

---

Transmission of material in this statement is embargoed until  
8:30 a.m. (ET) Friday, March 4, 2022.

---

Statement of

William W. Beach  
Commissioner  
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Friday, March 4, 2022

Nonfarm payroll employment rose by 678,000 in February, and the unemployment rate edged down to 3.8 percent. Employment growth was widespread, led by gains in leisure and hospitality, professional and business services, health care, and construction.

Employment is down by 2.1 million, or 1.4 percent, from its level before the onset of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in February 2020.

In February, employment growth continued in leisure and hospitality (+179,000) with job gains in food services and drinking places (+124,000) and accommodation (+28,000). Employment in leisure and hospitality is down by 1.5 million, or 9.0 percent, from its February 2020 level.

Employment rose by 95,000 in professional and business services in February. Over the month, job gains occurred in temporary help services (+36,000), management of companies and

enterprises (+12,000), management and technical consulting services (+10,000), and scientific research and development services (+8,000). Employment in professional and business services is 596,000 higher than in February 2020, largely in temporary help services (+240,000), computer systems design and related services (+154,000), and management and technical consulting services (+152,000).

Health care added 64,000 jobs in February. Employment increased in home health care services (+20,000), offices of physicians (+15,000), and offices of other health practitioners (+12,000). Health care employment is 306,000 below its February 2020 level.

Construction employment rose by 60,000 in February, following little change in January. Job growth was concentrated in specialty trade contractors (+44,000), with both the residential (+24,000) and nonresidential (+20,000) components contributing to the gain. Construction employment is slightly below (-11,000) its February 2020 level.

In February, job growth continued in transportation and warehousing (+48,000). Employment increased in warehousing and storage (+11,000), couriers and messengers (+9,000), support activities for transportation (+9,000), and air transportation (+7,000). Employment in transportation and warehousing is 584,000 above its February 2020 level, with particularly strong

growth in warehousing and storage (+420,000) and couriers and messengers (+240,000).

Retail trade added 37,000 jobs in February. Employment rose in building material and garden supply stores (+12,000), furniture and home furnishings stores (+6,000), and gasoline stations (+5,000). Retail trade employment is 104,000 higher than in February 2020.

In February, manufacturing added 36,000 jobs. Employment rose by 20,000 in durable goods industries. Job gains occurred in fabricated metal products (+11,000), machinery (+8,000), electrical equipment and appliances (+4,000), nonmetallic mineral products (+3,000), furniture and related products (+3,000), and primary metals (+3,000). These gains were partially offset by a job loss in motor vehicles and parts (-18,000). Nondurable goods manufacturing also added jobs in February (+16,000). Manufacturing employment is down by 178,000 from its February 2020 level.

Employment in financial activities grew by 35,000 in February, with job gains of 16,000 each in finance and insurance and in real estate. Employment in financial activities is 31,000 higher than its February 2020 level.

Social assistance added 31,000 jobs in February, with two-thirds of the gain occurring in individual and family services

(+21,000). Employment in social assistance is down by 152,000 since February 2020.

Employment in the other services industry rose by 25,000 in February, with a job gain in repair and maintenance (+10,000). Employment in the other services industry is 317,000, or 5.3 percent, below its February 2020 level.

Wholesale trade added 18,000 jobs in February, but employment in the industry is down by 113,000 since February 2020.

Employment in mining increased by 9,000 in February, with job gains in support activities for mining (+6,000) and oil and gas extraction (+2,000). Since a recent low in February 2021, mining employment has grown by 62,000.

In February, employment showed little or no change in information and government.

The average workweek for all private-sector workers rose by 0.1 hour in February to 34.7 hours. The average workweek for manufacturing rose by 0.4 hour to 40.7 hours.

Average hourly earnings of all employees on private nonfarm payrolls, at \$31.58, changed little in February (+1 cent), following large increases in recent months. Over the past 12 months, average hourly earnings have increased by 5.1 percent.

Turning to the labor market indicators from the household survey, both the unemployment rate, at 3.8 percent in February,

and the number of unemployed people, at 6.3 million, edged down over the month. Both measures remain above their February 2020 levels (3.5 percent and 5.7 million, respectively).

Among the major worker groups, the unemployment rates for adult men (3.5 percent) and Hispanics (4.4 percent) declined in February. The jobless rates for adult women (3.6 percent), teenagers (10.3 percent), Whites (3.3 percent), Blacks (6.6 percent), and Asians (3.1 percent) showed little or no change.

Among the unemployed, the number of people on temporary layoff, at 888,000 in February, changed little over the month. The number of permanent job losers, at 1.6 million, also changed little in February. Both measures are higher than their February 2020 levels of 780,000 and 1.3 million, respectively.

In February, the number of people jobless less than 5 weeks declined by 286,000 to 2.1 million. The number of people unemployed for 27 weeks or more (often referred to as the long-term unemployed) was essentially unchanged at 1.7 million. These individuals accounted for 26.7 percent of the unemployed in February. The number of long-term unemployed is 581,000 above its February 2020 level.

The labor force participation rate, at 62.3 percent, changed little over the month. The employment-population ratio edged up to 59.9 percent in February. Both measures are up over

the year but remain below their February 2020 levels (63.4 percent and 61.2 percent, respectively).

In February, the number of people working part time for economic reasons increased by 418,000 to 4.1 million but remains below its February 2020 level of 4.4 million.

The number of people not in the labor force who currently want a job declined by 349,000 to 5.4 million in February. This measure remains above its February 2020 level of 5.0 million.

Among those who were not in the labor force but wanted a job, 1.5 million were marginally attached to the labor force in February, little changed over the month. (People who are marginally attached to the labor force had not actively 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.) The number of discouraged workers, a subset of the marginally attached who believed that no jobs were available for them, was also little changed at 391,000 in February.

Looking at supplemental pandemic-related measures from the household survey (these supplemental data are not seasonally adjusted), the share of employed people who teleworked because of the pandemic declined to 13.0 percent in February. These data refer only to employed people who teleworked or worked from home for pay at some point in the last 4 weeks specifically because of the pandemic; they do not include all instances of telework.

In February, the number of people who reported that they had been unable to work because their employer closed or lost business due to the pandemic fell to 4.2 million, following a sharp rise in the prior month. (These individuals did not work at all or worked fewer hours at some point in the last 4 weeks due to the pandemic.)

Among those who reported in February that they were unable to work because of pandemic-related closures or lost business, 20.3 percent received at least some pay from their employer for the hours not worked, down from the prior month.

Among those not in the labor force in February, 1.2 million people were prevented from looking for work due to the pandemic, down from January. (To be counted as unemployed, by definition, individuals must either be actively searching for work or on temporary layoff.)

In summary, nonfarm payroll employment increased by 678,000 in February, and the unemployment rate edged down to 3.8 percent.