

# The State of Working

# Iowa

# 2010

**The Iowa Policy Project**



# **The State of Working Iowa 2010**

## **Author**

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## **The Iowa Policy Project**

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# The State of Working Iowa 2010

## ***Introduction***

The nation is now more than two and a half years from the beginning of what has been called “the Great Recession.” Though other states may have been hit harder by the recession, the Iowa economy is still struggling and far from performing as well as it did before December 2007, at the start of the recession. From that point to July 2010, Iowa’s unemployment rate has gone from 3.9 percent to 6.8 percent and the state lost 52,000 jobs.

This report presents data to illustrate two trends — on the one hand, Iowa’s relative strength in comparison to most other states in the nation and in the region; and on the other hand, the economy’s relative weakness in relation to pre-recession performance. This report also provides data at the county and MSA levels within the state. The Iowa Policy Project will expand on this analysis in January; this interim installment provides a Labor Day 2010 glance at the state’s labor market trends and conditions.

## ***Job Gains/Losses by Industry***

The latest recession officially began in December 2007. Though most industries showed mild gains in jobs between 2007 and 2008, four sectors accounting for nearly half of Iowa jobs (Retail Trade, Leisure and Hospitality, Information and Manufacturing) experienced declines, and the level of nonfarm jobs was flat.

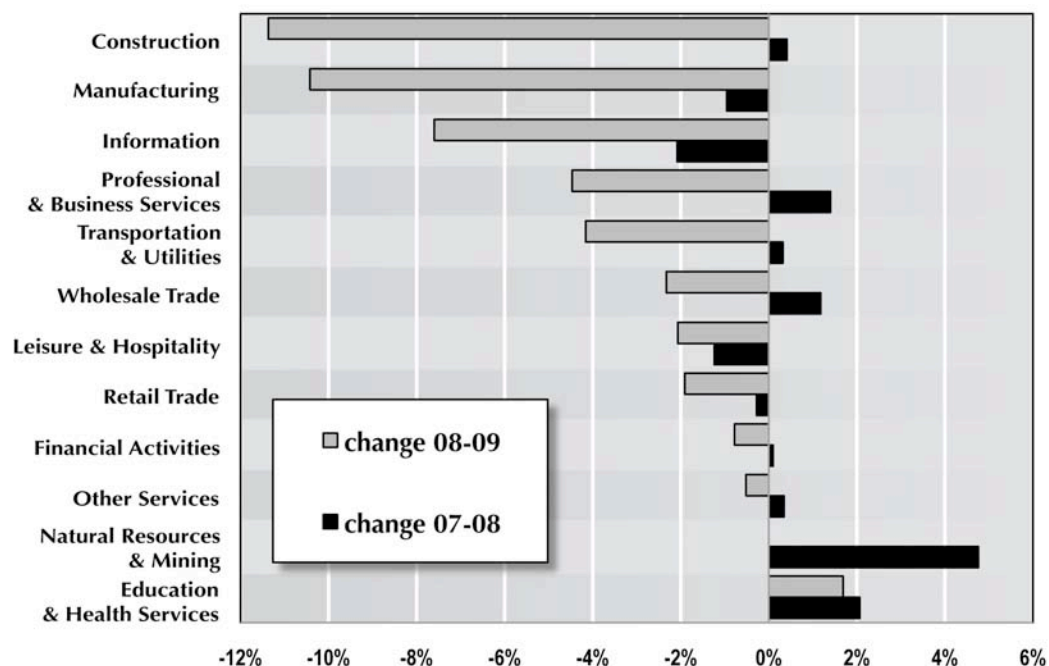
Iowans saw the recession dipping deeper in 2009. Between 2008 and 2009, all but two industries showed considerable job losses. This effect was most pronounced in Manufacturing and Construction, with job losses exceeding 10 percent between 2008 and 2009. The only two industries not exhibiting losses were Education and Health Services, which showed a small gain, and the tiny Natural Resources and Mining sector, which had no change between 2008 and 2009. Altogether, the nonfarm labor force lost 46,200 jobs between 2008 and 2009, more than half of which came in manufacturing alone. (See Table 1 and Figure 1.)

