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Current Employment Statistics Highlights



May 2020

Release Date: June 5, 2020

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 Survey Summary, May 2020

Nonfarm payroll employment rose by 2.5 million in May, after dropping by a staggering 22.1 million in March and April, combined. The May change reflects limited resumption of economic activity that had been curtailed in March and April due to effects of the coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic and efforts to contain it.

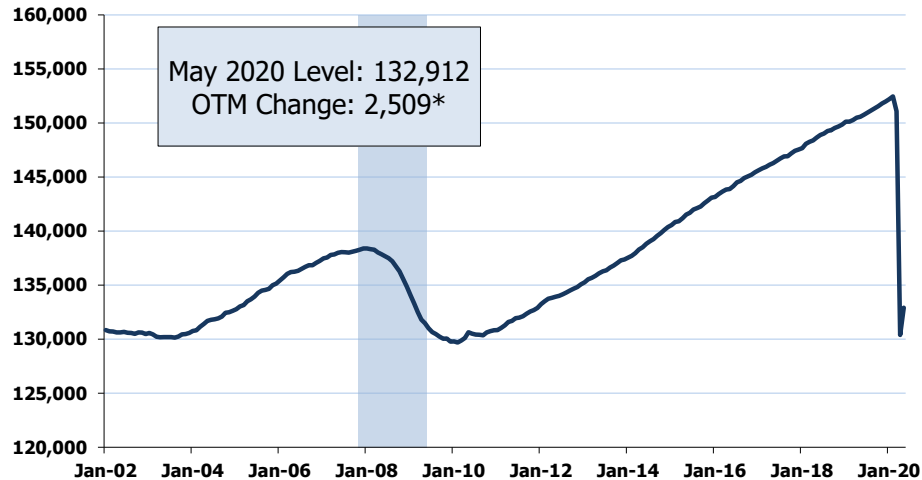
Leisure and hospitality accounted for about one-half of the May employment increase. Large job gains also occurred in construction, education and health services, and retail trade. By contrast, employment in government declined sharply.

Average hourly earnings of all employees on private-sector payrolls fell by 29 cents or 1.0 percent in May. Hourly earnings had risen by \$1.35 in April. Over the year, hourly earnings have increased by 6.7 percent. Average weekly hours rose by 0.5 hour to 34.7 hours. Caution is advised in interpreting recent trends in total private hours and earnings. Monthly changes in employment composition, especially in lower-paying and lower-hour industries, have been the driving force of recent changes in hours and earnings.

The employment change for April revised down by 150,000 to -20,687,000, and the change for March revised down by 492,000 to -1,373,000. On net, employment over these

Employment in total nonfarm January 2002–May 2020

Seasonally adjusted, in thousands



Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics survey, June 05, 2020.
Shaded area represents recession as denoted by the National Bureau of Economic Research.
Most recent 2 months of data are preliminary.
* denotes significance.

months is 642,000 lower than previously reported.

Changes made to the estimation methods for the establishment survey in April to better account for temporary or permanent business closures were kept in place for May. Also, after further research, BLS extended these changes

back to March, which accounted for a portion of the revision to March data. The impacts of the pandemic on the payroll survey are detailed in the May Employment Situation news release and accompanying materials (available on the BLS website at <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0>)

Current Employment Statistics Summary, May 2020

.htm). The response rate for the establishment survey was slightly below normal for May; however, CES was still able to produce estimates that meet BLS standards for accuracy and reliability.

+1,239,000 Leisure and Hospitality

In May, leisure and hospitality recovered 1.2 million of 8.3 million jobs lost in March and April. Food services and drinking places accounted for 1.4 million jobs gained in May. Employment continued to fall in accommodation, which has lost 1.1 million jobs over the past 3 months.

+464,000 Construction

Construction employment rose by 464,000 in May after declining by 1.1 million in the prior 2 months. The job gains in May were distributed throughout construction.

+424,000 Education and Health Services

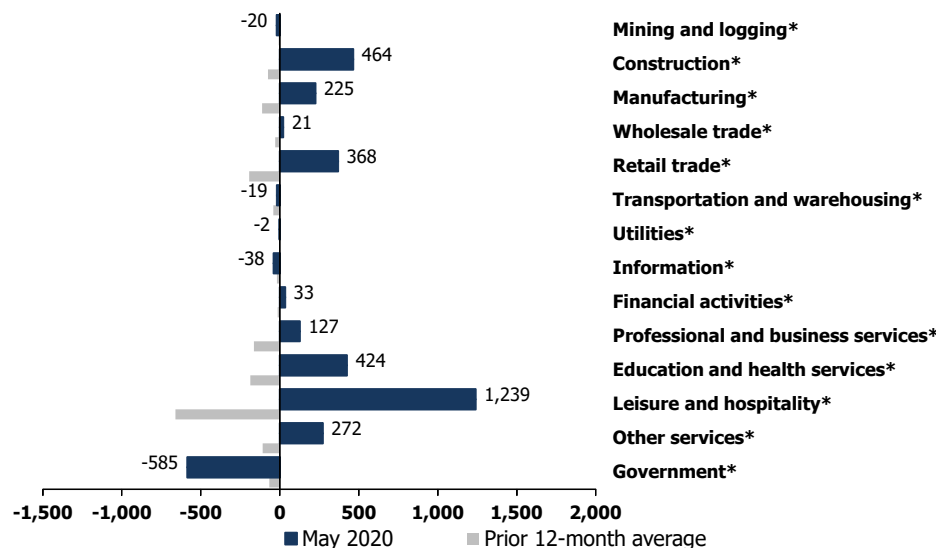
Employment in health care rose by 312,000 following declines totaling 1.6 million in March and April. In May, ambulatory health care services added 376,000 jobs, while hospitals and nursing and residential care facilities lost jobs.

Employment in total nonfarm

Over-the-month change, May 2020

Seasonally adjusted, in thousands

Total nonfarm:
2,509*



Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics survey, June 05, 2020.
Data are preliminary.
* denotes significance

Social assistance added 78,000 jobs in May after losing 692,000 jobs in the previous 2 months.

+368,000 Retail Trade

Retail trade added 368,000 jobs in May following declines totaling 2.4 million in March and April. Job gains were spread across most retail industries, including sizable gains in clothing and clothing accessories (+95,000), automobile dealers

Current Employment Statistics Survey Summary, May 2020

(+85,000), and general merchandise stores (+84,000). Electronics and appliance stores lost 95,000 jobs over the month.

+272,000 Other Services

Employment in other services rose by 272,000 in May, following losses totaling 1.4 million in the prior 2 months. In May, personal and laundry services added 182,000 jobs, while repair and maintenance services added 77,000.

+225,000 Manufacturing

Manufacturing added 225,000 jobs after losing about 1.4 million in March and April. In May, gains were distributed among durables goods (+119,000) and nondurables goods (+106,000) industries.

+127,000 Professional and Business Services

Employment in professional and business services rose by 127,000 over the month, following declines totaling 2.3 million in March and April. In May, administrative and waste services added 109,000 jobs.

