NEWS RELEASE

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

BLS

Unemployment in the Pittsburgh Area by County – December 2015
Two Pittsburgh Counties Record Unemployment Rate Increases Over the Year

In December, Allegheny and Butler Counties had the lowest unemployment rate in the Pittsburgh, Pa., Metropolitan Statistical Area at 3.8 percent each, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that two Pittsburgh-area counties had jobless rates higher than the 4.8-percent U.S. average. Fayette County had the area's highest unemployment rate at 6.5 percent, followed by Armstrong County at 6.1 percent. Two counties—Beaver and Washington—had an unemployment rate equal to the nation's. (See chart 1 and chart 2. The Technical Note at the end of this release contains the metropolitan area definition. All data in this release are not seasonally adjusted; accordingly, over-the-year analysis is used throughout.)

Chart 1. Unemployment rates for the United States and counties in the Pittsburgh, Pa., Metropolitan Statistical Area, December 2015, not seasonally adjusted

Source: U.S. Bureau at Labor Statistics.
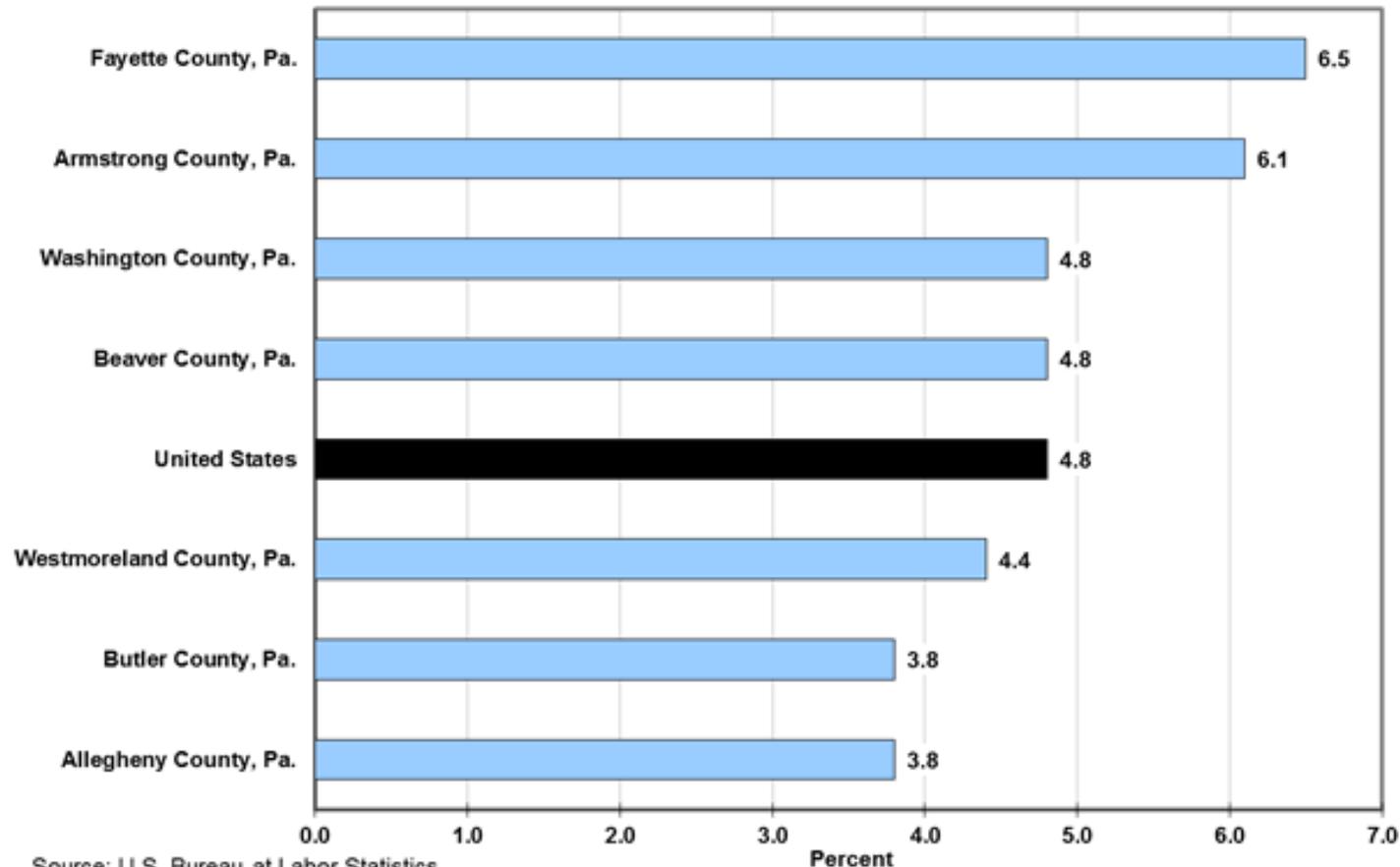
In December 2015, 5 of the 7 Pittsburgh-area counties had over-the-year unemployment rate declines; all were smaller than the nation's 0.6-percentage point decrease. (See table A.) The largest rate declines were in Allegheny and Beaver Counties (-0.4 percentage point each), followed by decreases in Butler and Westmoreland Counties (-0.2 percentage point each), and Fayette County (-0.1 percentage point). The remaining two counties in the area had over-the-year rate increases—0.5 point in Armstrong County and 0.2 percentage point in Washington County.

