

## COLORADO'S LABOR FORCE FOUR MONTHS INTO COVID-19

JULY 2020

The impacts of COVID-19 have disproportionately impacted some parts of our economy more than others. Restaurants, cafes, large event venues, hotels, and other recreational activities have been severely impacted, with job losses that remain over 20%. This stands in contrast to the information and manufacturing sectors which are just 2% below their February level of employment.

This range of impacts is also reflected in changes across different groups within the Colorado labor force.

The following series of charts show the impacts of policies in response to COVID-19, on the Colorado labor force from February through June. February is included to reflect the month prior to the start of the pandemic. The latest available monthly data is broken down into: Gender, Age, and Educational Attainment.

### **Key Findings**

- Overall labor force participation increased in June, from 66.6% to 68.7%.
- The jump in overall labor force participation was driven by a substantial increase in participation from women under the age of 35, from 68.1% to 74.11%.
- Coloradans with some college or an associate degree, saw an increase in unemployment by 5.42%, despite seeing a decline in labor force participation of 1.63%.
- The June jobs report for Colorado indicated 55,000 jobs were added in June.
- Nationally labor force participation rate for women in June remain as low as the 1980s. The LFPR for women peaked in 2009 and never fully rebounded post-recession.
- In June, the LFPR for women in Colorado remained 6% below the February level while the national LFPR for women was only 2% the February level.

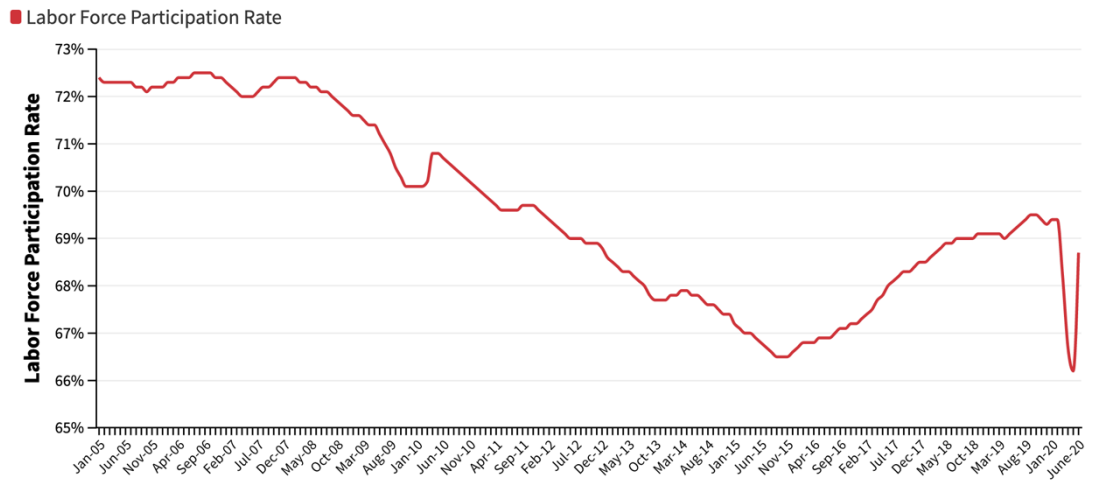
### List of Charts

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Monthly History Since 2005	By Gender	By Gender	By Age (Male)	By Age (Female)	By Educational Attainment Level
Colorado	Colorado	National	Colorado	Colorado	Colorado
Figure 1 – Labor force participation rate	Figure 3 – Labor force participation rate	Figure 5 – Labor force participation rate	Figure 7 – Male labor force participation rate	Figure 9 – Female labor force participation rate	Figure 11 – Labor force participation rate
Figure 2 – Unemployment rate	Figure 4 – Unemployment rate	Figure 6 – Unemployment rate	Figure 8 – Male unemployment rate	Figure 10 – Female unemployment rate	Figure 12 – Unemployment rate

## Figure 1 – Colorado Labor Force Participation Rate

The 2015 labor force participation rate (LFPR) was at a low of 66.5%, however since then the overall rate had slowly climbed upward to 69% in February of 2020. Since then the LFPR dropped to 66% in April before rebounding slightly to 68.7% in June.

