

# News

United States  
Department  
of Labor



Bureau of Labor Statistics

Washington, D.C. 20212

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USDL 05-385

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For release: 10:00 A.M. EST  
Thursday, March 10, 2005

## STATE AND REGIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT, 2004 ANNUAL AVERAGES

Annual average unemployment rates were down in all four regions and 43 states in 2004, while employment-population ratios were little changed in three regions and half the states, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. At the national level, the jobless rate fell by 0.5 percentage point to 5.5 percent, while the employment-population ratio was unchanged at 62.3 percent.

### Regional Unemployment

Among the four regions, the West and Northeast registered the largest annual average unemployment rate decreases from 2003 (-0.7 and -0.6 percentage point, respectively). The Northeast and South reported the lowest jobless rates in 2004, 5.3 percent each, while the West continued to record the highest rate, 5.9 percent. The Midwest had a rate of 5.7 percent. The range between the high and low regional unemployment rates narrowed from 0.9 percentage point in 2003 to 0.6 point in 2004.

At the division level, the Middle Atlantic, New England, Pacific, and West South Central had the largest unemployment rate declines in 2004 (-0.6 percentage point each). No division posted a rate increase over the year. The New England and South Atlantic divisions recorded the lowest jobless rates in 2004, 4.8 percent each, little different from that of the West North Central, 4.9 percent. The Pacific and East North Central divisions reported the highest unemployment rates, 6.3 and 6.1 percent, respectively.

### State Unemployment

Annual average unemployment rates decreased in 43 states from 2003 to 2004, rose in 4 states and the District of Columbia, and were unchanged in 3 states. The largest rate declines were in Washington

All subnational estimates presented in this release, except those for Puerto Rico, were derived from newly updated time-series models with real-time benchmarking to national Current Population Survey (CPS) estimates. A description of the changes to the estimation methodology is available from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/lau/lausredesignqa.htm>. Data for Puerto Rico are not included in the U.S. totals.

Effective with this release, annual averages for regions, divisions, states, and the District of Columbia shown in tables 1 and 2, reflect historical revisions back to 1976.

(-1.2 percentage points), New Jersey (-1.1 points), and North Carolina (-1.0 point). Twenty-two additional states registered over-the-year rate decreases of at least one-half percentage point. This group included most of the states in the West. In 2004, no state had an unemployment rate increase larger than 0.4 percentage point. The District of Columbia's rate rose by 1.0 percentage point. (See table 1 and chart 1.)

Hawaii had the lowest jobless rate among all states, 3.3 percent. Two West North Central states posted the next lowest rates—North Dakota, 3.4 percent, and South Dakota, 3.5 percent. Five additional states reported annual average unemployment rates below 4.0 percent. Two Pacific states—Alaska and Oregon—recorded the highest jobless rates in 2004, 7.5 and 7.4 percent, respectively. Michigan, at 7.1 percent, was the only other state with a rate above 7.0 percent. The District of Columbia's rate was 8.2 percent.

Overall, 30 states had unemployment rates below the national average of 5.5 percent, 16 states and the District of Columbia had rates above it, and 4 states had the same rate. All six states in the New England division, six of the eight states in the Mountain, and five of the seven states in the West North Central posted rates below that of the U.S. In contrast, four of the five Pacific division states and three of the four West South Central states recorded rates above the national rate. (See chart 2.)

### Regional Employment-Population Ratios

Three of the four regions registered little or no change in their employment-population ratios—the proportion of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years and over that was employed—from 2003. The Northeast posted the largest change, an increase of 0.4 percentage point. Relative to the 62.3 percent employment-population ratio for the U.S., the Midwest (64.5 percent) and West (62.6 percent) reported higher ratios, while the Northeast (61.5 percent) and South (61.3 percent) had lower ratios.

Of the nine geographic divisions, the Middle Atlantic recorded the largest over-the-year change in its employment-population ratio, an increase of 0.6 percentage point. The West North Central again registered the highest proportion of employed persons (68.0 percent), while the East South Central continued to report the lowest proportion (58.9 percent).

