

# employment situation

Frontline Analysis by the MRINetwork Team of Global Search Experts

## Employment Summary for February 2015

The U.S. experienced a positive labor report for February as the nation continued to move toward a strong employment situation, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Not only did the overall employment rate drop, but positions were added to a variety of sectors.

### Unemployment rate drops

The unemployment rate decreased by .2 percent in February to 5.5 percent. Youth unemployment, a point of concern for the nation, experienced a positive shift as well, dropping by 1.7 percent to stand at 17.1 percent. The number of residents dealing with long-term unemployment remained relatively unchanged at 2.7 million. The civilian labor force participation rate also changed very little, coming in at 62.8 percent.

### Gains seen across a variety of industries

Overall, the country added a total of 295,000 jobs during February, exceeding the current average monthly gain of 266,000. Food services saw a significant hiring increase, adding 59,000 jobs. The professional and business services sector grew by 51,000 positions. Most of these new jobs were in the technical consulting services, computer systems design and architectural engineering fields.

The construction industry grew by 29,000 positions, most of them in the form of specialty trade contractors. Healthcare services added 24,000 jobs, many of them focusing on ambulatory care and hospitals. The transportation and warehousing sector expanded by 19,000 jobs, mostly couriers and messengers, while the retail industry continued its upward employment trend by adding 32,000 positions. Manufacturing also saw a notable increase of 8,000 jobs.

Industries that saw little change during the month of February include information, financial activities,

wholesale trade and government. The mining sector saw a slight loss in its workforce.

### Wages up slightly, Federal Reserve rates could increase

According to the report, average hourly earnings improved by 3 cents to the current average of \$24.78. Despite this only slight improvement, the U.S. dollar reached its highest value in 11.5 years against a number of currencies, reported Reuters. This general positive growth could inspire the Federal Reserve to hike rates come June, explained the source. Although the Fed has kept overnight lending rates close to zero since December 2008, the strength and potential present in the labor report could be grounds for increases.

**Chart 1. Unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted, February 2013 – February 2015**



**Chart 2. Nonfarm payroll employment over-the-month change, seasonally adjusted, February 2013 – February 2015**