**Colorado Labor Force Participation Rate**

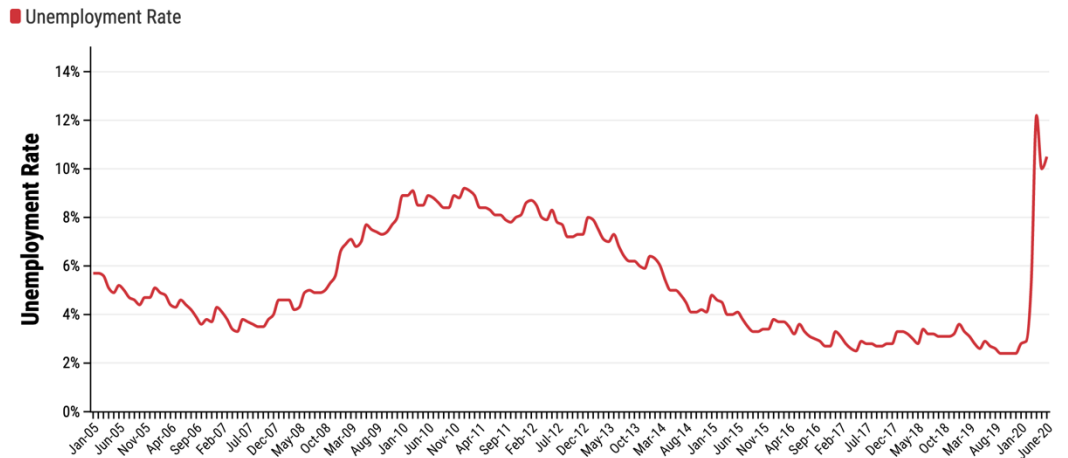


Source: Colorado CPS Data, FRED - Common Sense Institute

## Figure 2 – Colorado Unemployment Rate

From February to April Colorado's unemployment rate rose from 3.3% to 12.2%. Since then it has dropped to 10.2% as of June. Despite strong job growth in June, the slight growth in the UE rate from May to June is due to larger growth in the labor force than new jobs.

**Colorado Unemployment Rate**

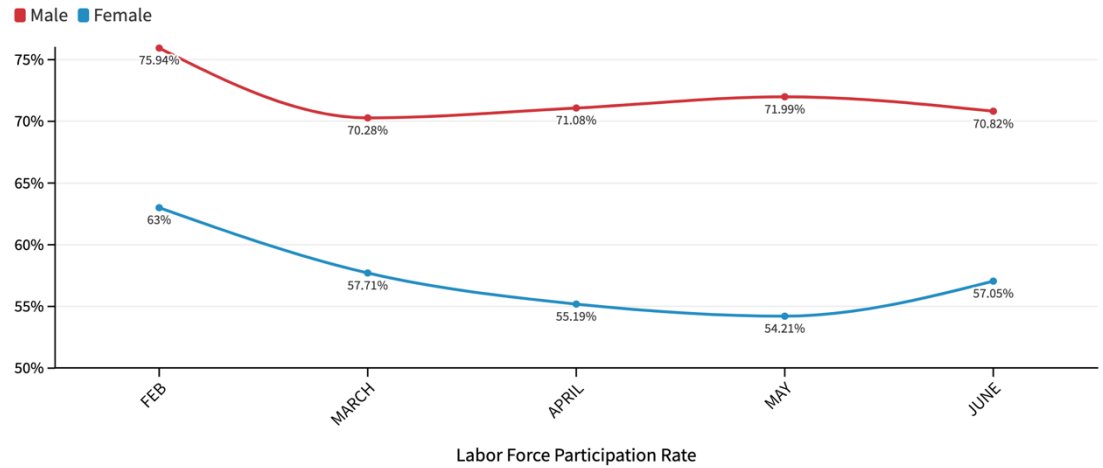


Source: Colorado CPS Data, FRED, BLS - Common Sense Institute

**Figure 3 – Labor Force Participation by Gender**

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic we saw a difference between the male and female LFPR. The female LFPR has been historically lower than the males, but until June, the impact of COVID-19 had been greater on females than males. However, in June the female LFPR jumped by 2.84%. The male rate slightly decreased by 1.17%.

