

9-1-1960

Labor Market News Letter, September 1960

Maine Employment Security Commission

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalmaine.com/cwri_docs

Recommended Citation

Maine Employment Security Commission, "Labor Market News Letter, September 1960" (1960). *Center for Workforce Research and Information Documents*. Paper 176.
http://digitalmaine.com/cwri_docs/176

This Text is brought to you for free and open access by the Labor at Maine State Documents. It has been accepted for inclusion in Center for Workforce Research and Information Documents by an authorized administrator of Maine State Documents. For more information, please contact statedocs@maine.gov.

M E.S.N. 21: 960/9
C.I.

LABOR MARKET



NEWS LETTER

Maine Employment Security Commission

331 Water Street

Augusta, Maine



SEPTEMBER - 1960

ISSUED BI-MONTHLY



Labor Market Highlights — Labor market activities in Maine eased during the summer months, following a late-spring and early-summer upsurge. Employment continued to edge upwards, reaching a peak for the year in mid-August. The volume of unemployment in the State remained relatively stable during June, July, and August. The unemployment level, while considerably lower than in the first months of the year, was, nevertheless, comparatively high. On the whole, however, available economic trend indicators were reflective of generally favorable conditions.

Maine's Work Force — The estimated total work force in Maine, comprising approximately 402,300 persons, was at its highest point for the year during the middle of August. Seasonally expanded labor requirements in a number of industries which usually reach peak operating levels in the summer months accounted for the comparatively large August total—the low point for the year occurred in January when an estimated 359,500 were in the work force. Of the workers in the work force in August, approximately 18,100 were unemployed. This reflected moderate improvement in the unemployment situation since the first of the summer — there having been an estimated 18,400 unemployed in June — but a slight increase from a year ago when, according to latest revised estimates, there were 18,000 unattached job-seekers in the labor market. The expected withdrawal of persons who have been available only for summer-time jobs should cause a sharp drop in the size of the State's working force in the coming months.

Farm Labor Developments—Comparison of the summer trends for 1959 and 1960 in seasonal hired farm worker employment in Maine, as estimated by local public employment offices in the State, indicates a continuation of the long-range contraction in farm labor needs which has been in evidence for a number of years. Current estimates show that there were around 14,900 seasonal hired workers in agricultural employment at the middle of August this year, whereas at the same period in 1959 the number was 17,800. Differences in growing conditions, crop maturity dates, and acreage under cultivation

could cause year-to-year changes in the number of seasonal farm hands required, but it is apparent from the job openings listed with the local offices that more wide-spread mechanization on the farms has been a major reason for the declining volume of agricultural job opportunities — especially for youths — during the summer months.

Nonagricultural Employment Trends — An upward trend in nonagricultural employment which started early in the spring continued through the middle of August when the number of wage and salary workers on the payrolls of nonfarm establishments in Maine reached 290,000. This was the highest August nonagricultural employment level in four years, being up from a year ago by 1,100. Jobs in manufacturing industries, at 111,200, were down slightly from last year when 111,700 persons had factory employment. Nonmanufacturing industries, on the other hand, registered an over-the-year gain of 1,600 jobs — aggregate employment in such activities having risen from 177,200 to 178,800. Changes occurred in the employment levels of most of the major nonagricultural industries in the State between August 1959 and August 1960. Those showing the most noteworthy advances were government and wholesale-retail trade. The most significant job declines for the twelve-month period were 900 in the textile and 300 in the leather and leather products industries.

Insured Unemployment Rates — Fluctuations in the rate of insured unemployment in this State were not particularly pronounced during the summer period. At the end of June the rate was

4.8 percent whereas at the end of August it was 4.9 percent. The latter ratio was the seventh highest end-of-the-season rate in the Country. States having higher rates than Maine were Alabama, Kentucky, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Washington, and West Virginia. The nationwide rate for the last week of August was 4.2 percent. Rates in the other New England States were: Connecticut—4.4 percent; Massachusetts—4.0 percent; New Hampshire—3.7 percent; Rhode Island—4.7 percent; and Vermont—3.0 percent. Maine's current rate is slightly higher than a year ago when the number of unemployed workers in an insured status under the State's unemployment insurance program represented 4.7 percent of the average monthly number employed in activities covered by the Maine Employment Security Law.

Characteristics of the Unemployed — The composition of the unemployed labor force in Maine has changed rather appreciably in a number of respects during the past few months, according to information revealed in a continuing study relating to the characteristics of the unemployed insured under the State UI program. In April, the month in which unemployment was at a peak for the current year, nearly 58 percent of those in an insured unemployed status were males, whereas in August only 43 percent of the persons in the labor market were males. Between these two months — April and August — declines occurred in the number of available workers in all age groups. However, older workers — those sixty-five years of age or over — accounted for a significantly larger proportion (16 percent) of the total in August than in April

(12 percent). During the five-month period ending with August, reductions were noted in the number of unemployed from all of the State's major industries. In terms of percentage declines, the largest unemployment decreases for the period on an industry basis were: contract construction—82 percent; lumber and wood products—71 percent; food and kindred products—69 percent; leather and leather products—47 percent; and wholesale-retail trade—24 percent.

Average Workweek and Earnings — The average number of hours worked per week by production workers employed in Maine manufacturing industries followed an upward course throughout the spring and summer period. In August, the average factory workweek was 41.1 hours, as compared with hourly averages of 39.6 in April, 40.0 in May, 40.5 in June, and 40.6 in July. The indicated upswing was due in major part to seasonally stimulated production requirements in nondurable goods industries, especially in food processing and shoe manufacturing. The average workweek, reflecting over-the-year improvements in production schedules generally, showed a twelve-month increase of 0.7 hours from an August 1959 average of 40.4 hours. Average hourly earnings of manufacturing production workers amounted to \$1.76 as compared with averages of \$1.77 in each of the three preceding months. Average hourly earnings rates in Maine have remained fairly constant for over a year, there having been an increase of only four cents per hour between August 1959 and August this year.

MAINE EMPLOYMENT SECURITY COMMISSION
331 WATER STREET, AUGUSTA, MAINE
AFFILIATED WITH
UNITED STATES EMPLOYMENT SERVICE
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
EMPLOYMENT SECURITY MAIL

MAINE STATE LIBRARY
AUGUSTA MAINE