

Ohio jobs data sends mixed messages for March

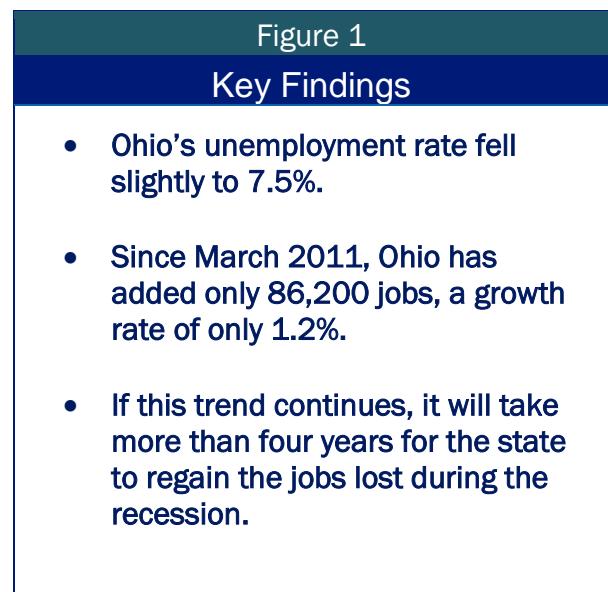
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Data from two separate surveys released by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) today reveal a mixed message on the state economy. Ohio's unemployment rate fell slightly in March to land at 7.5 percent according to data released from ODJFS's survey of households for March 2012. The household survey also showed that Ohio's labor force continued to grow, and the employment to population ratio, the percent of the working-age population that is employed, also slightly improved.

A separate survey of employers also released today by ODJFS suggests that the big job gains seen in January and February may be ending, as the state is estimated to have lost 9,500 jobs. Month-to-month data is highly subject to revision, and it is ill advised to make too much of month-to-month comparisons, particularly when the surveys express mixed and contradictory messages. Revisions to March's data are likely.

There is more certainty in examining job trends. Even with the positive reports in both January and February, recovery in Ohio remains painfully slow. Since the official end of the great recession (June, 2009), the state has had modest job growth of just 1.7 percent; adding only 86,200 jobs. That rate has slowed over the last twelve months. Since March 2011, the state has only grown by 1.2 percent. At that rate, it will take more than four years to generate the additional 283,400 jobs needed to return Ohio to pre-2007 recession levels of employment. That figure would be even higher if population growth were taken into account.

Figure 2 highlights changes in the Ohio job market from key points in time. These include the start of the 2001 and 2007 recessions, and the 2005 approval of a major state tax overhaul, which promised speedier economic growth. These figures include the latest seasonally-adjusted data from the monthly survey of employers (Current Employer Survey) done by ODJFS in co-operation with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.



