

IT'S YOUR BUSINESS

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Did you know?

A Message from the Director



The Rapides American Job Center has many moving and operational parts. My name is Sharon Neal, and I have recently been appointed as the new Executive Director for Workforce Operations Department to Area 61.

As the newly appointed Director of OEWD, (Office of Economic Workforce Development) and WDB, (Workforce Development Board), it is my job to ensure that all parts are moving fluidly and efficiently.

We are committed to addressing the challenges within our local area. We are partnering with agencies to collaborate on how to better deliver services effectively. We have been busy helping those in need to find services and employment. In January, we hosted a DCFS (Department of Children & Family Services) job fair. Two-hundred fifty people plus walked through the door of our center. At the end of the day, the agency had 88 jobs to offer applicants. The media was there to showcase the success of the day.

In addition, in January, we submitted a grant proposal centered on helping disconnected youth in our community. Our hope is to use these funds to expand our youth program. We are truly excited about what the future holds here at the Rapides American Job Center.

If we can be of any assistance at all, please contact us at 318-767-6030 or come by between the hours of 8:00 am - 4:30 pm, Monday - Friday. Come join us in keeping our community connected and thriving!

Sharon Neal
Executive Director
Rapides American Job Center

Rapides Workforce Development Board

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Louisiana's Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Remains Lowest in Series History

Preliminary data for January 2023 released today by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) shows that Louisiana's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate is 3.5 percentage points, tied for the lowest in series history. The rate, while unchanged from December 2022, dropped 0.5 percentage points from the January 2022 rate of 4.0 percentage points. The rate has declined over the year for 23 consecutive months.

The figures in today's release reflect data revisions made in the annual benchmark process. Benchmarking is the BLS's adjustment procedure to prior years' data which impacts every state with the publication of January data. During this procedure, survey data used to prepare monthly reports on nonfarm employment, the labor force, and unemployment rates are replaced by the actual employment data in the quarterly wage and tax reports filed by Louisiana employers.

[full story here](#)

Initial Unemployment Insurance Claims Rise for Week Ending March 11

The initial unemployment insurance claims for the week ending March 11, 2023, rose to 1,715 from the week ending March 4, 2023, a total of 1,631. For a comparison, during the week ending March 12, 2022, 1,573 initial claims were filed.

The four-week moving average of initial claims decreased to 1,574 from the previous week's average of 1,587.

The unemployment insurance continued claims for the week ending March 11, 2023, decreased to 11,294 from the week ending March 4, 2023, a total of 11,426. The continued claims were below the comparable figure of 11,818 for the week ending March 12, 2022.

The four-week moving average of continued claims decreased to 11,633 from the previous week's average of 11,883.

[full story here](#)



What is OJT?

On-the-Job-Training (OJT) is a federal program that provides reimbursement to an employer for training a new employee. The goal of OJT is to put qualified unemployed individuals back to work earning a paycheck while receiving job-specific training. Training takes place in a real work environment, using the tools, equipment, and materials employees use when fully trained.



How does OJT benefit me?

OJT is an incentive for employers to hire job seekers lacking some of the skills required to fill an open job vacancy and therefore unlikely to obtain the position. Job seekers bring cash assistance to an employer who is willing to train them in new skills.

Do I qualify for the OJT program?

The OJT program serves job seekers most in need of assistance. Job seekers have to possess barriers to employment in addition to lacking the skills able to obtain the position without training.

Benefits to Employers

- Receive 50% wage reimbursement as applicable.
- Receive pre-screened applicants from a large pool of job seekers or refer ideal candidates to LWC to determine program eligibility.
- Reduce training costs.
- Save on recruiting and screening costs.
- Employer makes all the hiring and training decisions.
- Employer will gain an effective, proficient, and productive employee.
- Increase positive public image of the employer's company by providing jobs in the community.

OJT Job Requirements

- Must be posted in HiRE at www.laWorks.net
- Must be in demand.
- Must be full-time and pay at least \$10.00 an hour.
- OJT contract must be written and approved prior to trainee start date.

For more information, contact Brittany Barkdull at (318) 767-6035 or bbarkdull@cenlaworks.org.

WIOA Youth Employment Program

Now recruiting High School Seniors
WIOA YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

APPLY NOW!!

LOUISIANA WORKFORCE COMMISSION
The Department of Labor

Rapides American Job Center
5610-B Coliseum Boulevard Alexandria, LA 71303

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The banner features a blue background with white and red text. It includes logos for the Louisiana Workforce Commission and Rapides Parish Police Jury, along with a row of four small photos showing young people in various work settings.

