

## NJ's Employment Making Sluggish Recovery in 2021

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A year and half into the pandemic, as a sense of normalcy is returning to the Garden State, New Jersey's employment numbers and unemployment rate are making an unhurried recovery.

**Employment in NJ:** In March and April 2020, New Jersey lost over 673,000 jobs because of the pandemic, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (US BLS). In April 2021, the state's employment increased by 5,600 jobs and totaled nearly 4,089,200 workers, according to the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development. As of April 2021, the Garden State has regained just 354,000 jobs or 53% of the employment lost a year ago.

As a result of job losses, the state's unemployment rate skyrocketed in April 2020 to 16.6%, a rate never seen during our lifetime. By January 2021, New Jersey's unemployment rate experienced a decent decline and was 7.8%. However, since the start

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of the new year, the Garden State's unemployment rate has remained stagnant, declining a measly 0.3%. As of April 2021 (the most up-to-date stats available), New Jersey's unemployment rate was 7.5%, the seventh highest rate in the nation.

### Employment Trends

April 2020



**-673,271**

Jobs lost in March & April 2020



**16.6%**

Unemployment Rate

April 2021



**+353,816**

Jobs regained



**7.5%**

Unemployment Rate

**Employment by Industry:** Nearly all major industries experienced an increase in employment from April 2020 to April 2021, however, all are employing fewer workers than before the pandemic, according to the US BLS.

As of April 2021, the state's largest private sector employers were Trade, Transportation & Utilities industry and the Education & Health Services industry. The Trade, Transportation & Utilities industry employed 845,000 individuals, which is a 5% decline in employment compared to pre-pandemic numbers. The Education & Health Services industry experienced an 8% decline in employment, compared to pre-pandemic numbers, and employed just 674,000 individuals.

Professional & Business Services (655,400 workers) and Leisure & Hospitality (307,500 workers) are the next

largest private-sector employer industries in the state and experienced a 5% and 23% decline in employment respectively, compared to pre-pandemic employment. Despite Leisure & Hospitality employment increasing by 108,900 by April 2021, nearly 1-in-4 industry jobs have yet to be regained.

Four other industries – Financial Activities (249,100 workers), Manufacturing (241,900 workers), Construction (147,900 workers), and Information (67,200 workers) – also continue to employ fewer individuals than before the pandemic.

As masking, social distancing, and crowd limit mandates are lifted in the Garden State, the hope is that New Jerseyans will return to work, and the state's economy will rebound to pre-pandemic numbers by the end of 2021. However, for now, the State has a long way to go to regain the jobs lost because of the pandemic. **NJB**