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N E W S R E L E A S E

Metropolitan area unemployment rates down from last year

BATON ROUGE – According to data released last Friday, April 20, Louisiana’s not seasonally adjusted nonfarm job sector added 12,500 jobs from March 2017 to 1,982,800. This is the sixth straight over-the-year increase. From February 2018, not seasonally adjusted nonfarm employment increased by 13,900 jobs. This is the largest over-the-month gain for the month of March since 2010.

The not seasonally adjusted private sector added 15,300 jobs from March 2017 to 1,655,800. Private sector employment is defined as nonfarm employment minus government jobs. The not seasonally adjusted private sector has also added jobs over the year for six straight months. From February 2018, the private sector added 15,100 jobs.

From March 2017, the number of not seasonally adjusted employed individuals increased by 52,373 to 2,046,339. From February 2018, the number of not seasonally adjusted employed individuals showed an increase of 3,204. From March 2017, the number of not seasonally adjusted unemployed individuals decreased by 18,600 to 92,757.

From March 2017, the not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased 1.0 percent to 4.3 percent.

“Gaining 13,900 not seasonally adjusted nonfarm jobs, the largest over-the-month gain for the month of March since 2010, is a significant indicator of the positive direction in which our job market is heading,” said Ava Dejoie, Executive Director of the Louisiana Workforce Commission. “This also highlights the reality that as the supply of skilled worker tightens and jobs become more technical, it is important that workers and job-seekers continue their focus on developing their skills through workforce development programs such as the LWC’s [Registered Apprenticeship and Incumbent Worker Training Program](#).”

The not seasonally adjusted civilian labor force, or the number of people who are employed in addition to those looking for work, increased by 33,773 from March 2017 to 2,139,096. From February 2018, the not seasonally adjusted civilian labor force increased by 10,309.

All nine metropolitan statistical area unemployment rates declined over the year. Not seasonally adjusted March unemployment rates for the nine metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) are as follows:

- Alexandria: 4.7 percent, up from 4.4 percent in February, but down from 5.9 percent from March 2017.
- Baton Rouge: 3.8 percent, up from 3.5 percent in February, but down from 4.5 percent from March 2017.
- Hammond: 4.6 percent, up from 4.3 percent in February, but down from 5.8 percent from March 2017.
- Houma: 4.4 percent, up from 4.1 percent in February, but down from 6.0 percent from March 2017.
- Lafayette: 4.6 percent, up from 4.3 percent in February, but down from 6.1 percent from March 2017.
- Lake Charles: 3.3 percent, up from 3.1 percent in February, but down from 4.0 percent from March 2017.

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- Monroe: 4.7 percent, up from 4.3 percent in February, but down from 5.5 percent from March 2017.
- New Orleans: 4.0 percent, up from 3.7 percent in February, but down from 4.8 percent from March 2017.
- Shreveport: 4.7 percent, up from 4.2 percent February, but down from 5.7 percent from March 2017.

Seasonally Adjusted vs. Not-Seasonally Adjusted Data

Jobs and employment trends data is often difficult to understand because two different ways to look at the data, seasonally or non-seasonally adjusted data.

Seasonally adjustment works to measure and remove the influences of predictable seasonal patterns to reveal how employment and unemployment change from month to month. Not seasonally adjusted data retains seasonal employment trends.

Over the course of a year, the labor force size, jobs available and employment rates undergo predictable fluctuations due to seasonal changes in weather, harvests, major holidays, and school schedules. Seasonal adjustment reduces the impact of these changes making it easier understand trends. Seasonally adjusted data is best utilized when comparing several months of employment and jobs data, while not seasonally adjusted data is best used to compare over-the-year trends. Seasonally adjusted data are useful for comparisons among states and the nation.

The Louisiana Workforce Commission primarily uses seasonally adjusted data because it provides a more useful and telling picture of Louisiana's jobs and employment situation.

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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