



# Snapshot

April 6 Update

The Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana

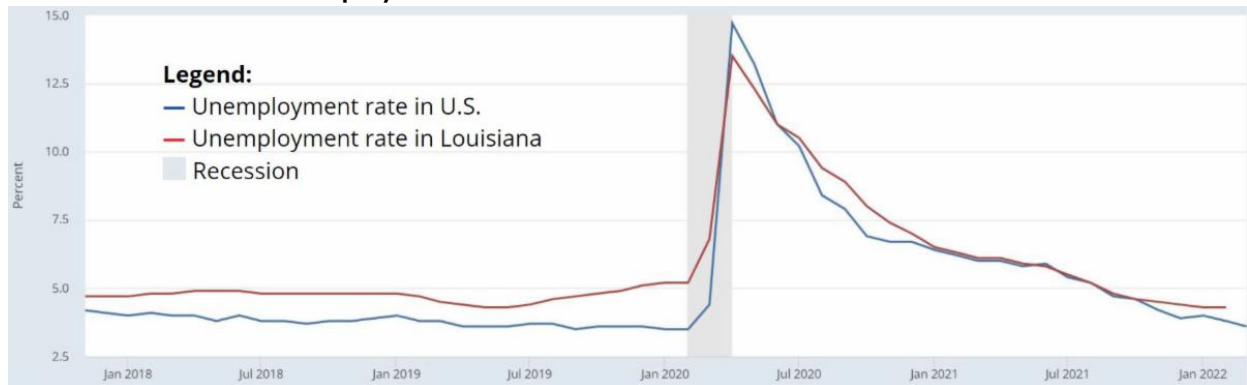
## Unemployment and the Unemployment Trust Fund COVID 3-Day Positivity Rate 0.5% Since March 18

### Louisiana's Unemployment Rate Lowest Since June 2019

Louisiana's unemployment rate was 4.3% in February 2022, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data. That is the lowest reported figure since June 2019.

The national and state unemployment rates have largely been similar. Prior to the pandemic, the gap between the national and state rates was about 2%. The distance closed during the recession. Since then, the rates have followed a similar falling trend.

Unemployment Rate in the U.S. and Louisiana Since 2018

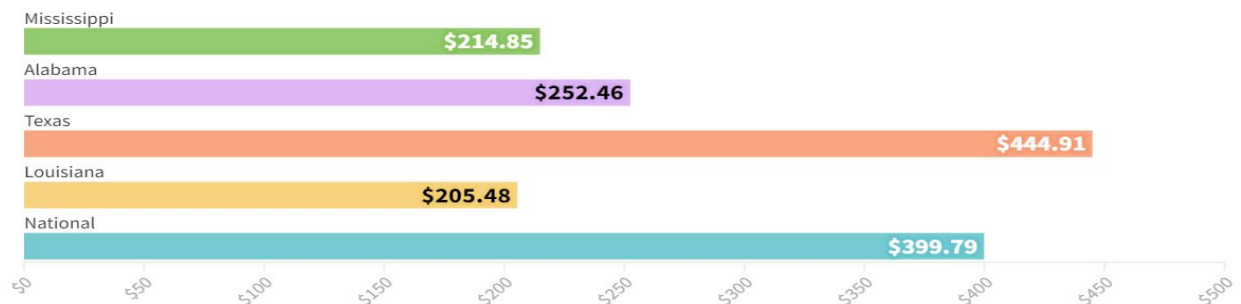


Source: Federal Reserve Economic Data

The state provides weekly jobless benefits to eligible unemployed workers through a trust fund replenished with taxes charged on businesses. The national average weekly payment is twice that of Louisiana's average benefit.

Louisiana's maximum payment is \$275. The neighboring states' maximum payments are Texas \$549, Alabama \$275 and Mississippi \$235 by comparison.

