

## Contents

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[Summary](#)

[Mining & Logging](#)

[Construction](#)

[Manufacturing](#)

[Wholesale Trade](#)

[Retail Trade](#)

[Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities](#)

[Information](#)

[Financial Activities](#)

[Professional & Business Services](#)

[Private Education & Health Services](#)

[Leisure & Hospitality](#)

[Other Services](#)

[Government](#)

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# Current Employment Statistics Highlights



**December 2018**

Release Date: January 4, 2019

Prepared by Analysts of the National Estimates Branch  
Current Employment Statistics Survey  
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

202-691-6555

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## Current Employment Statistics Summary, December 2018

Nonfarm payroll employment rose by 312,000 in December. Over the year, employment rose by 2.6 million, compared with a gain of 2.2 million in 2017. In December, health care, food services and drinking places, construction, manufacturing, and retail trade added jobs.

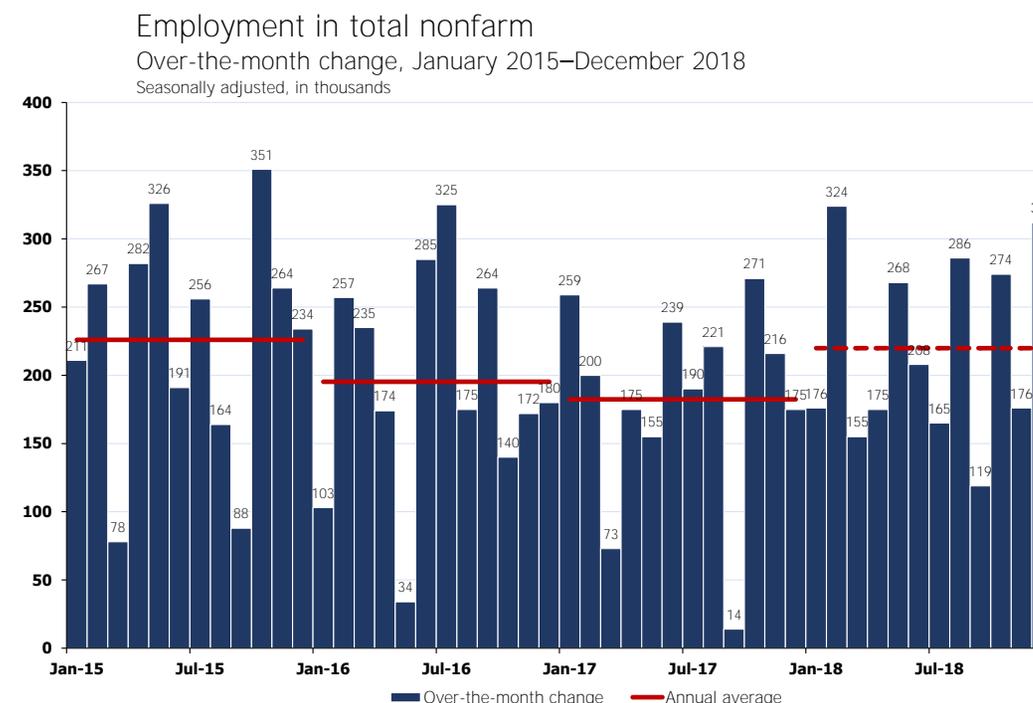
The employment change for November revised up from +155,000 to +176,000, and the change for October also revised up from +237,000 to +274,000. Incorporating revisions, job growth has averaged 254,000 per month over the past 3 months.

Average hourly earnings for all employees on private, nonfarm payrolls rose by 11 cents in December. Hourly earnings are up 3.2 percent over the year. Average weekly hours, at 34.5 hours, increased by 0.1 hour over the month, offsetting a 0.1-hour decrease in November.

### +82,000 Education and Health Services

Employment in health care rose by 50,000 in December, with home health care services (+13,000), hospitals (+7,000), and offices of dentists (+7,000) contributing to the growth.

In 2018, employment in health care expanded by 346,000, compared with 284,000



Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics, January 04, 2019.  
Most recent 2 months of data are preliminary.

jobs gained in 2017. Employment in hospitals rose by 108,000 over the year, up from 70,000 jobs added in 2017.

### +55,000 Leisure and Hospitality

Within leisure and hospitality, employment in food services and drinking places rose by 41,000 in December. Over the past year, this

industry added 235,000 jobs, similar to an increase of 261,000 in 2017.

### +38,000 Construction

Employment in construction rose by 38,000 in December. Within the industry, heavy and civil engineering construction (+16,000) and nonresidential specialty trade contractors

### Current Employment Statistics Survey Summary, December 2018

(+16,000) added jobs. Over the year, construction added 280,000 jobs, compared with an increase of 250,000 in 2017.

#### +32,000 Manufacturing

In December, employment in manufacturing rose by 32,000. Durable goods industries accounted for 19,000 of the increase, including job gains in fabricated metal products (+7,000) and computer and electronic products (+4,000). In 2018, employment in manufacturing expanded by 284,000, compared with a gain of 207,000 jobs in 2017.

#### +24,000 Retail Trade

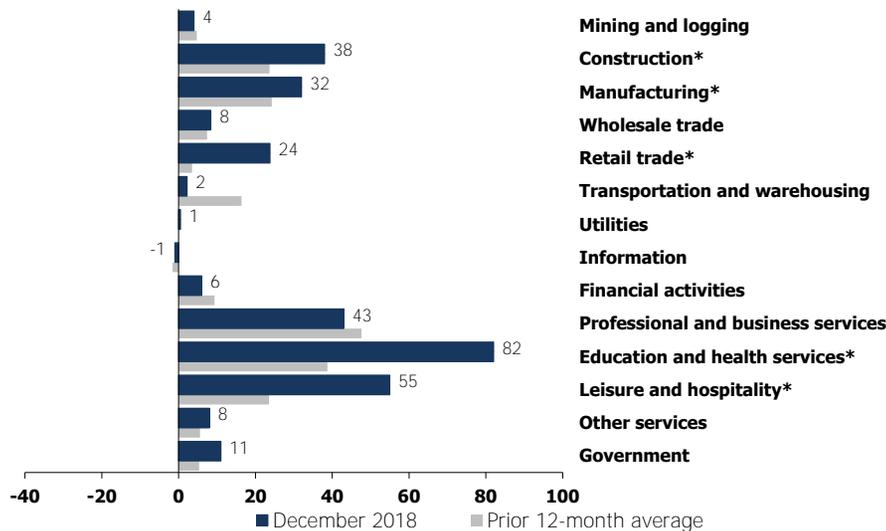
Employment in retail trade rose by 24,000 in December. Within the industry, general merchandise stores (+15,000) and automobile dealers (+6,000) added jobs. Sporting goods, hobby, book, and music stores lost 9,000 jobs. Over the past year, retail trade added 92,000 jobs, after little net change in 2017 (-29,000).

#### +43,000 Professional and Business Services

Employment in professional and business services continued to trend up in December. Over the year, employment in the industry increased by 583,000, after rising by 458,000 in 2017.

