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BLS Data: Wisconsin Unemployment Rate Drops to 3.9 Percent, Lowest Since January 2001

Wisconsin's total employment increased to its highest point ever when compared to updated monthly estimates from prior years

MADISON – The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) today released the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) latest monthly job and unemployment estimates for Wisconsin. The release includes preliminary estimates for January 2017 as well as updated estimates for December 2016.

Highlights of today's release of BLS estimates for January 2017 include:

- A preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 3.9% in January, down from 4.3% in January 2016 and below the national rate of 4.8%. The state's 3.9% rate in January is down 0.2 points from the updated 4.1% unemployment rate in December 2016 and is the lowest rate since January 2001. Additionally, the number of unemployed individuals is at its lowest point since February 2001.
- Total employment increased by 20,500 over the year, meaning more *people* were employed than ever before in Wisconsin in January 2017 when compared to updated 2016 monthly estimates. In addition, January 2017 shows the highest number of *jobs* than any point in history when compared to updated monthly estimates in 2016.
- According to seasonally adjusted data, Wisconsin added an estimated 13,600 private sector jobs and 16,100 total nonfarm jobs from January 2016 to January 2017, marking the highest number of total jobs ever when compared to updated monthly estimates.
- Wisconsin's January 2017 Labor Force Participation Rate increased to 68.1% and was 5.2 percentage points higher than the national rate of 62.9% during the month.

DWD today also published BLS' updated monthly employment [estimates](#) covering 2016 and previous years showing Wisconsin added 200,300 private-sector jobs since December 2010. BLS adjusted the monthly job estimates through an annual process called "benchmarking" to bring the sample-based series into closer alignment with actual job counts from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). The latest available QCEW data shows Wisconsin added nearly 25,600 private-sector jobs between September 2015 and September 2016.

Secretary Allen issued the following statement about today's report:

"Under Governor Walker, Wisconsin's economy is showing strength with its lowest unemployment rate and number of unemployed since 2001," Secretary Allen said. "In addition, Wisconsin is seeing both the highest number of people employed and the highest number of jobs ever when compared to updated monthly estimates.

Today's numbers demonstrate that Wisconsin's focus and investments in workforce development are paying off for both job seekers and employers across the state."

The BLS uses three data sets to measure employment and unemployment:

- **Current Employment Statistics (CES):** compiled from a monthly survey sent to about 5,500 employers (3.5% of Wisconsin employers). CES data has been shown to be subject to significant revision.
- **Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS):** compiled from a monthly survey of 985 households and unemployment insurance claims. Measures the labor force, employment, unemployment, and the unemployment rate.
- **Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW):** compiled on a quarterly basis from Unemployment Insurance records from some 96 percent of Wisconsin business establishments. Considered by most economists to be the most accurate measure of jobs, the QCEW includes data from almost all employers in Wisconsin.

Other indicators that help illustrate the state of Wisconsin's economy include:

- Initial UI claims ended 2016 at their lowest level since 1988. Year 2017 initial UI claims are running at their lowest levels since 1989.
- Continuing unemployment claims ended 2016 at their lowest level since 1973. Continuing unemployment claims in Wisconsin are running the lowest in at least the past 30 years.

Attached are tables that show the (1) December-January LAUS and CES revisions; (2) preliminary January estimates and updated December estimates for CES and LAUS; (3) the CES revision history for calendar year 2016; and (4) QCEW data for the third quarter of 2016, which is the most recent data available.

Benchmarked CES and LAUS estimates for 2016 and earlier will be accessible [online](#).

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Wisconsin Employment and Unemployment Report
DECEMBER – JANUARY 2017

