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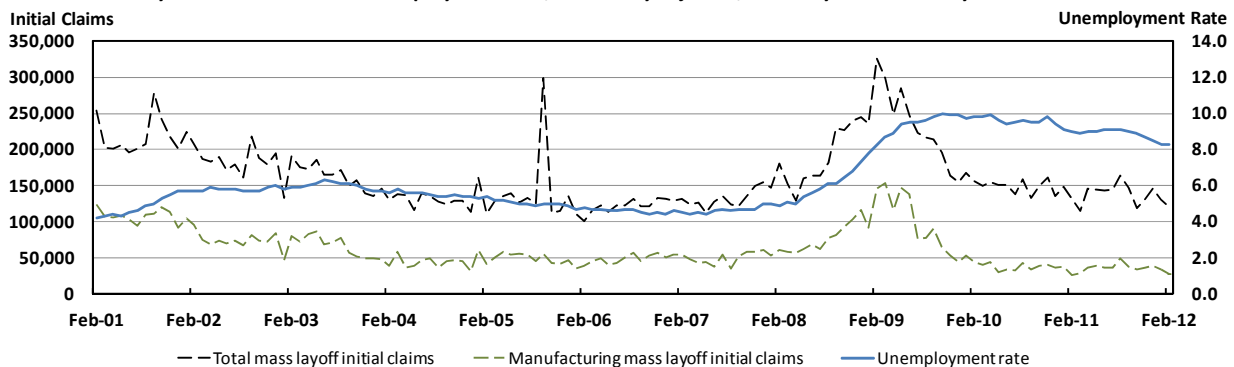
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MASS LAYOFFS — FEBRUARY 2012

Employers took 1,293 mass layoff actions in February involving 119,463 workers, seasonally adjusted, as measured by new filings for unemployment insurance benefits during the month, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Each mass layoff involved at least 50 workers from a single employer. Mass layoff events in February decreased by 141 from January, and the number of associated initial claims decreased by 10,457. In February, 282 mass layoff events were reported in the manufacturing sector, seasonally adjusted, resulting in 27,388 initial claims. Both manufacturing figures were lower when compared to January. (See table 1.)

Chart 1. Mass layoff initial claims and unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted, February 2001-February 2012



The national unemployment rate was 8.3 percent in February, the same as the prior month and down from 9.0 percent a year earlier. Total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 227,000 over the month and by 2,021,000 over the year.

Industry Distribution (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

The number of mass layoff events in February was 895, not seasonally adjusted, resulting in 73,974 initial claims for unemployment insurance. (See table 2.) Over the year, the number of average weekly mass layoff events decreased by 32 to 224, and associated average weekly initial claims decreased by 2,902 to 18,494. Twelve of the 19 major industry sectors in the private economy reported over-the-year decreases in average weekly initial claims, with the largest decrease occurring in information. (See table 3.) Over the month, the six-digit industry with the largest number of private nonfarm initial claims in February was temporary help services. (See table A.)

Table A. Six-digit NAICS industries with the largest number of mass layoff initial claims in February 2012, private nonfarm, not seasonally adjusted

Industry	Initial Claims	February peak	
		Year	Initial claims
Temporary help services ¹	6,381	2001	18,893
Supermarkets and other grocery stores	2,685	2012	2,685
School and employee bus transportation	2,507	2008	4,254
Department stores, except discount	2,445	2001	2,994
Food service contractors	2,434	2009	2,580
Motion picture and video production	2,341	2011	6,260
Professional employer organizations ¹	2,012	2009	6,452
Discount department stores	1,701	2004	2,669
Warehouse clubs and supercenters	1,480	2012	1,480
Nonresidential electrical contractors	967	2009	2,113

¹ See the Technical Note for more information on these industries.

In February, the manufacturing sector accounted for 23 percent of mass layoff events and associated initial claims in the private economy. Within manufacturing, the numbers of mass layoff claimants were greatest in food and in transportation equipment. Twelve of the 21 manufacturing subsectors experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly initial claims, with the largest decrease occurring in food. (See table 3.)

