

BUSINESS

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TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 2025

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Joblessness declines even as more seek work

At 3.2% for region in March, state figures show

LISA GREEN*The Journal Gazette*

The labor force grew by nearly 2,070 people in March and Fort Wayne metro area unemployment dropped to 3.2%, preliminary figures out Monday show.

That was down more than half a percentage point from 3.8% in March 2024, a report from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development indicates.

The Fort Wayne metro area includes Allen, Wells and Whitley counties. The labor force for the three counties was 233,283 last month, up from 231,216 in March 2024, state figures show.

With the labor force growth, fewer than 7,430 people were without work last month compared to nearly 8,835 in March 2024.

In February, unemployment was 4.1% for the Fort Wayne area.

Workforce Development says comparing the same month year over year provides a better snapshot due to seasonal hiring that fluctuates in fields such as retail, education and farming.

Statewide for March, unemployment was 3.4% or 4.1% when seasonally adjusted. Nationally, unemployment last month was 4.2% and stayed the same when seasonally adjusted, the workforce development report showed.

For the Huntington County area, the state's preliminary numbers show the labor force was 18,827 last month, up from 18,626 in March 2024.

The number of unemployed individuals, however, dropped from 704 in March 2024 to 603 last month despite the slightly larger labor pool.

Unemployment last month was 3.2%, down from 4.2% in February.

Mark A. Wickersham, executive director of the Huntington County Economic

Development Corporation, said through email that the report was "generally encouraging."

Howard County, which includes Kokomo, remained at the top of the list for the highest March unemployment - 5.7%. It was followed by Lake County in northwest Indiana with 5.1% unemployment.

Union County in southeastern Indiana and bordering Ohio had the state's lowest unemployment, 2.4, the report from the state shows.

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Unemployment

March jobless rates for northeast Indiana		Steuben
		3.5%
		Noble
		3.1%
		DeKalb
		3.1%
		Kosciusko
		3.3%
		Whitley
		3.1%
		Allen
		3.2%
		Huntington
		3.2%
		Wabash
		3.2%
		Adams
		3.2%
		Wells
		2.8%

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Source: Indiana Department of Workforce Development