**Table 1. Most Iowa Industries Lose Jobs, 2007-09 (thousands)**

	2007	2008	2009	Change 2007-08		Change 2008-09	
				N	%	N	%
Construction	72.7	73.0	64.7	0.3	0.41%	-8.3	-11.37%
Manufacturing	229.6	227.4	203.7	-2.2	-0.96%	-23.7	-10.42%
Information	33.6	32.9	30.4	-0.7	-2.08%	-2.5	-7.60%
Professional and Business Services	121.4	123.1	117.6	1.7	1.40%	-5.5	-4.47%
Transportation and Utilities	62.3	62.5	59.9	0.2	0.32%	-2.6	-4.16%
Wholesale Trade	67.9	68.7	67.1	0.8	1.18%	-1.6	-2.33%
Leisure and Hospitality	137.1	135.4	132.6	-1.7	-1.24%	-2.8	-2.07%
Retail Trade	178.8	178.3	174.9	-0.5	-0.28%	-3.4	-1.91%
Financial Activities	102.6	102.7	101.9	0.1	0.10%	-0.8	-0.78%
Other Services	57.7	57.9	57.6	0.2	0.35%	-0.3	-0.52%
Natural Resources and Mining	2.1	2.2	2.2	0.1	4.76%	0.0	0.00%
Education and Health Services	203.3	207.5	211.0	4.2	2.07%	3.5	1.69%
<b>Total Nonfarm</b>	<b>1,519.1</b>	<b>1,524.4</b>	<b>1,478.2</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>0.35%</b>	<b>-46.2</b>	<b>-3.03%</b>

Source: IPP analysis of Current Employment Statistics survey data

**Figure 1. Stark Differences By Industry In Iowa Job Change, 2007-08 and 2008-09**



Source: IPP analysis of Current Employment Statistics survey data

### Job Gains/Losses By State

Since the beginning of the latest recession, Iowa's total jobs shrank by 3.3 percent, ranking Iowa at No. 37 nationally (36 states experienced greater losses). Most Midwestern states showed greater workforce losses in percentage terms, the exceptions being South Dakota and Nebraska, two states with considerably smaller labor forces than other Midwestern states. (See Table 2.)

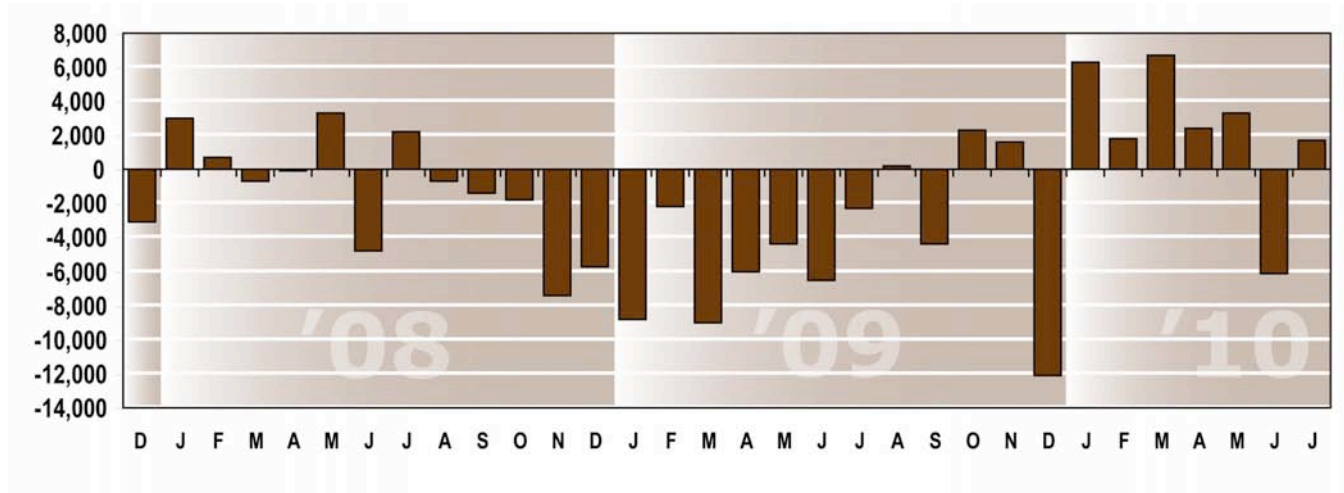
**Table 2. Iowa Nonfarm Job Declines Less Severe Than Most States,  
December 2007-June 2010 (thousands)**