### State Employment-Population Ratios

In 2004, 25 states posted declines in their proportions of employed persons from 2003, 19 states and the District of Columbia reported increases, and 6 states had no change. The largest employment-population ratio declines were in Delaware (-1.0 percentage point) and Rhode Island (-0.9 point). Five other states recorded declines of at least one-half percentage point. Washington reported the largest increase in its employment-population ratio in 2004 (+1.2 percentage points). Colorado had the next largest increase (+0.9 percentage point), followed by Arkansas, New York, and Pennsylvania (+0.6 point each). (See table 2 and chart 3.)

West Virginia continued to have the lowest employment-population ratio among all states in 2004, 51.4 percent. No other state reported a ratio below 57 percent. Seven of the other nine states with employment-population ratios below 60 percent also were located in the South. Minnesota continued to record the highest proportion of employed persons, 71.4 percent, followed by two other West North Central states—Nebraska and South Dakota—at 71.2 and 70.5 percent, respectively. These three were the only states with ratios over 70.0 percent. Thirty-two states recorded employment-population ratios higher than the U.S. figure (62.3 percent), while 18 states and the District of Columbia registered lower ratios. All states in the New England and the West North Central divisions again reported employment-

population ratios above that of the U.S., while all states in the East South Central division again had ratios below it.

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.

**Table 1. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years of age and over by region, division, and state, 2003-04 annual averages**

(Numbers in thousands)

