

U.S. LABOR REPORT SHOWS THINGS LOOKING UP



In another sign the jobs market may be slowly returning to life, the [U.S. Labor Department](#) reported Tuesday that job openings increased in December and the number of unemployed workers fell. In its monthly Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, the Labor Department said the number of unemployed workers fell 73,000 to 15.3 million and the number of job openings moved from 2.4 million to 2.5 million. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics last week reported [the national unemployment rate had fallen to 9.7 percent](#) in January, the lowest level in five months. While things appear to be looking up, Larry Mishel, president of the Economic Policy Institute in Washington spoke to reality when he told Reuters that, prior to the recession, there was on average 4.6-million job openings in any given month as compared to the 2.5 million, a 54 percent increase. Also in the report, the Labor Department revealed hiring held steady at 4.1 million and total separations (layoffs, quits, firings) fell 36,000 to 4.2 million.

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