

NEWS RELEASE

For Statewide Distribution



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Iowa Unemployment Rate Drops to 3.8 Percent

DES MOINES, IOWA – Iowa’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped to 3.8 percent in April from 4.0 percent in March. The state’s jobless rate was 4.4 percent one year ago. The U.S. unemployment rate dropped to 5.4 percent in April.

“While there was a loss of 1,700 jobs in nonfarm employment in Iowa, those losses were offset by the overall increase in the number of Iowans working,” said Beth Townsend, director of Iowa Workforce Development. “April’s unemployment rate of 3.8% reflects an increase of more than 23,000 working Iowans compared to a year ago. IWD is working hard with our employer partners to find employees to meet an ever increasing need for qualified and skilled employees within the State of Iowa.”

The number of unemployed Iowans decreased to 65,500 in April from 68,000 in March. The current estimate is 8,600 lower than the year ago level of 74,100.

The total number of working Iowans increased to 1,647,700 in April. This figure is 600 higher than March and 23,700 higher than one year ago.

Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment

Total nonfarm employment shed 1,700 jobs in April, lowering nonfarm employment to 1,566,000. This month’s loss was the first of 2015 for the state and was heavily influenced by losses in manufacturing, trade and transportation, finance, and government. The last drop in nonfarm employment for Iowa occurred in September of 2014. While private sectors combined for 800 jobs lost, government shed 900 due to losses in local government; the majority of that drop was seasonal and education-related. Despite the loss, the state continues to hover above last year’s employment mark (+20,400).

Construction advanced this month (+2,400) due to strong hiring in highway and infrastructure projects coupled with larger-than-seasonal gains within specialty finishing contractor employment. This month’s increase marks the third-consecutive month that this sector has increased. The other services sector increased this month (+1,600), as did leisure and hospitality (+600) and education and health services (+200). Alternatively, slightly over half the sectors shed employment this month and were led by manufacturing (-3,200). The decline was primarily due to layoffs in durable goods manufacturing (-2,700) coupled with a smaller loss within nondurable goods factories (-500). Trade and transportation shed jobs this month due to an unexpected drop in retail (-1,000), while financial activities pared jobs for the second consecutive month (-700). Smaller losses this month occurred in professional and business services (-300), mining (-200), and information services (-200).

Compared to last April, nonfarm employment has steadily increased with private industry adding most of the jobs (+17,500). Construction continues to add jobs, expanding on a surge started in 2014 and is now up 5,600 jobs versus last year. Trade and transportation has also fared well annually (+4,400), so has leisure and hospitality (+4,200). Following this month’s decline, manufacturing leads all sectors in jobs lost (-2,800). The entire decline has occurred in durable goods factories, as nondurable industries are up a combined 1,600 jobs. All other annual job losses were small and limited to information services (-1,300) and financial activities (-200).

MEDIA ALERT: An audio cut of comments about Iowa’s labor market situation is available by calling (515) 281-6057. Statewide data for May will be released on Friday, June 19, 2015. Local data for May will be posted to the IWD website on Tuesday, June 23, 2015.

Employment and Unemployment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

	April 2015	March 2015	April 2014	Change from March 2015	April 2014
Civilian labor force	1,713,200	1,715,100	1,698,100	-1,900	15,100
Unemployment	65,500	68,000	74,100	-2,500	-8,600
Unemployment rate	3.8%	4.0%	4.4%	-0.2	-0.6
Employment	1,647,700	1,647,100	1,624,000	600	23,700
U.S. unemployment rate	5.4%	5.5%	6.2%	-0.1	-0.7

Nonfarm Employment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

Total Nonfarm Employment	1,566,000	1,567,700	1,545,600	-1,700	20,400
Mining	2,100	2,300	2,200	-200	-100
Construction	79,800	77,400	74,200	2,400	5,600
Manufacturing	214,500	217,700	217,300	-3,200	-2,800
Trade, transportation and utilities	317,000	318,000	312,600	-1,000	4,400
Information	24,600	24,800	25,900	-200	-1,300
Financial activities	103,700	104,400	103,900	-700	-200
Professional and business services	138,200	138,500	136,000	-300	2,200
Education and health services	225,900	225,700	222,900	200	3,000
Leisure and hospitality	141,200	140,600	137,000	600	4,200
Other services	61,500	59,900	59,000	1,600	2,500
Government	257,500	258,400	254,600	-900	2,900

Unemployment Insurance Claims for Iowa

	April 2015	March 2015	April 2014	% Change from March 2015	April 2014
Initial claims	9,683	9,713	10,769	-0.3%	-10.1%
Continued claims					
Number of claimants	31,464	40,012	36,155	-21.4%	-13.0%
Weeks paid	102,012	128,564	114,132	-20.7%	-10.6%
Amount paid	\$35,430,672	\$45,530,551	\$38,006,879	-22.2%	-6.8%

Visit www.iowaworkforce.org/lmi/laborforce/locallaborforce.html for county unemployment rates, www.iowaworkforce.org/lmi/laborforce/index.html for current and historical labor force data and www.iowaworkforce.org/lmi/empstat/msanonag.htm for detailed information on nonfarm employment.

Visit www.iowaworkforce.org/trends/wages.html for information on hours and earnings and www.iowaworkforce.org/trends/uiclaimscomo.html to obtain a breakout of jobless benefits by county.

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