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NEWS RELEASE

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Payroll Jobs Up, Unemployment Rate Ticks Up in March

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) announced today that the unemployment rate was 5.1 percent in March, up +0.1 percentage point from February, and up +0.5 percentage point from the same month, one year ago, based on data provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The revised February unemployment rate was 5.0 percent.

Total nonfarm payrolls increased over-the-month in March, up +8,400 (+0.1%) to 6,145,500. The February monthly change in payrolls was revised from the preliminary report, from -17,800 to -17,900. The March payroll jobs estimate and unemployment rate reflect activity for the week including the 12th.

The industry sectors with the largest monthly payroll jobs increases included: Private Education and Health Services (+7,900), Professional and Business Services (+1,600), and Government (+1,400). The industry sectors with the largest over-the-month jobs decreases included: Trade, Transportation and Utilities (-2,000), Financial Activities (-800), and Manufacturing (-700).

Compared to a year ago, total nonfarm payroll jobs were down -4,300 jobs. The industry groups with the largest jobs decreases included: Trade, Transportation and Utilities (-18,900), Professional and Business Services (-6,700), and Manufacturing (-5,300). The industry groups with the largest jobs increases included: Private Education and Health Services (+21,700), Construction (+6,500) and Government (+3,600). In March, total nonfarm payrolls were down -0.1 percent over-the-year in Illinois and up +0.2 percent in the nation.

“While Illinois added jobs in March, rising unemployment and continued softness in key sectors reflect broader economic uncertainty coming out of Washington,” 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 March increase in payroll jobs shows continued growth in certain sectors, and underscores why DCEO remains laser-focused on our economic development initiatives that open doors for all Illinoisans,” said **DCEO Director Kristin Richards**. “The State is committed to implementing programs that strategically build upon this momentum.”

The number of unemployed persons in March was 334,700, up +1.9% from February, and up +9.5% over the same month one year ago. The labor force was almost unchanged (0.0%) from February and down -0.8% 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 57,093 posted resumes with 71,718 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

	Mar-26	Feb-26	Mar-25	3-month Average	Over-the- Month Change	Over-the- Year Change
Illinois	5.1%	5.0%	4.6%	5.0%	0.1	0.5
U.S.	4.3%	4.4%	4.2%	4.3%	-0.1	0.1

Illinois Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Jobs – by Major Industry

	Mar-26 Current *	Feb-26 Prior month**	Mar-25 Year Ago	Over-the- Month	Over-the- Year	3-month Moving Avg	Change from Previous 3-month Moving Avg
IL - Total Nonfarm	6,145,500	6,137,100	6,149,800	8,400	-4,300	6,145,900	-1,100
IL - Mining	7,000	7,000	7,000	0	0	7,000	0
IL - Construction	246,900	246,700	240,400	200	6,500	248,300	3,200
IL - Manufacturing	567,100	567,800	572,400	-700	-5,300	568,000	1,500
IL - Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,206,200	1,208,200	1,225,100	-2,000	-18,900	1,209,000	-2,600
IL - Information	88,200	87,000	90,700	1,200	-2,500	88,300	-900
IL - Financial Activities	388,800	389,600	392,500	-800	-3,700	389,700	-1,000
IL - Professional and Business Services	898,300	896,700	905,000	1,600	-6,700	897,800	-500
IL - Private Education and Health Services	1,038,700	1,030,800	1,017,000	7,900	21,700	1,034,000	300
IL - Leisure and Hospitality	601,700	601,700	602,800	0	-1,100	602,000	-600
IL - Other Services	248,300	248,700	246,200	-400	2,100	248,400	-100
IL - Government	854,300	852,900	850,700	1,400	3,600	853,200	-400
* 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).