



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 22, 2021

Contact: [Glenn Mills](#) 207-621-5192

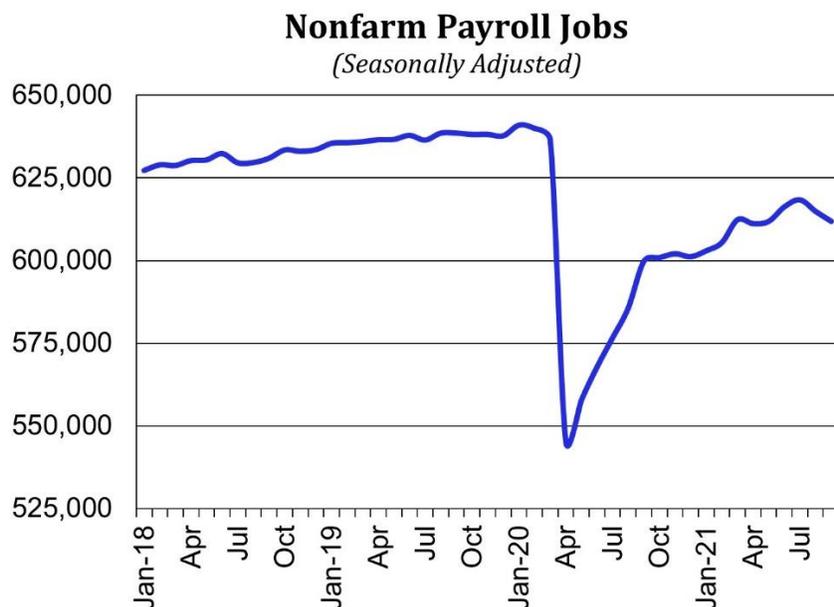
Employment Situation in Maine – September 2021

AUGUSTA – The surge in coronavirus cases continued to set the jobs recovery back in September:

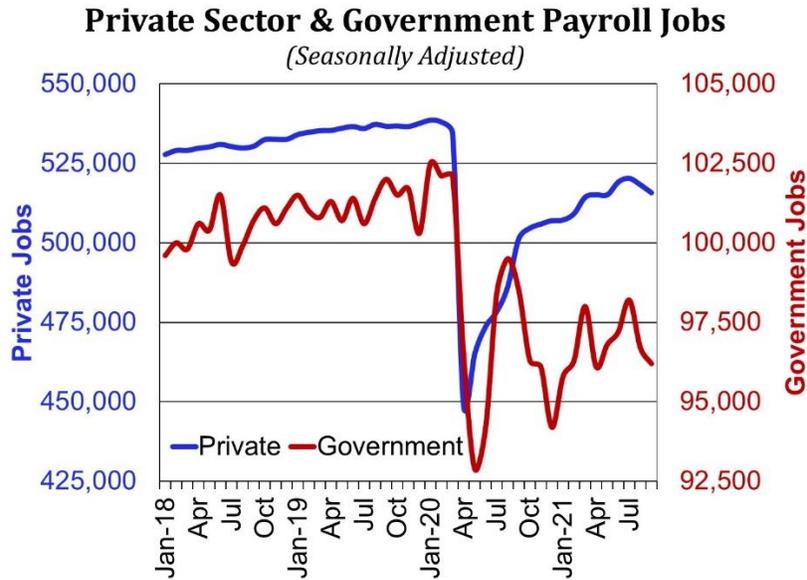
- There were 3,000 fewer nonfarm payroll jobs than in August and 6,500 fewer than in July
- Unemployment and labor force participation rates were little changed at 4.8 and 60.4 percent

Seasonally Adjusted Estimates

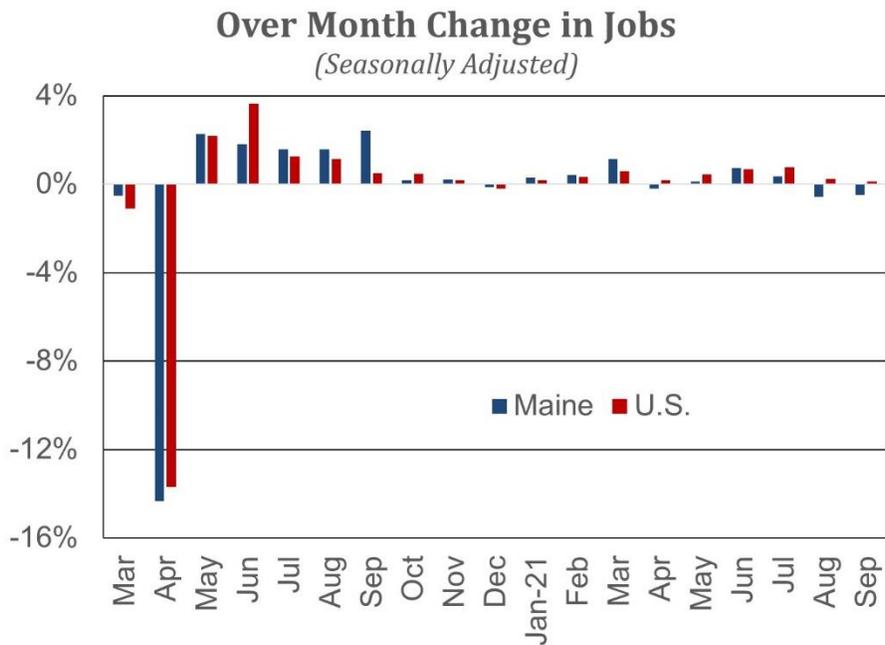
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs Estimates – The number of nonfarm payroll jobs decreased by 3,000 to 611,900 in September and the estimate for August was revised from a decrease of 1,200 to a decrease of 3,500 jobs. In September there were 6,500 fewer jobs than in July, which currently stands as the pandemic-era peak. The number of jobs was similar to levels from March through May.



