

INSIGHTS



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S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce

Business Intelligence Department

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S.C. businesses add jobs; unemployment rate inches up

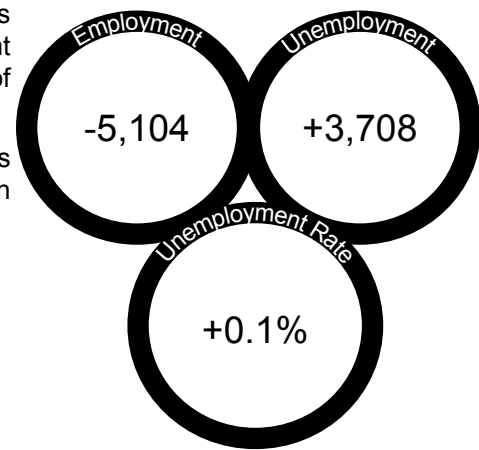
South Carolina businesses continued to add jobs in December to a new record level with the Hospitality and Tourism and Construction sectors leading the way.

The state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate edged up to 4.1 percent in December from November's rate of 4 percent.

The number of individuals working across the state decreased by 5,104 people to 2,227,542, while the number of unemployed individuals increased by 3,708 to 96,434. The state's labor force decreased by 1,396 to an estimated 2,323,976 people.

Since December 2016, the labor force has grown by 25,889 people, and employment gains totaled nearly 27,680. The level of unemployed people decreased by 1,791.

Nationally, the unemployment rate was unchanged, remaining at 4.1 percent in December.

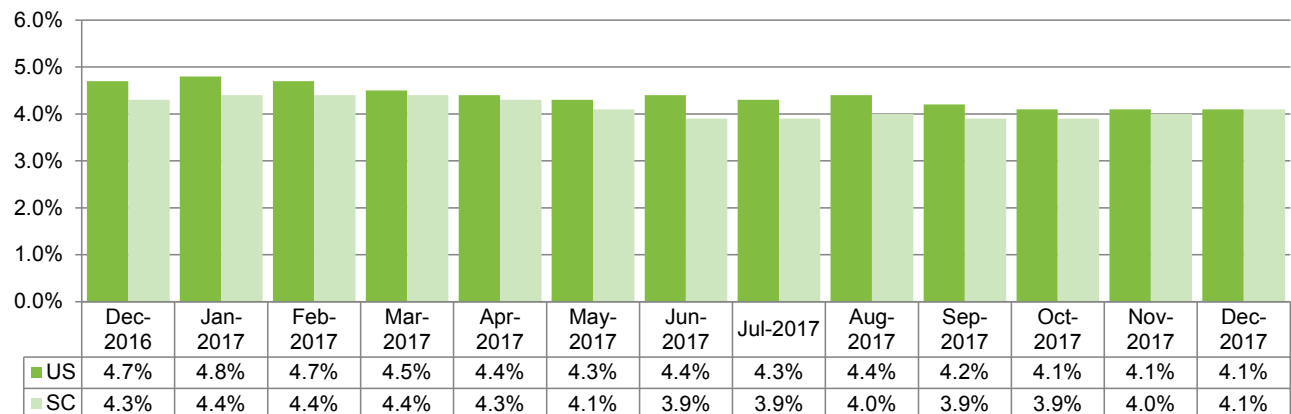


Economic Indicators

December - Seasonally Adjusted (SA)

	United States	S.C.
Labor Force	160,597,000	2,323,976
Employed	154,021,000	2,227,542
Unemployed	6,576,000	96,434
Unemp. Rate	4.1%	4.1%

South Carolina vs U.S. Unemployment Rate
December 2016 - December 2017



Insights is prepared in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. The current month's estimates are preliminary, while all previous data are subject to revision. All estimates are projected from a first quarter 2016 benchmark. To subscribe to *Insights*, please email bidcustomerservice@dew.sc.gov or to provide feedback please click on the [BID Customer Feedback Form](#).