The WIOA Youth Program provides work readiness training through a paid work experience and other services for young adults who meet eligibility requirements.

We are looking for eligible applicants who are:

- Available for a paid work experience up to 29 hours per week starting now or this summer
- Living within Rapides Parish
- Showing commitment and determination
- Interested in working at a job with your career goal

WIOA Program provides connection to training and supportive services to strengthen the workforce. Program benefits may include:

- Completed application must include the following items (if applicable):
- Copy of birth certificate
- Copy of driver's license, school ID, or state ID
- Copy of Social Security Card
- Students; Copy of most recent report card and Work Keys scores

For more information, contact Donna Smith at (318) 767-6019 or dsmith@cenlaworks.org, and Ginny Juneau at (318) 767-6021 or gjuneau@cenlaworks.org.

Coughlin Saunders Foundation Invests \$150,000 for CLTCC's Practical Nursing Students

One of the clear lessons learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic is the critical demand for more Practical Nurses in Central Louisiana. Central Louisiana Technical Community College (CLTCC) is working diligently to meet the demand for this high-wage, high-skill profession, and those efforts have been enhanced by a generous \$150,000 investment from the Coughlin Saunders Foundation as well as additional funding from the Louisiana Community & Technical College System's Workforce Ready Rapid Response Grant program.



Photo credit: CLTCC

“The Coughlin Saunders Foundation has a long history of supporting nursing education in Central Louisiana,” said Anna Saunders Maynard Coughlin Saunders Foundation Secretary. “Both Hugh Coughlin and my father, Rife Saunders, always recognized the importance of having enough nurses here. They would both be very proud of this grant.”

The Coughlin Saunders Foundation investment will be used to fund scholarships of up to \$500 per semester for Practical Nursing students who have successfully completed their second semester of work. The Practical Nursing program is five semesters long, with an optional sixth semester to earn an Associate of Applied Science degree in Practical Nursing. Officials estimate this initiative will provide up to 300 awards to current Practical Nursing students, with students eligible to receive additional awards for their fourth to sixth semester.

In addition, a \$25,000 LCTCS Workforce Ready Rapid Response grant will be used to create a leading-edge multimedia training center at the Downtown Alexandria Campus.

“The generosity of the Coughlin Saunders Foundation funds for Practical Nursing student scholarships will significantly lighten the financial burdens of students allowing them to focus on their program of study and successful completion of the nursing program.

For information about enrolling in the Allied Health Programs at CLTCC visit www.CLTCC.edu/apply. For more information, contact the school via email at info@cltcc.edu or call 800-278-9855.

Source: Dr. Jimmy Sawtelle, CLTCC Chancellor

Community Partners



**Rapides Parish
Police Jury**
(318) 473-6660



**Louisiana Workforce
Commission**
(318) 487-5532



**Louisiana Technical
& Community
College System**
(318) 487-5443



**Louisiana
Rehabilitation
Services (on site)**
(318) 487-5335



**National
Association for
Hispanic Elderly**
(318) 221-7611



**Alexandria
Housing Authority**
(318) 442-8843

Helpful Organizations for Employers



**US Department
of Labor**



**Louisiana Workforce
Commission**



**Cenla Regional
Chamber of
Commerce**



**Louisiana
Small Business
Development Center**



Secretary of State



**Rapides Sales & Use
Tax Department**



Employer.gov

Click the logos to access
the organization's website.

Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC)

WOTC is one tool in a diverse toolbox of flexible strategies designed to help move people into gainful employment and obtain on-the-job experience. It joins other tax credits, education, and workforce training and development programs that help American workers with barriers to employment prepare for good jobs; ease their transition from job to job; benefit from the creation of effective regional economic development strategies; and create high performance workplaces.

For more information, [click here](#).

Fidelity Bonding

The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) offers bonding services for hard-to-place job seekers under the Fidelity Bonding Program. The federal bonding program provides insurance to employers that protects against employee dishonesty and acts as an incentive to hire at-risk applicants, including Returning Citizens (ex-offenders). Fidelity Bonding covers theft, forgery, larceny and embezzlement. Bond insurance issued ranges from \$5,000 - \$25,000 for a 6-month period with **no deductible**. The bond can be issued to employers once the applicant has received a job offer with a scheduled start date.

For more information, [click here](#).