Employment in total nonfarm  
Over-the-month change, December 2018  
Seasonally adjusted, in thousands

Total nonfarm:  
312\*



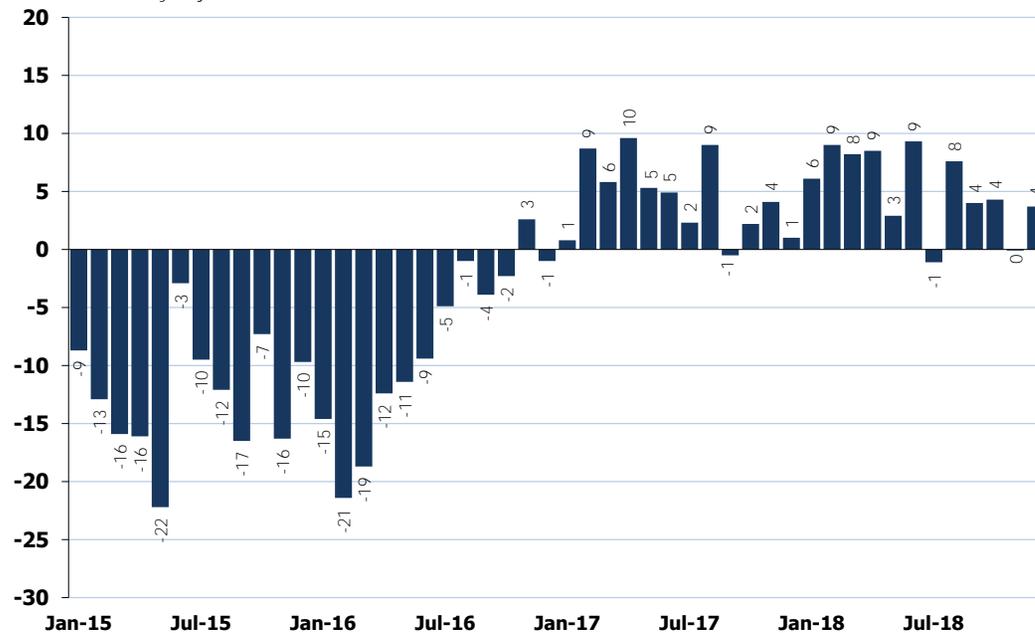
Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics survey, January 04, 2019.  
Data are preliminary.  
\* denotes significance

## Mining and Logging

### Employment in mining

Over-the-month change, January 2015–December 2018

Seasonally adjusted, in thousands

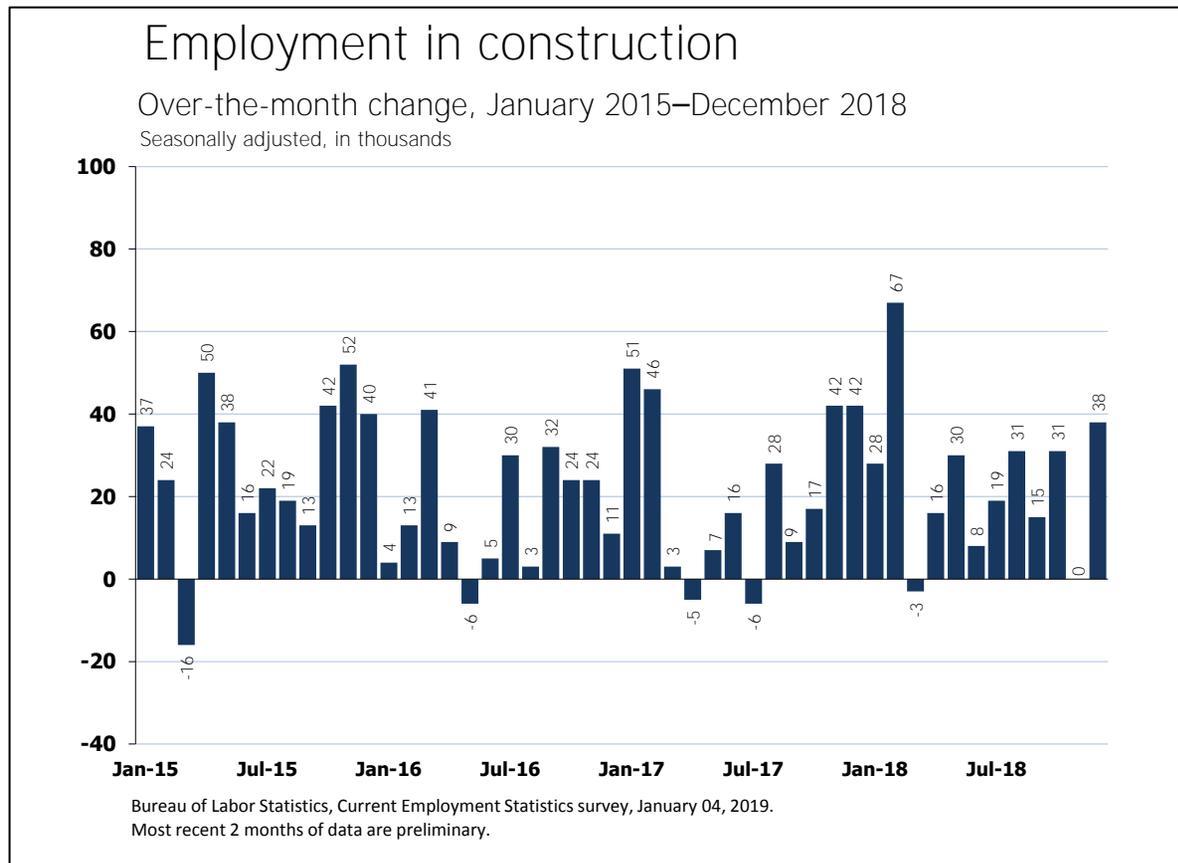


Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics survey, January 04, 2019.  
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Employment in mining edged up by 4,000 in December. Coal mining gained 1,000 jobs. Over the year, mining added 62,000 jobs. However, job growth slowed from 7,000 per month during the first half of the year to 3,000 per month in the last half.

Recent weakness in mining employment is consistent with a 15-percent decline in [oil prices](#) from November to December.

