

Additional Q&A

If you have any additional questions, you can reach out directly to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue via DORSecretary@wisconsin.gov.

What does the governor plan to do to incentivize the labor market to go back to work?

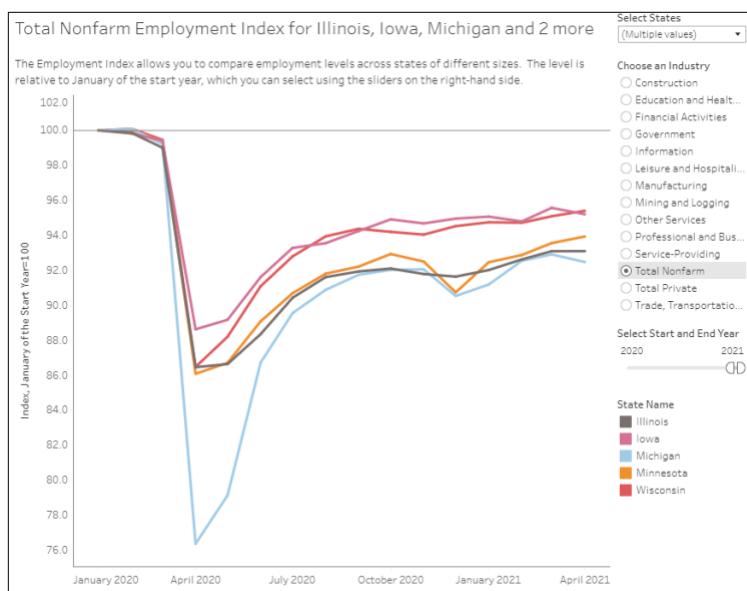
The governor has been laser-focused on getting Wisconsinites vaccinated, which is the most important factor to allow workers to be able to return to their “normal” lives and work safely and confidently. The Badger Bounce Back agenda is designed to help Wisconsinites bounce back better. Additionally, the governor has made strategic investments in education and workforce development, as well as investments for child care and transportation, which are what the data suggests to be among the most important factors to help Wisconsinites get back to work.

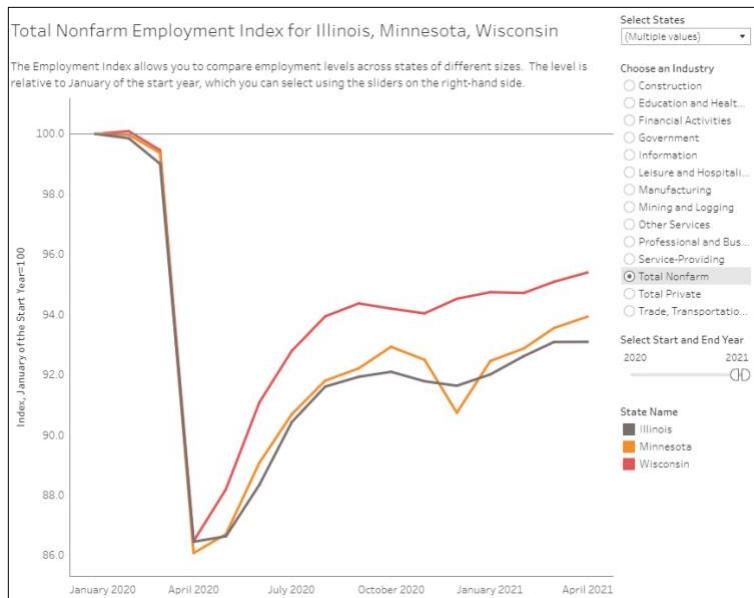
What is the plan to get people off of unemployment and back to work?

It should be noted that many Wisconsinites are already back at work, and Wisconsin is doing better than neighboring states in improving our unemployment numbers. Our current unemployment numbers are approaching the unemployment numbers from January 2020. In March 2021, Wisconsin had an [unemployment rate](#) of 3.8 percent, well below the [national unemployment rate](#) at the same time of 6 percent, and we were [ranked](#) 9th in the country (tied with two others).