South Carolina ranked 25th lowest of 50 states and D.C. in December

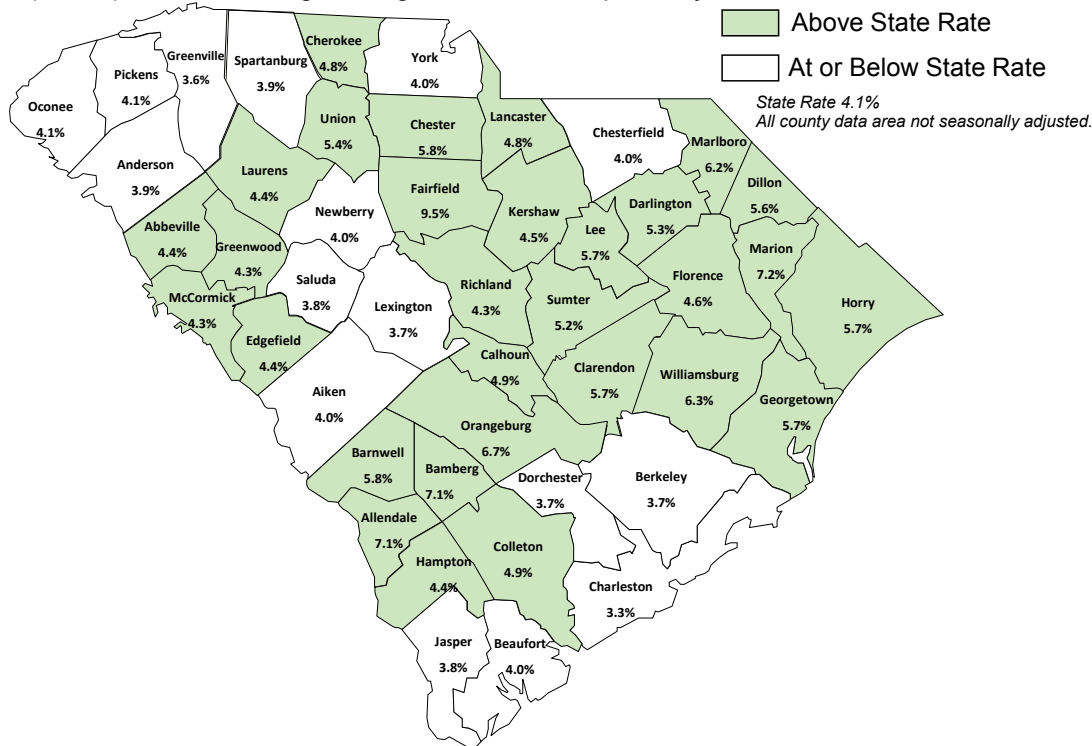
Unemployment rates were lower in December in six states and the District of Columbia, higher in one state, and stable in 43 states. Twenty-five states had jobless rate decreases from a year earlier, two states had increases, and 23 states and the District had little or no change. In December, South Carolina ranked 25th lowest out of 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Nonfarm payroll employment increased in ten states in December 2017, decreased in three states, and was essentially unchanged in 39 states and the District of Columbia. Over the year, 25 states added nonfarm payroll jobs, and 25 states and the District were essentially unchanged. The largest percentage gain occurred in Nevada (+3.3 percent), followed by Oregon (+2.7 percent) and Utah (+2.6 percent) from a year ago.

December unemployment rates by county

Not seasonally adjusted county unemployment rate estimates rose in December as the not seasonally statewide unemployment rate increased for the third consecutive month. Overall, county unemployment rates ranged from 9.5 percent in Fairfield County to 3.3 percent in Charleston County. Fairfield County's unemployment level is still being impacted by the closure of the V.C. Summer nuclear construction site back in late July, and this is expected to continue in the near term.

Over the month, employment was lower across 17 of 46 counties. Horry, Richland, Charleston, Lexington, and Berkeley counties experienced the greatest over-the-month declines in employment with Horry (-2,782) and Richland (-1,712) counties seeing the largest declines, respectively.