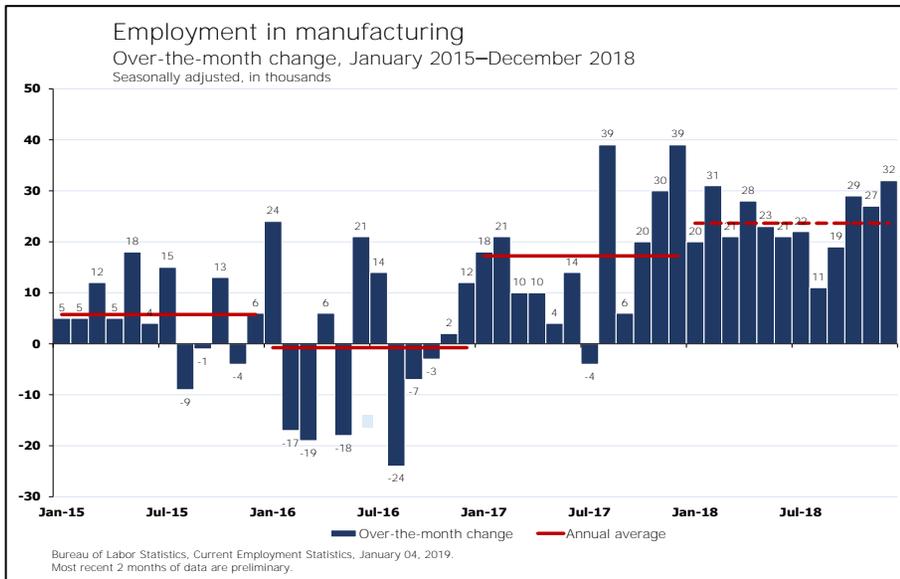
## Construction



Construction employment rose by 38,000 in December. Heavy and civil engineering construction and non-residential specialty trade contractors both led with gains of 16,000 jobs each. Employment in construction of buildings (+8,000) continued to trend up.

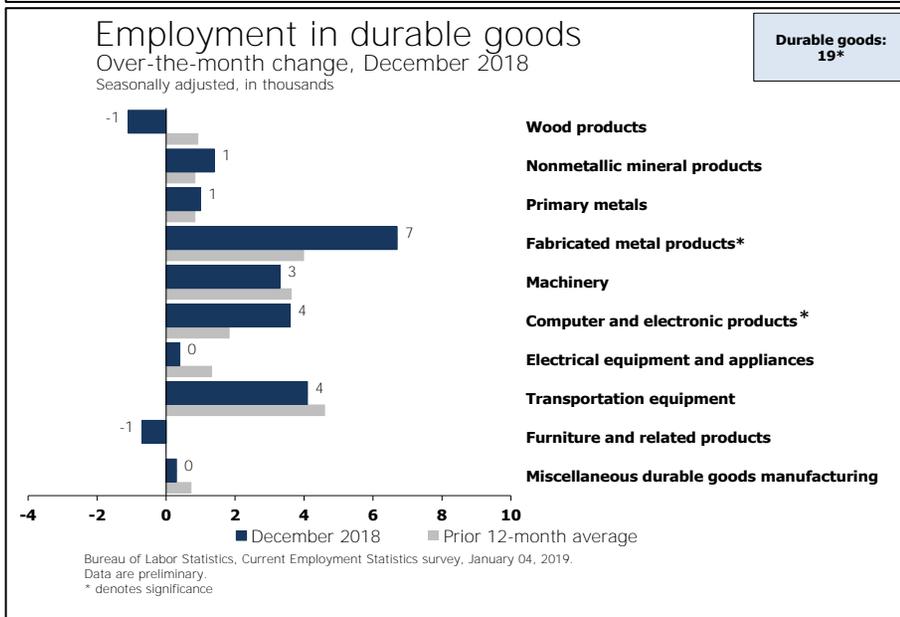
Construction added 280,000 jobs in 2018, yet employment in the industry was still 374,000 below its last peak in April 2006.

## Manufacturing



In December, employment in manufacturing continued to rise (+32,000). Over the year, manufacturing added 284,000 jobs, compared to 207,000 in 2017. Durable goods accounted for 76 percent of the 2018 job gains, adding 216,000.

The 1-month diffusion index for manufacturing increased by 4.6 points to 67.1. A value over 50 indicates that more industries are adding jobs than losing them.



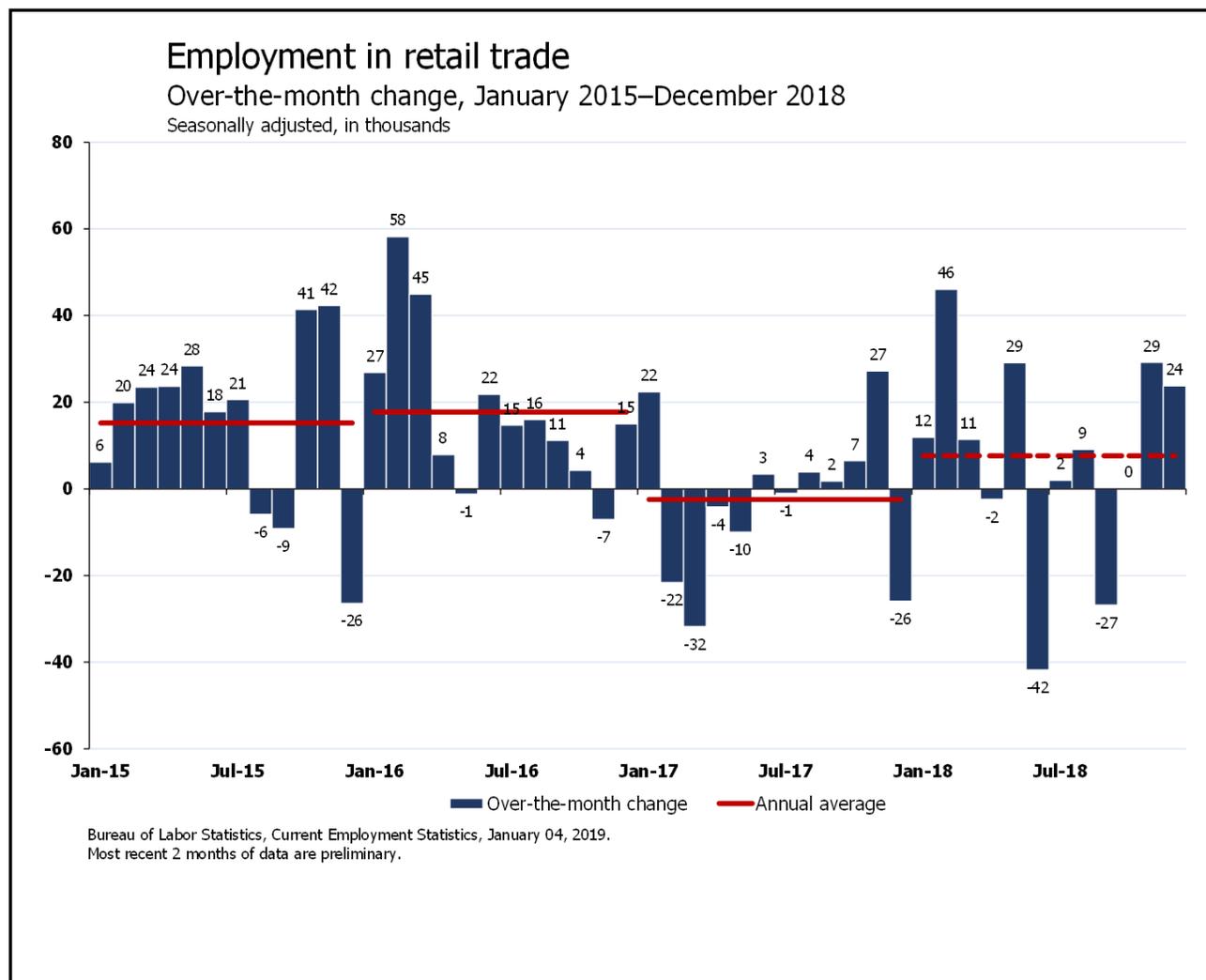
Within durable goods, fabricated metal products (+7,000) and computer and electronic products (+4,000) continued to add jobs in December, reflecting stronger annualized growth of [Industrial Production](#) in both industries, as of November. Over the year, fabricated metal products added 48,000 jobs, while computer and electronic products added 22,000.

