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Current Employment Statistics Highlights



April 2020

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Prepared by Analysts of the National Estimates Branch
Current Employment Statistics Survey
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

202-691-6555

[Email CES](#)

Current Employment Statistics Summary, April 2020

Nonfarm payroll employment fell by an historic 20.5 million in April, after declining by 881,000 in March, bringing employment to its lowest level since January 2011—over 9 years ago. Job losses in April 2020 were widespread. For private-sector industries, the diffusion index over a 1-month period fell to 4.8 in April, the lowest level in the series history, indicating that far more industries lost jobs than added them over the month. In April, employment fell sharply in all major industry sectors, with a particularly large job decline in leisure and hospitality.

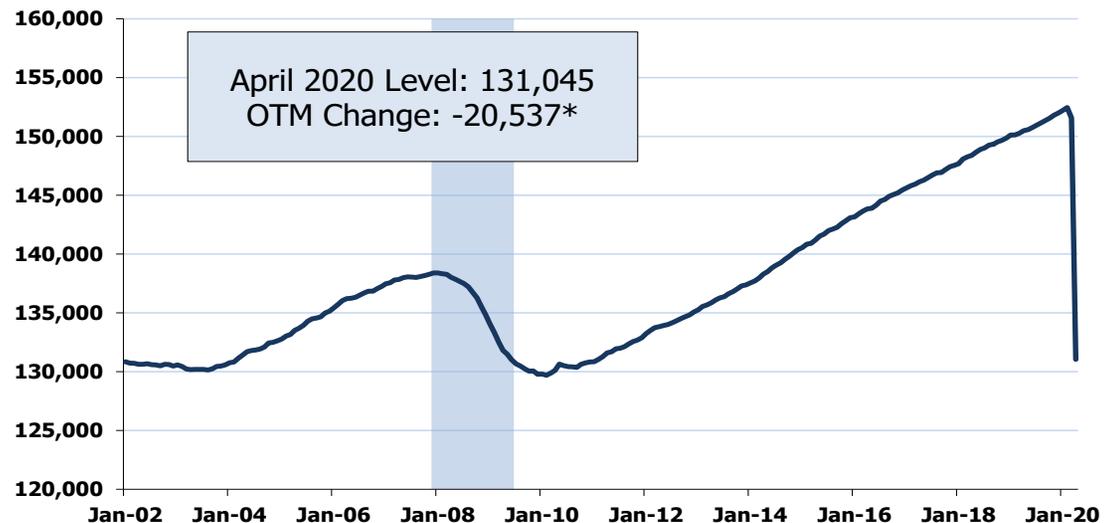
The employment change for February revised down from 275,000 to 251,000, and the change for March also revised down from -701,000 to -881,000.

Average hourly earnings for all employees on private, nonfarm payrolls rose by \$1.34, or 4.7 percent, in April and were up 7.9 percent over the year. The average workweek, at 34.2 hours, increased by 0.1 hour over the month.

NOTE: Details on the impacts of COVID-19 on the March and April estimates from the CES survey can be found on <https://www.bls.gov/ces/notices/2020/covid-19-march-2020.htm>.

Employment in total nonfarm January 2002–April 2020

Seasonally adjusted, in thousands



Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics survey, May 08, 2020.
 Shaded area represents recession as denoted by the National Bureau of Economic Research.
 Most recent 2 months of data are preliminary.
 * denotes significance.

-7,653,000 Leisure and Hospitality

Employment in leisure and hospitality declined sharply by 7.7 million, or 47 percent, in April, bringing employment to its lowest

level since August 1988. Within the industry, employment fell by 5.5 million in food services and drinking places, followed by losses of 1.1 million in amusements, gambling and recreation and 839,000 in accommodation.

Current Employment Statistics Survey Summary, April 2020

-2,544,000 Education and Health Services

Employment in education and health services fell by 2.5 million in April, a level not seen since April 2015. Within the industry, most of the jobs losses in health care occurred in ambulatory health care services (-1.2 million), including losses of 503,000 in offices of dentists, 243,000 in offices of physicians, and 205,000 in offices of other health practitioners.

Employment in private education declined by 457,000. Within social assistance, employment in individual and family services declined by 241,000, and child daycare services lost 336,000 jobs.

-2,165,000 Professional and Business Services

Employment in professional and business services fell to its lowest level since October 2014. Employment declines came in temporary help services (-842,000), professional and technical services (-546,000), and services to buildings and dwellings (-259,000).

-2,107,000 Retail Trade

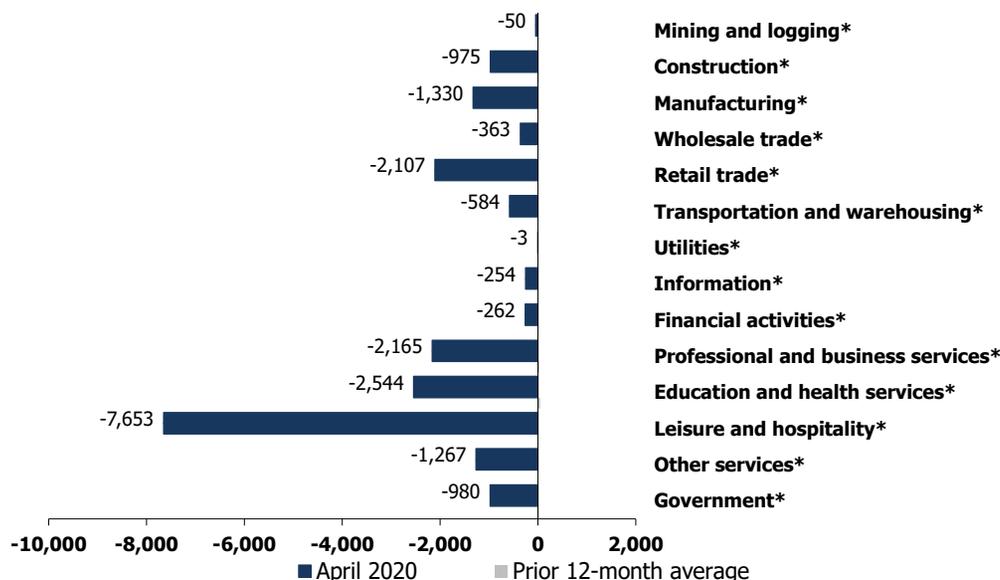
Employment in retail trade fell by 2.1 million in April to its lowest level since July

Employment in total nonfarm

Over-the-month change, April 2020

Seasonally adjusted, in thousands

Total nonfarm:
-20,537*



Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics survey, May 08, 2020.
Data are preliminary.
* denotes significance

widespread, including losses of 740,000 in clothing and clothing accessories stores and 345,000 in motor vehicles and parts dealers.

-1,330,000 Manufacturing

Manufacturing employment declined by 1.3 million in April, including declines of 421,000 in transportation equipment and 109,000 in

fabricated metal products. Manufacturing employment fell to its lowest level since March 2010.

-1,267,000 Other Services

Employment in other services fell by 1.3 million in April. Within the industry, employment declined in personal and laundry

Current Employment Statistics Survey Summary, April 2020

services (-797,000), in membership associations (-250,000), and in repair and maintenance (-220,000). Employment in other services is at its lowest level since July 1994.