Hawaii	2.0
New Hampshire	2.6
North Dakota	2.6
Nebraska	2.7
Iowa	2.8
Vermont	2.8
Idaho	2.9
Maine	3.0
Wisconsin	3.0
Colorado	3.1
Minnesota	3.1
Utah	3.1
Tennessee	3.2
Indiana	3.4
Kansas	3.4
Alabama	3.5
Massachusetts	3.5
Missouri	3.5
South Dakota	3.5
Arkansas	3.7
Florida	3.7
Virginia	3.7
Texas	3.9
Maryland	4.0
Montana	4.1
Oklahoma	4.1
Oregon	4.1
South Carolina	4.1
United States	4.1
Wyoming	4.2
California	4.3
Georgia	4.4
Kentucky	4.4
Rhode Island	4.4
Arizona	4.5
North Carolina	4.5
Washington	4.5
Connecticut	4.6
Delaware	4.6
Louisiana	4.6
Mississippi	4.6
New York	4.6
Michigan	4.7
Ohio	4.7
Pennsylvania	4.7
Illinois	4.8
Nevada	5.0
New Jersey	5.0
West Virginia	5.5
District of Columbia	6.0
New Mexico	6.0
Alaska	7.3

December 2017

Highest County Unemployment Rates		Lowest County Unemployment Rates	
Fairfield	9.5%	Charleston	3.3%
Marion	7.2%	Greenville	3.6%
Allendale	7.1%	Berkeley	3.7%
Bamberg	7.1%	Dorchester	3.7%
Orangeburg	6.7%	Lexington	3.7%

December 2017

Economic Indicators Average Hours & Earnings		
	United States (SA)	S.C. (Unadj.)
Manufacturing		
Avg. Weekly Earnings	\$1,090.99	\$845.82
Avg. Weekly Hours	40.8	44.8
Avg. Hourly Wages	\$26.74	\$18.88

South Carolina seasonally adjusted nonfarm employment trend for December

In December 2017 seasonally adjusted, nonfarm payrolls increased by 2,900 over the month to a record level of 2,117,200.

The increase in employment was primarily due to growth in Leisure and Hospitality (+5,800); Construction (+2,200); Education and Health Services (+600); Manufacturing (+400); and Other Services (+100).

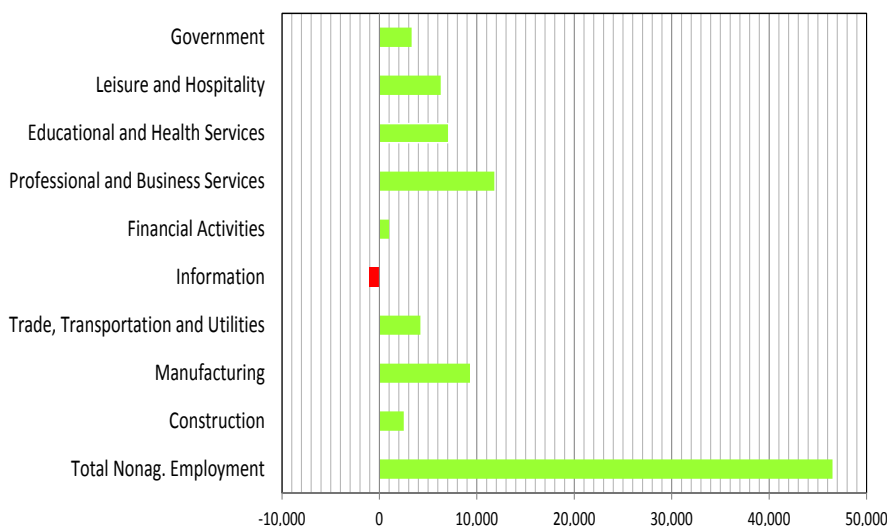
Industries reporting declines during the same period were in the Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (-3,400); Professional and Business Services (-2,300); Government (-200); Information (-100); and Financial Activities (-100) sectors.

