

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
State of Montana

Steve Bullock
Governor



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Governor Bullock Announces Montana's Unemployment Rate Declines to 9.0% in May

Montana joins third fastest payroll employment growth in the nation

MONTANA – Governor Steve Bullock today announced Montana's unemployment rate improved considerably in May due to strong job growth dropping 2.9 percentage points to 9.0%. In April, the Montana unemployment rate was at 11.9%. The Montana unemployment rate remained below the national rate of 11.3% in May.

"Due to our early action to prevent the spread of COVID-19, we've been able to continue with the phased reopening of our state, our economy is recovering, and thousands of Montanans have returned to work," said Governor Bullock. "As we keep working to fight the spread of the virus, we will keep working every single day to stimulate our economy and support Montana families and businesses through this time."

Montana posted the third fastest payroll employment growth among states in May with 6% over the month growth, and had the 7th lowest unemployment rate in the country. Private payroll employment also posted a record-breaking gain of 15,700 jobs over the month, with improvement across most private industries. Job losses in the local government sector kept overall payroll employment gains to 13,200 jobs. Total employment (including both payroll jobs and the self-employed) added 14,700 jobs over the month – the most jobs added in any single month since the state sector began in 1976. Despite these large job gains, Montana's May employment estimate remains roughly 44,000 jobs below its pre-pandemic peak.

Since this employment data was captured in May, unemployment claims continue to drop, suggesting future employment data will continue to improve. Since the peak of unemployment claims during the week of April 18, nearly 25,000 Montanans have gone back to work to date.