

## **Revisions to seasonally adjusted national household survey labor force series effective in January 2020**

At the end of each calendar year, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reestimates the seasonal factors for the Current Population Survey (CPS, or household survey) series by including another full year of data in the estimation process.

Following this annual reestimation, BLS seasonally adjusted national household survey labor force data for the previous 5 years are subject to revision. The revised historical data are released in January each year with the publication of the latest December data.

As a result, each year's data are generally subject to five revisions before the values are considered final. The fifth and final revisions to data for the earliest of the 5 years are usually quite small, while the first-time revisions to data for the most recent years are generally much larger. For the major aggregate labor force series, however, the first-time revisions rarely alter the essential trends observed in the initial estimates. For detailed information about the seasonal adjustment procedures, see [www.bls.gov/cps/seasonal-adjustment-methodology.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cps/seasonal-adjustment-methodology.htm).

### **Revisions to 2019 estimates**

This year's revisions incorporate data through December 2019 and provide revised estimates for January 2015 through November 2019 for all previous seasonally adjusted labor force series.

An important criterion for evaluating alternative methods of seasonal adjustment is how close initial estimates are to the results of subsequent revisions. Users of seasonally adjusted data are often most interested in current information. Thus, it is desirable that the initial seasonally adjusted estimates be as close as possible to the improved estimates made after more data become available. Even though the revisions currently being released for the 2019 seasonally adjusted data are not final, the first revisions are usually the largest and often indicate the direction of subsequent revisions.

Table 1 shows the civilian unemployment rates for January to November 2019, as first published and as revised. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate did not change for any month in 2019. (Note that December 2019 is the final month of the series and has no revision.)

**Table 1. Seasonally adjusted unemployment rates in 2019 and change due to revision**

Month	As first published	As revised	Change
January .....	4.0	4.0	0.0
February .....	3.8	3.8	0.0
March .....	3.8	3.8	0.0
April .....	3.6	3.6	0.0
May .....	3.6	3.6	0.0
June .....	3.7	3.7	0.0
July .....	3.7	3.7	0.0
August .....	3.7	3.7	0.0
September .....	3.5	3.5	0.0
October .....	3.6	3.6	0.0
November .....	3.5	3.5	0.0

**New seasonally adjusted series**

With the publication of The Employment Situation for January 2020 on February 7, 2020, two not seasonally adjusted series currently displayed in Summary table A—persons marginally attached to the labor force and discouraged workers—will be replaced with new seasonally adjusted series. The new seasonally adjusted series will be available in the BLS online database back to 1994.

Persons marginally attached to the labor force and discouraged workers are inputs into three alternative measures of labor underutilization. Therefore, with the release of data for January 2020, data for U-4, U-5, and U-6 will reflect the new seasonally adjusted series. Revised data back to 1994 will be available in the BLS online database.

With the release of data for July 2019, seasonally adjusted labor force data for all veterans, male veterans, all nonveterans, and male nonveterans became available in the BLS online database. The adjusted series for these four groups are the labor force, the labor force participation rate, employed persons, the employment-population ratio, unemployed persons, the unemployment rate, and persons not in the labor force. Seasonally adjusted data for veterans and nonveterans are available back to 2003.

**Availability of revised series**

These revisions replace the seasonally adjusted estimates previously published. Revised historical seasonally adjusted labor force data are available in various forms on the BLS website at [www.bls.gov/cps/data.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cps/data.htm), including text file access at <https://download.bls.gov/pub/time.series/ln/> to all of the revised data. The seasonally adjusted data last published for 2014 and earlier years were not further revised.