For December 2016 to December 2017, South Carolina's economy has added 46,500 seasonally adjusted, nonfarm jobs with the largest increases in the Professional and Business Services (+11,800). Additional job gains were seen in Manufacturing (+9,300); Education and Health Services (+7,100); Leisure and Hospitality (+6,300); Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (+4,200); Government (+3,300); Construction (+2,500); Other Services (+2,100); and Financial Activities (+1,000).

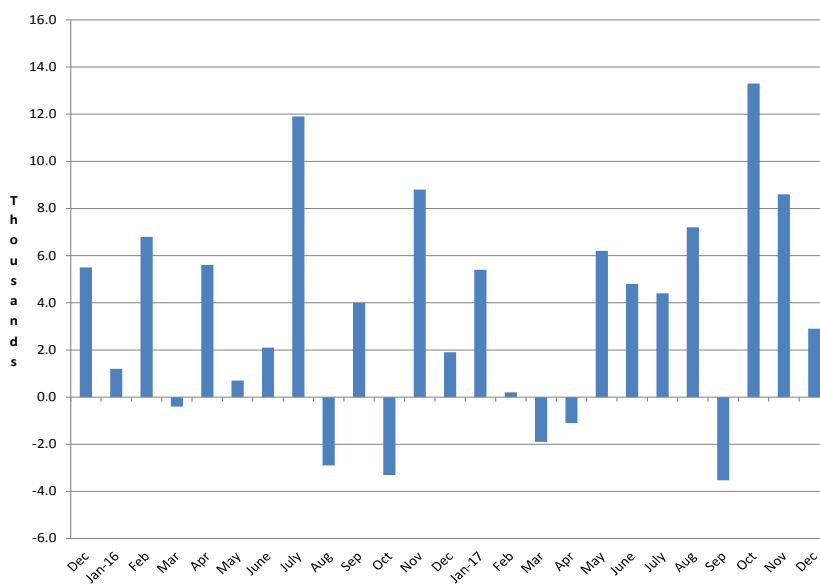
Declines were reported in the Information (-1,100) sector.

For Metropolitan Statistical Areas, seasonally adjusted, total nonfarm payroll's most significant job growth was in Greenville (+2,400), followed by Myrtle Beach (+600) and Florence (+400). Sumter remained the same. Over-the-month reported decreases were in Columbia (-1,100), Spartanburg (-400) and Charleston (-300).

**South Carolina Job Changes by Industry
December 2016 - December 2017 (SA)**



**S.C. Total Monthly Nonfarm Job Change
2015 - 2017**



Over the year, Metropolitan Statistical Areas saw a surge in seasonally adjusted payroll.

**Economic Indicators (December 2017)
Top Job Growth by MSA (SA)**

MSA	Over Month % Change	Over Year % Change
Greenville MSA	0.57%	1.58%
Florence MSA	0.45%	1.36%
Sumter MSA	0.00%	0.00%
Charleston MSA	-0.08%	1.85%