	Dec 2007	June 2010	Change
1 Nevada	1,292.9	1,116.7	-13.63%
2 Arizona	2,673.7	2,397	-10.35%
3 Michigan	4,246.2	3,848.2	-9.37%
4 Florida	7,953.3	7,233.1	-9.06%
5 California	15,180.8	13,884.3	-8.54%
6 Georgia	4,150.8	3,820.5	-7.96%
7 Oregon	1,738.1	1,600	-7.95%
8 Rhode Island	488.5	451.2	-7.64%
9 Idaho	656.7	607.1	-7.55%
10 Tennessee	2,804.4	2,600.1	-7.28%
11 Alabama	2,011.3	1,870.4	-7.01%
12 Ohio	5,421.7	5,045	-6.95%
13 Mississippi	1,158.2	1,085.2	-6.30%
14 Colorado	2,349.2	2,203.4	-6.21%
15 Hawaii	628.1	589.3	-6.18%
16 New Mexico	849	796.9	-6.14%
17 South Carolina	1,946.4	1,828	-6.08%
<b>18 Indiana</b>	<b>2,986.7</b>	<b>2,805.5</b>	<b>-6.07%</b>
<b>19 Illinois</b>	<b>5,984.2</b>	<b>5,621.9</b>	<b>-6.05%</b>
20 North Carolina	4,169.5	3,925.1	-5.86%
<b>21 Wisconsin</b>	<b>2,885.5</b>	<b>2,720.9</b>	<b>-5.70%</b>
22 New Jersey	4,087	3,863.1	-5.48%
23 Utah	1,263.5	1,198	-5.18%
24 Washington	2,961	2,808.7	-5.14%
25 Maine	620.2	588.4	-5.13%
26 Delaware	438.9	416.5	-5.10%
<b>27 Missouri</b>	<b>2,799.8</b>	<b>2,662.9</b>	<b>-4.89%</b>
28 Connecticut	1,704.3	1,621.4	-4.86%
29 Vermont	308.5	293.6	-4.83%
30 Kentucky	1,869.9	1,780.4	-4.79%
31 Montana	447.1	426.4	-4.63%
<b>32 Minnesota</b>	<b>2,770.2</b>	<b>2,651.3</b>	<b>-4.29%</b>
<b>33 Kansas</b>	<b>1,384.9</b>	<b>1,331</b>	<b>-3.89%</b>
34 Virginia	3,766.6	3,636.4	-3.46%
35 Arkansas	1,207.3	1,166.1	-3.41%
36 Pennsylvania	5,809.9	5,614.3	-3.37%
<b>37 Iowa</b>	<b>1,523.8</b>	<b>1,473.2</b>	<b>-3.32%</b>
38 Wyoming	293.2	283.5	-3.31%
39 Massachusetts	3,288.9	3,184.6	-3.17%
40 Maryland	2,612.1	2,530.7	-3.12%
41 New York	8,779.8	8,519.2	-2.97%
42 New Hampshire	647.6	631.8	-2.44%
43 West Virginia	760.7	742.2	-2.43%
44 Oklahoma	1,575.1	1,536.8	-2.43%
<b>45 Nebraska</b>	<b>962.8</b>	<b>945.2</b>	<b>-1.83%</b>
46 Louisiana	1,934	1,903.3	-1.59%
47 Texas	10,525.5	10,395.8	-1.23%
<b>48 South Dakota</b>	<b>408.3</b>	<b>403.8</b>	<b>-1.10%</b>
49 DC	699.5	711.5	1.72%
50 Alaska	319.3	325.8	2.04%
51 North Dakota	362.1	371.9	2.71%

Source: IPP analysis of Current Employment Statistics survey data, Total Nonfarm Employment, seasonally adjusted

All told, Iowa lost 52,000 jobs from December 2007 through July of this year. Almost all of the losses occurred by the end of 2009; the month of June was the only month in 2010 to report job losses, compared to nine months of losses in 2009. By July 2010, the state has regained 16,100 jobs. (See Figure 2.)