1. REVISIONS TO ESTIMATES FROM DECEMBER 2016

Place of Residence Data	Seasonally Adjusted			Not Seasonally Adjusted		
	Prelim	Revised	Change	Prelim	Revised	Change
CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE	3,132,900	3,114,900	-18,000	3,108,600	3,098,300	-10,300
LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE	68.3%	68.0%	-0.3%	67.8%	67.6%	-0.2%
EMPLOYMENT (1)	3,007,900	2,988,100	-19,800	2,992,900	2,983,500	-9,400
UNEMPLOYMENT	125,000	126,800	1,800	115,800	114,800	-1,000
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	4.0%	4.1%	0.1%	3.7%	3.7%	0.0%
U.S. Unemployment Rate	4.7%	4.7%	0.0%	4.5%	4.5%	0.0%
Place of Work Data						
NONFARM WAGE & SALARY	2,932,800	2,934,300	1,500	2,938,200	2,935,200	-3,000
TOTAL PRIVATE	2,520,100	2,516,100	-4,000	2,514,800	2,507,800	-7,000
GOODS PRODUCING	594,600	584,900	-9,700	584,500	575,600	-8,900
NATURAL RESOURCES & MINING	3,900	3,700	-200	3,800	3,600	-200
CONSTRUCTION	116,700	112,800	-3,900	109,600	106,300	-3,300
MANUFACTURING	474,000	468,400	-5,600	471,100	465,700	-5,400
Durable Goods	283,800	282,200	-1,600	281,900	279,900	-2,000
Nondurable Goods	190,200	186,200	-4,000	189,200	185,800	-3,400
SERVICE PROVIDING	2,338,200	2,349,400	11,200	2,353,700	2,359,600	5,900
PRIVATE SERVICE PROVIDING	1,925,500	1,931,200	5,700	1,930,300	1,932,200	1,900
TRADE	426,400	428,300	1,900	441,700	442,300	600
TRANS., WAREHOUSING, & UTILITIES	113,300	107,500	-5,800	115,000	108,900	-6,100
INFORMATION	47,700	47,700	0	48,000	48,000	0
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	154,300	152,200	-2,100	154,200	151,900	-2,300
PROFESSIONAL & BUSINESS SERVICES	317,200	320,300	3,100	315,300	317,800	2,500
EDUCATIONAL & HEALTH SERVICES	440,700	449,200	8,500	444,600	452,400	7,800
LEISURE & HOSPITALITY	273,400	274,300	900	259,700	259,300	-400
OTHER SERVICES, except Public Admin.	152,500	151,700	-800	151,800	151,600	-200
GOVERNMENT	412,700	418,200	5,500	423,400	427,400	4,000
Federal Government	29,100	29,200	100	29,400	29,500	100
State Government	97,700	100,000	2,300	103,000	104,300	1,300
Local Government	285,900	289,000	3,100	291,000	293,600	2,600

2. MONTHLY ESTIMATES FOR JANUARY 2017

Place of Residence Data	Jan-17 (P)	Dec-16 (R)	Net Change	Jan-17 (P)	Dec-16 (R)	Net Change
CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE	3,120,000	3,114,900	5,100	3,094,500	3,098,300	-3,800
LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE	68.1%	68.0%	0.1%	67.5%	67.6%	-0.1%
EMPLOYMENT (1)	2,998,400	2,988,100	10,300	2,963,900	2,983,500	-19,600
UNEMPLOYMENT	121,600	126,800	-5,200	130,600	114,800	15,800
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	3.9%	4.1%	-0.2%	4.2%	3.7%	0.5%
U.S. Unemployment Rate	4.8%	4.7%	0.1%	5.1%	4.5%	0.6%
Place of Work Data						
NONFARM WAGE & SALARY	2,934,500	2,934,300	200	2,868,800	2,935,200	-66,400
TOTAL PRIVATE	2,521,900	2,516,100	5,800	2,459,100	2,507,800	-48,700
GOODS PRODUCING	586,100	584,900	1,200	567,900	575,600	-7,700
NATURAL RESOURCES & MINING	3,900	3,700	200	3,400	3,600	-200
CONSTRUCTION	114,400	112,800	1,600	100,500	106,300	-5,800
MANUFACTURING	467,800	468,400	-600	464,000	465,700	-1,700
Durable Goods	281,700	282,200	-500	278,900	279,900	-1,000
Nondurable Goods	186,100	186,200	-100	185,100	185,800	-700
SERVICE PROVIDING	2,348,400	2,349,400	-1,000	2,300,900	2,359,600	-58,700
PRIVATE SERVICE PROVIDING	1,935,800	1,931,200	4,600	1,891,200	1,932,200	-41,000
TRADE	431,200	428,300	2,900	426,700	442,300	-15,600
TRANS., WAREHOUSING, & UTILITIES	106,400	107,500	-1,100	104,000	108,900	-4,900
INFORMATION	47,600	47,700	-100	47,500	48,000	-500
FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	154,000	152,200	1,800	152,600	151,900	700
PROFESSIONAL & BUSINESS SERVICES	321,500	320,300	1,200	312,200	317,800	-5,600
EDUCATIONAL & HEALTH SERVICES	450,400	449,200	1,200	445,400	452,400	-7,000
LEISURE & HOSPITALITY	273,000	274,300	-1,300	252,400	259,300	-6,900
OTHER SERVICES, except Public Admin.	151,700	151,700	0	150,400	151,600	-1,200
GOVERNMENT	412,600	418,200	-5,600	409,700	427,400	-17,700
Federal Government	29,400	29,200	200	29,100	29,500	-400
State Government	96,300	100,000	-3,700	95,100	104,300	-9,200
Local Government	286,900	289,000	-2,100	285,500	293,600	-8,100

*Differences in total may occur as a result of rounding. (1) Includes Labor Market Disputes (P) = Prelim; (R) = Revised Blue changes are outside margin of error.
Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics and Current Employment Statistics programs, Bureau of Workforce Information and Technical Support.