One-third of the September decrease was in public and private education, K-12 and higher ed. Most of the rest of the decrease was spread across manufacturing, professional and business services, healthcare and social assistance, and other services.



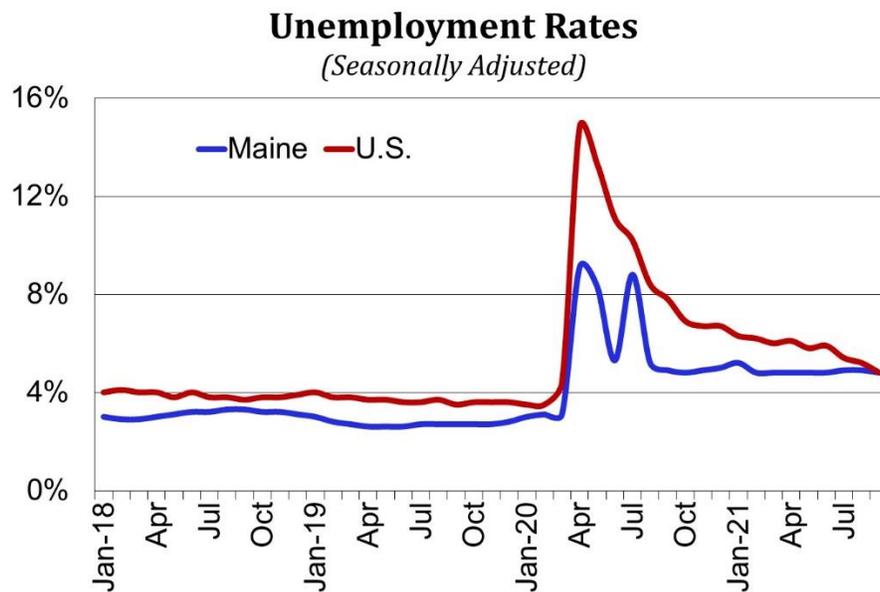
The coronavirus has had a clear impact on the jobs recovery over the last year. Surges in case counts stalled the recovery in the fall of 2020 and in the spring of 2021. The delta variant surge contributed to the net decrease in jobs over the last two months.



Over the last year the number of payroll jobs increased 12,100. The largest gains were in the leisure and hospitality, professional and business services, and wholesale and retail trade sectors.

In September there were 28,100 fewer jobs than in February 2020, before the virus impacted the labor market. In that period jobs remained down the most in leisure and hospitality, state and local government education (K-12 and higher ed), and healthcare and social assistance.

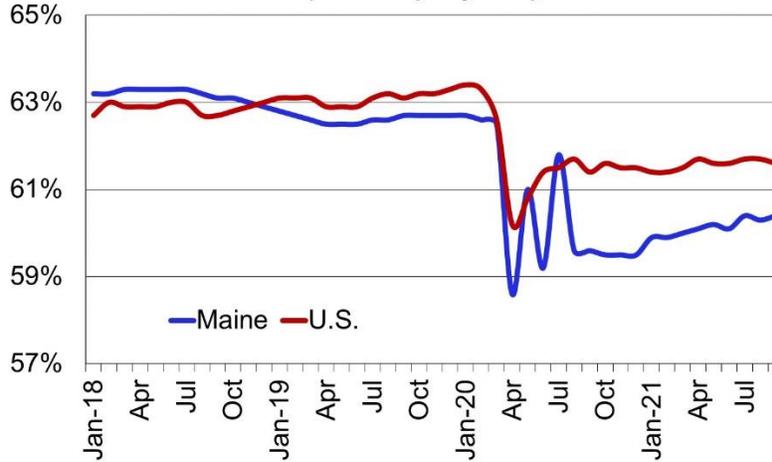
Labor Force and Unemployment Estimates – The unemployment rate was little changed in September at 4.8 percent, representing 32,900 job seekers. The unemployment rate has been 4.8 or 4.9 percent each of the last eight months. The 60.4 percent labor force participation rate was little changed, up 0.1 points.