**Labor Force Participation Rate by Gender Since Start of COVID-19 Pandemic**

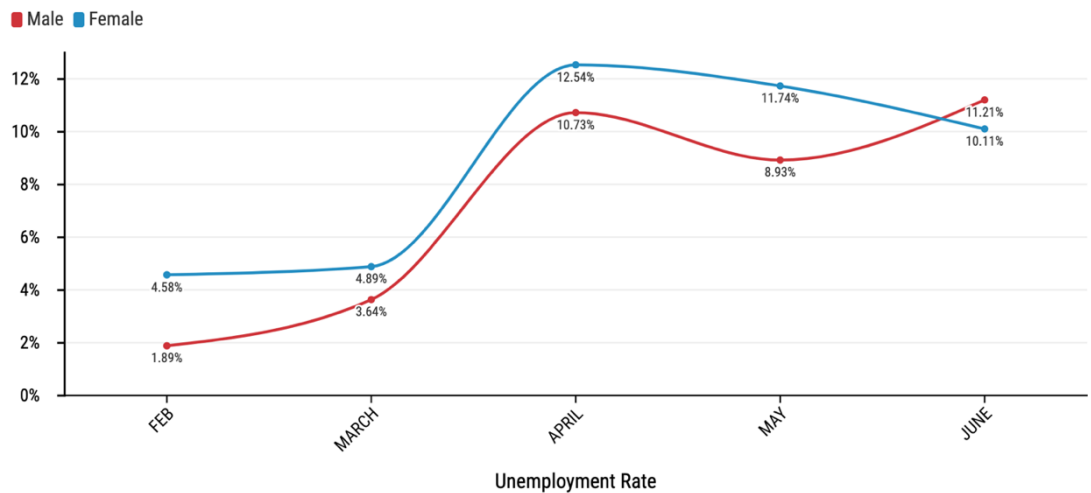


Source: [IPUMS CPS](#) · Common Sense Institute

**Figure 4 – Unemployment Rate by Gender**

From February to May 2020, the female unemployment rate was slightly higher than males. In May we saw a difference of 2.81% however, in June the female UE decreased to 10.11% and the male increased to 11.21%.

**Unemployment Rate by Gender Since Start of COVID-19 Pandemic**

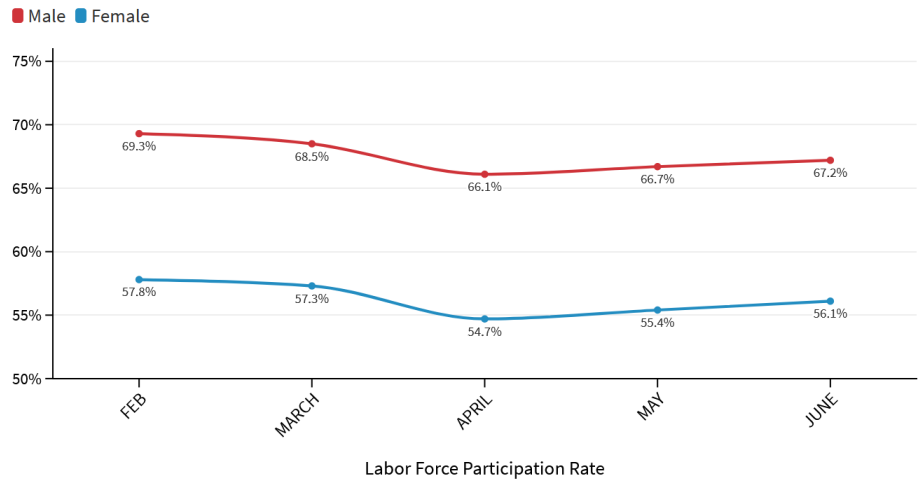


Source: [IPUMS CPS](#) · Common Sense Institute

**Figure 5 – Labor Force Participation Rate by Gender Nationally**

Nationally, the June labor force participation rate for women was as low as it was in 1988. The LFPR for women peaked in 2009 and never fully rebounded post-recession. Since February, the male and female LFPR dropped further in Colorado, than it did nationally. While the female LFPR rate in June is still 6% below its February level, nationally it is only 1.7% below its February level.

