



JobWatch
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Two months of job loss means fewer jobs in November than in July

Ohio lost jobs in November (-5,600) and October (-2,300), according to new seasonally adjusted data released today by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). That helped erase earlier growth and means Ohio had fewer jobs in November than it did in July. The state has made two successive, relatively sizable, downward revisions to prior months' data (revision of -10,400 jobs in September and -5,600 in October). Ohio continues to trail the U.S. 12-month job growth average, now by half (U.S. 1.4 percent, Ohio 0.7 percent).

"The new numbers paint a poor picture of Ohio's job situation," said Hannah Halbert, researcher with Policy Matters Ohio. "Ohio is struggling to keep pace with 2016 levels of growth, the year with the worst growth rate since the end of the recession, and we continue to fall short of the national average."

This month's report is a good reminder that the monthly numbers are always preliminary and subject to revision and annual benchmarking. These changes make the estimates more accurate but can also lead to swings in the data from what was initially reported. For these reasons, monthly numbers should not be treated with too much reverence.

"Ohio's longer trend remains one of slow growth," Halbert said. "Tax cuts have not created a jobs miracle in Ohio, and have shorted the state's ability to make investments that would give more Ohioans a shot at the middle class. Tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy will not protect children in foster care, educate a first-generation college student, or help someone leaving prison get back on track."

A separate survey also released today by ODJFS has a rosier report on the state's unemployment situation. Ohio's unemployment rate fell to 4.8 percent from 5.1 percent. That's good news for a state that needs an additional 203,000 people working or looking for work, just to return to our pre-recession labor force level.

The two surveys used in this report occasionally conflict. The sample sizes and methodology are very different. The jobs numbers are from the establishment survey, a survey of firms. The household survey generates the unemployment data and surveys people. The establishment survey defines a "job" as the number of *nonfarm* workers paid for work any time during the survey week. The household survey has a broader definition of "employment" that includes farm workers, some self-employed workers, and some employed workers who are not currently working because of weather, vacation, illness or other leave time reasons. These differences help explain how the two surveys, which seem to report on similar indicators can produce different results. It also underscores the importance of looking at longer term trends rather than month-to-month changes.

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