Geographic Distribution (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

Among the census regions, the West registered the largest number of initial claims in February. Three of the 4 regions experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly initial claims, with the largest decline occurring in the West. (See table 4.)

Among the states, California recorded the highest number of mass layoff initial claims in February, followed by New York, Pennsylvania, and Florida. Twenty-six states and the District of Columbia experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly initial claims, led by California, Florida, and Indiana. (See table 4.)

Note

The monthly data series in this release cover mass layoffs of 50 or more workers beginning in a given month, regardless of the duration of the layoffs. For private nonfarm establishments, information on the length of the layoff is obtained later and issued in a quarterly release that reports on mass layoffs lasting more than 30 days (referred to as “extended mass layoffs”). The quarterly release provides more information on the industry classification and location of the establishment and on the demographics of

the laid-off workers. The monthly data series in this release are subjected to average weekly analysis, which mitigates the effect of differing lengths of months. See the Technical Note for more detailed definitions and for a description of average weekly analysis.

The Mass Layoffs news release for March is scheduled to be released on Tuesday, April 24, 2012, at 10:00 a.m. (EDT).

Technical Note

The Mass Layoff Statistics (MLS) program is a federal-state program that uses a standardized automated approach to identifying, describing, and tracking the effects of major job cutbacks, using data from each state's unemployment insurance database. Each month, states report on employers which have at least 50 initial claims filed against them during a consecutive 5-week period. These employers then are contacted by the state agency to determine whether these separations lasted 31 days or longer, and, if so, other information concerning the layoff is collected. States report on layoffs lasting more than 1 month on a quarterly basis.

A given month contains an aggregation of the weekly unemployment insurance claims filings for the Sunday through Saturday weeks in that month. All weeks are included for the particular month, except if the first day of the month falls on Saturday. In this case, the week is included in the prior month's tabulations. This means that some months will contain 4 weeks and others, 5 weeks. The number of weeks in a given month may be different from year to year, and the number of weeks in a year may vary. Therefore, data users who intend to perform analysis of over-the-year change in the not seasonally adjusted series should use the average weekly mass layoff figures displayed in tables 3 and 4 of this release. The average weekly adjustment process produces a consistent series for each month across all years, permitting over-the-year analysis to be performed using strictly comparable data.

The MLS program resumed operations in April 1995 after it had been terminated in November 1992 due to lack of funding. Prior to April 1995, monthly layoff statistics were not available.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339

Definitions

Average weekly mass layoff events and initial claimants. The number of events and initial claimants in a given month divided by the number of weeks contained within that month.

Employer. Employers in the MLS program include those covered by state unemployment insurance laws. Information on employers is obtained from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, which is administered by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Industry. Employers are classified according to the 2007 version of the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). For temporary help and professional employer

organization industries, monthly MLS-related statistics generally reflect layoffs related to underlying client companies in other industries. An individual layoff action at a client company can be small, but when initial claimants associated with many such layoffs are assigned to a temporary help or professional employer organization firm, a mass layoff event may trigger.

Initial claimant. A person who files any notice of unemployment to initiate a request either for a determination of entitlement to and eligibility for compensation, or for a temporary period of unemployment within a benefit year or period of eligibility.

Mass layoff event. Fifty or more initial claims for unemployment insurance benefits filed against an employer during a 5-week period, regardless of duration.

Seasonal adjustment

Effective with the release of data for January 2005, BLS began publishing six seasonally adjusted monthly MLS series. The six series are the numbers of mass layoff events and mass layoff initial claims for the total, private nonfarm, and manufacturing sectors.

Seasonal adjustment is the process of estimating and removing the effect on time series data of regularly recurring seasonal events such as changes in the weather, holidays, and the beginning and ending of the school year. The use of seasonal adjustment makes it easier to observe fundamental changes in time series, particularly those associated with general economic expansions and contractions.

