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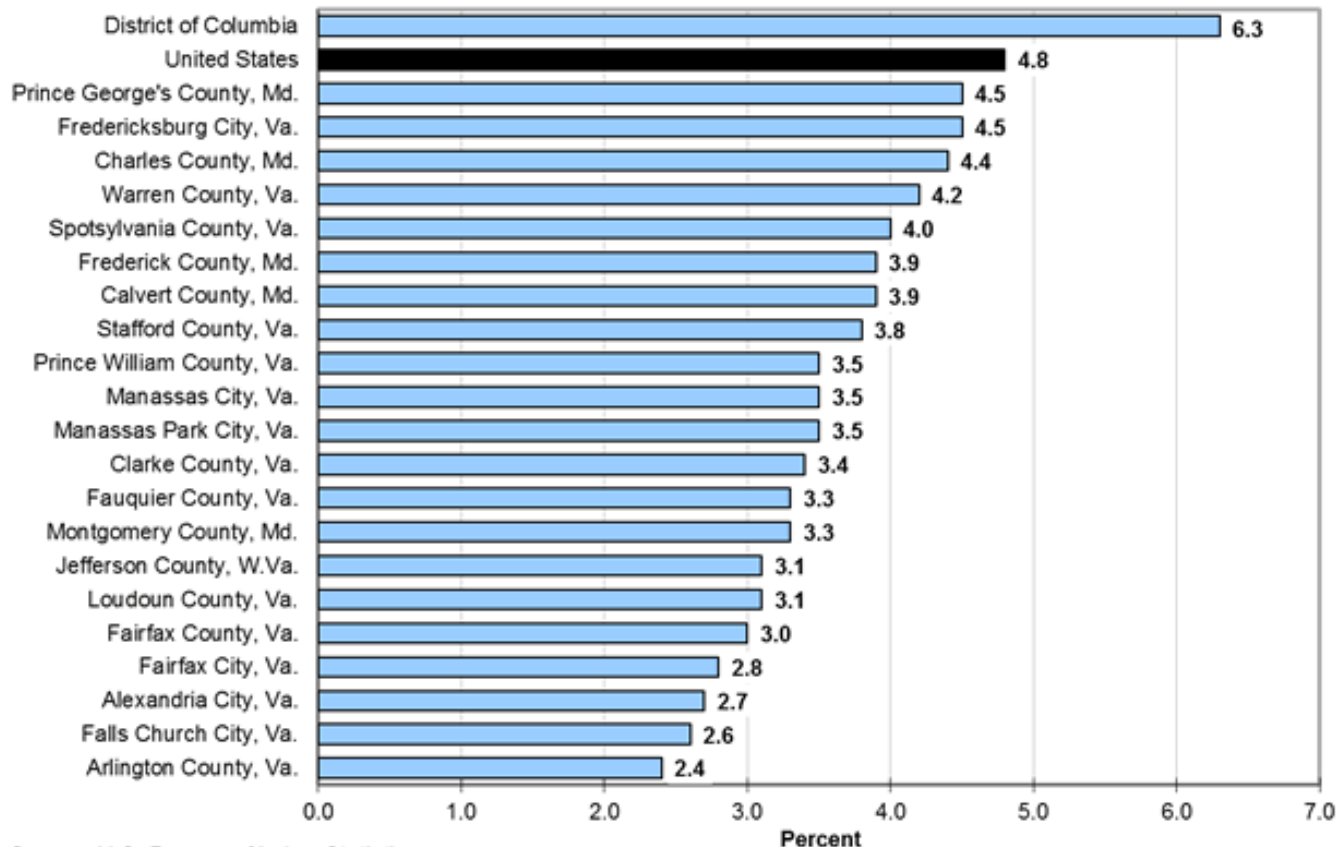
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Unemployment in the Washington Area by County – December 2015 **Only One Area County Posted an Unemployment Rate above the National Average**

In December, Arlington County, Va., had the lowest unemployment rate in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W.Va. Metropolitan Statistical Area at 2.4 percent, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau’s regional commissioner, noted that the District of Columbia had an unemployment rate of 6.3 percent, the highest among the 22 counties that make up the metropolitan area, and the only area county to exceed the 4.8-percent U.S. rate. The rates for the remaining 20 counties in the area ranged from 4.5 percent in Prince George’s, Md., and Fredericksburg City, Va., to 2.6 percent in Falls Church City, Va. (See [chart 1](#) and [chart 2](#). The Technical Note at the end of this release contains the metropolitan area definitions. 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 Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W.Va. Metropolitan Statistical Area, December 2015, not seasonally adjusted



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Unemployment rates in all 22 Washington-area counties were lower in December 2015 than in December 2014. (See [table A.](#)) Eight counties had rate declines that exceeded the national decrease of 0.6 percentage point with the District of Columbia recording the area’s largest decrease at 1.1 points. Five counties had rate declines that matched the national decline. Over-the-year rate decreases in the remaining counties ranged from 0.5 percentage point to 0.3 point.

