

INSIGHTS

Volume 5: Issue 7 August 2015

SC Department of Employment and Workforce

Business Intelligence Department

Economic Indicators

August 2015 - Seasonally Adjusted (SA)

| | United States | SC |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| Labor Force | 157,065,000 | 2,249,028 |
| Employed | 149,036,000 | 2,113,743 |
| Unemployed | 8,290,000 | 135,285 |
| Unemployed Rate | 5.1% | 6.0% |

Average Hours & Earnings

| | United States (SA) | SC (Unadj.) |
|----------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Manufacturing | | |
| Avg. Weekly Earnings | \$1,033.46 | \$787.93 |
| Avg. Weekly Hours | 40.9 | 41.8 |
| Avg. Hourly Wage | \$ 25.33 | \$ 18.85 |

Top Job Growth by MSA (SA)

| | Over Month % Change | Over Year % Change |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Florence MSA | 0.72% | 0.96% |
| Columbia MSA | 0.48% | 1.88% |
| Sumter MSA | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Charleston MSA | -0.15% | 2.19% |

Employment to Population Ratio (SA)

| | 2015 | 2014 |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|
| U.S. Population Ratio | 59.4% | 59.0% |
| S.C. Population Ratio | 55.4% | 54.5% |

Labor Force Participation Rate (SA)

| | Aug | Jul | % Change |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|----------|
| U.S. Participation Rate | 62.6% | 62.6% | 0.0% |
| S.C. Participation Rate | 58.9% | 59.1% | -0.2% |

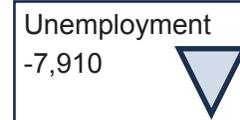
United States Consumer Price Index

| | |
|--------------|------|
| 12-Month CPI | 0.2% |
|--------------|------|

HIGHLIGHTS

- Unemployment rate drops -0.4 percent, the largest fall since 1983
- Employment level set new record
- Unemployment fall is most ever

View the [S.C. Employment Situation Report](#)



Unemployment Rate Plunges

The state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped significantly lower to 6.0 percent in August as more people found work and fewer people participated in the labor force. In fact, the unemployment rate fell by the largest percent since August 1983, while the number of unemployed dropped by the largest amount since the inception of the data series in 1976.

Setting a new record, the estimated number of employed people increased by nearly 2,770 to 2,113,743.

The labor force (those employed and those unemployed actively seeking work) declined for the third consecutive month by 5,140 to 2,249,030 people.

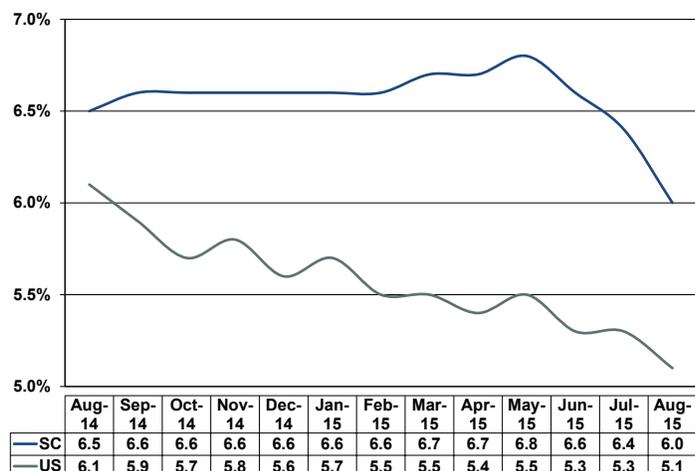
During August, the number of unemployed decreased by 7,910 people to 135,285 people.

Over the year, approximately 59,000 people found employment. The number of unemployed people declined by roughly 7,000, while the unemployment rate fell by 0.5 percent. Approximately 52,000 people entered the labor force over the year.

Nationally, over the month, the August unemployment rate fell to 5.1 percent from July's estimate of 5.3 percent.

Since the beginning of the year, state employment levels continue to expand, marking gains in seven of the past eight months. Looking forward, DEW remains optimistic the Palmetto State will continue to offer employment opportunities for job seekers.

