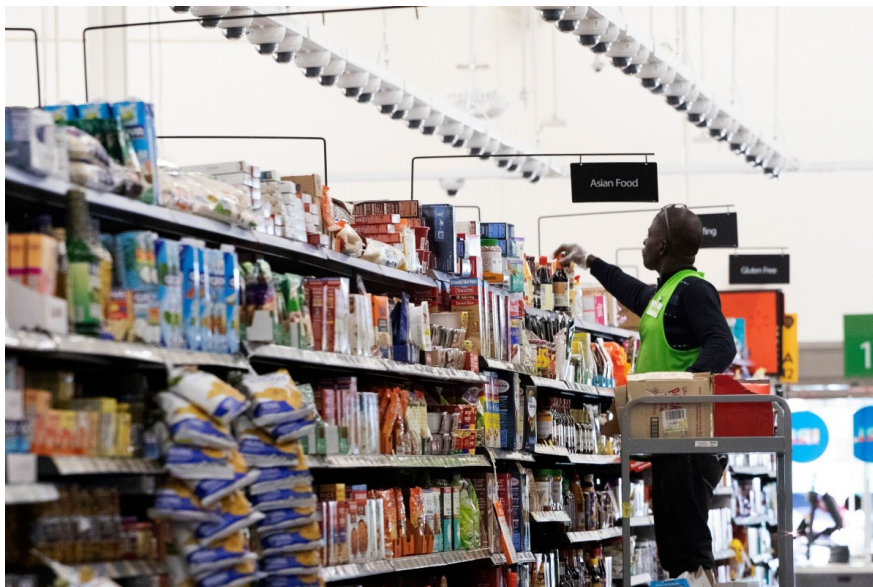


US: Jobs bonanza has much further to run

March experienced another huge jobs figure and with people movement and activity picking up strongly through 2H March we have to pencil in a 1 million plus reading for April. It's not inconceivable that all the jobs lost during the pandemic are regained before year-end, which if the case it would mean Federal Reserve rate hikes could come as soon as next year



916,000 The number of jobs the US economy added in March

Jobs surge on weather and the re-opening

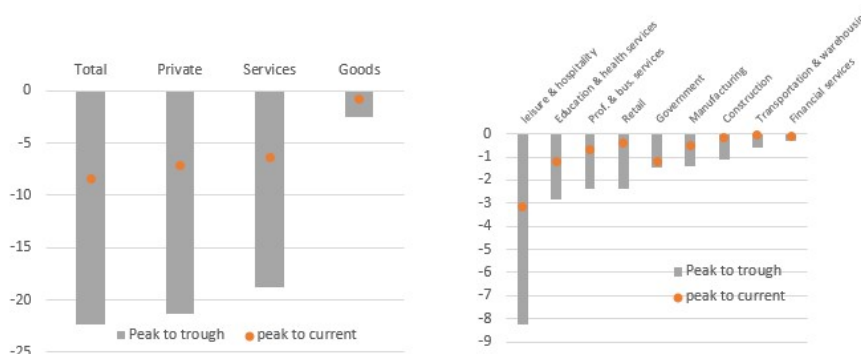
March has produced a fantastic US jobs report with employment rising 916k versus the 660k consensus with 156k upward revision to the past two months. Private payrolls rose 780k and the unemployment rate dropped to 6%.

We had been looking for a good figure as better weather in March versus February, a strong

vaccination program roll out and ongoing re-opening steps being taken by the individual states lift sentiment, activity and the need for workers.

The improved weather story clearly boosted construction, which rebounded 110k and the re-opening led to a 280k gain in leisure and hospitality. Government also jumped 136k with trade and transport up 94k. Nonetheless, there is still a long way to go before the jobs market is fully healed as the charts below show employment in virtually all sectors remains below pre-pandemic peaks.

Employment is climbing back - change in payrolls peak to trough and peak to current (millions)



Source: Macrobond, ING

People are on the move and that means more work - 1 million+ jobs in April

Having had the week off traveling around Nevada, Arizona and Utah, I can tell you people are out and about spending money with the \$1400 stimulus payment being put to good use. Wherever I have been, restaurants have queues outside (pandemic restrictions are, admittedly, still in place) while flights are full and highways and National Parks are busy. This reinforces the evidence on dining and flight taking from Opentable and the TSA (see charts below).