-975,000 Construction

Employment in construction fell by 975,000 in April to its lowest level since January 2016. Seventy-one percent of the job loss came in specialty trade contractors, which lost 691,000 jobs, split between residential (-297,000) and nonresidential (-393,000) components. Construction of buildings (-206,000) and heavy and civil engineering construction also lost jobs (-79,000).

-980,000 Government

Government employment fell by 980,000 in April. Local government accounted for 801,000 of the decline, with losses split between local education (-469,000) and local, excluding education (-332,000). State government also lost jobs over the month, mostly in state government education (-176,000). Federal government employment changed little over the month. Government employment is now at its lowest level since January 2005.

-584,000 Transportation and Warehousing

Employment in transportation and warehousing fell by 584,000 in April to the lowest level since January 2017. Within the industry, job declines were widespread, including in transit and ground transportation (-185,000), air transportation (-141,000), truck transportation (-88,000), and warehousing and storage (-74,000).

-363,000 Wholesale Trade

In April, wholesale trade employment fell to its lowest level since February 2012. Employment declined in durable goods (-185,000), in nondurable goods (-148,000), and in electronic markets and agents and brokers (-30,000) over the month.

-262,000 Financial Activities

Employment in financial activities fell by 262,000 in April to the lowest level since May 2018. Most of the jobs lost in April came from real estate (-101,000) and rental and leasing services (-120,000).

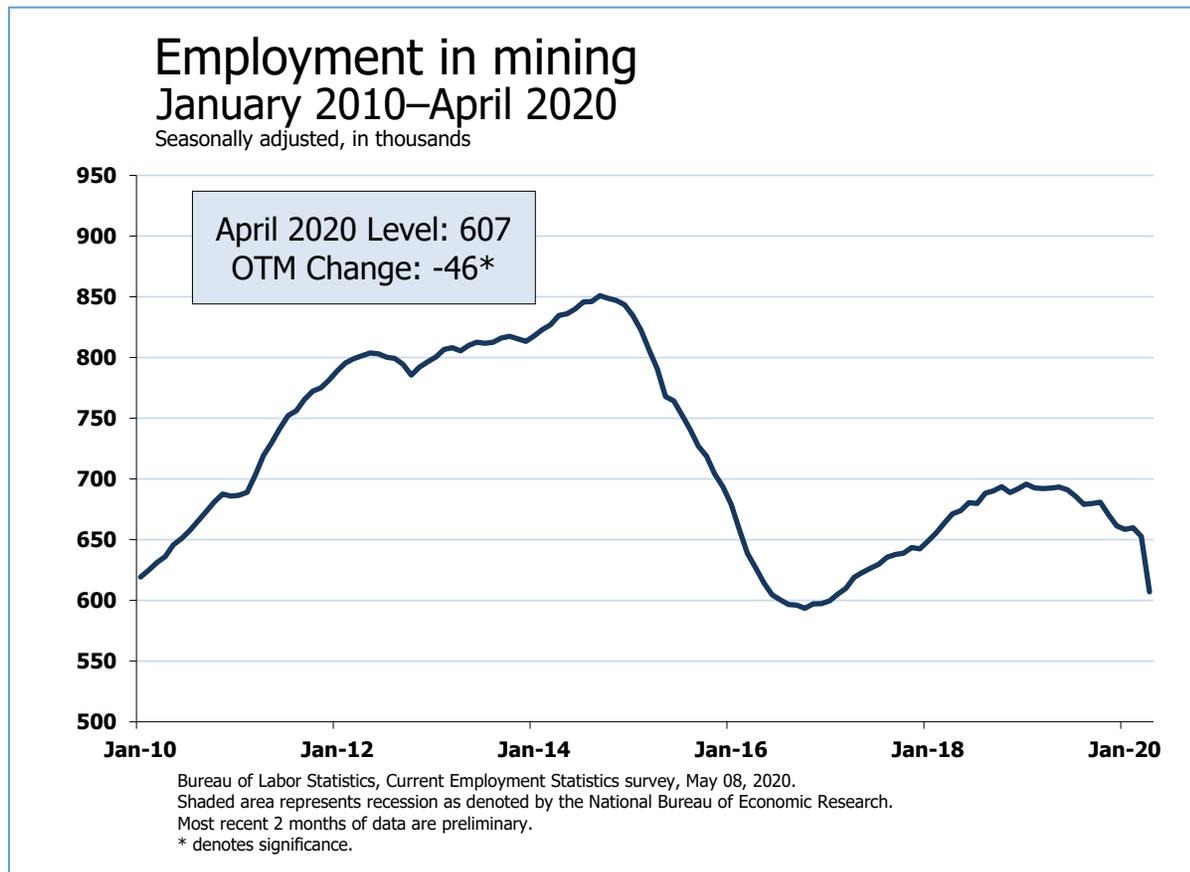
-254,000 Information

Within information, motion picture and sound recording industries lost 217,000 jobs. Information employment is at its lowest level

since August 2011, when a large strike impacted the industry.

Summary	Mining & Logging	Construction	Manufacturing	Trade: Wholesale Retail	Transp., Warehousing & Utilities	Information	Financial Activities	Professional & Business Services	Private Education & Health Services	Leisure & Hospitality	Other Services	Government
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Mining and Logging