+33,000 Financial Activities

Employment increased by 33,000 in financial activities after declining by 282,000 in March and April. In May, rental and leasing services added 21,000 jobs, while activities related to credit intermediation added 6,000.

+21,000 Wholesale Trade

Employment in wholesale trade increased by 21,000 after falling by a total 395,000 in March and April.

-585,000 Government

Government lost 585,000 jobs in May, bringing total job losses to 1.6 million over the past 2 months. Local government accounted for 487,000 of the May loss and 797,000 of the April loss.

-38,000 Information

Information lost 38,000 jobs in May following a loss of 272,000 in April. Weakness in the sector was widespread.

-20,000 Mining and Logging

Mining employment fell by 20,000 in May, with losses concentrated in support

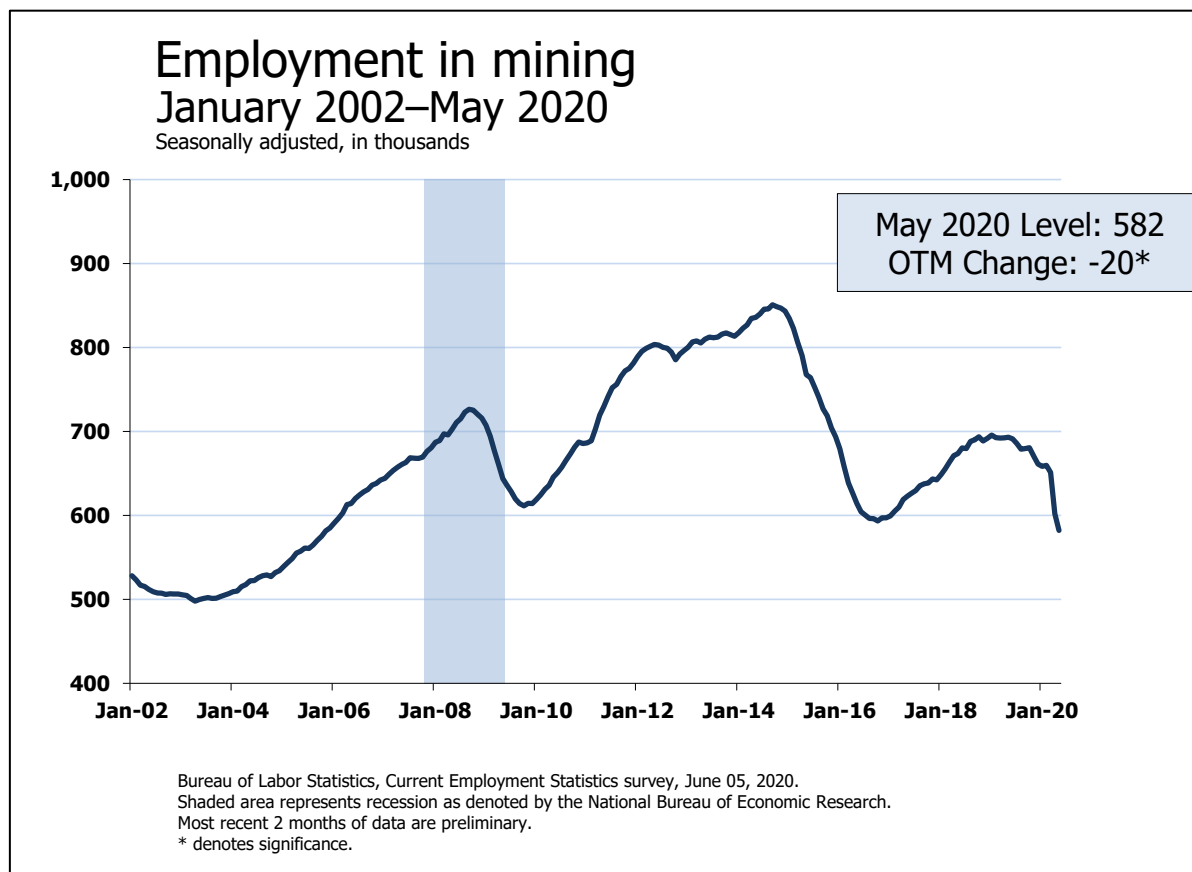
activities for mining (-16,000) and in oil and gas extraction (-7,000). Coal mining added 5,000 jobs over the month, mostly offsetting a decline in April. Since reaching a peak in January 2019, employment in mining has declined by 113,000, with 68 percent of the losses occurring over the past 3 months.

-19,000 Transportation and Warehousing

Employment in air transportation declined by 50,000 in May, following a decrease of 79,000 in April. The May loss was partly offset by job gains in couriers and messengers (+12,000), transit and ground passenger transportation (+10,000), and in warehousing and storage (+9,000).

