



**JobWatch**  
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## **Summer stagnation: Job growth slows, unemployment stays steady**

Ohio added 4,500 jobs in July according to seasonally adjusted data released today by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), but this growth is largely due to data revisions. June's job gain of 1,500 jobs was revised and now shows a loss of more than 900 jobs.

"Monthly job data are always reported as preliminary and subject to revision. Longer-term trends are better indicators of Ohio's economic health," said Hannah Halbert, project director with Policy Matters Ohio. "Ohio had fewer jobs in July than it did in January. The unemployment rate data remains positive but the summer slump in job growth shouldn't be dismissed."

Ohio's job growth rate for the last 12 months is just 0.5 percent. The national average is 1.5 percent. Over that time, Ohio has gained 25,200 jobs. If Ohio continues at this rate, 2019 will be the worst year for job growth, excepting recession-years, since 2005.

"Job growth in Ohio is sluggish. This week the bond market fueled speculation over an impending recession. Policy makers in Ohio missed an opportunity to strengthen our state against the inevitable by failing to eliminate major tax loopholes in the state budget. Allowing revenue to be spent on ineffective tax breaks for the wealthy means the state will have less ability to invest in and protect public programs like education, need-based college aid and local services when revenues drop during a downturn," said Halbert. "Short-sighted thinking will make it harder for the state, which already struggles to increase wage growth and bring down the poverty rate, to recover from a recession."

A separate survey also released today by ODJFS had somewhat better news for the state. The unemployment rate remained steady, at 4 percent, the lowest since 2001. The number of people working or seeking work also improved, with 9,000 entering the labor force. Most found employment, but unemployment increased by 2,000.

"It is not unusual for the surveys that generate the job data and the unemployment data to send mixed messages," said Halbert. "The unemployment data continues to hold steady, while job growth is struggling. Policymakers should prioritize action to recession-proof Ohio's investments. That means closing tax loopholes and giveaways to the rich, making education and workforce training more affordable, and making sure employers know about layoff aversion and workshare programs that can help soften downturns and keep people working."

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*Policy Matters Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan state policy research institute.*

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