

The COVID crisis is hitting some Vermonters harder

Initial unemployment claims shot up to nearly 50,000 in March after Gov. Phil Scott acted to curb the spread of the coronavirus. That was more than five times the initial claims for benefits in any month during or after the Great Recession. The crush has continued this month, adding 26,000 new claims by April 11.

| LATEST BLS DATA - APRIL 17, 2020 | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| | MAR 2020* | FEB 2020 | MAR 2019 |
| Labor Force | 342,381 | 340,142 | 343,817 |
| Employment | 331,357 | 331,947 | 335,772 |
| Unemployment | 11,024 | 8,195 | 8,045 |
| Unemployment Rate | 3.2% | 2.4% | 2.3% |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

*These numbers are from the week of March 12, before most of the effects of the pandemic.

Schools closed

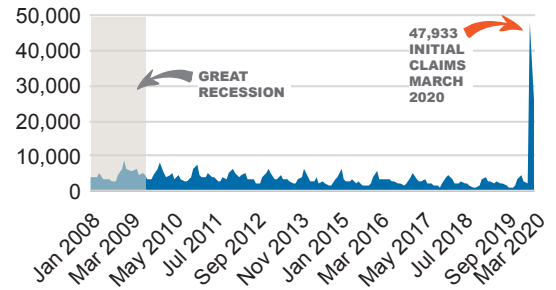
More than 55,000 Vermont households—just over 20 percent—included children under the age of 18 living with one parent or more in 2018. The closure of Vermont schools and child care centers during the COVID-19 crisis has left families scrambling for other arrangements. Nearly 80 percent of Vermont children lived in households where all parents worked in 2018.

Broadband gaps

With their buildings shuttered, some schools are providing online learning. But just as adults need Internet access to work from home, students need it to participate in classes. According to 2018 Census data, about 40 percent of Vermont households with income less than \$20,000 had no broadband service. For households with incomes \$35,000 to \$50,000, about 20 percent lacked broadband. Some Vermont providers are offering free Internet service to low-income customers during the pandemic.

Vermont jobless claims skyrocketed in March

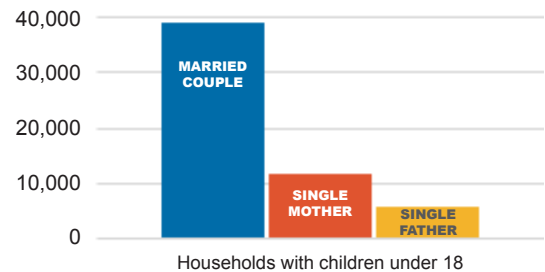
Initial monthly unemployment claims, Jan. 2008-Mar. 2020



Data source: Vermont Department of Labor
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With kids at home parents are tested

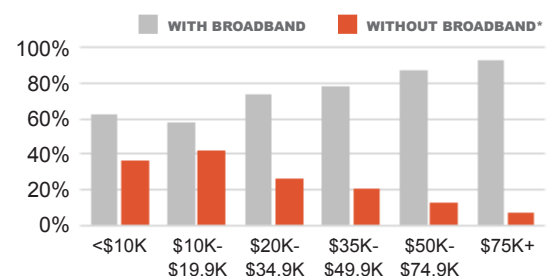
Vermont households with children under 18 living with one parent or more, 2018



Data source: American Community Survey, 2018 1-yr. estimates
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Many low-income Vermonters lack Internet access

Share of households with and without broadband service, by income, 2018



* Includes households with dial-up service only

Data source: American Community Survey, 2018 1-yr. estimates
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