## Wholesale Trade



Employment in wholesale trade continued to trend up in December (+8,000), bringing the industry’s employment gain for 2018 to 89,000 and representing an improvement over the 68,000 jobs added in 2017. Approximately two-thirds of the 2018 job growth occurred in durable goods (+59,000).

## Retail Trade

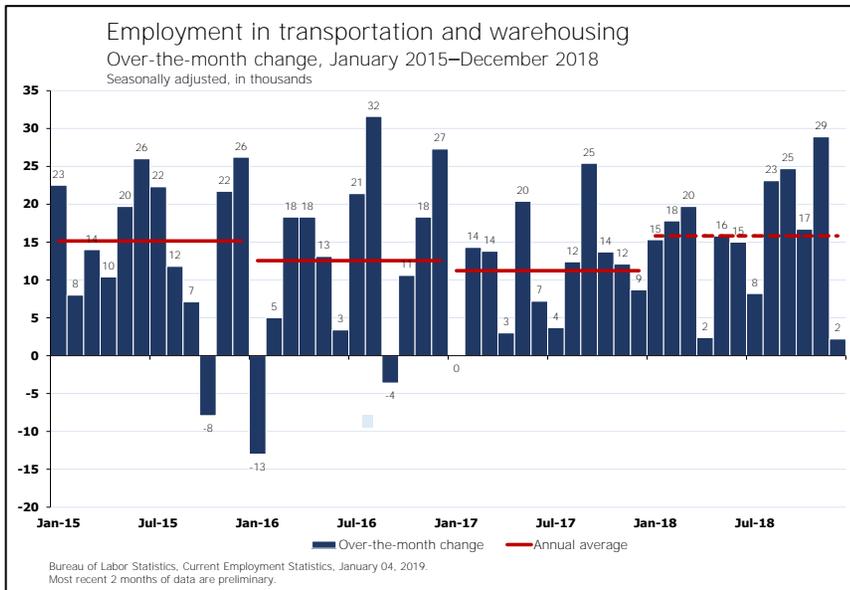


Retail trade employment increased by 24,000 in December. Over the year, employment in the industry grew by 92,000 after little net change in 2017 (-29,000).

In December, motor vehicle and parts dealers (7,000) and general merchandise stores (15,000) added jobs. These gains were partially offset by a decline in sporting goods, hobby, book, and music stores (-9,000).

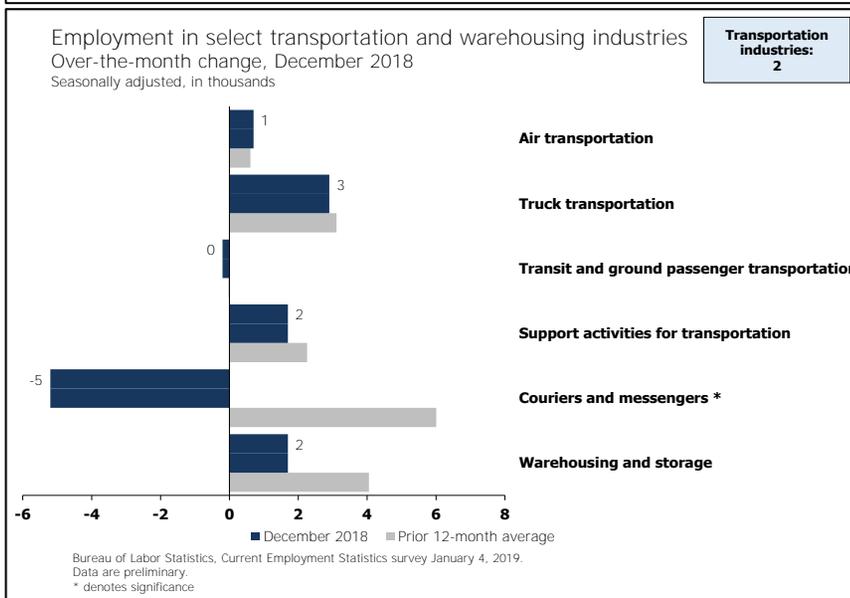
Recent retail-related economic indicators have been mixed. [Retail Sales](#) increased by 0.3 percent in November and were up by 4.0 percent year over year. [U.S. Light Weight Vehicle Sales](#) edged down by 0.6 percent in November. [The Consumer Confidence Index](#) decreased by 6.1 percent in December.

## Transportation and Warehousing



Employment in transportation and warehousing was flat in December (+2,000) after rising by 29,000 in November. Couriers and messenger services lost 5,000 jobs; however, the decline followed a particularly large gain in November (+13,000).

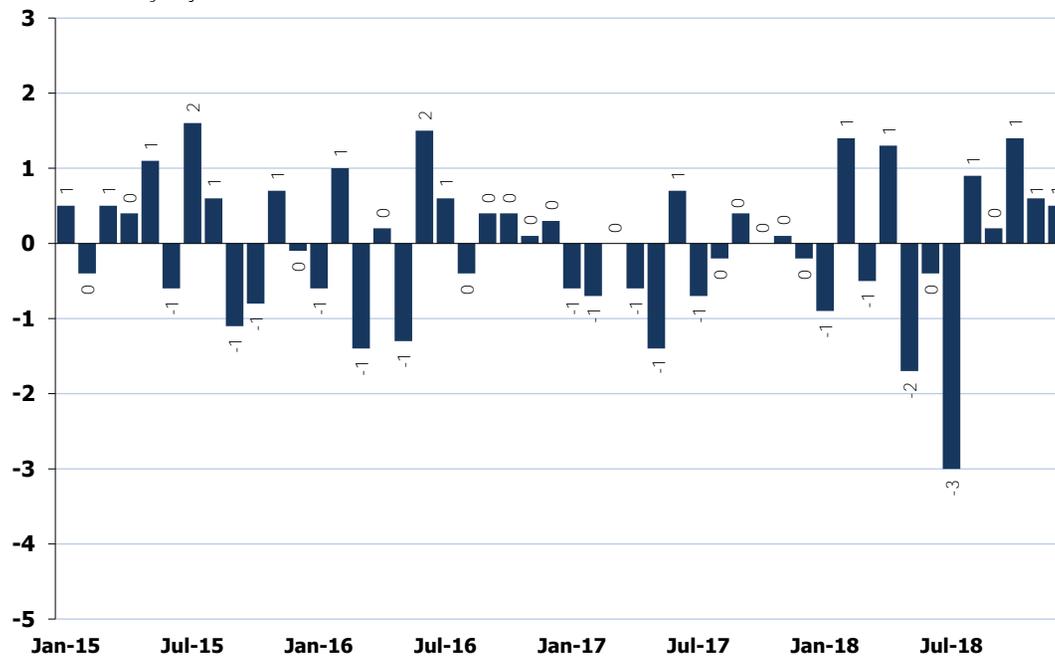
In 2018, transportation and warehousing added 190,000 jobs. This is more jobs than the industry had added in a calendar year since 2014 (+220,000). Over the past year, job gains were driven by expansion in couriers and messengers (+65,000), warehousing and storage (+53,000), and truck transportation (+37,000).