The MLS data are seasonally adjusted using the X-12-ARIMA seasonal adjustment method on a concurrent basis. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available monthly estimates, including those for the current month, in developing seasonal adjustment factors. Revisions to the most recent 5 years of seasonally adjusted data will be made once a year with the issuance of December data. Before the data are seasonally adjusted, prior adjustments are made to the original data to adjust them for differences in the number of weeks used to calculate the monthly data. Because weekly unemployment insurance claims are aggregated to form monthly data, a particular month's value could be calculated with 5 weeks of data in 1 year and 4 weeks in another. The effects of these differences could seriously distort the seasonal factors if they were ignored in the seasonal adjustment process. These effects are modeled in the X-12-ARIMA program and are permanently removed from the final seasonally adjusted series.

Table 1. Mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance, March 2008 to February 2012, seasonally adjusted

Date	Total		Private nonfarm		Manufacturing	
	Events	Initial claimants	Events	Initial claimants	Events	Initial claimants
2008						
March	1,515	151,628	1,400	141,316	441	58,254
April	1,290	128,643	1,157	117,639	453	57,044
May	1,567	160,475	1,432	150,893	470	62,776
June	1,612	163,425	1,471	152,133	491	68,862
July	1,589	163,572	1,452	153,060	465	62,210
August	1,763	181,853	1,632	172,147	578	77,464
September	2,159	229,180	1,990	215,749	629	82,011
October	2,201	226,853	2,043	213,454	698	93,252
November	2,406	239,239	2,247	225,404	907	103,836
December	2,437	244,889	2,261	230,621	935	116,181
2009						
January	2,254	235,371	2,083	221,653	726	92,293
February	3,059	326,392	2,901	310,378	1,251	145,839
March	2,999	299,322	2,800	282,414	1,230	154,168
April	2,566	249,129	2,349	232,632	1,007	116,051
May	2,710	284,468	2,516	267,869	1,181	147,184
June	2,466	247,597	2,257	230,502	1,048	137,649
July	2,186	222,941	1,979	203,911	636	75,728
August	2,340	216,047	2,115	197,172	751	77,894
September	2,261	214,018	2,048	198,761	786	91,125
October	1,969	195,752	1,772	178,172	571	65,217
November	1,757	164,454	1,588	151,172	472	52,855
December	1,719	155,056	1,543	140,835	424	44,096
2010						
January	1,707	168,044	1,529	154,187	471	53,817
February	1,631	156,292	1,465	141,831	374	43,620
March	1,676	149,816	1,469	134,518	356	40,705
April	1,637	154,558	1,452	138,503	368	44,506
May	1,608	150,996	1,357	130,273	302	29,932
June	1,695	151,435	1,475	132,742	325	33,298
July	1,519	138,091	1,316	122,162	304	32,253
August	1,588	159,329	1,399	136,697	390	43,154
September	1,510	133,576	1,295	115,349	328	34,333
October	1,654	149,589	1,446	132,146	354	38,937
November	1,592	161,145	1,410	145,494	360	39,977
December	1,477	135,849	1,271	121,171	322	36,267
2011						
January	1,536	148,952	1,348	131,869	337	37,477
February	1,434	131,569	1,242	116,745	297	26,696
March	1,275	115,391	1,118	102,722	251	28,988
April	1,548	145,836	1,383	131,317	341	37,053
May	1,600	144,412	1,404	127,793	374	39,180
June	1,513	143,384	1,334	128,410	344	36,265
July	1,562	145,078	1,348	125,285	346	36,312
August	1,551	164,275	1,347	149,874	382	49,194
September	1,447	147,353	1,306	134,038	364	38,026
October	1,335	118,924	1,205	107,330	341	33,926
November	1,332	131,627	1,192	120,760	324	36,563
December	1,384	145,648	1,238	130,583	351	39,081
2012						
January	1,434	129,920	1,298	119,102	341	33,597
February	1,293	119,463	1,153	108,577	282	27,388

