

POLICY MATTERS OHIO

JOB WATCH

May 2006

More improvement in Ohio's job market

Ohio's job market continued to show improvement last month, as a survey of employers showed a jump in employment to the highest level since February 2002.

The reported increase in April employment was the largest month-to-month increase since December 1999, according to the latest seasonally adjusted payroll numbers released by the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services May 23. However, month-to-month data can be volatile, so it is unwise to put too much weight in a single month's statistics.

Overall, the state has gained 28,400 jobs in the last year. These numbers for nonfarm wage and salary employment are based on a survey of employers. Despite gains during the past two months, Ohio still has not come close to restoring the jobs it had in March 2001, at the start of the last recession. While U.S. job gains have not been robust, the nation has gained more than 2.5 million jobs since then, or 1.9 percent. Ohio, meanwhile, has lost 130,900, or 2.3 percent.

The ODJFS also reported from a separate survey of households that the Ohio unemployment rate grew to 5.5 percent in April, an increase from 5.0 percent in March. Most economists agree that the survey of employers is more reliable than the survey of households, which covers a much smaller sample. It's possible that previous declines in the state unemployment rate, which dropped from 5.9 percent last December, had overstated the actual reduction. More people also may be looking for work because of an improving job market, as the ODJFS suggests.

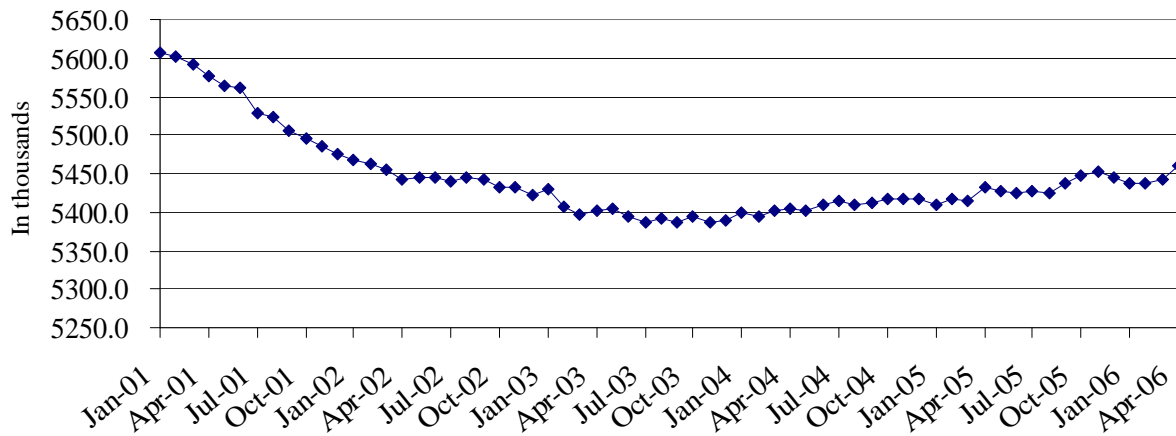
The following statistics, based on the latest seasonally adjusted ODJFS payroll numbers, highlight changes in the Ohio job market since 2001:

	4/2006	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
Total Jobs	5,460.8	5,606.1	-2.6%	5,591.7	-2.3%	5,486.2	-0.5%
Manuf. Jobs	810.0	998.8	-18.9%	984.6	-17.7%	915.7	-11.5%

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

According to the employer survey, Ohio is one of the just six states that have lost jobs since the recession officially ended in November 2001. Ohio has lost 0.5 percent, more than any other state except Michigan, Massachusetts and hurricane-wracked Louisiana.

Ohio Employment, January 2001 to April 2006 (seasonally adjusted)



Employer Survey, Ohio Department of Job & Family Services
and U.S. Department of Labor

JobWatch is an ongoing project of the **Economic Policy Institute** (<http://www.epinet.org>) and **Policy Matters Ohio**, (<http://www.policymattersohio.org>), both nonprofit policy research institutes.

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