



JobWatch
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Ohio 2017 job growth slow and sluggish **10 years since Great Recession, state continues to lag**

Annual job growth in Ohio is slowing. According to seasonally adjusted December data, released today by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), the state added just 38,500 in 2017. This is 11,200 fewer jobs than in 2016. The state is growing at half the national job growth rate (Ohio, 0.7 percent, U.S., 1.4 percent). December brought a slight increase in jobs (+2,500), a welcome break after two months of losses.

These data are subject to revisions. A major update will be released in early March. According to the preliminary data, 2017 was Ohio's worst year for job growth since the end of the 2007 recession. The state's best years followed large stimulus investments from the federal government and supports to the recovering auto industry (1.6 percent in 2011 and 1.8 percent in 2014). Since that 2014 peak, the state has been slipping.

"There is no trickle down," said Hannah Halbert, researcher with Policy Matters Ohio. "Policies that overwhelmingly favor corporations and the rich have made us weaker as a state. Tax cuts for the well-to-do strip revenue from the state so we cannot bring down the cost of higher education, or do enough to prevent and treat opiate addiction."

Ohio overhauled our tax system in 2005, cutting taxes for corporations and shifting taxes away from the wealthiest people in the state. Since that time, Ohio jobs have grown by a measly 2.4 percent. The nation grew by 10 percent. Tax cutting policies have continued and the jobs data reflect the same results: slow job growth and a struggling labor force.

The unemployment rate and data on the Ohio labor force are generated by a separate survey. Ohio also trails the nation on these measures. Ohio's unemployment rate improved to 4.7 percent in December, down from 4.8 percent a month earlier, but still slightly elevated compared to the nation's 4.1 percent. There's still slack in our labor market. The number of people employed or seeking work is still down by 200,000 since the start of the recession.

"In the 10 years since the Great Recession started, Ohioans did what they could to stay afloat," Halbert said. "Many depended on unemployment benefits to keep their homes and pay their bills. Enrollment rates in higher education climbed as workers and students worked to become more competitive in a labor market with few jobs, and even fewer good jobs. What should have been a time of investment to position the state to compete in the new economy was a time of retreat. If we want to bring more people into that recovery we need policies bring us closer to full employment and make work pay."

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