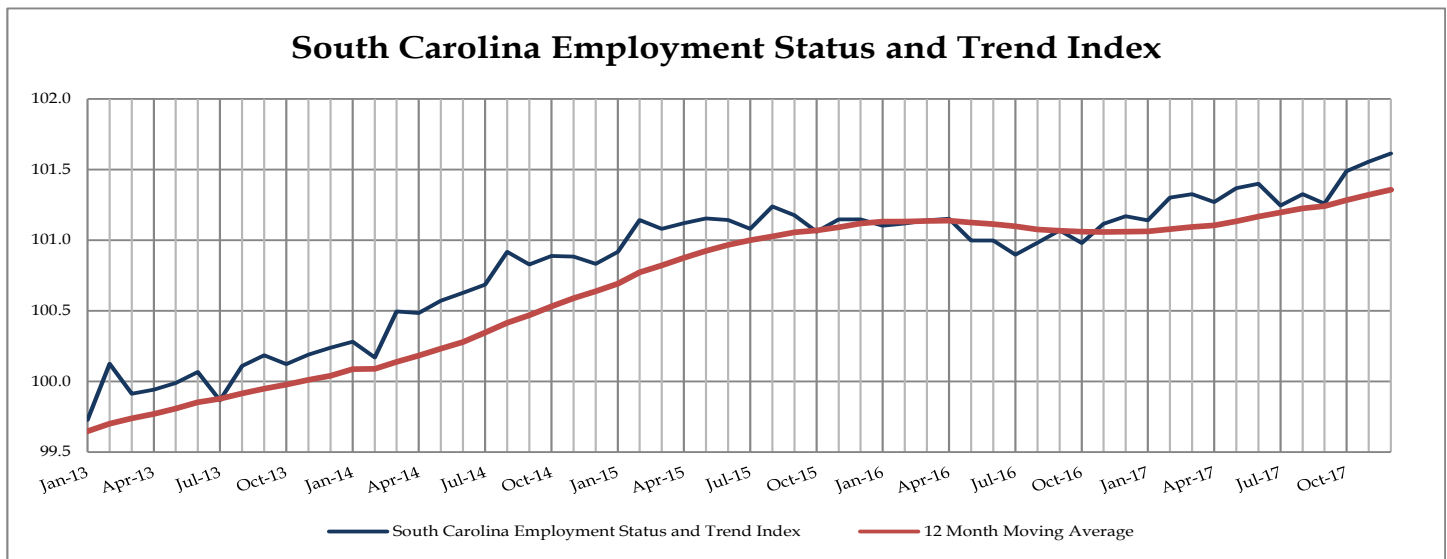
To see the monthly not seasonally adjusted data series, go to www.SCWorkforceInfo.com (Employment and Wage Data section)

Employment Changes by County

October 2017 through December 2017

County	Employment			Net Change From	
	Dec 2017	Nov 2017	Oct 2017	Nov '17 - Dec '17	Oct '17 - Nov '17
Abbeville	10,119	10,133	10,105	-14	28
Aiken	72,911	72,415	72,595	496	-180
Allendale	2,573	2,530	2,518	43	12
Anderson	86,091	86,028	86,634	63	-606
Bamberg	5,026	4,977	4,954	49	23
Barnwell	8,067	8,031	8,011	36	20
Beaufort	68,577	69,020	69,753	-443	-733
Berkeley	92,467	93,286	93,635	-819	-349
Calhoun	6,489	6,498	6,552	-9	-54
Charleston	197,379	198,836	199,593	-1,457	-757
Cherokee	22,942	22,998	22,947	-56	51
Chester	13,011	12,995	13,132	16	-137
Chesterfield	21,588	21,485	21,473	103	12
Clarendon	12,490	12,386	12,363	104	23
Colleton	16,697	16,676	16,653	21	23
Darlington	28,463	28,367	28,468	96	-101
Dillon	12,497	12,379	12,342	118	37
Dorchester	71,931	72,532	72,804	-601	-272
Edgefield	10,478	10,344	10,369	134	-25
Fairfield	9,332	9,369	9,451	-37	-82
Florence	62,548	62,541	62,776	7	-235
Georgetown	24,613	24,611	24,649	2	-38
Greenville	237,555	237,502	239,182	53	-1,680
Greenwood	30,766	30,761	30,674	5	87
Hampton	8,018	7,941	7,943	77	-2
Horry	128,118	130,900	133,750	-2,782	-2,850
Jasper	11,383	11,405	11,522	-22	-117
Kershaw	27,556	27,680	27,921	-124	-241
Lancaster	36,299	36,272	36,653	27	-381
Laurens	29,126	29,053	29,255	73	-202
Lee	6,185	6,150	6,160	35	-10
Lexington	140,022	140,890	142,128	-868	-1,238
McCormick	3,341	3,338	3,328	3	10
Marion	11,913	11,916	11,940	-3	-24
Marlboro	8,863	8,847	8,805	16	42
Newberry	18,770	18,625	18,605	145	20
Oconee	33,927	33,847	33,796	80	51
Orangeburg	33,724	33,616	33,518	108	98
Pickens	54,347	54,323	54,707	24	-384
Richland	189,527	191,239	192,948	-1,712	-1,709
Saluda	8,519	8,402	8,467	117	-65
Spartanburg	138,248	138,672	139,348	-424	-676
Sumter	41,214	41,210	41,504	4	-294
Union	11,157	11,186	11,240	-29	-54
Williamsburg	12,116	12,061	12,023	55	38
York	126,326	126,419	127,759	-93	-1,340