**Figure 2. Iowa Nonfarm Jobs Fluctuate by Month, December 2007-July 2010**

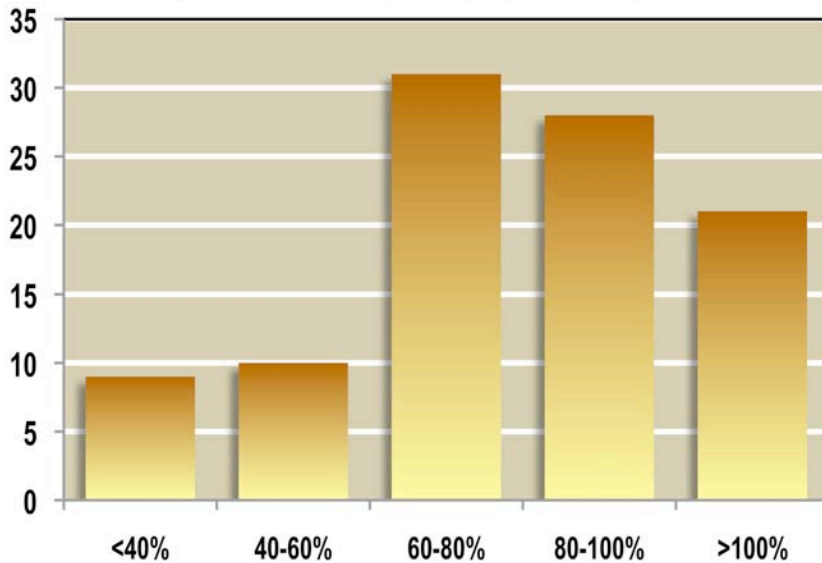


**Unemployment Rates Within the State**

Between December 2007 and June 2010, unemployment rates rose nationally, as well as in the state of Iowa, to their highest levels since 1983. Nationally, annual unemployment more than doubled, from 4.6 percent in 2007 to 9.3 percent in 2009; while in Iowa, unemployment rose from 3.7 percent in 2007 to 6.3 percent in 2009.

**Figure 3. Jobless Rate Grew by 60 Percent-Plus In 4 of 5 Iowa Counties, 2007-10**

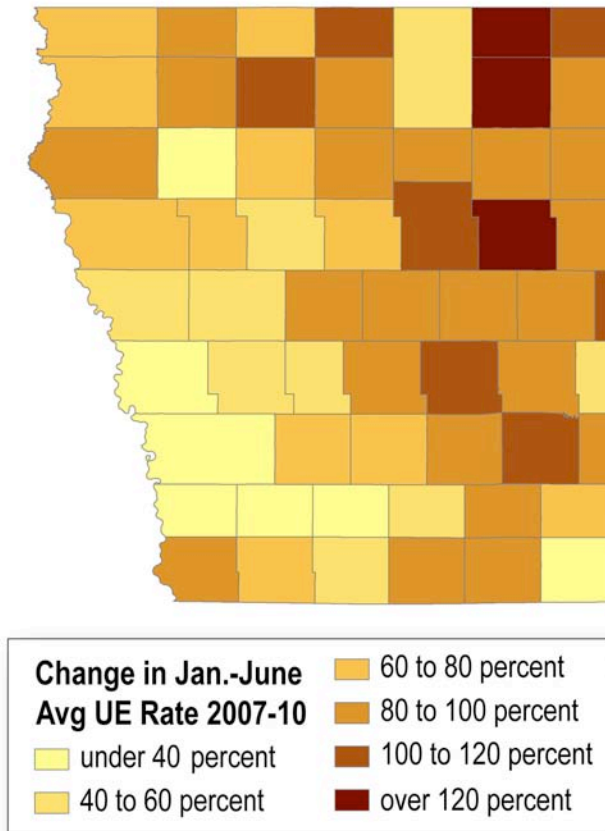
*Change in Jan.-June Avg Unemployment Rate, 2007-10*



