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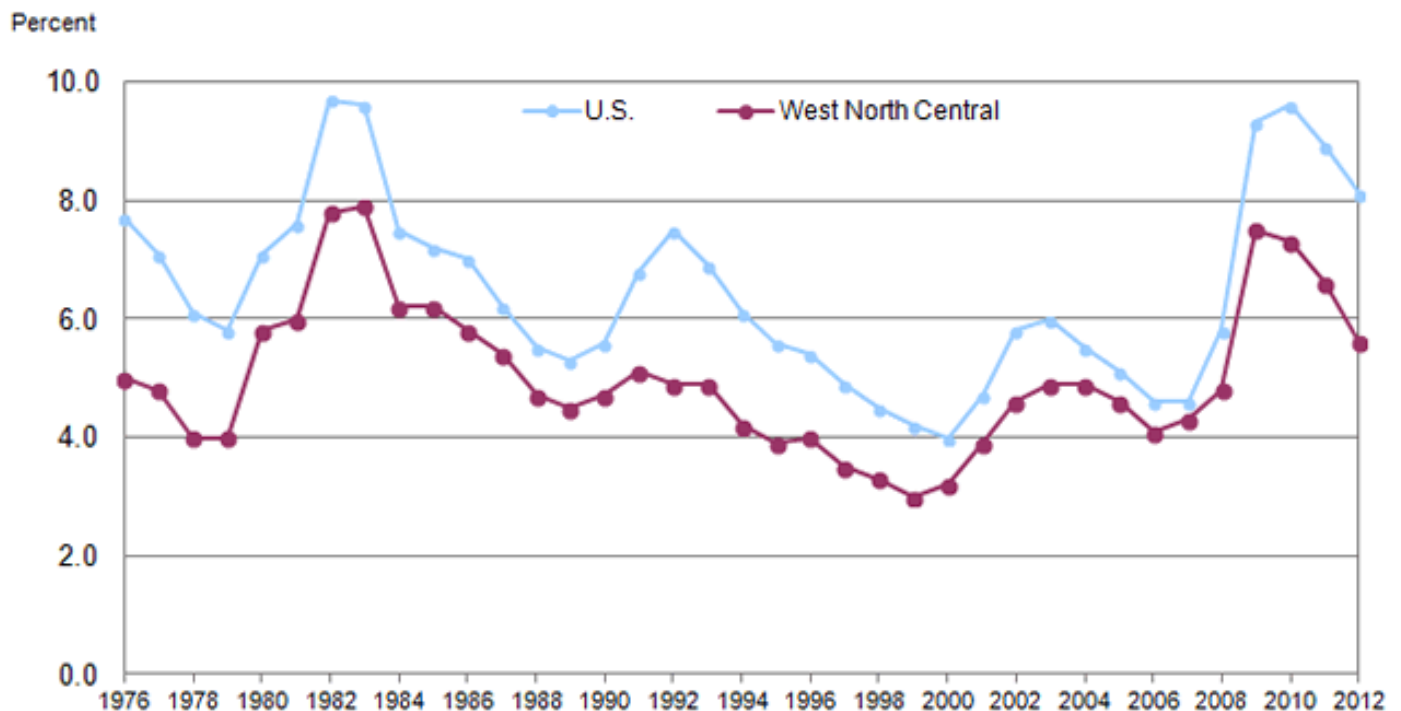
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West North Central Division and State Unemployment – 2012

Division recorded unemployment rate significantly lower than the U.S. rate

The unemployment rate in the West North Central division declined 1.0 percentage point over the year to 5.6 percent in 2012, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Nationally, the U.S. jobless rate was 8.1 percent, down 0.8 percentage point from the prior year. (See [table 1.](#)) Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that the West North Central's unemployment rate was the lowest among the nine census divisions and was significantly below the national rate. The jobless rate in the West North Central division has never exceeded the U.S. average in the 37 years that these data have been collected. (See [chart 1.](#) All division and state series begin in 1976.)