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

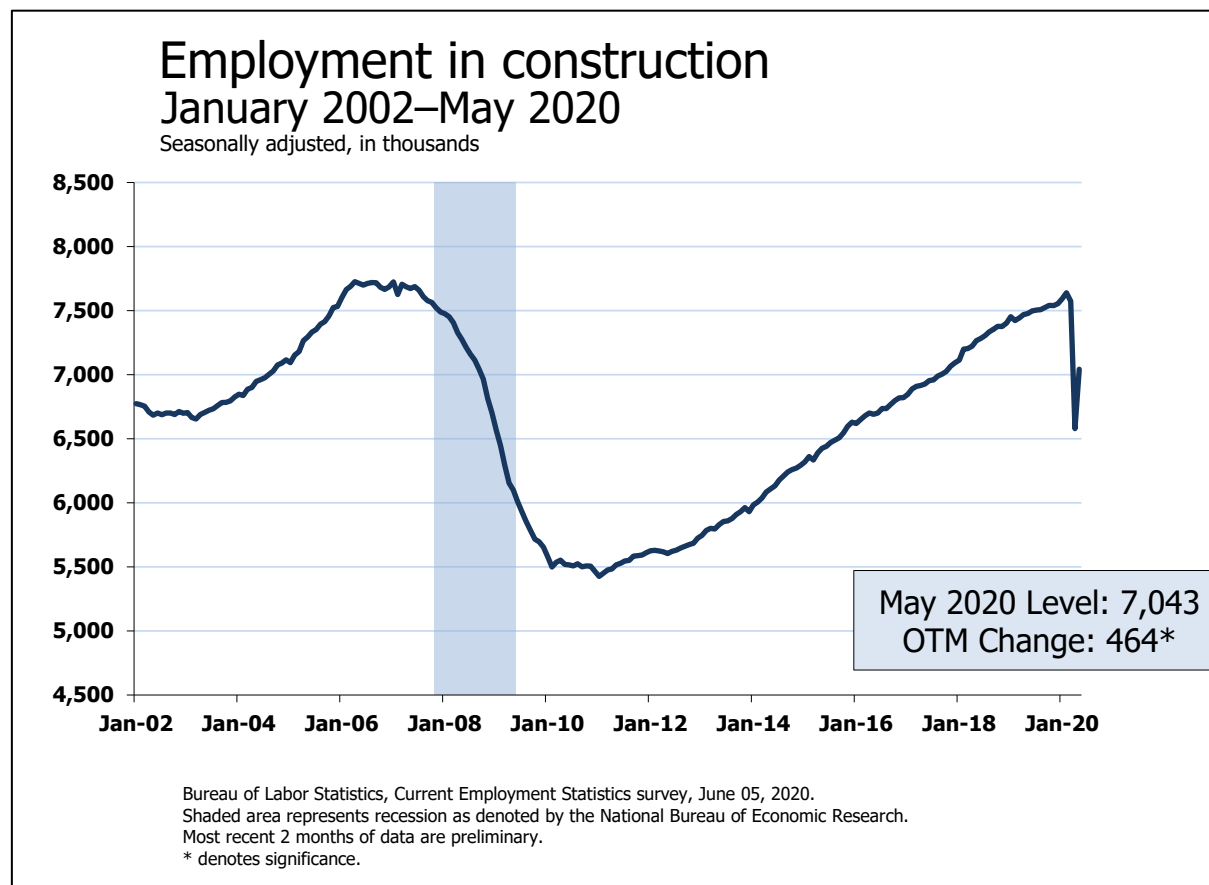


Mining employment declined by 20,000 in May, bringing the 3-month net job loss to 77,000. Over the month, support activities for mining (-16,000) and oil and gas extraction (-7,000) lost jobs. Coal mining added 5,000 jobs, largely offsetting a decline of 8,000 in April.

Mining employment losses are reflected in May indicator data, which show declines in the [North American rotary rig count](#).

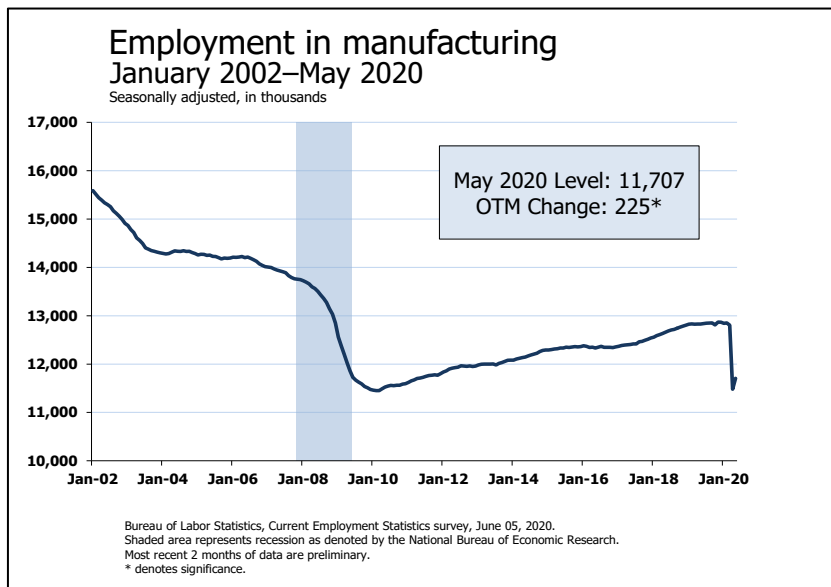
Logging employment, which had declined by 5,000 in April, changed little in May.

Construction



Construction employment increased by 464,000 in May, as businesses started to resume activity after the coronavirus pandemic reduced employment by 1.1 million in April and March. Strength in specialty trade contractors (+325,000) and construction of buildings (+105,000) combined for most of the job growth in May. Heavy and civil engineering construction added 34,000 jobs.

Manufacturing

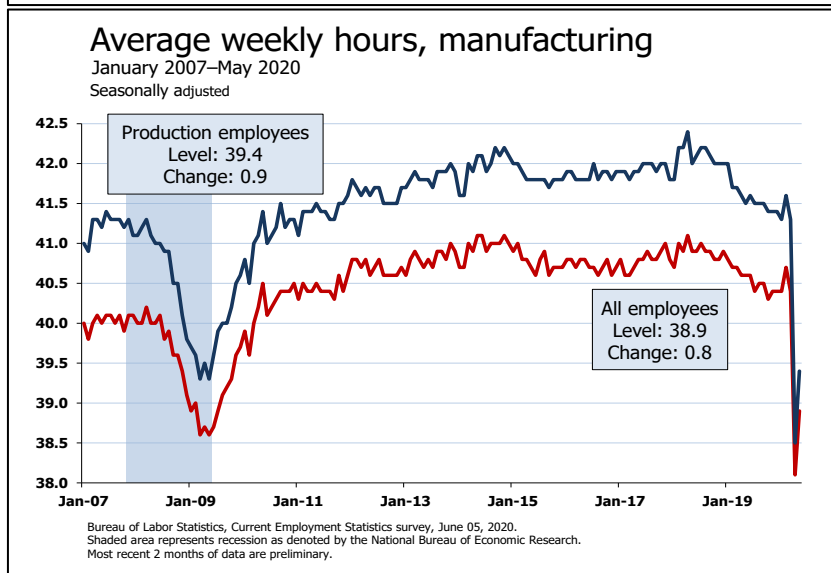


In May, manufacturing employment increased by 225,000 after falling by 1.4 million in April and March. The gains in May were spread between durable goods (+119,000) and nondurable goods (+106,000).

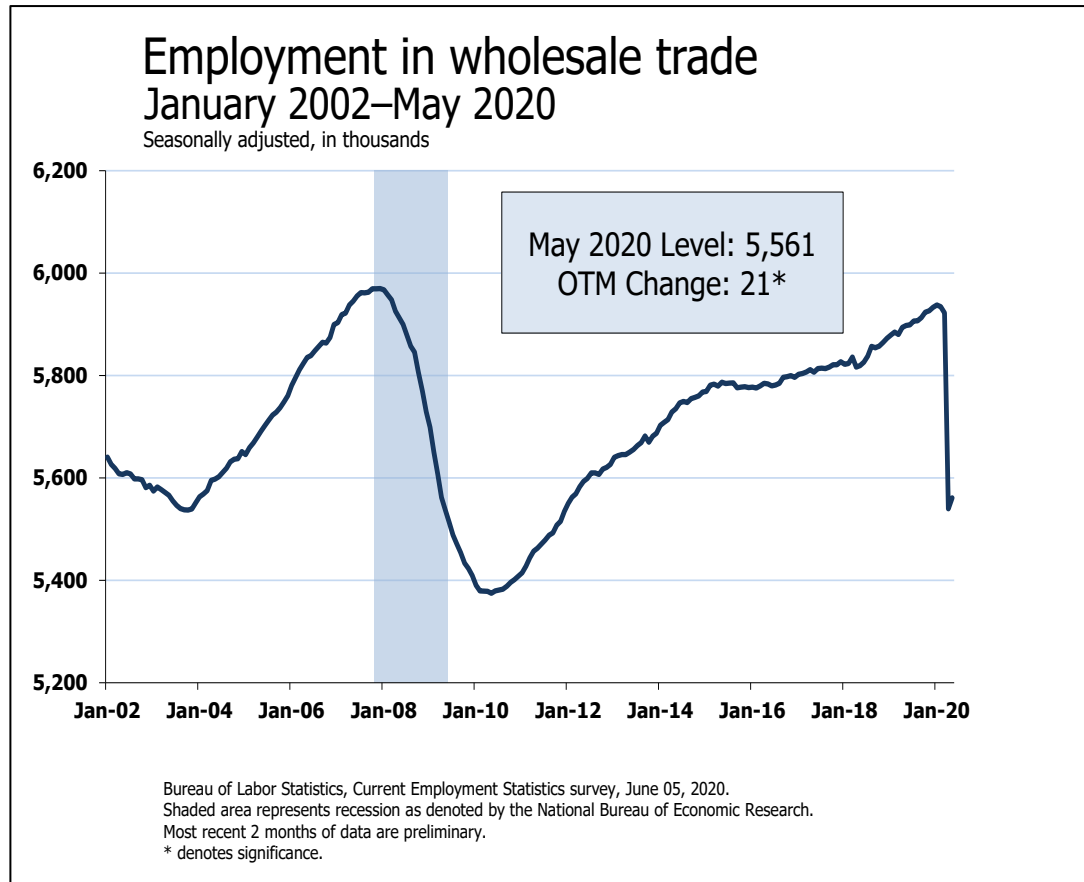
The manufacturing 1-month diffusion index rebounded to 70.4 from 3.3 in April, as manufacturers started to resume business activity. A value over 50 indicates that more manufacturing industries are adding jobs than are losing jobs.

