



St. Johns County's Unemployment Rate Third-Lowest in State in April

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For the first time in about a year, the unemployment rate in St. Johns County was not the second-lowest in the state last month. But the information released Friday still showed the county in a good position.

Statistics released by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, said St. Johns County had an unemployment rate of 3.4 percent in April, down 0.1 of a percentage point from the previous month. It's also similar to April 2015, when the county's rate was 3.7 percent.

The most recent numbers left St. Johns County with the third-lowest rate in the state behind Monroe County (3.0 percent) and Hamilton County (3.2 percent).

Florida's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 4.8 percent in April 2016, down 0.1 of a percentage point from March and down 0.7 of a percentage point from 5.5 percent a year ago. Local county rates are not seasonally adjusted.

According to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, there were 472,000 jobless Floridians out of a labor force of 9.8 million in April. The U.S. unemployment rate was 5.0 percent in April. Florida's unemployment rate has been less than or equal to the national rate for 26 of the last 41 months.

The number of jobs in Florida was 8,283,900 in April 2016, up 254,500 jobs compared to a year ago.

The industry gaining the most jobs was education and health services (up 47,100 jobs, 4.0 percent). Other industries gaining jobs included leisure and hospitality (up 45,100 jobs, 4.0 percent); professional and business services (up 43,700 jobs); trade, transportation, and utilities (up 41,500 jobs); construction (up 30,100 jobs); financial activities (up 20,200 jobs); total government (up 10,200 jobs); manufacturing (up 9,400 jobs); and other services (up 8,500 jobs).

There was some positive news for the counties surrounding St. Johns.

Putnam and Flagler counties have had some of the highest unemployment rates in the state in recent years.

But in April, Putnam's rate declined to 5.1 percent — 1.7 percentage points lower than April 2015.

Putnam and Flagler were tied for the 14th highest rate of unemployment in the state last month. Flagler's 5.1 percent rate was a decrease of 0.9 of a percentage point from a year ago.

Duval County remained strong at 4.5 percent, a full percentage point better than last year. Clay County's unemployment rate was reported at 4.1 percent.