

# POLICY MATTERS OHIO

## JOB WATCH

May 2005

### Modest improvement shown in Ohio's job market

Ohio's labor market is showing modest signs of improvement this spring. According to the latest seasonally adjusted payroll numbers issued May 20 by the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services, the state has gained nearly 16,000 jobs since January, the recent low point in employment. However, employment still remains well below where it was when the recession officially ended in November, 2001, and 168,500 or 3 percent below where it was when the recession began in March of that year.

Job gains over the past quarter trailed the national average. Overall, Ohio ranks behind only Massachusetts, Michigan and Illinois in relative job losses since the recession began. At this point after the early 1990s recession started, 177,600 nonfarm wage and salary jobs had been created in Ohio, an increase of 3.6 percent.

Month-to-month data can be volatile and each month's statistics are later revised, so it is unwise to put too much weight in a single month's statistics. The ODJFS adjusted its March count of nonfarm wage and salary employment upward by 4,800. The number of jobs in the state grew from 2003 lows to a high last summer, but then plateaued and dropped through January. With the April increase of 6,400 jobs, employment is 15,200 above where it was a year ago but slightly below the recent high last August.

The ODJFS also reported from a separate survey of households that the Ohio unemployment rate dropped to 6.1 percent in April, down from 6.3 percent the previous month. The number of people employed grew and the number of unemployed was 363,000, down 11,000 from the month before.

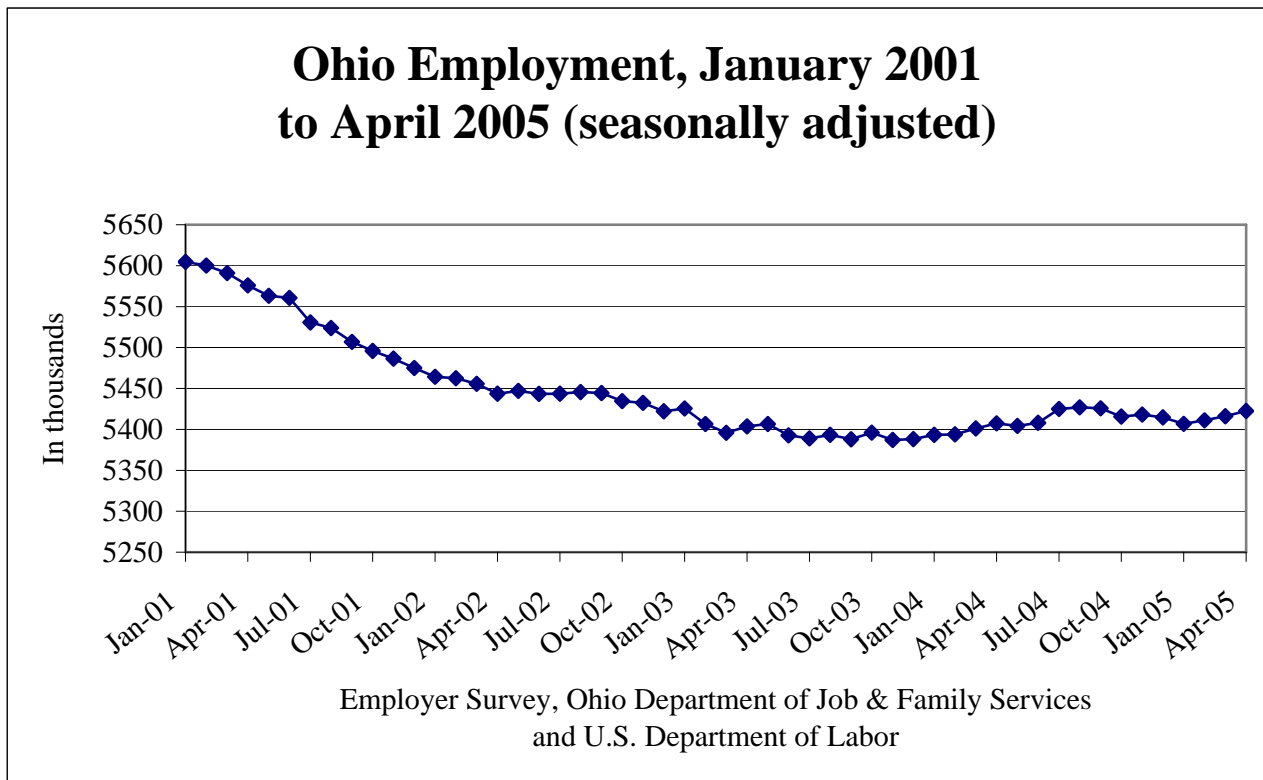
The following table by the Economic Policy Institute and Policy Matters Ohio puts the latest Ohio employment numbers in perspective:

	4/2005	1/2001	Percent Change since 1/2001	3/2001 (Start of recession)	Percent Change since 3/2001	11/2001 (End of recession)	Percent Change since 11/2001
<b>Total Jobs</b>	5,422.5	5,604.6	-3.2%	5,591	-3.0%	5,486.4	-1.2%
<b>Manuf. Jobs</b>	823.1	998.4	-17.6%	984.4	-16.4%	915.5	-10.1%

Source: Employer Survey, Ohio Department of Job & Family Services and U.S. Department of Labor, number of jobs in thousands.

The state has yet to recover all of the jobs lost since the recession officially ended in November 2001. At the comparable point after the end of the early 1990s recession, Ohio had gained 265,000 jobs, an increase of 5.5 percent, compared to the loss of 63,900, or 1.2 percent, since November 2001.

Though there have been overall job gains since January, manufacturing jobs have not increased since then. They remain near the low reported last June, according to the latest ODJFS employment report. Professional and business services accounted for the largest share of the quarter's job gains.



*JobWatch*, an ongoing project of the Economic Policy Institute ([www.epinet.org](http://www.epinet.org)), tracks current trends in the U.S. labor market and offers up-to-date readings on its status.

*Policy Matters Ohio*, a nonprofit research institute, assists in the evaluation and release of the data in Ohio. A detailed description of the JobWatch project can be found at <http://www.jobwatch.org/>.

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