With more and more movement there is more and more demand, resulting in the need for more and more workers. New York is lagging well behind on all measures, but is at least showing signs of moving in a positive direction. Given continuing upward moves in the daily restaurant and flight data through the second half of March we should be looking at jobs growth figure well in excess of 1 million in April - remember the data are collected the week of the 12th of each month so 2H March job creation shows up in April data.

Opentable restaurant data and TSA airport security check numbers point to 1million+ April figure



Source: Opentable, Macrobond

Fed behind the curve?

Despite this good news, we have to remember there are still 8.4 million fewer people in work than before the pandemic started. The Fed are currently signaling a first rate hike won't come until 2024 and that they want to see "substantial further progress" before contemplating a change in their stance. Given their relaxed position on inflation it's clear that the focus is on the jobs market returning close to its pre-pandemic state.

Comments from officials suggest they believe the unemployment rate is giving misleading signals given so many people have left the labour force, for reasons including having to look after people at home or no job opportunities due to pandemic-related industry closures. Consequently, the employment ratio is probably the better number to watch.

Currently just 57.8% of working age (16-65 year olds) are actually working. This is very weak as we are on a par with the early 1980s recession and when female worker participation was much lower than it is today. To get us to a jobs market that is on a similar basis to pre-pandemic levels we think the Fed would be looking for that employment ratio to get up above 60%. That requires just under 6 million more jobs being created based on the current labour force size.

Employment as % of working age population (1948-2021)



Source: Macrobond, ING

A 2022 rate hike is more likely than a 2024 first move

With a full re-opening by May/June, we believe that is achievable this year. As already outlined, we think we can see 1 million+ monthly readings in April and May before settling down in a 300-700k range for the rest of the year. On this basis there is no reason to believe that “substantial further progress” can’t be reached in 3Q. This would allow for a 4Q taper of the QE asset purchases and could conceivably open the door to a rate hike before the end of next year.

Right now, the Fed’s language isn’t there and our house view is 1H23, but the risks increasingly look skewed towards an earlier move.

Author

James Knightley

Chief International Economist, US

james.knightley@ing.com

Disclaimer

This publication has been prepared by the Economic and Financial Analysis Division of ING Bank N.V. (“ING”) solely for information purposes without regard to any particular user’s investment objectives, financial situation, or means. *ING forms part of ING Group (being for this purpose ING Group N.V. and its subsidiary and affiliated companies).* The information in the publication is not an investment recommendation and it is not investment, legal or tax advice or an offer or solicitation to purchase or sell any financial instrument. Reasonable care has been taken to ensure that this publication is not untrue or misleading when published, but ING does not represent that it is accurate or complete. ING does not accept any liability for any direct, indirect or consequential loss arising from any use of this publication. Unless otherwise stated, any views, forecasts, or estimates are solely those of the author(s), as of the date of the publication and are subject to change without notice.

The distribution of this publication may be restricted by law or regulation in different jurisdictions and persons into whose possession this publication comes should inform themselves about, and observe, such restrictions.

Copyright and database rights protection exists in this report and it may not be reproduced, distributed or published by any person for any purpose without the prior express consent of ING. All rights are reserved. ING Bank N.V. is authorised by the Dutch Central Bank and supervised by the European Central Bank (ECB), the Dutch Central Bank (DNB) and the Dutch Authority for the Financial Markets (AFM). ING Bank N.V. is incorporated in the Netherlands (Trade Register no. 33031431 Amsterdam). In the United Kingdom

this information is approved and/or communicated by ING Bank N.V., London Branch. ING Bank N.V., London Branch is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and is subject to regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority and limited regulation by the Prudential Regulation Authority. ING Bank N.V., London branch is registered in England (Registration number BR000341) at 8-10 Moorgate, London EC2 6DA. For US Investors: Any person wishing to discuss this report or effect transactions in any security discussed herein should contact ING Financial Markets LLC, which is a member of the NYSE, FINRA and SIPC and part of ING, and which has accepted responsibility for the distribution of this report in the United States under applicable requirements.

Additional information is available on request. For more information about ING Group, please visit <http://www.ing.com>.