

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development: Wisconsin local employment and unemployment estimates released

Posted on Wednesday, Sep 20, 2017

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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 July 2017 and the preliminary estimates for August 2017. These numbers are not seasonally adjusted. In brief, the estimates showed:

Metropolitan Statistical Areas: Preliminary August 2017 unemployment rates decreased in all areas when compared over the year to August 2016 and decreased or remained the same in 9 of the 12 areas compared over the month to July 2017. The rates ranged from 2.4 percent in Madison to 4.6 percent in Racine.

Municipalities: Preliminary August 2017 rates decreased in the state's 32 largest municipalities when compared over the year to August 2016. The largest over-the-year decline was 1.1 percentage points in Milwaukee and Janesville. The latest rates ranged from 2.3 percent in Fitchburg and Madison to 6.1 percent in Racine.

Counties: Preliminary August 2017 rates decreased in 71 of 72 counties when compared over the year to August 2016 rates. The largest over the year decline was 1.3 percentage points in Bayfield and Sawyer counties. The latest rates ranged from 2.4 percent in Dane to 7.5 percent in Menominee.

The release of the August 2017 local rates follows last week's release of BLS monthly estimates showing a preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 3.4 percent in August 2017 while the state added 19,000 total non-farm jobs and 20,100 private-sector jobs from August 2016 to August 2017, with a significant year-over-year gain of 10,200 manufacturing jobs.

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

- Wisconsin's labor force participation rate of 68.8 percent continues to outpace the national rate of 62.9 percent.
- The latest available QCEW figures covering the first quarter of 2017 show a gain of 27,597 private-sector jobs in the 12-month period ending in March 2017.
- QCEW also shows a 7.7 percent increase in total quarterly private sector wages from March 2016 to March 2017.
- Moody's Investors Service has upgraded the states credit rating, noting that "(T)he stable outlook reflects the expectation that the state will experience moderate economic growth and will continue its prudent fiscal management practices."