Table A. Unemployment rates for the United States, the Pittsburgh, Pa., Metropolitan Statistical Area, and its components, not seasonally adjusted

Area	Unemployment rate			Change from	
	Dec 2013	Dec 2014	Dec 2015	Dec 2013 to Dec 2015	Dec 2014 to Dec 2015
United States..	6.5	5.4	4.8	-1.7	-0.6
Pittsburgh, Pa. Metropolitan Statistical Area	5.9	4.5	4.3	-1.6	-0.2
Allegheny County, Pa.	5.5	4.2	3.8	-1.7	-0.4
Armstrong County, Pa.	7.1	5.6	6.1	-1.0	0.5
Beaver County, Pa.	6.5	5.2	4.8	-1.7	-0.4
Butler County, Pa..	5.3	4.0	3.8	-1.5	-0.2
Fayette County, Pa...	8.7	6.6	6.5	-2.2	-0.1
Washington County, Pa.	6.0	4.6	4.8	-1.2	0.2
Westmoreland County, Pa....................................	6.1	4.6	4.4	-1.7	-0.2

Note: Data for the Pittsburgh, Pa. Metropolitan Statistical Area and its components are preliminary for the most recent month.

Jobless rates in all Pittsburgh counties in December 2015 were lower than their December 2013 levels. Fayette County had the largest jobless rate decline of 2.2 percentage points, exceeding the national decline of 1.7 percentage points. Allegheny, Beaver and Westmoreland Counties had jobless rate decreases equal to the nation's. The remaining three Pittsburgh-area counties had rate decreases ranging from 1.5 to 1.0 percentage points.

The Metropolitan Area Employment and Unemployment news release for January is scheduled to be released on Friday, March 18, 2016, at 10:00 a.m. (EDT).

Technical Note

This release presents unemployment rate data for states and counties from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program, a federal-state cooperative endeavor.

Definitions. The labor force and unemployment data are based on the same concepts and definitions as those used for the official national estimates obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS), a sample survey of households that is conducted for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) by the U.S. Census Bureau. The LAUS program measures employment and unemployment on a place-of-residence basis. The universe for each is the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years of age and over. Employed persons are those who did any work at all for pay or profit in the reference week (the week including the 12th of the month) or worked 15 hours or more without pay in a family business or farm, plus those not working who had a job from which they were temporarily absent, whether or not paid, for such reasons as labor-management dispute, illness, or vacation. Unemployed persons are those who were not employed during the reference week (based on the definition above), had actively looked for a job sometime in the 4-week period ending with the reference week, and were

currently available for work; persons on layoff expecting recall need not be looking for work to be counted as unemployed. The labor force is the sum of employed and unemployed persons. The unemployment rate is the number of unemployed as a percent of the labor force.

Methods of Estimation. The LAUS program is a hierarchy of non-survey methodologies for indirectly estimating employment and unemployment in states and local areas. Statewide data are produced through a modeling technique that uses estimates of payroll jobs from the Current Employment Statistics survey and unemployment insurance claims counts from the state workforce agencies to mitigate volatility in the direct CPS tabulations of employment and unemployment, respectively. Data for labor market areas, such as metropolitan areas and metropolitan divisions, are produced through a building block approach and adjusted proportionally to state model-based totals. Data for counties within labor market areas are produced through a disaggregation technique. A detailed description of the LAUS estimation procedures is available in chapter 4 of the BLS Handbook of Methods at https://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch4.pdf.

Annual revisions. Labor force and unemployment data for prior years reflect adjustments made at the end of each year. The adjusted estimates reflect updated population data from the U.S. Census Bureau, any revisions in the other data sources, and model reestimation. All substate estimates are reestimated and adjusted to add to the revised model-based estimates for states.

Area definitions. The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, dated February 28, 2013. A detailed list of the geographic definitions is available at www.bls.gov/lau/lausmsa.htm.

The **Pittsburgh, Pa. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Washington, and Westmoreland counties in Pennsylvania.

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.

Chart 2. Unemployment rates for counties in the Pittsburgh, Pa. Metropolitan Statistical Area, not seasonally adjusted, December 2015

U.S. rate = 4.8 percent

Unemployment Rate

- 6.1% and above
- 5.1% to 6.0%
- 4.1% to 5.0%
- 4.0% and below

Butler

Armstrong

Beaver

Allegheny

Westmoreland

Washington

Fayette

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.