

Improvements in the Labor Market are Slow but Steady

Vermont's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for November remained at 5.7 percent, according to data released today by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The national rate inched up in November, to 9.8 percent. With a declining trend in the unemployment rate since June 2009, Vermont continues to have the second-lowest rate in New England, after New

	Nov. 2010	Oct. 2010	Nov. 2009
Labor Force	357,400	356,600	358,400
Employment	336,900	336,200	334,400
Unemployment	20,500	20,400	24,000
Rate	5.7%	5.7%	6.7%

Hampshire. That state's 5.4 percent rate was also unchanged from October.

It's a Little Easier to Land a Job

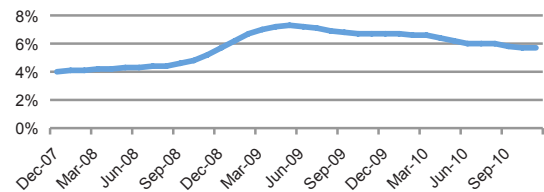
Before the recession, the Northeast had an average of two job openings for every three people looking for work. As the recession deepened, the competition for jobs grew. By November 2009, no positions existed for four out of five people trying to find a job. Competition has eased since then. In October 2010, there were no jobs for five out of seven people seeking work. The number of job openings in the Northeast has increased—from 482,000 in November 2009 to 676,000 in October 2010. However, the competition also has lessened because people have dropped out of the labor force and stopped looking for work. The Northeast region includes the New England states plus New York and Pennsylvania. There are no separate numbers for Vermont.

In a Smaller Economy Productivity is Growing

The output of Vermont workers increased for the second year in a row in 2009, even while the overall economy contracted. After adjusting for inflation, the value of goods and services produced in Vermont in 2009 was down 0.7 percent from 2008. The fact that fewer people were working contributed to the decline. But the output of those who did have jobs increased an average of 1.8 percent per worker, again after adjusting for inflation. Nationally, the economy (gross domestic product) declined 2.1 percent in 2009, while real productivity per worker increased 1.2 percent.

Downward Trend in Unemployment

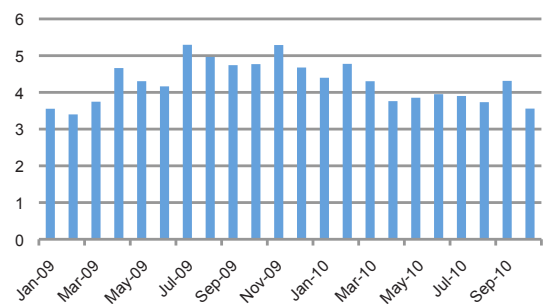
Monthly Vermont rate since the start of the recession



Data source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Declining Northeast Job Competition

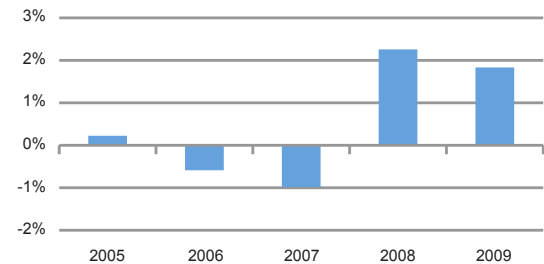
Unemployed workers per job opening, 2009-10



Data source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Rising Output from Vermont Workers

Annual change in real productivity per worker, 2005-09



Data source: Economic Policy Institute