

NEWS RELEASE

For Statewide Distribution



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Iowa Unemployment Rate Remains at 3.8 Percent

DES MOINES, IOWA – Iowa’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remained at 3.8 percent in May, but was down from the May 2014 rate of 4.4 percent. Meanwhile, the U.S. unemployment rate rose to 5.5 percent in May from 5.4 percent in April.

“Iowa’s businesses continued to add employees in May,” said Beth Townsend, director of Iowa Workforce Development. “This month’s increase was fueled by hiring in manufacturing, education, and financial activities and offsets the slight decline in employment last month.”

The number of unemployed Iowans decreased to 64,700 in May from 65,600 in April. The current estimate is 9,500 lower than the year ago level of 74,200.

The total number of working Iowans decreased to 1,645,800 in May. This figure was 2,000 lower than April, and 19,200 higher than one year ago.

Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment

Following a loss last month, total nonfarm employment in Iowa rebounded in May by adding 2,200 jobs. Gains this month were sparked by hiring in private services and goods-producing sectors. Government shed 800 jobs this month due to larger-than-expected seasonal losses primarily in state government but remains up 2,900 jobs since last year. This month’s increase pushes statewide nonfarm employment back up to 21,400 jobs versus one year ago (+1.4 percent).

Manufacturing advanced this month following two consecutive months of losses. Jobs were added in durable goods (+1,000) along with nondurable goods factories (+700). The education and health services sector was bolstered by an increase in private education and added 1,300 jobs this month. Health services experienced a slight decline this month (-200), the first drop since September. Financial services added 900 jobs this month following declines in March and April, and professional and business services advanced by 700. Other gains included leisure and hospitality (+400) and mining (+100). Conversely, losses this month were heaviest in construction (-1,400). This was the first loss for this super sector since January. Despite the drop, construction has been trending up and reached an all-time high last month. All other losses were small in May and included other services (-300), trade and transportation (-300) and information (-100).

Since May of 2014, nonfarm employment growth has been led by private services, although goods-producing sectors continue to be elevated by hiring in construction. The gain of 4,400 jobs in construction is the most of any sector in Iowa and more than offsets the loss of 1,300 jobs in manufacturing. Trade and transportation has also fared well annually (+4,200), so has leisure and hospitality (+4,000). Aside from manufacturing, the only other super sectors to pare jobs versus last year are information (-1,100) and mining (-100).

MEDIA ALERT: An audio cut of comments about Iowa’s labor market situation is available by calling (515) 281-6057. Statewide and local data for June 2015 will be released on July 21, 2015.

Employment and Unemployment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

	May 2015	April 2015	May 2014	Change from	
				April 2015	May 2014
Civilian labor force	1,710,500	1,713,400	1,700,700	-2,900	9,800
Unemployment	64,700	65,600	74,200	-900	-9,500
Unemployment rate	3.8%	3.8%	4.4%	0.0	-0.6
Employment	1,645,800	1,647,800	1,626,600	-2,000	19,200
U.S. unemployment rate	5.5%	5.4%	6.3%	0.1	-0.8

Nonfarm Employment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

Total Nonfarm Employment	1,568,200	1,566,000	1,546,800	2,200	21,400
Mining	2,200	2,100	2,300	100	-100
Construction	78,400	79,800	74,000	-1,400	4,400
Manufacturing	216,200	214,500	217,500	1,700	-1,300
Trade, transportation and utilities	316,200	316,500	312,000	-300	4,200
Information	24,600	24,700	25,700	-100	-1,100
Financial activities	104,600	103,700	103,900	900	700
Professional and business services	138,800	138,100	137,000	700	1,800
Education and health services	227,400	226,100	223,500	1,300	3,900
Leisure and hospitality	141,600	141,200	137,600	400	4,000
Other services	61,200	61,500	59,200	-300	2,000
Government	257,000	257,800	254,100	-800	2,900

Unemployment Insurance Claims for Iowa

	May 2015	April 2015	May 2014	% Change from	
				April 2015	May 2014
Initial claims	10,748	9,683	10,794	11.0%	-0.4%
Continued claims					
Number of claimants	22,214	31,464	23,190	-29.4%	-4.2%
Weeks paid	68,430	102,012	71,687	-32.9%	-4.5%
Amount paid	\$23,605,753	\$35,430,672	\$23,352,930	-33.4%	1.1%

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