Region, division, and state	Population		Civilian labor force		Employed		Unemployed		Unemployment rate	
	2003	2004	2003	2004	2003	2004	2003	2004	2003	2004
United States .....	221,168	223,357	146,510	147,401	137,736	139,252	8,774	8,149	6.0	5.5
Northeast .....	42,237	42,429	27,408	27,546	25,796	26,081	1,612	1,466	5.9	5.3
New England .....	11,091	11,155	7,551	7,529	7,140	7,166	410	363	5.4	4.8
Connecticut .....	2,680	2,700	1,805	1,797	1,706	1,710	99	88	5.5	4.9
Maine .....	1,042	1,055	694	699	660	667	35	32	5.0	4.6
Massachusetts .....	5,027	5,036	3,414	3,393	3,216	3,219	198	174	5.8	5.1
New Hampshire .....	1,005	1,018	717	723	685	696	32	27	4.5	3.8
Rhode Island .....	844	848	569	562	538	533	31	29	5.4	5.2
Vermont .....	494	499	352	353	336	340	16	13	4.5	3.7
Middle Atlantic .....	31,146	31,274	19,857	20,018	18,656	18,915	1,202	1,103	6.1	5.5
New Jersey .....	6,618	6,666	4,371	4,388	4,115	4,176	256	212	5.9	4.8
New York .....	14,875	14,906	9,300	9,355	8,705	8,812	595	543	6.4	5.8
Pennsylvania .....	9,653	9,702	6,186	6,275	5,835	5,927	351	348	5.7	5.5
Midwest .....	49,984	50,378	34,284	34,440	32,263	32,472	2,020	1,968	5.9	5.7
East North Central .....	34,981	35,222	23,522	23,601	22,033	22,167	1,489	1,434	6.3	6.1
Illinois .....	9,576	9,641	6,361	6,396	5,934	6,000	427	396	6.7	6.2
Indiana .....	4,687	4,725	3,169	3,170	3,001	3,005	168	165	5.3	5.2
Michigan .....	7,703	7,748	5,054	5,079	4,695	4,719	358	360	7.1	7.1
Ohio .....	8,781	8,828	5,869	5,885	5,506	5,523	363	362	6.2	6.1
Wisconsin .....	4,233	4,280	3,069	3,071	2,897	2,919	172	152	5.6	4.9
West North Central .....	15,003	15,156	10,762	10,838	10,231	10,305	531	533	4.9	4.9
Iowa .....	2,287	2,307	1,620	1,624	1,548	1,545	72	78	4.4	4.8
Kansas .....	2,053	2,069	1,447	1,464	1,366	1,384	81	80	5.6	5.5
Minnesota .....	3,898	3,943	2,929	2,952	2,786	2,814	143	138	4.9	4.7
Missouri .....	4,378	4,424	3,014	3,031	2,846	2,859	168	172	5.6	5.7
Nebraska .....	1,318	1,331	976	985	937	948	39	37	4.0	3.8
North Dakota .....	492	497	351	354	339	342	13	12	3.6	3.4
South Dakota .....	578	586	424	428	409	413	15	15	3.5	3.5
South .....	78,713	80,003	51,235	51,767	48,300	49,037	2,935	2,730	5.7	5.3
South Atlantic .....	41,316	42,053	26,939	27,297	25,526	25,975	1,414	1,322	5.2	4.8
Delaware .....	630	643	420	423	404	406	17	17	4.0	4.1
District of Columbia .....	448	443	298	299	277	274	21	24	7.2	8.2
Florida .....	13,197	13,521	8,195	8,396	7,764	7,997	431	399	5.3	4.8
Georgia .....	6,416	6,534	4,341	4,390	4,135	4,188	206	202	4.7	4.6
Maryland .....	4,178	4,223	2,880	2,883	2,751	2,761	128	122	4.5	4.2
North Carolina .....	6,340	6,439	4,230	4,256	3,957	4,021	273	236	6.5	5.5
South Carolina .....	3,147	3,193	2,013	2,046	1,878	1,907	135	140	6.7	6.8
Virginia .....	5,516	5,605	3,767	3,815	3,612	3,674	155	140	4.1	3.7
West Virginia .....	1,445	1,452	796	788	748	747	48	42	6.0	5.3
East South Central .....	13,267	13,411	8,337	8,361	7,845	7,899	492	461	5.9	5.5
Alabama .....	3,451	3,484	2,133	2,149	2,009	2,029	124	119	5.8	5.6
Kentucky .....	3,163	3,194	1,979	1,974	1,856	1,870	123	104	6.2	5.3
Mississippi .....	2,146	2,169	1,322	1,330	1,237	1,248	85	82	6.4	6.2
Tennessee .....	4,507	4,564	2,903	2,908	2,742	2,752	161	156	5.5	5.4
West South Central .....	24,129	24,539	15,959	16,110	14,929	15,163	1,030	946	6.5	5.9
Arkansas .....	2,076	2,102	1,279	1,306	1,205	1,232	75	74	5.9	5.7
Louisiana .....	3,349	3,377	2,042	2,058	1,915	1,940	128	117	6.3	5.7
Oklahoma .....	2,647	2,671	1,710	1,710	1,614	1,628	95	83	5.6	4.8
Texas .....	16,057	16,388	10,927	11,035	10,196	10,363	731	672	6.7	6.1
West .....	49,706	50,546	33,228	33,648	31,048	31,663	2,181	1,985	6.6	5.9
Mountain .....	14,441	14,790	9,859	10,057	9,302	9,549	557	509	5.6	5.1
Arizona .....	4,137	4,266	2,707	2,774	2,553	2,637	154	137	5.7	5.0
Colorado .....	3,427	3,468	2,480	2,522	2,325	2,383	155	139	6.2	5.5
Idaho .....	1,014	1,039	691	703	654	670	37	33	5.3	4.7
Montana .....	717	730	473	483	452	462	21	21	4.4	4.4
Nevada .....	1,686	1,759	1,149	1,178	1,090	1,126	59	51	5.1	4.3
New Mexico .....	1,407	1,436	893	912	841	860	53	52	5.9	5.7
Utah .....	1,664	1,697	1,188	1,203	1,121	1,140	67	63	5.7	5.2
Wyoming .....	389	395	277	282	265	271	12	11	4.4	3.9
Pacific .....	35,266	35,755	23,370	23,591	21,746	22,114	1,624	1,476	6.9	6.3
Alaska .....	457	465	331	333	305	308	26	25	7.7	7.5
California .....	26,412	26,768	17,414	17,552	16,223	16,460	1,190	1,092	6.8	6.2
Hawaii .....	932	946	612	616	589	596	24	20	3.9	3.3
Oregon .....	2,768	2,800	1,852	1,856	1,702	1,719	151	138	8.1	7.4
Washington .....	4,696	4,777	3,160	3,234	2,927	3,032	233	201	7.4	6.2
Puerto Rico .....	2,918	2,938	1,364	1,371	1,200	1,226	163	145	12.0	10.6

NOTE: Data refer to place of residence. Data for Puerto Rico are derived from a monthly household survey similar to the Current Population Survey. Data for all other areas reflect an updated model-based methodology. Subnational data

incorporate updated Census 2000-based population controls. As a result, they will not add to U.S. totals. Unemployment rates are based on unrounded levels.

