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NEWS RELEASE

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Small Decrease in Payroll Jobs, Slight Increase in Unemployment Rate in February

PRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) announced today that the unemployment rate was 5.0 percent in February, up +0.1 percentage point from January, and up +0.3 percentage point from the same month, one year ago, based on data provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The revised January unemployment rate was 4.9 percent.

Total nonfarm payrolls decreased over-the-month in February, down -17,800 (-0.3%) to 6,137,200. The January monthly change in payrolls was revised from the preliminary report, from +18,000 to +6,200. The February payroll jobs estimate and unemployment rate reflect activity for the week including the 12th.

The industry sectors with the largest monthly payroll jobs decreases included: Construction (-4,900), Trade, Transportation and Utilities (-4,800), and Information (-2,800). The industry sectors with over-the-month jobs increases included: Government (+800) and Other Services (+700).

Compared to a year ago, total nonfarm payroll jobs were down -19,900 jobs. The industry groups with the largest jobs decreases included: Trade, Transportation and Utilities (-18,600), Professional and Business Services (-15,700), and Information (-3,700). The industry groups with the largest jobs increases included: Private Education and Health Services (+16,500), Construction (+7,600) and Other Services (+2,100). In February, total nonfarm payrolls were down -0.3 percent over-the-year in Illinois and up +0.1 percent in the nation.

“Rising unemployment and jobs decreases reflect the economic instability coming out of Washington right now,” said **Deputy Governor Andy Manar**. “The Trump Administration’s policies are creating real headwinds for states and working families across the country. In Illinois, we’re staying focused on fiscal discipline and long-term growth to mitigate those impacts and keep our economy moving forward.”

“The State is committed to increasing economic development and job opportunities for Illinoisians,” said **DCEO Director Kristin Richards**. “It is foundational to DCEO’s mission to prioritize initiatives and programs that invest in our state’s biggest asset – our workforce – ensuring all Illinoisians have the support and resources they need to succeed.”

The number of unemployed persons in February was 328,400, up +3.0% from January, and up +5.6% over the same month one year ago. The labor force was up +0.1% from January and down -1.0% over-the-year. The unemployment rate identifies those individuals who are out of work and seeking employment. An individual who exhausts or is ineligible for benefits is still reflected in the unemployment rate if they actively seek work.

IDES helps connect jobseekers to employers who are hiring in a number of ways, including hosting and co-hosting job fairs and hiring events with statewide workforce partners, and through maintaining [Illinois JobLink](#) (IJL), the state’s largest job search engine. IJL is a tool used by jobseekers to look for work, and by employers who can post open and available positions for hire and browse resumes. Recently, IJL showed 55,933 posted resumes with 69,157 jobs available. Additionally, in partnership with IDOL and DCEO, IDES published resources to [assist federal employees and contractors](#) impacted by recent terminations or deferred resignations.

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Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates

	Feb-26	Jan-26	Feb-25	3-month Average	Over-the- Month Change	Over-the- Year Change
Illinois	5.0%	4.9%	4.7%	4.9%	0.1	0.3
U.S.	4.4%	4.3%	4.2%	4.4%	0.1	0.2

Illinois Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Jobs – by Major Industry

	Feb-26 Current *	Jan-26 Prior month**	Feb-25 Year Ago	Over-the- Month	Over-the- Year	3-month Moving Avg	Change from Previous 3-month Moving Avg
IL - Total Nonfarm	6,137,200	6,155,000	6,157,100	-17,800	-19,900	6,147,000	0
IL - Mining	7,000	7,100	6,900	-100	100	7,000	0
IL - Construction	246,400	251,300	238,800	-4,900	7,600	245,000	1,700
IL - Manufacturing	568,100	569,200	571,400	-1,100	-3,300	566,600	1,400
IL - Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,207,900	1,212,700	1,226,500	-4,800	-18,600	1,211,500	-2,700
IL - Information	86,900	89,700	90,600	-2,800	-3,700	89,200	-900
IL - Financial Activities	389,700	390,800	393,300	-1,100	-3,600	390,800	-300
IL - Professional and Business Services	896,300	898,400	912,000	-2,100	-15,700	898,200	2,200
IL - Private Education and Health Services	1,031,100	1,032,400	1,014,600	-1,300	16,500	1,033,800	-1,400
IL - Leisure and Hospitality	601,600	602,700	604,300	-1,100	-2,700	602,600	-300
IL - Other Services	248,900	248,200	246,800	700	2,100	248,600	500
IL - Government	853,300	852,500	850,700	800	2,600	853,800	-200
* Preliminary							
**Final							

- Monthly 2021-2025 seasonally adjusted labor force data for Illinois, and all other states, have been revised as required by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The monthly historical revisions to state labor force estimates reflect new national benchmark controls, state working-age population controls, outlier specifications, seasonal factors, as well as updated total nonfarm jobs and unemployment benefits claims inputs. Illinois labor force data were also smoothed to eliminate large monthly changes as a result of volatility in the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS) and national benchmarking. For these reasons, the comments and tables citing unemployment rates in previous news releases/materials may no longer be valid.
- Monthly seasonally adjusted unemployment rates for Illinois and the Chicago-Naperville-Schaumburg Metropolitan Division are available [here](#).
- Monthly 2021-2025 seasonally adjusted nonfarm payroll employment data for Illinois have been revised. To control for potential survey error, the estimates are benchmarked annually to universal counts derived primarily from unemployment insurance tax reports.
- Not seasonally adjusted jobs data with industry detail are available [here](#). “Other Services” include activities in three broad categories: personal and laundry; repair and maintenance; and religious, grant making, civic and professional organizations. Seasonally adjusted data for subsectors within industries are not available.

About the Department of Employment Security

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) provides vital employment services to Illinois workers, jobseekers, and employers with resources including [Job Fairs](#), [IllinoisJobLink.com](#), and [Workshare IL](#), analyzes and disseminates actionable [Labor Market Information](#), and administers the [Unemployment Insurance Program](#). To see the full range of services provided by IDES, and for the latest news concerning the department, visit [IDES.Illinois.gov](#).

Disclaimer on statewide data: The data contained in the statewide press releases are seasonally adjusted, which eliminates seasonal fluctuations in monthly employment data. Many economic data series have seasonal patterns, which means they tend to occur at the same time each year. For example, construction employment declines in winter, tourism employment rises in summer, and retail employment peaks in January. Seasonal adjustment helps to describe the underlying economic trends in the monthly data. When data are seasonally adjusted, as are the data in this release, the seasonal adjustment permits comparisons of data from one month to the next (January 2026 data compared to December 2025 data).