

State's jobless rate falls to 4.2% 1,600 added in May with hospitality, food services going strong

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FULL TEXT

Employers in Connecticut added 1,600 jobs in May, bringing the unemployment rate to its lowest level since before the pandemic, but the state's labor force still struggles to get back on its feet following the pandemic and posted job losses in manufacturing and construction, two key industries, the state Department of Labor reported Thursday.

The number of unemployed workers fell by 5,000, pushing the unemployment rate to 4.2%, down 0.2% from April. In contrast, the U.S. unemployment rate in May was 3.6%.

Connecticut has recovered about 86% of private sector jobs lost due to COVID-19 business shutdowns.

Patrick Flaherty, the Department of Labor's research director, said the food services and hospitality sectors are showing strength, "trends we hope will continue as we head into summer." And data are backing up what economists say they observed during the pandemic: Workers are leaving payroll jobs to pursue self-employment. Connecticut's private sector employment expanded by 2,900 jobs in May. Jobs in government again fell last month by 1,300, with state government employment now falling six consecutive months as retirements take their toll. The government sector in Connecticut includes federal, state, local, school and tribal employment at the state's two casinos.

The public sector has recovered 39.8% of jobs lost due to the COVID lockdown.

Labor Commissioner Danté Bartolomeo cautioned that the rising cost of energy, inflation driving up prices of most other goods, declining values on stock markets and other factors could have an impact on Connecticut's financial services sector.

Chris DiPentima, president of the Connecticut Business & Industry Association, said job growth of 0.8% this year is half the national rate and the lowest in New England.

"It is discouraging to see the construction sector lose 1,300 jobs and manufacturing lose 200 positions," he said. "These sectors are critical to driving economic growth in Connecticut."

What industries hired?

Professional and Business Services, (scientific, technical, management and administrative jobs) up 500, or 1.7%.
Leisure and Hospitality added 500, up 0.3%.

Trade, Transportation & Utilities posted an increase of 400 jobs, up 0.1%.

Financial Activities, up 300, or 0.3%.

Which industries shed jobs?

Construction and Mining, down 1,300 jobs, or -2.1%.

Government shed 1,300 jobs, down 0.6%.

Manufacturing dropped 200 jobs, off 0.1%.

Jobs created in two of Connecticut's six labor markets: The Norwich-New London-Westerly labor market area was the strongest in monthly hires and in percentage terms, adding 500 jobs.

The Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk labor market area added 200 jobs, an increase of 0.1%.

The New Haven labor market led job declines, losing 1,000, a drop of 0.3%.

Danbury's labor market posted a decline of 400 jobs, down 0.5%.

The Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford labor market shed 400 jobs, a decline of 0.1%.
Waterbury's labor market lost 300 jobs, a decline of 0.5%.
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DETAILS

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