



Alabama Department of Labor

News Release

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Alabama's April Unemployment Rate Drops to 5.4%; Wage and Salary Employment Tops Two Million

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Labor Secretary Fitzgerald Washington announced today that Alabama's preliminary, seasonally adjusted April unemployment rate is 5.4%, down from March's rate of 5.8%, and well below April 2016's rate of 5.8%. April's rate represents 119,256 unemployed persons, compared to 128,610 in March and 126,490 in April 2016. 2,088,884 people were working in April, up from 2,080,300 in March and 2,038,043 in April 2016.

"50,000 more Alabamians are working now compared to last year. This represents thousands of Alabama families that now have more opportunity than before," Governor Kay Ivey said. "I am proud they have opportunities to put their skills into action. We haven't seen an unemployment rate this low in nearly nine years. I took office in April and these numbers from that month confirm our message that 'Alabama is open for business' is being heard loud and clear."

The last time the unemployment rate was at or below 5.4% was in May 2008, when it measured 5.2%.

"On top of the drop in the unemployment rate, we've also reached a huge milestone in wage and salary employment," said Washington. "We've long said that reaching the two million jobs mark would be a true indicator of economic health. We've surpassed that number for the first time in almost nine years. Employers are hiring in Alabama, and it shows in these numbers."

Wage and salary employment, totaling 2,001,800 in April, grew by 10,400. Monthly gains were seen in the leisure and hospitality sector (+4,800), the professional and business services sector (+1,600), and the government sector (+1,400), among others.

The last time wage and salary employment measured more than two million was in June 2008, when it measured 2,012,100.

Over the year, wage and salary employment increased 22,400, with gains in the education and health services sector (+6,600), the professional and business services sector (+4,400), and the leisure and hospitality sector (+4,400), among others.

“Every metropolitan statistical area and every county in the state saw their rates drop both over the month and over the year,” continued Washington. “Wilcox County, which traditionally has one of the highest unemployment rates in the state, saw its rate drop two full percentage points this month.”

Counties with the lowest unemployment rates are: Shelby County at 3.3%, Elmore County at 3.6%, and Cullman County at 3.7%. Counties with the highest unemployment rates are: Wilcox County at 11.7%, Clarke County at 8.5%, and Lowndes County at 8.1%.

Major cities with the lowest unemployment rates are: Homewood and Vestavia Hills at 2.9%, Hoover at 3.1%, and Alabaster at 3.2%. Major cities with the highest unemployment rates are: Prichard at 8.2%, Selma at 7.8%, and Bessemer at 6.2%.

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Members of the media seeking more information should contact Communications Director Tara Hutchison at (334) 242-8616.

“Seasonal adjustment” refers to BLS’s practice of anticipating certain trends in the labor force, such as hiring during the holidays or the surge in the labor force when students graduate in the spring, and removing their effects to the civilian labor force.

The Current Population (CPS), or the household survey, is conducted by the Census Bureau and identifies members of the work force and measures how many people are working or looking for work.

The establishment survey, which is conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), a division of the U.S. Department of Labor, surveys employers to measure how many jobs are in the economy. This is also referred to as wage and salary employment.