2023 Elevate Your Future Job Fair

This year's event is Thursday, March 30, 2023, 8:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. at the Alexandria Mega Shelter, located at 8125 US-71, Alexandria, LA 71302.

Elevate your future job fair is the Rapides Parish school district's third job fair for high school seniors. "We greatly appreciate your continued support of this event. We also appreciate the feedback you shared last year. So this year, we will also have our high school juniors in attendance. once again. We anticipate great interest and readiness from this group of students as they seek to learn more about the workforce options in Central Louisiana, and how this workforce can benefit them now and in the future," LaRunda Pierce said, Supervisor of Career and Technical Education, Rapides Parish School District.

Superintendent Jeff Powell's vision for this event continues to focus on guaranteeing that graduating seniors, and now rising seniors, recognize the employment opportunities that are available to them here in Central Louisiana - opportunities that will engage, empower and elevate their futures. "With this in mind, we are asking that our graduating seniors and rising seniors have a chance to learn as much as possible about your company and its current and upcoming openings. Companies are welcome to have marketing and informational materials available to share with the students," Pierce added.

There is no registration fee required for this event. Each company will have a table and two chairs available for set-up. Additional tables and chairs will be available if needed. The opportunity to set-up will be Thursday, March 30, 6:45 a.m. – 7:45 a.m. Each company registered for the event will receive two lunches, with two drinks. Coffee and water will also be available.

You may call 318-308-1680 if you have any questions.



ELEVATE
YOUR FUTURE
JOB FAIR

March 30, 2023
8:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Alexandria Mega Shelter
8125 US-71
Alexandria, La. 71302

For more information or to inquire about sponsorships, please contact LaRunda Pierce at larunda.pierce@rpsb.us



LSUA Provides Crucial Economic Impact in Central Louisiana

According to a new impact report, LSUA contributes \$109.1 million in annual economic impact to Central Louisiana.

LSUA, an integral part of the LSU System, makes a significant contribution to Louisiana's economy, directly contributing \$52.1 million in output, \$16.8 million in earnings, and employing 475 people. However, the indirect impact of LSUA is also significant, affecting the local economy with \$57.0 million in output, \$14.9 million in earnings, and creating 382 additional indirect jobs.

LSUA's contribution to the LSU System's economic impact on Louisiana should not be underestimated. Its impact on the local economy, both directly and indirectly, generates significant output, earnings, and jobs. LSUA's commitment to providing a qualified and educated future workforce further emphasizes its importance in the LSU System's wider economic impact on Louisiana.



Photo credit: LSU Office of Communications and University Relations

[full story here](#)

WIOA Mandated Partners (on-site)

Cenla Community Action Committee, Inc.
318-314-3480

CLTCC
318-487-5443

Job Corps Center Alexandria
318-487-6773 x102

Louisiana Workforce Commission-Employment Services
318-487-5532

National Farm Worker Program
318-435-8885

Native American Programs
985-851-5408

Trade Adjustment Assistance
318-487-5539

Unemployment Insurance
1-866-783-5567

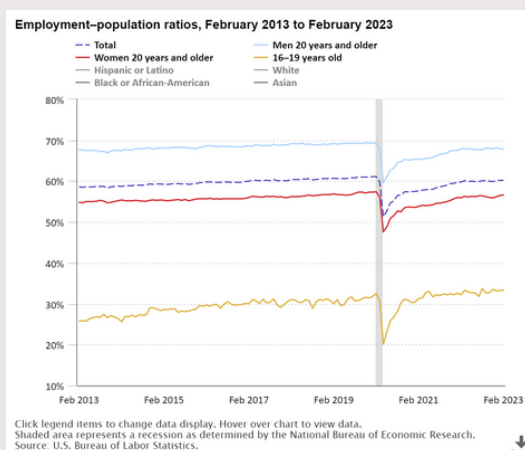
Wagner-Peyser
318-487-5532

WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker & Youth
318-767-6030

Employment-Population Ratio at 60.2 percent in February 2023

The employment–population ratio—the proportion of the population that is employed—was 60.2 percent in February 2023 for people age 16 and older. The ratio was about unchanged over the month and has shown little net change since early last year.

The February ratio was 0.4 percentage point higher than in February 2022 (59.8 percent) and is 0.9 percentage point below its February 2020 value, before the COVID-19 pandemic.