The reality is that the low unemployment numbers point to a situation we were faced with back in January 2020 – worker shortages.

Further, it was precisely because of Wisconsin’s improved employment recovery that the federal government reduced Wisconsin’s ARPA financial award by \$700M. It should again be noted that the governor’s Badger Bounce Back Plan includes significant investments in workforce development so that we can improve the skills of our workforce to help them meet the demand of the jobs that are currently available.





I'm still hearing of people not getting unemployment owed dating back to December, 2020 ... why is the state so far behind in meeting their obligations?

DWD has greatly improved the timeliness of unemployment insurance payments. The normal turnaround time for someone to receive benefits after an initial claim is less than two weeks. It's possible the person you've heard from is appealing a denial of benefits. Although DWD has brought on more administrative law judges to handle appeals, it can still sometimes take more than two months to get a hearing due to the record volume number of appeals.

Please feel free to share the person's contact information with DWD Assistant Deputy Secretary Danielle Williams (Danielle.williams@wisconsin.gov) and she can have the Division contact the claimant to share more particular information about the case.

What, if any, plans are there to try to reach or sway people who continue to be hesitant to get vaccinated?

The governor and the Department of Health Services (DHS) are working toward ensuring Wisconsin achieves a high rate of vaccination. There are several efforts, which include vaccine education, as well as a grant program geared toward community organizations to assist reaching the difficult-to-reach populations.

See <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/news/releases/040121.htm>

Additionally, DHS is working on several efforts to bring vaccines closer to those who need them, for example, they are working with employers to offer vaccine clinics at worksites. Finally, in addition to the governor continually putting out messages on the importance of vaccines, he has also had continuous meetings with business leaders. In these meetings, the governor has discussed how they can also help message the importance of their staff being vaccinated. Cabinet Members have been asked and have similarly also had related stakeholder meetings.

When are we going to halt the extra \$300 as it is hurting my company finding employees?

There are currently no plans to halt the extra \$300. Studies have demonstrated that the extra

