



Alabama Department of Labor

News Release

For Immediate Release: March 24, 2017

Alabama's February Unemployment Rate is 6.2% *Rates Down in All 67 Counties; Number Working Highest in Eight Years*

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Labor Secretary Fitzgerald Washington announced today that Alabama's preliminary, seasonally adjusted February unemployment rate is 6.2%, down from January's rate of 6.4%, and above January 2016's rate of 6.0%. February's rate represented 2,067,042 people working, up from January's count of 2,053,837, and significantly higher than February 2016's count of 2,036,314. February's rate represents 136,826 unemployed persons, compared to 141,217 in January and 130,283 in February 2016.

"We are once again announcing that we have more people working in Alabama than have been over the last eight years," said Washington. "The labor force continues to grow, showing that jobseekers have confidence in our economy and are willing to enter the job market. Wage and salary employment is fewer than 20,000 jobs away from reaching the two million-mark milestone. We aren't exactly where we need to be yet, but we are surely getting there."

Alabama's civilian labor force measured 2,203,868 in February, the highest it's been since June 2011, when it measured 2,202,354.

Wage and salary employment measured 1,980,800 in February, representing an increase of 13,300 from January. Monthly gains were seen in the government sector (+3,800), the professional and business services sector (+3,500), and the leisure and hospitality sector (+3,200), among others.

Over the year, wage and salary employment has increased 29,800, with gains in the educational and health services sector (+7,700), the manufacturing sector (+5,800), and the leisure and hospitality sector (+5,600), among others.

"All of our counties and metros saw their rates drop this month, and 57 counties and 11 metros saw over-the-year declines," continued Washington.

Counties with the lowest unemployment rates are: Shelby County at 4.5%, Elmore County at 5.0%, and Madison and Lee Counties at 5.2%. Counties with the highest unemployment rates are: Wilcox County at 14.9%, Clarke County at 11.2%, and Lowndes County at 10.7%.

Major cities with the lowest unemployment rates are: Vestavia Hills at 4.0%, Homewood at 4.1%, and Hoover at 4.3%. Major cities with the highest unemployment rates are: Selma at 10.8%, Prichard at 10.3%, and Bessemer at 8.5%.

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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.