California Employment Report for March 2024

The Center for Jobs and the Economy has released our initial analysis of the February Employment Report from the California Employment Development Department. For additional information and data about the California economy visit www.centerforjobs.org/ca.

March Data Shows Mixed Results

The March data returned to reporting mixed results for the state's economy. Nonfarm jobs rose 28,000 in the preliminary results for March, while the loss in February was revised 3,300 lower to 6,600. The preliminary average monthly gain for the first quarter of 2024 was 15,800, down sharply from the previous quarter's average of 38,800 but better than the 5,200 average loss in the first quarter of 2023.

The labor force numbers continued to weaken, but at less significant numbers. Employment reported yet another loss, the 9th in the last 10 months. Employment dipped 8,400 for the month and a total of 128,600 in the current 10-month downward trend. Unemployment also has grown in every month except one since September 2022, for a total increase in this period of 309,500 or 42.8% higher than the recent low in August 2022. The unemployment rate remained at 5.3%, the highest among the states and DC and the highest in California since December 2021.

California Labor Force

Seasonally Adjusted	California		US	
	Mar 2024	Change from Feb 2024	Mar 2024	Change from Feb 2024
Unemployment Rate	5.3%	0.0	3.8%	-0.1
Labor Force	19,345,900	0.0%	167,895,000	0.3%
Participation Rate	62.0%	-0.1	62.7%	0.2
Employment	18,313,500	0.0%	161,466,000	0.3%
Unemployment	1,032,400	0.4%	6,429,000	-0.4%

Not Seasonally Adjusted	California		US	
	Mar 2024	Change from Mar 2023	Mar 2024	Change from Mar 2023
Unemployment Rate	5.3%	0.6	3.9%	0.3
Labor Force	19,409,300	0.1%	167,960,000	0.7%
Participation Rate	62.2%	-0.1	62.7%	0.1
Employment	18,372,600	-0.6%	161,356,000	0.4%
Unemployment	1,036,700	14.7%	6,604,000	9.3%

5.3%

CA Unemployment Rate

California's reported unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted) in February was unchanged at 5.3%. The US rate improved 0.1 point to 3.8%.

California again had the highest unemployment rate among the states and DC.

-8.2k

CA Employment

Employment dipped 8,200 (seasonally adjusted), with the total employment loss since May 2023 now at 128,600.

US employment rose by 498,000.

California unemployment edged up 4,000, while US unemployment dipped by 29,000. Since August 2022, unemployment has risen 309,500 (42.8%) in California, while rising 446,000 (7.5%) in the US as a whole.

62.0%

CA Labor Force Participation Rate

California labor force (seasonally adjusted) dipped 4,200, while the labor force participation rate was down 0.1 point to 62.0%. The US labor force rose 469,000, while the participation rate rose 0.2 point to 62.7%.

Recovery Progress: CA Employment vs. Other States

Compared to the pre-pandemic peak in February 2020, California's sustained weakness in employment recovery remained at the 3rd lowest among the states and DC.