**Labor Force Participation Rate by Gender Since Start of COVID-19 Pandemic**

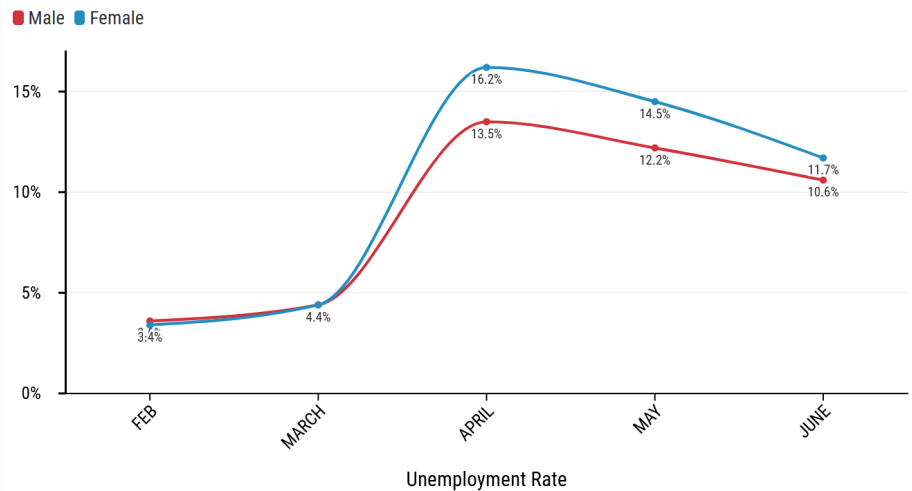


Source: FRED • Common Sense Institute

**Figure 6 – Unemployment Rate by Gender Nationally**

Given the national labor force participation rates have responded more mildly to the effects of the pandemic than have Colorado's, unemployment grew higher nationally than it did in Colorado. Despite the female LFPR dropping slightly more than the male LFPR nationally, unemployment remains slightly higher for women than men.

