

News

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MASS LAYOFFS IN NOVEMBER 2003

Employers initiated 1,438 mass layoff actions in November 2003, as measured by new filings for unemployment insurance benefits during the month, according to data from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Each action involved at least 50 persons from a single establishment, and the number of workers involved totaled 138,543. (See table 1.) The number of layoff events and initial claims were sharply lower than a year ago, with the number of initial claims at the lowest level for November since 1997. (November 2003 contained 4 weeks for possible mass layoffs, compared with 5 weeks in each November of the prior 2 years.)

Fewer mass-layoff initial claims were filed against employers in temporary help services, payroll services, farm labor, and highway, street, and bridge construction in November 2003 compared with November 2002. From January through November 2003, both the total number of events, at 17,034, and the number of initial claims, at 1,696,293, were lower than the January-November period a year ago (17,803 events and 1,980,893 initial claims).

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. 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. Because monthly figures include short-term layoffs of 30 days or less, the sum of the figures for the 3 months in a quarter will be higher than the quarterly figure for mass layoffs of more than 30 days. (See table 1.) See the Technical Note for more detailed definitions.

Industry Distribution

Highway, street, and bridge construction, with 11,242 initial claimants, and temporary help services, with 7,002 initial claimants, together accounted for 13 percent of all initial claims in November. (See table A.) The 10 industries reporting the highest number of mass-layoff initial claims accounted for 28 percent of the total.

The manufacturing sector recorded 28 percent of all mass layoff events and 35 percent of all initial claims filed in November. A year ago, manufacturing reported 33 percent of events and 39 percent of initial claims.

Table A. Industries with the largest mass-layoff initial claims in November 2003^p

Industry	Initial claims	November peak	
		Year	Initial claims
Highway, street, and bridge construction	11,242	2001	14,805
Temporary help services	7,002	2000	19,023
Farm labor contractors and crew leaders	3,524	1999	11,613
Food service contractors	2,962	2001	4,214
Supermarkets and other grocery stores	2,460	2003	2,460
AC, refrigeration, and forced air heating	2,385	2001	3,028
Wired telecommunications carrier	2,383	2003	2,383
Motion picture and video production	2,188	2000	8,664
Frozen fruit and vegetable mfg.	2,029	2002	3,290
Industrial building construction	2,005	2002	3,306

p=preliminary.

Within manufacturing, the number of claimants was highest in transportation equipment (9,696) and food processing (8,410). (See table 2.)

Construction accounted for 18 percent of events and 15 percent of initial claims filed in November, with layoffs mostly in highway, street, and bridge construction. Administrative and waste services accounted for 11 percent of events and 10 percent of initial claims during the month, mainly in temporary help services. Ten percent of the events and 7 percent of the initial claims were from the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector, largely among farm labor contractors and crew leaders. An additional 5 percent of all layoff events and initial claims filed during November were from accommodation and food services, primarily among food service contractors.

Government establishments accounted for 4 percent of events and 3 percent of initial claims filed during the month, particularly in educational services.

Compared with November 2002, the largest decreases in initial claims were reported in administrative and support services (-15,568) and professional and technical services (-7,404). The largest over-the-year increase in initial claims was in food and beverage stores (+701).

Geographic Distribution

Among the four regions, the highest number of initial claims in November due to mass layoffs was reported in the Midwest, 46,298. (See table 3.) Heavy and civil engineering construction, transportation equipment manufacturing, and administrative and support services accounted for 43 percent of all initial claims in that region during the month. The West region was next, with 43,329 initial claims, followed by the South, with 27,438, and the Northeast, with 21,478.

The number of initial claimants in mass layoffs declined over the year in all four of the regions, with the largest decrease in the West (-43,623). The only other November in which all four regions had over-the-year declines was in 1997. This November also marked the first time that each of the nine geographic divisions had over-the-year decreases in the number of initial claims associated with mass layoffs, with the largest decreases in the Pacific (-36,615) and East North Central (-12,228).

Among the states, California recorded the largest number of initial claims filed in mass layoff events this November, 32,200, mostly in administrative and support services and in agriculture and forestry support activities. Wisconsin reported 10,111 initial claims, followed by Pennsylvania (7,563) and Ohio (6,464). These four states accounted for 46 percent of all layoff events and 41 percent of initial claims for unemployment insurance. (See table 4.)

