

2023 Workforce Data Revisions

Nonfarm Jobs Estimates Increased in a More Consistent Pattern Unemployment Changed More Gradually at Much Lower Rates

Each month estimates derived from two surveys provide the most current indications of workforce conditions. Nonfarm wage and salary jobs estimates by sector and by metropolitan area are based on the Current Employment Statistics “payroll survey.” Labor force estimates, including unemployment, are based on the Current Population Survey “household survey.”

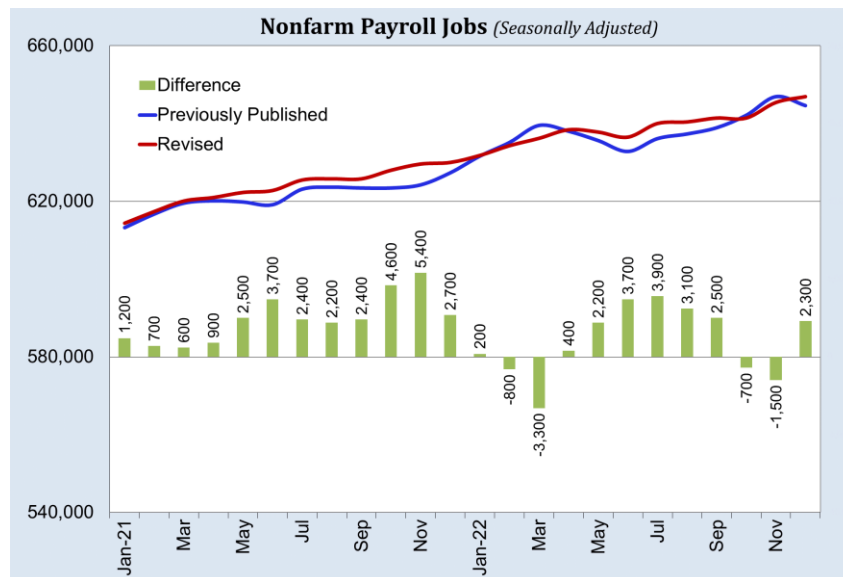
In the winter of each year estimates from those programs are revised for previous years based on more complete information. Revisions usually are largest for the most recent year and smaller for the year before that. Compared to previously published data, now official revised estimates indicate that:

- The number of nonfarm jobs increased more consistently and were somewhat higher in 2021 and 2022
- Unemployment was little changed from what previously was published for 2021; it was less variable throughout 2022 and substantially lower for most months

Data cited in this brief is seasonally adjusted.

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs

Previously published estimates indicated the number of nonfarm jobs increased throughout 2021, decreased in the first half of 2022, and then returned to a pattern of growth in the second half the year. The decrease in jobs in the spring of 2022 was at odds with unemployment estimates, which trended lower during the same period.



[Revised estimates](#) indicate that job growth was relatively consistent throughout the two years. There was an average of 2,700 more jobs in 2021 and 600 more in 2022 than previously published figures indicated. Upward revisions were mostly for the second half of 2021 and for the middle of 2022.

Among sectors, the largest revisions for 2021 were for the information and the leisure and hospitality sectors, each of which have more jobs than previously thought. For 2022 the largest revisions were for leisure and hospitality, which has fewer jobs than previously estimated, and for information, which has more.

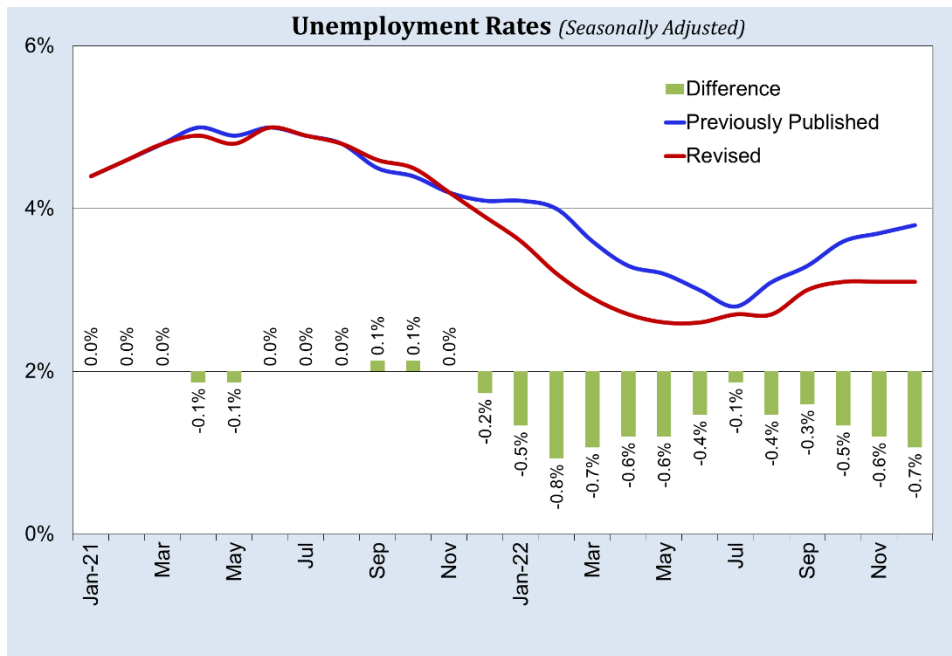
Each of the three metro areas in the state had somewhat fewer jobs than previously estimated for 2022.

