

Economic News Release



Employment Situation Summary

Transmission of material in this release is embargoed until 8:30 a.m. (EDT) Friday, **June 3, 2011**

USDL-11-0809

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THE EMPLOYMENT SITUATION -- MAY 2011

Nonfarm payroll employment changed little (+54,000) in May, and the unemployment rate was essentially unchanged at 9.1 percent, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Job gains continued in professional and business services, health care, and mining. Employment levels in other major private-sector industries were little changed, and local government employment continued to decline.

Household Survey Data

The number of unemployed persons (13.9 million) and the unemployment rate (9.1 percent) were essentially unchanged in May. The labor force, at 153.7 million, was little changed over the month. (See table A-1.)

Among the major worker groups, the unemployment rates for adult men (8.9 percent), adult women (8.0 percent), teenagers (24.2 percent), whites (8.0 percent), blacks (16.2 percent), and Hispanics (11.9 percent) showed little or no change in May. The jobless rate for Asians was 7.0 percent, not seasonally adjusted. (See tables A-1, A-2, and A-3.)

In May, the number of long-term unemployed (those jobless for 27 weeks and over) increased by 361,000 to 6.2 million; their share of unemployment increased to 45.1 percent. (See table A-12.)

The civilian labor force participation rate was 64.2 percent for the fifth consecutive month. The employment-population ratio remained at 58.4 percent in May. (See table A-1.)

The number of persons employed part time for economic reasons (sometimes referred to as involuntary part-time workers) was essentially unchanged in May at 8.5 million. These individuals were working part time because their hours had been cut back or because they were unable to find a full-time job. (See table A-8.)

In May, 2.2 million persons were marginally attached to the labor force, about the same as a year earlier. (These data are not seasonally adjusted.) These individuals were not in the labor force, wanted and were available for work, and had looked for a job sometime in the prior 12 months. They were not counted as unemployed because they had not searched for work in the 4 weeks preceding the survey. (See table A-16.)

Among the marginally attached, there were 822,000 discouraged workers in May, a decrease of 261,000 from a year earlier. (These data are not seasonally adjusted.) Discouraged workers are persons not currently looking for work because they believe no jobs are available for them. The remaining 1.4 million persons marginally attached to the labor force in May had not searched for work in the 4 weeks preceding the survey for reasons such as school attendance or family responsibilities. (See table A-16.)

Establishment Survey Data

Total nonfarm payroll employment was little changed in May (+54,000), following gains that averaged 220,000 in the prior 3 months. Private-sector employment continued to trend up (+83,000), although by a much smaller amount than the average for the prior 3 months (+244,000). In May, job gains occurred in professional and business services, health care, and mining. Local government employment continued to trend down. Employment in other major industries changed little over the month. (See table B-1.)

Employment in professional and business services continued to increase in May (+44,000). Notable job gains occurred in accounting and bookkeeping services (+18,000) and in computer systems design and related services (+8,000). Employment in temporary help services was little changed.

Health care employment continued to expand in May (+17,000). Employment in the industry had risen by an average of 24,000 per month over the prior 12 months.

Mining added 7,000 jobs in May. Employment in mining has risen by 115,000 since a recent low point in October 2009.

Employment in manufacturing changed little in May (-5,000). Job gains in fabricated metal products and in machinery were offset by losses in transportation equipment, paper and paper products, and printing and related support activities. The manufacturing industry added 243,000 jobs from a recent low point in December 2009 through April 2011.

Construction employment was essentially unchanged in May. Employment in the industry has shown little movement on net since early 2010, after having fallen sharply during the 2007-09 period.

Employment in local government continued to decline over the month (-28,000). Local government has lost 446,000 jobs since an employment peak in September 2008.

Employment in other major industries, including retail trade, transportation and warehousing, information, financial activities, and leisure and hospitality, changed little in May.

The average workweek for all employees on private nonfarm payrolls remained at 34.4 hours in May. The manufacturing workweek for all employees increased by 0.2 hour to 40.6 hours over the month, while factory overtime was unchanged at 3.2 hours. The average workweek for production and nonsupervisory employees on private nonfarm payrolls was 33.6 hours in May. (See tables B-2 and B-7.)

In May, average hourly earnings for all employees on private nonfarm payrolls increased by 6 cents, or 0.3 percent, to \$22.98. Over the past 12 months, average hourly earnings increased by 1.8 percent. In May, average hourly earnings of private-sector production

and nonsupervisory employees rose by 6 cents, or 0.3 percent, to \$19.43. (See tables B-3 and B-8.)

The change in total nonfarm payroll employment for March was revised from +221,000 to +194,000, and the change for April was revised from +244,000 to +232,000.

The Employment Situation for June is scheduled to be released on Friday, July 8, 2011, at 8:30 a.m. (EDT).

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