



# Economics Group

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## Georgia Employment Conditions: March 2016

**Nonfarm payrolls rose 0.3 percent in March as Georgia employers added 12,600 jobs. The state's construction and health care industries led growth. Despite the increase, the jobless rate ticked up to 5.5 percent.**

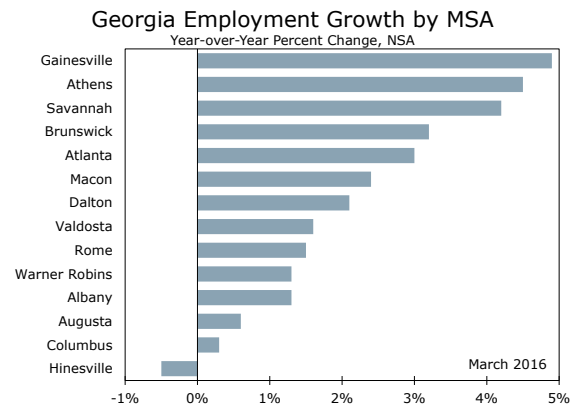
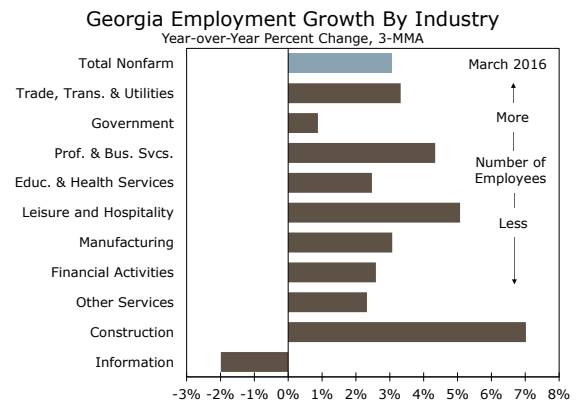
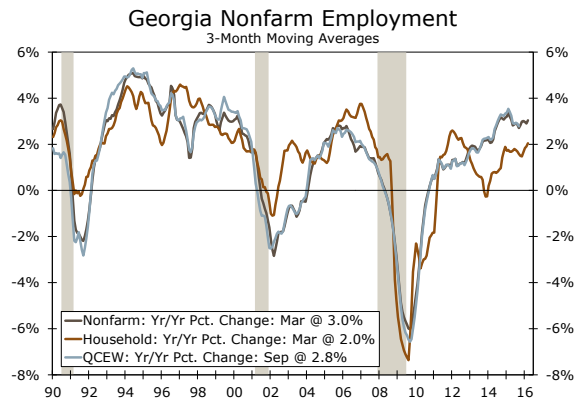
### Georgia Continues to Report Solid Job Gains

Georgia continued to report solid job growth in March, as nonfarm employment rose 0.3 percent on the month. Employers added 12,600 jobs across the state, marking the largest month-to-month gain since October 2015. Although Georgia saw sizable job gains in March, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate ticked up 0.1 percentage point to 5.5 percent.

Results were mixed across the state's major industry categories. Construction posted the largest gain, with 4,300 net new jobs added during the month. Mild weather allowed more projects to get started this winter and hiring has ramped up as residential and commercial projects have moved forward. Hiring also rose in health care & social assistance, which added 3,000 jobs, and government, which added 1,900 jobs. The wholesale and retail trade sectors also posted modest gains of 1,800 jobs and 1,000 jobs, respectively. Professional & business services, however, registered a loss of 1,000 jobs in March. The sector has been one of Georgia's largest sources of growth, accounting for a 3,700-job gain in February and 20,000 jobs over the past six months. The weakness was concentrated in the administrative & support services subsector, which shed 1,400 jobs. Hiring also moderated in leisure & hospitality, which lost 100 jobs, as arts, entertainment & recreation employers cut 1,400 jobs.

On a year-to-year basis, growth remains exceptionally strong. Hiring in the Peach State has risen 3.1 percent over the past year, easily besting the nation's 2.0 percent growth. Most key industries have seen healthy job growth over the year (middle chart). Construction employment has surged 9.5 percent year to year, reflecting the addition of 15,500 jobs. New stadiums for the Braves and the Falcons have provided a huge boost. Payroll gains in professional & business services and leisure & hospitality also remain solid, rising 4.6 percent and 4.5 percent over the year, respectively. Mining & logging employment has seen a slight decline, however, which mirrors commodity-related declines registered across the nation.

A majority of Georgia's metropolitan areas have seen steady employment growth over the past year. Gainesville, Athens and Savannah continue to top the charts, as each area has seen year-over-year job growth above 4 percent (bottom chart). Atlanta has also shown particular strength, with payrolls up 3.0 percent year to year. Atlanta has added a significant 77,000 jobs over the past year, accounting for roughly 60 percent of total job gains in the state. Hinesville registered a modest decline in employment over the year, reflecting the drag from federal government spending cuts. Columbus has also eked out only modest gains. Savannah and Brunswick continue see strong growth, reflecting the increased volume of trade going through Georgia's ports in recent years.



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