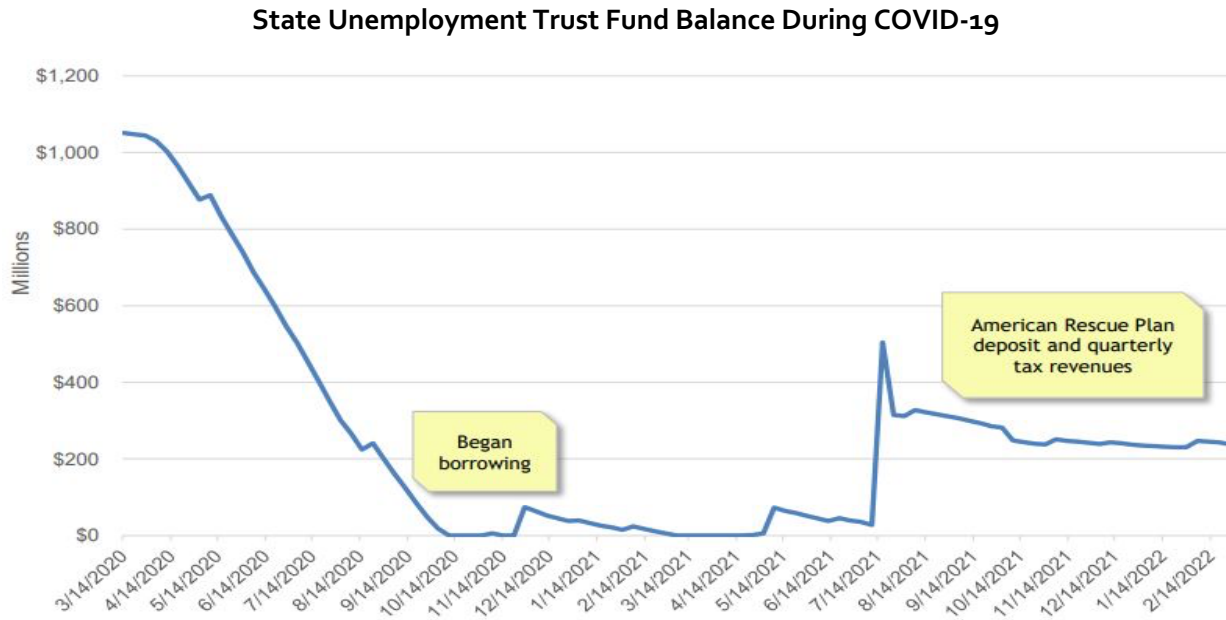
Average Weekly Unemployment Benefits in February 2022



Source: U.S. Department of Labor

Louisiana's unemployment trust fund had a healthy \$1.1 billion balance before the COVID-19 outbreak, but it was nearly drained when hundreds of thousands of people lost their jobs during the pandemic and sought unemployment benefits.

The graph below shows changes in Louisiana's trust fund balance since March 2020, when the coronavirus pandemic began.



Source: Louisiana Workforce Commission / House Fiscal Division

While the federal government paid for the expanded jobless aid that Congress approved in the early days of COVID-19, states still had to pick up the tab for their own weekly unemployment benefits paid on top of the federal assistance.

The state borrowed money from the federal government to keep its jobless aid flowing, and lawmakers used federal pandemic relief money available through the American Rescue Plan to repay that debt and add more dollars into the trust fund.

Still, the fund's balance remains far below its pre-pandemic level, with \$238 million in the account at the end of February. The governor and legislative leaders want to steer more federal COVID-19 money to help rebuild the balance.

If the trust fund remains below \$750 million, that could trigger an increase in taxes on businesses and a decrease in payments to the unemployed, which already are among the lowest in the nation. Lawmakers have suspended those legal triggers since the early days of the coronavirus outbreak and are debating whether to do that for another year.

