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## Spring Swing

### Good jobs news in April, weakness remains

Ohio added 12,600 jobs in April, according to data released today by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The jobs report is accompanied by a separate ODJFS survey that showed the unemployment rate dropping to a level not seen since February 2008, 5.7 percent.

Monthly numbers are always preliminary and subject to revision, making it unwise to make too much of monthly fluctuations. The longer view shows that, despite April's upswing, the state still struggles with below-average job growth. Over the last 12 months, the seasonally adjusted number of nonfarm jobs has increased by only 1.1 percent, underperforming national growth of 1.7 percent.

"It's a relief to see a good monthly number," said Hannah Halbert, workforce researcher with Policy Matters Ohio. "But without accounting for population growth, the state needs to add another 120,600 jobs just to make up for those lost in the 2007 recession."

Ohio's unemployment rate fell to a rate not seen since the start of the 2007 recession, 5.7 percent. The household survey, which is a separate survey from the jobs report, showed that unemployment fell by 26,000 in April. Unfortunately, less than half of that drop was due to people entering employment (12,000). The majority of the drop (14,000) was due to Ohioans leaving the labor force.

Ohio has struggled with labor market participation since the recession. Today's 5.7 percent rate is very different than the 5.7 rate of December 2007. Since that time, Ohio's labor force has shrunk by 211,000 (3.5 percent) and employment, according to the household survey, is still down by 182,000 (3.2 percent).

"April's upswing is good news," said Halbert, "but we still have a long way to go to recovery."

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*Policy Matters Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan state policy research institute  
with offices in Cleveland and Columbus.*