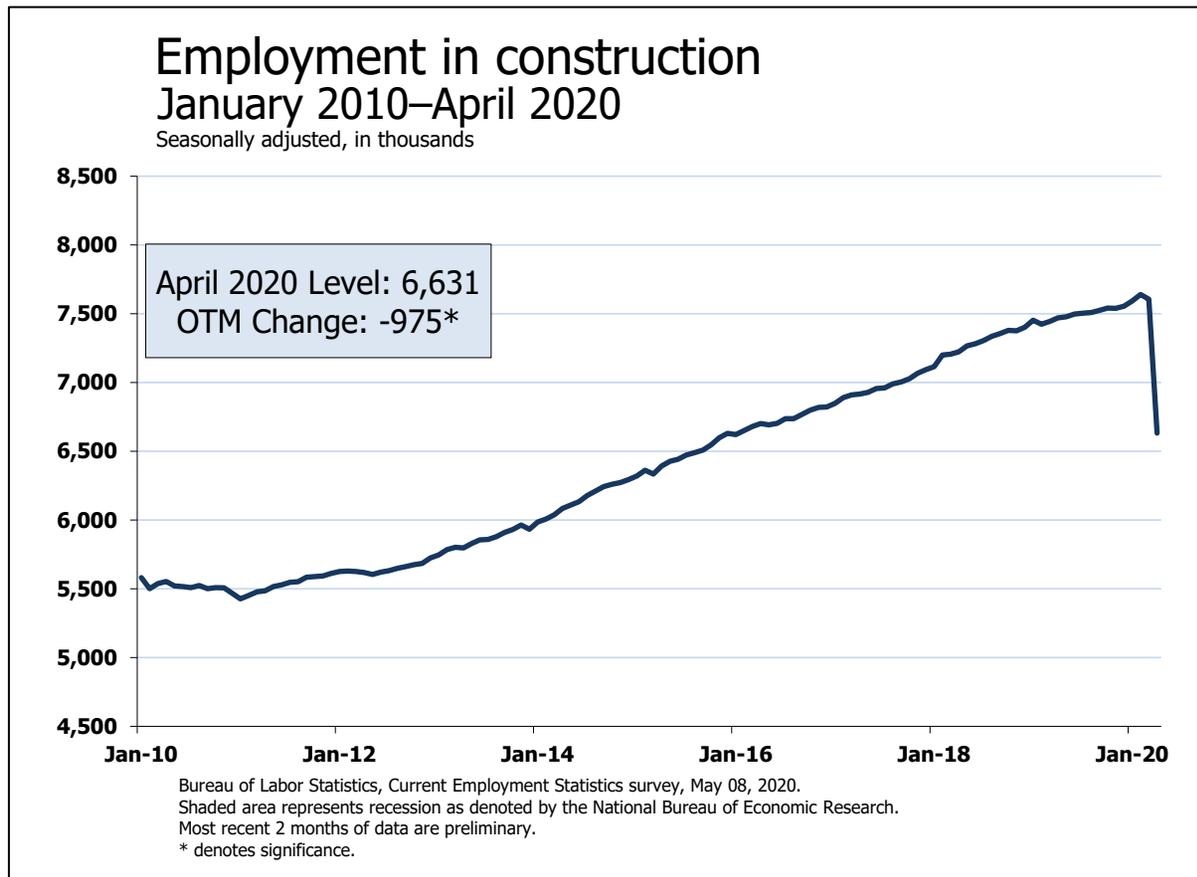


Mining employment declined by 46,000 in April. All major mining components experienced significant declines over the month, with the majority of the job loss occurring in support activities for mining (-33,000).

Mining employment losses are consistent with April indicator data, which showed large declines in the [North American rotary rig count](#) and in the price of [West Texas Intermediate](#) oil.

Logging employment fell by 5,000 in April.

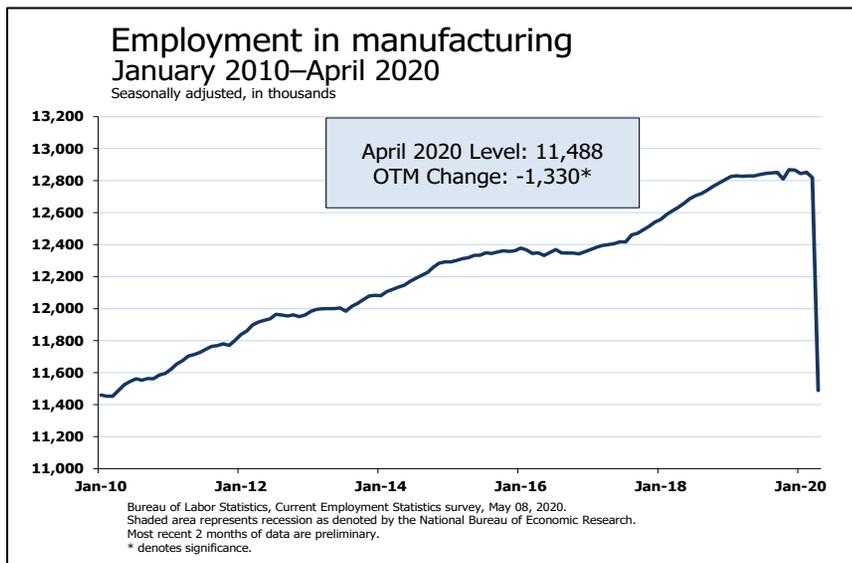
Construction



Construction employment decreased by 975,000 in April. Weakness in specialty trade contractors (-691,000) and in construction of buildings (-206,000) combined for most of the job loss, followed by heavy and civil engineering construction (-79,000).

While the job loss in construction follows weakness in [residential building permits](#) and [new home sales](#) in March, the losses were most likely a response to the coronavirus pandemic as worksites shuttered or significantly reduced employment across all regions of the United States.

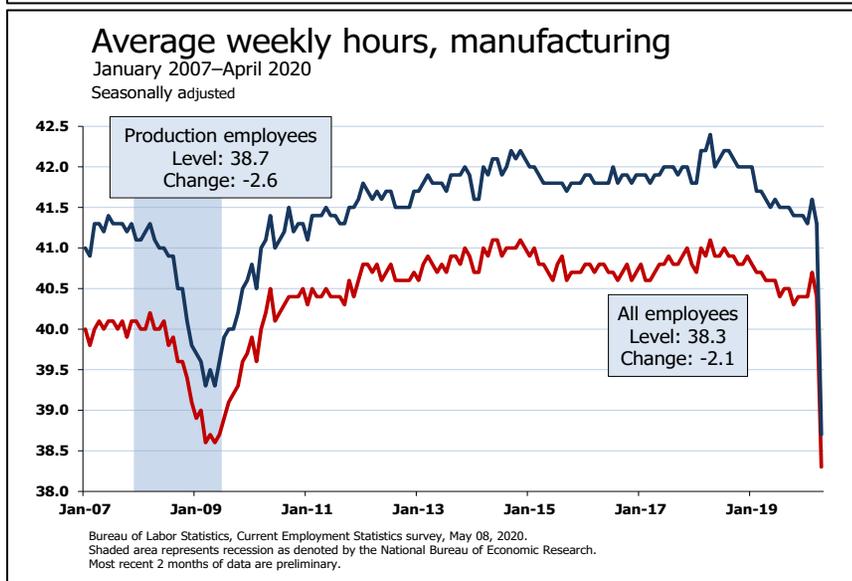
Manufacturing



Employment in manufacturing declined by 1,330,000 in April and has not been this low since March 2010. The decrease was led by durable goods, which shed 914,000 jobs and included a loss of 421,000 in transportation equipment.

The manufacturing 1-month diffusion index plummeted by 23.7 points to 2.6 in April, indicating that far more manufacturing industries lost jobs than added them over the month. This is the second consecutive month the index has fallen by 20 or more points and is the lowest level in the history of the index, which began in 1991.

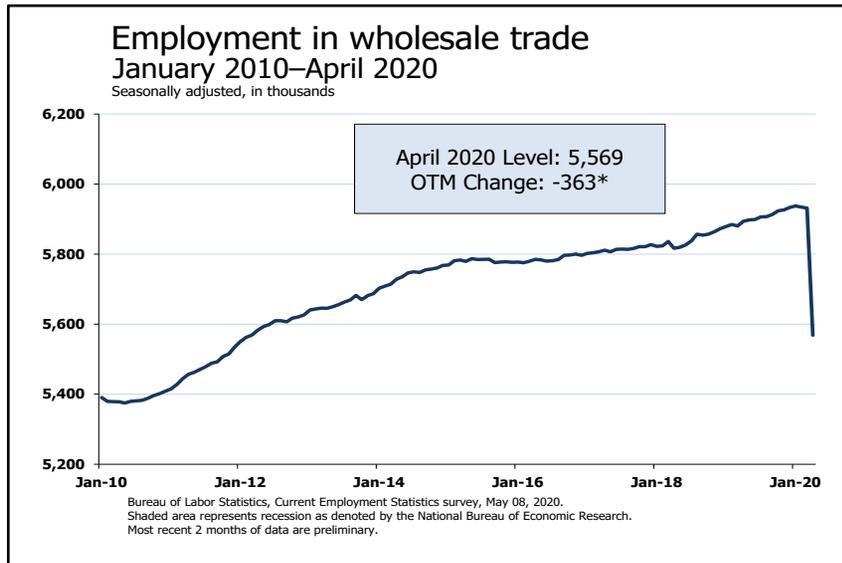
In April, average weekly hours for all employees in manufacturing tumbled 2.1 hours to 38.3 hours, the lowest level and the largest drop since the series began in 2006. The average workweek of production workers decreased 2.6 hours to 38.7 hours, the lowest level since January 1982.