South Carolina Employment Status and Trend Index Rises for Third Consecutive Month



The S.C. Employment Status and Trend Index (SCESTI), an aggregate of five labor-market indicators, rose again in December 2017, climbing to 101.61 from a November revised value of 101.56. The Index continued above its 12-month moving average of 101.36, an increase of four-hundredths of a point from November.

Three of the five underlying labor-market components moved in a positive direction in December, while two moved in a negative direction. The Conference Board’s Employment Trends Index rose in December to 107.10 points from a November revised value of 106.36. The Employment Trends Index recomputed the series with a base year of 2016 in the December release. The Conference Board’s Help Wanted Online data, which tracks the number of available job openings posted online, increased by 2,593 in December to 62,795 from 60,202 in November. The Bureau of Labor Statistic’s Weekly Manufacturing Hours data in December climbed to a 44.8 average hours per week figure, increasing from November’s value of 44.1. The Conference Board’s Consumer Confidence Index fell by 6.5 points from November’s value of 128.6 to 122.1 in December. Initial claims for Unemployment Insurance increased from a November average of 2,752 per week to a December average of 3,931 per week.

SCESTI has increased from its year-ago value of 101.17 in December 2016. The Index remaining above its 12-month moving average in December 2017 signifies a positive direction for employment change over the next several months.

The Current Population Survey—standing the test of time

For more than three-quarters of a century, the Current Population Survey (CPS) has been a vital tool for providing information on the state of the job market. While initially designed to obtain data on the employment status of individuals (such as whether or not individuals were employed or unemployed), survey questions have been expanded over the years to capture additional labor market data. Because the CPS is a survey of the population, its data can be cross-classified by a full range of demographic characteristics—including age, gender, race, and educational attainment, to name a few—allowing researchers and policymakers to examine and track the labor market experiences across specific population groups. And it was recognized early on that supplemental questions could be added to the survey on a wide range of topics, some unrelated to the job market.

Despite the vast amount of labor market data the CPS captures, people continue to focus mostly on the unemployment rate. Some critics have revived the argument that the unemployment rate is flawed because it is not an all-encompassing measure of labor market conditions and hardship, although it was never intended to be so. Some call for a broader definition of unemployment. In fact, it has been suggested that the job-search requirement for unemployment is far too stringent—ironically, circling the discussion back to the measurement issues that resulted in the survey in the first place.

These arguments about the relevance and reliability of labor force concepts are not new or even particular to the current economic climate. During the survey's history, such questions led to several wholesale reviews of CPS concepts. In fact, the definition of unemployment has been tightened at the margins after each review. However, these reviews also concluded that, fundamentally, the measure was objective and reliable. Hence, the basic concept has remained largely intact—the unemployed are people who are not working, but are currently looking for work and are available to take a job—and the historical comparability of the unemployment rate has been preserved. In the end, it is only by studying the full range of information collected on the job market—not just from the CPS, but also from various other data sources—that one can accurately assess the health of the labor market and the overall state of the U.S. economy.

Megan Dunn, Steven E. Haugen, and Janie-Lynn Kang, "The Current Population Survey—tracking unemployment in the United States for over 75 years," Monthly Labor Review, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 2018