Unemployment Rates in South Carolina and The United States
August 2014 – August 2015 Seasonally Adjusted



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 2014 benchmark. To subscribe to *Insights*, please email bidcustomerservice@dew.sc.gov or to provide feedback please click on the [BID Customer Feedback Form](#).

State Unemployment Rates

| | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| West Virginia | 7.6 |
| District Of Columbia | 6.8 |
| Nevada | 6.8 |
| New Mexico | 6.7 |
| Alaska | 6.6 |
| Arizona | 6.3 |
| Mississippi | 6.3 |
| Alabama | 6.2 |
| California | 6.1 |
| Oregon | 6.1 |
| Louisiana | 6.0 |
| South Carolina | 6.0 |
| Georgia | 5.9 |
| North Carolina | 5.9 |
| New Jersey | 5.7 |
| Tennessee | 5.7 |
| Illinois | 5.6 |
| Missouri | 5.6 |
| Rhode Island | 5.6 |
| Arkansas | 5.4 |
| Pennsylvania | 5.4 |
| Connecticut | 5.3 |
| Florida | 5.3 |
| Washington | 5.3 |
| Kentucky | 5.2 |
| New York | 5.2 |
| Maryland | 5.1 |
| Michigan | 5.1 |
| United States | 5.1 |
| Delaware | 4.9 |
| Massachusetts | 4.7 |
| Ohio | 4.7 |
| Indiana | 4.6 |
| Kansas | 4.6 |
| Oklahoma | 4.6 |
| Maine | 4.5 |
| Virginia | 4.5 |
| Wisconsin | 4.5 |
| Colorado | 4.2 |
| Idaho | 4.2 |
| Montana | 4.1 |
| Texas | 4.1 |
| Minnesota | 4.0 |
| Wyoming | 4.0 |
| Iowa | 3.7 |
| South Dakota | 3.7 |
| Utah | 3.7 |
| New Hampshire | 3.6 |
| Vermont | 3.6 |
| Hawaii | 3.5 |
| North Dakota | 2.9 |
| Nebraska | 2.8 |

South Carolina Ranked 11th Highest of 51 in August

According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics \(BLS\)](#), 29 states experienced decreases in their unemployment rates, 10 states had increases, and 11 states and the District of Columbia remained unchanged. In August, South Carolina's ranked 11th highest out of 51.

The most significant over-the-month acceleration in employment occurred in Hawaii at 1.3 percent, followed by Nebraska at 0.6 percent and Maine at 0.4 percent. The largest reduction in employment was in South Dakota at -0.7 percent, followed by Delaware and New Hampshire at -0.6 percent each.

Over the year, nonfarm employment increased in 47 states and the District of Columbia and decreased in three states. The largest over-the-year uptrend occurred in Utah at 4.0 percent, followed by Oregon at 3.5 percent, and Florida and Nevada at 3.3 percent.