Average weekly hours for all employees in manufacturing rose 0.8 hour to 38.9 hours over the month, after declining by 2.3 hours in April. The average workweek of production workers in manufacturing increased 0.9 hour to 39.4 hours in May. Average weekly overtime hours for all employees in manufacturing increased by 0.3 hour to 2.4 hours. Average weekly overtime hours for production workers rose 0.4 hour to 3.2 hours.

Average hourly earnings for all employees stood at \$28.96, reflecting a decrease of 32 cents but following a 93-cent increase in April. Average hourly earnings of production and nonsupervisory workers fell by 7 cents to \$22.71 in May.



Wholesale Trade



Employment in wholesale trade increased by 21,000 in May, a small rebound from the 383,000 jobs lost in April. Nondurable goods added 13,000 jobs after shedding 152,000 in April. Employment in durable goods and in electronic markets and agents and brokers changed little in May.

Retail Trade

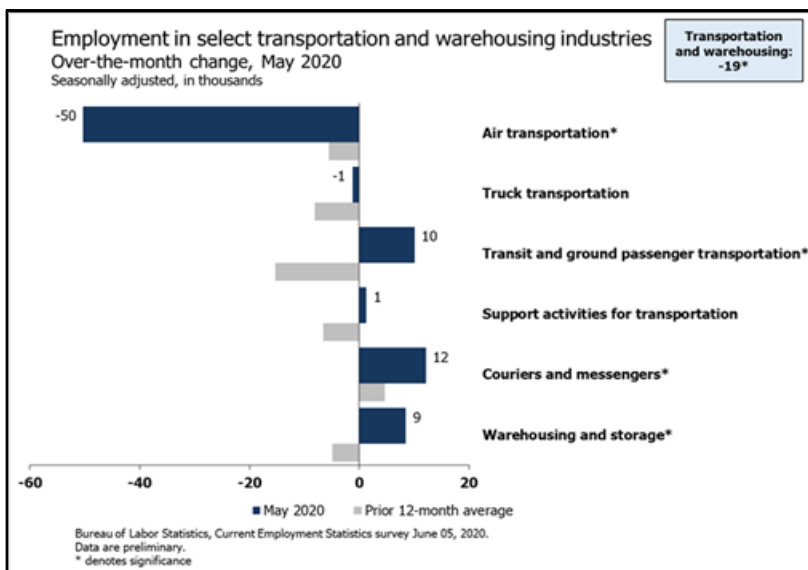


Employment in retail trade rose by 368,000 in May, after dropping by 2.4 million in March and April, combined. Over the 3-month period, industry employment declined by 2.0 million.

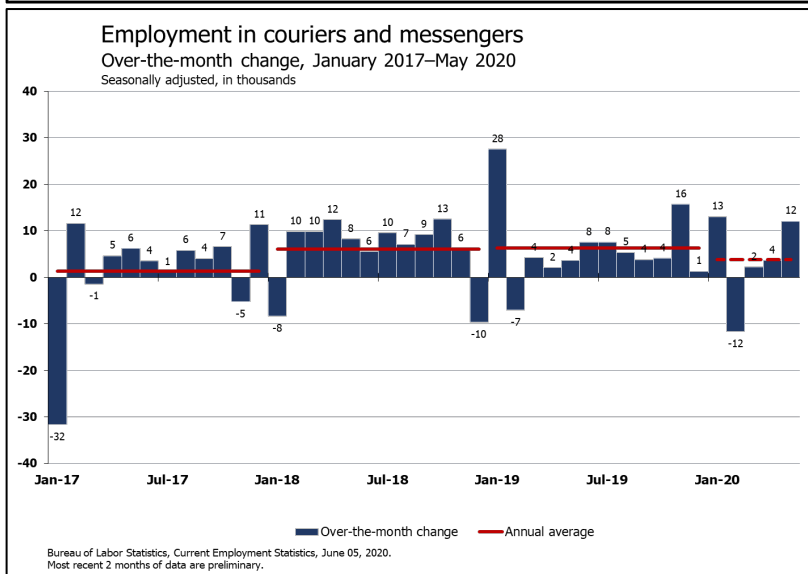
Job gains were widespread in May, with considerable gains in clothing and clothing accessories stores (+95,000), automobile dealers (+85,000), and general merchandise stores (+84,000). Employment in electronics and appliance stores declined by 95,000 over the month.

Recent retail-related economic indicators are mixed. [Retail Sales](#) declined sharply in April. The per gallon price of regular gasoline increased in May ([U.S. Energy Information Administration](#)). Contrarily, the [Consumer Confidence Index](#) increased in May.

