LABOR MARKET DIGEST

DATA SPOTLIGHT: Labor Force: Persons with a Disability

“2020 marks the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):” the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) highlights national data in celebration of three decades of this historically significant civil rights law. Since enacted on July 26, 1990, the ADA has worked to increase employment access and opportunity for people with disabilities. Recent labor force trends have reflected grander realization of the ADA’s core objectives. Over the past decade a greater share of persons with a disability have entered the labor force and found employment. Moreover, growth trends have shown that persons with a disability, on average, have found more opportunity for employment in the Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News MSA.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Labor force participation for people with disabilities exceeds that of the nation by 4.6%, average (right). The region holds a 46.1% participation rate, compared to the 41.5% national participation rate for people with disabilities.

People with disabilities represent more than 66,400 workers in the local economy. From the trough of the last economic crisis in 2010 to the present, this sector of the labor force has grown 66.3%. This is a significant contribution that aided in economic recovery then, and is a noteworthy sector to watch as we work through the present-day crises.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

As unemployment declined in the United States, the gap between the rate for persons with a disability and that for all workers has narrowed. In our region, the gap has been cut nearly in half, by almost 5%.

On average, the region has enjoyed lower unemployment for persons with a disability. A decade ago, unemployment exceeded 20% nationally and 17% in the region (left). In 2019, unemployment is expected to have declined to 8%.


For nearly 70 years, Versability Resources has fulfilled its mission to support people with disabilities in leading productive and fulfilling lives. They have grown to now serve over 1,700 people with disabilities and their families with a variety of programs. Services range from coordinating developmental therapies for children to building successful business partnerships that provide staffing solutions for employers and provide jobs in Hampton Roads and beyond for people with disabilities.

Employment programs include government contracts, supported employment, on-site employment services, and high school transition. Adults with disabilities participating in Versability Resources employment programs earn millions in wages and benefits annually and have made a significant contribution to the resiliency of the region’s labor force.

WHERE ABILITY MEETS OPPORTUNITY

2520 58th Street
Hampton, VA 23661
Phone: (757) 896-6461
Fax: (757) 896-8470
www.versability.org
**Labor Market Indicator**

**Q2 Average**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Non-Farm Employment</strong></td>
<td>723.4K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civilian Labor Force</strong></td>
<td>848.3K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unemployment Rate</strong></td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial Unemployment Claims</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Weekly Hours</strong></td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Hourly Earnings</strong></td>
<td>$24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nominal Hourly Earnings</strong></td>
<td>$20.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Change from Previous Quarter**

- Total Non-Farm Employment: 723.4K
- Civilian Labor Force: 848.3K
- Unemployment Rate: 10.6%
- Initial Unemployment Claims: 143.3K
- Average Weekly Hours: 33.4
- Average Hourly Earnings: $24.6
- Nominal Hourly Earnings: $20.5