Previously Published and Revised Average Nonfarm Wage & Salary Jobs by Sector (in thousands)								
Sector	2021		2022		Net Revised		Percent Revised	
	Previous	Revised	Previous	Revised	2021	2022	2021	2022
Statewide								
Nonfarm Wage and Salary Jobs	620.8	623.5	638.1	638.7	2.7	0.6	0.4%	0.1%
Private Sector	523.1	525.8	539.0	539.3	2.7	0.3	0.5%	0.1%
Mining and Logging	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0%	0.0%
Construction	31.7	32.0	32.2	32.6	0.3	0.4	0.9%	1.2%
Manufacturing	54.1	53.9	55.0	54.5	-0.2	-0.5	-0.4%	-0.9%
Wholesale Trade	19.1	19.1	19.3	19.8	0.0	0.5	0.0%	2.6%
Retail Trade	79.3	79.5	80.1	80.8	0.2	0.7	0.3%	0.9%
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	18.3	18.4	18.3	18.9	0.1	0.6	0.5%	3.3%
Information	6.6	7.5	7.0	7.9	0.9	0.9	13.6%	12.9%
Financial Activities	33.0	33.1	32.9	33.9	0.1	1.0	0.3%	3.0%
Professional & Business Services	72.1	72.5	74.8	75.8	0.4	1.0	0.6%	1.3%
Educational Services	22.1	21.8	23.5	22.8	-0.3	-0.7	-1.4%	-3.0%
Health Care and Social Assistance	103.6	103.8	103.1	103.1	0.2	0.0	0.2%	0.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	60.1	60.9	67.9	65.5	0.8	-2.4	1.3%	-3.5%
Other Services	21.1	21.1	22.8	22.0	0.0	-0.8	0.0%	-3.5%
Government	97.8	97.7	99.1	99.4	-0.1	0.3	-0.1%	0.3%
Federal	16.4	16.4	16.6	16.5	0.0	-0.1	0.0%	-0.6%
State	24.1	23.8	23.5	23.8	-0.3	0.3	-1.2%	1.3%
Local	57.3	57.4	59.0	59.2	0.1	0.2	0.2%	0.3%
Metropolitan Areas								
Portland-S. Portland	206.6	207.2	214.0	212.5	0.6	-1.5	0.3%	-0.7%
Lewiston-Auburn	49.6	49.5	50.7	49.5	-0.1	-1.2	-0.2%	-2.4%
Bangor	65.8	65.8	68.4	68.0	0.0	-0.4	0.0%	-0.6%

Numbers may not add due to rounding.

Unemployment Rates

Previously published estimates indicated that monthly unemployment rates gradually moved up and then down through the course of 2021. That pattern was reversed in 2022 with rates moving down in the first half of the year and up in the second. The pattern of unemployment rates throughout 2022 was at odds with nonfarm jobs estimates derived from the payroll survey.



[Revised rates](#) for 2021 were little changed from what was previously published. For 2022 they maintained the pattern of decrease in the first half of the year and increase in the second half, though changes from month to month were much more moderate. Now official revised unemployment rates for 2022 are lower for every month. The average 0.5 percentage point decrease from what had previously been published is among the largest revisions that has occurred for Maine. The flatter pattern that revised rates portray is an improvement, though increasing rates in the second half of the year remains at odds with the job gains and high numbers of job openings employers reported during that period.

Rising unemployment in a period of strong job growth, as these estimates portray for the latter part of 2022, can occur if labor force participation increased during the same period. After all, an environment of opportunity from both job growth and large numbers of job openings sometimes does draw some people in to the labor force. In this case that is not what underlies rising unemployment estimates for that period. Future revisions are likely to bring unemployment and labor force estimates into closer alignment with nonfarm job trends.

Annual revisions improve the quality of workforce data and provide a better indication of overall trends. Variability in preliminary estimates is expected to continue in 2023 and beyond. This is due to changes in both the sample of survey respondents and the statistical methods used, as well as to gaps in the representativeness of survey respondents to the broader workforce. It is better to look at trends over many months than a single month or the change from one month to another to draw conclusions about the condition and direction of the labor market.