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Ohio is riding a job-growth seesaw State's slow progress stalls with August losses

Ohio lost more than 8,000 jobs in August, according to seasonally adjusted data from a survey of employers released today by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The loss erases a small gain in July, and leaves the state down more than 13,000 jobs since our 2013 peak in May.

While the August data are discouraging, monthly numbers are always preliminary and subject to revision, making it unwise to make too much of the monthly fluctuations. This is particularly true in light of the seesawing trend that has taken hold in Ohio since the spring.

Nevertheless, the longer-term job-growth pattern indicates that the state continues to struggle.

With August's loss, Ohio has only added 32,500 jobs (0.6 percent) in the last 12 months. Between August 2011 and August 2012, the job-growth rate of 1.2 percent was more than double what it is now. In order to recover the jobs lost since the start of the recession the state would need to add another 217,600, without considering jobs needed to match population growth. Since the recovery began more than four years ago the state has added only 157,400.

"Ohio's already anemic recovery has slowed," said Hannah Halbert, workforce researcher with Policy Matters Ohio.

Data from the separate ODJFS survey of households showed Ohio's unemployment rate ticking up to 7.3 percent, back at the national average for the first time in two-and-a-half years. This survey shows that the number of unemployed increased by 3,000 last month. Ohio's labor force shrank again, falling by 13,000, and is now barely above the recent low reached last fall.

"Since 2005, Ohio's job-growth strategy has focused on tax cuts," said Halbert. "Since then, the state has lost more than 214,000 jobs, and the survey shows that we have the fourth worst job-growth rate in the nation. Tax cuts clearly aren't helping Ohio get back on track."

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