



1001 North 23rd Street
Post Office Box 94094
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9094

(O) 225-342-3035
(F) 225-342-3743
www.laworks.net

John Bel Edwards, Governor
Ava Dejoie, Executive Director

Office of Public Affairs

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Media Contact:
LWC Public Affairs (225) 342-3035

N E W S R E L E A S E

Louisiana unemployment rate lowest since August 2008

BATON ROUGE – Louisiana’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate has now declined for four consecutive months according to data released by the Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS). Continuing its improvement from July, the unemployment rate decreased by 0.1 percentage point to 5.2 percent. The last time the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was lower than 5.2 percent was August 2008. This figure is 0.9 percentage points lower from the same time period a year ago.

Seasonally adjusted total nonfarm jobs have increased by 24,200 since August 2016. This brings the new seasonally adjusted total for August 2017 to 1,985,200. This figure represents an over-the-month gain of 3,400 jobs from July 2017. Total seasonally adjusted nonfarm jobs have now posted four straight over-the-year gains. In addition, total seasonally adjusted nonfarm jobs have posted over-the-month gains in three out of the last four months.

Seasonally adjusted total private-sector employment saw an over-the-year increase of 26,600 jobs since August 2016. With a new seasonally adjusted figure of 1,663,800, private-sector jobs increased by 2,600 from July 2017. Seasonally adjusted private-sector employment has experienced five-straight over-the-year gains. Additionally, seasonally adjusted private sector employment has posted over-the-month gains six out of the last nine months.

“Louisiana’s job market has experienced notable improvement in the last year, with 24,200 nonfarm jobs gained since last August,” said Louisiana Workforce Commission Executive Director Ava Dejoie. “The addition of 3,400 jobs in the last month underscores a restoration of confidence among employers and job seekers.”

Seasonally adjusted data shows that the total number of unemployed individuals decreased by 22,330 from the August 2016 figure of 129,851 to 107,521. From July 2017, the number of seasonally adjusted unemployed individuals decreased by 2,409. The number of seasonally adjusted employed individuals decreased by approximately 6,991 to 1,975,209 since July 2017.

Industries that showed the largest gains for seasonally adjusted jobs:

- **Leisure and Hospitality** gained 2,400 jobs for the month and is up 7,600 jobs for the year. Employment throughout this sector is at an all time series high.
- **Professional and Business Services** gained 1,100 jobs for the month and is up 5,000 jobs for the year.
- **Financial Activities** gained 1,200 jobs for the month and is up 1,400 jobs for the year.

Among other seasonally adjusted sectors in August:

- **Construction** lost 500 jobs for the month, but is up 15,300 jobs for the year. Despite the job loss from July, this is the fourth highest record of employment for the sector.

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• **Mining and Logging**, which includes industries in the oil and gas sector, lost 600 jobs for the month and is down 2,000 jobs for the year.

The seasonally adjusted civilian labor force, or the number of people who are employed in addition to those looking for work, decreased by 9,400 from July 2017 to 2,082,730.

Among Louisiana's metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), five out of eight seasonally adjusted areas posted job gains over-the-month and from August 2016. Remaining seasonally adjusted data shows:

- Alexandria lost 400 jobs from July 2017 and is down 900 jobs from August 2016.
- Baton Rouge gained 1,300 jobs from July 2017 and is up 10,000 jobs from August 2016. The Baton Rouge MSA has had eight straight over-the-year increases.
- Houma lost 200 jobs from July 2017 and is down 1,200 jobs from August 2016.
- Lafayette gained 300 jobs from July 2017 and is up 200 jobs from August 2016.
- Lake Charles gained 600 jobs from July 2017 and is up 6,400 jobs from August 2016. The Lake Charles MSA has had over-the-year increases for 74 consecutive months.
- Monroe gained 100 jobs from July 2017 and is up 1,200 jobs from August 2016. The Monroe MSA has had 11 straight over-the-year increases.
- New Orleans gained 2,600 jobs from July 2017 and is up 2,300 jobs from August 2016.
- Shreveport lost 400 jobs from July 2017 and is down 2,500 jobs from August 2016.

The BLS does not report seasonally adjusted data for Hammond, due to the fact that it is a recently designated MSA, and has not yet had time to acquire seasonally adjusted data for the area.

- Hammond gained 600 jobs from July 2017 and is up 700 jobs from August 2016.

Not-seasonally adjusted MSA and individual parish data for August 2017 will be released on September 22, 2017.

Seasonally adjusted data are useful for comparisons among states and the nation. Not seasonally adjusted data are useful for comparing trends in parishes and metropolitan statistical areas, and for comparing them to the state.

To view all available employment data, visit Louisiana's employment homepage at <http://www.laworks.net> and select Labor Market Information from the top-right menu. Then, select LOIS (Louisiana Occupational Information System) and select Employment and Wage Data listed under Data Trends. To view the BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics for the state, visit <http://data.bls.gov/pdq/querytool.jsp?survey=la>. For BLS nonfarm employment data, click here: <http://data.bls.gov/pdq/querytool.jsp?survey=sm>.

Resources for employers and job seekers

Job-seekers can explore careers, apply for top-rated jobs and connect with local training providers using Louisiana Star Jobs, the LWC's free career tool, at <http://www.laworks.net/Stars/>. Employers looking for workers should visit Louisiana's employment homepage at www.laworks.net. Click on HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment) and create an account allowing access to qualified job seekers.

About the Louisiana Workforce Commission

The Louisiana Workforce Commission is an agency of state government that administers programs designed to enhance workforce growth and provide family-sustaining jobs for Louisiana residents. The commission monitors employment, administers unemployment compensation and tax funds, provides training resources for employers and employees and oversees worker compensation benefits. The agency also gathers and supplies information on the labor market and occupational sectors in Louisiana.

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