

## 2016 Ends with Continued Job Growth Unemployment Rate Ticks Up Slightly

**JOB GROWTH:** The economy closed out the year with the addition of 156,000 jobs in December, for a total annual increase of 2.2 million jobs, which was a bit lower than in the prior year.

**TOP INDUSTRIES:** In December, employment continued to trend up across almost every sector Spherion tracks, with the biggest gains recorded in the healthcare and social services sector.

**UNEMPLOYMENT:** After registering its most significant change in more than a year last month, the unemployment rate ticked up slightly to 4.7 percent in December. That is a signal that more people are looking for work, following a long stretch of “underemployment.”

**WAGES:** Wages rose in December, bringing the annual average hourly increase to 2.9 percent.

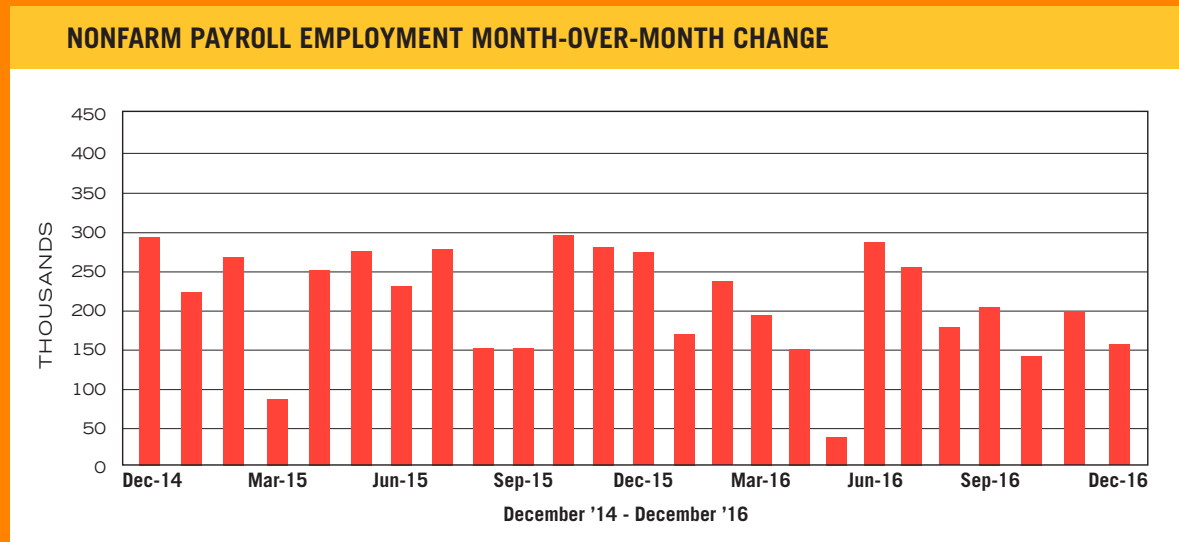
**WORK WEEK:** The average work week remained unchanged at 34.3 hours.

**TEMPORARY JOB TRENDS:** There was a pullback in the temporary staffing sector of 15,500 jobs in December.

**WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?** The year closed on a positive note, albeit a muted one. The economy saw fairly steady job growth throughout the year, although overall, 2016 was not as robust as the previous two years. More people are actively looking for full-time work, but they—and the disturbingly high number of discouraged workers who have stopped looking—may lack the skills required to fill open positions. For the year, wages trended up, which is a good sign for workers but also a signal that employers face continuing struggles to attract and retain the skilled employees needed to spur further growth.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Steinberg Employment Research, Bloomberg, USA Today, CNNMoney, Staffing Industry Analysts, Chicago Tribune, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times

CHART 1: EMPLOYMENT NUMBERS / SOURCE: BLS

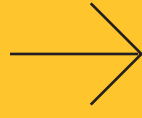


Employers closed out the year with the addition of 156,000 jobs in December.