## Utilities

### Employment in utilities

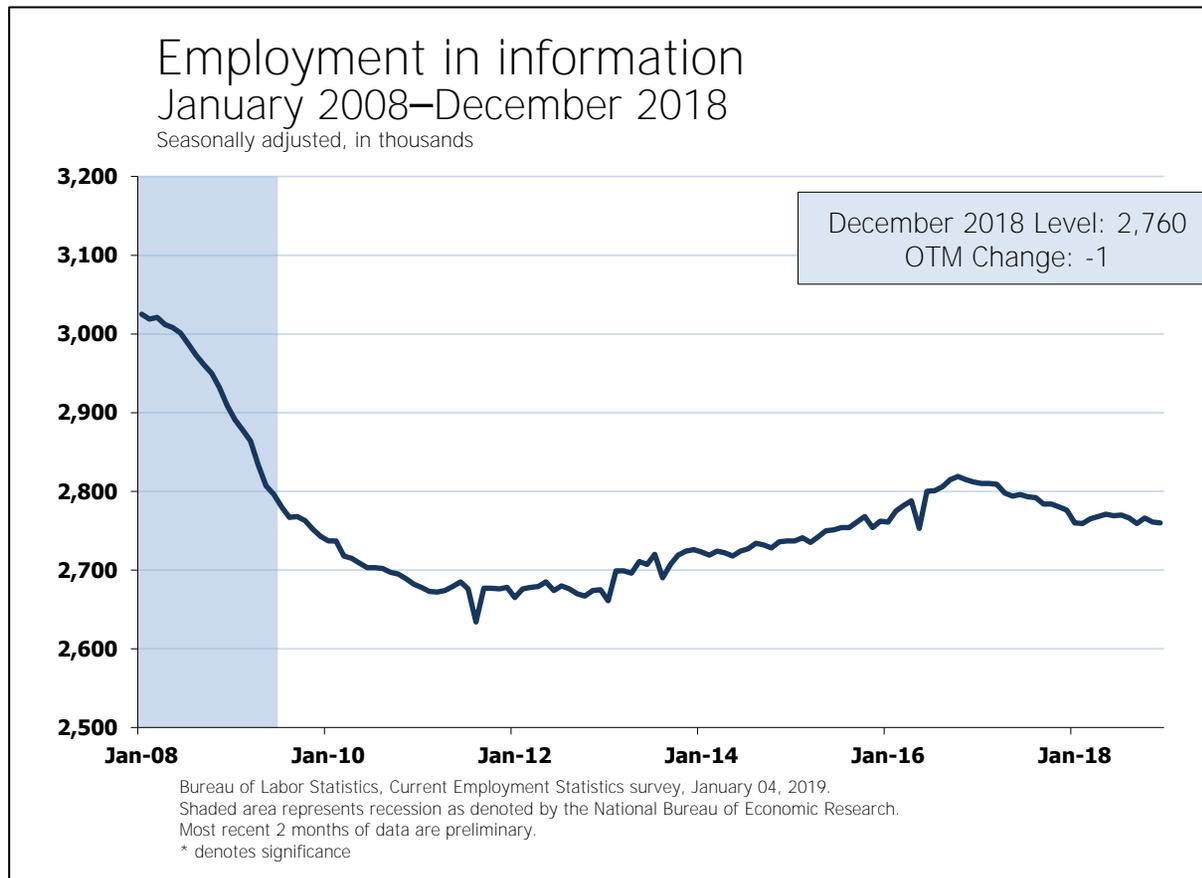
Over-the-month change, January 2015–December 2018  
Seasonally adjusted, in thousands



Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics survey, January 04, 2019.  
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Employment in utilities was essentially unchanged in December and has shown little net change over the year.

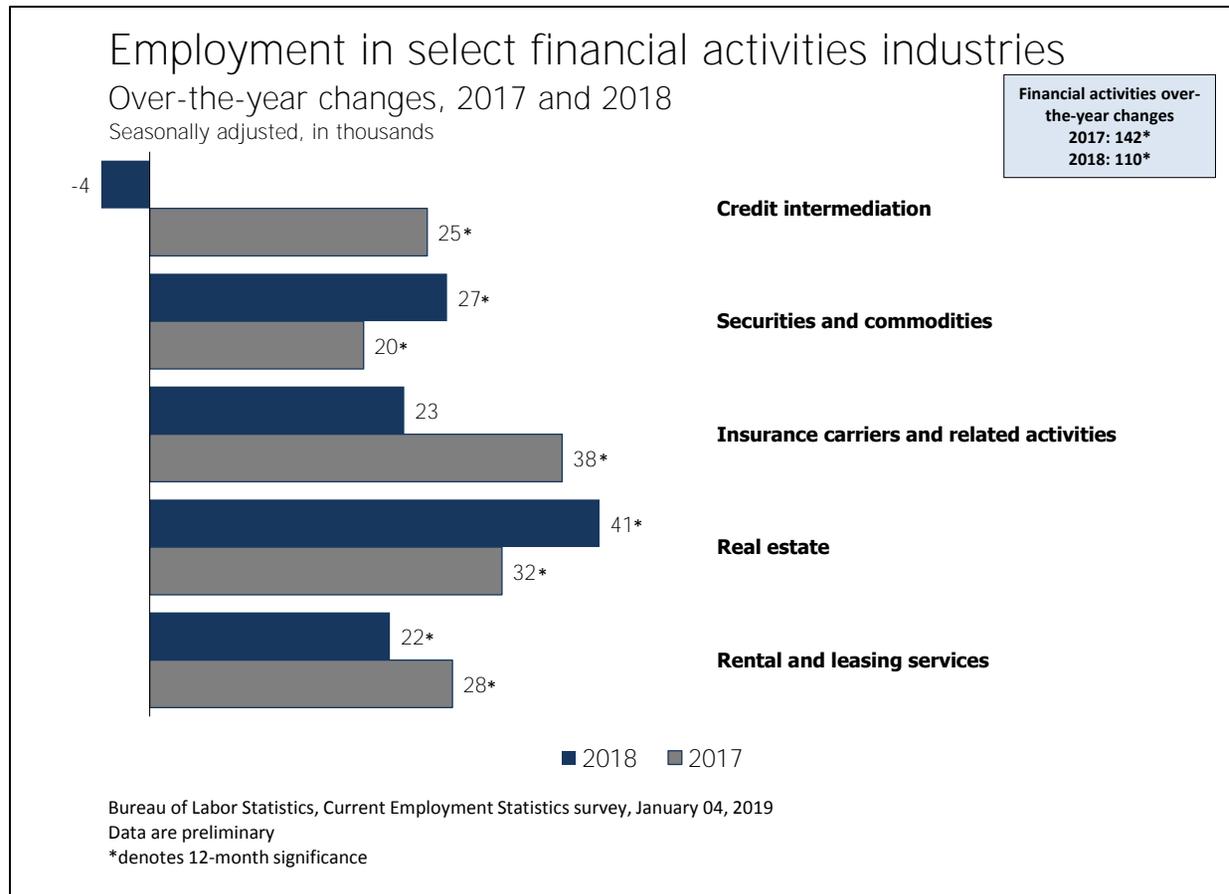
### Information



Information employment changed little in December (-1,000) and over the year (-16,000).