Table 2. Mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance, March 2008 to February 2012, not seasonally adjusted

Date	Total		Private nonfarm		Manufacturing	
	Events	Initial claimants	Events	Initial claimants	Events	Initial claimants
2008						
March	1,089	114,541	1,039	110,147	333	43,740
April	1,272	130,810	1,172	121,625	394	48,188
May	1,552	159,471	1,438	150,462	388	51,698
June	1,622	166,742	1,315	140,916	309	42,097
July	1,891	200,382	1,687	186,018	760	108,733
August	1,427	139,999	1,343	133,146	414	51,912
September	1,292	129,586	1,202	122,505	361	46,391
October	2,125	221,784	1,917	205,553	689	100,457
November	2,574	241,589	2,389	226,657	997	107,620
December	3,377	351,305	3,232	340,220	1,378	172,529
2009						
January	3,806	388,813	3,633	375,293	1,461	172,757
February	2,262	218,438	2,173	210,755	945	103,588
March	2,191	228,387	2,107	221,397	940	114,747
April	2,547	256,930	2,385	243,321	887	100,872
May	2,738	289,628	2,572	274,047	1,005	123,683
June	2,519	256,357	2,051	216,063	674	85,726
July	3,054	336,654	2,659	296,589	1,133	154,208
August	1,428	125,024	1,334	117,193	436	41,151
September	1,371	123,177	1,258	115,141	448	51,126
October	1,934	193,904	1,678	172,883	566	69,655
November	1,870	164,496	1,679	150,751	517	55,053
December	2,310	214,648	2,166	203,655	615	64,540
2010						
January	2,860	278,679	2,682	265,074	962	104,846
February	1,183	102,818	1,091	96,022	282	30,728
March	1,197	111,727	1,111	105,514	273	29,745
April	1,840	199,690	1,697	184,654	424	55,178
May	1,354	123,333	1,170	109,203	216	19,334
June	1,861	171,190	1,355	125,872	212	21,083
July	2,124	206,254	1,732	172,248	532	64,200
August	976	92,435	897	83,021	230	23,088
September	920	77,654	806	67,987	187	19,403
October	1,642	148,638	1,373	127,865	351	40,861
November	1,676	158,048	1,477	142,591	389	41,383
December	1,931	184,130	1,763	172,881	465	52,816
2011						
January	2,558	246,463	2,372	229,765	693	75,006
February	1,024	85,585	919	78,718	222	18,471
March	908	85,095	844	80,014	191	20,869
April	1,750	189,919	1,625	176,478	397	47,104
May	1,367	119,911	1,221	108,531	270	25,199
June	1,661	159,930	1,238	122,821	226	22,986
July	2,176	216,774	1,759	174,078	602	71,814
August	961	99,213	875	93,159	228	26,916
September	1,189	117,232	1,095	107,300	296	32,058
October	1,101	96,914	950	83,748	265	28,447
November	1,393	127,750	1,245	117,474	349	37,799
December	2,433	263,665	2,258	247,916	658	75,033
2012						
January	1,705	141,703	1,587	132,754	415	38,021
February	895	73,974	820	69,076	196	16,555

Table 3. Industry distribution: Mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance, not seasonally adjusted

