



Technical information:

Employment: (202) 691-6559 USDL 04-2170
<http://www.bls.gov/sae/>

Unemployment: 691-6392
<http://www.bls.gov/lau/>

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REGIONAL AND STATE EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT: SEPTEMBER 2004

Regional and state unemployment rates were little changed in September. All four regions and 42 states recorded shifts of 0.3 percentage point or less in their jobless rates from August, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. Over the year, unemployment rates declined in all four regions and in 46 states. The national unemployment rate, 5.4 percent in September, was unchanged from August. Nonfarm payroll employment rose in 33 states over the month.

Regional Unemployment (Seasonally Adjusted)

Among the four regions, the South again registered the lowest unemployment rate, 4.9 percent in September. The West posted the highest rate, 5.6 percent, followed closely by the Midwest, 5.5 percent. All regions experienced over-the-year jobless rate declines: -0.9 percentage point each in the South and West, -0.7 point in the Northeast, and -0.5 point in the Midwest. (See table 1.)

Hurricane Effects on State Payroll Employment

Four hurricanes struck the U.S. during August and September: Charley in mid-August, Frances early in September, Ivan in mid-September, and Jeanne late in the month. BLS made additional data collection efforts for the hurricane-affected counties. Establishment survey response rates in September were within the normal range for these areas as well as for the U.S. as a whole.

For weather conditions to reduce the estimate of payroll employment, people have to be off work for an entire pay period and not be paid for the time missed. While some employed persons were off payrolls during the survey reference period because of the hurricane effects, some jobs were added as part of recovery efforts.

As a result of the hurricanes, all of Florida and parts of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania were declared disaster areas by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Although some of these states experienced weakness in employment in September, it is not possible to quantify precisely the net impact of this unusual string of severe weather events on the state payroll employment data.

In the labor force data, people who miss work for weather-related events are counted as employed whether or not they are paid for the time off.

In September, the New England and South Atlantic divisions registered the lowest unemployment rates among the nine geographic divisions, 4.5 percent each, followed by the West North Central, 4.7 percent, and Mountain, 4.8 percent. The East North Central and Pacific divisions again recorded the highest unemployment rates, 5.9 percent each. Over the month, the New England division posted the largest change, -0.4 percentage point. All nine divisions had over-the-year jobless rate declines of at least 0.3 percentage point, with the largest decreases in the West South Central (-1.3 percentage points) and the New England and Pacific divisions (-1.0 point each).

State Unemployment (Seasonally Adjusted)

Hawaii again reported the lowest state unemployment rate, 3.1 percent in September, followed by Virginia, 3.2 percent, and Vermont, 3.3 percent. Seven additional states recorded jobless rates below 4.0 percent. Alaska and Oregon again posted the highest state unemployment rates, 7.6 and 7.3 percent, respectively. Five additional states and the District of Columbia reported unemployment rates of 6.0 percent or more in September. (See table 3 and chart 1.)

Compared with August, unemployment rates in September were lower in 23 states, higher in 22 states and the District of Columbia, and unchanged in 5 states. The largest over-the-month jobless rate decrease was in Massachusetts (-0.8 percentage point), followed by Washington (-0.6 point) and Kentucky, Rhode Island, and West Virginia (-0.5 point each). South Carolina posted the largest rate increase (+0.5 percentage point).

Unemployment rates were lower than a year earlier in 46 states, higher in 3 states and the District of Columbia, and unchanged in 1 state. Washington recorded the largest over-the-year unemployment rate decrease (-2.1 percentage points), followed by Vermont (-1.7 points) and Kentucky and North Carolina (-1.6 points each). Twelve additional states had over-the-year rate declines of at least 1.0 percentage point. No state posted an unemployment rate increase from September 2003 larger than 0.3 percentage point. The District of Columbia had a rate increase of 1.1 percentage points over the year.