Within the sector, telecommunications lost 26,000 jobs in 2018, while other information services added 17,000.

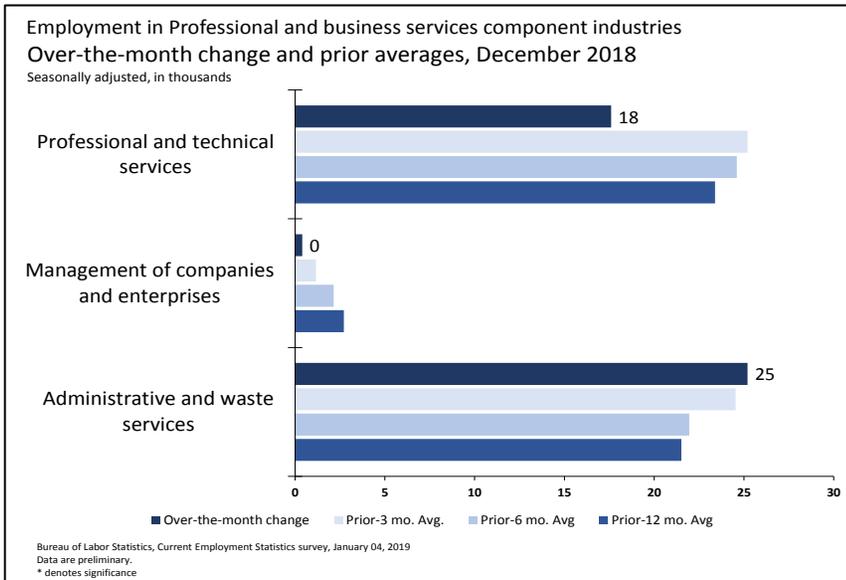
## Financial Activities



Employment in financial activities changed little in December (+6,000). Within the sector, nondepository credit intermediation lost 5,000 jobs.

Over the year, financial activities employment grew by 110,000, a gain of 1.3 percent—below the 2017 growth rate of 1.7 percent. A notable change in trend occurred in credit intermediation, which lost 17,000 jobs since June, leaving employment flat over the year (-0.2 percent) and following a gain of 1.0 percent in 2017. Insurance carriers and related activities also saw weaker growth in 2018.

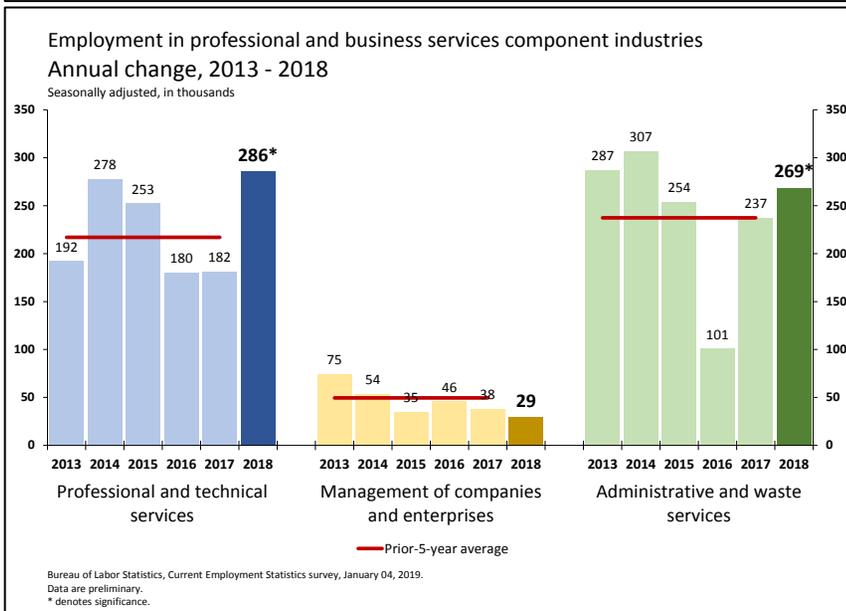
## Professional and Business Services



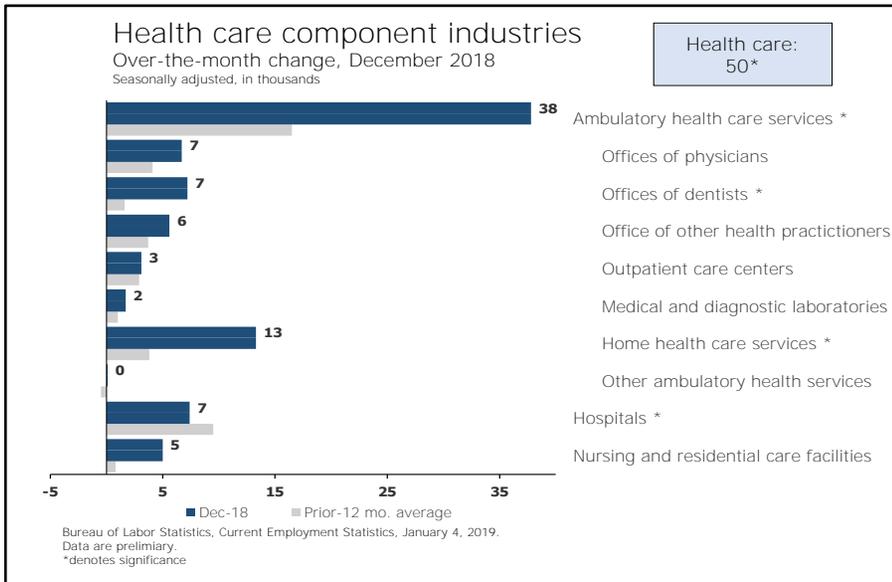
Employment in professional and business services continued to trend up in December (+43,000). In 2018, the industry added 583,000 jobs, 125,000 more than in 2017. Industry employment has been trending up since the most recent employment trough in August 2009.

In December, employment in most professional and technical services industries continued to trend up. In 2018, professional and technical services added 286,000 jobs, compared to the 182,000 jobs gained in 2017. Year-to-year trends accelerated in accounting and bookkeeping services, computer systems design and related services, and scientific research and development services.