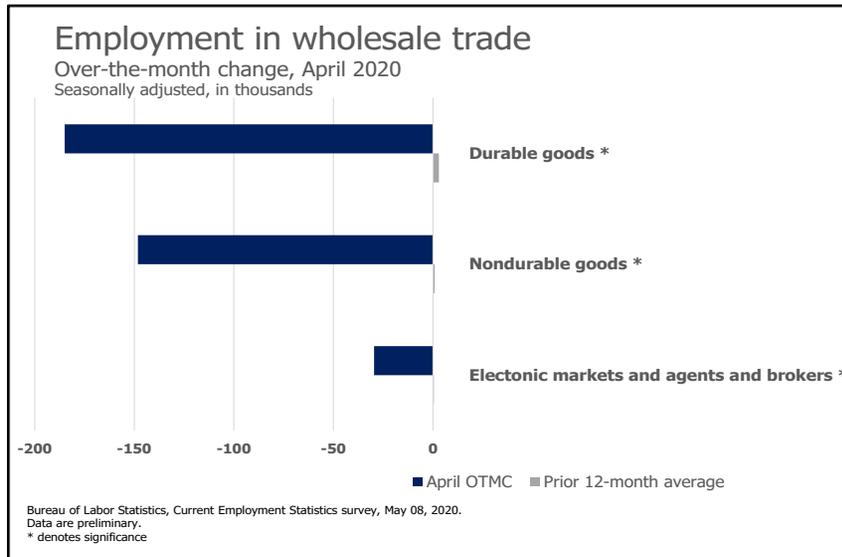
Average weekly overtime hours for all employees in manufacturing fell by 0.9 hour to 2.1 hours, matching its lowest level in May 2009. Average weekly overtime hours for production workers fell 1.2 hours to 2.7 hours, matching its lowest level since April 2009.

Average hourly earnings for all employees stood at \$29.11, an increase of 78 cents. Production and nonsupervisory workers hourly earnings increased by 19 cents to \$22.76.

Wholesale Trade



Employment in wholesale trade fell by 363,000 in April, a decline of 6.1 percent. Durable goods shed 185,000 jobs, nondurable goods lost 148,000, and employment in electronic markets and agents and brokers declined by 30,000. The employment declines in April represent the largest ever monthly job changes in wholesale trade and its 3 components.



Retail trade

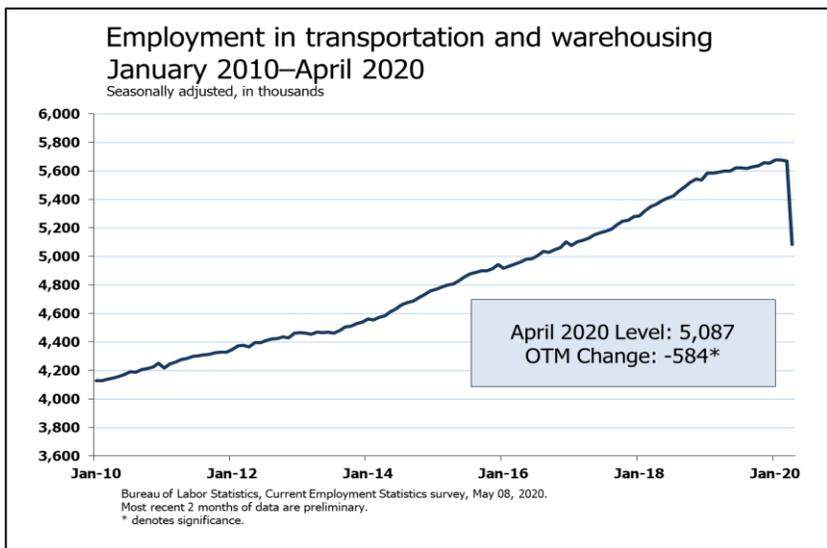


In April, employment in retail trade declined by 2.1 million, the largest monthly drop in the history of the series, which began in 1939. Since reaching a peak in January 2017, industry employment declined by 2.4 million.

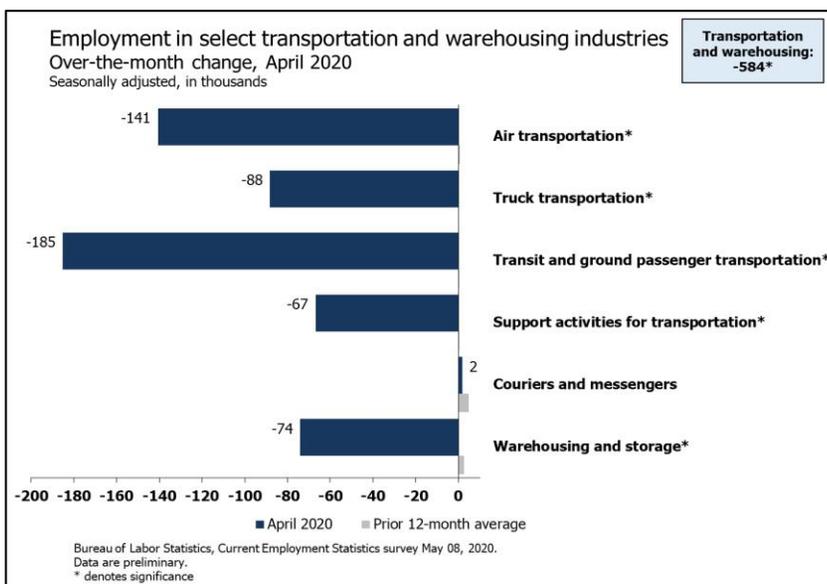
Within retail trade, employment declines were pervasive. Clothing and clothing accessories stores lost 740,000 jobs, and employment in motor vehicle and parts dealers fell by 345,000.

In line with employment, recent retail-related economic indicators are mostly negative. [Retail Sales](#) were down in March. Both [Auto Sales](#) and the [Consumer Confidence Index](#) declined sharply in April.