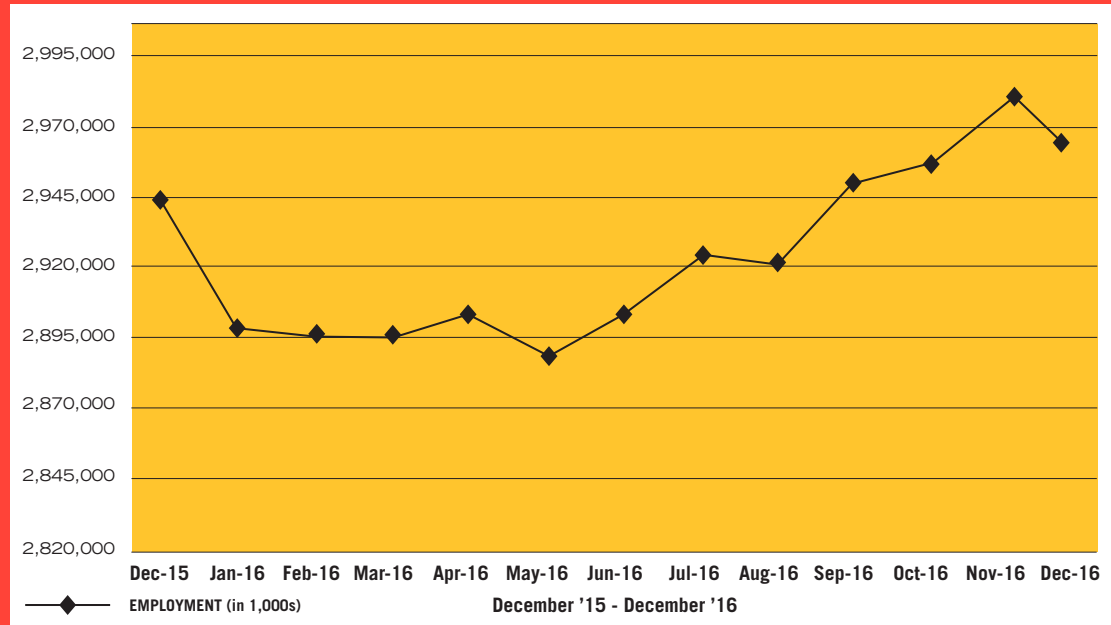
CHART 2: TOP INDUSTRIES / SOURCE: BLS

December job growth slowed in a number of sectors, although positive momentum was registered across almost every sector Spherion tracks.



JOB GAINS	JOB INCREASE
Healthcare & Social Assistance	+63,300
Leisure & Hospitality	+24,000
Manufacturing	+17,000
Professional & Business Services	+15,000
Transportation & Warehousing	+14,700
Financial Activities	+13,000
Retail Trade	+6,300

CHART 3: TEMPORARY WORKFORCE / SOURCE: BLS & STEINBERG EMPLOYMENT RESEARCH



Temporary help services lost 15,500 jobs in December. Overall, the sector continues to account for slightly more than 2% of all jobs.



## Many American Workers Planning New Careers for the New Year

For many people, the New Year prompts a re-evaluation of career priorities. Based on the findings of Spherion's latest WorkSphere survey, the New Year's resolution list for 62 percent of American workers includes making a professional change. What do they have in mind? For some, it is overall performance improvement or learning a new skill. Others want to find a new job, negotiate a higher salary, embark on a new career or start a new business. That is why employers would be wise to ensure business priorities take into account the needs and aspirations of employees.

Employees are virtually split on whether the New Year will bring improved job prospects. More than one-fourth (27 percent) think 2017 will be a better year for jobs than 2016, while only slightly fewer (24 percent) disagree. And, despite recent optimism surrounding the current economic outlook, one-third of all workers (33 percent) and nearly 40 percent of Millennials are more worried about the economy and its impact on their career than they were at this time last year.

Worries aside, workers are confident of their ability to follow through on their resolutions.

CHART 4: NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS / SOURCE: SPHERION Q4 WORKSPHERE SURVEY

**62%** of workers want to make a change in 2017



### I RESOLVE TO:

- ☒ Make more money!
- ☒ Relocate
- ☒ Improve performance
- ☒ Learn a new professional skill
- ☒ Find a new job
- ☒ Negotiate a higher salary
- ☒ Launch a brand new career
- ☒ Start a business

CHART 5: TIME FOR CHANGE / SOURCE: SPHERION Q4 WORKSPHERE SURVEY

More than one quarter of workers want a new job or career in the New Year

### WHY?

- 56%** Higher Pay
- 45%** Try Something New
- 44%** Better Work/Life Balance

**Notable:** 90% also want to change industries  
**The good news?** 72% of those not planning to make a move say they are satisfied with their current work arrangement.



CHART 6: STICKTOITIVENESS / SOURCE: SPHERION Q4 WORKSPHERE SURVEY

More than 40% of workers are confident of their ability to follow through on resolutions

**Millennials are super-confident!**

- 62%** grade themselves “A” or “B” for keeping New Year's resolutions
- 46%** have made job/career-related resolutions more than once over the past 5 years
- 81%** report following through