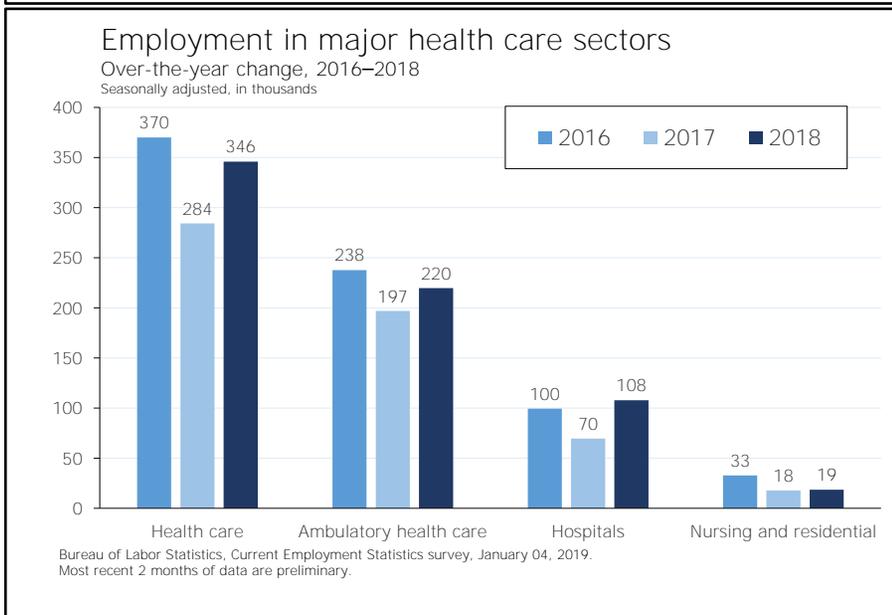
Employment in administrative and waste services also continued to trend up in December (+25,000). This industry added 269,000 jobs in 2018, slightly more than the 238,000 in 2017. Most of the component industries experienced very similar annual changes compared to the prior year. Job growth accelerated slightly in services to building and dwelling places and in waste management and remediation services. Temporary help services experienced an annual change in 2018 (+99,000) similar to 2017.



## Private Education and Health Services



Health care ended 2018 strongly as it added 50,000 jobs in December. Employment gains were concentrated in ambulatory health care services, which added 38,000 jobs. Home health care services added 13,000 jobs, while offices of dentists added 7,000. Other industries within ambulatory health care posted gains near their prior 12-month average change. Elsewhere in health care, hospital employment also expanded, adding 7,000 in December.

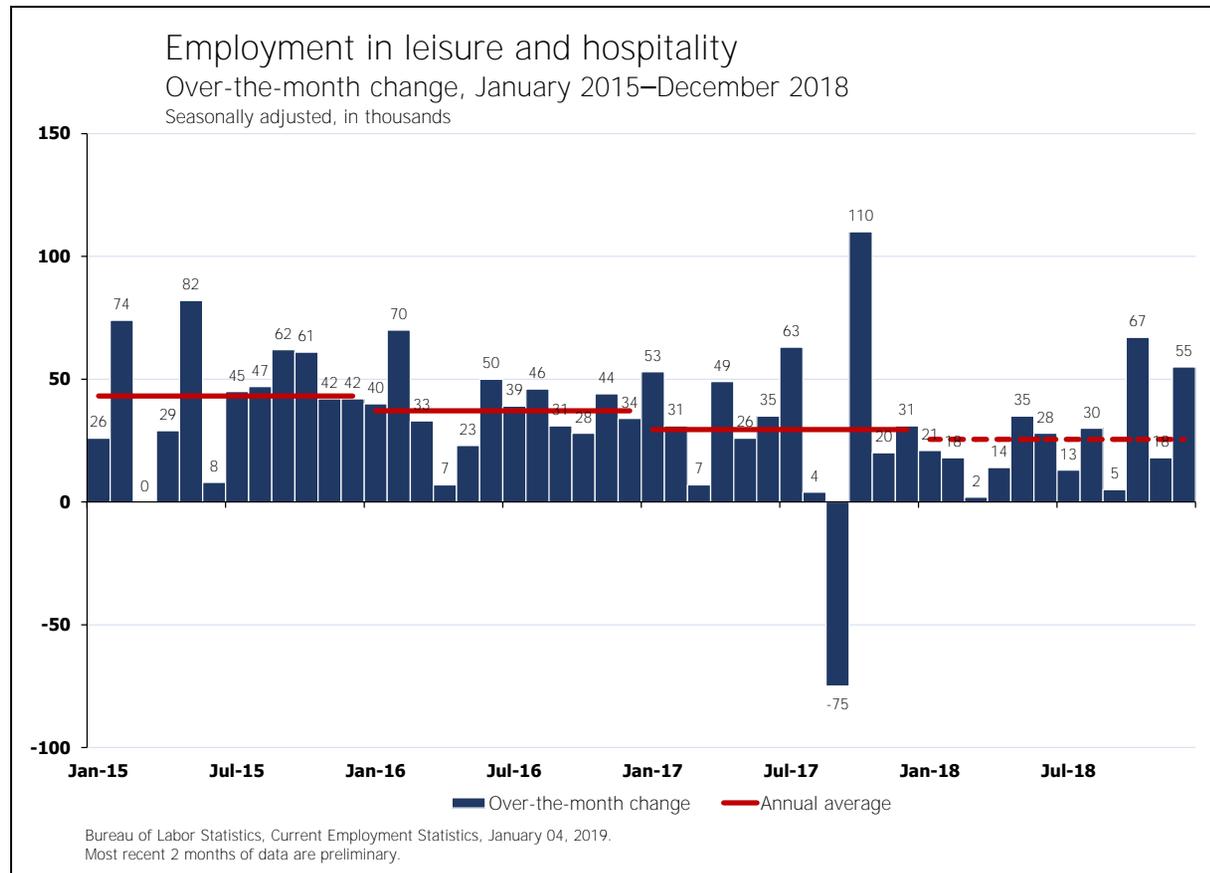


Health care added 346,000 jobs in 2018, more than the 284,000 added in 2017. Within ambulatory health care services, home health care services added 58,000 jobs in 2018, the most of any industry within health care. Hospitals also had a strong year, adding more jobs than in either of the previous 2 years.

