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Unemployment in the Washington Area by County – December 2019
21 of 22 Area Counties had Unemployment Rates Lower than the National Average

In December, Arlington County, VA, had the lowest unemployment rate in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area at 1.6 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 4.9 percent, the highest among the 22 counties and equivalents that make up the metropolitan area. No other county or equivalent in the area had rates above the U.S. rate of 3.4 percent. The rates for the remaining 20 counties and equivalents in the area ranged from 3.2 percent in Prince George's County, MD, to 1.7 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, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area, December 2019, not seasonally adjusted
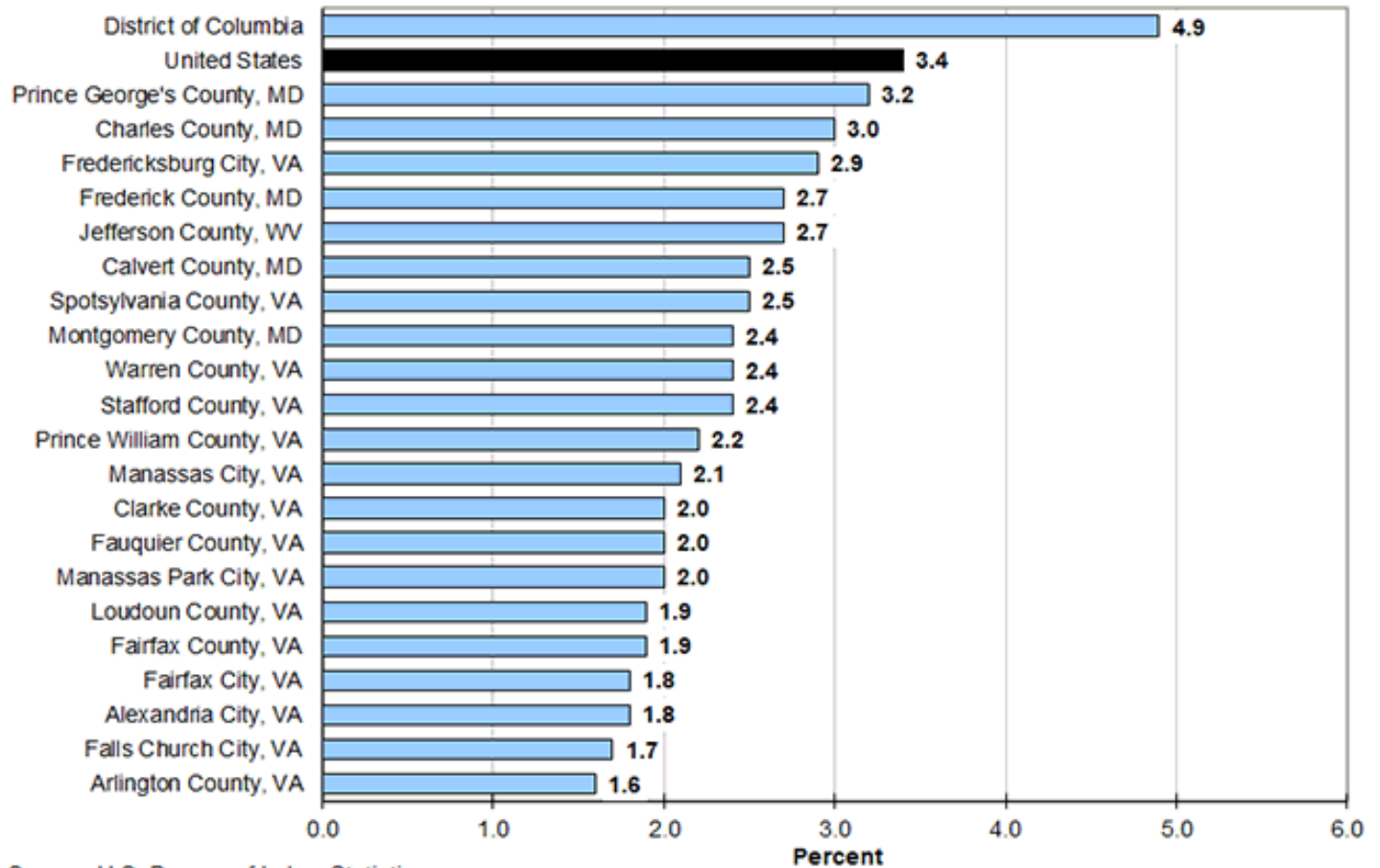
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Unemployment rates in 21 of the 22 Washington-area counties and equivalents were lower in December 2019 than in December 2018. Prince George's County, MD, had the area's largest over-the-year decline at 0.5 percentage point, followed by four area counties and equivalents—Clarke, VA; Manassas Park City, VA; Calvert, MD; and Charles, MD—at 0.4 point each. The District of Columbia was unchanged over-the-year, while the remaining 16 counties and equivalents had rate declines that were at or below the national rate decline of 0.3 percentage point. (See table A.)