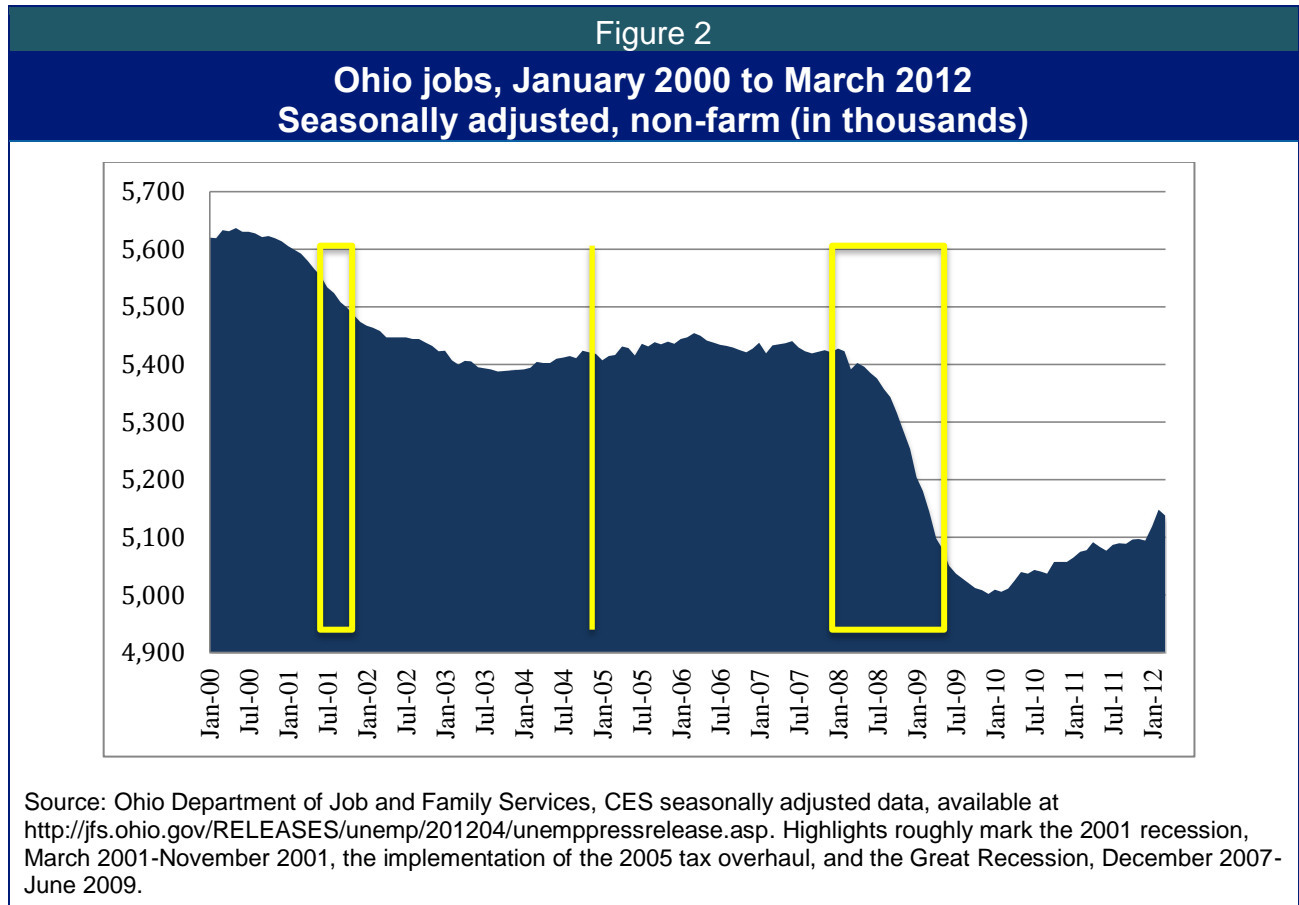


Table 1 details these changes. Not only is the state struggling to recover from the 2007 recession, Ohio never recovered from the 2001 recession, having lost more than 454,000 jobs since that recession began. Public jobs continue to decline. Ohio has lost 28,400 lost since the start of the 2007 recession, with much of the loss born by federal and local government workforces. Manufacturing continues to post small gains in 2012 but the sector has a very long way to recovery, remaining more than 14 percent behind the level at the start of the 2007 recession.

Table 1
Change in Ohio jobs by sector (in thousands)

	March 2012	Job change since 2001 recession start	% change since 2001 recession	Job change since 2005 tax overhaul	% change since 2005 tax overhaul	Job change since 2007 recession start	% change since 2007 recession
Total jobs	5,137.0	-454.9	-8.13%	-277.9	-5.13%	-283.4	-5.23%
Manufacturing	653.5	-331.3	-33.64%	-157.1	-19.38%	-107.2	-14.09%
Public sector	764.9	-27.1	-3.42%	-31.9	-4.0%	-28.4	-3.58%

Source: Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, CES seasonally adjusted data, available at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/RELEASES/unemp/201204/unempresrelease.asp>

While the March data presents mixed messages, it seems clear that even with the recent gains Ohio is a long way from recovery.

Recent WARN notices in Ohio

The Worker Adjustment Retraining Notification (WARN) Act protects workers and communities by requiring employers with more than 100 employees to provide 60 days advance notice of plant closures or mass layoffs. Federal, state, and local government entities are not covered. WARN triggers rapid response services, which can include layoff aversion, training and dislocated worker assistance. As Table 2 shows, eight WARN Act notices were filed with ODJFS in March, impacting 747 workers, of whom 350 are in a union.

Table 2			
WARN Act notices filed in Ohio, March 2012			
Employer	Location	Type of work	Impacted workers
AMG Direct (Delia's Inc.)	Westerville (Franklin)	Call Center for Retail Sales	79
AISS (Sterling Infosystems)	Independence (Cuyahoga)	Background Screening	38
AISS (Sterling Infosystems)	Fairlawn (Summit)	Background Screening	35
Graham Packaging Co. (Delta Plant)	Delta (Fulton)	Packaging	65
QinetiQ North America	Cleveland (Cuyahoga)	Advanced software development and systems engineering	115
Worthington Metal Fabricators, LLC	Akron (Summit)	Metal Fabrication	65
Appleton Papers, Inc.	West Carrollton (Montgomery)	Paper Mill	330*
The Anderson-DuBose Co.	Solon (Cuyahoga)	Distribution	20*

Source: Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services, WARN Act Notices, available at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/warn/current.stm>, last accessed April 19, 2012. * Unionized workplace.

Conclusion

While today's report presents conflicting data, one thing is clear: Ohio remains a long way from recovery. We need increased investment to restore our communities and grow good jobs.

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