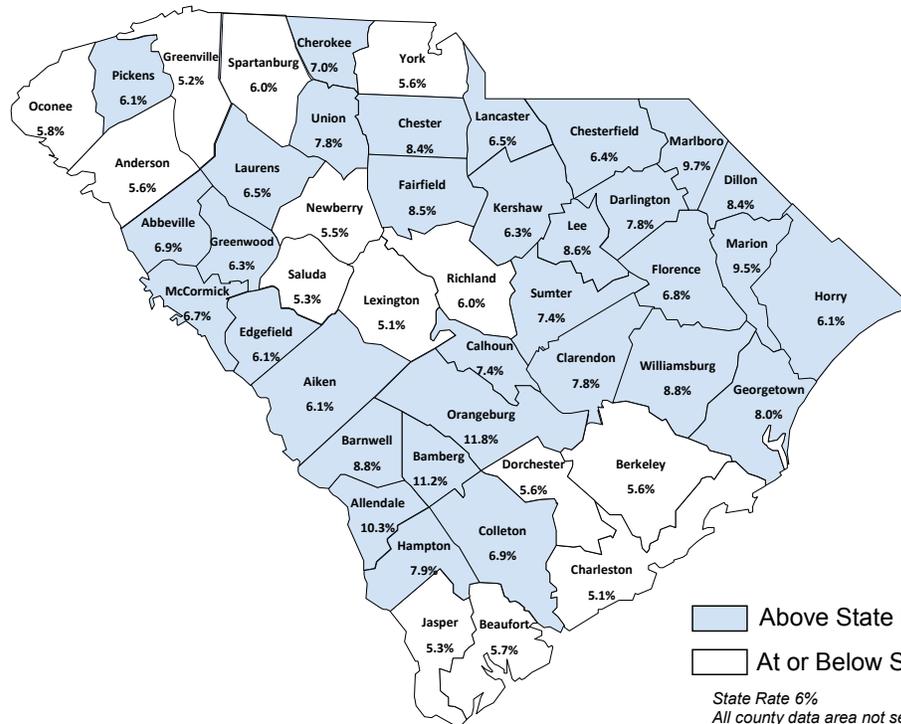
August Unemployment Rate by County

Not seasonally adjusted, county unemployment rates across the state fell over the month. Unemployment rates decreased in 45 counties; one county experienced a rate increase. Rates ranged from 11.8 percent in Orangeburg County to 5.1 percent in Charleston and Lexington counties.

Over the year, Greenville County continued to set the mark for people finding work with approximately 6,700 people obtaining employment. Charleston (5,400), York (5,100), and Richland (4,500) counties have seen strong growth as well.

Since August of 2014, all 46 counties marked employment growth. The I-85 corridor counties (Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, and Spartanburg) account for 25 percent of the statewide growth.

| Highest County Unemployment Rate | | Lowest County Unemployment Rate | |
|----------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------|------|
| Orangeburg | 11.8% | Charleston | 5.1% |
| Bamberg | 11.2% | Lexington | 5.1% |
| Allendale | 10.3% | Greenville | 5.2% |
| Marlboro | 9.7% | Jasper | 5.3% |
| Marion | 9.5% | Saluda | 5.3% |



