



# Virginia Economic Update

March 28, 2016

## Summary

Nonfarm payroll employment in Virginia increased by 12,800 jobs and the unemployment rate was unchanged at 4.1 percent in February according to data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

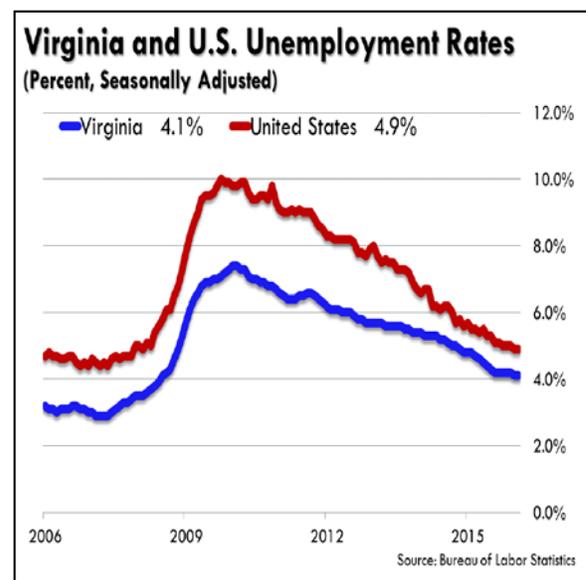
## Virginia Unemployment Rate

During February, the unemployment rate in Virginia was unchanged at 4.1 percent. The number of people counted as unemployed fell by 2,925 in February to 172,549, while the labor force fell by 818 to 4,245,113. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 13 posted lower unemployment rates for the month than Virginia. A year earlier, the unemployment rate in Virginia stood at 4.8 percent.

The 10 year peak for the unemployment rate in Virginia was 7.4 percent in February 2010.

The series high for the unemployment rate in Virginia occurred in December 1982 when the unemployment rate reached 7.9 percent. The 10 year low for the unemployment rate in Virginia was 2.9 percent in May 2007. The series low for the unemployment rate in Virginia occurred in November 2000 when the unemployment rate reached 2.1 percent. BLS began publishing the state unemployment rate series in 1976.

The national unemployment rate was unchanged at 4.9 percent in February. February's unemployment rate was 0.6 percentage point lower than a year earlier. The 10-year high for the national unemployment rate was 10.0 percent in October 2009. The 10-year low was 4.4 percent in May 2007.



## Virginia Payroll Employment

Virginia nonfarm payrolls increased by 12,800 jobs, or 0.33 percent, on a seasonally adjusted basis during February. In the prior month, nonfarm payrolls declined by 600. Over the past 12 months nonfarm payrolls in Virginia increased by 96,500, or 2.53 percent. Virginia nonfarm payroll employment has increased in 10 of the past 12 months.

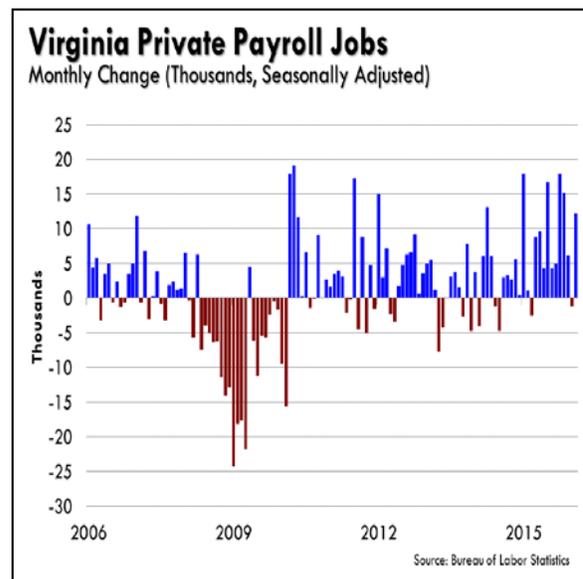
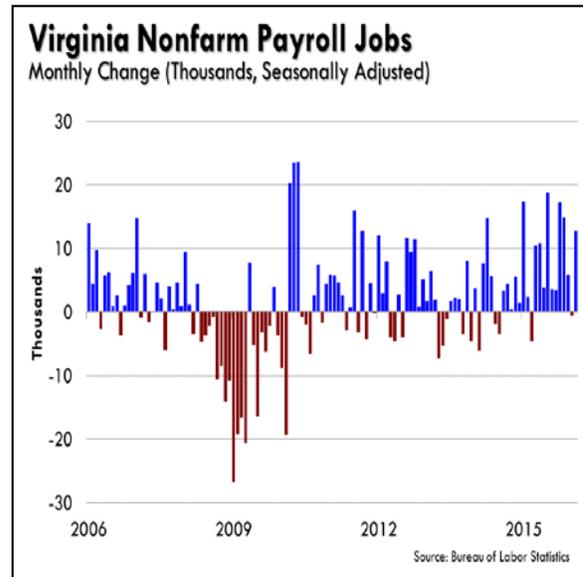
Nationally, nonfarm payrolls increased by 242,000 jobs in February, or 0.17 percent. Over the 12-month period ending February 2016 nonfarm payrolls grew by 2,672,000 jobs, or 1.9 percent. Virginia ranks 10th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for percentage gain in nonfarm payroll employment over the past 12 months.