Transportation and Warehousing



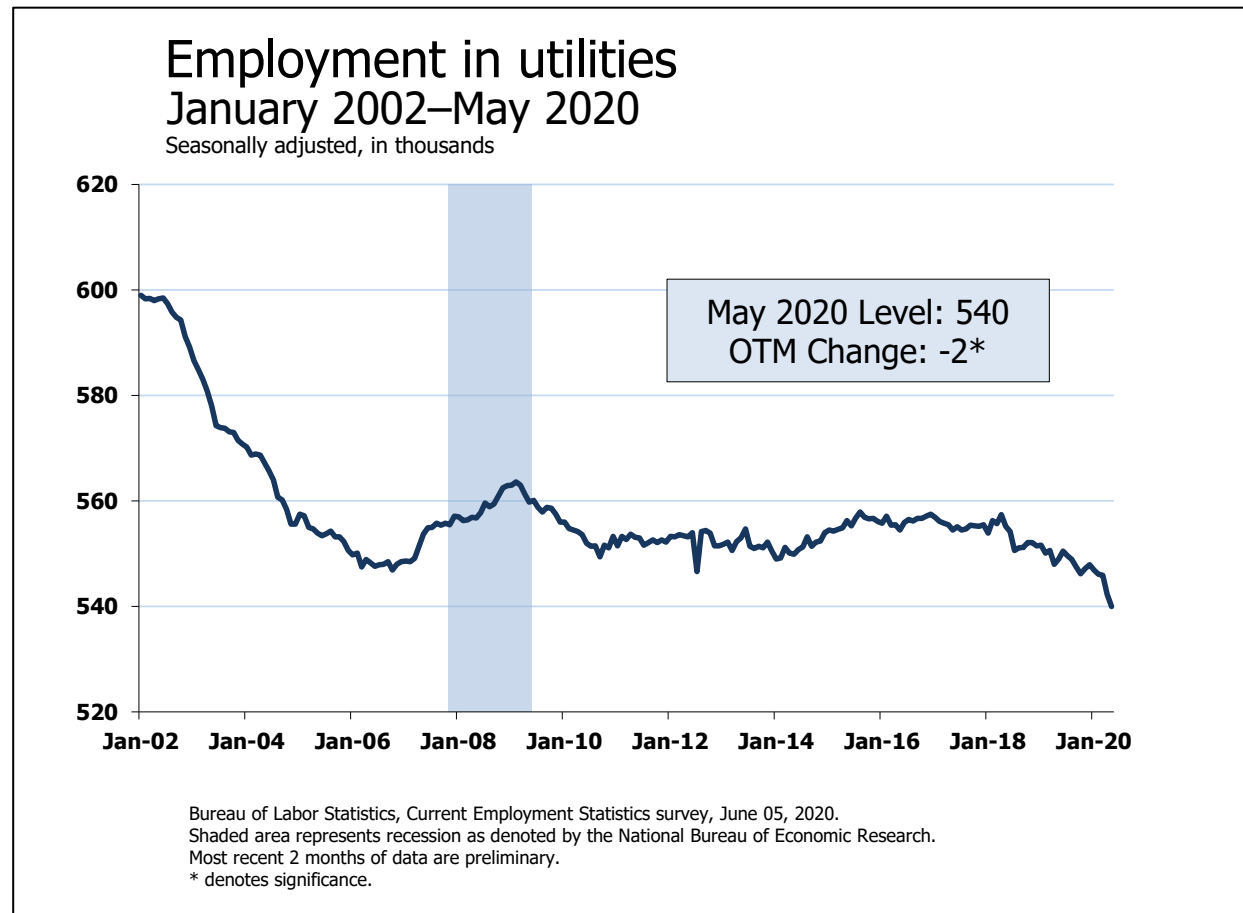
Employment in transportation and warehousing decreased by 19,000 in May after dropping 553,000 jobs in April. Driving the May decline, air transportation lost 50,000 jobs, following a decline of 79,000 in April.



Employment in couriers and messengers rose by 12,000 in May, following a gain of 4,000 in April. Hiring in the industry likely reflects an April surge in [daily U.S. e-commerce sales](#) as consumers modify their shopping habits due to the pandemic.

Transit and ground passenger transportation (+10,000) and warehousing and storage (+9,000) also added jobs in May.

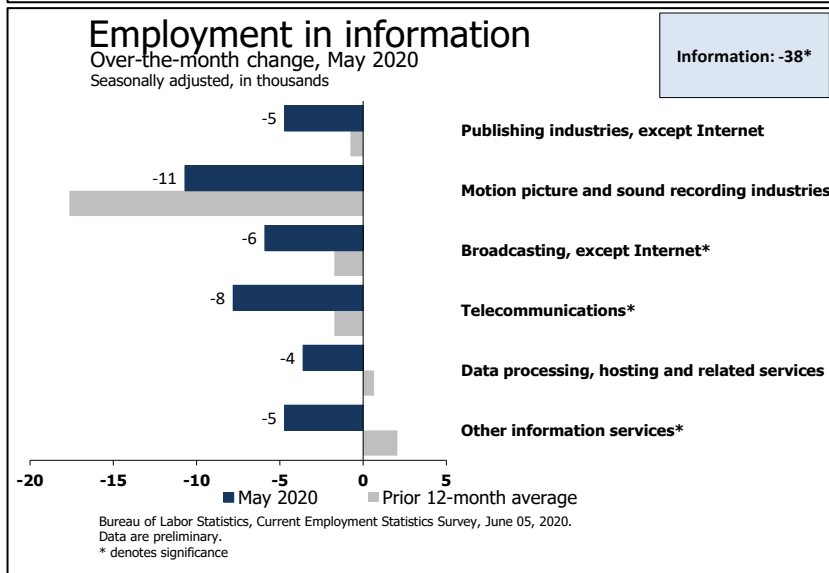
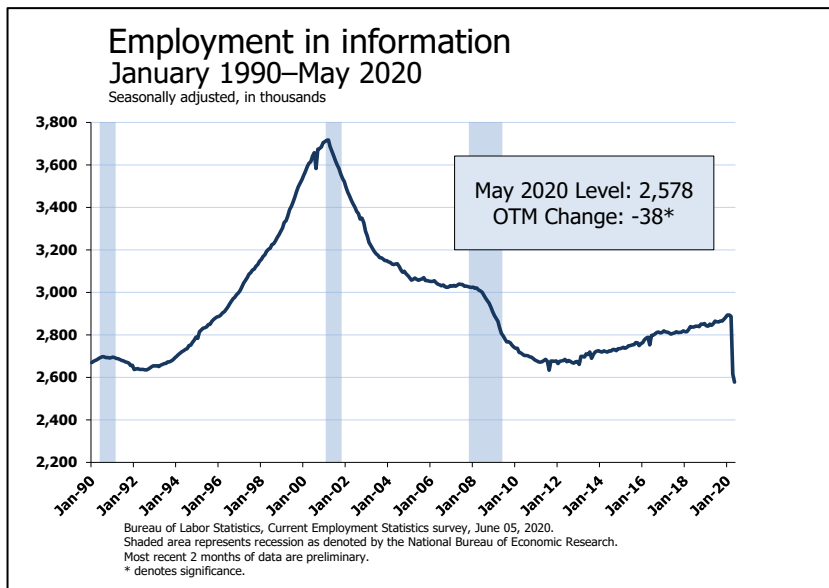
Utilities



Employment in utilities declined by 2,000 in May, bringing the 3-month loss to 6,000.

