

new york minute

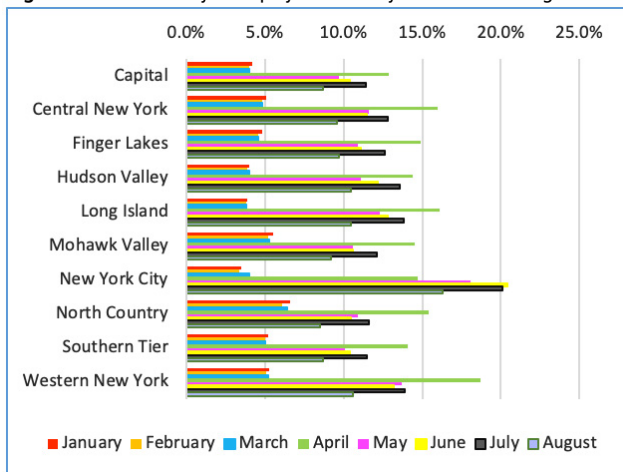
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Unemployment Trends across New York State: The Impact of COVID-19

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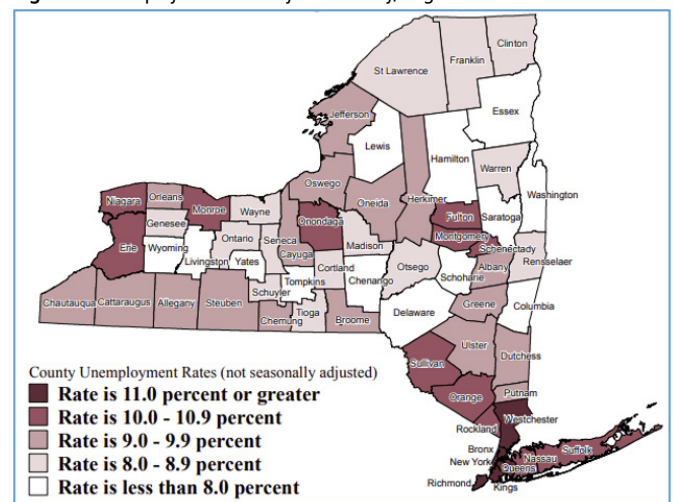
The Coronavirus pandemic has caused an economic shockwave around the world, and the United States (U.S.) is no exception. U.S. unemployment increased from 3.6% in January to a high of 14.7% in April, before declining to 8.4% by August¹. New York State (NYS) has followed a similar pattern; the unemployment rate rose from 3.8% in January to a high of 15.9% in July, and declined to 12.6% in August². Figure 1 provides the rates by NYS region, and Figure 2 allows county-level comparisons.

Figure 1: 2020 Monthly unemployment rate by NYS Economic Region



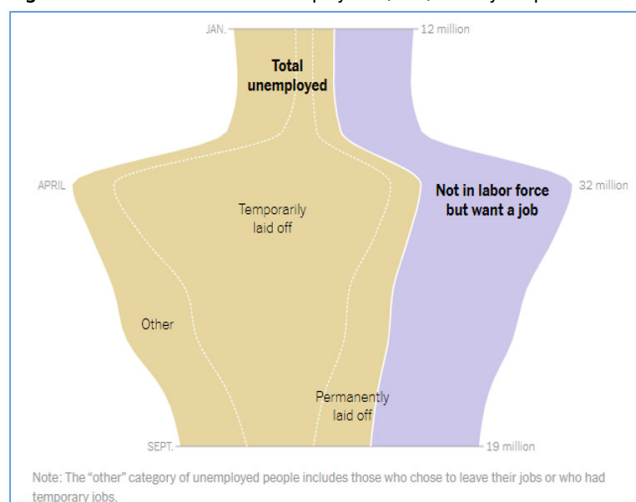
Source: Cornell Program on Applied Demographics; [NYS Department of Labor](#)

Figure 2: Unemployment Rates by NYS County, August 2020



Source: [NYS Department of Labor](#)

Figure 3: Official versus "real" unemployment, U.S., January - September 2020



Source: [New York Times, October 5, 2020](#)

While the unemployment rate has been used as a key indicator of economic well-being, a recent analysis³ suggests that while U.S. unemployment rates have been improving recently, these trends may mask longer-term negative impacts. As Figure 3 indicates, while the numbers of temporary lay-offs peaked in April at 18 million and declined to 4.3 million in September, the number of permanent lay-offs has steadily increased since January. Additionally, individuals who have been out of the labor force but still want a job are not counted in the unemployment data. Yet, this number swelled from 5.1 million in January to 9.8 million in April, and still accounted for 7 million people in September. The analysis concludes that although unemployment is officially declining, an increasing number of people are permanently unemployed.

[Headwaters Economics county unemployment data](#)

¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

³ [New York Times, October 5, 2020](#)

