While the unemployment rate improved slightly in July, state government employment is still falling, continuing a three-year trend.

The Labor Department reports that there were 400,000 initial unemployment claims filed the week ending July 30, slightly less than many economists were forecasting. Total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 117,000 in July, while the unemployment rate fell slightly from 9.3 percent in June to 9.1 percent in July.

The Labor Department reports that job gains occurred in health care, retail trade manufacturing and mining, while employment in the government sector continued to drop. State government employment has generally been on a downward trend since fall 2008.

Author's calculations of data from The Bureau of Labor Statistics

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