

NC Jobs and GDP Economy Fully Recovered to Pre-Pandemic Levels in 2021

Concerns about consumer prices, labor shortages continue

North Carolina's economy fully returned to the employment level it enjoyed before the COVID-19 pandemic sent the world into an economic recession, state economists reported in March. The state's economy recovered to pre-pandemic employment levels in July of 2021 and the GDP even earlier, and the state's economy continues to grow despite concerns of inflation and high gas prices.

The state's economy is expanding, with job growth being high relative to other states. Over the year, the labor force participation rate increased 0.5 percentage points, nonfarm jobs increased by 166,500, a 3.7 percent increase, and the unemployment rate fell by 1.6 percentage points.

"Our significant success increasing jobs during the pandemic shows North Carolinians are resilient and we need to focus on training workers and educating children to continue to grow our workforce," Governor Roy Cooper said. "But right now, prices for gas and food are too high, and we have to find ways to make those costs more affordable while we keep bringing good paying jobs to our state."

The data shows economic recovery but also places that need work. North Carolina's unemployment rate fell by 0.2 percent from December to January, ranking 6th in over-the month change. The state unemployment rate is in the middle nationally at 25th as is its over-the-year change from January 2021. The labor force participation rate improved but the state is ranked 38th nationally. However, the state ranks 9th nationally in the number of total nonfarm jobs.

The labor market, or number of people seeking jobs, continues to be tight in North Carolina. For example, December figures show the state had only 0.8 job seekers per job opening, according to the NC Department of Commerce.

Annual state-level data revisions are published by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics in March. Revised data for 2021 show that the state economy is expanding after recovering to pre-pandemic total nonfarm employment last summer. The state's unemployment rate reached a high of 14.2 percent at the start of the pandemic in April 2020.

Wildlife Commission Schedules Public Hearing to Receive Comment on Proposed CWD Temporary Rules

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission has initiated temporary rulemaking to address Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and the positive detection found in a hunter-harvested deer in Yadkin County on March 31. A public hearing to receive comments on the proposed rules will be held on May 12, 7 - 9 p.m. at the agency's headquarters at 1751 Varsity Drive, Raleigh. A virtual option will also be available via Zoom for anyone unable to attend in person.

Registration is not required for in-person attendance, however pre-registration is required for Zoom. Individuals may also join the meeting toll free at 833-568-8864 or 669-216-1590 using Webinar ID 161 000 7539.

Public comments on the proposed changes will be accepted through May 20 and may be submitted during the public comment portion of the public hearing, via the agency's online Comment Portal, emailed to regulations@ncwildlife.org (must include name, phone number and mailing address in e-mail), or mailed to: Rule-Making Coordinator, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, 1701 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1700.

Emergency powers were invoked by the Executive Director on April 12 to activate a localized response plan to assist with detection and isolation of CWD. The proposed temporary rules will replace emergency powers and specify requirements necessary to reduce movement of the disease and infection opportunities. Additional information about the proposed temporary rules is available at ncwildlife.org/Proposed-Regulations.

For more information about CWD, visit ncwildlife.org/CWD.

Got an Innovative Business Idea? Pitch it to SPCC in 53 Seconds.

It's a chance for \$10,000

What if you were only 53 seconds away from turning your dream business into a reality? South Piedmont and Fifth Third Bank are excited to announce that entries for the 53 Ideas Business Pitch Competition will open on May 1.

The search is on for the next big idea. Take a chance on yourself and get ready to enter for a shot to move forward in the competition to win \$10,000, \$5,000 or \$2,500.

Here's how it works

- Visit 53ideas.com between May 1 and May 31 to record your 53-second pitch and enter the competition.
- Judges will select the top 53 ideas to move forward in the competition. All can sign-up for training (at www.ncsbc.net) that will help develop their idea and a 3-minute pitch. These virtual sessions will be critical for those moving on to the next round of the competition and equally important for those not selected.
- During the week of July 11th pitch virtually before judges to try to secure a spot in the top 10.
- Get \$250 if your idea is selected as one of the top 10 and take advantage of coaching to help you perfect your pitch for the final round.
- Pitch as a top 10 contestant in the final round to compete for \$10,000, \$5,000 and \$2,500. The final pitch round will be in-person before judges and broadcast to an online audience.

First Round Pitch Tips: Judging of the initial video idea submissions will focus on your idea. In your 53-second video entry be sure to:

- 1) tell us who you are.
- 2) clearly define the problem and how your idea solves it.
- 3) identify your target customers and the impact your solution will make.
- 4) share what is unique about your solution; why is it better than options that may currently exist?
- 5) communicate the potential to make it happen if you had the resources.

Video shooting tip:

If you are recording from a cell phone do so in landscape with the phone held horizontally.

NC 211 Releases Video Providing Guidance On How to Use 211's Website and Help Line

NC 211 is excited to share their "How To" video, which guides individuals through the process of calling 2-1-1 and searching for resources on nc211.org.

Finding help can be overwhelming and many do not know what to expect from a call to 2-1-1 or realize that they can also search the 2-1-1 database for programs and services in their area. This video provides detailed information to make the process easier to understand and help North Carolinians find the resources they need. Find the video at nc211.org/2020/12/14/nc-211-how-to-video.



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