During February, Virginia private sector payrolls increased by 12,200, or 0.38 percent. Private sector payrolls declined by 1,200 jobs in the prior month. Over the past 12 months, private sector payrolls in Virginia increased by 96,600, or 3.11 percent. Virginia private sector payroll employment has increased in 10 of the past 12 months.

Nationally private-sector payroll jobs increased by 230,000 jobs in 1.9, or 0.19 percent. Over the past 12 months, the nation's economy has added 2,597,000 jobs in the private sector, an increase of 2.18 percent.

Virginia ranks 9th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for percentage gain in private sector payroll employment over the past 12 months.

During February, total government payroll employment in Virginia increased by 600, or 0.08 percent. Federal government payroll employment increased by 500, or 0.28 percent. State government payroll employment increased by 800, or 0.50 percent, while local government payroll employment declined by 700, or 0.19 percent.



Over the past year, total government payroll employment declined by 100, or 0.01 percent. State government payroll employment declined by 400, or 0.25 percent. Local government payroll employment declined by 2,200, or 0.59 percent.

The best performing sectors on a seasonally adjusted basis during February were Professional & Business Services (+7,300) and Other Services (+2,100). The poorest performing sectors during the month were Manufacturing (-1,100) and Trade, Transportation & Utilities (-400).

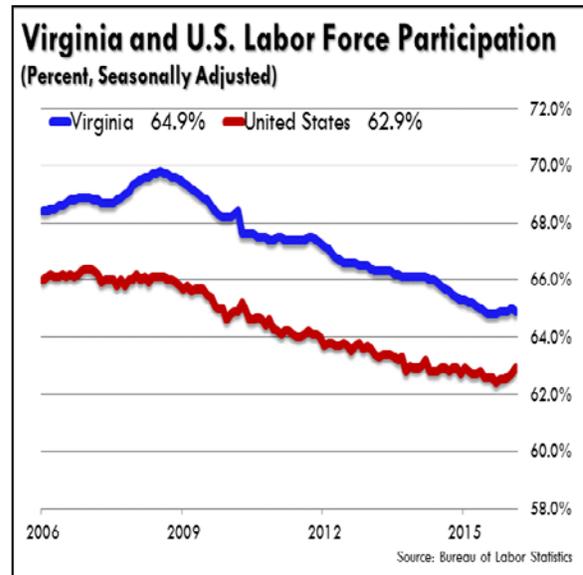
The best performing sectors during the last twelve months were Professional & Business Services (+35,400) and Trade, Transportation & Utilities (+18,700). The poorest performing sectors for the year were Mining & Logging (-1,000) and Manufacturing (-1,000).

#### Other Virginia Labor Force Statistics

The labor force participation rate in Virginia declined to 64.9 percent in February from 65.0 percent the prior month. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 18 have a higher labor force participation rate than Virginia. The labor force participation rate in Virginia 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 Virginia was 69.8 percent in July 2008. The series high for the labor force participation rate in Virginia occurred in May 1992 when the labor force participation rate hit 71.5 percent. The 10 year low for the labor force participation rate was 64.8 percent in September 2015. This also represents the series low for the labor force participation rate in Virginia.

The national labor force participation rate rose by 0.2 percentage point to 62.9 percent in February, but remains near its 38-year low of 62.4 percent.



The employment-to-population ratio, or the percentage of the Virginia civilian noninstitutionalized population 16 years and older counted as employed, was unchanged at 62.3 percent in February. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 16 have higher employment-to-population ratios than Virginia. The employment-to-population ratio in Virginia is 0.2 percentage point higher than a year earlier.

The 10 year high for the employment-to-population ratio in Virginia was 67.1 percent in April 2008. The series high for the employment-to-population ratio in Virginia occurred in December 1989 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 67.2 percent. The 10 year low for the employment-to-population ratio was 62.1 percent in September 2015. The series low for the employment-to-population ratio occurred in November 1982 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 61.0 percent.

The national employment-to-population ratio rose by 0.2 percentage point to 59.8 percent in February. That rate was 0.5 percentage point higher than a year earlier. The all-time high for the employment-to-population ratio was 64.7 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 ratio posted a reading lower than 58.2 percent was July 1983.

State employment and unemployment data for March is scheduled for release on April 15, 2016. The national employment situation report for March will be released on Friday, April 1, 2016.