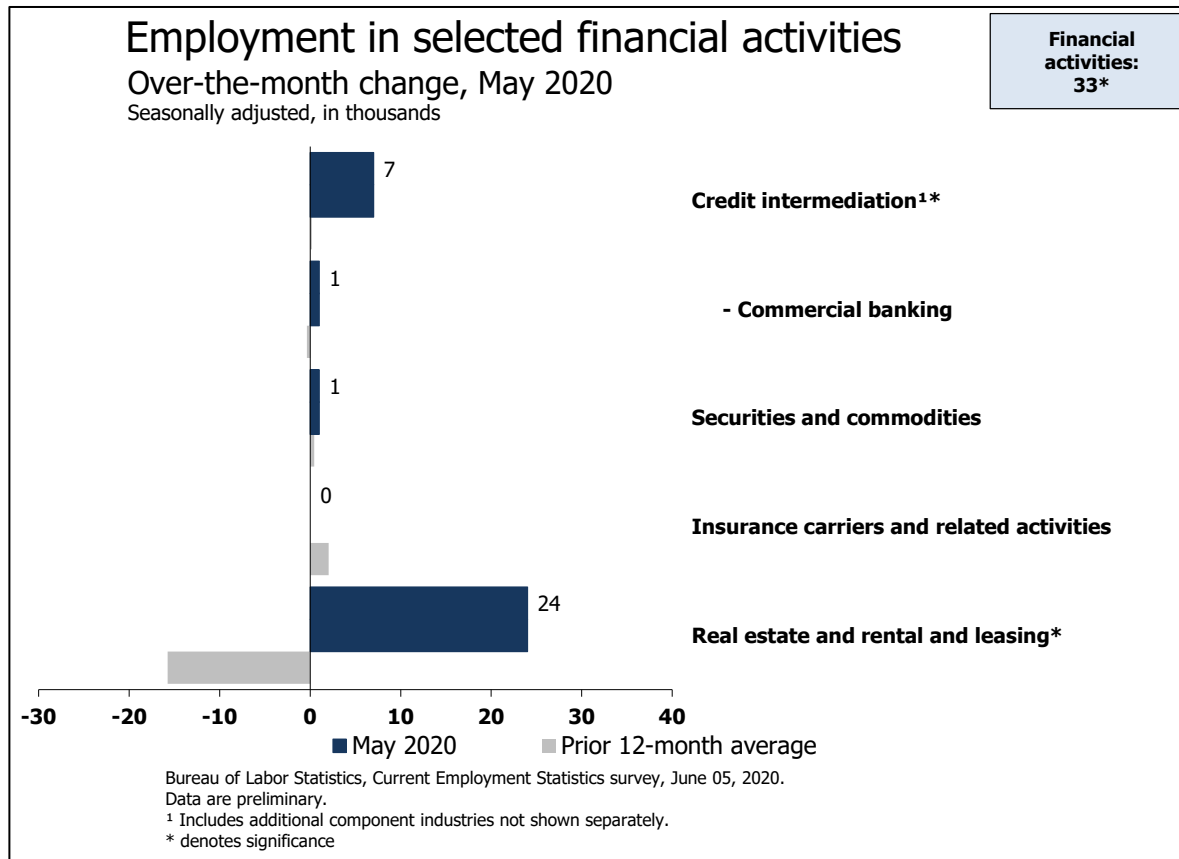
Information

Information employment declined by 38,000 in May following a record decline of 272,000 in April. May marked the lowest employment level for this industry since August 1989.



The May losses were spread across the component industries, with broadcasting, except internet (-6,000), telecommunications (-8,000), and other information services (-5,000) losing jobs.

Financial Activities

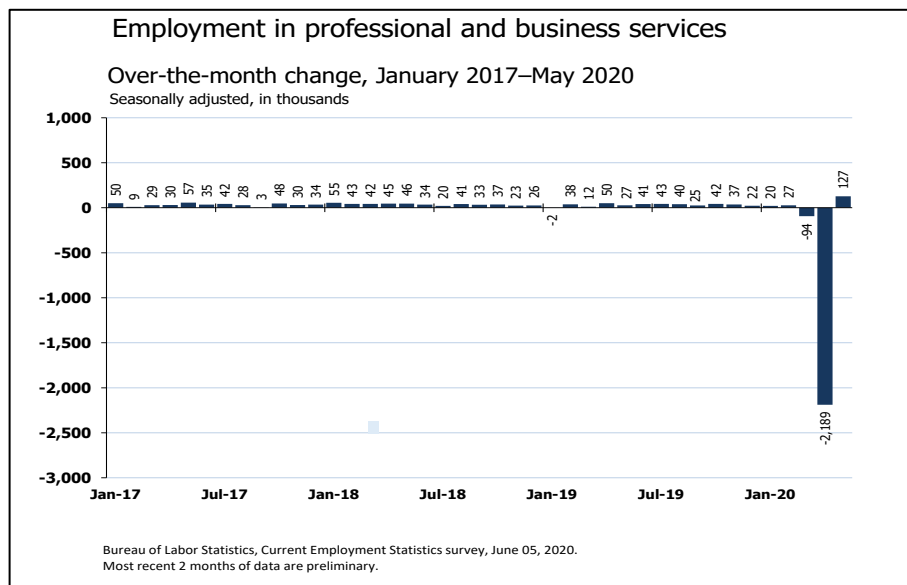


Employment in financial activities rose by 33,000 in May, following losses totaling 282,000 in the prior 2 months.

Job gains in May were concentrated in real estate and rental and leasing (+24,000) and in credit intermediation and related activities (+7,000).

Over the prior 2 months, real estate and rental and leasing lost 236,000 jobs, and credit intermediation lost 33,000 jobs.

