

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ROBERT BENTLEY
GOVERNOR



STATE CAPITOL
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130

STATE OF ALABAMA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2016

Governor Bentley Announces Alabama's August Unemployment Rate Drops to 5.4%

Lowest Rate of Governor Bentley's Administration

MONTGOMERY – Governor Robert Bentley announced today that Alabama's preliminary, seasonally adjusted August unemployment rate is 5.4%, down from July's rate of 5.7%, and below August 2015's rate of 6.1%.

"Lowering the unemployment rate and putting Alabamians back to work have been the major goals of my administration, and I'm proud to say that this month our unemployment rate is the lowest it's been since I took office," said Governor Bentley. "These last two months have been great for Alabama! Our unemployment rate has dropped six tenths of a percent since June."

"We've had a good jobs week in Alabama," Bentley continued. "There was a huge job fair in the Wiregrass region of the state, with record attendance. We also announced more than 100 jobs in Houston County. And in addition to marking the lowest unemployment rate of my administration, we can also say that we have the least number of unemployed Alabamians in more than eight years."

August's rate represents 116,361 unemployed persons, compared to 123,034 in July and 129,780 in August 2015. The last time the number of unemployed persons was at or below 116,361 was May 2008, when the number measured 113,343.

"Not only did we see the unemployment rate drop, but we also saw the number of jobs our economy supports increase," said Labor Secretary Fitzgerald Washington. "Our total wage and salary employment is reaching levels that we haven't seen in nearly eight years. Manufacturing employment is at its second highest level since 2009. These numbers show us that employers have jobs and are hiring Alabamians."

Over the year, wage and salary employment increased 15,600, with gains in the manufacturing sector (+4,900), the education and health services sector (+4,200), and the trade, transportation, and utilities sector (+3,400), among others.

Wage and salary employment increased in August by 8,000. Monthly gains were seen in the professional and business services sector (+3,400), the education and health services sector (+2,900), the government sector (+2,900), and the manufacturing sector (+1,700), among others.

“The continued improvement reaches to the county level as well,” continued Washington. “Over the year, 66 of 67 counties experienced a drop in their unemployment rates, some counties by more than two percentage points.”

Over the year, only Perry County experienced an increase in its unemployment rate, rising from 10.5% to 10.9%.

Counties with the lowest unemployment rates are: Shelby County at 4.2%, Elmore County at 4.7%, and Cullman County at 4.8%. Counties with the highest unemployment rates are: Wilcox County at 13.8%, Clarke County at 11.1%, and Perry County at 10.9%.

Major cities with the lowest unemployment rates are: Vestavia Hills at 3.7%, Homewood at 3.9%, and Hoover at 4.0%. Major cities with the highest unemployment rates are: Selma at 10.2%, Prichard at 9.5%, and Bessemer at 8.9%.

###

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.