Cautionary note to users: Revised methodological procedures mandated by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) force individual state estimates of employment into closer alignment with the national estimate. This change results in larger month-to-month employment change for the states and the information reported by DWD.

3. HISTORY OF REVISIONS OF ESTIMATES FROM PLACE OF WORK SURVEY

Month-Over-Month Changes	TNF			Private		
	Prelim	Revised	Change	Prelim	Revised	Change
January 2016	(200)	+10,500	+10,700	(1,400)	+9,400	+10,800
February 2016	+7,200	+4,200	(3,000)	+8,000	+4,300	(3,700)
March 2016	+11,500	+400	(11,100)	+13,100	+600	(12,500)
April 2016	(12,600)	+1,300	+13,900	(11,500)	+600	+12,100
May 2016	+5,500	(7,600)	(13,100)	+9,700	(4,600)	(14,300)
June 2016	+5,300	+100	(5,200)	+10,900	(2,300)	(13,200)
July 2016	+9,100	+11,400	+2,300	+5,000	+8,500	+3,500
August 2016	(2,900)	+900	+3,800	(6,200)	(900)	+5,300
September 2016	(10,500)	(5,300)	+5,200	(8,500)	(100)	+8,400
October 2016	+10,400	+6,300	(4,100)	+6,000	+100	(5,900)
November 2016	(1,900)	+3,700	+5,600	(5,200)	(1,200)	+4,000
December 2016	(3,700)	+500	+4,200	+900	+2,800	+1,900

Note: Prelim = original month-over-month change. Revised = updated month-over-month change. The "Change" column represents the difference between the prelim month-over-month change and the revised month-over-month change.

How to read this table: The prelim column shows what we reported last year - the original Preliminary Month-over-month values. The "Revised" column shows the new "Benchmark 2016" data on how it effects the original prelim estimate. The "Change" column shows the difference between the two values.

4. LATEST QUARTERLY DATA: CENSUS OF EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES

	2015 Employment			2016 Employment			Sep-Sep Change	
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Jul	Aug	Sep	Number	Percent
TOTAL	2,809,787	2,815,552	2,820,647	2,843,145	2,850,891	2,850,076	29,429	1.0%
<i>Total Private</i>	2,471,399	2,476,433	2,444,869	2,503,530	2,503,151	2,470,431	25,562	1.0%
Natural Resources & Mining	31,767	31,956	32,511	32,189	32,259	32,895	384	1.2%
Construction	119,958	119,281	116,638	121,517	121,506	118,887	2,249	1.9%
Manufacturing	474,373	473,595	467,412	470,845	469,700	463,378	-4,034	-0.9%
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	530,433	532,779	531,788	538,781	538,697	534,891	3,103	0.6%
Information	49,522	49,900	48,954	49,289	49,498	48,381	-573	-1.2%
Financial Activities	149,181	148,785	146,788	149,720	149,564	147,769	981	0.7%
Professional & Business Services	317,788	320,267	316,130	325,783	326,931	324,669	8,539	2.7%
Education & Health Services	412,189	412,984	413,095	422,027	422,379	423,351	10,256	2.5%
Leisure & Hospitality	292,398	293,265	279,581	299,337	298,714	283,336	3,755	1.3%
Other Services	85,326	84,865	83,522	85,236	84,845	83,897	375	0.4%
Unclassified	8,464	8,756	8,450	8,806	9,058	8,977	527	6.2%
<i>Total Government</i>	338,388	339,119	375,778	339,615	347,740	379,645	3,867	1.0%

Data as published by U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages counts are published 6 months after the quarter they describe.

Data from the latest published quarter and a year prior are included here.

QUARTERLY WAGES

	Total Wages		Change	
	Q3:2015	Q3:2016	Number	Percent
TOTAL	\$30,502,958	\$32,782,841	\$2,279,883	7.5%
<i>Total Private</i>	\$26,736,520	\$28,608,614	\$1,872,094	7.0%
<i>Total Government</i>	\$3,766,438	\$4,174,227	\$407,789	10.8%

Total wages are in thousands (Totals may not equal due to rounding)

Data as published by U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages counts are published 6 months after the quarter they describe.

Data from the latest published quarter and a year prior are included here.