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## Mar-21-19 Unemployment Rate Holds at 4.0 Percent in February



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**TRENTON** – Following four consecutive months of gains, New Jersey employment declined slightly in February while the state’s unemployment rate was unchanged at 4.0 percent, according to estimates released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Total nonfarm wage and salary employment decreased by 7,700 in February to reach a seasonally adjusted level of 4,183,600. The decline was concentrated in the private sector (-9,300) of the state’s economy.

Looking at the longer-term, over the year, February 2018 – February 2019, employment in New Jersey was higher by 33,000, with gains recorded in both the private (+30,600) and public (+2,400) sectors of the New Jersey economy. Since February 2010 (the low point of the last recession), New Jersey’s private sector employers have added 391,500 jobs.

Based on more complete reporting from employers, the previously released total nonfarm employment estimate for January was revised lower by 5,600 to show an over-the-month (December – January) increase of 12,200 jobs. Preliminary estimates had indicated an over-the-month increase of 17,800 jobs. The state’s revised January unemployment rate was unchanged at 4.0 percent.

In February, employment decreases were recorded in seven out of nine major private industry sectors. Industry sectors that experienced a decrease include trade, transportation, and utilities (-4,200), financial activities (-1,800), leisure and hospitality (-1,400), education and health services (-1,300), other services (-1,000), information (-500), and construction (-300). Industry sectors that added jobs were professional and business services (+1,000) and manufacturing (+200). Over the month, public sector employment was higher by 1,600 jobs, mainly due to gains at the local level (+1,300).

Preliminary BLS data for March will be released on April 18, 2019.

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**Technical Notes:** *Estimates of industry employment and unemployment levels are arrived at through the use of two different monthly surveys.*

*Industry employment data are derived through the Current Employment Statistics (CES) survey, a monthly survey of approximately 4,000 New Jersey business establishments conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor, which provides estimates of employment, hours, and earnings data broken down by industry for the nation as a whole, all states and most major metropolitan areas (often referred to as the “establishment” survey).*

*Resident employment and unemployment data are mainly derived from the New Jersey portion of the national Current Population Survey (CPS), a household survey conducted each month by the U.S. Census Bureau under contract with BLS, which provides input to the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program (often referred to as the “household” survey).*

*Both industry and household estimates are revised each month based on additional information from updated survey reports compiled by the BLS. In addition, these estimates are benchmarked (revised) annually based on actual counts from New Jersey’s Unemployment Compensation Law administrative records and more complete data from all New Jersey employers.*

*Effective with the release of January 2018 estimates, the Current Employment Statistics (CES) program has converted to concurrent seasonal adjustment, which uses all available estimates, including those for the current month, in developing seasonal factors. Previously, the CES program developed seasonal factors once a year during the annual benchmark process. For more information on concurrent seasonal adjustment in the CES State and Area program, see [www.bls.gov/sae/saeconcurrent.htm](http://www.bls.gov/sae/saeconcurrent.htm).*



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