

Unemployment rates drop as school season starts

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Unemployment rates across the North Bay dropped in August, as hiring activity picked up with the start of the school year, according to figures from the Employment Development Department.

Sonoma County's jobless rate was 6.6 percent in August, down from a revised July rate of 7.1 percent and below last year's rate of 8.6 percent. Between July and August, a number of industries showed increased hiring activity, with government leading the way with 700 hires, most of which was related to public school districts bring teachers back on board. Manufacturing, which includes wine production, added 300 jobs as the harvest season approaches, while construction added 200 jobs over the month.

Over the year, professional and business services added the most jobs, at 800, while leisure and hospitality added 500, education and health services added 400 and trade, transportation and utilities added 300 jobs. All told, Sonoma County added 1,700 total jobs over the year.

Napa County's rate was 5.8 percent in August, down from 6 percent in July and well below last year's rate of 7.4 percent. Over the month, the government sector added 300 jobs because of the school year, while manufacturing added 200 jobs. Over the year, manufacturing added the most jobs, at 1,000, followed by leisure and hospitality at 800, while trade, transportation and utilities added 500.

Marin County continued to post the lowest jobless rate in California, with a rate of 5.6 percent in August. Industry specifics are not yet available for Marin, part of a three-county region that includes San Francisco and San Mateo counties.

Solano County's rate dropped to 8.2 percent in August, compared to 8.5 percent in July and 10.1 percent last year. Yearly gains occurred in education and health services, which added 500 jobs, while construction added 400. Professional and business services, leisure and hospitality and the trades sector each added 300 jobs, respectively, while financial activities added 200.

The unemployment rate in the Lake County was 11.6 percent in August, down from a revised 12.6 percent in July, and below the year-ago estimate of 14.0 percent. This compares with an unadjusted unemployment rate of 8.8 percent for California and 7.3 percent for the nation during the same period.

Mendocino County's unemployment rate was 7.3 percent in August, down from 7.9 percent in July and below the year-ago rate of 9.1 percent.

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