



# Mississippi Economic Update

August 21, 2015

## Summary

Nonfarm payroll employment in Mississippi increased by 5,800 jobs and the unemployment rate fell to 6.5 percent in July according to data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

## Mississippi Unemployment Rate

During July, the unemployment rate in Mississippi declined by 0.1 percentage point to 6.5 percent. The number of people counted as unemployed fell by 1,190 in July to 81,790, while the labor force grew by 3,022 to 1,265,763. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 45 posted lower unemployment rates for the month than Mississippi. A year earlier, the unemployment rate in Mississippi stood at 7.5 percent.

The 10 year peak for the unemployment rate in Mississippi was 10.8 percent in March 2010. The series high for the unemployment rate in Mississippi occurred in April 1983 when the unemployment rate reached 12.8 percent. The 10 year low for the unemployment rate in Mississippi was 5.9 percent in December 2007. The series low for the unemployment rate in Mississippi occurred in January 2001 when the unemployment rate reached 5.0 percent. BLS began publishing the state unemployment rate series in 1976.

The national unemployment rate was unchanged at 5.3 percent in July. July's unemployment rate was 0.9 percentage point lower than a year earlier when the rate stood at 6.2 percent. The ten year high for the national unemployment rate was 10.0 percent in October 2009. The ten year low was 4.4 percent in May 2007.



## Mississippi Payroll Employment

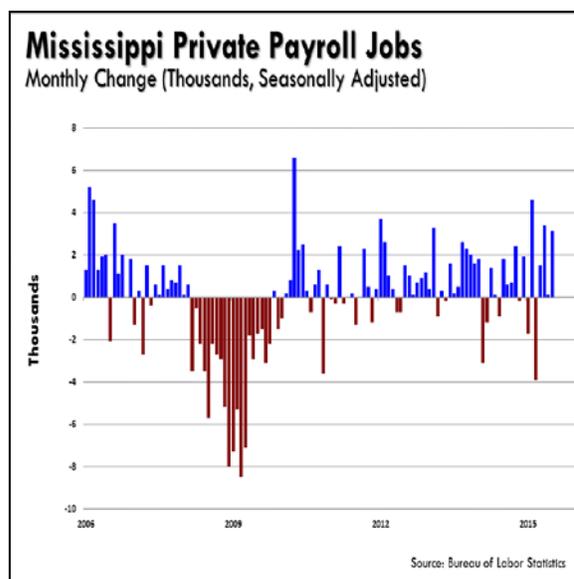
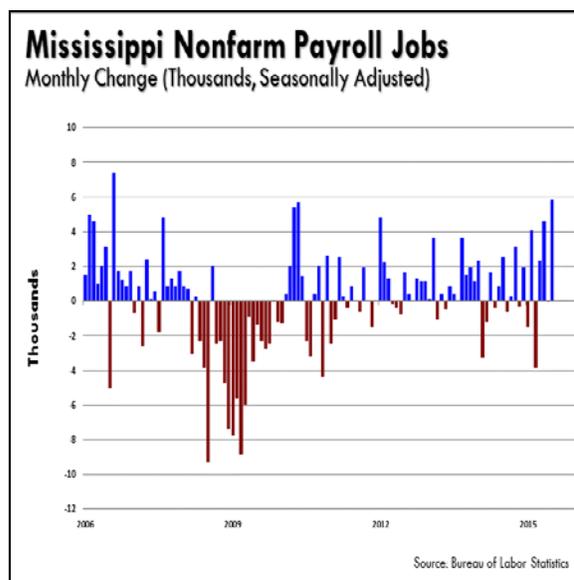
Mississippi nonfarm payrolls increased by 5,800 jobs, or 0.51 percent, on a seasonally adjusted basis during July. In the prior month, nonfarm payrolls declined by 100. Over the past 12 months nonfarm payrolls in Mississippi increased by 15,700, or 1.40 percent. Mississippi nonfarm payroll employment has increased in 7 of the past 12 months.

