

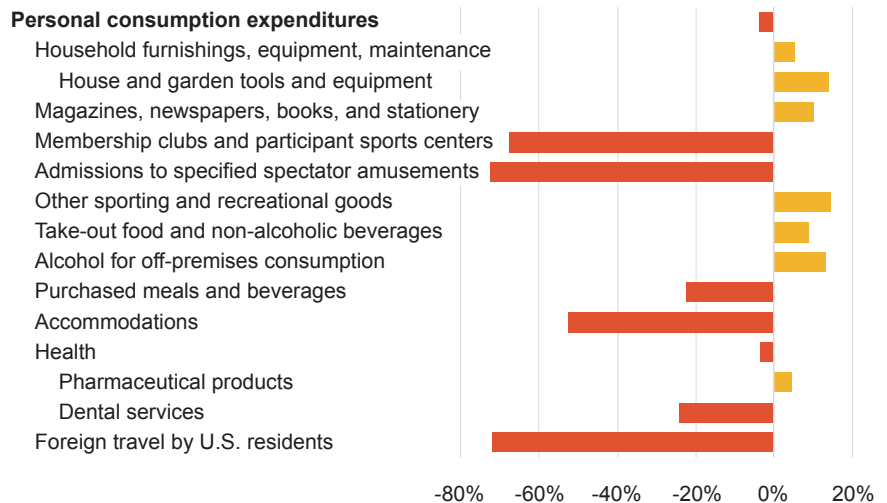
In 2020 shopping eased the long months at home

No surprise, Vermonters cut back their consumer spending in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis [released data](#) recently showing that Vermonters spent \$1.2 billion less in 2020 than the year before. That was about a 4 percent drop.

But while people stopped shelling out for hotels, restaurant meals, and trips to the dentist, some appear to have made the most of being stuck at home. Spending on garden tools and equipment rose almost 14 percent, or \$10 million, and on books and periodicals more than \$35 million.

In 2020 Vermonters bought more liquor and garden tools but consumed less overall

Change in select consumer spending, 2019-2020



Data source: The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis
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Vermonters spent less on health overall, yet paid the pharmaceutical companies almost \$50 million more than the previous year. Travel restrictions cut into trips abroad, and the shutdowns of large gatherings nearly wiped out spectator activities, where spending fell more than 70 percent.

THIS MONTH

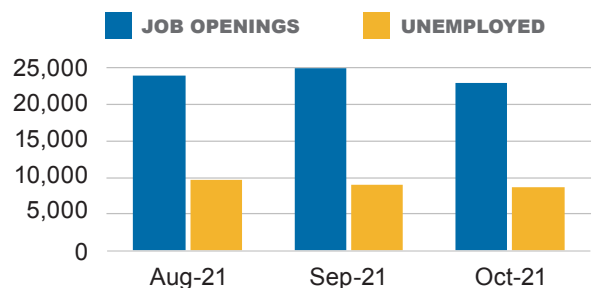
Vermont's unemployment rate dropped a little in November. On one hand, that's good news. On the other, lower unemployment meant fewer people looking to fill the 20,000-plus job openings employers reported in October. Private employers added 300 new jobs in November.

LATEST BLS DATA - DECEMBER 17, 2021			
	NOV 2021	OCT 2021	NOV 2020
Labor Force	318,319	318,531	316,982
Employment	310,106	309,770	305,386
Unemployment	8,213	8,761	11,596
Unemployment Rate*	2.6%	2.8%	3.7%

* The unemployment rate does not capture all out-of-work Vermonters. [Details here.](#)
 Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Job openings outnumbered Vermonters seeking work

Number of job openings and unemployed, Aug-Oct 2021



Data source: Vermont Department of Labor
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