



Press Release

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MECEP: Jobs Report Confirms that Maine's Recovery is Incomplete

One hundred months after the recession began, Maine is among a handful of states yet to reach pre-recession employment levels

Augusta, Maine (Friday, May 20, 2016) The Maine Center for Economic Policy (MECEP) issued the following statement from policy analyst James Myall concerning the April employment report released today by the Maine Department of Labor.

"Today's data doesn't tell the full story of what's happening for working Mainers. While Maine's official unemployment rate is below the national rate, far too many Mainers counted as employed want full-time work but can only secure part-time jobs. One reason Maine's unemployment rate is so low is that thousands of workers have left the labor force either because they couldn't find a good paying job or for other reasons such as health concerns or family responsibilities. One bright spot in today's numbers is that the proportion of Mainers participating in the labor force is beginning to creep upwards, as some of these people start to look for work again. Ironically, that may result in upward pressure on the unemployment rate in future months.

"Today's data confirm that Maine remains one of a handful of states where job levels have yet to reach pre-recession levels. All other New England states have recovered at least one hundred percent of the jobs lost during the recession, a threshold the nation crossed two years ago. One hundred months after the start of the recession, Mainers are still waiting.

"While there are signs of improvement in Maine's economy, we must prioritize policies that support good paying jobs and improve the health and skills of Maine workers."

Earlier this week, MECEP released a policy brief, "[Maine's Unemployment Rate, More than Meets the Eye](#)," that provides more context for today's unemployment numbers and presents other unemployment measures.

Data summary/notes:

- Maine's headline unemployment rate remained at 3.4%, the same as the March rate.
- Total employment and unemployment numbers were statistically the same as in March.
- While the number of unemployed Mainers has declined by 8,000 from April 2015 to April 2016, the total employed population of 652,000 reflected no change from a year earlier.
- In February 2016, Maine's labor force participation rate reached its lowest point (61.2%) in 33 years (October 1983). Labor force participation has increased 0.2% since February.

About the Maine Center for Economic Policy

The Maine Center for Economic Policy advances public policies that help Maine people prosper in a strong, fair and sustainable economy. We advance this mission through high-quality research, analysis, citizen education, and coalition building. MECEP is an independent, nonpartisan organization.

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