Nationally nonfarm payrolls increased by 215,000 jobs in July, or 0.15 percent. Over the 12 month period ending in July 2015, nonfarm payrolls grew by 2,915,000 jobs, or 2.09 percent. Mississippi ranks 31st among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for percentage gain in nonfarm payroll employment over the past 12 months.

During July, Mississippi private sector payrolls increased by 3,100, or 0.35 percent. Private sector payrolls increased by 100 jobs in the prior month. Over the past 12 months, private sector payrolls in Mississippi increased by 12,500, or 1.43 percent. Mississippi private sector payroll employment has increased in 9 of the past 12 months.

Nationally, private sector payroll jobs increased by 210,000 in July, or 0.18 percent. Over the past 12 months, the nation's economy has added 2,853,000 private sector payroll jobs, an increase of 2.43 percent. Mississippi ranks 32nd among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for percentage gain in private sector payroll employment over the past 12 months.

During July, total government payroll employment in Mississippi increased by 2,700, or 1.09 percent. Federal government payroll employment declined by 200, or 0.78 percent. State government payroll employment increased by 400, or 0.66 percent, while local government payroll employment increased by 3,100, or 1.95 percent.



Over the past year, total government payroll employment increased by 3,200, or 1.30 percent. State government payroll employment declined by 1,800, or 2.86 percent. Local government payroll employment increased by 2,400, or 1.50 percent.

The best performing sectors on a seasonally adjusted basis during July were Total Government (+2,700) and Other Services (+1,400). The poorest performing sectors during the month were Trade, Transportation & Utilities (-1,000) and Financial Activities (-200).



The best performing sectors during the last twelve months was Leisure & Hospitality (+3,700). The poorest performing sectors for the year were Construction (-2,100) and Mining & Logging (-700).

#### Other Mississippi Labor Force Statistics

The labor force participation rate in Mississippi rose to 55.5 percent in July from 55.3 percent the prior month. At 55.5 percent, Mississippi has one of the five lowest labor force participation rates in the nation. The labor force participation rate in Mississippi is unchanged from a year earlier. The labor force participation rate is the percentage of the civilian noninstitutionalized population age 16 and older who are employed or actively looking for work.



The 10 year high for the labor force participation rate in Mississippi was 62.1 percent in August 2005. The series high for the labor force participation rate in Mississippi occurred in September 1994 when the labor force participation rate hit 63.5 percent. The 10 year low for the labor force participation rate was 53.6 percent in December 2014. This also represents the series low for the labor force participation rate in Mississippi.

The national labor force participation rate remained at 62.6 percent in July. That rate is 0.2 percentage point lower than a year earlier. The rate for June and July are the lowest recorded since October 1977.

The employment-to-population ratio, or the percentage of the Mississippi civilian noninstitutionalized population 16 years and older counted as employed, rose to 51.9 percent in July from 51.7 percent the prior month. At 51.9 percent, Mississippi has one of the five lowest employment-to-population ratios in the nation. The employment-to-population ratio in Mississippi is 2.1 percentage points higher than a year earlier.

The 10 year high for the employment-to-population ratio in Mississippi was 57.1 percent in August 2005. The series high for the employment-to-population ratio in Mississippi occurred in May 2000 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 59.8 percent. The 10 year low for the employment-to-population ratio was 49.7 percent in December 2014. The series low for the employment-to-population ratio occurred in January 2015 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 49.7 percent.

The national employment-to-population ratio held steady at 59.3 percent in July. At 59.3 percent, the national employment-to-population ratio is below its level of 59.4 percent when the recession ended in June 2009. The all-time high for the employment-to-population ratio was 64.7 percent in April 2000. The 10 year high for the employment-to-population ratio was 63.4 percent in December 2006. The recent low occurred in October 2013 when the employment-to-population ratio dipped to 58.2 percent. The last time the employment-to-population posted a reading lower than 58.2 percent was July 1983.

State employment and unemployment data for August is scheduled for release on Friday, September 18. The national employment situation report for August will be released on Friday, September 4.