Table A. Unemployment rates for the United States, the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area, and its components, not seasonally adjusted

Area	Back data	Unemployment rates			Change from	
		Dec 2017	Dec 2018	Dec 2019 (1)	Dec 2017 to Dec 2019 (1)	Dec 2018 to Dec 2019 (1)
United States..................................	〜	3.9	3.7	3.4	-0.5	-0.3
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area	〜	3.3	2.9	2.6	-0.7	-0.3
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Division	〜	3.4	2.9	2.7	-0.7	-0.2
District of Columbia	〜	5.4	4.9	4.9	-0.5	0.0
Arlington County, VA....................................	〜	2.1	1.7	1.6	-0.5	-0.1
Clarke County, VA	〜	2.9	2.4	2.0	-0.9	-0.4
Fairfax County, VA.......................................	〜	2.5	2.1	1.9	-0.6	-0.2
Fauquier County, VA....................................	〜	2.7	2.3	2.0	-0.7	-0.3
Loudoun County, VA.....................................	〜	2.6	2.1	1.9	-0.7	-0.2
Prince William County, VA...........................	〜	2.8	2.4	2.2	-0.6	-0.2

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table A. Unemployment rates for the United States, the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area, and its components, not seasonally adjusted - Continued

Area	Back data	Unemployment rates			Change from	
		Dec 2017	Dec 2018	Dec 2019 (1)	Dec 2017 to Dec 2019 (1)	Dec 2018 to Dec 2019 (1)
Spotsylvania County, VA	〽	3.2	2.7	2.5	-0.7	-0.2
Stafford County, VA	〽	3.1	2.6	2.4	-0.7	-0.2
Warren County, VA	〽	3.1	2.7	2.4	-0.7	-0.3
Alexandria City, VA	〽	2.5	1.9	1.8	-0.7	-0.1
Fairfax City, VA	〽	2.4	2.0	1.8	-0.6	-0.2
Falls Church City, VA	〽	2.2	1.8	1.7	-0.5	-0.1
Fredericksburg City, VA	〽	3.8	3.2	2.9	-0.9	-0.3
Manassas City, VA	〽	2.8	2.3	2.1	-0.7	-0.2
Manassas Park City, VA	〽	2.9	2.4	2.0	-0.9	-0.4
Calvert County, MD	〽	3.5	2.9	2.5	-1.0	-0.4
Charles County, MD	〽	3.8	3.4	3.0	-0.8	-0.4
Prince George's County, MD	〽	4.2	3.7	3.2	-1.0	-0.5
Jefferson County, WV	〽	2.9	3.0	2.7	-0.2	-0.3
Silver Spring-Frederick-Rockville, MD Metropolitan Division	〽	3.1	2.7	2.5	-0.6	-0.2
Frederick County, MD	〽	3.4	3.0	2.7	-0.7	-0.3
Montgomery County, MD	〽	3.0	2.7	2.4	-0.6	-0.3

Footnotes
(1) Data for the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area and its components are preliminary for the most recent month.

Jobless rates in all 22 counties and equivalents in the Washington metropolitan area were lower in December 2019 than two years earlier. Two Maryland counties—Calvert and Prince George's—had the largest rate declines, each down 1.0 percentage point since December 2017. Nineteen other counties and equivalents had decreases that were equal to or larger than the national rate decline of 0.5 percentage point. Jefferson County, WV, had a rate decrease that was smaller than the U.S. rate decline of 0.2 percentage point.

December 2019 unemployment rates for the two metropolitan divisions in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria metropolitan area—Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV and Silver Spring-Frederick-Rockville, MD—were at 2.7 and 2.5 percent, respectively. The jobless rate in each division decreased 0.2 percentage point over the year.

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The Metropolitan Area Employment and Unemployment news release for January is scheduled to be released on Friday, March 20, 2020, 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 counties are developed through a building-block approach and adjusted proportionally to state model-based totals. For multi-county areas, such as the metropolitan areas and metropolitan divisions delineated by the Office of Management and Budget, estimates are summed from the data for their component counties. Estimates for cities and towns 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/lau/pdf/lau.pdf.

