Iowa’s seasonally adjusted jobless rate remained at 2.4 percent in December. The state’s jobless rate was 2.9 percent one year ago.

The number of employed Iowans increased to 1,651,300 in December from 1,649,000 in November.

The U.S. unemployment rate rose to 3.9 percent in December.

Following an upward revision in November, Iowa establishments have now added jobs in three consecutive months. In December, 3,900 jobs were added.

Private sectors added jobs for the fifth consecutive month and is now up 9,100 jobs since July.

Health care and social assistance gained 1,800 jobs in December. The gain follows two months of little movement.

Leisure and hospitality rebounded from a loss last month and added 1,300 jobs. Accommodations and food services added jobs for the first time since July.

Manufacturing ended the year by gaining 1,200 jobs. Durable goods factories have been slightly more prosperous.

Iowa establishments are up 15,500 jobs annually. Gains in manufacturing and construction have accounted for over four in every five jobs gained in 2018.

U.S. total nonfarm employment advanced by 312,000 in December. The monthly gain was far more than expected. The largest increases were in health care and food services and drinking establishments.

The number of UI benefit recipients declined from 101,825 in 2017 to 92,344 in 2018. This is the first year benefit recipients fell below 100,000 since 1998.