Transportation and Warehousing

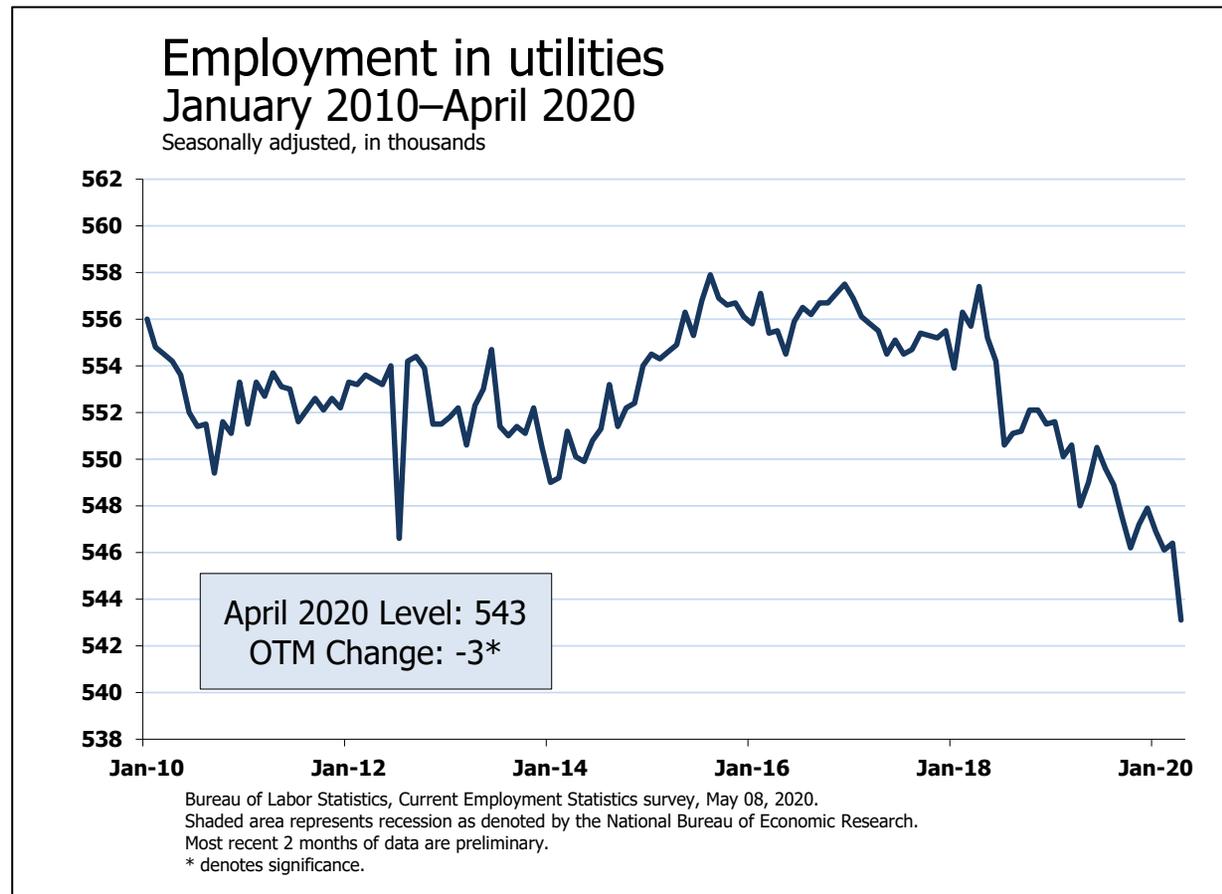


Employment in transportation and warehousing decreased by 584,000 in April, erasing essentially all of the gains made in the industry since January 2017.



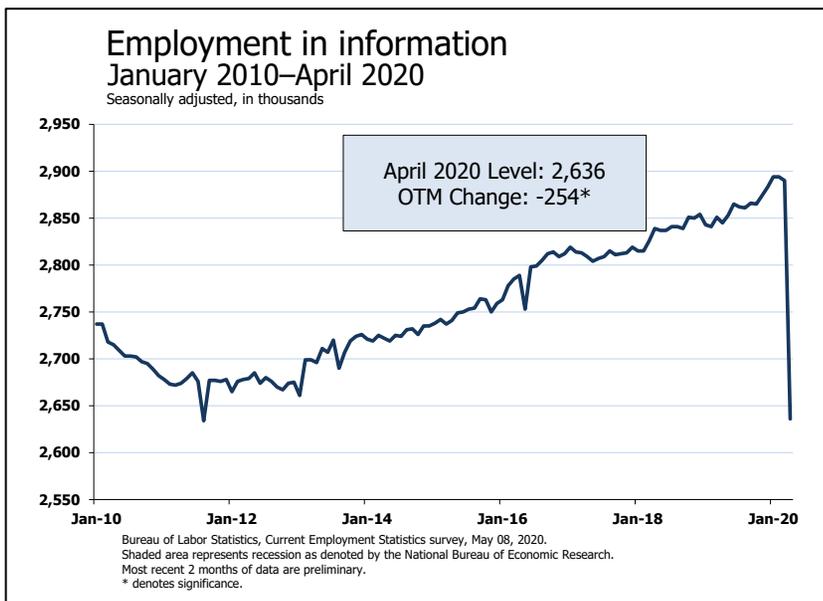
Within transportation and warehousing, transit and ground passenger transportation (-185,000), and air transportation (-141,000) accounted for 56 percent of the losses in April. The losses in these component industries follow declines in [transit ridership](#) and [air travel](#) amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Utilities

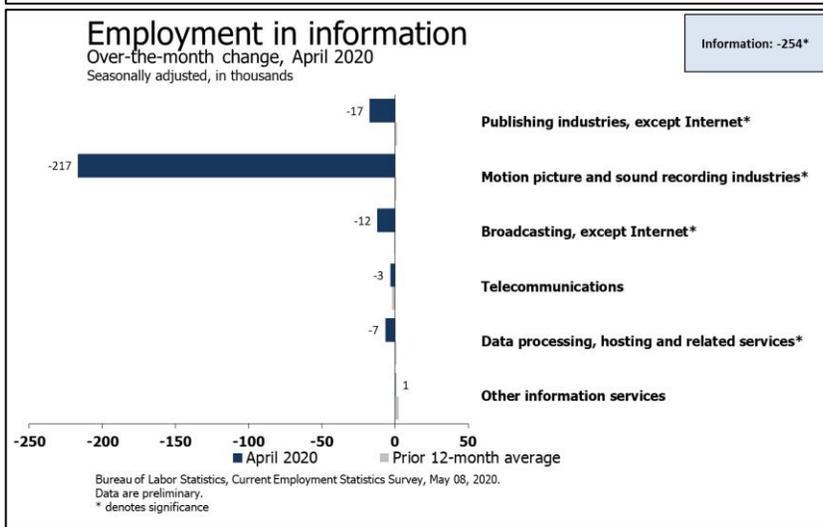


Employment in utilities declined by 3,000 in April, reaching its lowest level since August 1971.

