



# Unemployment Falls to New Historical Low in January

March 12 2020 5:17 PM

**SPRINGFIELD** – The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) announced today that the unemployment rate fell -0.2 percentage point to 3.5 percent, a new record low, while nonfarm payrolls added +16,600 jobs in January, based on preliminary data provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and released by IDES. The December monthly change in payrolls was revised from the preliminary report from +8,000 to +12,000 jobs.

The state's unemployment rate is -0.1 percentage point lower than the national unemployment rate reported for January, which was 3.6 percent, up +0.1 percentage point from the previous month. This was the first time the state unemployment rate was lower than the national unemployment rate since November 2010. The Illinois unemployment rate was down -0.9 percentage point from a year ago when it was 4.4 percent.

Statewide monthly payroll employment can be subject to volatility. The three-month average Illinois payroll employment, which provides a more stable measure of payroll employment change, was up +5,800 jobs during the November to January three-month period, compared to the October to December three-month period. The largest average gains were found in Trade, Transportation and Utilities (+2,100), Educational and Health Services (+2,100) and Leisure and Hospitality (+1,600).

“Governor Pritzker has remained dedicated to improving Illinois’ economy, expanding job-growth, and building foundations for long-term success with the historic Rebuild Illinois infrastructure plan,” said Deputy Governor Dan Hynes. “Rebuild Illinois and its next phase will make further investments in infrastructure and continue to provide workers and families the opportunity to take part in the state’s economy.”

“A strong economy is built on the foundation of strong infrastructure, and Governor Pritzker has made both of these a priority of his administration,” said Erin Guthrie,

Acting Director of the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. “The new wave of Rebuild Illinois is an important building block to addressing and investing in infrastructure in communities that have been neglected for far too long.”

Compared to a year ago, nonfarm payroll employment increased by +9,100 jobs with the largest gains in: Educational and Health Services (+17,100), Government (+10,000) and Financial Activities (+6,400). The industry sectors with the largest over-the-year declines were: Manufacturing (-13,900), Professional and Business Services (-11,400) and Trade, Transportation and Utilities (-3,300). Illinois nonfarm payrolls were up +0.1 percentage point over-the-year as compared to the nation’s +1.4 percent over-the-year gain in January.

The number of unemployed workers decreased from the prior month, -3.6 percent to 227,700, a new record low, and was down -19.6 percent over the same month for the prior year. The labor force was down -0.2 percent over-the-month and -0.9 percent over-the-year. The unemployment rate identifies those individuals who are out of work and seeking employment.

An individual who exhausts or is ineligible for benefits is still reflected in the unemployment rate if they actively seek work. IDES maintains the state’s largest job search engine, [Illinois Job Link](#) (IJL), to help connect jobseekers to employers who are hiring, which recently showed 61,549 posted resumes with 96,799 jobs available.