

Meltdown 101: Unemployment by the Numbers

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WASHINGTON — Employers are laying off fewer workers, the government reported Friday, but widespread cuts are still happening — only about 30 percent of industries are adding jobs or holding steady.

That's up from 20 percent in March, at the depth of the recession, but it still means that 70 percent of the 271 industries tracked by the Labor Department are cutting jobs, according to the department's July employment report.

"We're still a long way from where we would be in an expansion," said Mark Vitner, senior economist at Wells Fargo Securities. "Job losses continue to be extremely broad-based."

For example, in July 2007, five months before the recession began, 50.7 percent of industries were hiring, or at least not laying people off, the department said.

Still, most of the news in the monthly report showed improvement: The unemployment rate dropped slightly to 9.4 percent, from 9.5 percent in June. And companies cut 247,000 jobs, a large number but fewer than the average of 645,000 a month from November to April.

Even in industries where job cuts are continuing, the reductions are smaller than in recent months.

Manufacturing, for example, lost 52,000 jobs in July, compared with 131,000 lost jobs in June. Much of the change was due to a big improvement in the auto and auto-parts industries, which added more than 28,000 jobs.

That reflects a rebound by General Motors Corp. and Chrysler LLC, which had closed plants in May and June as they filed for bankruptcy protection and restructured. Many of those factories were reopened in July.

Job losses in construction, meanwhile, fell to 76,000, from 86,000 in June and 123,000 in March, in the depths of the recession. Financial services lost 13,000 positions, from 29,000 in June and 41,000 in March.

There were some new bright spots, as arts, entertainment and recreation added 10,000 jobs last month. That category includes performing arts, spectator sports, amusement parks and gambling.

Health care, which has been a bright spot throughout the recession, added 19,600 jobs.

Here, by the numbers, are some other details that can be found deep in the government's monthly employment report.

MISERY LOVES COMPANY

14.5 million: People unemployed in July 2009, down from a record 14.7 million in June

12.1 million: People unemployed in December 1982, the record before the current downturn

9.4 percent: Unemployment rate in July 2009, down from 9.5 percent the previous month

4.9 percent: Unemployment rate in December 2007, when the recession began

10.8 percent: Unemployment rate in December 1982, the highest since World War II

LONG-TERM JOBLESSNESS

33.8 percent: Proportion of unemployed who've been out of work six months or longer, a record

25.1 weeks: Average length of unemployment in July, also a record

4.97 million: Number of people unemployed for six months or longer

1.32 million: Number unemployed for that long in December 2007, when the recession began

CUTS AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE

19 months: Number of months in a row employers have cut jobs, a record

17 months: Months of consecutive job cuts in the 1981-82 recession, the record before this year

EDUCATION COUNTS ...

15.4 percent: Unemployment rate for those without a high school diploma

9.4 percent: Rate for high school graduates

4.7 percent: Rate for college graduates

... BUT THOSE WITHOUT COLLEGE DEGREES IMPROVED

0.1 percentage points: Drop in jobless rate for those without high school diploma

0.4 percentage points: Drop for those with diploma

0 percent: drop for college graduates

UNDEREMPLOYED

8.8 million: Number of part-time workers who would have preferred full-time work last month

2.3 million: People without jobs who wanted to work, were available and had looked in the last 12 months, but had not looked in the last month.

16.3 percent: Unemployment rate if you include both groups above — down from 16.5 percent in June, the highest in records dating to 1994

JULY UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY GROUP

9.8 percent: Adult men

7.5 percent: Adult women

12.6 percent: Female heads of households

8.3 percent: Asians

8.6 percent: Whites

12.3 percent: Hispanics

14.5 percent: Blacks

23.8 percent: Teenagers