Employment: March 2024 vs. February 2020

Source: BLS, seasonally adjusted
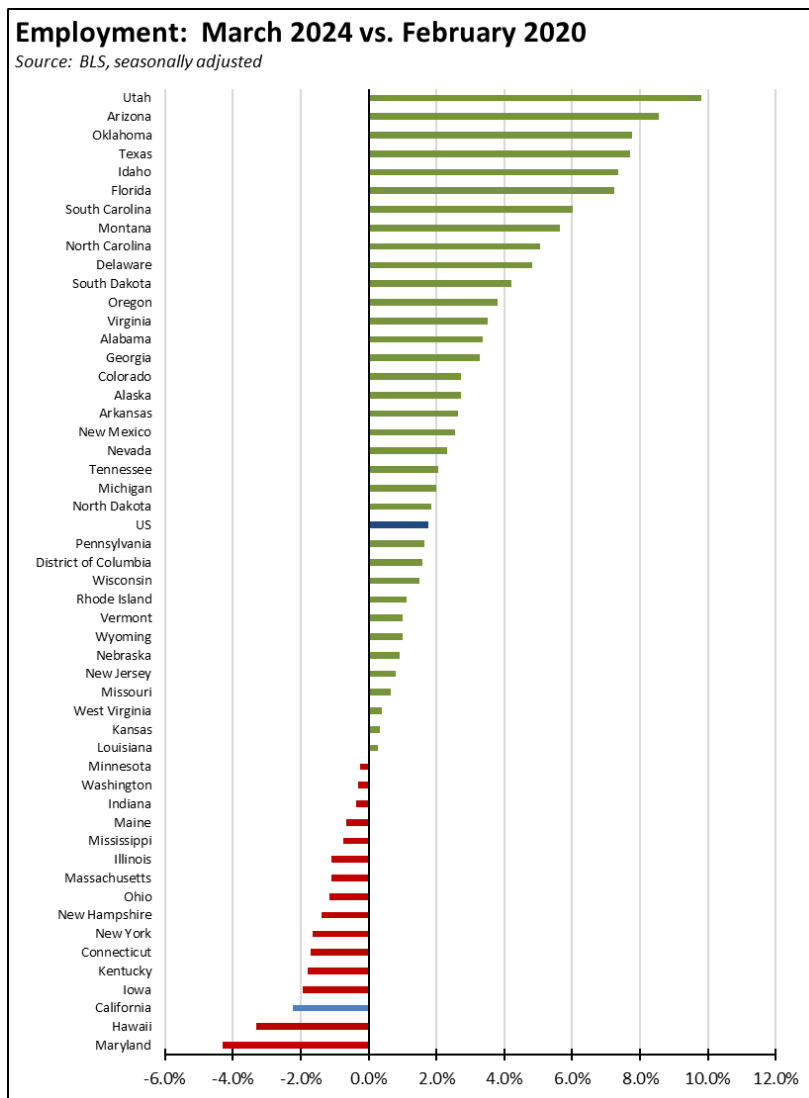
Nonfarm Jobs

28.0k
Nonfarm Jobs Change

Nonfarm wage and salary jobs rose 28,000 in the preliminary results for March, while the loss in February was revised 3,300 lower to 6,600.

For the US as a whole, nonfarm jobs rose 303,000 in March.

The seasonally adjusted numbers for California showed gains in 10 industries and losses in 8. Increases were led by Healthcare & Social Assistance (11,200), Government (6,400), and Administrative & Support & Waste Services (5,300). Losses were led by Manufacturing (-5,300), Wholesale Trade (-2,000), and Accommodation & Food Services (-1,800).

Recovery Progress: CA Nonfarm Jobs vs. Other States

California's monthly job performance in March was the highest among the states and DC. New York was 2nd highest with a gain of 23,900, followed by Texas with 19,100.

Compared to the pre-pandemic peak, California has now gained a net 319,200 nonfarm jobs, still in 4th place among the states and DC.

	Nonfarm Job Gains, Feb 2020 - Mar 2024
Texas	1,152,600
Florida	812,000
North Carolina	332,300
California	319,200
Georgia	276,500

Adjusted for size, California dropped to 31st highest, below the US average.

