

News

Unemployment

Jobless Rate Decreased to 7.7 Percent In November, 146,000 Jobs Added, BLS Says

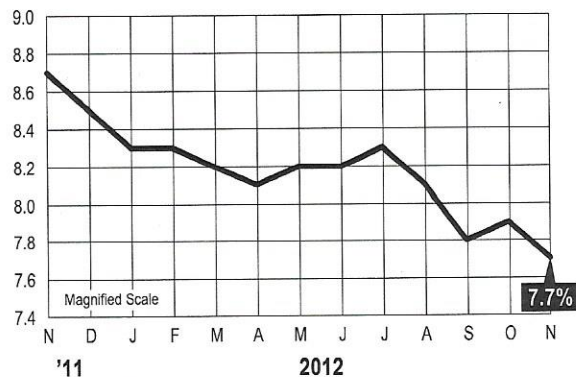
Workforce analysts expressed cautious optimism about Bureau of Labor Statistics figures released Dec. 7 that show employers added 146,000 jobs in November and the unemployment rate dropped to 7.7 percent, from 7.9 percent the previous month.

Nonfarm payroll employment expanded in retail trade, health care, and professional and business services, BLS said.

"We're in this very slow and steady pattern of growth," Joseph Coombs, workplace trends and forecasting specialist for the Society for Human Resource Management, told BNA Dec. 7. "Growth is good, but we need more. Twelve million people are still out of work, and there are huge numbers of long-term unemployed."

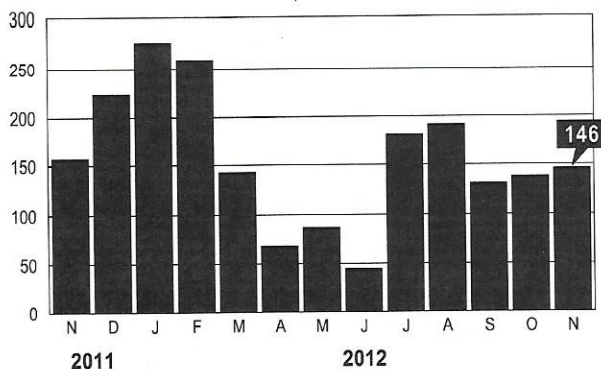
Civilian Unemployment Rate in November

Seasonally Adjusted, in Percent



Monthly Change in Nonfarm Employment

All Establishments, in Thousands of Jobs



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

ABNA Graphic/hrr248g1

Kathy Bostjancic, director of macroeconomic analysis for the Conference Board, said in a written statement Dec. 7 that "the gain on the month would have been even better if not for the mildly restraining impact from Super Storm Sandy and the looming fiscal cliff." The fiscal cliff describes a combination of expiring tax cuts and major government spending cuts scheduled to take effect Dec. 31.

BLS noted that since the beginning of 2012, employment growth has averaged 151,000 per month, about the same as the average monthly job gain of 153,000 in 2011.

In November, retail trade employment increased by 53,000, BLS said, and has risen by 140,000 over the past three months. Job gains last month took place in clothing and clothing accessory stores (+33,000), in general merchandise stores (+10,000), and in electronics and appliance stores (+9,000).

Employment in professional and business services expanded by 43,000 last month, BLS reported. Employment continued to rise in computer systems design and related services.

Health care employment also increased in November by 20,000 jobs, primarily in hospitals (+8,000) and nursing care facilities (+5,000), BLS said. It noted that health care has added an average of 26,000 jobs per month this year.

Employment in wholesale trade rose over the month by 13,000 jobs, BLS reported. The industry has grown by 228,000 jobs since May 2010.

Another sector that experienced growth in November is information employment, which added 12,000 jobs, mostly in motion picture and sound recording.

BLS said leisure and hospitality employment also continued to increase (+23,000 jobs). It noted that during the past 12 months, the industry has added 305,000 jobs.

While the unemployment rates for adult men (7.2 percent), adult women (7 percent), teenagers (23.5 percent), whites (6.8 percent), and Hispanics (10 percent) showed little or no change in November, BLS said the unemployment rate for blacks declined (13.2 percent) over the month. The jobless rate for Asians was 6.4 percent, reflecting little change from a year earlier.

HR Standards

SHRM Drops Human Capital Metrics Standard In Face of Opposition From Business Groups

In response to opposition from the business community, the Society for Human Resource Management has withdrawn the proposed human capital metrics standard it was developing for the American National Standards Institute, SHRM announced Nov. 29.

