
Advance copies of this statement are made available to the press under lock-up conditions with the explicit understanding that the data are embargoed until 8:30 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

Statement of

William J. Wiatrowski
Acting Commissioner
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Friday, November 3, 2017

In October, nonfarm payroll employment rose by 261,000, after changing little in September. The unemployment rate edged down to 4.1 percent in October. Employment rose sharply in food services and drinking places, mostly offsetting a decline in September that largely reflected the impact of Hurricanes Irma and Harvey. Job gains also occurred over the month in professional and business services, manufacturing, and health care.

Incorporating revisions for September and August, which increased nonfarm payroll employment by 90,000, monthly job gains have averaged 162,000 over the past 3 months.

Employment in food services and drinking places increased by 89,000 in October. This followed a decline of 98,000 in September. Many workers in this industry who were off payrolls due to the hurricanes returned to their jobs in October.

Professional and business services added 50,000 jobs over

the month, about in line with its average monthly gain over the prior 12 months.

In October, employment in manufacturing increased by 24,000, with job gains in computer and electronic products (+5,000) and chemicals (+4,000). Employment in fabricated metals continued to trend up. Manufacturing has added 156,000 jobs since an employment low in November 2016.

Employment in health care rose by 22,000 in October, as employment continued to trend up in ambulatory care services. Health care has added an average of 24,000 jobs per month thus far in 2017, compared with an average gain of 32,000 per month in 2016.

Employment in other major industries--including mining, construction, wholesale trade, retail trade, transportation and warehousing, information, financial activities, and government--changed little over the month.

Average hourly earnings of all employees on private nonfarm payrolls changed little in October (-1 cent), after increasing by 12 cents in September. Over the past 12 months, average hourly earnings have risen by 2.4 percent. From September 2016 to September 2017, the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) increased by 2.2 percent (on a seasonally adjusted basis).

Turning now to measures from the household survey, the unemployment rate edged down to 4.1 percent in October and is down by 0.7 percentage point since January. The number of unemployed people declined by 281,000 to 6.5 million in October and has fallen by 1.1 million since January.

Among the unemployed in October, 1.6 million had been searching for work for 27 weeks or more. These long-term unemployed accounted for 24.8 percent of the total unemployed.

The labor force participation rate declined by 0.4 percentage point in October to 62.7 percent. Over the past year, the labor force participation rate has shown no clear trend.

The employment-population ratio declined by 0.2 percentage point to 60.2 percent in October, following an increase of 0.3 percentage point in September. This ratio is up by 0.5 percentage point over the past 12 months.

In October, the number of people working part time for economic reasons, also referred to as involuntary part-time workers, declined by 369,000 to 4.8 million. Over the past 12 months, the number of involuntary part-time workers has decreased by 1.1 million.

Among those neither working nor looking for work in October, 1.5 million people were marginally attached to the labor force, little changed from a year earlier. Discouraged workers, a subset of the marginally attached who believe that no

jobs are available for them, numbered 524,000 in October, essentially unchanged from a year earlier. (People who are marginally attached to the labor force had not looked for work in the 4 weeks prior to the survey but wanted a job, were available for work, and had looked for a job within the last 12 months.)

In summary, nonfarm payroll employment increased by 261,000 in October, after changing little in September. The unemployment rate edged down to 4.1 percent over the month.