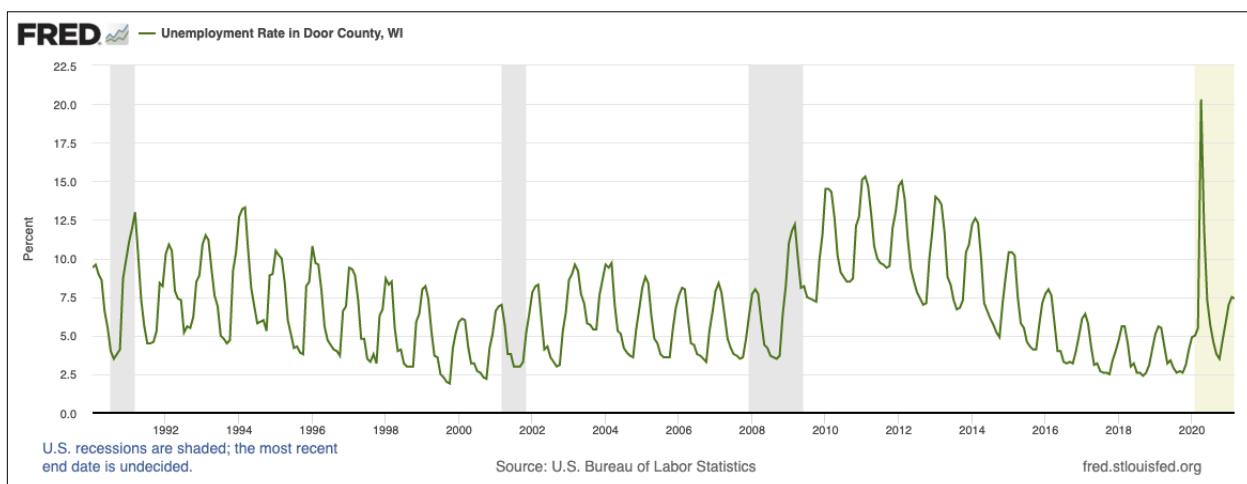
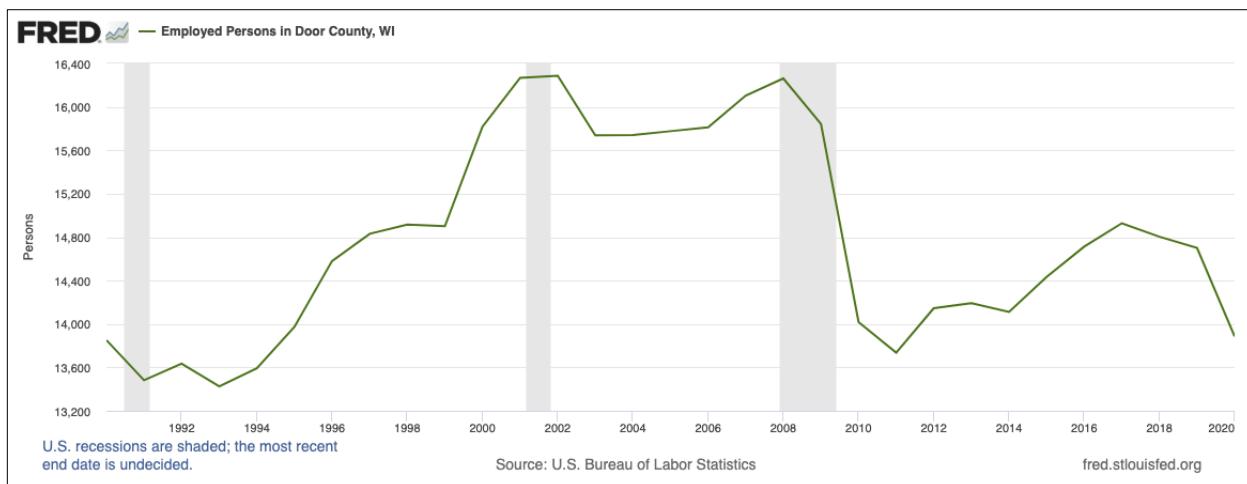
incentive offered to the unemployed is not a primary reason resulting in a disincentive to work. As mentioned above, the governor has taken other steps that are greater factors. [Read more.](#)

Unemployment for Wisconsin is at 3.8 percent. Are those people the only people receiving the extra \$300 unemployment benefits?

No, the unemployment rate is not the number of people receiving unemployment insurance as a share of all workers. If you are not actively looking for a job, you are not included in the unemployment rate, but you may be receiving unemployment insurance benefits. The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) has detailed numbers on who is receiving benefits (use the “weekly claims” number, not initial claims) under each program: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uistats/activity/>

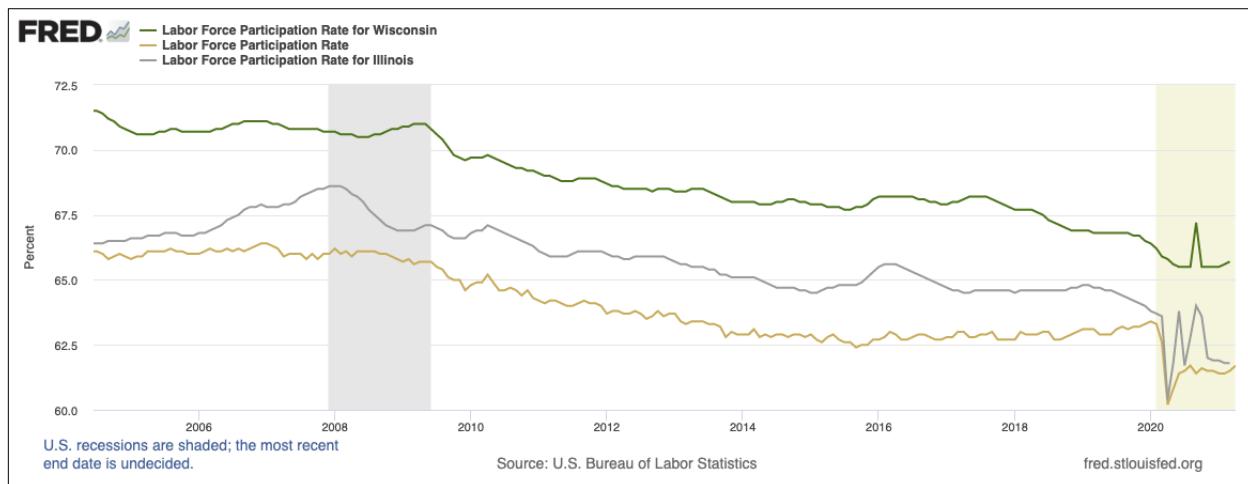
What is the employment history for Door County?