**Unemployment Rate by Gender Since Start of COVID-19 Pandemic**

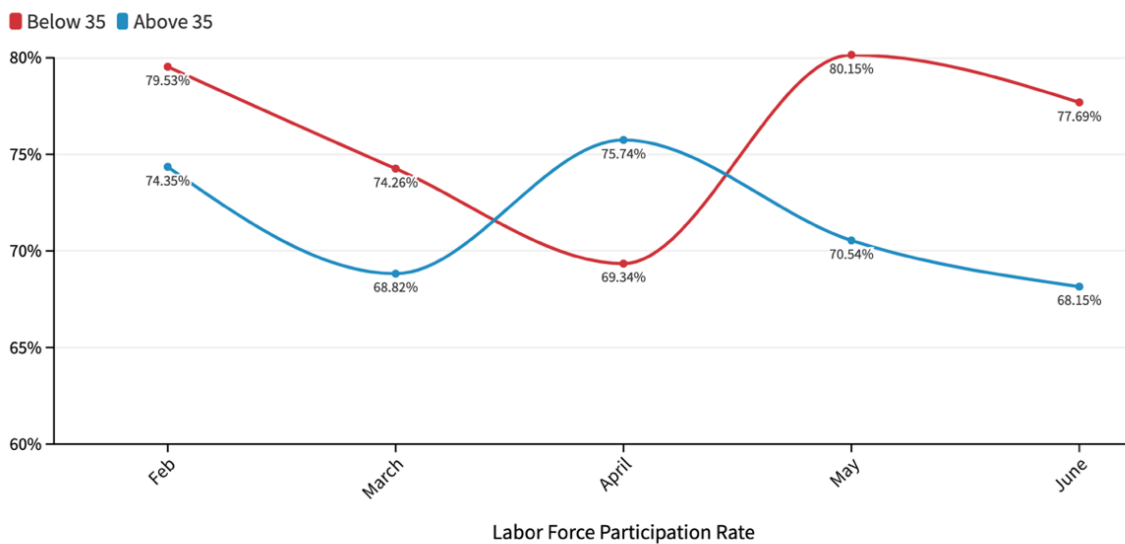


Source: FRED • Common Sense Institute

## Figures 7 & 8 – Male Labor Force Participation Rate and Unemployment Rate by Age

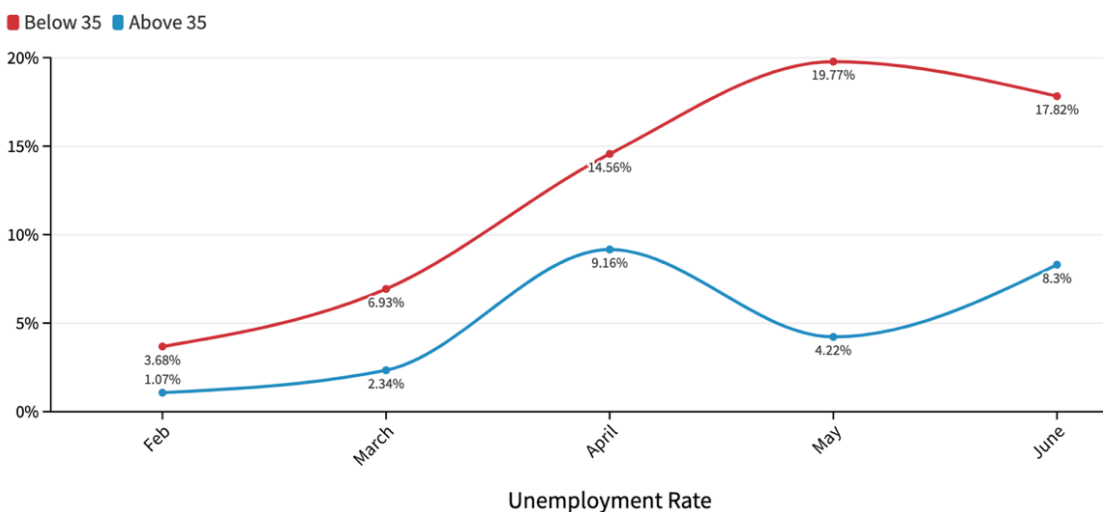
Figures 7 and 8 show the male labor force participation rate and unemployment rate from February to June of 2020 by two age ranges. The LFPR has been volatile for both age groups: below 35, and above 35. Below 35 however, has increased to 77.69% making it only slightly below February's numbers by 1.84%. The male unemployment rate below the age of 35 increased until May and saw a slight decrease in June of 1.95%. The current rate of 8.3% is not higher than April's rate of 9.16%.

