



JB Pritzker, Governor
Thomas D. Chan, Acting Director

NEWS RELEASE

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Illinois Unemployment Rate Drops to New Historical Low in December

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) announced today that the unemployment rate fell -0.1 percentage point to 3.7 percent, a new historical low, while nonfarm payrolls added +8,000 jobs in December, based on preliminary data provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and released by IDES. The November monthly change in payrolls was revised from the preliminary report from -17,200 to -13,400 jobs.

The state's unemployment rate is +0.2 percentage points higher than the national unemployment rate reported for December 2019, which was 3.5 percent, unchanged from the previous month. The Illinois unemployment rate was down -0.6 percentage point from a year ago when it was 4.3 percent.

Illinois payroll employment has shown variability since the beginning of the year, as have national payrolls. Average payroll employment in Illinois during the October to December three-month period, which provides a more stable measure of payroll employment change, was up +900 jobs, compared to the September to November three-month period. The largest average gains were found in Educational and Health Services (+2,900), Leisure and Hospitality (+1,900) and Government (+1,700).

“Over the past year, Governor Pritzker has worked hard to improve Illinois’ economy and create the conditions for good jobs around the state that will build long-term economic success,” said Deputy Governor Dan Hynes. “From the bipartisan balanced budget and historic Rebuild Illinois infrastructure plan to lifting up workers and families by raising the minimum wage, this administration is creating an economy that works for everyone.”

“Governor Pritzker has implemented a number of policies and strategies that continue to address the needs of the diverse Illinois workforce,” said Erin Guthrie, Acting Director of the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. “The Five-Year Economic and Rebuild Illinois Plans, coupled with the minimum wage increase, are steps that will help create a symbiotic environment in which businesses and workers can thrive.”

Compared to a year ago, nonfarm payroll employment increased by +45,000 jobs with the largest gains in: Educational and Health Services (+17,100), Leisure and Hospitality (+16,900), and Government (+13,400). The industry sectors with the largest over-the-year declines were: Trade, Transportation and Utilities (-4,600), Manufacturing (-1,900) and Construction (-1,200). Illinois nonfarm payrolls were up +0.7 percent over-the-year as compared to the nation's +1.4 percent over-the-year gain in December.

The number of unemployed workers decreased from the prior month, -2.4 percent to 240,100, a new record low, and was down -13.2 percent over the same month for the prior year. The labor force was down -0.3 percent over-the-month but up +0.1 percent over-the-year. The unemployment rate identifies those individuals who are out of work and seeking employment.

An individual who exhausts or is ineligible for benefits is still reflected in the unemployment rate if they actively seek work. IDES maintains the state's largest job search engine, [Illinois Job Link](#) (IJL), to help connect jobseekers to employers who are hiring, which recently showed 60,792 posted resumes with 90,561 jobs available.



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Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates

	Dec-19	Nov-19	Dec-18	3-month Moving Average	Over-the- Month Change	Over-the- Year Change
Illinois	3.7%	3.8%	4.3%	3.8%	-0.1	-0.6
U.S.	3.5%	3.5%	3.9%	3.5%	0.0	-0.4

Illinois Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Jobs – by Major Industry

	Dec-19 Current *	Nov-19 Prior month**	Dec-18 Year Ago	Over the Month	Over the Year	3-month Moving Avg	Change from Previous 3-month Moving Avg
IL - Total Nonfarm	6,193,300	6,185,300	6,148,300	8,000	45,000	6,192,400	900
IL - Mining	7,200	7,300	7,800	-100	-600	7,300	-100
IL - Construction	223,000	222,800	224,200	200	-1,200	223,500	-1,100
IL - Manufacturing	588,000	588,900	589,900	-900	-1,900	589,000	-1,300
IL - Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,218,600	1,220,300	1,223,200	-1,700	-4,600	1,221,300	-2,500
IL - Information	92,400	92,000	93,100	400	-700	92,500	500
IL - Financial Activities	407,000	407,200	405,200	-200	1,800	407,000	0
IL - Professional and Business Services	957,000	955,400	956,000	1,600	1,000	957,700	-2,000
IL - Educational and Health Services	959,300	955,000	942,200	4,300	17,100	956,800	2,900
IL - Leisure and Hospitality	640,600	637,400	623,700	3,200	16,900	638,500	1,900
IL - Other Services	260,400	259,600	256,600	800	3,800	259,400	1,000
IL - Government	839,800	839,400	826,400	400	13,400	839,400	1,700

* Preliminary
** Final

- 2014-2018 seasonally adjusted labor force data for Illinois, and all other states, have been revised as required by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The monthly historical revisions to state labor force estimates reflect new national benchmark controls, state working-age population controls, seasonal factors, as well as updated total nonfarm jobs and unemployment benefits claims inputs. Illinois labor force data were also smoothed to eliminate large monthly changes as a result of volatility in the monthly Census Population Survey (CPS) and national benchmarking. For these reasons, the comments and tables citing unemployment rates in previous news releases/materials may no longer be valid.
- Monthly seasonally adjusted unemployment rates for Illinois and the Chicago-Naperville-Arlington Heights Metropolitan Division are available [here](#).
- Monthly 1990-2018 seasonally adjusted nonfarm payroll employment data for Illinois have been revised. To control for potential survey error, the estimates are benchmarked annually to universal counts derived primarily from unemployment insurance tax reports.
- Not seasonally adjusted jobs data with industry detail are available [here](#). “Other Services” include activities in three broad categories: personal and laundry; repair and maintenance; and religious, grant making, civic and professional organizations. Seasonally adjusted data for subsectors within industries are not available.

About the Department of Employment Security

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) provides vital employment services to Illinois workers, employers, and job seekers with resources including [Job Fairs](#) and [Illinois Job Link](#), analyzes and disseminates actionable [Labor Market Information](#), and administers the [Unemployment Insurance Program](#). To see the full range of services provided by IDES, and for the latest news concerning the department, visit IDES.Illinois.gov.

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