Industry	Mass layoff totals				Average weekly mass layoffs ¹			
	Events		Initial claimants		Events		Initial claimants	
	February 2011	February 2012	February 2011	February 2012	February 2011	February 2012	February 2011	February 2012
Total ²	1,024	895	85,585	73,974	256	224	21,396	18,494
Total, private	976	865	82,230	71,884	244	216	20,558	17,971
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	57	45	3,512	2,808	14	11	878	702
Total, private nonfarm	919	820	78,718	69,076	230	205	19,680	17,269
Mining	4	7	322	510	1	2	81	128
Utilities	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)	-
Construction	104	81	7,003	5,395	26	20	1,751	1,349
Construction of buildings	23	12	1,751	760	6	3	438	190
Heavy and civil engineering construction	35	19	2,302	1,319	9	5	576	330
Specialty trade contractors	46	50	2,950	3,316	12	13	738	829
Manufacturing	222	196	18,471	16,555	56	49	4,618	4,139
Food	58	45	5,115	4,208	15	11	1,279	1,052
Beverage and tobacco products	5	4	287	199	1	1	72	50
Textile mills	5	7	468	638	1	2	117	160
Textile product mills	4	4	270	512	1	1	68	128
Apparel	5	4	693	379	1	1	173	95
Leather and allied products	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)	-
Wood products	22	13	1,872	1,292	6	3	468	323
Paper	12	6	750	397	3	2	188	99
Printing and related support activities	6	9	679	634	2	2	170	159
Petroleum and coal products	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)
Chemicals	7	(³)	759	(³)	2	(³)	190	(³)
Plastics and rubber products	5	9	262	547	1	2	66	137
Nonmetallic mineral products	16	7	1,141	505	4	2	285	126
Primary metals	8	6	794	428	2	2	199	107
Fabricated metal products	8	10	446	699	2	3	112	175
Machinery	11	9	897	994	3	2	224	249
Computer and electronic products	13	15	847	1,008	3	4	212	252
Electrical equipment and appliances	4	7	1,078	590	1	2	270	148
Transportation equipment	19	20	1,275	1,725	5	5	319	431
Furniture and related products	9	13	533	1,095	2	3	133	274
Miscellaneous manufacturing	(³)	4	(³)	467	(³)	1	(³)	117
Wholesale trade	24	17	2,187	1,594	6	4	547	399
Retail trade ⁴	114	135	9,346	12,716	29	34	2,337	3,179
Building material and garden supply stores	12	7	1,102	494	3	2	276	124
Food and beverage stores	19	26	1,450	2,735	5	7	363	684
Clothing and clothing accessories stores	16	19	1,137	1,390	4	5	284	348
General merchandise stores	42	57	4,182	6,096	11	14	1,046	1,524
Transportation and warehousing ⁴	49	32	5,630	3,506	12	8	1,408	877
Truck transportation	12	3	1,052	154	3	1	263	39
Transit and ground passenger transportation	20	17	3,272	2,561	5	4	818	640
Support activities for transportation	3	3	198	184	1	1	50	46
Information	58	42	8,959	4,456	15	11	2,240	1,114
Finance and insurance	22	22	1,407	1,891	6	6	352	473
Real estate and rental and leasing	7	5	369	305	2	1	92	76
Professional and technical services	43	25	3,729	1,931	11	6	932	483
Management of companies and enterprises	(³)	5	(³)	344	(³)	1	(³)	86
Administrative and waste services	166	155	13,894	11,920	42	39	3,474	2,980
Educational services	8	6	474	341	2	2	119	85
Health care and social assistance	28	26	1,685	1,686	7	7	421	422
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	11	19	629	1,442	3	5	157	361
Accommodation and food services	50	37	4,088	3,814	13	9	1,022	954
Accommodation	15	8	1,115	493	4	2	279	123
Food services and drinking places	35	29	2,973	3,321	9	7	743	830
Other services, except public administration	4	7	161	526	1	2	40	132
Unclassified	-	3	-	144	-	1	-	36
Government	48	30	3,355	2,090	12	8	839	523
Federal	5	5	384	337	1	1	96	84
State	17	10	1,029	715	4	3	257	179
State government education	6	7	383	531	2	2	96	133
Local	26	15	1,942	1,038	7	4	486	260
Local government education	10	6	1,032	377	3	2	258	94

¹ Average weekly analysis mitigates the effect of differing lengths of months. There were 4 weeks in February 2011 and 4 weeks in February 2012. Average weekly events and initial claimants may not sum to subtotals and totals due to rounding.

