

Missouri Economy Indicators

Private Sector Job Trends

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The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted Missouri employment. By summer 2021, the state’s number of payroll jobs—wage and salary employment reported by businesses—was still below pre-pandemic levels. The latest detailed jobs data indicate that employment in sectors such as *Arts, Entertainment & Recreation* declined significantly in the past two years. Other sectors, however, grew employment faster than they did prior to the pandemic—despite the workforce challenges affecting the overall economy.

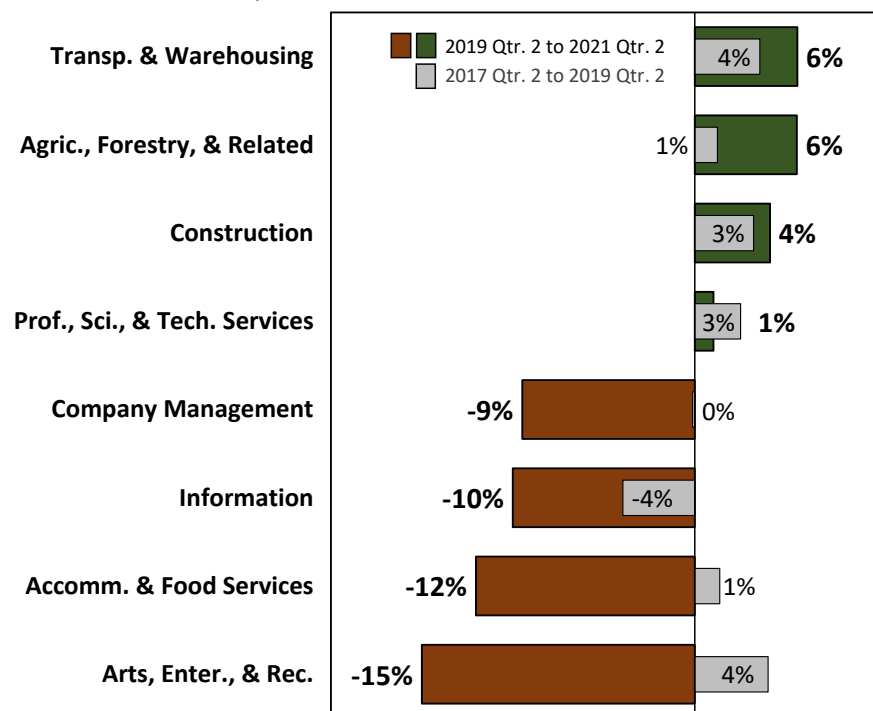
Missouri Private Sector Job Trends

From second-quarter 2019 to second-quarter 2021, *Transportation & Warehousing* gained 6% in payroll employment, continuing growth from the prior two years. *Agriculture, Forestry & Related* businesses also grew jobs by 6%, outpacing the prior two-year growth trend.

Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and *Accommodations & Food Services* jobs grew prior to the pandemic, but their employment declined by 15% and 12%, respectively, over the past two years.

Percent Change in Missouri Employment

Top Growing or Declining Sectors, Second-Quarter 2019-21
Compared with Second-Quarter 2017-19



Source: MU Extension graphic using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and MERIC quarterly census of employment and wage data.

Metro Areas Greatly Influence Missouri Job Trends

Missouri’s metro areas — including St. Louis, Kansas City and Springfield — account for 83% of Missouri’s payroll jobs, so urban areas largely influence the state’s overall employment trends. From second-quarter 2019 to second-quarter 2021, metro *Transportation & Warehousing* and *Construction* sectors had employment gains similar to those recorded at the state level. Growth in these businesses outpaced job gains from the two years before the pandemic. *Arts, Entertainment & Recreation* and *Accommodations & Food Services* employment declined at a faster rate in metro areas, than in the state overall.

Food Services (e.g., restaurants) lost more jobs (-31,000) than any other Missouri sector. In the two years prior to the pandemic, metro area *Arts, Entertainment & Recreation* grew by 4%, but over the past two years employment in this sector shrank by 15%.

Although a small sector in Missouri metros, *Agriculture, Forestry & Related* businesses had significant job growth — 19% — from second-quarter 2019 to second-quarter 2021. Growth came primarily from greenhouse and nursery production firms.

Nonmetro Areas Had Slightly Different Employment Trends

Construction and Transportation & Warehousing employment grew in both nonmetro and metro areas between second-quarter 2019 and second-quarter 2021. Due mainly to hiring in individual instructional services, the *Educational Services* sector experienced the fastest nonmetro area job growth over the past two years. However, it is a smaller nonmetro sector (3,200 jobs) relative to the *Construction* (18,600 jobs) and *Transportation & Warehousing* (15,000 jobs) sectors.

In relative terms, the greatest nonmetro job losses were in *Health Care & Social Assistance* (-5%), *Administrative & Support* (-9%) and *Information* (-15%) sectors. The *Health Care & Social Assistance* sector also had the greatest absolute jobs losses (-3,700) among nonmetro sectors, mainly due to employment declines in nursing and residential care facilities. Nonmetro areas also lost employment in *Arts, Entertainment & Recreation* (-4%) and *Accommodations & Food Services* (-2%), but at a slower rate than their metro counterparts.

Source Notes

- The [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) and the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center ([MERIC](#)) track payroll employment data reported by businesses covered by unemployment insurance. This brief uses private sector payroll jobs data for businesses with known metro or nonmetro locations. (Note, some employers do not specify a job location.) Payroll employer data cover about 95% of all jobs, but the data do not include the self-employed, some federal employment and smaller farm operations without wage and salary workers.

All briefs in the economy indicators series and future updates will be available at tinyurl.com/ExceedEconomyIndicators

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Top Missouri Metro Area Growing or Declining Sectors

Percent Job Change from Second Qtr. 2019-21

Payroll Business Sector	Metro Percent Change
Agriculture, Forestry, & Related	19%
Transp. & Warehousing	6%
Construction	4%
Company Management	-10%
Accomm. & Food Services	-15%
Arts, Enter., & Rec.	-17%

Top Missouri Nonmetro Area Growing or Declining Sectors

Percent Job Change from Second Qtr. 2019-21

Payroll Business Sector	Nonmetro Percent Change
Educational Services	5%
Construction	4%
Transp. & Warehousing	3%
Health Care & Social Assist.	-5%
Administrative & Support	-9%
Information	-15%

Source: MU Extension graphic using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and MERIC quarterly census of employment and wage data.