### Male Labor Force Participation Rate by Age Since Start of COVID-19 Pandemic



Source: IPUMS CPS • Common Sense Institute

### Male Unemployment Rate by Age Since Start of COVID-19 Pandemic

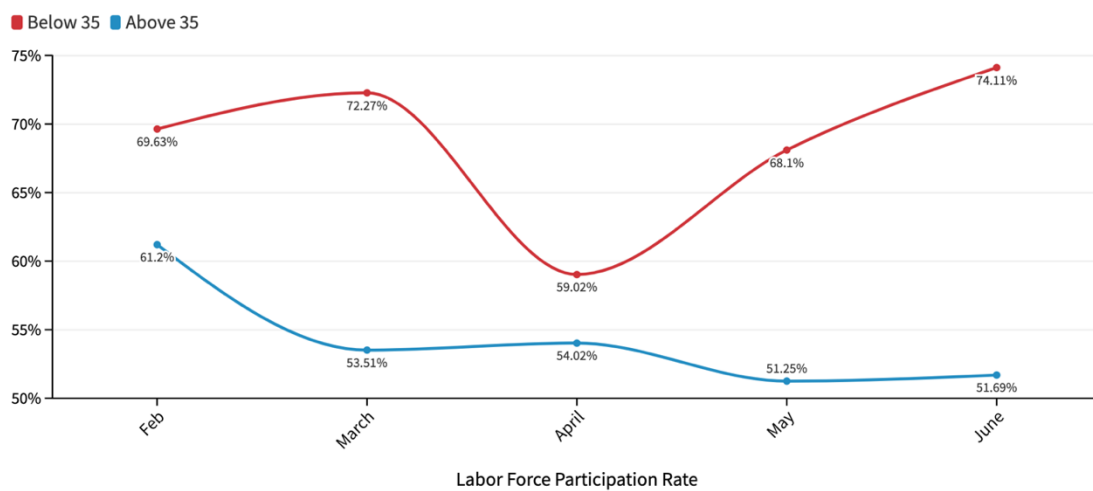


Source: IPUMS CPS • Common Sense Institute

## Figure 9 & 10 – Female Labor Force Participation Rate by Age

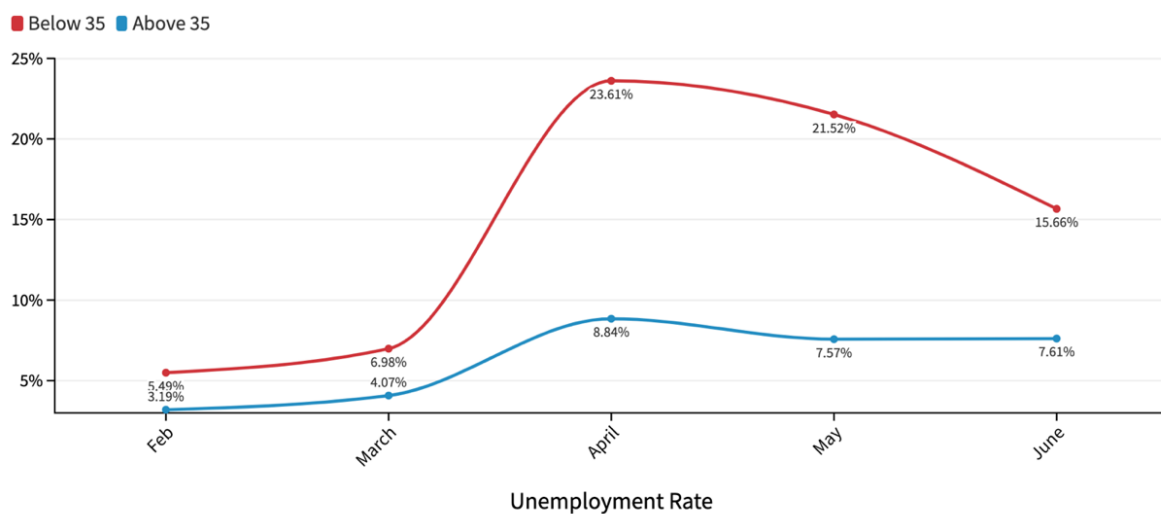
Figures 9 and 10 depict the female labor force participation rate and unemployment rate from February to June of 2020. The female unemployment rate has increased the most for those below the age of 35, as this group saw a stark increase from March to April by 16.63%. Since April the UE rate has slowly decreased, even as the LFPR increased. Those above the age of 35 have seen a slight increase in UE which has remained steady since April. The female LFPR for those below the age of 35 has been relatively high until April when it decreased by 13.02%.

