

U.S. Unemployment Claims Fall by 6,000

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The figure was far below analysts' forecasts of 265,000 new claims.

The rolling four-week average of claims, seen as a more reliable indicator of underlying trends in the labor market, dropped by 1,500 last week to 260,500, according to the report.

The average has remained below 300,000 for 59 consecutive weeks, the longest such streak since 1973.

The number of people receiving continuing jobless benefits declined by 39,000 in the week that ended April 9 to 2.14 million, the fewest since November 2000.

Unemployment edged up in March to 5 percent even though the economy added a higher-than-expected 215,000 new jobs.

The Labor Department's broader U6 measure of unemployment, which includes people working part-time who would prefer full-time and workers who have given up looking for a job, was 9.8 percent in March, while the labor-force participation rate came in at 63.0 percent, the highest since March 2014.

The participation rate has been rebounding since last September, when it reached a 40-year low of 62.4 percent.