To examine how county-by-county unemployment has changed from before the recession through its lingering effects in the first half of 2010, consider the change in average January through June unemployment rates from 2007-2010.<sup>1</sup> In 4 of every 5 Iowa counties, the unemployment rate grew by 60 percent or more. In addition, it more than doubled in 1 of every 5 counties. (See Figure 3, left, and Figure 4, next page.)

<sup>1</sup> Since the monthly unemployment data by county is not seasonally adjusted, this report presents an average of January through June unemployment. This method enables a comparison of unemployment rates from different years, without the bias of certain months that tend to be higher or lower in unemployment due to seasonal job trends.

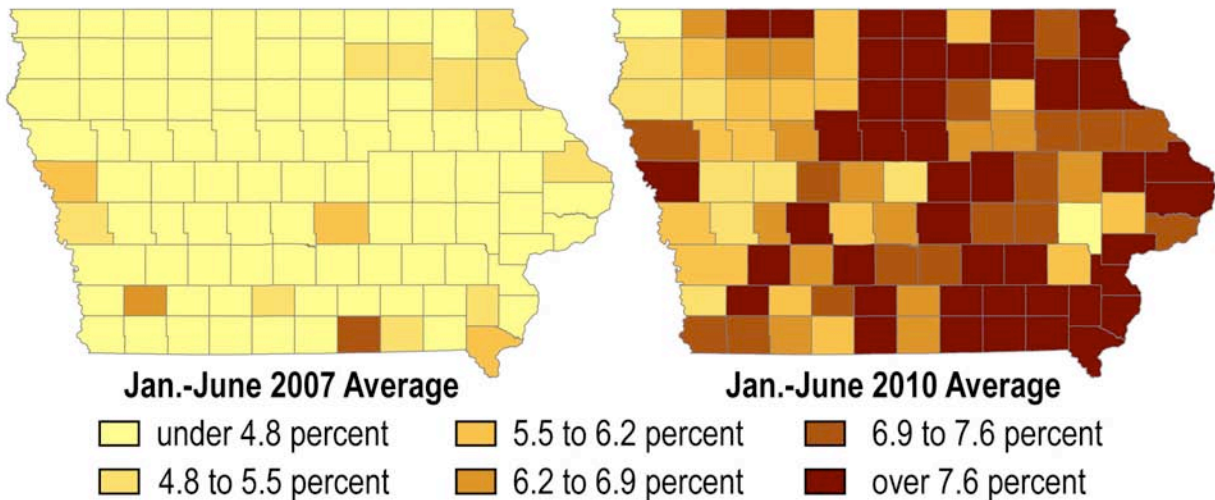
**Figure 4. Pre- to Post-Recession Change By County in Average Unemployment Rate**



The left map in Figure 5 below shows the distribution of average unemployment by county during the first half of 2007. Only 12 percent of Iowa counties had an average unemployment rate above 4.8 percent, and only one (Appanoose) had an unemployment average reaching 7.6 percent.

By the first half of 2010 (right map, Figure 5), 97 percent of Iowa counties had an unemployment rate of 4.8 percent or higher, with 46 percent of counties showing a rate of over 7.6 percent. The only two counties below 4.8 percent were Johnson and Lyon counties. The greatest rise came in Muscatine County, from 3.6 percent in 2007 to 8.9 percent in 2010, a change of 145 percent — almost 2 1/2 times the pre-recession unemployment rate. Winnebago and Hamilton counties rose by 140 and 139 percent, respectively. (See <http://www.iowapolicyproject.org/SWI2010.html>.)

**Figure 5. Maps of January through June average unemployment rate by county, 2007 (left) and 2010**



Another way of looking at unemployment is by Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)<sup>2</sup>, including only the Iowa portion of MSAs spreading over more than one state. For each MSA, an average of January through June unemployment rates is calculated for each of the years 2007-10.