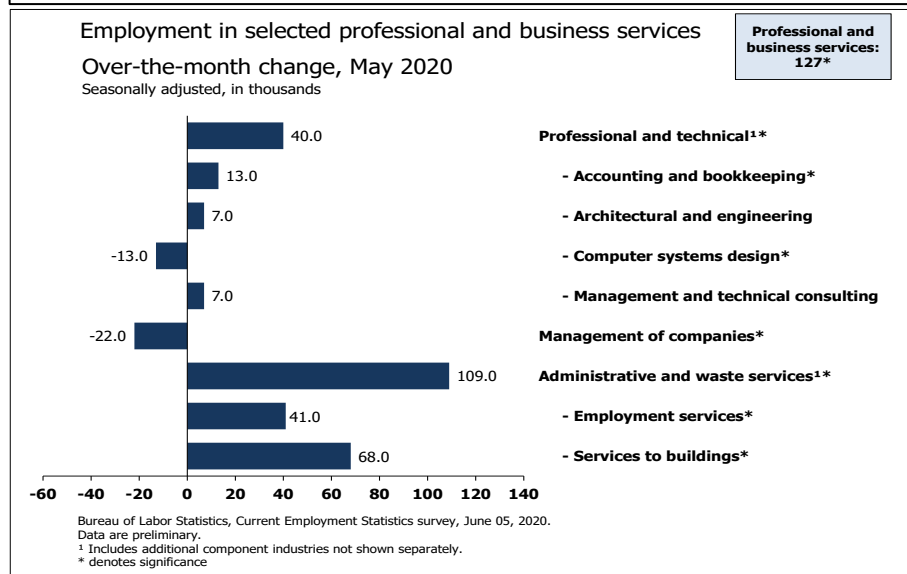
Professional and Business Services



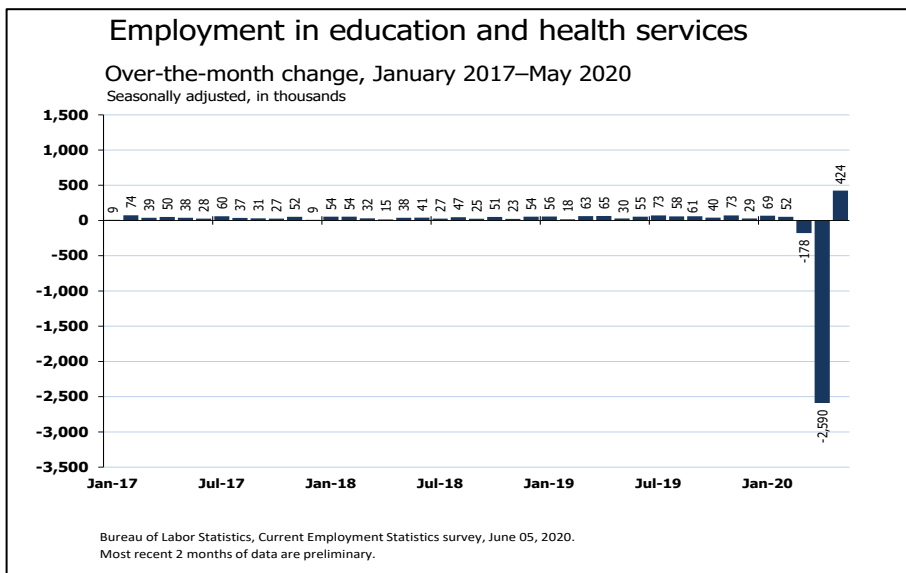
Employment in professional and business services increased by 127,000 in May, after declining by 2.3 million in April and March. May employment gains occurred in administrative and waste services (+109,000), and professional and technical service (+40,000). Management of companies and enterprise lost 22,000 jobs in May.

Within administrative and waste services, services to buildings and dwellings added 68,000 jobs in May, following losses totaling 270,000 over the prior 2 months. Temporary help services added 39,000 jobs, after losing 892,000 jobs in April and March.

Within professional and technical services, job gains occurred in other professional and technical services (+21,000) and in accounting and bookkeeping services (+13,000), while computer systems and design shed 13,000 jobs in May.

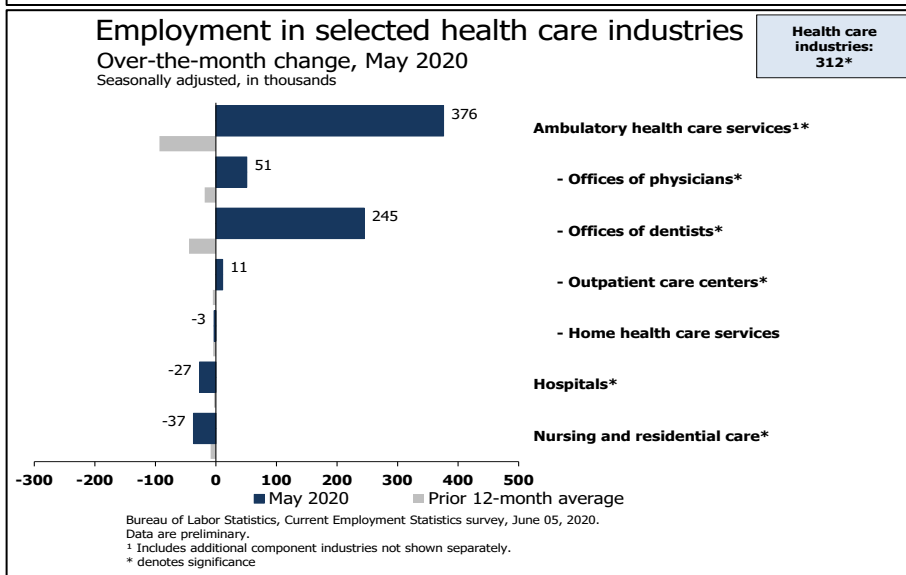


Private Education and Health Services



In May, employment in health care and social assistance increased by 391,000 following declines totaling 2.3 million in March and April. Educational services added 33,000 jobs after losing 505,000 in the previous 2 months.

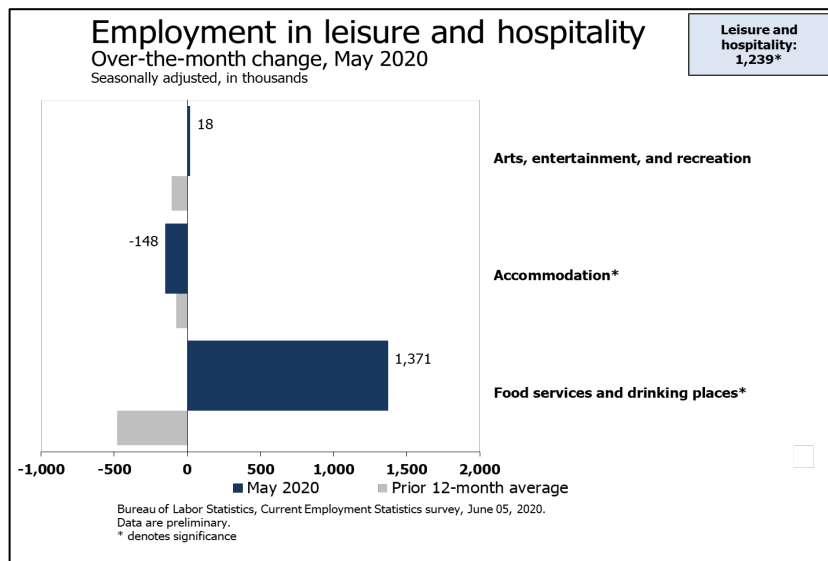
Within social assistance, child day care services (+44,000), and individual and family services (+29,000) added jobs in May, after losing 370,000 and 246,000 jobs, respectively, over the prior 2 months.



Employment in ambulatory health care services increased by 376,000 in May, with offices of dentists (+245,000) accounting for almost two-thirds of the gains. Offices of other health practitioners (+73,000), offices of physicians (+51,000), and outpatient care centers (+11,000) also added jobs.

In May, employment in nursing and residential care facilities fell by 37,000, while hospitals shed 27,000 jobs.

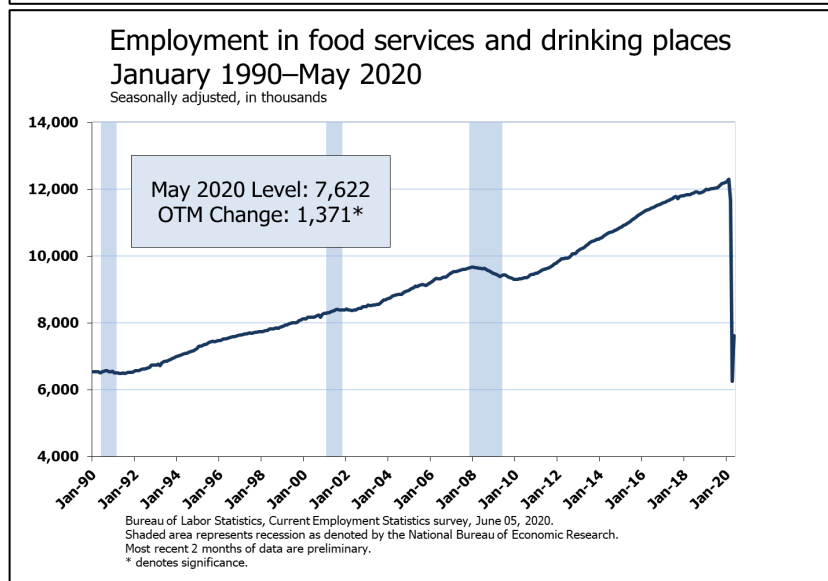
Leisure and Hospitality



Leisure and hospitality added more than 1.2 million jobs in May, rebounding somewhat after record losses in April (-7.5 million) and March (-743,000).

