



Contact: Hannah Halbert, 614.221.4505

2015 job growth total is totally uninspiring January jobs report and annual revisions confirm slow-growth trend

Revised jobs data released today underscored Ohio's slow-growth trend, and January's numbers suggest we are off to a sluggish 2016. The new data, released today by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services show that 2014 was a better year for job growth than previously reported, but in 2015 the state was in retreat.

"The revisions, particularly the improvement in 2014, put Ohio a little further ahead than earlier data suggested, but on balance the state's job growth remains uninspiring," said Hannah Halbert, researcher with Policy Matters Ohio.

The revisions, which are performed annually, put Ohio's 12-month job growth rate at 1.5 percent. This is an improvement over earlier reports, but we still trailed the national average of 1.9 percent. The late-year rally hoped for in December was also setback, as Ohio added a measly 100 jobs in January. In contrast, the U.S. had moderate growth in January, adding more than 172,000 jobs, and a solid February, gaining more than 242,000 (U.S. jobs data was reported separately today by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).

The Ohio jobs report shows that the state added more than 96,000 jobs in 2014, better than previously reported. That change turned 2014 from one of the worst post-recession job-growth years to the best. The revised data for 2015 show the state added only 80,500 jobs last year. "The monthly jobs data are always subject to revision and an annual process to adjust the survey based on wage records. Today's report underscores the importance of evaluating the longer-term trends," Halbert said.

Federal Reserve Chairwoman Janet Yellen has said that growth of 200,000 jobs per month is needed to draw workers who have dropped out of the job market back into the national labor force. Data from a separate survey of households show that the U.S. saw a small increase in the labor force (2.9 percent) between the official start of the recession and January 2016. By contrast, Ohio saw its labor force decline over that time. Even with the increase in January (28,000), Ohio's labor force is down 4.2 percent (252,000) since the official start of the recession. Ohio's unemployment rate in January matched the national average of 4.9 percent.

In 2015, Ohio's labor force participation rate, the share of the population employed or actively seeking employment, was only 62.5 percent, a rate lower than any year since 1977. The share of Ohio's population that worked in 2015 improved slightly from 2014, from 59.1 percent to 59.4 percent.

"Slow growth means there are still too few jobs for the number of Ohioans who want and need to work. That hurts wage growth, economic mobility and opportunity. We should invest in

infrastructure improvements—water security, bridge repair, and energy efficiency upgrades to help more Ohioans get back to work,” said Halbert.

###

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