Nonfarm Payroll Employment (Seasonally Adjusted)

From August to September, total nonfarm employment increased in 33 states, decreased in 16 states and the District of Columbia, and remained unchanged in 1 state. The largest employment increases occurred in Kansas (+12,400), New Jersey (+12,000), Missouri (+10,400), Nevada (+6,700), and Texas (+6,500). Kansas reported the largest over-the-month percentage increase in employment (+0.9 percent), followed by Delaware (+0.8 percent), Hawaii and Nevada (+0.6 percent each), and Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and West Virginia (+0.4 percent each). The largest employment decreases occurred in Michigan (-14,800), Florida (-9,500), Wisconsin (-7,000), Louisiana (-6,300), and Alabama and North Carolina (-5,600 each). Florida's employment decline is likely linked to the effects of multiple hurricanes that struck the state. Additionally, the declines in Alabama, Louisiana, and North Carolina may be attributable in part to the effects of the adverse weather conditions. The largest over-the-month percentage decreases in employment were reported in the District of Columbia and Montana (-0.7 percent each), Maine (-0.4 percent), and Alabama, Louisiana, Michigan, and Oregon (-0.3 percent each). (See table 5.)

Over the year, nonfarm employment increased in 47 states and the District of Columbia and decreased in 3 states. The largest over-the-year gains in employment occurred in Florida (+125,500), Texas (+123,700), California (+121,900), Virginia (+81,900), and New Jersey (+68,800). The largest percentage gains were reported in Nevada (+4.6 percent), Hawaii (+3.3 percent), Idaho and Utah (+3.2 percent each), and

Arizona and New Mexico (+2.4 percent each). The over-the-year employment decreases were registered in Michigan (-52,500, -1.2 percent), Ohio (-17,900, -0.3 percent), and Massachusetts (-1,000, 0.0 percent).

The Metropolitan Area Employment and Unemployment release for September is scheduled to be issued on November 3. The Regional and State Employment and Unemployment release for October is scheduled to be issued on November 19.

Table 1. Civilian labor force and unemployment by census regions and divisions, seasonally adjusted¹

(Numbers in thousands)

Census region and division	Civilian labor force				Unemployed							
					Number				Percent of labor force			
	Sept. 2003	July 2004	Aug. 2004	Sept. 2004 ^P	Sept. 2003	July 2004	Aug. 2004	Sept. 2004 ^P	Sept. 2003	July 2004	Aug. 2004	Sept. 2004 ^P
Northeast	27,373.8	27,580.8	27,565.1	27,553.7	1,597.2	1,473.9	1,460.9	1,395.5	5.8	5.3	5.3	5.1
New England	7,548.1	7,565.2	7,556.5	7,527.2	411.6	366.0	368.7	337.7	5.5	4.8	4.9	4.5
Middle Atlantic	19,825.8	20,015.6	20,008.6	20,026.5	1,185.6	1,107.9	1,092.2	1,057.8	6.0	5.5	5.5	5.3
South	51,378.1	51,822.9	51,842.8	51,843.0	2,960.3	2,569.6	2,583.1	2,519.9	5.8	5.0	5.0	4.9
South Atlantic	27,095.0	27,388.6	27,416.0	27,364.5	1,403.2	1,227.7	1,260.1	1,221.8	5.2	4.5	4.6	4.5
East South Central	8,347.5	8,405.8	8,410.6	8,410.9	505.0	437.9	453.9	443.0	6.1	5.2	5.4	5.3
West South Central	15,935.6	16,028.4	16,016.2	16,067.6	1,052.1	904.0	869.1	855.2	6.6	5.6	5.4	5.3
Midwest	34,340.0	34,450.1	34,466.7	34,493.7	2,056.9	1,892.7	1,925.2	1,913.4	6.0	5.5	5.6	5.5
East North Central	23,599.6	23,584.8	23,580.1	23,622.8	1,516.4	1,394.8	1,408.5	1,397.3	6.4	5.9	6.0	5.9
West North Central	10,740.4	10,865.3	10,886.6	10,870.9	540.6	497.9	516.8	516.0	5.0	4.6	4.7	4.7
West	33,280.8	33,759.4	33,754.9	33,795.5	2,170.6	1,932.9	1,888.7	1,885.1	6.5	5.7	5.6	5.6
Mountain	9,870.3	10,048.9	10,069.4	10,083.6	553.3	472.5	472.3	480.2	5.6	4.7	4.7	4.8
Pacific	23,410.5	23,710.5	23,685.5	23,711.9	1,617.3	1,460.3	1,416.3	1,405.0	6.9	6.2	6.0	5.9

¹ These estimates are obtained by summing the state estimates.

