

Dept. of Workforce Development: Wisconsin local employment and unemployment estimates released

Posted on Wednesday, Mar 14, 2018

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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 December 2017 and preliminary estimates for January 2018. These numbers are not seasonally adjusted. In brief, the estimates show:

- **Metropolitan Statistical Areas:** Preliminary January 2018 unemployment rates decreased in all areas when compared over the year to January 2017. Eleven (11) of Wisconsin's 12 metro areas reached their lowest January unemployment rate on record (1990). The rates ranged from 2.3 percent in Madison to 3.7 percent in Racine.
- **Municipalities:** Preliminary January 2018 rates decreased in the state's 32 largest municipalities when compared over the year to January 2017. Twenty (20) of the 32 largest municipalities reached their lowest January unemployment rate on current record. January 2018 rates ranged from 2.1 percent in Fitchburg and Madison to 4.3 percent in Racine.
- **Counties:** Preliminary January 2018 rates decreased in all 72 counties when

compared over the year to January 2017. The largest over the year decline was 2 percentage points in Bayfield County. Sixty-one (61) of Wisconsin's 72 counties reached their lowest January unemployment rate on current record. The rates ranged from 2.2 percent in Dane County to 6 percent in Iron County.

The release of January 2018 local rates follows the release of BLS monthly estimates showing a preliminary seasonally adjusted statewide unemployment rate of 3.1 percent, the lowest statewide January unemployment rate on current record. The data also showed that the state added 9,200 total non-farm jobs and 8,000 private sector jobs, including 2,000 manufacturing jobs from December 2017 to January 2018. Wisconsin ranked in the top ten among states in numerous measures, including:

- Wisconsin ranked 7th highest nationally in the one-month growth rate of total non-farm jobs, 10th highest for private-sector jobs and 8th highest in manufacturing jobs.
- Wisconsin's one-month net change ranked 7th highest for total nonfarm jobs, 8th highest in private sector jobs and 4th highest in manufacturing jobs.
- Wisconsin's unemployment rate of 3.1 percent ranked 10th lowest nationally and was 4th in month-over-month change.
- Wisconsin's labor force participation rate of 68.5 percent ranked 5th highest nationally

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

- Initial UI claims ended 2017 at their lowest level in the last 30 years.
- Continuing unemployment claims ended 2017 at their lowest level since 1973.
- Moody's investor Service recently upgraded the state's 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."