## Leisure and Hospitality

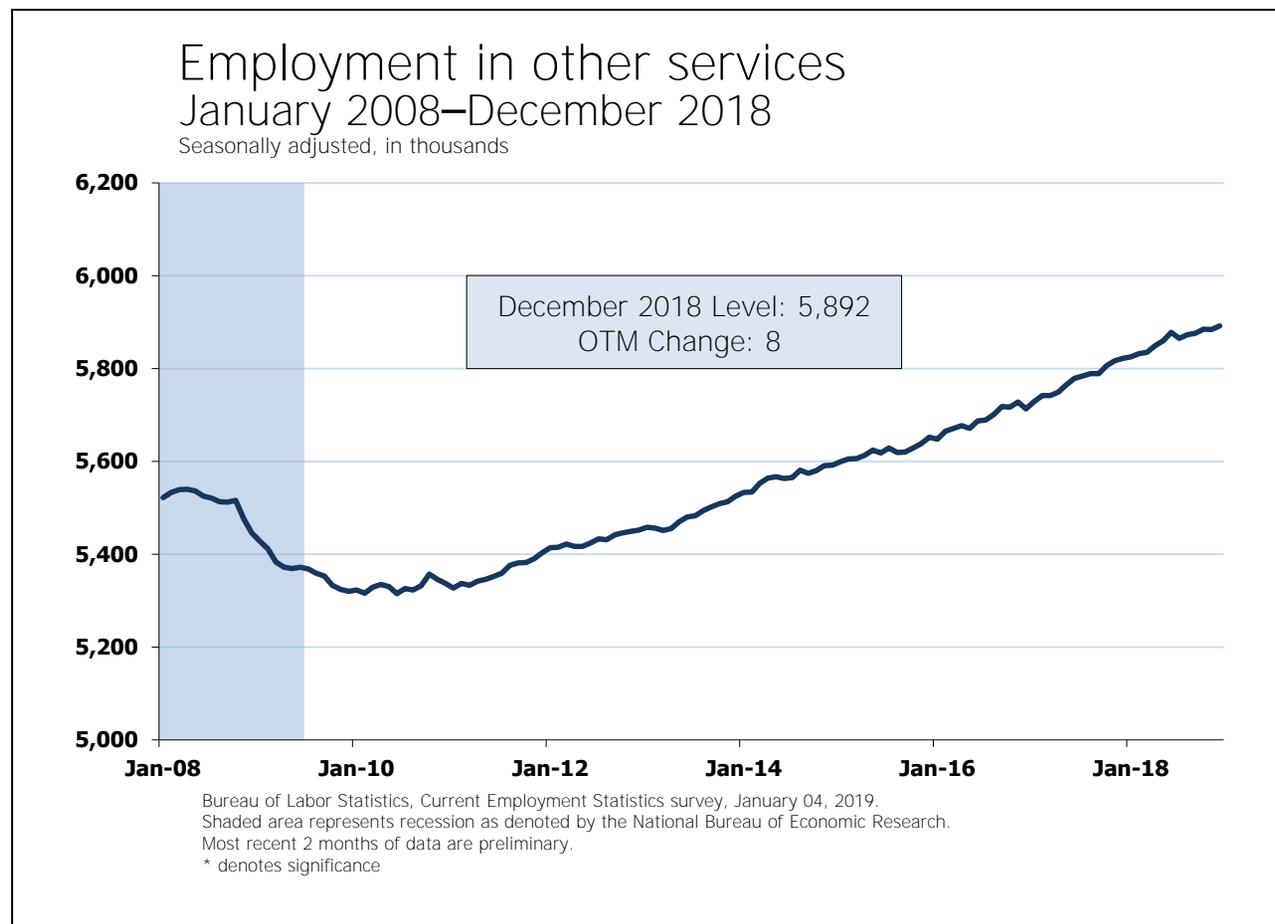
Employment in leisure and hospitality increased by 55,000 in December, which was concentrated in food services and drinking places.

Leisure and hospitality added 306,000 jobs over the year, after adding 354,000 in 2017. Food services and drinking places, [buoyed by strong sales](#), gained 235,000 jobs in 2018.

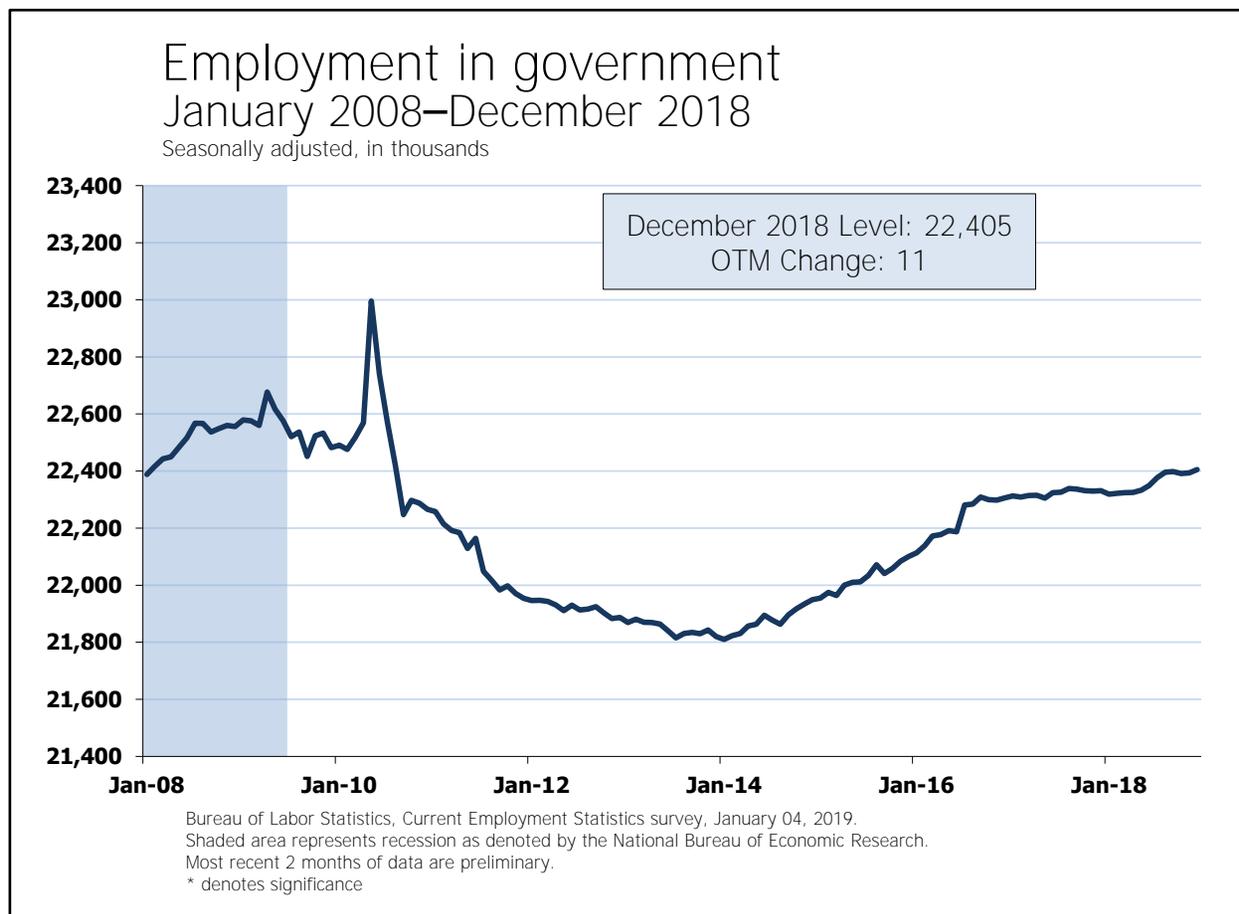


## Other Services

Employment in other services changed little in December (+8,000). The industry added 70,000 jobs in 2018, less than the 109,000 jobs added in 2017. Over the year, personal and laundry services added 34,000 jobs.



## Government



In December, employment in government changed little (+11,000). U.S. Postal Service lost 4,000 jobs after a gain of 6,000 in November. Employment in both state and local government was essentially unchanged.

Government employment changed little in 2018.



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