Employment gains were concentrated in food services and drinking places (+1.4 million), while depressed [demand](#) contributed to continued losses in accommodation (-148,000).

Average hourly earnings for all leisure and hospitality workers fell by 56 cents to \$17.39 in May, after jumping \$1.09 in April. The changes in average earnings were driven largely to the large job loss in April and a partial return in May of lower-earning employees.



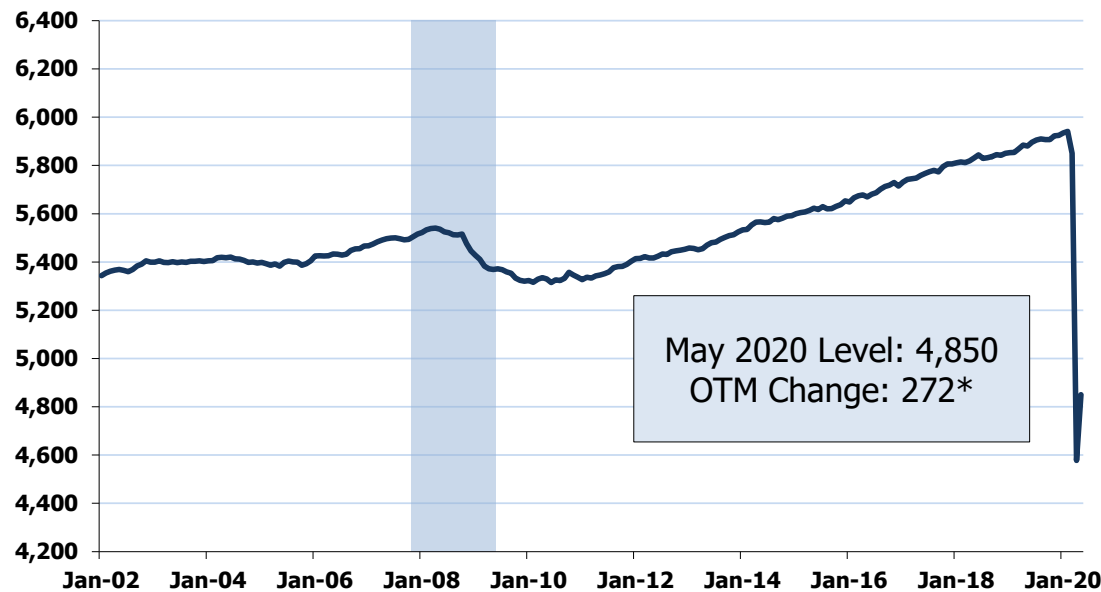
Employment in food services and drinking places increased by nearly 1.4 million in May as restaurant operators remained [confident](#) of improved near-term economic conditions following mandatory COVID-19 closures. Since February, the industry has lost a net 4.7 million jobs.

The average workweek for nonsupervisory employees in food services and drinking places establishments rose to 24 hours in May (an increase of 2.4 hours), mostly offsetting the downward movement seen over the prior 2 months.

Other Services

Employment in other services January 2002–May 2020

Seasonally adjusted, in thousands



Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics survey, June 05, 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 grew by 272,000 in May following a decrease of 1.4 million in March and April, combined. In May, personal and laundry services (+182,000), and repair and maintenance (+77,000) added jobs. According to a [media report](#), by the middle of May, some states had partially lifted restrictions on personal care businesses such as barbershops and hair and nail salons.

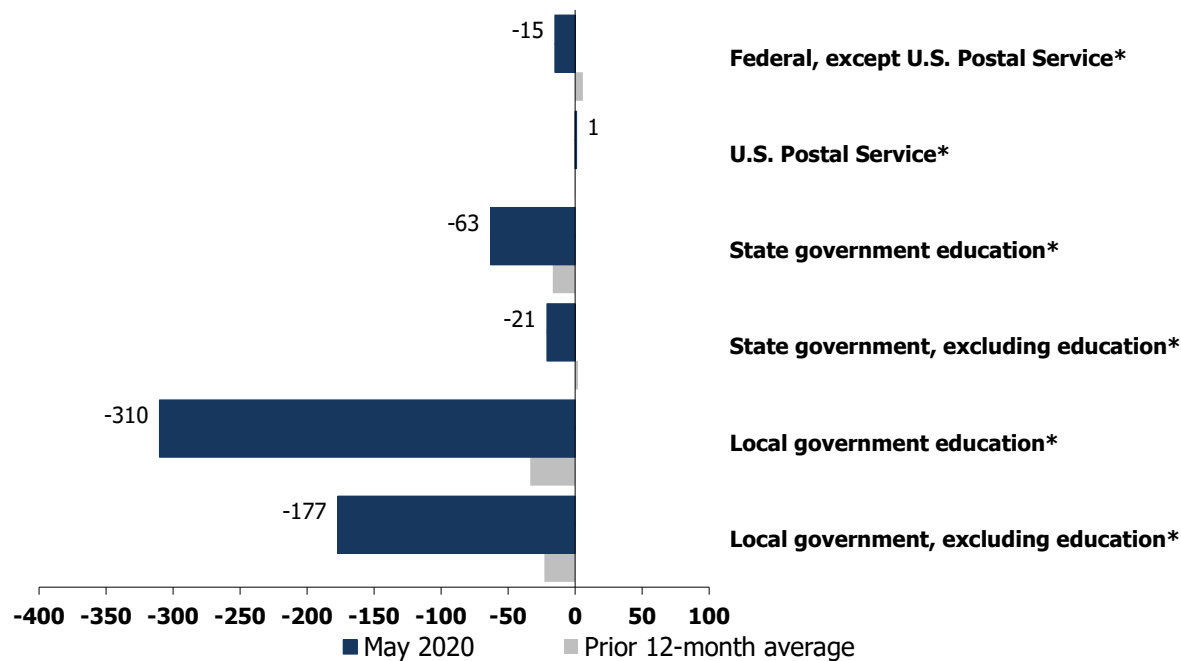
Government

Employment in selected government

Over-the-month change, May 2020

Seasonally adjusted, in thousands

Government:
-585*



Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics survey, June 05, 2020.

Data are preliminary.

* denotes significance

Government employment decreased by 585,000 in May, with local government accounting for 487,000 of the loss.

Over the past 2 months, government employment has declined by 1.5 million, with state and local education accounting for 64 percent of the losses.

Federal government employment fell in May, due to the layoff of 15,000 temporary decennial census workers.



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