**Table 2. Employment-population ratio of persons 16 years of age and over by region, division, and state, 2003-04 annual averages**

(Percent)

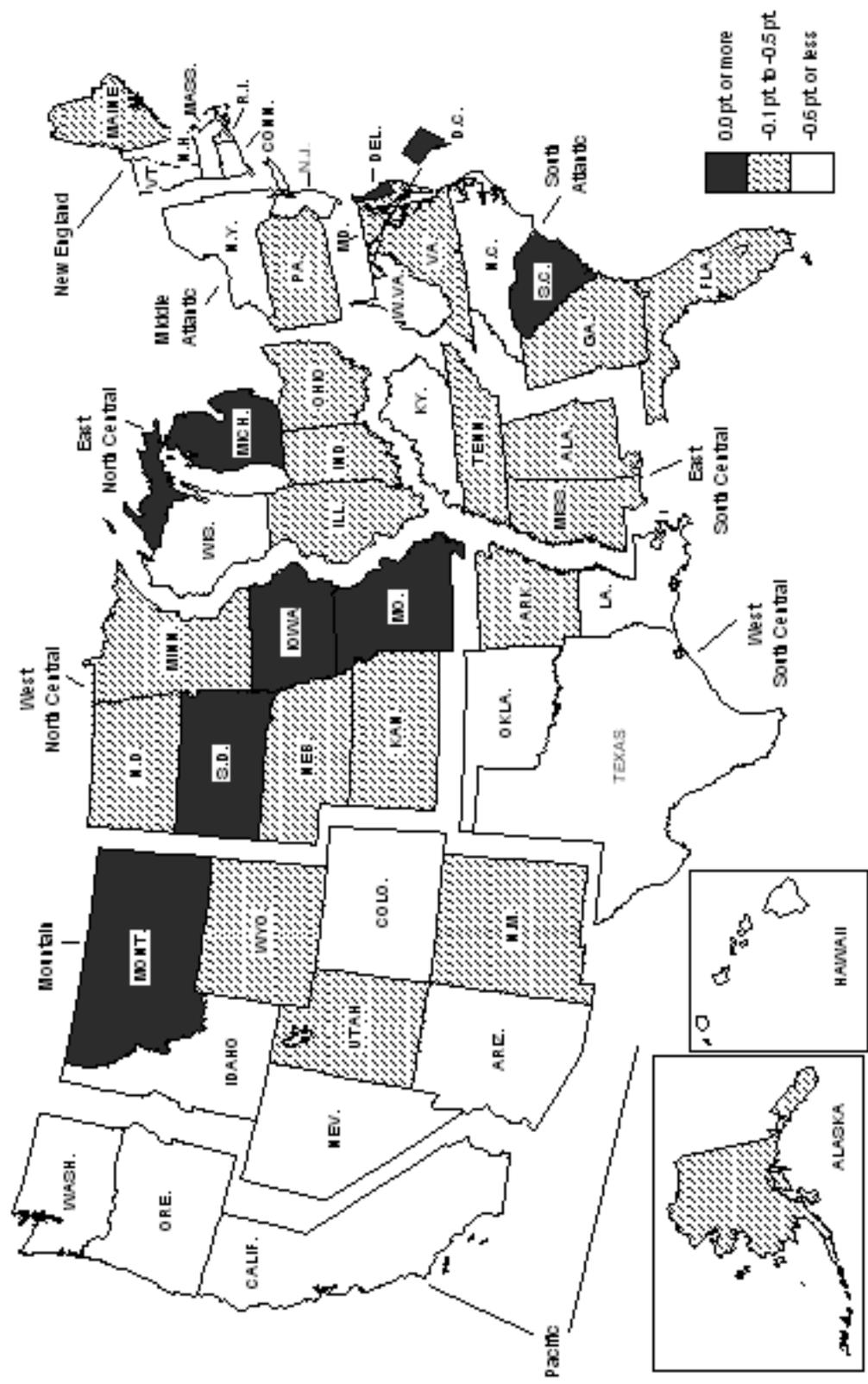
Region, division, and state	Employment-population ratio <sup>1</sup>		Over-the-year change
	2003	2004	
United States .....	62.3	62.3	.0
Northeast .....	61.1	61.5	0.4
New England .....	64.4	64.2	-.2
Connecticut .....	63.7	63.3	-.4
Maine .....	63.3	63.3	.0
Massachusetts .....	64.0	63.9	-.1
New Hampshire .....	68.2	68.3	.1
Rhode Island .....	63.8	62.9	-.9
Vermont .....	67.9	68.2	.3
Middle Atlantic .....	59.9	60.5	.6
New Jersey .....	62.2	62.6	.4
New York .....	58.5	59.1	.6
Pennsylvania .....	60.5	61.1	.6
Midwest .....	64.5	64.5	.0
East North Central .....	63.0	62.9	-.1
Illinois .....	62.0	62.2	.2
Indiana .....	64.0	63.6	-.4
Michigan .....	61.0	60.9	-.1
Ohio .....	62.7	62.6	-.1
Wisconsin .....	68.4	68.2	-.2
West North Central .....	68.2	68.0	-.2
Iowa .....	67.7	67.0	-.7
Kansas .....	66.5	66.9	.4
Minnesota .....	71.5	71.4	-.1
Missouri .....	65.0	64.6	-.4
Nebraska .....	71.1	71.2	.1
North Dakota .....	68.9	68.9	.0
South Dakota .....	70.8	70.5	-.3
South .....	61.4	61.3	-.1
South Atlantic .....	61.8	61.8	.0
Delaware .....	64.1	63.1	-1.0
District of Columbia .....	61.8	62.0	.2
