

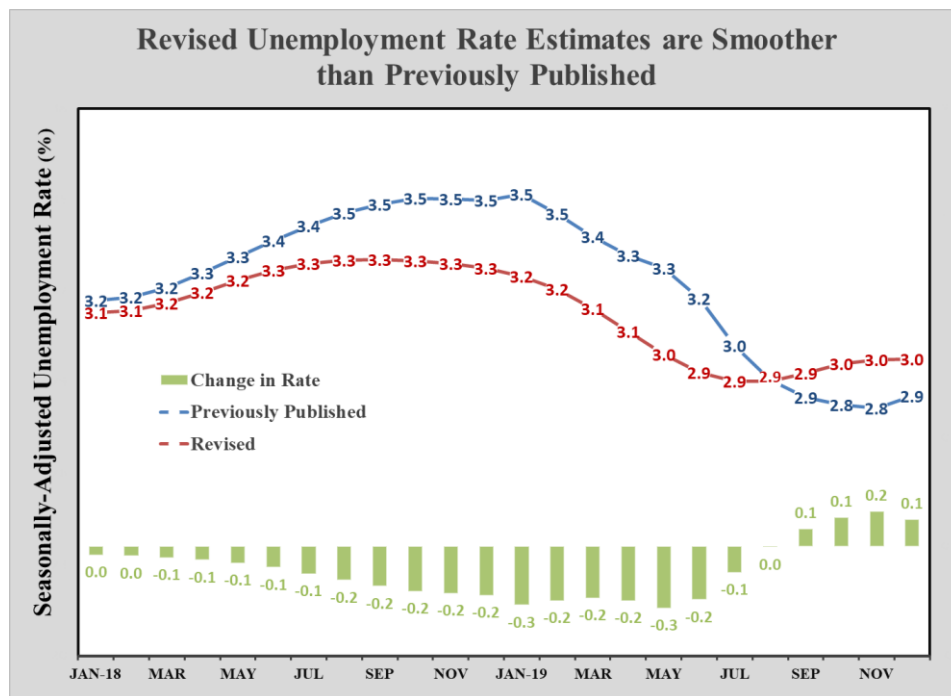
2019 Workforce Data Revisions

More Job Growth and Less Monthly Variability than Previously Indicated

Annual revisions to monthly workforce estimates for Maine have been published. Based on more complete data, revisions indicate that the unemployment rate and size of the labor force were little changed throughout 2019. The number of nonfarm payroll jobs increased more than previous estimates indicated. Data cited in this brief is seasonally adjusted.

Unemployment Rate

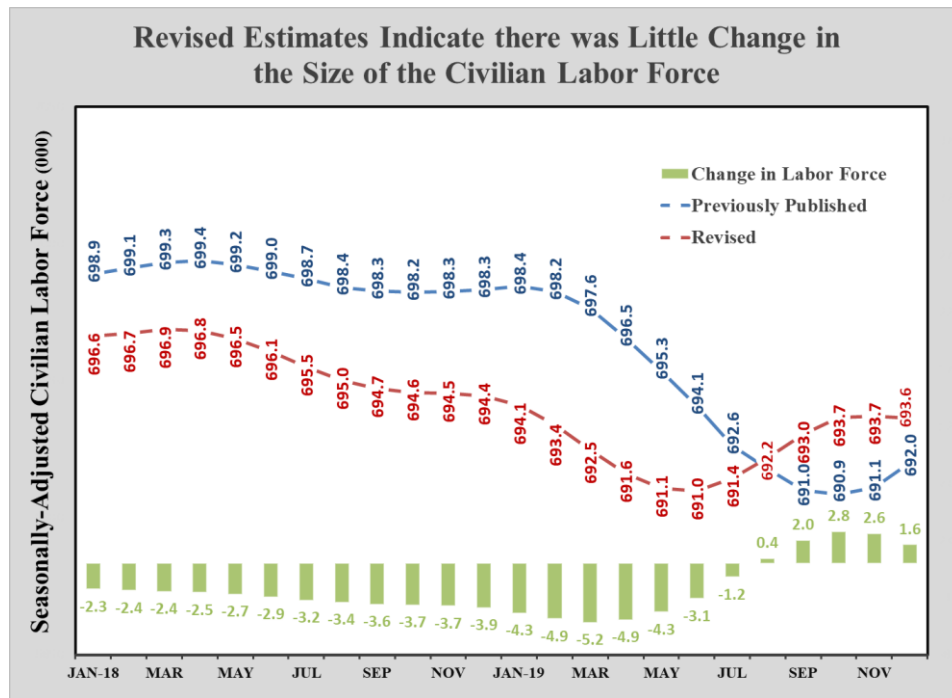
Preliminary estimates released each month indicated that the unemployment rate was as high as 3.5 percent in the first two months and as low as 2.8 percent in the fall of 2019. [Revised rates](#) indicate that the unemployment rate changed little during the year, gradually falling from 3.2 percent in the first two months of the year to 2.9 or 3.0 percent each of the last eight months. Given the size of the survey sample and margins of error in the estimates, there has essentially been no change in the statewide unemployment rate for more than two years.



Unemployment has been below 4.0 percent each month since December 2015. At more than four years, this is the longest period of such low unemployment since the current estimating methodology was implemented in 1976, eclipsing the previous long of 22 months from 1999 to 2001.