Employment Changes by County June 2015 through August 2015

| County | Employment | | | Net Change From | |
|--------------|------------|----------|----------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | Aug 2015 | Jul 2015 | Jun 2015 | Jul '15 - Aug '15 | Jun '15 - Jul '15 |
| Abbeville | 10,031 | 10,067 | 10,069 | -36 | -2 |
| Aiken | 70,272 | 70,406 | 69,769 | -134 | 637 |
| Allendale | 2,714 | 2,750 | 2,735 | -36 | 15 |
| Anderson | 83,155 | 83,657 | 83,684 | -502 | -27 |
| Bamberg | 5,197 | 5,256 | 5,240 | -59 | 16 |
| Barnwell | 8,279 | 8,340 | 8,315 | -61 | 25 |
| Beaufort | 67,358 | 68,323 | 67,892 | -965 | 431 |
| Berkeley | 87,090 | 87,797 | 87,481 | -707 | 316 |
| Calhoun | 6,584 | 6,595 | 6,551 | -11 | 44 |
| Charleston | 186,244 | 187,226 | 186,314 | -982 | 912 |
| Cherokee | 22,387 | 22,460 | 22,488 | -73 | -28 |
| Chester | 12,909 | 12,769 | 12,818 | 140 | -49 |
| Chesterfield | 20,607 | 20,643 | 20,606 | -36 | 37 |
| Clarendon | 12,395 | 12,480 | 12,424 | -85 | 56 |
| Colleton | 16,230 | 16,280 | 16,219 | -50 | 61 |
| Darlington | 27,565 | 27,636 | 27,664 | -71 | -28 |
| Dillon | 11,894 | 12,008 | 11,965 | -114 | 43 |
| Dorchester | 67,545 | 68,071 | 67,806 | -526 | 265 |
| Edgefield | 10,221 | 10,239 | 10,116 | -18 | 123 |
| Fairfield | 9,431 | 9,453 | 9,404 | -22 | 49 |
| Florence | 59,820 | 59,762 | 59,880 | 58 | -118 |
| Georgetown | 24,476 | 24,633 | 24,537 | -157 | 96 |
| Greenville | 225,861 | 227,223 | 227,357 | -1,362 | -134 |
| Greenwood | 30,390 | 30,585 | 30,592 | -195 | -7 |
| Hampton | 8,125 | 8,242 | 8,189 | -117 | 53 |
| Horry | 133,624 | 134,684 | 133,815 | -1,060 | 869 |
| Jasper | 11,179 | 11,241 | 11,128 | -62 | 113 |
| Kershaw | 26,933 | 26,994 | 26,856 | -61 | 138 |
| Lancaster | 33,417 | 32,999 | 33,118 | 418 | -119 |
| Laurens | 28,595 | 28,749 | 28,727 | -154 | 22 |
| Lee | 6,057 | 6,107 | 6,086 | -50 | 21 |
| Lexington | 135,088 | 135,276 | 134,668 | -188 | 608 |
| McCormick | 3,381 | 3,386 | 3,375 | -5 | 11 |
| Marion | 11,973 | 12,054 | 12,029 | -81 | 25 |
| Marlboro | 9,198 | 9,274 | 9,277 | -76 | -3 |
| Newberry | 18,161 | 18,332 | 18,245 | -171 | 87 |
| Oconee | 33,366 | 33,570 | 33,534 | -204 | 36 |
| Orangeburg | 35,105 | 35,319 | 35,254 | -214 | 65 |
| Pickens | 52,775 | 53,031 | 53,040 | -256 | -9 |
| Richland | 184,321 | 184,713 | 184,162 | -392 | 551 |
| Saluda | 8,590 | 8,646 | 8,536 | -56 | 110 |
| Spartanburg | 130,318 | 129,669 | 129,818 | 649 | -149 |
| Sumter | 40,975 | 41,160 | 41,032 | -185 | 128 |
| Union | 10,848 | 10,786 | 10,793 | 62 | -7 |
| Williamsburg | 12,132 | 12,223 | 12,203 | -91 | 20 |
| York | 118,104 | 116,516 | 117,007 | 1,588 | -491 |

South Carolina Nonfarm Employment Trends for August - Seasonally Adjusted

In August 2015, seasonally adjusted, non-farm payrolls increased by 4,300 over the month to reach a level of 2,007,900. The increase in employment was primarily due to gains in Government (+1,400) and Manufacturing (+1,000).

Additional increases were in Other Services (+700); Construction (+600); Financial Activities (+400); Education and Health Services (+300); Leisure and Hospitality (+300); and Professional and Business Services (+200). Industries reporting downturns were Information (-400) and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (-200).

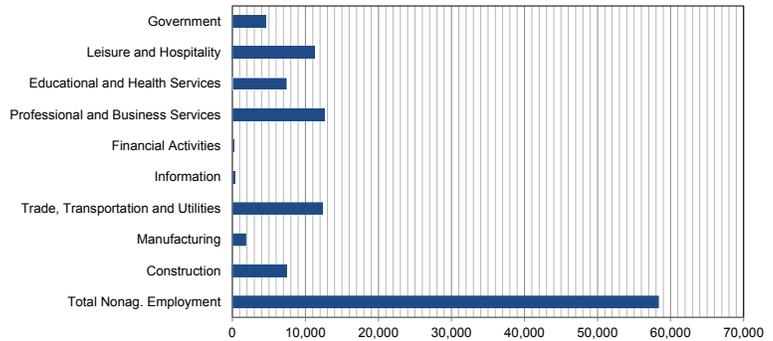
Over-the-year growth in nonfarm employment was at 58,400 with the largest increases in the Professional and Business Services (+12,600); Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (+12,400); Leisure and Hospitality (+11,300); Construction (+7,500); Education and Health Services (+7,500); Government (+4,600); and Manufacturing (+1,900). Modest gains were seen in Information (+300); Other Services (+300); and Financial Activities (+200).

