

## ECONOMIC NEWS

# United States: Jobs Rebound in February

### HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ The establishment survey indicates that there were 379,000 net hires in February, following a gain of 166,000 jobs in January (revised from +49,000) and a loss of 306,000 jobs in December (revised from -227,000).
- ▶ There were 21,000 net hires in manufacturing, but 61,000 losses in construction.
- ▶ Private-sector services created 513,000 jobs. Most hires come from the food services sector, which saw 285,900 new positions added. The number of workers rose by 33,000 in the recreation and entertainment industry and by 35,700 in the hotel industry. Retailers added 41,100 jobs, professional services 63,000 (including 52,700 in temp services), and health and education 44,000. The public sector lost 86,000 jobs.
- ▶ The jobless rate edged down to 6.2% in February from 6.3% in January.

### COMMENTS

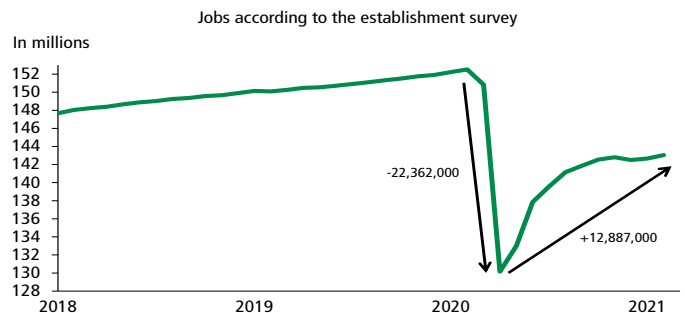
Many factors suggest better job performance in February, the main one being the drop in COVID-19 cases, which prompted some states to ease public health restrictions after having tightened them in late fall. For example, restaurant dining rooms were allowed to reopen in New York. This led to a surge in jobs in the food services sector. That said, the situation remains far from normal in this sector, which still has 2,008,500 fewer employees than a year ago.

In fact, the shortfall for the U.S. economy as a whole continues to be significant. Last month, there were 9,475,000 fewer workers than in February 2020. The level of jobs in February 2021 is therefore 93.8% of the level a year earlier. Just 57.6% of the jobs lost in March and April 2020 have returned so far.

In February, job losses in construction (-61,000) and in the resources sector (-8,000) appear to be tied to the start of the

### GRAPH

#### The U.S. job market is still quite far from its peak a year ago



Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics and Desjardins, Economic Studies

winter storm that hit in mid-February. However, the worst of the storm and the disruptions in Texas occurred after the reference week, minimizing the effects on job numbers. Despite these losses, 57.0% of the 257 economic sectors posted job gains in February, compared to just 48.4% in January.

### IMPLICATIONS

The rebound in jobs bodes well for the U.S. economy. The steady pace of the vaccine rollout suggests that public health restrictions will be eased more and more in the coming months. That should boost the job market even further.

**Francis Généreux**, Senior Economist

François Dupuis, Vice-President and Chief Economist • Mathieu D'Anjou, Deputy Chief Economist  
Hélène Bégin, Senior Economist • Benoit P. Durocher, Senior Economist • Francis Généreux, Senior Economist

Desjardins, Economic Studies: 514-281-2336 or 1 866-866-7000, ext. 5552336 • [desjardins.economics@desjardins.com](mailto:desjardins.economics@desjardins.com) • [desjardins.com/economics](https://desjardins.com/economics)

NOTE TO READERS: The letters k, M and B are used in texts and tables to refer to thousands, millions and billions respectively.

IMPORTANT: This document is based on public information and may under no circumstances be used or construed as a commitment by Desjardins Group. While the information provided has been determined on the basis of data obtained from sources that are deemed to be reliable, Desjardins Group in no way warrants that the information is accurate or complete. The document is provided solely for information purposes and does not constitute an offer or solicitation for purchase or sale. Desjardins Group takes no responsibility for the consequences of any decision whatsoever made on the basis of the data contained herein and does not hereby undertake to provide any advice, notably in the area of investment services. The data on prices or margins are provided for information purposes and may be modified at any time, based on such factors as market conditions. The past performances and projections expressed herein are no guarantee of future performance. The opinions and forecasts contained herein are, unless otherwise indicated, those of the document's authors and do not represent the opinions of any other person or the official position of Desjardins Group. Copyright © 2021, Desjardins Group. All rights reserved.