Florida .....	58.8	59.1	.3
Georgia .....	64.4	64.1	-.3
Maryland .....	65.9	65.4	-.5
North Carolina .....	62.4	62.4	.0
South Carolina .....	59.7	59.7	.0
Virginia .....	65.5	65.6	.1
West Virginia .....	51.8	51.4	-.4
East South Central .....	59.1	58.9	-.2
Alabama .....	58.2	58.2	.0
Kentucky .....	58.7	58.6	-.1
Mississippi .....	57.7	57.6	-.1
Tennessee .....	60.8	60.3	-.5
West South Central .....	61.9	61.8	-.1
Arkansas .....	58.0	58.6	.6
Louisiana .....	57.2	57.5	.3
Oklahoma .....	61.0	60.9	-.1
Texas .....	63.5	63.2	-.3
West .....	62.5	62.6	.1
Mountain .....	64.4	64.6	.2
Arizona .....	61.7	61.8	.1
Colorado .....	67.8	68.7	.9
Idaho .....	64.5	64.5	.0
Montana .....	63.1	63.3	.2
Nevada .....	64.6	64.0	-.6
New Mexico .....	59.8	59.9	.1
Utah .....	67.4	67.2	-.2
Wyoming .....	68.2	68.5	.3
Pacific .....	61.7	61.8	.1
Alaska .....	66.7	66.2	-.5
California .....	61.4	61.5	.1
Hawaii .....	63.1	63.0	-.1
Oregon .....	61.5	61.4	-.1
Washington .....	62.3	63.5	1.2
Puerto Rico .....	41.1	41.7	.6

<sup>1</sup> Employment as a percent of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years of age and over.

NOTE: Data for Puerto Rico are derived from a household survey similar to the Current Population Survey. Employment-population ratios are based on unrounded levels.

