



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

Unemployment Rate and Civilian Labor Force Improve

BATON ROUGE – The state’s unemployment rate for March decreased to 5.7 percent. March is the fourth consecutive month with a decline in the unemployment rate. The last time the unemployment rate increased was January of 2016.

The civilian labor force which is the number of people working or looking for work, grew by 7,100 from the previous month, according to seasonally adjusted figures. With a new total of 2,114,052, the number of seasonally adjusted employed individuals grew by 8,712 from February. “Since the first quarter of 2017, the LWC has participated in more than 150 hiring events, said Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) Executive Director Ava Dejoie. “We will continue to help every person find employment, now that citizens are more confident they can find a job.”

The not seasonally adjusted civilian labor force grew by 20,562, bringing the current total to 2,112,302 for the month of March. Not seasonally adjusted employed individuals also showed a gain of 19,173 for the month, with the current total of 1,997,436.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimates the number of jobs in Louisiana using a statewide survey of 6,000 employers across industries. Seasonally adjusted nonfarm jobs decreased by 8,500 for the month, bringing the current figure to 1,975,100. “Most of the jobs lost, 6,700 out of the 8,500, were in the construction sector,” said Dejoie. “This loss may be attributed to the completion of some flood recovery construction.”

“The Edwards administration is committed to helping all citizens of Louisiana find employment,” said Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) Executive Director Ava Dejoie.

Industries that showed the largest gains in seasonal adjusted employment;

- **Education and health services** gained 1,000 jobs for the month. The sector is up 6,800 jobs over the year.
- **Professional and business services** gained 700 jobs in March and is up 4,100 jobs over the year. This sector includes companies that provide support for oil-related companies.
- **Trade, transportation and utilities** gained 1,500 jobs for the month but is down 4,400 jobs for the year.

Among other seasonally adjusted sectors in March:

- **Leisure and Hospitality** gained 500 jobs for the month but is down 2,100 jobs for the year.
- **Mining and Logging** gained 200 jobs for the month but is down 5,100 jobs for the year. This is the second consecutive month of gains for the sector.
- **Construction** lost 6,700 jobs for the month but is up 7,400 jobs for the year.

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Among Louisiana's nine metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), Lake Charles was the only area that did not lose jobs for the month according to seasonally-adjusted data. Hammond, which has yet to be included on seasonally-adjusted figures, did show a 300 job gain for the month. Remaining seasonally-adjusted data for March showed:

- Alexandria lost 600 jobs for the month and is down 600 jobs over the year.
- Baton Rouge lost 1,600 jobs for the month but is up 3,100 jobs over the year.
- Houma lost 1,300 jobs for the month and is down 5,200 jobs over the year.
- Lafayette lost 700 jobs over the month and is down 7,000 jobs over the year.
- Lake Charles remained unchanged for the month but is up 4,500 jobs over the year.
- Monroe lost 400 jobs for the month but is up 100 jobs over the year.
- New Orleans lost 2,100 jobs over the month and remained unchanged over the year.
- Shreveport lost 500 jobs over the month and is down 2,800 jobs over the year.

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

- Hammond gained 300 jobs for the month and is up 1,000 jobs over the year.

MSA and individual parish data for March 2017 will be released on April 28, 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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