Three of the four Metropolitan Statistical Areas' (MSAs), seasonally adjusted, total nonfarm payroll employment saw upturns over-the-month. Columbia had the largest gain of 900, followed by Charleston (+200), and Sumter (+100), while Florence declined by 900.

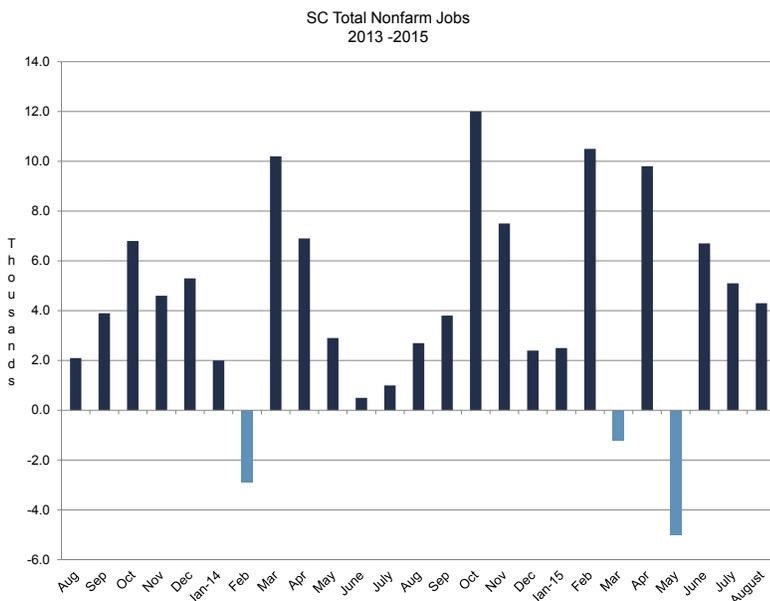
Every MSA saw seasonally adjusted, payroll employment growth over-the-year. The most prominent growth was reported in Charleston (+6,800), followed by Columbia (+6,100), Florence (+1,100), and Sumter (+400).

As a result of the new MSA redefinition, there are only four South Carolina MSAs publishable under nonfarm, seasonally adjusted employment. MSAs are defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget and are the result of the latest published standards from Census Bureau data. (The standards for defining the areas are reviewed and revised once every 10 years prior to each decennial census). Therefore, with the release of the 2014 benchmark, Current Employment Survey (CES) will incorporate the updates to area definitions based on the new standards from the 2010 Census. As a result of the new standards, breaks have been

**South Carolina Job Changes by Industry
August 2014 - August 2015 (SA)**



created in the time series for these areas. Due to the breaks in the time series, BLS will be unable to publish all of the redefined areas on a seasonally adjusted basis. The South Carolina areas based on the 2010 standards and Census Bureau data were defined in February 2013.



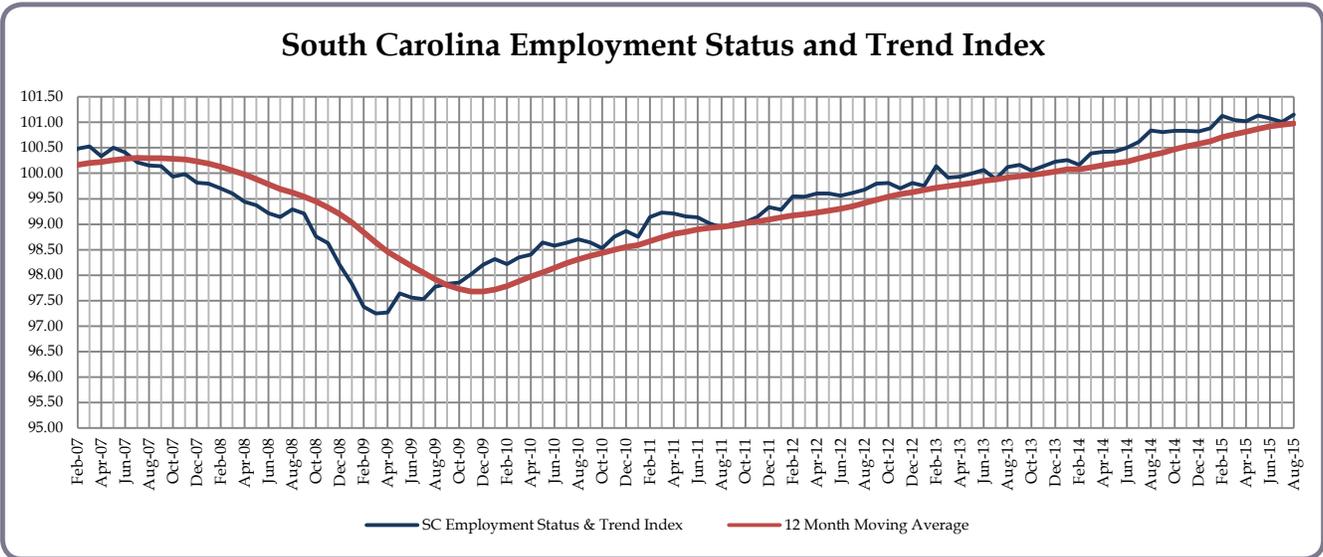
To see the monthly not seasonally adjusted data series, go to www.SCWorkforceInfo.com (Employment and Wage Data section)

