

California unemployment falls to 7 percent; few new jobs

The Associated Press January 23, 2015 Updated 2 hours ago

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California's unemployment rate fell to 7 percent in December, a drop of two-tenths of a percentage point from a month earlier, but the state added just 700 jobs last month, a disappointing number after good job gains in November.

Job gains in areas such as trade and transportation, financial activities, educational and health services, hospitality and government were offset by major losses in construction, information, and professional, business and other services, the California Employment Development Department reported Friday.

When the swings in the number of jobs created month-by-month are evened out, the state had roughly a net gain of 26,000 jobs per month in 2014, said Michael Bernick, a former department director who is now a fellow at the Milken Institute.

"This is healthier job growth than we have seen since the early 2000s, and more in line with what we can expect in 2015," Bernick said. But he noted that a far higher percentage of those new jobs are part-time.

"The part-time workforce reached 3.49 million in November, of which 1.2 million were 'involuntary' part time workers who were unable to find full-time work," he wrote.

EDD said that the state has added more than 1.5 million jobs since the economic recovery began in February 2010. The last time California's jobless rate stood at 7 percent was June 2008, before the recession took hold.

The U.S. unemployment rate is 5.6 percent.

Join The Conversation

Copyright

© 2015 www.fresnobee.com and wire service sources. All Rights Reserved. <http://www.fresnobee.com>