### Female Labor Force Participation Rate by Age Since Start of COVID-19 Pandemic



Source: IPUMS CPS • Common Sense Institute

### Female Unemployment Rate by Age Since Start of COVID-19 Pandemic

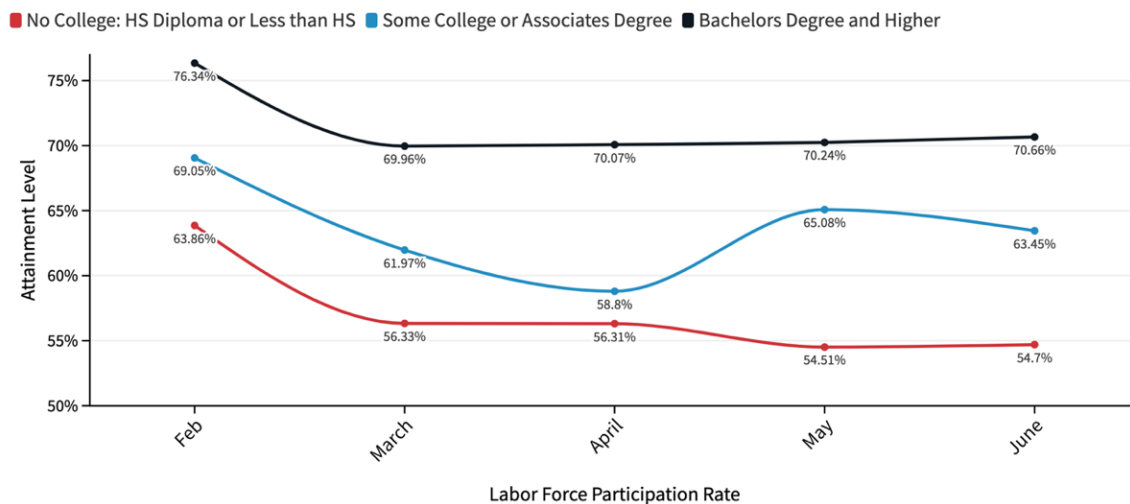


Source: IPUMS CPS • Common Sense Institute

## Figure 11 & 12 – Labor Force Participation Rate and Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment Level

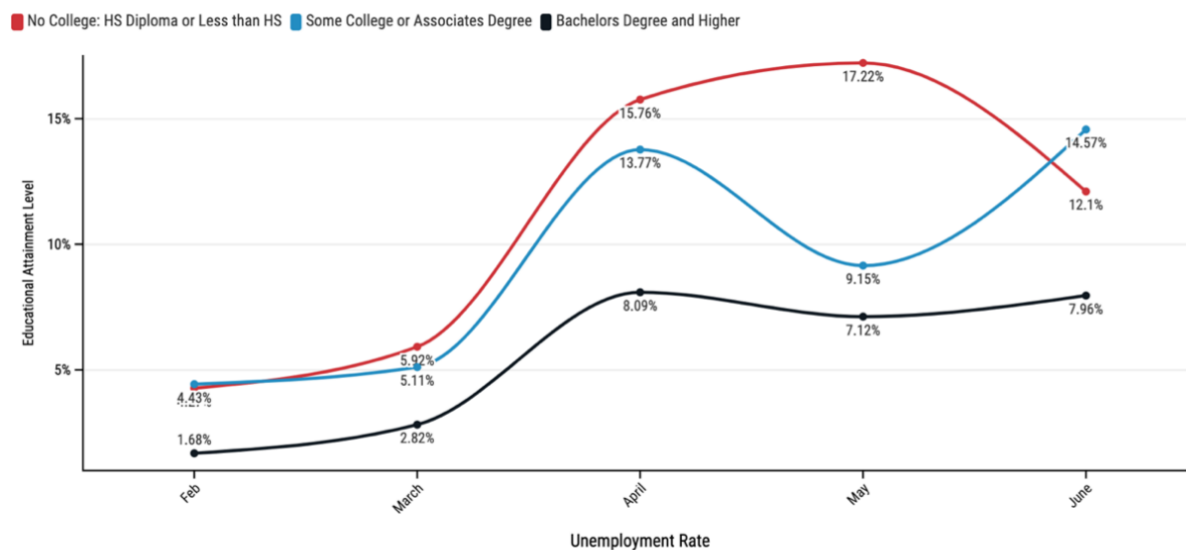
Figures 11 and 12 show the change in labor force participation rate and unemployment rate by three levels of educational attainment. While all three categories saw large drops in LFP through April, the category of 'Some College or Associates Degree' has rebounded some while the other two have not. Unemployment jumped the highest for those who had No College: HS Diploma or Less than HS. It continued to increase until June when it slightly decreased. Some College or Associates degree and bachelor's degree or higher have seen continuous changes since April.

**Labor Force Participation Rate by Educational Attainment Level Since Start of COVID-19 Pandemic**



Source: [IPUMS CPS](#) • Common Sense Institute

**Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment Level**



Source: [LMI Gateway - Colorado CPS Data](#) • Common Sense Institute