Information



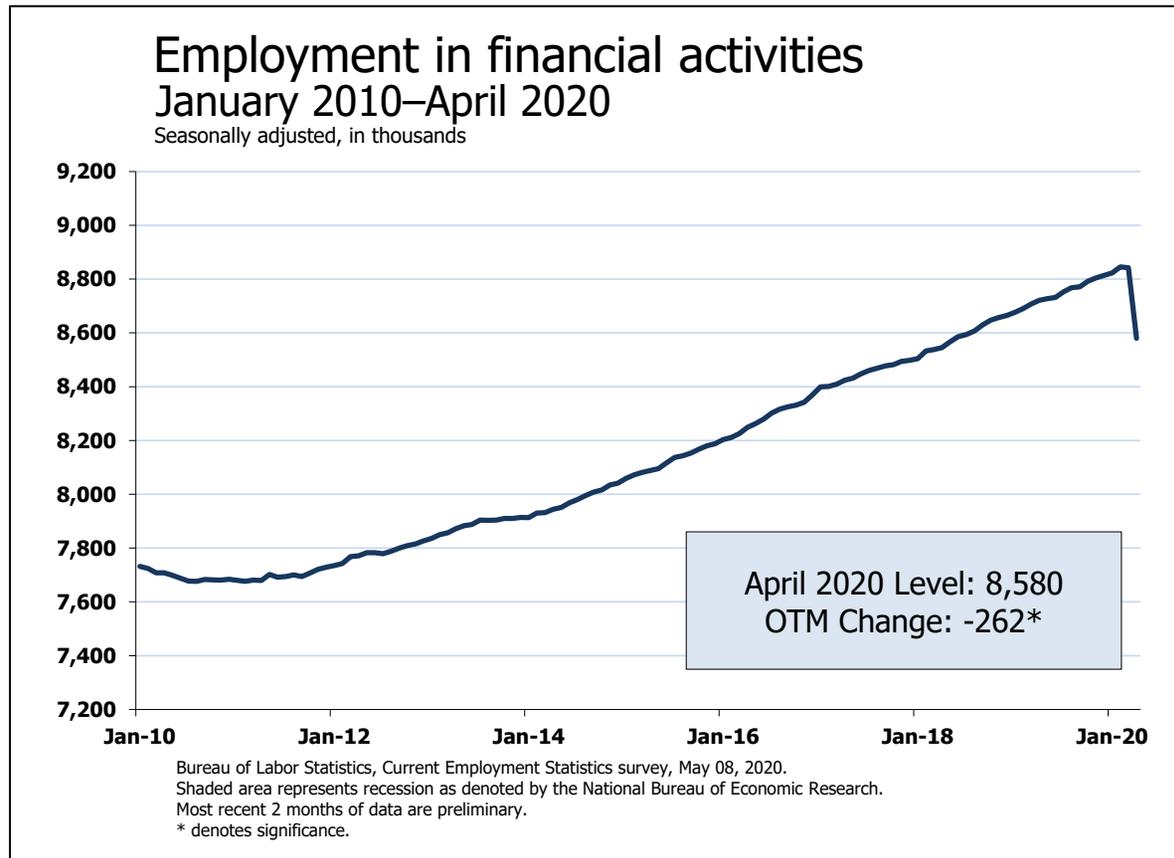
Information employment contracted by 254,000 to its lowest level since August 2011. The only larger one-month decline in the series' history—which dates to 1939—occurred in August 1983 and coincided with a large telecommunications strike.



The impact of COVID-19 on the motion picture and sound recording industries has been particularly acute. Most of the information jobs lost in April are likely associated with film [production](#) and [exhibition](#).

Employment in publishing industries, except internet (-17,000); broadcasting, except internet (-12,000); and data processing, hosting and related services (-7,000) shrank in April. Bucking recent trends, employment in both telecommunications and other information services was flat over the month.

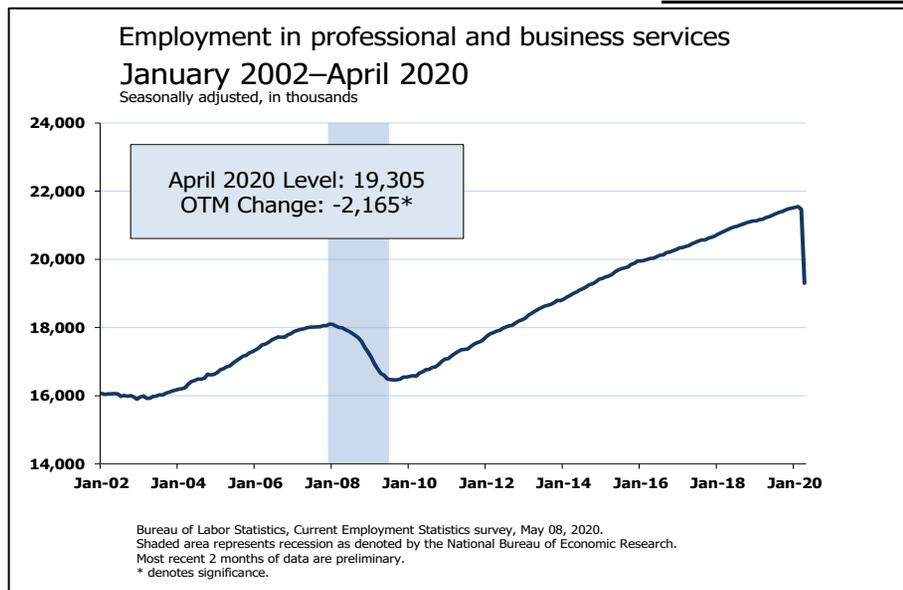
Financial Activities



Employment in financial activities declined by 262,000 in April. This is the industry’s largest monthly decline in the history of the series since 1939.

The April employment decline in real estate and rental and leasing (-222,000) coincided with a sharp decline in [the Consumer Confidence Index](#). Employment in credit intermediation and related activities also contracted in April (-31,000).