South Carolina Employment Status and Trend Index Set another New High

After two months of decline, South Carolina Employment Status and Trend Index (SCESTI) rebounded a strong 0.14 percent, ending August at 101.15, a new life time record high. Contributing to this month's jump of SCESTI is an almost 29 percent improvement of the SC Unemployment Insurance Initial Claims, coupled with a better than 11.5 percent surge of the Conference Board's US Consumer Confidence Index and a more than 0.92 percent gain of the Conference Board's US Employment Trends Index. On the down side, the Conference Board's SC Help Wanted Online Ads dropped 1.45 percent, and the SC Manufacturing Average Weekly Hours worked was almost a half percentage point smaller than July of this year.

On a 12-month comparison, SCESTI along with all the index components managed improvements. SCESTI was 0.30 percent higher than August 2014. The SC Unemployment Insurance Initial Claims dropped almost 17 percent, the Conference Board's Consumer Confidence Index rose 8.67 percent, and the Conference Board's US Employment Trends Index gained 3.64 percent for the same period of time. Meanwhile, the SC Manufacturing Average Weekly Hours and the Conference Board's SC Help Wanted Online Ads were also higher, advancing 0.97 percent and 0.44 percent, respectively.

Indeed, August is a good month for SCESTI. It marks the fourth time in this year that it breaks its life-time record (January, February and May were the first three times). It also marks the 48th consecutive month (since August 2011) that SCESTI has been above its 12-month moving average. These are unambiguous signs of a continuously improving employment situation for the Palmetto State in the upcoming four to six months.



Customer Service Representative

What is a Customer Service Representative?

Customer service representatives interact with customers to provide information in response to inquiries about products and services and to handle and resolve complaints. Customer service representatives typically do the following:

- Listen to customers' questions and concerns and provide answers or responses
- Provide information about products and services
- Take orders, calculate charges, and process billing or payments
- Review or make changes to customer accounts
- Handle returns or complaints
- Record details of customer contacts and actions taken
- Review and select standard responses for answers or solutions
- Refer customers to supervisors or more experienced employees

Education and Work Experience

Customer service representatives usually need at least a high school diploma or equivalent in order to meet the requirement of this occupation. Many customer service representatives do not necessarily need work experience to be successful upon beginning their career. Many employers usually provide short-term on-the-job training to assist the customer service representative in learning the necessary skills to perform their duties.

Employment and Wages

In May 2014, the total estimated number of customer service representatives in South Carolina was 44,130. Customer service representatives in South Carolina earn on average \$30,240 annually, which is slightly below the national average of \$33,890. Overall, the outlook for the customer service occupation is bright. As the economy recovers and more businesses open or expand, demand is expected to increase for people with customer service skills. Nationally, the job outlook for customer service representatives is projected to see an increase of 13 percent, or 298,700, by the year 2022.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2014-15 Edition, Customer Service Representatives