Nonfarm Jobs: March 2024 vs. February 2020
Source: BLS, seasonally adjusted
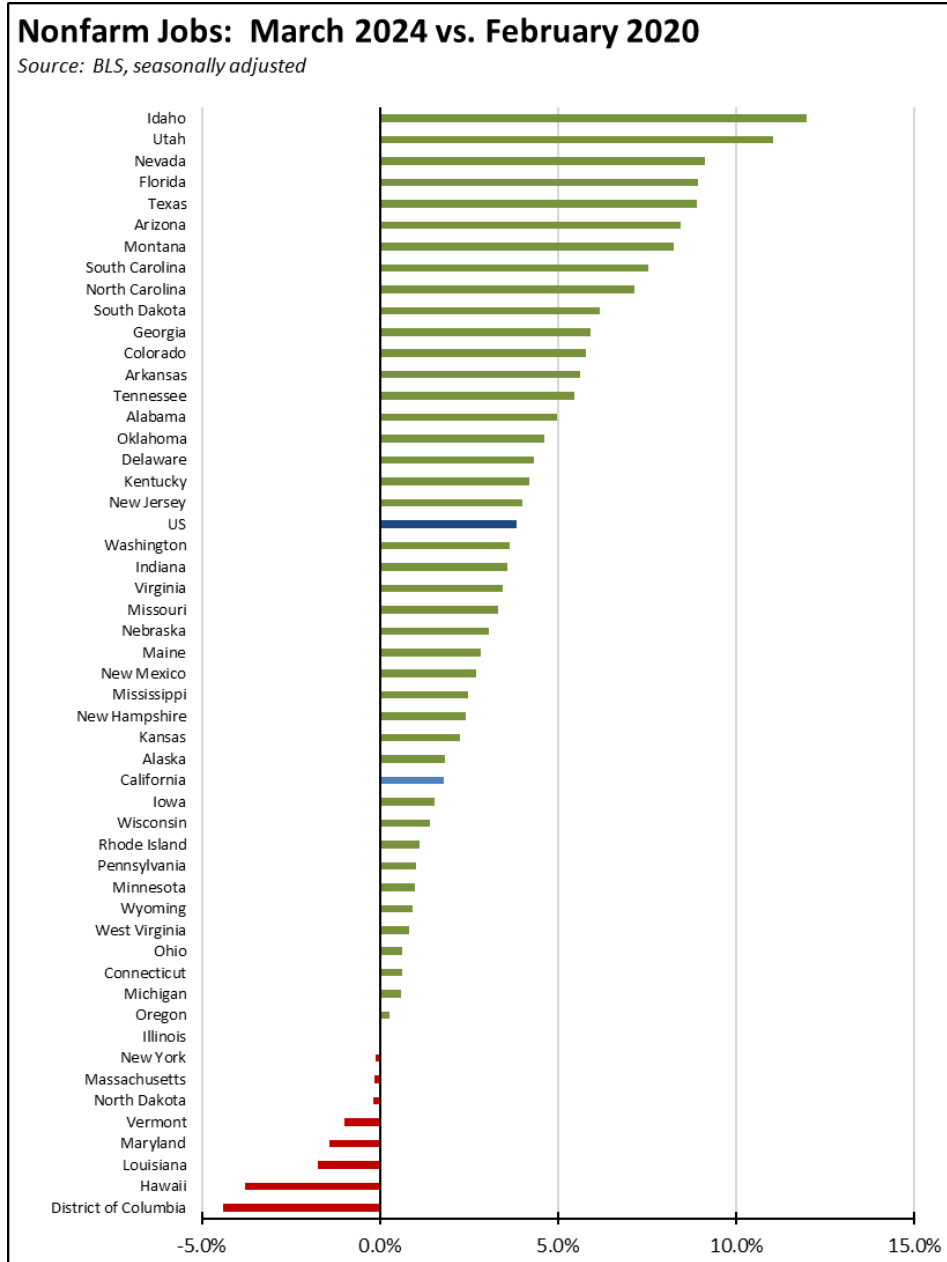
Nonfarm Jobs by Region

Both the budget critical Bay Area and Los Angeles Region posted nonfarm job gains (seasonally adjusted) over the month. Los Angeles, Bay Area, and Central Coast regions, however, remained below their pre-pandemic peaks, with the other regions of the state showing post-recovery gains.

Nonfarm Jobs by Region
Source: EDD, seasonally adjusted

	Change from January 2024	Change from February 2020
Inland Empire	3,600	106,300
Central Valley	6,200	96,900
Sacramento	3,300	57,300
San Diego	2,000	42,100
Orange County	4,100	16,700
Central Coast	1,300	-11,300
Bay Area	4,200	-52,100
Los Angeles	7,800	-60,200

Because the data in the table is seasonally adjusted, the numbers should be considered as the total for the counties in each region rather than the regional number. This job series also is not available for all areas in California.

Unemployment Rates by Region

Looking at employment, no region in the state has yet to pass the pre-pandemic peak. Los Angeles and Bay Area remain the furthest behind.

