

U.S. Employers Add 312,000 Jobs in December

Unemployment Rate Inches Up to 3.9%



HEALTH CARE LEADS JOB GROWTH ADDING 36,000 JOBS

In December, health care added 50,000 jobs, with ambulatory health care services adding 38,000 new jobs. Throughout 2018, the health care sector added 346,000 jobs. Latinos, however, are underrepresented in the health care sector, making up only 13% of workers.

INDICATORS	National	Latinos
Employed • Working people over the age of 16, including those temporarily absent from their jobs	156.9 million	27.7 million
Unemployed • Those who are available to work, trying to find a job, or expect to be called back from a layoff but are not working	6.3 million	1.3 million
Civilian Labor Force • The sum of employed and unemployed people	163.2 million	29.0 million
Not in the Labor Force • People over the age of 16 classified as neither employed nor unemployed	95.6 million	14.3 million
Unemployment Rate • Share of the labor force that is unemployed	3.9%	4.4%
Labor Force Participation Rate • Share of the population over the age of 16 that is in the labor force	63.1%	67.0%
Employment-Population Ratio • Share of the population over the age of 16 that is working	60.6%	64.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Status of the Hispanic or Latino Population by Sex and Age," *Current Population Survey*, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empst.pdf> (accessed January 4, 2019), Table A and A-3.

Employment of Latinos in December 2018

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) reported that employers added 312,00 jobs in December, up from 155,000 jobs in November. In December, the national unemployment rate inched up slightly to 3.9%, after a four-month period of staying below 3.9%. This may be because more individuals are unemployed (+276,000) compared to November.

The Latino unemployment rate decreased to 4.4% in December, down from 4.5% in November. In October 2018, the Latino unemployment reached 4.4% for the first time—marking the lowest Hispanic unemployment rate on record since the Department of Labor started tracking Hispanic unemployment numbers in 1973. Even though it is a record low, the Latino unemployment rate remains higher than the national rate of 3.9%. Yet, Latinos saw an increase in those employed (+177,000) and a decrease in the number of unemployed (-35,000). There was an increase of 143,000 Latinos in the civilian labor force from November to December, which may contribute to a slight uptick in the labor force participation rate, up to 67% from 66.8%.

Despite high labor force participation and low unemployment, many Latino families continue to struggle to cover basic necessities. One contributing factor is insufficient wage growth, an important indicator of job quality and a key factor in economic security. Over the past year, average hourly earnings only rose by 2.7%, compared to the 3.5% to 4% economists recommend for a healthy economy.

The following takes a closer look at Latino employment by gender and age:

- **Men (ages 20 years and older):** The Latino male unemployment rate increased from 3.4% in November to 3.5% in December. The number of employed Hispanic men increased by approximately 44,000 between November and December.
- **Women (ages 20 years and older):** The unemployment rate for Latinas fell from 4.6% in November to 4.3% in December. The number of employed Hispanic women increased by approximately 179,000 over the last month.
- **Young Hispanic workers (ages 16-19 years old):** The unemployment rate for Latino youth decreased slightly between November and December, from 15.6% to 15.4%. This may be due to young workers exiting the labor force.