



JobWatch
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Ohio's job growth rate slowed this fall

Seasonally-adjusted data released today by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services show that the state's job growth slowed over the fall, with a gain of just over 14,000 jobs since August. In November, Ohio added only 5,200 jobs. Job totals for both September and October were revised downward. Despite the recent slowdown, Ohio's 12-month job growth rate of 2.1 percent remains higher than the national average of 1.7 percent. As long as the annual revision of the data does not bring stark changes to the totals, 2018 will be one of best years for job growth since 1994, but the year is ending on a weaker note.

"Sluggish growth coupled with GM's decision to abandon its Lordstown assembly plant suggest the new year could be tough for many working families," Policy Matters Ohio Project Director Hannah said. "Workers who lose good-paying manufacturing jobs will struggle to find new opportunities that pay well. That loss in purchasing power will reverberate throughout the regional economy. Taxpayers saved GM, which earned \$2.5 billion in the last quarter alone. GM should do the right thing and invest in the people who have already invested so much in the success of the corporation."

Ohio has 703,300 manufacturing jobs, which make up 12.5 percent the state's total. For context, there are 493,600 accommodation and food service jobs. The Lordstown GM plant once employed 12,000 autoworkers. Until early last year, it employed 4,500 people who earned solid wages with real purchasing power. Today that number is just 1,500. The broader manufacturing economy will feel this loss. Ohio's Development Services Agency estimates that between 580 and 1,100 companies are part of the state's auto supply chain.

"Job growth has weakened over the last three-months, a departure from the relatively strong growth that dominated most of 2018," Halbert said. "This is disappointing news for a state that still struggles with recession-level poverty rates and labor force participation. Ohio is not at full employment and needs many more months of strong job growth to get there."

Ohio's unemployment rate remained at 4.6 percent, higher than the national rate of 3.7 percent. A year of relatively strong growth has not pulled people into the labor force. Rather, 18,000 fewer people were working or looking for work this November than last. Ohio's labor force has declined in each of the last four months.

"There are solutions to these problems," Halbert said. "Ohio must build an economy that works for all. Raising the minimum wage would help restore some lost purchasing power to Ohioans earning low-wages, enticing people who dropped out of the labor force to come back to work and setting a more reasonable wage floor. [Policies that support Ohio manufacturing](#) should be top priority to preserve jobs and regional economies."

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

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