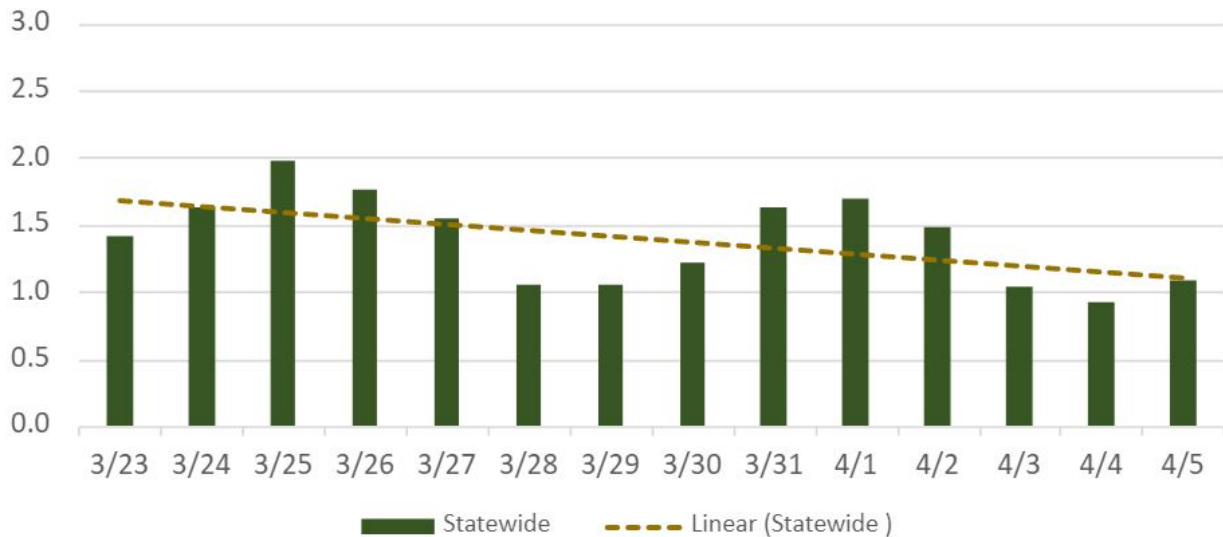


# COVID-19 Update

*3-Day Positivity Rate 0.5% since March 18  
Fewer Than 70 Patients with COVID in Hospitals  
64 New Confirmed Cases | 6 New Confirmed Deaths*

The Louisiana Department of Health reported 64 confirmed cases out of 11,358 tests on April 5. The three-day average of new cases was about 50. There were about 2 patients in hospitals with COVID-19 per 100,000 residents. The LDH reported 6 confirmed deaths.

Statewide COVID Trends- PLATEAU



Confirmed cases have reached a plateau statewide.

The graphs in this report show the number of new cases per 100,000 residents over a 14-day period, which is a method used by the state. By calculating the cases according to population in this way, the results from region to region are easier to compare to determine the severity of the outbreak.

Region	14 Day Look-Back (3 Day Average)		
	4/3/2022	4/4/2022	4/5/2022
Orleans	—	—	—
Capital	—	—	—
Bayou	—	—	—
Lafayette	—	▼	▼
Lake Charles	—	—	—
Central	—	—	—
Shreveport	—	—	—
Monroe	—	—	—
Northshore	—	—	—
Statewide	—	—	—

PAR uses an average of new cases over a three-day period to smooth out irregularities that could be related to reporting inconsistencies (LDH also uses multiple-day averaging). Then, a statistically derived trendline – in the form of a straight line – is fitted to the data to gauge whether cases are increasing, decreasing or have reached a plateau, according to the CDC definition for each.

These figures are based only on known cases. Some studies indicate that the number of people who have carried COVID-19 is far greater than the number who have taken the test and shown a positive result. An unknown but potentially large number of people have been infected but are asymptomatic and have not been tested. Others have taken at-home tests, and their positive results haven't necessarily been reported to the state.

*Special thanks to the Union Pacific Foundation for supporting PAR's Louisiana Recovery Project.*

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