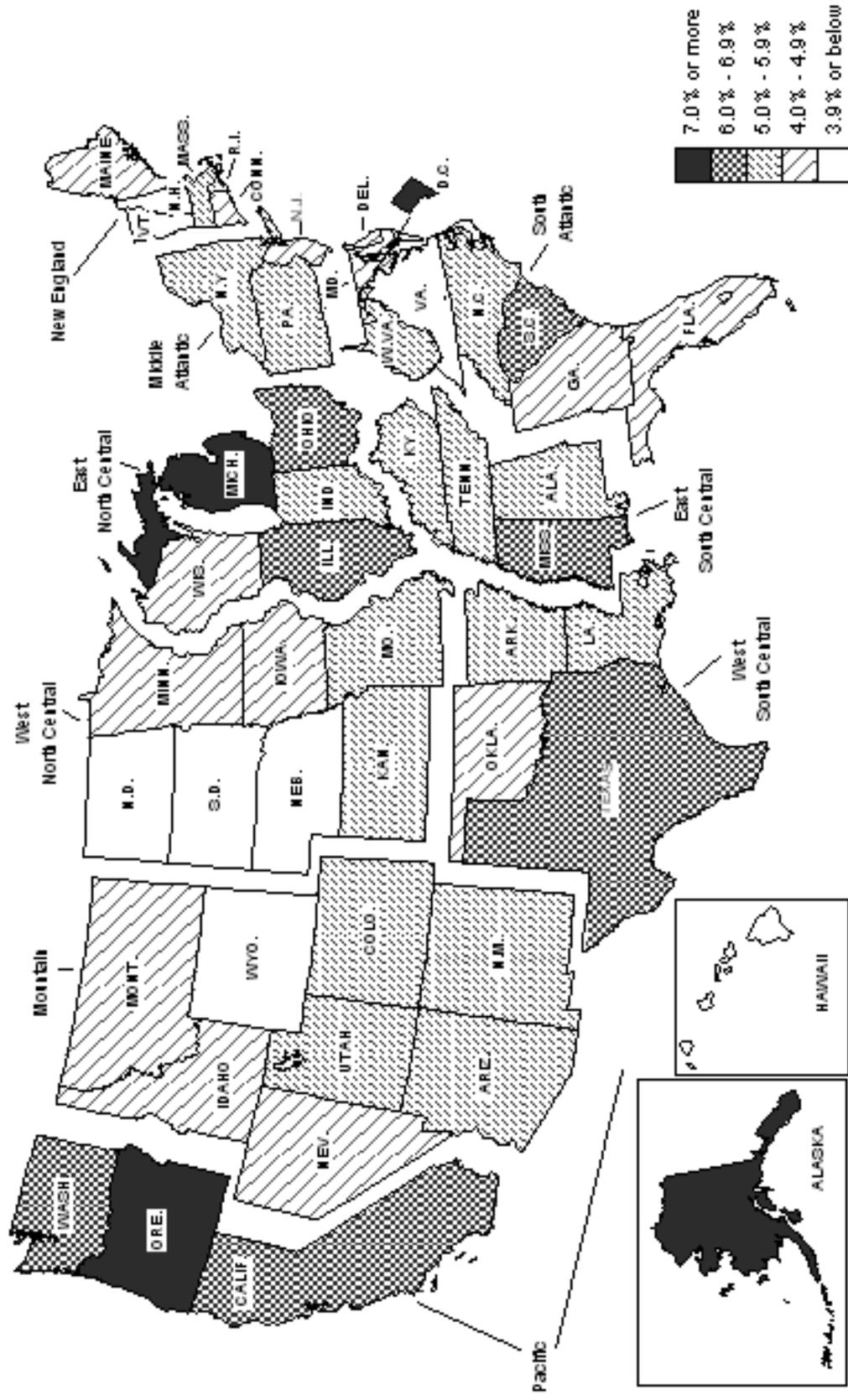
**Chart 1. Over-the-Year change in unemployment rates by state, 2004 annual averages**

(U.S. change = -0.5 percentage point)



# Chart 2. Unemployment rates by state, 2004 annual averages

(U.S. rate = 5.5 percent)



# Chart 3. Employment-population ratios by state, 2004 annual averages

(U.S. average = 62.3 percent)

