



Beacon Economics Employment Report

May 2010

A partnership of the EVC and Beacon Economics

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California Unemployment Rate Unchanged; Optimism Among Job Seekers Continues; Service Industries Post Job Gains

Unemployment Rate Treading Water

California's unemployment rate remained at 12.6% last month, even though the state saw significant employment gains. Despite an increase in employment of 76,100 over the month, the lack of a falling unemployment rate is a phenomenon caused by increasing labor force participation. For the fourth month in a row, previously discouraged workers (who dropped out of the labor force during the recession) are coming back to look for work, encouraged by positive trends seen across the nation. This means they are now being counted among the unemployed. Since December 2009, 213,000 people have reentered the California labor force. Overall, 164,800 more California residents have found work since January.

It's All In The Service

For the most part, it is the service producing sectors that are posting job gains (up 19,900 over the month), while the goods producing sectors continue to shed jobs (down 5,700 over the month).

Government (specifically federal government) and leisure and hospitality posted the largest month-over gains.

The OC Shines

Orange County posted the largest industry employment growth of the major metropolitan areas, adding 2,400 jobs between March and April. Both goods producing and service producing sectors gained jobs here, but the majority of the increase was in the service sectors. Similar to the state (and in fact primarily driving the state numbers), most of Orange County's job expansion was in federal government and leisure and hospitality.

Glass Half Full For Many Regions?

El Centro (Imperial County) still has the highest unemployment rate in the state (29.3% in April), but also posted the largest month-over decline, dropping from a seasonally adjusted 31.8% in March. Otherwise, unemployment rates decreased only in the San Jose MSA and in Orange County, both by one-tenth of one percent.

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Contact Beacon's Experts

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