

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development: Madison MSA unemployment rate ranked 9th best in nation in March

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MADISON –According to data released from the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the Madison Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) had the 9th lowest unemployment rate in the country at 2.6 percent in March. Data also showed that in March, the Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis MSA had the 9th lowest unemployment rate and 7th best year-over-year unemployment rate change (-1.0 percent) in the nation for large metropolitan areas with a population of 1 million or more.

“These top-ten rankings for Wisconsin’s two largest metro areas prove that Wisconsin is continuing on a path of economic growth under Governor Scott Walker,” Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Ray Allen said. “With a statewide unemployment rate at its lowest point since February 2000 and many counties and cities experiencing the lowest unemployment rates on record for the month of April, Wisconsin is primed to see continued job growth and economic prosperity.”

Yesterday, DWD released estimates of unemployment and employment statistics for metro areas, major cities, and counties in Wisconsin. Highlights of the MSA data included:

- Preliminary April 2017 unemployment rates decreased in all areas when compared over the year to April 2016 and over the month to March 2017. The largest 12-month decline was 1.3 percent in Racine. The rates ranged from 2.1 percent in Madison to 3.8 percent in Racine.

Preliminary March 2017 rates showed Wisconsin with 5 of the 10 lowest MSA unemployment rates when compared to MSA's in Iowa, Illinois, Michigan and Minnesota.

The preliminary March 2017 rate for the MSA including Milwaukee was below that of MSA's covering Minneapolis-St. Paul, Chicago and Detroit.

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

- Wisconsin's labor force participation rate increased to 68.6 percent and continues to outpace the U.S. rate of 62.9 percent in April.
- Wisconsin saw a preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 3.2 percent in April 2017, down 0.2 percent from March and at its lowest rate since February 2000.
- Both total labor force and employment in Wisconsin reached all-time highs in April, while the number of unemployed individuals was its lowest since April 2000.
- Initial UI claims ended 2016 at their lowest level in their last 30 years. 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.