



JobWatch  
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## The most jobs in Ohio history State has recovered decades of losses

**The takeaway:** Ohio reached a record high number of jobs in July, recovering the May 2000 job peak for the first time in 23 years. The state's unemployment rate set a new record low for the fourth straight month, reaching 3.3% in July. Inflation rose 0.2 points to 3.2% for July.

**The jobs numbers:** Seasonally adjusted data released today by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) show that Ohio employers added 12,100 jobs over the month, reaching 5,639,200 jobs in July and posting **the largest number of jobs in Ohio's history, according to today's unrevised data**. Prior to July, Ohio remained in a decades-long jobs deficit below its previous peak of 5,638,000 jobs set in May 2000. July's figure exceeds that by 1,200. The news comes two months after Ohio fully recovered COVID job losses in May.

This excellent news comes with a note of caution that the monthly numbers are subject to revision and an annual benchmarking, so the numbers could vary when more information is known. Ohio jobs have been on a steady climb nearly every month of the recovery and have trended toward this record over several months.

"Ohioans have waited 23 years to get the jobs back that our state lost in the early 2000's recession," said Policy Matters Ohio economist, Michael Shields. "If these numbers hold in next month's revision, this will be a watershed moment for Ohio's working people. Strong labor demand has already begun to present working people with better job choices; created space to bargain for higher wages and improved working conditions; and opened doors to people previously sidelined from work, including [people harmed by the criminal legal system](#), [people with disabilities](#) and others.

**The household survey:** The separate household survey showed Ohio's unemployment rate reached a new record low for the fourth month running, falling to 3.3% in July. The number of Ohioans in the workforce working or seeking a job was the same as in June at 5,817,000 and 6,000 people found jobs in July. About 101,000 fewer Ohioans (1.7%) are in the workforce than before the pandemic — a notable shortfall, since bringing all Ohioans who want to work back into the labor force is a policy priority. Their departure has contributed to the exceptional unemployment rate, since those out of the workforce don't get counted among the unemployed. This workforce is larger by 31,000 people than in May of 2000 when Ohio hit its previous jobs peak; [5,787,000 people were in the workforce that month](#), and the unemployment rate was 4.2%, with 49,000 more unemployed job seekers looking for work than in May 2000. Further job growth is possible by pulling more of those workers back into the job market. Doing so will likely require deeper state investments into child care to improve access and affordability, with attention to raising wages in that industry to attract the child care workers Ohio needs.

"This strong recovery owes much to the massive response by Congress to meet the scale of the crisis caused by COVID-19. After decades when sluggish job growth helped corporations hold down wages, federal action has delivered a strong job market with opportunities Ohioans

haven't seen in a generation. [Policymakers should do everything in their power to sustain it,](#)" said Shields. The Fed should pause interest rate hikes that slow job growth now that inflation is nearing pre-pandemic norms; state and federal lawmakers should continue direct supports for those who need them, including strong unemployment insurance provisions and Medicaid; and lawmakers should throw direct support behind working people by passing a livable minimum wage, enforcing laws against union busting, and ensuring all workers have the legal protections that connect to their status as employees instead of contractors.