² Data were reported by all states and the District of Columbia.

³ Data do not meet BLS or state agency disclosure standards.

⁴ Includes other industries not shown.

NOTE: Dash represents zero.

Table 4. Region and state distribution: Mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance, not seasonally adjusted

Census region and state	Mass layoff totals				Average weekly mass layoffs ¹			
	Events		Initial Claimants		Events		Initial Claimants	
	February 2011	February 2012	February 2011	February 2012	February 2011	February 2012	February 2011	February 2012
Total ²	1,024	895	85,585	73,974	256	224	21,396	18,494
Northeast	173	203	16,047	18,074	43	51	4,012	4,519
Connecticut	(³)	5	(³)	505	(³)	1	(³)	126
Maine	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)
Massachusetts	6	5	534	358	2	1	134	90
New Hampshire	4	3	537	209	1	1	134	52
New Jersey	19	26	2,243	2,246	5	7	561	562
New York	45	91	4,161	8,124	11	23	1,040	2,031
Pennsylvania	77	61	5,384	4,448	19	15	1,346	1,112
Rhode Island	10	7	2,125	1,883	3	2	531	471
Vermont	6	(³)	558	(³)	2	(³)	140	(³)
South	260	242	19,998	19,704	65	61	5,000	4,926
Alabama	12	7	1,583	541	3	2	396	135
Arkansas	3	11	283	1,163	1	3	71	291
Delaware	3	(³)	239	(³)	1	(³)	60	(³)
District of Columbia	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)
Florida	85	65	5,071	3,742	21	16	1,268	936
Georgia	28	20	2,221	2,195	7	5	555	549
Kentucky	13	18	1,682	1,338	3	5	421	335
Louisiana	6	13	518	1,294	2	3	130	324
Maryland	4	10	306	825	1	3	77	206
Mississippi	8	6	446	353	2	2	112	88
North Carolina	27	27	1,984	2,604	7	7	496	651
Oklahoma	9	5	1,015	315	2	1	254	79
South Carolina	5	8	340	700	1	2	85	175
Tennessee	11	4	632	584	3	1	158	146
Texas	32	33	2,468	2,714	8	8	617	679
Virginia	10	10	899	1,027	3	3	225	257
West Virginia	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)	-
Midwest	180	152	15,075	13,591	45	38	3,769	3,398
Illinois	35	40	3,508	3,291	9	10	877	823
Indiana	15	4	1,471	314	4	1	368	79
Iowa	9	11	870	1,246	2	3	218	312
Kansas	5	4	308	447	1	1	77	112
Michigan	17	28	1,091	2,639	4	7	273	660
Minnesota	10	3	675	237	3	1	169	59
Missouri	17	7	1,038	449	4	2	260	112
Nebraska	9	8	634	610	2	2	159	153
North Dakota	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ohio	30	25	2,473	2,381	8	6	618	595
South Dakota	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wisconsin	33	22	3,007	1,977	8	6	752	494
West	411	298	34,465	22,605	103	75	8,616	5,651
Alaska	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)
Arizona	12	13	838	1,023	3	3	210	256
California	349	225	29,769	16,919	87	56	7,442	4,230
Colorado	4	6	383	478	1	2	96	120
Hawaii	3	(³)	232	(³)	1	(³)	58	(³)
Idaho	4	6	225	399	1	2	56	100
Montana	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)	-
Nevada	5	5	394	427	1	1	99	107
New Mexico	3	5	164	348	1	1	41	87
Oregon	9	19	896	1,497	2	5	224	374
Utah	6	3	370	228	2	1	93	57
Washington	13	13	955	1,084	3	3	239	271
Wyoming	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Puerto Rico	16	13	1,808	1,131	4	3	452	283

¹ See footnote 1, table 3.

³ Data do not meet BLS or state agency disclosure standards.

² See footnote 2, table 3.

NOTE: Dash represents zero.