Some Iowa areas in the period were hit harder than others. Davenport's unemployment rate doubled, from 3.8 percent in the first half of 2007 to 7.6 percent in the first half of 2010, and Des Moines unemployment rose by 89 percent, to 6.8 percent. Ames unemployment rose by 89 percent as well, but since its 2007 unemployment rate was at a low of 2.8 percent, the rise only brought it up to a high of 5.3 percent, the second-lowest unemployment rate of all Iowa MSAs for the first half of 2010. (See Table 3.)

The only MSA exhibiting a very mild change was the Omaha-Council Bluffs MSA, with a total change of only 26.1 percent. The Iowa City MSA had the lowest 2010 rate, at 4.9 percent; however, that is an increase of 75 percent from the 2007 pre-recession figure.

### **Labor Underutilization by State**

In addition to the official unemployment rate, the Bureau of Labor Statistics offers annual averages for three broader labor underutilization measures. These are more extensive definitions of unemployment that may provide a more accurate picture of how workers are faring. Official unemployment figures are limited to persons who had actively searched for work in the four weeks preceding the survey, thus excluding those who had given up looking or who had undertaken part-time unemployment involuntarily. Underutilization figures, which include both the unemployed and the underutilized, tend to be about twice as high as the official unemployment rates.

The three labor underutilization measures include:

1. **Total unemployed plus discouraged workers:** Discouraged workers are those not in the labor force who want to work and stopped looking for work, specifically because they believed no jobs are available for them or there are none for which they would qualify.
2. **Total unemployed, plus discouraged workers, plus all other marginally attached workers:** Marginally attached workers are those not in the labor force who want to work, and who have looked for a job sometime in the prior 12 months, but were not counted as unemployed because they had not searched for work in the four weeks preceding the survey. Unlike

**Table 3. Most Iowa Metropolitan Areas See Sharp Jumps In Jobless Rate Since Before Recession**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	change 2007-10
Davenport	3.8%	4.2%	6.2%	7.6%	100.0%
Ames	2.8%	3.3%	4.2%	5.3%	89.3%
Des Moines	3.6%	4.0%	5.3%	6.8%	88.9%
Cedar Rapids	3.9%	4.0%	5.5%	7.0%	79.5%
Sioux City	4.1%	4.0%	5.1%	7.2%	75.6%
Iowa City	2.8%	3.1%	4.0%	4.9%	75.0%
Waterloo - Cedar Falls	3.8%	4.2%	5.1%	6.6%	73.7%
Dubuque	4.3%	4.7%	6.4%	7.1%	65.1%
Omaha - Council Bluffs	4.6%	4.5%	4.7%	5.8%	26.1%
Non-MSA	4.2%	4.6%	6.6%	7.6%	81.0%
<b>Entire state</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>79.5%</b>

*Source: IPP analysis of Current Employment Statistics survey data, not seasonally adjusted*

<sup>2</sup> A Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is a geographical region with a relatively high population density at its core and close economic ties throughout the area. The state of Iowa has nine such MSAs.



discouraged workers, there may be different reasons as to why they were not actively looking for work in the four weeks preceding the survey, with feelings of discouragement being just one of many reasons.

- 3. Total unemployed, plus discouraged workers, plus all other marginally attached workers, plus total employed part time for economic reasons:** Employed part time for economic reasons are those who indicated that they would like to work full time but were working part time (fewer than 35 weekly hours) because of an economic reason, such as a cutback in hours or inability to find full-time jobs.

Table 4 (next page) includes labor underutilization figures for 2007 and 2009. Using the broadest possible definition of labor underutilization (definition No. 3 above), Michigan ranked highest in the nation in 2009, with 21.5 percent of the labor force unemployed, discouraged, marginally attached, or involuntarily working part time. Iowa ranked 44<sup>th</sup>, with 11.7 percent of the labor force underutilized in 2009, compared to 7 percent in 2007. Most Midwestern states ranked higher than Iowa. Three Midwestern states — Kansas, South Dakota and Nebraska — ranked below Iowa, with slightly lower rates of labor underutilization than Iowa's. For the U.S. as a whole, the 2009 rates of unemployment and of labor underutilization are about double the pre-recession rates of 2007.