[full report here](#)

WIOA Mandated Partners (off-site)

AYUDA & Institute for Indian Development
318-767-6040

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services
318-487-5335

Louisiana State University Alexandria
318-427-4441

National Association for Hispanic Elderly
318-221-7611

Labor Market Information

Unemployment Data By Parish

Allen Parish - 4.3%
Avoyelles Parish - 4.2%
Catahoula Parish - 4.9%
Concordia Parish - 4.9%
Grant Parish - 3.7%
La Salle Parish - 2.8%
Natchitoches Parish - 4.2%
Rapides Parish - 3.3%
Vernon Parish - 5.2%
Winn Parish - 3.2%

Unemployment Data by Parishes for January 2023 - Preliminary (not seasonally adjusted) Source: LWC - Labor Force Employment and Unemployment (LAUS)

Latest Unemployment Rates			
	January 2023	December 2022	November 2022
Rapides Parish (not seasonally adjusted)	3.3%	2.9%	2.4%
Louisiana (seasonally adjusted)	3.5%	3.5%	3.3%
United States (seasonally adjusted)	3.4%	3.5%	3.7%

Source: BLS & LWC Louisiana Occupational Information System

Occupations with the Highest Number of Job Openings Advertised in Alexandria, MSA

Registered Nurses - 328
Physicians, All Other - 123
LPN & LVN - 100
Critical Care Nurses - 73
Respiratory Therapists - 56
Retail Salespersons - 44
First Line Spv. of Food Prep. & Serving Workers - 40
Farmworkers & Laborers, Crop, Nursery & Greenhouse - 33
Fast-food & Counter Workers - 32
Nursing Assistants - 29

Source: LWC Online advertised jobs data: March 19, 2023

Job Openings Advertised online in Cenla by Parishes

Allen Parish - 143
Avoyelles Parish - 330
Catahoula Parish - 28
Concordia - 140
Grant Parish - 46
La Salle Parish - 120
Natchitoches Parish - 325
Rapides Parish - 2,939
Vernon Parish - 526
Winn Parish - 67

This data above shows the distribution number of job openings advertised online in Central Louisiana by parishes on Mar. 19, 2023

Source: LWC- Online advertised jobs data

Industries with Highest Job Openings Advertised Online in Alexandria, LA MSA		
Rank	Industry	Job Openings
1	Health Care and Social Assistance	753
2	Retail Trade	226
3	Public Administration	177
4	Accommodation and Food Services	160
5	Mngt. of Companies & Enterprises	112
6	Educational Services	105
7	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Svcs	104
8	Admin. & Support & Waste Mgmt. & Remediation Services	97
9	Manufacturing	72
10	Unclassified	906

The table above shows the top ten job openings advertised online for the industries selected in Alexandria, LA Metropolitan Statistical Area on March 19, 2023. Source: LWC Online advertised jobs data.

Top 15 Largest Employers in Alexandria LA, MSA

Pinecrest Developmental Ctr
Rapides Women's-Children's Hsp
Rapides Regional Medical Ctr
Christus St Frances Cabrini Chief of Staff
Crest Operations LLC
Alexandria VA Hospital Med Ctr
Sheriff's Department
Walmart Suprcntr - Monroe Hwy
Walmart Supcntr - N Mall Dr
Sheriff's Department - Jail
Crest Industries
Cleco Corporate Holdings, LLC
Boise Cascade
Walmart Supcntr - Coliseum Blvd

Source: Louisiana Workforce Commission March 20, 2023



DID YOU know?



The longest career in the same company is 84 years and 9 days.

Source: Guinness World Records

About the Rapides American Job Center

The Rapides American Job Center (RAJC) brings "those who need jobs" and "those who need employees" together.

The Rapides Parish American Job Center is a comprehensive AJC that includes the mandatory WIOA partners on-site offering an integrated array of quality services so that job seekers and businesses can conveniently find the help they need under one roof such as scholarship training, training referrals, career counseling, job listings, and other employment-related services for both jobseekers and employers.

Established under the Workforce Investment Act and reauthorized in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act of 2014 (WIOA), American Job Centers (AJCs) are at the heart of the workforce investment system.

The Rapides Workforce Development Board 61 is charged by the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to certify the Rapides American Job Center, as a comprehensive One-Stop Center.

We thank and acknowledge our Contributors!

Rapides AJC - Sharon Neal
LWC - Regine Williams
CLTCC Jimmy Sawtelle
LSUA - Adam Lord
Guinness World Records
Rapides AJC - Desiree Tobin
Louisiana Workforce Commission
Rapides Parish Schools - LaRunda Pierce
Bureau of Labor Statistics,
U.S. Department of Labor, *The Economics Daily*


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Ava Cates, Secretary

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