	Change from Feb 2024	Change from Feb 2020
Los Angeles	-33,200	-586,800
Bay Area	-103,100	-324,200
Central Valley	-5,000	-129,000
Orange County	-22,400	-102,300
San Diego/Imperial	-24,400	-86,400
Inland Empire	-7,200	-60,200
Central Coast	-18,000	-56,000
Upstate California	630	-38,830
Sacramento	440	-28,790
Central Sierra	1,180	-4,610

Unemployment rates (not seasonally adjusted) remain higher in all regions compared to pre-pandemic February 2020 levels.

Unemployment Rate by Region
Source: EDD, not seasonally adjusted

	Mar-24	**Feb-20**
California	*5.3*	*4.3*
Orange County	3.9	2.8
Bay Area	4.2	2.7
Sacramento	4.9	3.7
San Diego/Imperial	4.9	3.8
Inland Empire	5.1	3.9
Los Angeles	5.2	4.3
Central Sierra	5.3	4.5
Upstate California	7.2	6.3
Central Coast	7.8	7.0
Central Valley	9.2	8.4

Counties with Double-Digit Unemployment

8

Counties with Unemployment Above 10%

The number of counties with an unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) at 10% or more dipped to 8. The unadjusted rates ranged from 3.5% in San Mateo to 19.2% in Colusa.

Unemployment Rate by Legislative District

The estimated unemployment rates are shown below for the highest and lowest districts. The full data and methodology are available on the Center's website.

March 2024: Unemployment Rate by Legislative District			
Legislator	Highest Unemployment Rate	Legislator	Lowest Unemployment Rate
CD48 Issa (R)	6.3	CD40 Kim (R)	3.5
CD46 Correa (D)	6.6	CD11 Pelosi (D)	3.6
CD36 Lieu (D)	7.0	CD15 Mullin (D)	3.6
CD14 Swalwell (D)	7.2	CD50 Peters (D)	3.6
CD02 Huffman (D)	7.7	CD16 Eshoo (D)	3.7
CD51 Jacobs (D)	8.0	CD47 Porter (D)	3.8
CD45 Steel (R)	8.5	CD49 Levin (D)	3.9
CD35 Torres (D)	10.4	CD38 Sánchez (D)	4.0
CD03 Kiley (R)	10.7	CD17 Khanna (D)	4.0
CD41 Calvert (R)	12.1	CD10 DeSaulnier (D)	4.0
SD28 Smallwood-Cuevas (D)	5.9	SD13 Becker (D)	3.3
SD33 Gonzalez (D)	6.1	SD39 Atkins (D)	3.5
SD21 Wilk (R)	6.2	SD40 Jones (R)	3.5
SD04 Alvarado-Gil (D)	6.4	SD37 Min (D)	3.6
SD17 Laird (D)	6.6	SD38 Blakespear (D)	3.6
SD05 Eggman (D)	6.9	SD11 Wiener (D)	3.8
SD12 Grove (R)	7.6	SD34 Umberg (D)	4.2
SD18 Padilla (D)	7.9	SD15 Cortese (D)	4.2
SD14 Caballero (D)	11.1	SD10 Wahab (D)	4.2
SD16 Hurtado (D)	12.0	SD36 Nguyen (R)	4.2
AD57 Jones-Sawyer (D)	7.3	AD23 Berman (D)	3.2
AD03 Gallagher (R)	7.5	AD76 Maienschein (D)	3.2
AD22 Alanis (R)	7.8	AD19 Ting (D)	3.3
AD32 Fong (R)	8.5	AD26 Low (D)	3.5
AD29 Rivas (D)	9.1	AD72 Dixon (R)	3.5
AD36 Garcia (D)	10.2	AD21 Papan (D)	3.5
AD35 Bains (D)	11.0	AD16 Bauer-Kahan (D)	3.6
AD31 Arambula (D)	11.0	AD66 Muratsuchi (D)	3.7
AD27 Soria (D)	11.1	AD77 Boerner (D)	3.8
AD33 Mathis (R)	12.4	AD68 Valencia (D)	3.8