

Department of Workforce Development: Wisconsin Local Employment & Unemployment Estimates Released

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MADISON - The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) today released the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimates of unemployment and employment statistics for metro areas, major cities, and counties in Wisconsin. The estimates include updates for January 2017 and the preliminary estimates for February 2017. As these numbers are not seasonally adjusted, they are most appropriately compared year-over-year instead of month-over-month as rates often increase in the colder winter months due to the seasonality of the state economy. In brief, the not-seasonally adjusted estimates showed:

Metropolitan Statistical Areas: Preliminary February 2017 unemployment rates decreased in all areas over the year when compared to February 2016. The largest over the year decline was 0.7 percent in Fond du Lac. The latest rates ranged from 3.3 percent in Madison to 5.4 percent in Racine.

Municipalities: Preliminary February 2017 rates decreased or stayed the same in 30 of the state's 32 largest municipalities when compared to February 2016. The latest rates ranged from 2.9 percent in Madison to 6.3 percent in Racine.

Counties: Preliminary February 2017 rates decreased or stayed the same in 71 of 72 counties when compared to February 2016 rates. The largest over the year decline was 1.5 percent in Sawyer county. The latest rates ranged from 3.1 percent in Dane to 8.6 percent in Iron.

The release of the February 2017 local rates follows last week's release of BLS monthly estimates showing a preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 3.7 percent in February 2017, dropping to its lowest rate since November 2000. Data also showed both total labor force and employment in Wisconsin reached an all-time high in February, while the number of unemployed individuals was its lowest since January 2001.

Other indicators of the state of Wisconsin's economy include:

Based on preliminary data, the state added 28,200 total non-farm jobs and 21,500 private-sector jobs from February 2016 to February 2017, with a statistically significant gain of 11,100 total non-farm jobs as well as 7,600 private-sector jobs over the month.

Wisconsin's labor force participation rate increased to 68.3 percent and continues to outpace the U.S. rate of 63.0 percent in February.

Wisconsin saw a preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 3.7 percent in February 2017, down 0.2 percent from January and at its lowest rate since November 2000.

Initial UI claims ended 2016 at their lowest level since 1988. Year 2017 initial UI claims are running at their lowest levels since 1989.

Continuing unemployment claims ended 2016 at their lowest level since 1973.

Continuing unemployment claims in Wisconsin are running the lowest in at least the past 30 years.