California registered the largest over-the-year decrease in the number of initial claims (-30,564), followed by Texas (-8,176). The largest over-the-year increase occurred in Michigan (+3,855).

From January through November, California reported 441,620 initial claims, 26 percent of the national total. The states with the next highest numbers of initial claims were Pennsylvania (101,166), Ohio (92,171), Texas (84,556), and New York (84,135).

Mass Layoffs in December 2003 is scheduled to be released on Thursday, January 22, 2004.

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 establishments which have at least 50 initial claims filed against them during a consecutive 5-week period. These establishments 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, and the number of weeks in a given month may be different from year to year. Therefore,

analysis of over-the-month and over-the-year change should take this calendar effect into consideration.

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; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

Definitions

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 subsequent 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 establishment during a 5-week period, regardless of duration.

Table 1. Mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance, October 2001 to November 2003

Date	Total mass layoffs		Extended mass layoffs lasting more than 30 days		Realization rates ¹	
	Events	Initial claimants	Events	Initial claimants	Events	Initial claimants
2001						
October	1,831	215,483				
November	2,721	295,956				
December	2,440	268,893				
Fourth Quarter	6,992	780,332	2,697	502,502	38.6	64.4
2002						
January	2,146	263,777				
February	1,382	138,808				
March	1,460	161,316				
First Quarter	4,988	563,901	1,750	316,489	35.1	56.1
April	1,506	165,814				
May	1,723	179,799				
June	1,584	162,189				
Second Quarter	4,813	507,802	1,905	353,017	39.6	69.5
July	2,042	245,294				
August	1,248	128,103				
September	1,062	124,522				
Third Quarter	4,352	497,919	1,383	284,629	31.8	57.2
October	1,497	171,100				
November	2,153	240,171				
December	2,474	264,158				
Fourth Quarter	6,124	675,429	2,257	421,570	36.9	62.4
2003						
January	2,315	225,430				
February	1,363	124,965				
March	1,207	113,026				
First Quarter	4,885	463,421	1,700	333,197	34.8	71.9
April	1,581	161,412				
May	1,703	174,204				
June	1,691	157,552				
Second Quarter	4,975	493,168	2,131	415,316	42.8	84.2
July	2,087	226,435				
August	1,258	133,839				
September	868	82,647				
Third Quarter	4,213	442,921	² P1,375	² P181,793	^P 32.6	^P 41.0
October ^P	1,523	158,240				
November ^P	1,438	138,543				

¹ The event realization rate is the percentage of total mass layoff events lasting more than 30 days. The initial claimant realization rate is the percentage of total mass-layoff initial claimants associated with layoffs lasting more than 30 days.

² These quarterly numbers are provisional and will increase as more

data on these layoffs become available. Recent experience suggests that the number of extended mass layoff events is generally revised upwards by less than 10 percent and the number of initial claimants associated with such events increases by 25-40 percent.

^P = preliminary.

Table 2. Industry distribution: Mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance

Industry	Mass layoff events				Initial claimants for unemployment insurance			
	November 2002	September 2003	October 2003 ^P	November 2003 ^P	November 2002	September 2003	October 2003 ^P	November 2003 ^P
Total ¹	2,153	868	1,523	1,438	240,171	82,647	158,240	138,543
Total, private	2,092	799	1,453	1,380	234,104	76,296	150,713	133,818
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	232	43	188	146	17,867	2,382	13,007	10,294
Mining	17	4	5	8	1,477	259	343	568
Utilities	3	(²)	(²)	4	246	(²)	(²)	308
Construction	321	82	143	263	30,604	5,205	11,422	20,999
Manufacturing.....	719	271	438	408	92,712	31,428	53,741	48,419
Food	101	44	96	70	12,066	4,145	10,034	8,410
Beverage and tobacco products	8	(²)	16	9	733	(²)	1,237	938
Textile mills	30	21	9	13	5,065	3,510	1,533	1,178
Textile product mills	6	(²)	8	8	655	(²)	881	483
Apparel	22	10	25	14	2,257	1,212	2,592	1,269
Leather and allied products	5	(²)	(²)	(²)	645	(²)	(²)	(²)
Wood products	61	11	15	29	7,934	969	1,163	3,852
Paper	16	10	12	12	2,116	834	1,049	856
Printing and related support activities	14	(²)	11	8	1,212	(²)	998	570
Petroleum and coal products	10	-	(²)	(²)	902	-	(²)	(²)
Chemicals	12	9	7	10	928	602	546	908
Plastics and rubber products	30	10	16	27	2,974	886	1,390	2,085
Nonmetallic mineral products	29	5	13	21	3,144	420	1,193	2,089
Primary metals	45	24	29	22	5,502	2,011	3,444	2,470
Fabricated metal products	62	5	23	31	5,897	826	2,093	2,696
Machinery	60	21	35	28	11,280	2,073	7,212	4,642
Computer and electronic products	65	26	26	19	5,911	4,820	2,361	1,468
Electrical equipment and appliances	22	9	11	12	2,636	1,142	2,493	2,671
Transportation equipment	84	31	55	51	14,322	4,825	10,229	9,696
Furniture and related products	22	11	15	10	4,986	1,254	1,995	856
Miscellaneous manufacturing	15	10	11	8	1,547	662	883	891
Wholesale trade	33	22	22	23	3,907	1,808	1,760	2,421
Retail trade	96	69	115	76	9,094	5,789	21,870	6,877
Transportation and warehousing	55	20	37	42	8,094	1,723	3,003	4,127
Information	58	26	52	37	6,884	5,791	7,755	5,918
Finance and insurance	44	35	35	19	3,655	2,371	2,541	1,485
Real estate and rental and leasing	13	5	12	8	1,231	382	718	432
Professional and technical services	54	29	30	33	10,579	3,730	2,447	3,175
Management of companies and enterprises	3	(²)	(²)	(²)	503	(²)	(²)	(²)
Administrative and waste services	259	109	233	163	29,522	9,606	21,380	13,925
Educational services.....	4	8	(²)	(²)	267	634	(²)	(²)
Health care and social assistance	38	13	37	28	3,390	945	2,407	2,243
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	34	19	28	26	3,323	1,237	2,039	1,920
Accommodation and food services	92	37	62	75	9,277	2,623	5,176	7,348
Other services, except public administration.....	15	3	7	15	1,289	183	459	1,081
Unclassified	2	1	5	2	183	50	343	1,646
Government	61	69	70	58	6,067	6,351	7,527	4,725
Federal	11	13	20	9	828	1,910	1,649	820
State	20	14	16	22	2,195	1,417	1,383	1,917
Local	30	42	34	27	3,044	3,024	4,495	1,988

¹ Data were reported by all states and the District of Columbia.

² Data do not meet BLS or state agency disclosure standards.

^P = preliminary.

NOTE: Industry data reflect the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), 2002. Dash represents zero.

Table 3. Mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance by census region and division

Census region and division	Mass layoff events				Initial claimants for unemployment insurance			
	November 2002	September 2003	October 2003 ^P	November 2003 ^P	November 2002	September 2003	October 2003 ^P	November 2003 ^P
United States ¹	2,153	868	1,523	1,438	240,171	82,647	158,240	138,543
Northeast	291	107	184	210	33,692	12,115	17,061	21,478
New England	53	19	16	29	5,785	4,559	1,157	2,282
Middle Atlantic	238	88	168	181	27,907	7,556	15,904	19,196
South	460	196	278	265	53,960	19,287	29,371	27,438
South Atlantic	208	96	134	135	25,125	8,698	13,270	13,822
East South Central	74	31	44	35	8,103	4,144	5,310	4,212
West South Central	178	69	100	95	20,732	6,445	10,791	9,404
Midwest	531	165	325	426	65,567	16,868	43,432	46,298
East North Central	373	125	264	313	43,915	12,646	27,841	31,687
West North Central	158	40	61	113	21,652	4,222	15,591	14,611
West	871	400	736	537	86,952	34,377	68,376	43,329
Mountain	95	30	47	51	11,614	2,568	4,038	4,606
Pacific	776	370	689	486	75,338	31,809	64,338	38,723

¹ See footnote 1, table 2.

