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Growth, just barely: After April's big loss Ohio adds jobs, but not many

Ohio, like the nation had very little job growth in May. The state added just 9,200 jobs last month, not enough to recover the number of jobs shed in April. Even with the nation adding a scant 38,000 jobs in May, Ohio still trails the national job growth average. Jobs data released today by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) show that the state has only grown by 1.2 percent since the official start of the 2007 recession. In total, Ohio has added only 67,200 jobs in those eight years. The nation as a whole has grown by nearly four percent over that same time.

“Job growth is better than job loss, but the data released today demonstrate that Ohio continues to have a slow and shallow recovery. The state continues to underperform the nation, even when national growth is disappointing,” said Hannah Halbert, researcher with Policy Matters Ohio.

The state made very modest gains in the number of Ohioans working or actively seeking work (+9,000) according to data from a separate survey of households, also released today by ODJFS. This is much needed as Ohio’s labor force is 2.5 percent smaller than it was when the 2007 recession officially began. In contrast the national labor force has grown by 3.0 percent over that time. Ohio’s unemployment rate nudged back down to 5.1 percent, but remains slightly above the national rate of 4.7 percent.

“The small growth in Ohioans entering the labor force moves us in the right direction, albeit modestly. Long-term, however, it is clear that too many communities have been left out of the recovery,” said Halbert. “Ohio could reverse this by prioritizing employment. The state should upgrade our infrastructure, reinvest in our local services, and make post-secondary education affordable, all of which would create jobs and opportunity.”

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