

State: LI jobs growth continues, but slowly

August 16, 2012 by CARRIE MASON-DRAFFEN / carrie.mason-draffen@newsday.com



The pace of hiring on [Long Island](#) remained slow in July, the latest [State Labor Department](#) data show.

The Island had 7,500 more jobs last month than a year earlier, one of the smallest increases this year, according to data released Thursday. In the first three months of the year, the Island averaged 19,800

more jobs, compared with a year ago. The local economy now has 1.254 million jobs, up from 1.246 million the same time last year.

The construction sector was the biggest drag on the job market, down 5,100 jobs. The category continues to reflect the sluggish housing market.

"The only sector holding back the economy is construction right now," said Shital Patel, labor-market analyst in the department's [Hicksville](#) office.



By contrast, the professional and business-services sector showed the most growth, up 7,100. The category, one of the Island's highest paying, has now regained all the jobs it lost during the [recession](#) and has a record 170,400 jobs, the department said.

Pearl Kamer, chief economist of the [Long Island](#) Association, said of the sector's strong showing, "That alone would make me optimistic that we are on our way to a recovery, albeit a slow one."

The sector is keeping the staffing company [Adecco](#) in [Melville](#) busier. In the past several weeks companies have increased their requests for administrative assistants and customer-service reps and have taken on more of them as permanent hires, said Anthony Zarb, [Adecco](#) senior branch manager for [Garden City](#) and [Melville](#).

"A lot of these companies just stayed lean, but now that the economy is beginning to pick up steam, [they] have to backfill these . . . positions so that they can meet the growth and demand of the expanding economy," he said.

The private education and health services category, the only sector that gained jobs through

the [recession](#), had the second-highest employment -- 5,900 jobs.

For Elexius Robles, 30, of [East Islip](#), health care was her ticket to re-employment after she lost her job as a claims adjuster on Independence Day last year. With help from the [Suffolk County Department of Labor](#), she was able to enroll in a [Hunter Business School](#) medical assistant program. She finished on July 17 and now works at the Huntington Medical Group in [Huntington Station](#).

"Without the help of [Suffolk](#), I feel like I wouldn't know where to go," Robles said. "I am happy where I am."

The State [Labor Department](#) will release the July [unemployment](#) rate on Tuesday. The June jobless rate spiked to 7.7 percent, from 7 percent from a year earlier.

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