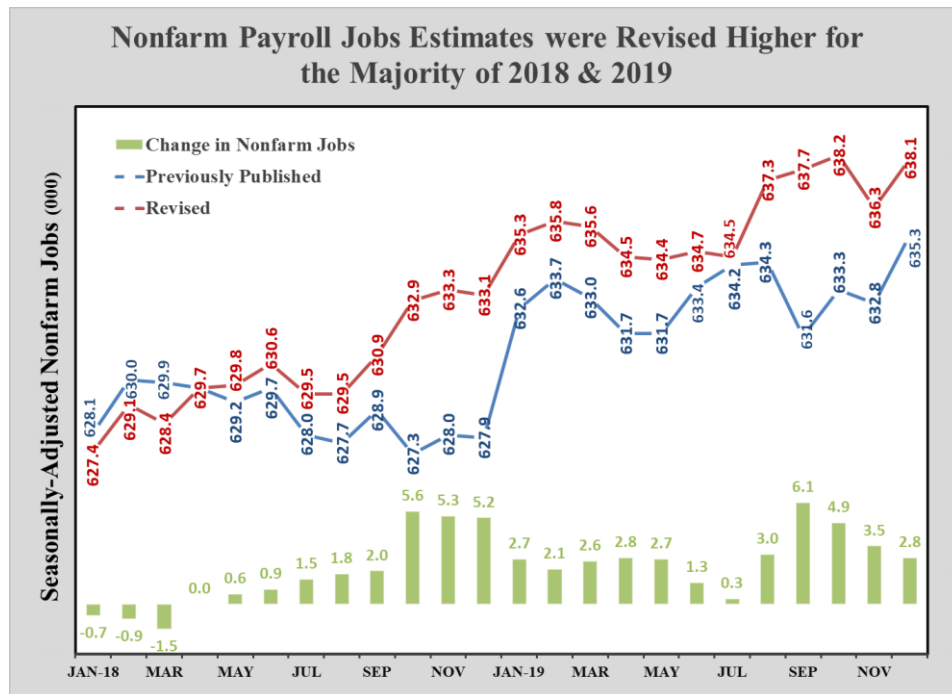
Civilian Labor Force

Preliminary estimates indicated that the size of the civilian labor force declined by more than 6,000 from the beginning to the end of 2019. Revised estimates indicate that the size of the labor force was about the same at the end of 2019 as at the end of 2018.



Nonfarm Payroll Jobs

Preliminary estimates indicated the number of nonfarm payroll jobs was relatively flat in 2018 followed by small gains in 2019. [Revised estimates](#) indicate there was a more consistent pattern of job growth in both 2018 and 2019 than previously indicated.



The number of nonfarm jobs has increased each year since 2010. The 635,500 average in 2019 is the highest number of jobs on record. Private sector job gains during the year were spread across many industries, with the largest gains in the health care and social assistance, manufacturing, financial activities, and educational services sectors. Retail trade was the only large sector to lose jobs in 2019.

Average Nonfarm Payroll Jobs in Maine by Sector, 2009 to 2019 (in thousands)											
Industry Sector	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs	596.6	593.3	595.0	598.5	602.0	605.5	610.9	618.5	624.1	630.4	635.5
Private Sector	492.9	489.3	492.9	497.0	501.6	505.6	511.3	518.4	523.9	530.0	534.2
Mining & Logging	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.2
Construction	25.2	24.4	25.3	25.6	25.6	26.0	26.5	27.5	28.3	29.4	29.8
Manufacturing	52.3	50.8	50.7	50.8	50.4	50.2	50.7	50.8	51.1	52.1	53.3
Wholesale Trade	19.3	18.8	19.0	19.3	19.4	19.6	19.8	19.7	19.4	19.5	19.5
Retail Trade	82.0	81.1	81.1	81.1	81.2	81.6	81.6	81.9	81.3	81.0	80.4
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	16.7	16.2	16.2	16.4	16.8	17.3	17.6	18.0	18.8	18.6	18.7
Information	9.0	8.7	8.3	7.9	7.7	7.5	7.7	7.7	7.5	7.4	7.2
Financial Activities	31.1	30.6	30.4	30.2	30.4	30.4	30.6	31.1	31.5	32.1	32.9
Professional & Business Services	57.0	57.7	59.4	60.2	62.2	64.2	65.4	66.5	67.3	69.4	69.4
Educational Services	19.4	20.0	20.3	20.9	21.1	21.1	21.2	21.7	22.0	22.1	22.7
Health Care & Social Assistance	99.2	99.0	99.5	100.4	100.8	100.9	102.0	103.4	105.0	104.9	106.6
Leisure & Hospitality	59.5	60.0	60.5	61.9	63.0	63.5	64.4	66.1	67.8	69.0	69.2
Other Services	19.7	19.7	19.9	20.0	20.7	21.0	21.4	21.7	21.8	22.2	22.4
Government	103.7	104.0	102.1	101.5	100.5	99.9	99.5	100.0	100.1	100.3	101.2
Federal	14.9	15.6	14.7	14.5	14.1	14.0	14.5	15.0	15.2	15.5	16.2
State	27.6	27.5	27.1	26.9	26.7	26.6	26.1	25.8	25.7	25.5	25.7
Local	61.2	60.8	60.3	60.1	59.7	59.4	59.0	59.2	59.2	59.3	59.4

There was a small increase in government jobs during the year. Most of the increase was at the federal Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery. Federal, state, and local governments combined accounted for 15.9 percent of nonfarm payroll jobs, matching 2018 with the lowest share since 1957.

Annual revisions improve the quality of workforce data and give a better indication of overall trends. We expect variability in preliminary estimates to continue through 2020 and beyond. This is due to a number of factors, including changes in the sample of survey respondents and to statistical methods that are used. As occurred in recent years, labor force and unemployment estimates are likely to move in one direction for several months before reversing course in the other direction. Directional turns in unemployment rates that may run for three to six months often do not indicate a fundamental change in underlying workforce conditions. As 2020 progresses, we recommend looking at trends over many months to draw conclusions about the direction and state of the labor force.