### ***Conclusion***

This report highlights some of the recent labor force trends in Iowa. The state saw a drop of 3.16 percent in jobs between 2008 and 2009, with manufacturing and construction experiencing annual job losses of more than 10 percent each. From the start of the recession in December 2007 through July 2010, the state had lost altogether 52,000 jobs. While this is not good news, 36 states, including six other Midwestern states, showed greater percentage losses.

Within the state, some metropolitan areas experienced a sharp rise in unemployment, while others were affected only moderately — though a deep recession gives new meaning to such terms. While Davenport's unemployment rate doubled, the Omaha-Council Bluffs unemployment rate grew by a comparatively small 26 percent. This is still a sizable increase. Looking across counties, 4 of every 5 counties experienced a rise in unemployment of 60 percent or more, and the rate of counties with an unemployment rate higher than 4.8 percent changed from 12 percent to 97 percent. Unemployment rates rose in every single county, with only nine counties experiencing a rise of less than 40 percent.

Lastly, labor underutilization rates by state, including persons who are unemployed, discouraged, marginally attached, or involuntary part-time workers, are substantially higher. Almost 12 percent of Iowa's labor force in 2009 was underutilized, compared to 7 percent in 2007. Iowa did, however, place 44<sup>th</sup> among the states in its 2009 underutilization rate, with only seven states experiencing lower underutilization rates.

While Iowa is still suffering from the effects of the recession, job losses in the state have slowed considerably in the last 12 months compared to the 12 months prior, and Iowa has fared better than most states nationally, as well as better than most Midwestern states. Still, a strong recovery in the job market, desperately needed to restore the jobs lost in the past 30 months and provide employment for new entrants to the labor market, has yet to get under way in Iowa or elsewhere.