^P = preliminary.

NOTE: The States (including the District of Columbia) that compose the various census divisions are: New England: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont; Middle Atlantic: New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania; South Atlantic: Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia; East South Central:

Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee; West South Central: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas; East North Central: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin; West North Central: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota; Mountain: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming; and Pacific: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington. All estimates are provisional and will be revised when new benchmark and population information becomes available.

Table 2. Civilian labor force and unemployment by census regions and divisions, not seasonally adjusted¹

(Numbers in thousands)

Census region and division	Civilian labor force				Unemployed							
					Number				Percent of labor force			
	August		September		August		September		August		September	
2003	2004	2003	2004 ^P	2003	2004	2003	2004 ^P	2003	2004	2003	2004 ^P	
Northeast	27,694.3	27,867.9	27,222.0	27,391.9	1,572.9	1,430.9	1,527.9	1,328.3	5.7	5.1	5.6	4.8
New England	7,664.2	7,668.8	7,512.4	7,491.0	408.5	363.8	391.4	319.4	5.3	4.7	5.2	4.3
Middle Atlantic	20,030.1	20,199.1	19,709.6	19,900.8	1,164.5	1,067.1	1,136.5	1,008.9	5.8	5.3	5.8	5.1
South	51,674.0	52,183.2	51,414.6	51,872.4	3,026.2	2,622.7	2,918.8	2,485.2	5.9	5.0	5.7	4.8
South Atlantic	27,313.5	27,665.9	27,139.1	27,411.4	1,451.4	1,295.7	1,400.5	1,221.8	5.3	4.7	5.2	4.5
East South Central	8,354.6	8,423.5	8,333.4	8,396.2	499.3	448.4	481.8	424.2	6.0	5.3	5.8	5.1
West South Central	16,006.0	16,093.9	15,942.1	16,064.8	1,075.6	878.7	1,036.4	839.3	6.7	5.5	6.5	5.2
Midwest	34,548.9	34,693.8	34,232.8	34,381.0	1,971.6	1,841.7	1,900.4	1,765.8	5.7	5.3	5.6	5.1
East North Central	23,787.1	23,777.5	23,534.9	23,551.4	1,451.2	1,346.1	1,399.7	1,286.3	6.1	5.7	5.9	5.5
West North Central	10,761.8	10,916.3	10,697.9	10,829.6	520.4	495.6	500.7	479.6	4.8	4.5	4.7	4.4
West	33,533.1	33,986.9	33,318.9	33,822.7	2,170.9	1,862.0	2,076.3	1,793.4	6.5	5.5	6.2	5.3
Mountain	9,958.2	10,160.0	9,920.3	10,131.5	568.0	476.3	538.8	466.6	5.7	4.7	5.4	4.6
Pacific	23,574.9	23,826.9	23,398.6	23,691.2	1,602.9	1,385.7	1,537.4	1,326.8	6.8	5.8	6.6	5.6

¹ These estimates are obtained by summing the state estimates. The composition of the regions and divisions is described in table 1.
^P = preliminary.

NOTE: All estimates are provisional and will be revised when new benchmark and population information becomes available.

