



Bruce Rauner, Governor
Jeffrey D. Mays, Director

NEWS RELEASE

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Unemployment rate drops to 4.9% in March *Over-the-month and over-the-year job growth lags national average*

CHICAGO—The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) announced today that the unemployment rate declined -0.5 percentage points to 4.9 percent in March and nonfarm payrolls decreased by -8,900 jobs over-the-month, based on preliminary data proved by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and released by IDES. February job growth was revised down to show an increase of +14,800 jobs rather than the preliminary estimate of +25,600 jobs. March's monthly payroll gain kept over-the-year job growth well below the national average. The March drop coupled with February's downward revised gain means that Illinois remains -19,600 jobs short of reaching its prior peak employment reached in September 2000.

"Illinois payrolls weakened in March, just like they did for the nation," said IDES Director Jeff Mays. "The usual pattern is that Illinois weakens more than the nation but grows less than the national average when both are on the upswing. This persistent lag in job growth explains why it took 10 years to push the unemployment rate below 5 percent."

"Our state has the potential to be the most competitive in the nation," said Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity Director Sean McCarthy. "To expand opportunities and good paying jobs, we need to make common sense reforms that will give businesses the confidence to grow and thrive in Illinois."

In March, the three industry sectors with the largest gains in employment were: Leisure and Hospitality (+4,200); Other Services (+1,300); and Trade, Transportation and Utilities (+900). The largest payroll declines were in the following sectors: Construction (-7,100); Professional and Business Services (-3,600); and Government (-1,900).

Over-the-year, nonfarm payroll employment increased by +25,500 jobs with the largest gains in these industry sectors in March: Education and Health Services (+15,900); Financial Activities (+8,900); and Leisure and Hospitality (+7,100). Industry sectors with the largest over-the-year declines include: Manufacturing (-6,500); Construction (-4,900); and Government (-3,800). The +0.4 percent over-the-year gain in Illinois is about one-third as strong as the +1.5 percent gain posted by the nation in March.

The state's unemployment rate is +0.4 percentage points higher than the national unemployment rate reported for March 2017, which decreased to 4.5 percent. The Illinois unemployment rate is down -1.2 percentage points from a year ago when it was 6.1 percent. At 4.9 percent, the Illinois jobless rate stands at its lowest level since June 2007, after having decreased for two consecutive months.

The number of unemployed workers decreased -8.4 percent from the prior month to 322,800, down -19.1 percent over the same month for the prior year. This brings the number of unemployed workers to its lowest level since May 2007. The labor force decreased -0.1 percent over-the-month and declined by -0.6 percent in March over the prior year. The unemployment rate identifies those individuals who are out of work and are seeking employment. An individual who exhausts or is ineligible for benefits is still reflected in the unemployment rate if they actively seek work.

To help connect jobseekers to employers who are hiring, IDES' maintains the state's largest job search engine IllinoisJoblink.com (IJL). IJL recently showed 69,419 posted resumes with 181,789 jobs available.



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Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates

	March 2017	February 2017 *	March 2016 *	3-Month Moving Avg.	Over-the- Month Change	Over-the- Year Change
Illinois	4.9%	5.4%	6.1%	5.4%	-0.5	-1.2
U.S.	4.5%	4.7%	5.0%	4.7%	-0.2	-0.5

* Revised

Illinois Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Jobs – by Major Industry

Industry Title	March* 2017	February** 2017	March 2016	Over the Month Change	Over the Year Change	3-Month Moving Avg.	Change From Previous 3-Month Mov. Avg.
Total Nonfarm	6,035,300	6,044,200	6,009,800	-8,900	25,500	6,036,300	4,700
Mining	8,200	8,100	8,300	100	-100	8,100	100
Construction	216,300	223,400	221,200	-7,100	-4,900	218,700	2,000
Manufacturing	569,100	569,800	575,600	-700	-6,500	568,900	-300
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	1,212,400	1,211,500	1,209,500	900	2,900	1,212,700	900
Information	98,900	99,000	98,600	-100	300	98,400	300
Financial Activities	391,700	392,100	382,800	-400	8,900	391,200	2,200
Professional and Business Services	939,200	942,800	932,300	-3,600	6,900	942,100	-2,200
Educational and Health Services	924,900	926,500	909,000	-1,600	15,900	923,500	2,200
Leisure and Hospitality	599,400	595,200	592,300	4,200	7,100	596,200	800
Other Services	250,200	248,900	251,400	1,300	-1,200	249,300	600
Government	825,000	826,900	828,800	-1,900	-3,800	827,100	-2,200

*Preliminary
**Final

- Monthly 2012 - 2016 labor force data for Illinois, and all other states, have been revised as required by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The monthly historical revisions to state labor force estimates reflect new national benchmark controls, state working-age population controls, seasonal factors, as well as updated total nonfarm jobs and unemployment benefits claims inputs. Illinois labor force data were also smoothed to eliminate large monthly changes as a result of volatility in the monthly Census Population Survey (CPS) and national benchmarking. For these reasons, comments and tables citing unemployment rates in previous state news releases/materials might no longer be valid.
- Monthly seasonally adjusted unemployment rates for Illinois and the Chicago-Naperville-Arlington Heights Metropolitan Division are available here: [Illinois & Chicago Metropolitan Area Unemployment Rates](#)
- Monthly 1990 – 2016 unadjusted and seasonally adjusted nonfarm payroll data for Illinois have been revised. To control for potential survey error, the estimates are benchmarked annually to universal counts derived primarily from unemployment insurance tax reports.
- Not seasonally adjusted jobs data with industry detail are available at [Not Seasonally Adjusted Jobs](#). “Other Services” include activities in three broad categories: Personal and laundry; repair and maintenance; and religious, grant making, civic and professional organizations. Seasonally adjusted employment data for subsectors within industries are not available.

About IDES

IDES encourages employment by connecting employers to jobseekers, provides unemployment insurance benefits to eligible individuals, produces labor market data and protects taxpayers from unemployment insurance fraud. Visit the Department’s website at www.ides.illinois.gov for more information. You can also follow IDES on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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