Table A. Unemployment rates for the United States, the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W.Va. Metropolitan Statistical Area, and its components, not seasonally adjusted

Area	Back data	Unemployment rates			Change from	
		Dec 2013	Dec 2014	Dec 2015 ⁽¹⁾	Dec 2013 to Dec 2015 ⁽¹⁾	Dec 2014 to Dec 2015 ⁽¹⁾
United States.....		6.5	5.4	4.8	-1.7	-0.6
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W.Va. Metropolitan Statistical Area		4.9	4.4	3.8	-1.1	-0.6
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W.Va. Metropolitan Division		5.1	4.6	3.9	-1.2	-0.7
District of Columbia		7.6	7.4	6.3	-1.3	-1.1
Arlington County, Va.		3.0	2.8	2.4	-0.6	-0.4
Clarke County, Va.		4.2	4.0	3.4	-0.8	-0.6
Fairfax County, Va.		4.0	3.5	3.0	-1.0	-0.5
Fauquier County, Va.		4.5	3.8	3.3	-1.2	-0.5
Loudoun County, Va.		4.0	3.6	3.1	-0.9	-0.5
Prince William County, Va.		4.8	4.2	3.5	-1.3	-0.7
Spotsylvania County, Va.		5.2	4.7	4.0	-1.2	-0.7
Stafford County, Va.		5.3	4.6	3.8	-1.5	-0.8
Warren County, Va.		5.5	4.9	4.2	-1.3	-0.7
Alexandria City, Va.		3.7	3.3	2.7	-1.0	-0.6
Fairfax City, Va.		3.7	3.5	2.8	-0.9	-0.7
Falls Church City, Va.		3.6	2.9	2.6	-1.0	-0.3
Fredericksburg City, Va.		5.8	5.2	4.5	-1.3	-0.7
Manassas City, Va.		5.0	4.1	3.5	-1.5	-0.6
Manassas Park City, Va.		4.7	3.8	3.5	-1.2	-0.3
Calvert County, Md.		5.1	4.5	3.9	-1.2	-0.6
Charles County, Md.		5.5	4.9	4.4	-1.1	-0.5
Prince George's County, Md.		5.9	5.1	4.5	-1.4	-0.6
Jefferson County, W.Va.		4.4	3.5	3.1	-1.3	-0.4
Silver Spring-Frederick-Rockville, Md. Metropolitan Division		4.3	3.9	3.4	-0.9	-0.5
Frederick County, Md.		5.0	4.6	3.9	-1.1	-0.7
Montgomery County, Md.		4.1	3.8	3.3	-0.8	-0.5

Footnotes

(1) Data for the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W.Va. Metropolitan Statistical Area and its components are preliminary for the most recent month.

All 22 counties in the Washington metropolitan area had lower unemployment rates in December 2015 than two years earlier, although no county had a rate decline larger than the national decrease of 1.7 percentage points. Stafford, Va., and Manassas City, Va., had the largest two-year decrease in the local area at 1.5 percentage points each. The area’s remaining counties had unemployment rate declines ranging from 1.4 percentage points in Prince George’s County, Md., to 0.6 point in Arlington County, Va.

December 2015 unemployment rates for the two metropolitan divisions in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria metropolitan area were 3.9 percent (Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W.Va.) and 3.4 percent (Silver Spring-Frederick-Rockville, Md.). The jobless rate in the Washington division declined 0.7 percentage point over the year; in the Silver Spring division, the rate decreased 0.5 point. Nationally, the unemployment rate fell 0.6 percentage point from December 2014 to December 2015.

The Metropolitan Area Employment and Unemployment news release for January is scheduled to be released on Friday, March 18, 2015, 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 www.bls.gov/opub/hom/homch4.htm.

Annual revisions. Labor force and unemployment data for prior years reflect adjustments made at the end of each year, usually implemented with January estimates. 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.

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 Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W.Va. Metropolitan Statistical Area includes the District of Columbia; Arlington, Clarke, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren Counties, and Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, and Manassas Park Cities in Virginia; Calvert, Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties in Maryland; and Jefferson County in West Virginia.

The **Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W.Va. Metropolitan Division** includes the District of Columbia; Arlington, Clarke, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren Counties, and Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, and Manassas Park Cities in Virginia; Calvert, Charles, and Prince George's Counties in Maryland; and Jefferson County in West Virginia.

The **Silver Spring-Frederick-Rockville, Md. Metropolitan Division** includes Frederick and Montgomery Counties in Maryland.

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 Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, D.C.-Va.-Md.-W.Va. Metropolitan Statistical Area, not seasonally adjusted, December 2015