Here are two graphs for context:



How does the Wisconsin labor participation rate compare to other states? Some employers have commented that they can't find labor due to the enhanced unemployment benefits. Child care and school closures are also mentioned as impediments.

The labor force participation for Wisconsin tends to be higher relative to the rest of the country as well as many other states. Here is a look at Wisconsin, Illinois and national rates:

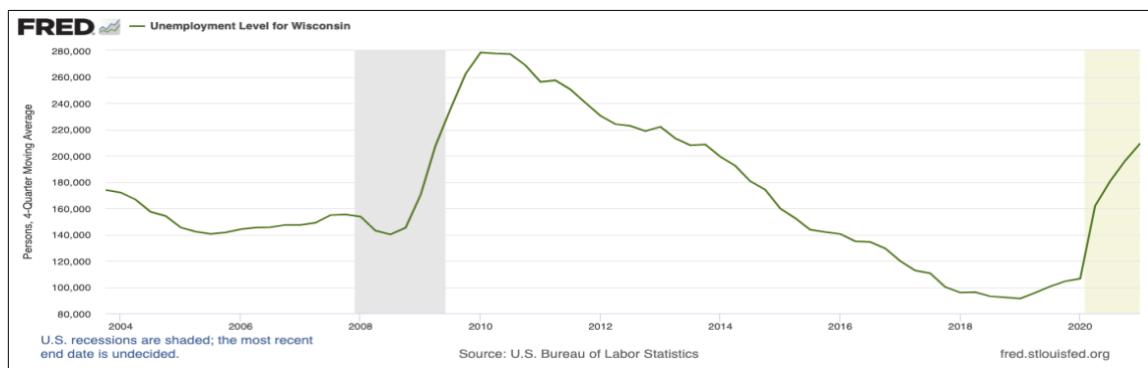


Employment has gained, but your graphs (shown in the webinar) still show levels well below pre-pandemic levels. I'm hearing of many businesses still not able to get workers. There seems to be a disconnect between your full employment claim and the graphs ...

Full employment means that nearly everyone looking for a job has one, and thus the unemployment rate is low (below 4 percent, some say below 5 percent). The disconnect is because a lot of people who were working pre-pandemic are currently not even looking for work, either because they feel it is unsafe, they have family to care for, or they've decided not to work for other reasons. And if you are not looking for work, you are not included in the unemployment rate.

How many people in the state of Wisconsin are receiving the extra \$300 unemployment benefit, and how many people does the 3.8 percent represent.

In terms of the number of people that the 3.8 percent represents, here is a look at the number of unemployed persons in Wisconsin.



See answer above for the first half of this ... the 3.8 percent unemployed represents 117,200 people who are not able to find jobs (out of the total labor force of 3,066,300). This is data from March.

What have we learned from this pandemic that would change how the policy makers/government react to a similar event in the future?

This is a great question – one that is multifaceted and complex. A complete response here would likely require pages. We have taken this suggestion as a potential topic for a future Wisconsin Economic Intel for the New North Region session.