**LABOR FORCE DATA
SEASONALLY ADJUSTED**

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Table 3. Civilian labor force and unemployment by state and selected areas, seasonally adjusted

(Numbers in thousands)

State and Area	Civilian labor force				Unemployed							
					Number				Percent of labor force			
	Sept. 2003	July 2004	Aug. 2004	Sept. 2004P	Sept. 2003	July 2004	Aug. 2004	Sept. 2004P	Sept. 2003	July 2004	Aug. 2004	Sept. 2004P
Alabama	2,160.0	2,167.4	2,171.0	2,161.2	125.6	122.5	130.5	122.7	5.8	5.7	6.0	5.7
Alaska	333.9	344.3	345.8	347.4	26.7	24.8	26.3	26.5	8.0	7.2	7.6	7.6
Arizona	2,696.2	2,762.7	2,765.2	2,770.5	147.3	119.8	122.3	133.3	5.5	4.3	4.4	4.8
Arkansas	1,263.6	1,318.2	1,321.3	1,326.7	83.2	73.5	70.9	73.3	6.6	5.6	5.4	5.5
California	17,464.7	17,684.9	17,646.9	17,693.3	1,170.2	1,097.9	1,037.1	1,046.5	6.7	6.2	5.9	5.9
Los Angeles-Long Beach	4,778.0	4,830.6	4,798.0	4,805.0	344.0	307.5	288.5	290.5	7.2	6.4	6.0	6.0
Colorado	2,485.2	2,517.2	2,521.6	2,530.7	148.6	128.9	127.6	123.0	6.0	5.1	5.1	4.9
Connecticut	1,800.4	1,793.9	1,788.3	1,791.0	99.4	82.3	83.0	84.1	5.5	4.6	4.6	4.7
Delaware	418.6	426.8	424.1	427.4	18.8	16.9	15.3	16.8	4.5	3.9	3.6	3.9
District of Columbia	301.9	297.5	301.0	304.9	20.7	23.2	22.6	24.2	6.8	7.8	7.5	7.9
Florida	8,191.8	8,382.5	8,400.6	8,387.7	415.8	375.0	387.7	375.1	5.1	4.5	4.6	4.5
Georgia	4,440.8	4,423.5	4,439.5	4,418.0	200.4	180.0	187.4	179.3	4.5	4.1	4.2	4.1
Hawaii	624.0	630.3	630.9	630.2	28.2	18.7	18.0	19.6	4.5	3.0	2.9	3.1
Idaho	693.1	706.1	710.5	708.4	36.4	34.5	35.5	35.6	5.3	4.9	5.0	5.0
Illinois	6,340.1	6,385.1	6,388.3	6,426.5	435.2	389.2	391.7	382.5	6.9	6.1	6.1	6.0
Indiana	3,188.4	3,170.9	3,147.2	3,152.4	166.4	162.5	160.0	164.2	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.2
Iowa	1,599.2	1,626.0	1,632.6	1,630.0	73.5	71.6	74.3	76.4	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.7
Kansas	1,436.3	1,466.3	1,471.0	1,473.4	77.0	68.3	71.0	69.3	5.4	4.7	4.8	4.7
Kentucky	1,962.8	1,990.0	1,982.5	1,981.1	122.0	106.2	101.9	91.6	6.2	5.3	5.1	4.6
Louisiana	2,041.0	2,048.0	2,033.0	2,059.9	131.9	125.5	100.9	108.7	6.5	6.1	5.0	5.3
Maine	696.6	697.5	701.5	698.1	36.1	29.2	31.9	32.5	5.2	4.2	4.5	4.7
Maryland	2,905.5	2,951.8	2,948.5	2,955.6	131.7	121.4	125.8	119.9	4.5	4.1	4.3	4.1
Massachusetts	3,402.9	3,415.2	3,413.0	3,389.0	199.6	180.9	184.1	155.4	5.9	5.3	5.4	4.6
Michigan	5,058.1	5,047.0	5,053.0	5,060.5	383.4	344.0	338.3	342.5	7.6	6.8	6.7	6.8
Minnesota	2,923.1	2,953.1	2,969.4	2,960.9	149.1	130.4	142.6	134.9	5.1	4.4	4.8	4.6