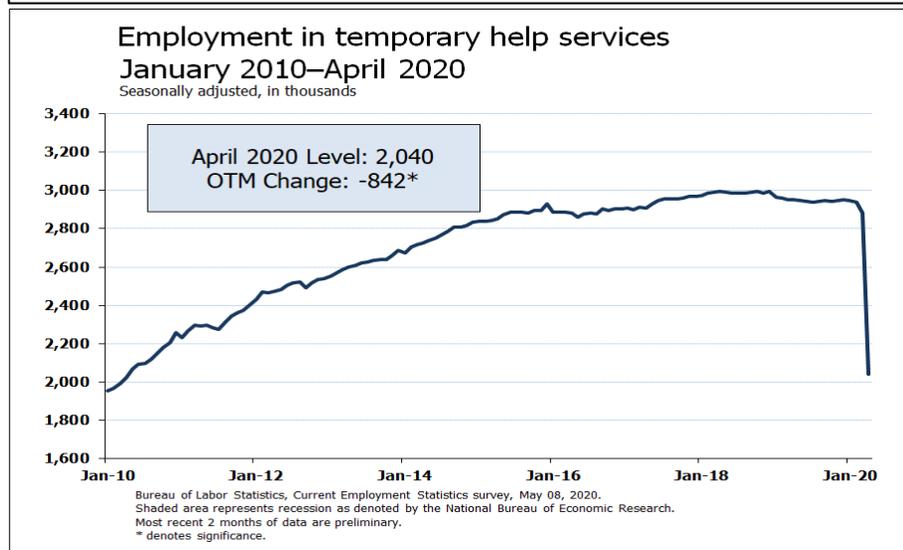
Professional and Business Services



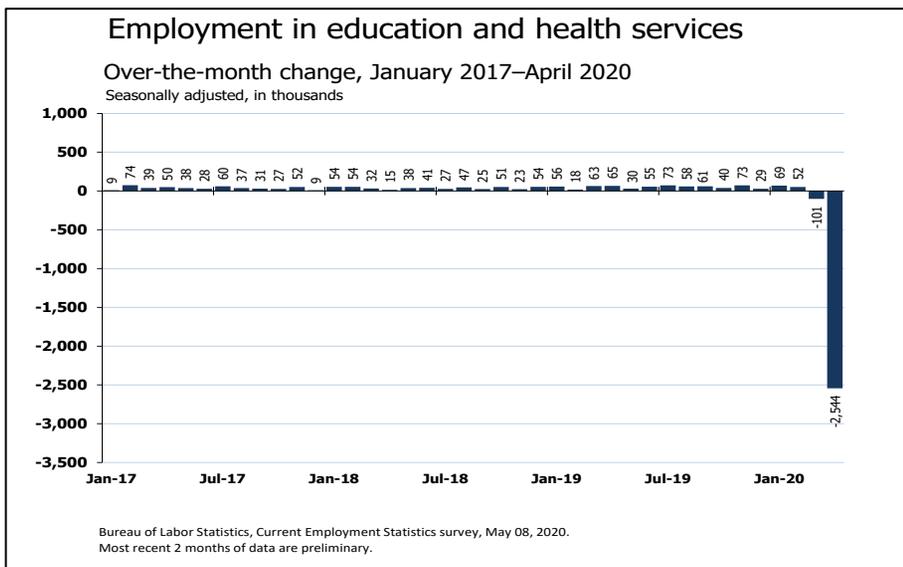
Employment in professional and business services decreased by 2.2 million in April, the largest decline in the history of the series, beginning in 1939. Employment in professional and business services is at its lowest level since October 2014.

Employment in administrative and support services decreased by 1.5 million in April. Within this component, temporary help services lost 842,000 jobs, bringing its employment to the lowest level since April 2010. Services to buildings and dwellings lost 259,000 jobs also.

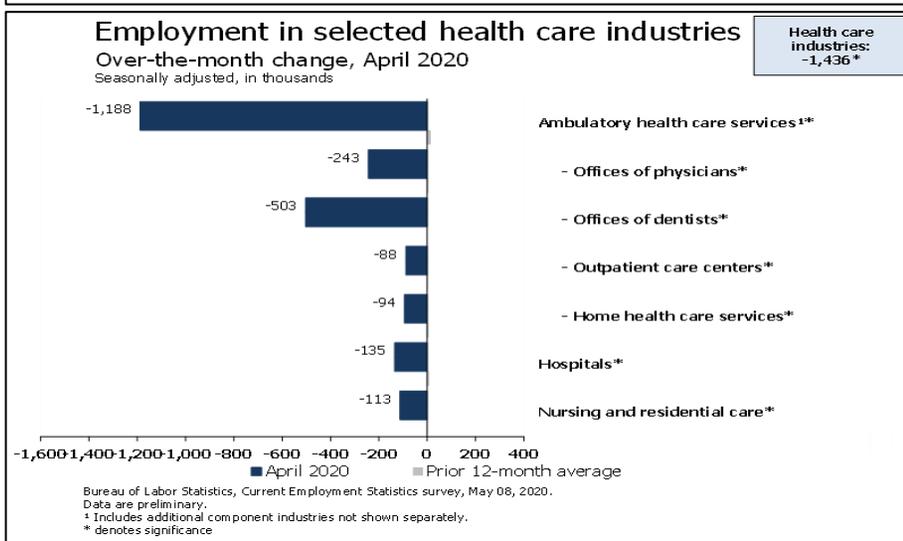
Both professional and technical services (-546,000) and management of companies and enterprises (-82,000) incurred job losses in April. Within professional and technical services, all of the components experienced job losses, including -93,000 in computer systems design and related services, and -85,000 in architectural and engineering services.



Private Education and Health Services



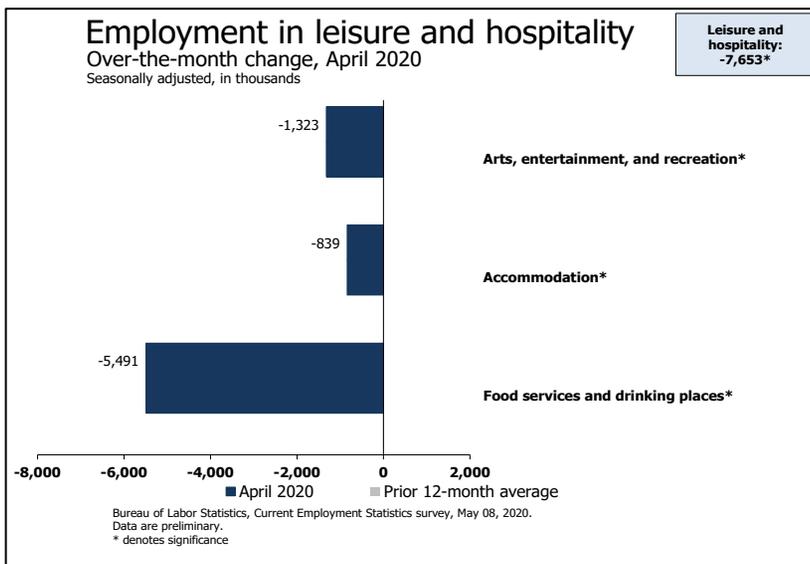
In April, employment in health care and social assistance declined by 2.1 million, while educational services shed 457,000 jobs. Within social assistance, child day care services (-336,000), and individual and family services (-241,000) lost jobs.



Ambulatory health care services lost 1.2 million jobs in April, with offices of dentists (-503,000) and offices of physicians (-243,000) accounting for almost two-thirds of the losses. Hospitals lost 135,000 jobs. In response to the coronavirus, several states [ordered](#) cancellation of elective procedures.

The loss in health-care employment in April follows a decline in [health care spending](#) in the first quarter of 2020.

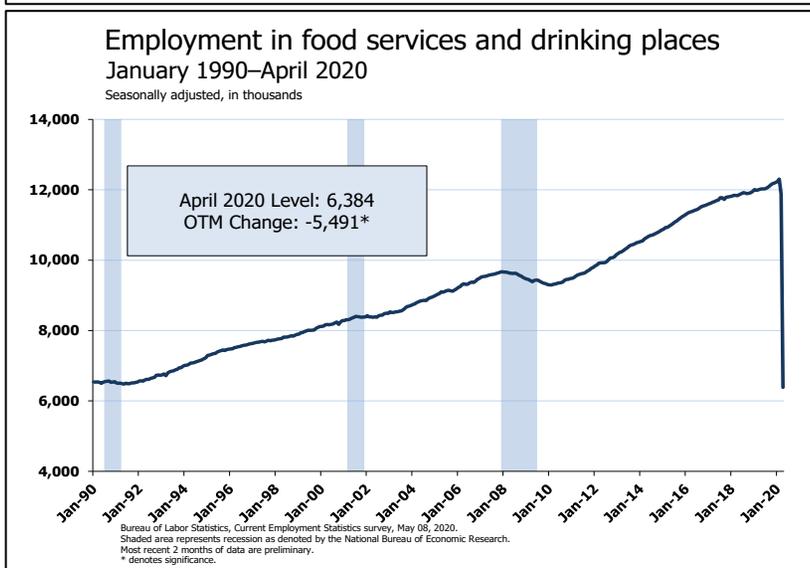
Leisure and Hospitality



Employment in leisure and hospitality fell sharply by nearly 7.7 million jobs in April, after an historically large job loss of 499,000 in March. Before the March losses, the largest one-month employment decrease in this industry occurred in August 1989 (-83,000). The April loss constitutes a 47-percent drop in employment.

