

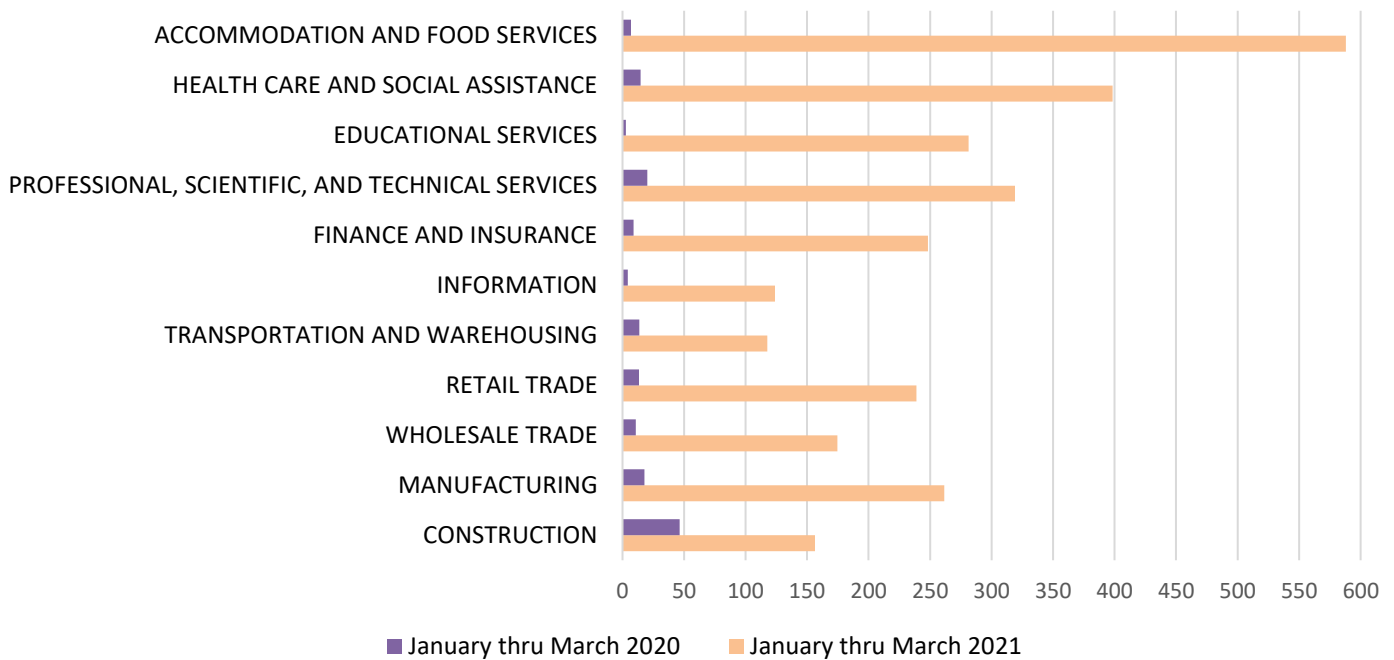


COVID-19 Impact on Employment: A Retrospective

The COVID-19 shutdown began around the week of March 21, 2020. According to the most recent data from the Kansas Department of Labor*, in the first month of the pandemic, over 28,000 Johnson County residents filed for unemployment insurance. One in three (8,462) of the unemployment insurance filings in Johnson County in the first month of the pandemic fell into the occupational categories of accommodation and food services, and retail trade.

Unemployment remained highest in occupations with low median annual wages: accommodation and food services, and health care and social assistance. However, even higher-income occupations such as manufacturing and professional services had higher rates of unemployment than in the pre-COVID era.

Average Initial Unemployment Claims by Industry



Overall, more than 124,000 initial unemployment claims were filed in the one-year period between March 2020 and March 2021. When comparing weekly unemployment claims in the first week of March 2020 and first week of March 2021, weekly unemployment claims are approximately three times higher than pre-pandemic levels (165 in 2020 compared to 478 in 2021). The current unemployment rate for Johnson County is 3.7%, compared to 10.6% in April of 2020 and 2.5% in April of 2019.

According to the most recent employment forecast for the Kansas City area, (including Bates, Caldwell, Cass, Clay, Clinton, Jackson, Lafayette, Platte and Ray counties in Missouri and Johnson, Leavenworth, Linn, Miami, and Wyandotte), the sector hit hardest by the pandemic, the leisure and hospitality sector, will see the fastest rate of growth as the area recovers from the pandemic. This sector is predicted to grow at a rate of 4.5%, compared to 1.3% overall.

**Initial unemployment claims data for 2020 were revised as the Kansas Department of Labor (KDOL) adopted new guidance from U.S. Department of Labor for claims reporting. Additionally, KDOL recently put into effect fraud mitigation actions including the implementation of OKTA, a user authentication software, which has stopped many fraudulent claims. Accordingly, KDOL data show a recent drop in claims. Data shown in this fact sheet represent KDOL revisions.*