Mississippi	1,315.1	1,328.1	1,325.9	1,326.6	80.1	78.4	78.6	79.5	6.1	5.9	5.9	6.0
Missouri	3,029.7	3,056.7	3,048.9	3,038.3	171.5	168.8	167.7	171.3	5.7	5.5	5.5	5.6
Montana	477.5	481.8	484.0	483.8	23.0	20.8	23.0	24.7	4.8	4.3	4.8	5.1
Nebraska	979.2	989.1	990.2	991.7	40.1	33.5	36.0	36.9	4.1	3.4	3.6	3.7
Nevada	1,146.9	1,187.7	1,185.9	1,184.6	61.0	52.3	47.1	46.5	5.3	4.4	4.0	3.9
New Hampshire	722.7	731.7	730.5	729.4	30.9	28.8	26.7	25.6	4.3	3.9	3.7	3.5
New Jersey	4,379.1	4,422.5	4,425.1	4,409.4	252.8	222.9	214.3	209.8	5.8	5.0	4.8	4.8
New Mexico	900.8	905.7	910.9	911.1	59.5	48.4	49.2	48.6	6.6	5.3	5.4	5.3
New York	9,303.9	9,329.7	9,308.4	9,327.4	600.0	552.7	525.7	515.2	6.4	5.9	5.6	5.5
New York City	3,675.6	3,705.7	3,688.4	3,716.6	313.9	279.0	248.6	256.9	8.5	7.5	6.7	6.9
North Carolina	4,253.9	4,191.5	4,183.6	4,156.9	274.3	212.2	208.2	199.6	6.4	5.1	5.0	4.8
North Dakota	347.3	349.1	350.6	351.3	13.6	10.9	11.5	12.6	3.9	3.1	3.3	3.6
Ohio	5,923.6	5,872.9	5,876.0	5,867.1	358.8	353.5	368.2	353.3	6.1	6.0	6.3	6.0
Oklahoma	1,695.2	1,709.2	1,698.8	1,704.6	98.0	76.1	70.0	74.5	5.8	4.5	4.1	4.4
Oregon	1,845.1	1,855.2	1,850.8	1,831.3	151.2	125.7	136.9	133.7	8.2	6.8	7.4	7.3
Pennsylvania	6,142.7	6,263.4	6,275.0	6,289.6	332.8	332.3	352.3	332.9	5.4	5.3	5.6	5.3
Rhode Island	573.6	572.6	568.9	567.1	28.0	33.0	31.2	28.2	4.9	5.8	5.5	5.0
South Carolina	2,014.9	2,066.9	2,068.9	2,082.0	140.5	124.6	132.6	142.6	7.0	6.0	6.4	6.9
South Dakota	425.7	425.1	424.0	425.3	15.7	14.3	13.7	14.7	3.7	3.4	3.2	3.4
Tennessee	2,909.6	2,920.3	2,931.1	2,941.9	177.3	130.7	142.8	149.1	6.1	4.5	4.9	5.1
Texas	10,935.9	10,953.0	10,963.2	10,976.3	739.0	628.8	627.3	598.6	6.8	5.7	5.7	5.5
Utah	1,190.3	1,208.2	1,211.4	1,214.0	65.4	57.7	57.2	57.7	5.5	4.8	4.7	4.8
Vermont	351.9	354.2	354.3	352.6	17.6	11.8	11.8	11.8	5.0	3.3	3.3	3.3
Virginia	3,782.8	3,847.0	3,846.1	3,828.9	154.1	132.8	136.7	123.7	4.1	3.5	3.6	3.2
Washington	3,142.7	3,195.8	3,211.1	3,209.7	241.0	193.2	198.1	178.7	7.7	6.0	6.2	5.6
West Virginia	784.8	801.1	803.7	803.0	46.9	41.7	43.9	40.5	6.0	5.2	5.5	5.0
Wisconsin	3,089.3	3,109.0	3,115.6	3,116.3	172.6	145.6	150.3	154.9	5.6	4.7	4.8	5.0
Wyoming	280.4	279.6	279.9	280.4	12.1	10.1	10.4	10.9	4.3	3.6	3.7	3.9
Puerto Rico	1,373.8	1,400.2	1,429.0	1,432.6	162.5	135.6	153.9	135.0	11.8	9.7	10.8	9.4

P = preliminary.

NOTE: Data refer to place of residence. Data for Puerto Rico are derived from a monthly household survey similar to the Current Population

Survey. All estimates are provisional and will be revised when new benchmark and population information becomes available.