Current Employment Statistics

Highlights

May 2007

Bureau of Labor Statistics

June 1, 2007
• Nonfarm employment rose by 157,000 in May.

• In the first 5 months of 2007, job growth averaged 133,000 per month, compared with 189,000 per month in 2006.

• Employment has risen by 8 million since reaching a low point in August 2003.
• Employment growth in May was concentrated in education and health services and leisure and hospitality. These sectors accounted for 64 percent of the gain in nonfarm employment.

• Growth in education and health services was centered within health care and social assistance. The employment increase in leisure and hospitality was dispersed between amusements, gambling, and recreation and food services and drinking places.

• Professional and business services and government saw continued job gains, while employment losses in manufacturing restrained total growth in May.
Average weekly hours of production and nonsupervisory workers on nonfarm payrolls increased 0.1 hour in May. The workweek has held within a 0.2-hour range since June 2004.

The index of total private aggregate weekly hours increased by 0.5 percent in May, following a small decrease of 0.3 percent in April. Since reaching a trough in August 2003, the index has increased by 9.5 percent.
• Average hourly earnings for production and nonsupervisory workers on nonfarm payrolls rose by 6 cents in May. The over-the-year percent change peaked in December 2006 at 4.3 percent and has fallen steadily to its current rate of 3.8 percent.

• The index of total private aggregate weekly payrolls rose 0.8 percent in May. Over the year, the index grew 5.9 percent.
• Construction employment was flat in May, which is in line with its prior 12-month trend. Employment stagnated as companies reported a smaller-than-normal spring buildup.

• The flatness was widespread throughout construction. In contrast with recent trends, there was no appreciable divergence between nonresidential and residential construction employment.
• Manufacturing continued its long-term decline, cutting 19,000 jobs in May. Job losses were concentrated in durable goods within the motor vehicles and parts industry.

• The average manufacturing workweek for production workers edged down 0.1 hour to 41.0 hours, seasonally adjusted. The factory workweek is 0.5 hour below its most recent peak reached in July 2006.

• Average weekly manufacturing overtime hours of production workers fell by 0.1 hour to 4.1 hours in May, seasonally adjusted.
Employment in professional and business services continued to rise on trend in May. Growth was concentrated within the professional and technical services industries with solid gains in architectural and engineering services and in computer systems design and related services.
• Employment in temporary help services has been flat recently, whereas professional and technical services employment has grown steadily.

• Since December 2005, employment in temporary help services is little changed (-49,000), and professional and technical services has gained 392,000 jobs.
Employment in health care rose by 25,000 in May, compared to a prior 12-month average gain of 30,000. Over the past year, health care has added 363,000 jobs.

Growth in health care was widespread throughout the components with the majority of the increase in ambulatory health care services and hospitals.
Employment in food services and drinking places continued its long term trend—up 35,000 in May and 361,000 over the year. Growth in May is above the prior 12-month average of 29,000.

Note: Most recent 2 months of data are preliminary.