Employment in arts, entertainment, and recreation dropped by 1.3 million or 54 percent in April.

As COVID-19 continues to depress demand for hotel accommodations, historically low occupancy rates pushed [revenue per available room](#) down significantly during the April reference period.



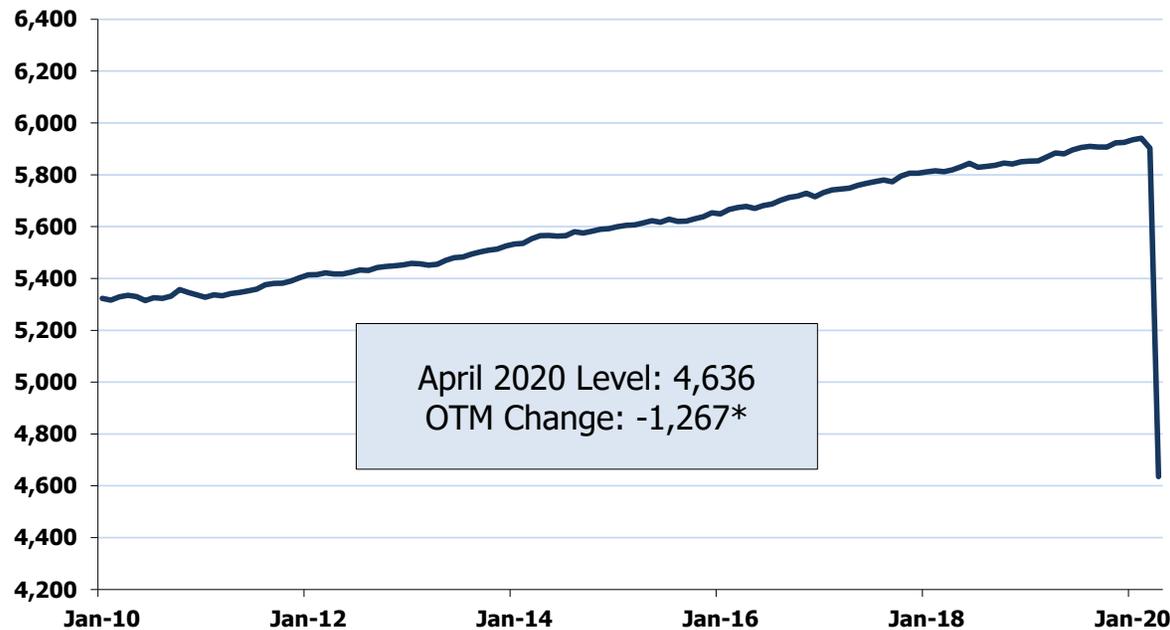
Food services and drinking places lost 5.5 million jobs—a 46 percent decline. A marked decrease in restaurant [sales](#) during March preceded the April employment loss.

Average hourly earnings for all leisure and hospitality workers rose \$1.14 in April to \$18.00 as lower-earning workers were removed from payrolls. Average weekly hours for nonsupervisory employees fell an additional 0.4 hour to 22.4 hours in April after a 1.9-hour reduction in March.

Other Services

Employment in other services January 2010–April 2020

Seasonally adjusted, in thousands



April 2020 Level: 4,636
OTM Change: -1,267*

Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics survey, May 08, 2020.
Shaded area represents recession as denoted by the National Bureau of Economic Research.
Most recent 2 months of data are preliminary.
* denotes significance.

Employment in other services fell by 1.3 million in April, by far the industry’s largest 1-month decline since the series began in 1939.

All component industries experienced sharp declines. The largest drop came in personal and laundry services, which lost 797,000 jobs. This industry includes personal care establishments, such as barbershops and hair and nail salons. According to a media [report](#), 46 states had shut down nonessential businesses by early April. Although the definition of essential businesses varied by state, the report states that “personal care retailers like spas, nail and hair salons, tend to fall in the nonessential businesses category.”

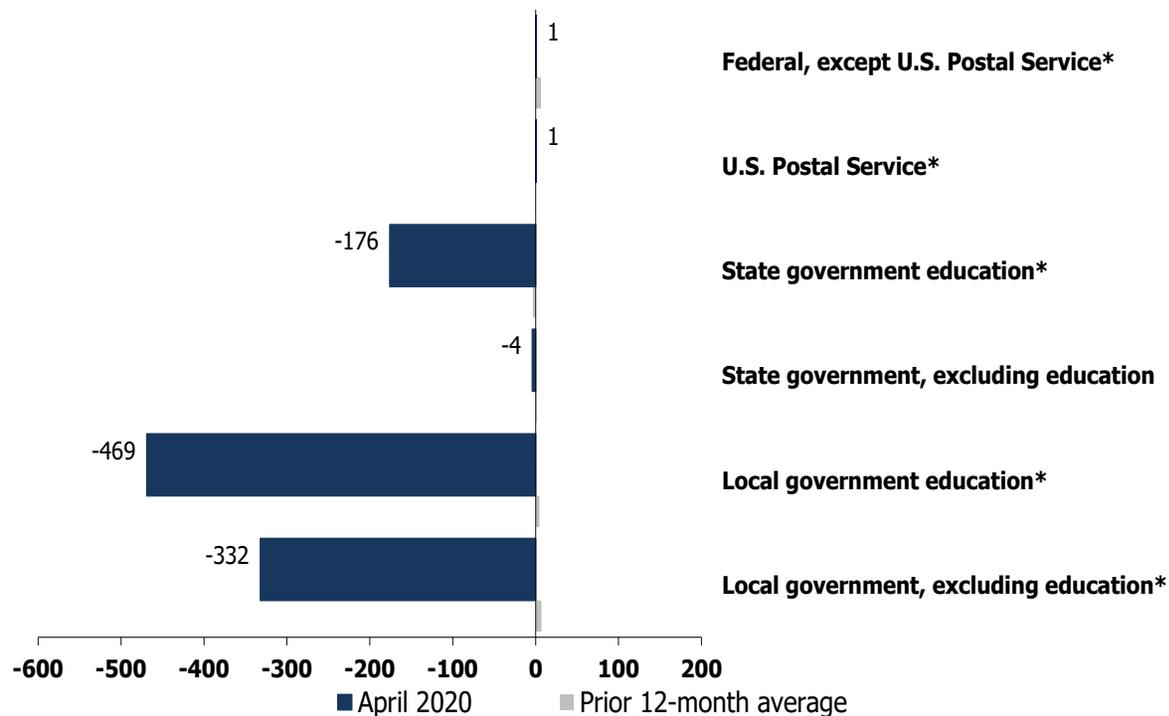
Government

Employment in selected government

Over-the-month change, April 2020
Seasonally adjusted, in thousands

**Government:
-980***

Government employment decreased by 980,000 in April, with local government accounting for 82 percent of the loss. Hiring for Census 2020 was negligible (+4,000).



Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics survey, May 08, 2020.
Data are preliminary.
* denotes significance



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