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Iowa's Unemployment Rate Decreases to 2.7 Percent in April Labor Force Participation Increases Again

DES MOINES, IOWA – Iowa's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped to 2.7 percent in April from 2.8 percent in March while the state's labor force added 4,300 new workers. The total number of Iowans with jobs increased to 1,681,400 in April, up 5,800 from the month before.

In comparison, the U.S. unemployment rate dropped to 3.4 percent in March.

Iowa's labor force participation rate increased to 68.3 percent, up from 68.2 percent last month. The number of unemployed Iowans decreased to 46,800 in April from 48,300 in March.

"Iowa continues to have a strong labor market, and fantastic opportunities remain for those seeking jobs," said Beth Townsend, Director of Iowa Workforce Development. "Manufacturing, health care, and retail grew significantly in April despite the external pressures of high inflation and rising interest rates that were felt in other industries. Iowa is the land of opportunity, and IWD can help make connections between workers and employers looking for help."

Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment

A survey of Iowa businesses (separate from the survey of individuals used to create the unemployment rate) showed that Iowa establishments shed a slight 300 jobs between March and April, lowering total nonfarm employment to 1,592,800 jobs. This was the first loss since November 2022. Private services showed some weakness in April (-1,800 jobs), mostly within professional and business services. These losses were partially offset by gains in goods-producing establishments. Government gained 600 jobs.

Manufacturing added the most jobs in April (+1,400). Many of the jobs gained were within nondurable goods factories (+900) with much of the hiring being in animal slaughtering and processing. Durable goods factories increased by 500 jobs, with metal product production helping drive much of this advancement. This industry has fared well relative to last year, along with wood product production. Retail added 800 jobs in April and helped fuel a gain of 1,200 jobs in trade, transportation, and utilities. This gain is now the fifth consecutive for retail. Wholesale trade advanced by 600 with both durable and nondurable goods distributors showing improvement over March. Health care and social assistance gained 800 jobs in April following an increase of 900 in March. Aside from two minor losses in February and November, this sector has trended up since March 2022 with 6,900 jobs gained over the last 13 months. On the flip side, job losses were largest in professional and business services in April (-1,600). These losses were fueled by losses in administrative support, waste management, and remediation services (-1,100). This industry has shown some signs of weakness with losses in seven of the last eight months, shedding 4,00 jobs over that span. Smaller drops included other services (-1,100) and leisure and hospitality (-900), which saw some loss in arts, entertainment, and recreation, and construction (-400).

Over the past 12 months, education and health care has added the most jobs (+11,100). Health care and social assistance has increased by 6,800 jobs alone (+1,700 over the past two months). Manufacturing has fared well, advancing by 5,200 since last April. Durable good shops have outpaced nondurable goods factories with 3,100 jobs gained. Leisure and hospitality gained 4,400 with all the growth stemming from accommodations and food services. Annual losses are much smaller and concentrated in professional and business services (-1,800), which has suffered from cutbacks in administrative support and waste management services.

Employment and Unemployment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

	April 2023	March 2023	April 2022	Change from March 2023	April 2022
Civilian labor force	1,728,200	1,723,900	1,717,100	4,300	11,100
Unemployment	46,800	48,300	40,100	-1,500	6,700
Unemployment rate	2.7%	2.8%	2.3%	-0.1	0.4
Employment	1,681,400	1,675,600	1,677,000	5,800	4,400
Labor Force Participation Rate	68.3%	68.2%	68.3%	0.1	0.0
U.S. unemployment rate	3.4%	3.5%	3.6%	-0.1	-0.2

Nonfarm Employment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

Total Nonfarm Employment	1,592,800	1,593,100	1,566,500	-300	26,300
Mining	2,300	2,400	2,300	-100	0
Construction	83,700	84,100	81,000	-400	2,700
Manufacturing	228,200	226,800	223,000	1,400	5,200
Trade, transportation and utilities	313,500	312,300	314,100	1,200	-600
Information	19,000	19,100	19,000	-100	0
Financial activities	108,900	109,000	108,700	-100	200
Professional and business services	144,000	145,600	145,800	-1,600	-1,800
Education and health services	236,300	235,500	225,200	800	11,100
Leisure and hospitality	140,100	141,000	135,700	-900	4,400
Other services	55,600	56,700	55,600	-1,100	0
Government	261,200	260,600	256,100	600	5,100

Unemployment Insurance Claims for Iowa

	April 2023	March 2023	April 2022	% Change from March 2023	April 2022
Initial claims	5,839	7,744	5,290	-24.6%	10.4%
Continued claims					
Benefit recipients	14,090	24,771	15,863	-43.1%	-11.2%
Weeks paid	34,839	89,885	42,720	-61.2%	-18.4%
Amount paid	\$16,667,625	\$44,456,467	\$19,837,409	-62.5%	-16.0%

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: Local data for April 2023 will be posted to the IWD website on Tuesday, May 23, 2023. Statewide data for May 2023 will be released on Thursday, June 15, 2023.