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 April 10, 2018. A detailed list of the geographic definitions is available at www.bls.gov/lau/lausmsa.htm.
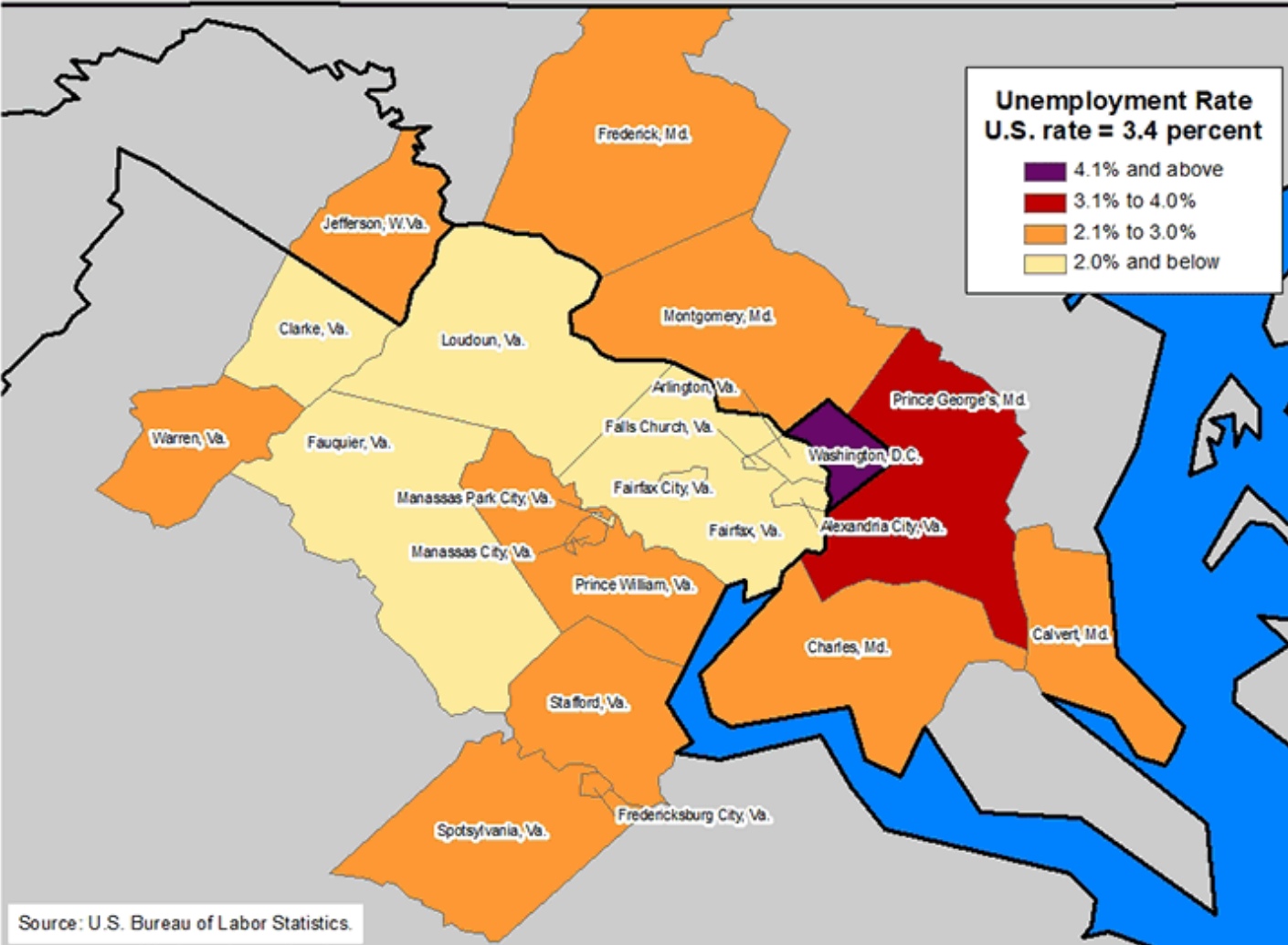
The **Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes the District of Columbia; Arlington, Clarke, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren Counties, and Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, and Manassas 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, DC-VA-MD-WV 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, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Statistical Area, not seasonally adjusted, December 2019

Unemployment Rate
U.S. rate = 3.4 percent

- 4.1% and above
- 3.1% to 4.0%
- 2.1% to 3.0%
- 2.0% and below

Frederick, Md.

Jefferson, W.Va.

Montgomery, Md.

Clarke, Va.

Loudoun, Va.

Arlington, Va.

Prince George's, Md.

Falls Church, Va.

Warren, Va.

Fauquier, Va.

Washington, D.C.

Manassas Park City, Va.

Fairfax City, Va.

Fairfax, Va.

Alexandria City, Va.

Manassas City, Va.

Prince William, Va.

Charles, Md.

Calvert, Md.

Stafford, Va.

Spotsylvania, Va.

Fredericksburg City, Va.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.