^P = preliminary.

NOTE: The States (including the District of Columbia) that comprise the 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.

Table 4. State distribution: Mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance

State	Mass layoff events				Initial claimants for unemployment insurance			
	November 2002	September 2003	October 2003 ^P	November 2003 ^P	November 2002	September 2003	October 2003 ^P	November 2003 ^P
Total ¹	2,153	868	1,523	1,438	240,171	82,647	158,240	138,543
Alabama	21	8	13	10	2,549	1,164	1,671	1,384
Alaska	7	3	3	6	662	185	295	561
Arizona	7	4	8	4	572	423	700	257
Arkansas	9	3	6	3	853	268	1,140	777
California	663	345	616	420	62,764	29,429	57,322	32,200
Colorado	20	6	8	7	2,090	439	581	549
Connecticut	8	4	3	4	706	291	200	312
Delaware	(²)	(²)	(²)	(²)	(²)	(²)	(²)	(²)
District of Columbia	(²)	-	-	(²)	(²)	-	-	(²)
Florida	67	43	66	55	4,617	2,555	4,608	3,533
Georgia	23	19	23	18	3,092	2,130	2,838	1,771
Hawaii	4	3	6	(²)	317	196	462	(²)
Idaho	21	6	10	11	3,202	463	1,203	1,408
Illinois	105	41	74	57	13,657	4,510	7,890	5,785
Indiana	49	13	22	42	5,762	983	2,118	4,269
Iowa	29	9	18	29	3,282	1,108	3,680	3,464
Kansas	16	6	6	6	2,226	547	738	696
Kentucky	25	16	23	14	2,674	2,259	3,136	1,649
Louisiana	32	4	12	23	2,836	231	1,045	1,773
Maine	4	-	3	4	534	-	180	306
Maryland	7	(²)	4	9	1,100	(²)	256	843
Massachusetts	30	10	9	17	2,910	1,047	713	1,373
Michigan	15	18	42	48	1,203	1,861	4,263	5,058
Minnesota	50	7	17	44	5,096	511	2,845	3,849
Mississippi	8	(²)	4	3	660	(²)	200	165
Missouri	47	13	18	22	9,219	1,307	8,165	5,651
Montana	8	(²)	5	5	1,363	(²)	360	428
Nebraska	12	5	(²)	7	1,264	749	(²)	412
Nevada	23	12	10	14	3,099	879	835	1,156
New Hampshire	6	(²)	(²)	(²)	531	(²)	(²)	(²)
New Jersey	49	8	27	43	6,482	691	2,906	5,985
New Mexico	3	(²)	(²)	4	206	(²)	(²)	212
New York	82	38	44	59	10,518	3,384	3,855	5,648
North Carolina	32	11	19	23	3,541	897	2,039	3,635
North Dakota	4	-	-	4	565	-	-	474
Ohio	84	29	66	75	7,749	2,979	7,316	6,464
Oklahoma	16	5	12	3	2,419	359	1,614	406
Oregon	53	5	39	26	5,958	375	3,784	3,058
Pennsylvania	107	42	97	79	10,907	3,481	9,143	7,563
Rhode Island	(²)	(²)	-	(²)	(²)	(²)	-	(²)
South Carolina	39	5	7	7	6,384	1,548	706	547
South Dakota	-	-	-	(²)	-	-	-	(²)
Tennessee	20	5	4	8	2,220	608	303	1,014
Texas	121	57	70	66	14,624	5,587	6,992	6,448
Utah	11	-	(²)	6	919	-	(²)	596
Vermont	3	(²)	-	(²)	957	(²)	-	(²)
Virginia	32	14	14	16	5,718	1,321	1,376	2,644
Washington	49	14	25	32	5,637	1,624	2,475	2,751
West Virginia	5	(²)	-	5	439	(²)	-	556
Wisconsin	120	24	60	91	15,544	2,313	6,254	10,111
Wyoming	(²)	-	3	-	(²)	-	216	-
Puerto Rico	4	7	7	-	399	573	567	-

¹ See footnote 1, table 2.

^P = preliminary.

² Data do not meet BLS or state agency disclosure standards.

NOTE: Dash represents zero.