**Table 4. Iowa Ranks Low in Unemployment and Underutilization, 2007, 2009**

		2007				2009			
		official	1	2	3	official	1	2	3
1	Michigan	7.1%	7.6%	8.5%	12.8%	13.3%	14.1%	15.0%	21.5%
2	California	5.3%	5.5%	6.2%	9.9%	11.3%	11.8%	13.0%	21.1%
3	Oregon	5.2%	5.3%	6.1%	10.0%	11.5%	11.8%	12.7%	20.7%
4	South Carolina	5.6%	5.9%	6.6%	9.5%	11.8%	12.4%	13.4%	19.6%
5	Nevada	4.6%	4.8%	5.3%	7.6%	11.3%	11.9%	12.4%	19.2%
6	Rhode Island	4.9%	5.0%	5.7%	8.3%	11.2%	11.7%	12.5%	19.1%
7	Tennessee	4.6%	4.7%	5.3%	8.0%	10.8%	11.2%	12.0%	18.6%
8	Florida	4.1%	4.3%	4.9%	8.0%	10.4%	11.1%	11.9%	18.4%
9	Arizona	3.9%	4.1%	4.6%	7.4%	10.0%	10.5%	11.3%	18.1%
10	North Carolina	4.5%	4.8%	5.6%	8.5%	10.4%	10.9%	11.6%	17.7%
<b>11</b>	<b>Indiana</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>11.2%</b>	<b>17.6%</b>
12	Kentucky	5.4%	5.7%	6.3%	9.3%	10.6%	11.1%	11.9%	17.5%
13	Ohio	5.6%	5.7%	6.5%	9.7%	10.3%	10.7%	11.7%	17.2%
14	Alabama	4.0%	4.3%	4.9%	7.1%	11.2%	11.6%	12.6%	17.1%
<b>15</b>	<b>Illinois</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>10.0%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>11.2%</b>	<b>17.0%</b>
16	Georgia	4.3%	4.7%	5.4%	8.1%	9.8%	10.3%	11.1%	16.9%
17	Idaho	3.0%	3.0%	3.4%	6.1%	8.5%	8.8%	9.6%	16.5%
	<b>United States</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>9.7%</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>16.2%</b>
18	Washington	4.6%	4.8%	5.5%	8.8%	9.0%	9.4%	10.2%	16.2%
19	Mississippi	6.1%	6.7%	7.6%	10.8%	9.2%	10.2%	11.2%	16.2%
<b>20</b>	<b>Missouri</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>	<b>9.4%</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>15.6%</b>
21	Hawaii	2.9%	3.0%	3.6%	6.4%	7.4%	8.0%	9.1%	15.5%
22	New Jersey	4.2%	4.4%	5.1%	7.4%	9.1%	9.5%	10.4%	15.2%
23	Maine	4.7%	4.9%	5.6%	8.9%	8.1%	8.5%	9.5%	14.7%
<b>24</b>	<b>Wisconsin</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>14.6%</b>
25	Arkansas	5.6%	5.8%	6.3%	9.5%	7.8%	8.2%	9.0%	14.6%
26	Delaware	3.5%	3.8%	4.4%	6.4%	8.5%	9.1%	9.9%	14.5%
27	Massachusetts	4.6%	4.8%	5.3%	7.3%	8.4%	8.7%	9.4%	14.5%
28	Connecticut	4.5%	4.8%	5.4%	8.2%	8.1%	8.6%	9.4%	14.4%
29	New York	4.6%	5.0%	5.6%	8.1%	8.3%	8.9%	9.9%	14.3%
<b>30</b>	<b>Minnesota</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>8.2%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>14.2%</b>
31	West Virginia	4.6%	4.9%	5.7%	9.2%	8.0%	8.6%	9.3%	14.2%
32	DC	5.5%	5.7%	6.8%	9.3%	9.5%	10.0%	11.1%	14.2%
33	New Mexico	3.7%	3.8%	4.5%	7.3%	7.6%	8.0%	8.7%	14.0%
34	Pennsylvania	4.3%	4.5%	5.3%	7.7%	7.9%	8.2%	9.1%	13.8%
35	Alaska	6.2%	6.4%	7.6%	11.2%	7.9%	8.3%	9.4%	13.8%
36	Colorado	3.7%	3.8%	4.3%	7.3%	7.4%	7.6%	8.3%	13.7%
37	Texas	4.3%	4.5%	5.0%	7.7%	7.5%	7.9%	8.5%	13.7%
38	Montana	3.6%	3.7%	3.9%	7.1%	7.1%	7.4%	7.9%	13.5%
39	Utah	2.6%	2.7%	3.1%	5.0%	7.3%	7.7%	8.3%	12.9%
40	New Hampshire	3.6%	3.7%	4.2%	6.5%	6.4%	6.8%	7.6%	12.5%
41	Maryland	3.6%	3.8%	4.4%	6.3%	7.1%	7.4%	8.2%	12.2%
42	Virginia	3.1%	3.2%	3.7%	6.1%	6.6%	7.0%	7.5%	12.1%
43	Vermont	4.0%	4.2%	4.8%	6.9%	6.5%	6.8%	7.5%	11.8%
<b>44</b>	<b>Iowa</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>7.1%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>
<b>45</b>	<b>Kansas</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>11.5%</b>
46	Wyoming	2.9%	3.0%	3.4%	5.6%	6.5%	6.8%	7.3%	11.0%
47	Louisiana	4.3%	4.6%	5.1%	7.2%	7.1%	7.6%	8.2%	10.6%
48	Oklahoma	4.4%	4.7%	5.3%	7.5%	6.2%	6.5%	7.2%	10.5%
<b>49</b>	<b>South Dakota</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>9.9%</b>
<b>50</b>	<b>Nebraska</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>9.0%</b>
51	North Dakota	3.2%	3.3%	3.6%	5.8%	4.2%	4.4%	4.9%	8.0%

Source:  
Alternative  
Measures of Labor  
Underutilization  
for States, Local  
Area  
Unemployment  
Statistics,  
Current  
Employment  
Statistics survey  
data