

# DATA RELEASE

Unemployment | June 18, 2021

**DATA RELEASE:** Silicon Valley unemployment analysis

## SILICON VALLEY UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FALLS TO 4.6 PERCENT UNEVEN RECOVERY AS REGION REOPENS

**June 18, 2021** – Silicon Valley’s unemployment rate continued in a slow downward trend into May, reaching 4.6%. Joint Venture Silicon Valley’s Institute for Regional Studies today released analysis that shows a significant improvement in the region’s unemployment rate since the pandemic-high of 12% in April 2020. Month-over-month declines have been small. Between April and May, the rate declined by three-tenths of a percentage point, which represents approximately 3,630 fewer unemployed workers throughout Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties.

The analysis follows the June 18 release from the California Employment Development Department (EDD). National-level data for May was released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) on June 4.

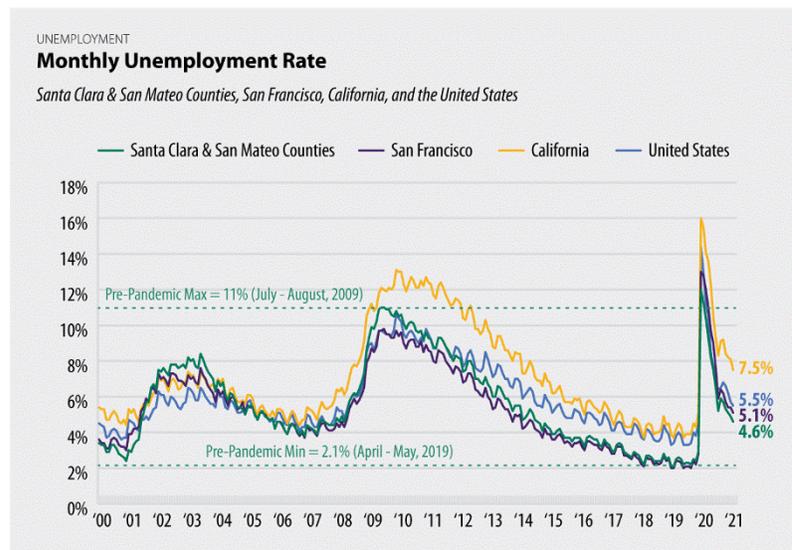
The June 18 EDD news release noted that the state’s unemployment rate for May was slightly less than half of the peak-pandemic rate of 16%. In contrast, Silicon Valley’s May unemployment rate was lower in comparison to its peak rate of 12%, indicating a more rapid recovery of employment levels than for the state overall.

The largest greater-Silicon Valley employment gains between April and May were in Leisure & Hospitality (+13,600 or +9%), Educational & Health Services (+1,000 or +0.3%), and Financial Activities (+800 or +0.7%). Retail jobs were still 9% below pre-pandemic levels, with no gains in May.

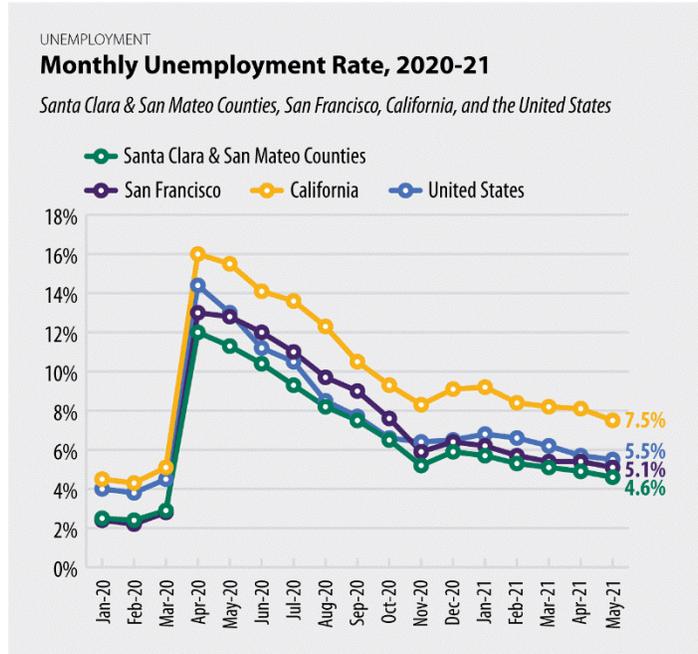
“Nine out of eleven major industry sectors added jobs in May, with notable gains in leisure and hospitality,” said Rachel Massaro, the Institute’s Director of Research. “With the exception of Information, though, none of those sectors have recovered to pre-pandemic employment levels.”

### Findings:

- Silicon Valley’s unemployment rate declined by 0.3 percentage points between April and May, reaching 4.6%. This compares to a May unemployment rate of 5.1% for San Francisco, 5.4% for the Bay Area, 7.5% statewide, and 5.5% nationwide.



- As of mid-April, approximately 66,800 people in Silicon Valley’s labor force remained unemployed (19,600 in San Mateo County, and 47,200 in Santa Clara County). This compares to 42,900 pre-pandemic (March 2020).
- Statewide, nine out of 11 industry sectors increased employment levels in May. By comparison, the greater Silicon Valley area—based on metro-area data, which includes San Francisco and San Benito Counties — gained in eight out of 11 sectors, with losses in Construction (-200 or -0.2%), Trade, Transportation & Utilities (-300 or -0.1%), and Other Services (-1,500 or -2.7%).
- The largest greater Silicon Valley employment gains between April and May were in Leisure & Hospitality (+13,600 or +9%), Educational & Health Services (+1,000 or +0.3%), and Financial Activities (+800 or +0.7%).
- San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties remained in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> slot for lowest unemployment rates, respectively, among the state’s 58 counties in May. Marin County remained in the #1 slot for the state’s lowest unemployment rate, at 4.3%.



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**Notes:** Silicon Valley includes Santa Clara & San Mateo Counties, unless otherwise noted.

**Data Sources:** U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (CPS) and Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS); California Employment Development Department (EDD)

Monthly unemployment rates are calculated using employment and labor force data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Statistics (CPS) and the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS). Rates are not seasonally adjusted. County-level and California data for April and May 2021 are preliminary, and county-level data for May are from the California Employment Development Department June 18 release.

**For further reference:** To access Silicon Valley’s online data hub, visit [www.SiliconValleyIndicators.org](http://www.SiliconValleyIndicators.org)

### About the Silicon Valley Institute for Regional Studies

The Silicon Valley Institute for Regional Studies is the research arm of Joint Venture Silicon Valley, and is housed within the organization. The Institute provides research and analysis on a host of issues facing Silicon Valley’s economy and society. <https://jointventure.org/institute/about-the-institute>.

### About Joint Venture Silicon Valley

Established in 1993, Joint Venture provides analysis and action on issues affecting the Silicon Valley economy and quality of life. The organization brings together established and emerging leaders—from business, government, academia, labor

and the broader community—to spotlight issues, launch projects and work toward innovative solutions.

[www.jointventure.org](http://www.jointventure.org)