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Iowa's Unemployment Rate Remains Steady in February

DES MOINES, IOWA – Iowa's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remained at 2.4 percent in February. The state's jobless rate was 2.7 percent one year ago. The U.S. unemployment rate dropped to 3.8 percent in February.

"Despite the brutal winter we have had the past two months, the unemployment rate remains steady at 2.4 percent. Remarkably, we have maintained that rate since June, 2018," said Director Beth Townsend, Iowa Workforce Development. "The total number of working lowans increased to 1,660,100 which is 5,700 higher than January and 25,500 higher than one year ago. In even more good news, the biggest segment of lowans who found employment in February are those who have been out-of-the-workforce for more than 12 months. If you're an employer looking for workers, stop by or call one of our [IowaWORKS Centers](#) around the state and let us put our top notch business service specialists to work for you. If you are looking for a better job or your next job opportunity, we can help you update your resume and sharpen your interview skills as well as assist you in finding new training opportunities available around the state. The time is now to become [Future Ready!](#)"

The number of unemployed lowans decreased to 40,000 in February from 40,600 in January. The current estimate is 6,100 lower than the year ago level of 46,100.

The total number of working lowans increased to 1,660,100 in February. This figure was 5,700 higher than January and 25,500 higher than one year ago.

Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment

In February, Iowa establishments cut payrolls leading to a drop of 5,500 jobs in total nonfarm employment. This was the first monthly drop since September and fueled by losses in private services. Unusually cold and forbidding winter weather may have had some influence on payrolls. Both construction and leisure and hospitality had losses this month. Private sectors accounted for most of the drop this month (-5,000); however, government also decreased slightly due to losses at the local level (-800). Compared to last year, government is now down 1,900 jobs due mostly to cutbacks at the state level and Iowa total nonfarm employment combined is up just 5,800 jobs (+0.4 percent).

Leisure and hospitality pared the most jobs in February (-2,400) with virtually all of the losses stemming from accommodations and food services. Eating and drinking establishments contracted this month, but should rebound in March when the weather supports more traffic and with regional basketball tournaments in the Des Moines area. This super sector has displayed mixed signals over the past several months and shrank slightly versus last year. Trade, transportation, and utilities shed 1,500 jobs due mostly to declines in transportation and warehousing (-900), although retail continued to trend down in February (-700). This was the first monthly loss for this super sector since October. Smaller monthly losses this month included professional and business services (-900), construction (-400), and education and health services (-300). Only three sectors added jobs this month. Other services added 400 jobs to lead all sectors. The financial services sector gained 200 jobs but has shown evidence of tapering down following expansion over the past several years. Natural resources and mining added 100 jobs.

Compared to last February, manufacturing continues to lead all sectors in job growth (+8,400). All other super sector gains are small by comparison and include professional and business services (+600) and construction (+400). The largest notable losses in Iowa's economy occur in retail trade (-3,000) and accommodations and food services (-1,700).

Employment and Unemployment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

	February 2019	January 2019	February 2018	Change from	
				January 2019	February 2018
Civilian labor force	1,700,200	1,695,000	1,680,600	5,200	19,600
Unemployment	40,000	40,600	46,100	-600	-6,100
Unemployment rate	2.4%	2.4%	2.7%	0.0	-0.3
Employment	1,660,100	1,654,400	1,634,600	5,700	25,500
U.S. unemployment rate	3.8%	4.0%	4.1%	-0.2	-0.3

Nonfarm Employment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

Total Nonfarm Employment	1,587,900	1,593,400	1,582,100	-5,500	5,800
Mining	2,600	2,500	2,500	100	100
Construction	76,700	77,100	76,300	-400	400
Manufacturing	228,800	228,900	220,400	-100	8,400
Trade, transportation and utilities	312,800	314,300	313,100	-1,500	-300
Information	21,500	21,600	22,100	-100	-600
Financial activities	109,400	109,200	109,100	200	300
Professional and business services	142,100	143,000	141,500	-900	600
Education and health services	234,400	234,700	235,400	-300	-1,000
Leisure and hospitality	143,600	146,000	143,900	-2,400	-300
Other services	57,500	57,100	57,400	400	100
Government	258,500	259,000	260,400	-500	-1,900

Unemployment Insurance Claims for Iowa

	February 2019	January 2019	February 2018	% Change from	
				January 2019	February 2018
Initial claims	9,665	18,768	8,792	-48.5%	9.9%
Continued claims					
Number of claimants	38,000	40,985	36,782	-7.3%	3.3%
Weeks paid	129,440	149,070	126,140	-13.2%	2.6%
Amount paid	\$52,403,981	\$59,267,019	\$49,966,106	-11.6%	4.9%

Visit www.iowalmi.gov for more information about current and historical data, labor force data, nonfarm employment, hours and earnings, and jobless benefits by county.

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MEDIA ALERT: Local data for February will be posted to the IWD website on Tuesday, March 26, 2019. Statewide data for March 2019 will be released on Friday, April 19, 2019.