

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development: Wisconsin's 3.1% unemployment rate tied for 7th lowest in nation

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MADISON – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Ray Allen released the following statement following today's U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) release showing Wisconsin tied for the 7th lowest unemployment rate in the nation, significantly lower than the national rate. The release also noted that Wisconsin's addition of 40,400 total non-farm jobs from May 2016 to May 2017 was statistically significant and Wisconsin's labor force participation rate was tied for 5th highest in the country:

“Not only is Wisconsin's 3.1 percent unemployment rate a near record-low for our state, but our rate is lower than that of 42 other states, including the neighboring states of Illinois, Michigan and Minnesota, and tied with Iowa for 7th lowest in the country,” Secretary Allen said. “We also are tied for the 5th highest labor force participation rate in the country, ahead of the neighboring states of Illinois, Iowa and Michigan. Under Governor Walker's leadership, Wisconsin's employers and communities are reaping economic rewards from a winning combination of a best-in-class workforce and innovative, proven worker training programs.”

Highlights of Friday's BLS release of state-by-state employment and unemployment data for May 2017 include:

- Wisconsin's 3.1 percent unemployment rate tied for the 7th lowest in the nation in May 2017 and was significantly lower than the national rate of 4.3 percent.
- Wisconsin added a statistically significant 40,400 total non-farm jobs from May 2016 to May 2017.
- Wisconsin's unemployment rate decline of 1.0 percent from 4.1% in May 2016 to 3.1% in May 2017 was statistically significant.
- Wisconsin's labor force participation rate of 68.8% tied for 5th best in the nation in May 2017.

Other indicators of Wisconsin's economy include:

- Both total labor force and employment in Wisconsin remained at all-time high in May, while the number of unemployed individuals was its lowest point since February 2000.
- The rate of 3.1 percent is the second-lowest rate on record for Wisconsin (the lowest rate was 3.0 percent in May-July 1999).
- Wisconsin's January (3.9 percent) to May (3.1 percent) unemployment rate decline of 0.8 percentage points in 2017 is the steepest January-May decline since 1983.
- Wisconsin's labor force participation rate increased by 0.2 percentage points to 68.8 percent, while the U.S. labor force participation rate decreased to 62.7 percent in May.
- 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.

[Friday's BLS 'Regional and State Employment and Unemployment Summary' report](#)