



For Release: 9:00 a.m.
Date: January 18, 2019

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Iowa's Unemployment Rate Remains at 2.4 Percent for Third Month

DES MOINES, IOWA – Iowa's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remained at 2.4 percent in December. The state's jobless rate was 2.9 percent one year ago. The U.S. unemployment rate rose to 3.9 percent in December.

"In 2018, four out of every five jobs created in Iowa were in the construction and manufacturing sectors," said Beth Townsend, director of Iowa Workforce Development. "Because more Iowans are employed in manufacturing than in any other industry and construction is a leading economic indicator of growth across industries - this month's jobs report indicates we are moving in the right direction - our manufacturing core is getting stronger and our businesses are focused on development. The challenge we face is ensuring Iowans have the skills our

employers need to power their potential. The time is now to invest in Future Ready Iowa, a powerful tool to grow family incomes, meet employer needs and strengthen communities.

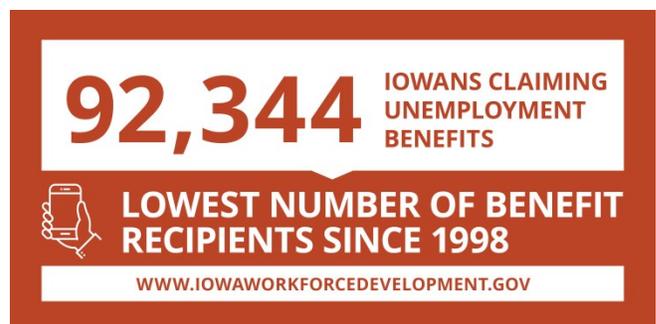
The number of unemployed Iowans remained at 40,600 in December. The current estimate is 8,700 lower than the year ago level of 49,300.

The total number of working Iowans increased to 1,651,300 in December. This figure was 2,300 higher than November and 25,700 higher than one year ago.



Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment

In December, Iowa's establishments continued to expand payrolls leading to an increase of 3,900 jobs. Following a revision upward in November, jobs have now been added in three consecutive months for the state. Most segments of Iowa's economy showed promise to end the year, although construction did contract following a later-than-usual building season. In total, goods producing sectors (generally construction and manufacturing) have fueled most of the state's growth in 2018 and have been responsible for four out of five jobs added during the calendar year. Government advanced by 1,100 jobs since last year and was up 600 jobs compared to November.



The education and health services super sector added the most jobs since November (+1,500) and was fueled by expansion in the health care and social assistance sector. This gain follows two months of little movement in the combined super sector. Leisure and hospitality also grew in December with 1,300 jobs added. This month's gain was partially fueled by hiring in accommodations and food services which had previously shed jobs in every month since July. Manufacturing continues to beat expectations and again hired more workers in December (+1,200). Both durable and nondurable goods factories had a prosperous year in 2018 and bolstered staffing levels to accommodate increased demand for goods. Alternatively, all was not positive in December, as construction continued to pare off the remainder of the seasonal employees. This loss of 1,900 jobs this month was not unexpected as this sector added jobs in every month from February through October. The only other notable loss this month was from the retail sector (-200) which extended its streak of four consecutive months of declines.

In total, 15,500 jobs have been added over the past twelve months. In that time, manufacturing maintained its status as the number one creator of jobs throughout 2018, ending the year at 7,600 jobs higher than last December. Both durable and nondurable goods shops have added staff over that span. Construction industries have also fared well annually (+5,100) despite a sizable decline this month. The only notable loss over the past twelve months is a drop in accommodations and food services (-4,500).

Employment and Unemployment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data					
	December	November	December	Change from	
	2018	2018	2017	November	December
				2018	2017
Civilian labor force	1,691,900	1,689,700	1,674,900	2,200	17,000
Unemployment	40,600	40,600	49,300	0	-8,700
Unemployment rate	2.4%	2.4%	2.9%	0.0	-0.5
Employment	1,651,300	1,649,000	1,625,600	2,300	25,700
U.S. unemployment rate	3.9%	3.7%	4.1%	0.2	-0.2
Nonfarm Employment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data					
Total Nonfarm Employment	1,598,100	1,594,200	1,582,600	3,900	15,500
Mining	2,500	2,400	2,400	100	100
Construction	78,600	80,500	73,500	-1,900	5,100
Manufacturing	230,600	229,400	223,000	1,200	7,600
Trade, transportation and utilities	315,700	315,500	315,500	200	200
Information	21,400	21,300	22,000	100	-600
Financial activities	111,800	111,900	111,300	-100	500
Professional and business services	143,000	142,700	140,700	300	2,300
Education and health services	234,200	232,700	232,200	1,500	2,000
Leisure and hospitality	143,500	142,200	146,400	1,300	-2,900
Other services	56,500	55,900	56,400	600	100
Government	260,300	259,700	259,200	600	1,100

Unemployment Insurance Claims for Iowa

	December 2018	November 2018	December 2017	% Change from	
				November 2018	December 2017
Initial claims	22,799	16,746	26,587	36.1%	-14.2%
Continued claims					
Number of claimants	26,605	16,466	27,146	61.6%	-2.0%
Weeks paid	82,560	49,692	83,932	66.1%	-1.6%
Amount paid	\$31,987,365	\$18,626,684	\$31,996,661	71.7%	0.0%

Visit www.iowalmi.gov for more information about current and historical data, labor force data, nonfarm employment, hours and earnings, and jobless benefits by county.

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MEDIA ALERT: [Click here](#) to access an audio cut of comments about Iowa's labor market situation. Local data for December will be posted to the IWD website on Wednesday, January 23, 2019. Statewide and local data for January 2019 will be released on Monday, March 11, 2019.