The standard, Human Resource Indices for Investors, was intended to help investors evaluate the worth of a

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Jobless Rate Inched Up to 7.9 Percent Last Month, With 157,000 Jobs Added, BLS Says

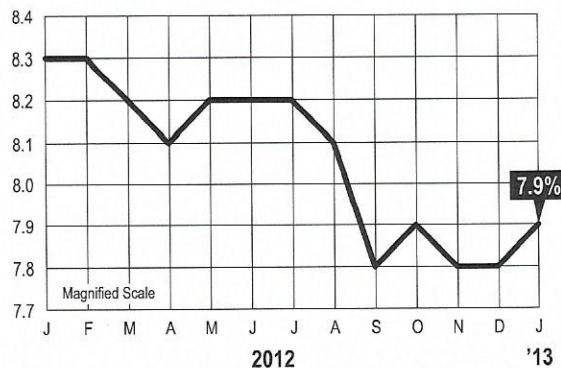
The unemployment rate rose to 7.9 percent in January, from 7.8 percent in December, while the economy added 157,000 new jobs, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics figures released Feb. 1. The agency noted that the unemployment rate has shown little or no change since September.

In January, nonfarm payroll employment increased in retail trade, construction, health care, and wholesale trade, BLS said, but decreased in transportation and warehousing.

"If I were an HR professional, I'd be encouraged," Joseph Coombs, workplace trends and forecasting specialist for the Society for Human Resource Management, told BNA Feb. 1. "It shows that there are still jobs being created, but it comes down to demand for your company's product."

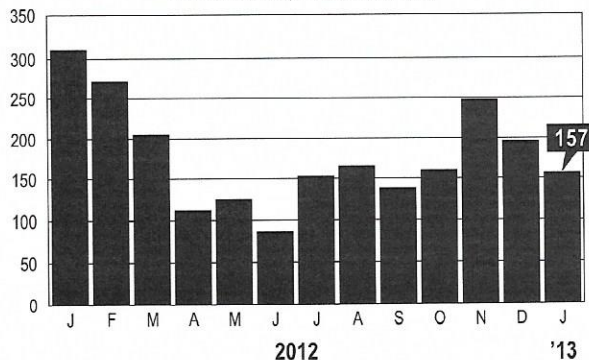
Civilian Unemployment Rate in January

Seasonally Adjusted, in Percent



Monthly Change in Nonfarm Employment*

All Establishments, in Thousands of Jobs



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

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*Graphic incorporates benchmark and revisions to seasonal adjustment factors for establishment survey data.

Kathy Bostjancic, director of macroeconomic analysis at The Conference Board, said Feb. 1 in a written statement: "[B]usiness has long wondered when demand would improve enough to warrant adding to staffing levels. The January job gain may represent that tipping point."

The most encouraging sign, Coombs said, is the increase of 28,000 construction jobs created in January. "This sector has grown, according to BLS, by about 300,000 jobs in the past two years, but the good news there is that one third of that growth has come in the last four months," he noted. "That's really good news for the broader economy, because we lost 2 million construction jobs during the Great Recession. So these are the folks who have been out of work for an extended period of time."

At the same time, Coombs said the January employment figures are "not great." "There's still more than 12 million people unemployed, and 4.7 million have been out of work for half a year or more," he said. "Those numbers really haven't been changing that much from month to month. So while there's progress, it's a long way to go before we can talk about being in full recovery in the labor market."

BLS Commissioner Erica L. Groshen noted in a written statement about the January employment figures that retail trade employment increased by 33,000 over the month and has expanded by 213,000 jobs over the past 12 months. Sectors adding jobs in January included clothing and accessories stores (+10,000 jobs), motor vehicle and parts dealers (+7,000 jobs), and electronics and appliance stores (+5,000 jobs).

Health care added 23,000 jobs in January, BLS said, which is about the same as the average monthly gains in this industry during 2012. Last month, ambulatory health care services such as doctors' offices and outpatient care centers added 28,000 jobs, BLS figures show, but employment in nursing and residential care decreased by 8,000 jobs.

BLS noted that wholesale trade grew by 15,000 jobs in January, primarily in nondurable goods. That industry has expanded by 291,000 jobs since reaching its recent low point in May 2010, BLS said.

Transportation and warehousing employment declined by 14,000 jobs in January, BLS figures showed, with couriers and messengers losing 19,000 jobs over the month.

NLRB

As Battle Rages Over Recess Appointments, Labor Board Confronts Deadlines and Choices

A Jan. 25 ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit that two of the three current members of the National Labor Relations Board were given unconstitutional recess appointments