

## No Bad News Is Good

That there was no bad news was good news on the Vermont unemployment front in October. The official unemployment rate dropped slightly—to 6.5 percent from 6.7 percent—but the change is not statistically significant. Still, the fact that the unemployment rate did not go up meant Vermont fared better than much of the rest of the country. There also may have been a slight rise in jobs. The Vermont Department of Labor reported an increase of 200 jobs during the month—half in the public sector and half in the private sector. However, the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics is revising its methods for estimating changes in the labor and job markets, and the October jobs figures are likely to change.

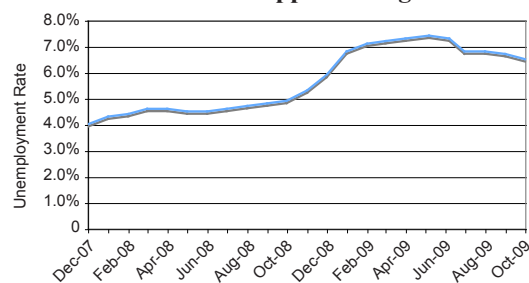
### Federal Unemployment Program Helped Vermont Economy

Unemployed Vermont workers—and the Vermont economy—received \$45 million through a federal emergency unemployment program that started about six months into the recession. Unemployment benefits and food stamps are two of the quickest ways for the federal government to get money into the economy. The Emergency Unemployment Compensation Program of 2008 began providing benefits in July 2008 to people who had run out of state benefits. By the time the program had ended in August 2009, almost 12,000 Vermonters had gotten just over \$45 million in benefits. Although that program ended, the same benefits are being provided through the economic stimulus package passed earlier this year.

### More Vermonters Are Using Food Stamps

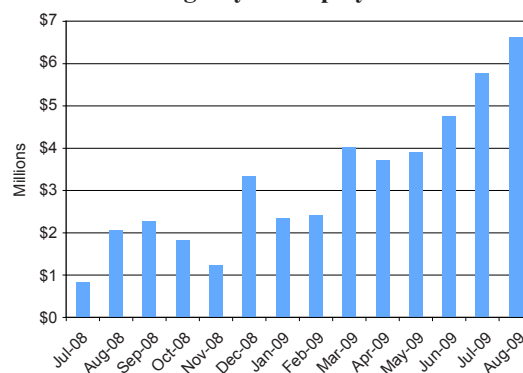
More Vermonters are relying on unemployment benefits to struggle through the recession; more, too, are turning to public support to help them feed their families. Since December 2007, the start of the current slump, the number of people in 3SquaresVT—Vermont’s renamed Food Stamp Program—has increased 50 percent. More than 80,000 Vermonters now rely on 3SquaresVT. Not all of the increase is due to the recession. In January 2009, Vermont expanded eligibility so that more Vermont families could qualify for assistance. But in the first 12 months of the recession, before the program was expanded, the number of Vermonters receiving food stamps rose to 63,000 from 54,000.

**Figure 1. Vermont’s Unemployment Rate Has Stopped Rising**



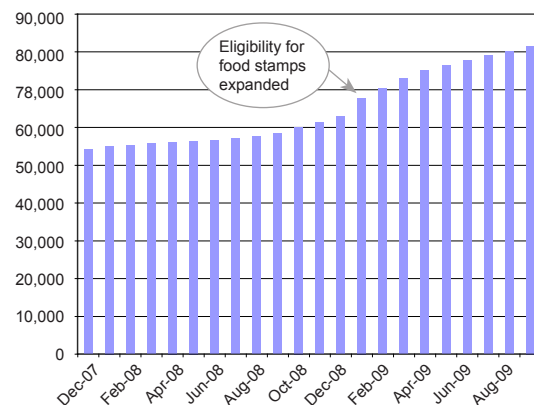
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

**Figure 2. Vermonters Received \$45M in Federal Emergency Unemployment Benefits**



Source: U.S. Department of Labor

**Figure 3. Number of Food Stamp Recipients Has Increased Since Start of Recession**



Source: Vermont Department for Children and Families; Food Research and Action Center