number of unemployed are based on a survey of households. The total employment estimate derived from this survey is intended to measure the number of people employed.

Nonfarm payroll jobs estimates are based on a survey of business establishments and government agencies, and are intended to measure the number of jobs, not the number of people employed. Other series based on this survey include private sector average weekly hours, average hourly earnings and average weekly earnings.

The business establishment survey covers about seven times the number of households surveyed and is therefore considered a more reliable indicator of economic conditions. Because the estimates are based on two separate surveys, one measuring jobs by worksite and the other measuring persons employed and unemployed by household, estimates based on these surveys may provide seemingly conflicting results.

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**Supplemental information available in following pages**