



Alabama Department of Labor

News Release

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Alabama's November Unemployment Rate is 5.9%; Most Employed All Year *Wage & Salary Unemployment Nearing Two Million*

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Labor Secretary Fitzgerald Washington announced today that Alabama's preliminary, seasonally adjusted November unemployment rate is 5.9%, up from October's rate of 5.7%, and below November 2015's rate of 6.2%. November's rate represents 2,065,967 employed persons, up from October's count of 2,058,443, and significantly higher than November 2015's count of 2,011,267. The number of people counted as unemployed in November was 128,787, compared to 123,750 in October and 132,779 in November 2015.

"More people are working now than at any time in 2016," said Washington. "In fact, more people are working now than since April 2008. Additionally, there are more people in the workforce than there have been in over five years. This means that Alabamians have increased confidence in the economy. As for those counted as unemployed, November's count ranks as one of the lowest five months since 2008."

The number of people in the Civilian Labor Force (CLF) measured 2,194,754 in November, compared to 2,182,193 in October and 2,144,046 in November 2015.

"Wage and salary employment, which measures actual jobs supported by our economy, is performing remarkably well," continued Washington. "We're just 9,800 jobs shy of reaching the two million jobs mark, which has only been achieved a handful of times over the last decade!"

"While the unemployment rate is a popular economic metric for the economy and its labor market, better and more important measures include wage and salary employment growth and wage growth," said Sam Addy, Associate Dean for Economic Development Outreach for the University of Alabama's Culverhouse College of Commerce and Senior Research Economist of the University's Center for Business and Economic Research. "Alabama's wage and salary growth has so far been progressing ahead of estimates, indicating employer confidence and steady hiring patterns."

Wage and salary employment, which measured 1,990,200 in November, increased by 8,800. Monthly gains were seen in the trade, transportation, and utilities sector (+4,900), the manufacturing sector (+1,400), and the professional and business services sector (+1,400), among others.

Over the year, wage and salary employment increased 19,000, with gains in the manufacturing sector (+6,800), the government sector (+5,500), and the financial activities sector (+4,500), among others.

“We also believe that seasonality played a factor in this month’s increase in the unemployment rate,” said Washington. “All but two counties experienced a drop in their unemployment rate over the month, as did 22 out of 23 major cities and all metropolitan statistical areas. County, city, and metro rates are not seasonally adjusted.”

Counties with the lowest unemployment rates are: Shelby County at 4.1%, Lee, Elmore, and Cullman Counties at 4.7%, and Madison, Cherokee, and Autauga Counties at 4.9%. Counties with the highest unemployment rates are: Wilcox County at 14.3%, Clarke County at 10.9%, and Greene County at 10.1%.

Major cities with the lowest unemployment rates are: Vestavia Hills at 3.5%, Homewood at 3.6%, and Hoover at 4.0%. Major cities with the highest unemployment rates are: Bessemer at 10%, Prichard and Selma at 9.7%, and Anniston at 8.0%.

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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.