Compared to February 2020, the unemployment rate in September was 1.7 percentage points higher and the labor force participation rate was 2.2 points lower.

The decrease in employment since February 2020 is partially reflected in the 11,300 increase in the number of unemployed. The remainder of the decrease in employment is reflected in lower labor force participation. If participation was as high in September as 19 months earlier, the unemployment rate would be 8.2 percent. (Unemployed are jobless people who were available and seeking work. Jobless people who were not available for work or who did not seek work are not counted as unemployed – they are not in the labor force.)

Labor Force Participation Rates (Seasonally Adjusted)

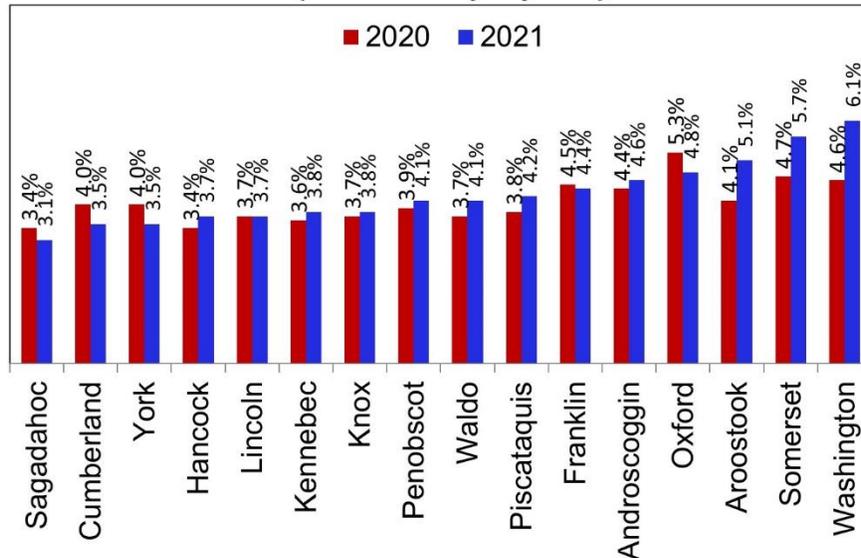


U.S and New England Unemployment Rates – The U.S. and New England unemployment rates were 4.8 and 5.2 percent in September. Rates for other states in the region were 2.9 percent in New Hampshire, 2.9 percent in Vermont, 5.2 percent in Massachusetts, 5.2 percent in Rhode Island, and 6.8 percent in Connecticut.

Substate Not Seasonally Adjusted Estimates

The not seasonally adjusted statewide unemployment rate of 4.0 percent for September was unchanged from one year ago. Unemployment rates were lowest in Sagadahoc County (3.1 percent) and highest in Washington County (6.1 percent).

September County Unemployment Rates (Not Seasonally Adjusted)



Unemployment rates were below the statewide average in the Portland-South Portland (3.5 percent) and Bangor metro areas (3.8 percent), and above the average in the Lewiston-Auburn metro (4.4 percent).

October workforce estimates will be released Friday, November 19 at 10 a.m. ([Data Release Schedule](#)).

[This release is available here.](#)

[Labor force and unemployment data is available here.](#)

[Nonfarm payroll jobs data is available here.](#)

Monthly workforce estimates are cooperatively produced and released by the Maine Department of Labor, Center for Workforce Research and Information and the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

NOTES

1. Preliminary seasonally-adjusted labor force estimates, including rates (labor force participation, employment, and unemployment rates), and levels (labor force, employed, and unemployed) tend to move in a direction for several months and then reverse course. Those directional trends are largely driven by a smoothing procedure and may not indicate a change in underlying workforce conditions. Annual revisions (published in March each year) tend to moderate or eliminate those directional patterns. A comparison of 2020 preliminary and revised estimates of labor force and unemployment rates, as well as nonfarm payroll jobs, is available at maine.gov/labor/cwri/blogs/2021_workforce_data_revisions.pdf
2. The 90 percent confidence interval for statewide unemployment rates for September is 0.8 percentage points above or below the published estimate.
3. To assess job growth, we recommend looking at nonfarm jobs from the payroll survey rather than at resident employment from the household survey. The payroll survey is larger, has smaller margins of error, and is subject to smaller revisions. A 2016 blog on the differences in accuracy of the two measures provides more context at maine.gov/labor/cwri/blogs/imprecise_data.pdf
4. Nonfarm payroll jobs estimates tend to be volatile from month to month because there is variability in the sample of reporting employers and their representativeness for the universe of all employers. Additionally, seasonal adjustment is imperfect because weather, the beginning and ending of school semesters, holidays, and other events do not always occur with the same timing relative to the pay period that includes the 12th day of the month, which is the survey reference period. This sometimes exacerbates monthly volatility. Users should look to the trend over multiple months rather than the change from one specific month to another. Estimates for the period from April 2020 to September 2021 will be replaced with actual payroll data in March 2022. Those benchmark revisions are likely to show less volatility than preliminary estimates do.