Chart 1. Unemployment rates for the U.S. and West North Central census division, 1976–2012



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The West North Central is one of nine geographic divisions in the United States. Jobless rates in the divisions ranged from a low of 5.6 percent in the West North Central to a high of 9.8 percent in the Pacific in 2012. Three divisions—West North Central, West South Central, and New England—had rates significantly below the national figure. Two divisions, the Pacific and the Middle Atlantic, recorded annual average unemployment rates that were significantly above the U.S. average. (See [table 2](#).)

Eight of the nine geographic divisions reported statistically significant over-the-year unemployment rate decreases in 2012. The largest of these occurred in the East South Central (-1.3 percentage points) and Pacific (-1.2 points).

The seven states that make up the West North Central division had jobless rates that were significantly lower than that for the nation in 2012. Three of these registered the lowest rates among the 50 states—North Dakota (3.1 percent), Nebraska (3.9 percent), and South Dakota (4.4 percent). Unemployment rates for Iowa (5.2 percent), Minnesota (5.6 percent), Kansas (5.7 percent), and Missouri (6.9 percent) were also appreciably lower than that for the nation.

Across the nation, Nevada's unemployment rate (11.1 percent) was the highest for the third consecutive year. Two additional states reported unemployment rates of 10.0 percent or more in 2012 – California (10.5 percent) and Rhode Island (10.4 percent). North Dakota registered the lowest jobless rate among the states for the fourth year in a row, 3.1 percent, followed by Nebraska, 3.9 percent, and South Dakota, 4.4 percent. Overall, 27 states had unemployment rates that were significantly lower than the U.S. rate of 8.1 percent, while 13 states and the District of Columbia recorded rates significantly above it. (See [chart 2](#).)

All of the states in the West North Central division posted statistically significant jobless rate decreases from 2011 to 2012. Missouri's unemployment rate declined 1.5 percentage points followed by Minnesota (-0.9 percentage point), Kansas (-0.8 percentage point), Iowa (-0.7 percentage point), and Nebraska (-0.5 percent point). North Dakota and South Dakota posted declines of 0.4 percentage point each.

Nationally, 41 states and the District of Columbia posted statistically significant unemployment rate decreases in 2012, the largest of which were in Nevada (-2.1 percentage points), Florida (-1.7 points), and Missouri (-1.5 points). Twelve additional states and the District of Columbia experienced decreases greater than 1.0 percentage point. The remaining nine states reported annual average unemployment rates for 2012 that were not appreciably different from those of the previous year, though some had changes that were at least as large numerically as the significant changes. (See [chart 3](#).)

Technical Note

This release presents labor force and unemployment data from the Current Population Survey (CPS) and the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program. Estimates for the U.S. are obtained directly from the CPS, which is a monthly sample survey of approximately 60,000 households nationwide that is conducted for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) by the Census Bureau. All subnational estimates presented in this release were derived from updated time-series models with monthly benchmarking to national Current Population Survey (CPS) estimates. Subnational data reflect revised population controls and model reestimation. Historical data were revised back to 2006. Data for regions, divisions, states, and the District of Columbia are available back to 1976.

The LAUS program produces data for the nine geographic divisions in the United States: New England, Middle Atlantic, South Atlantic, East South Central, West South Central, East North Central, West North Central, Mountain, and Pacific. Data for all divisions, as well as the 50 states, are available in the Regional and State Unemployment release at www.bls.gov/lau/home.htm#news.

Analysis in this news release reflects the use of model-based error measures when making comparisons with the U.S. and the prior year. BLS uses a 90-percent confidence level in determining whether changes or differences in subnational unemployment rates are statistically significant. Model-based error measures are available on the BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/lau/lastderr.htm.

Additional information

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; Federal Relay Service: 1-800-877-8339.

Table 1. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population for the U.S., West North Central, and West North Central states, 2011–12 annual averages (Numbers in thousands)

Area	Civilian labor force		Employed		Unemployed		Unemployment rate		Error range of rate, 2012 ⁽¹⁾
	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	
United States ⁽²⁾	153,617	154,975	139,869	142,469	13,747	12,506	8.9	8.1	8.0 - 8.2
West North Central.....	10,982	10,949	10,261	10,330	721	618	6.6	5.6	5.4 - 5.9
Iowa.....	1,659	1,639	1,562	1,553	97	86	5.9	5.2	4.8 - 5.7
Kansas.....	1,499	1,489	1,401	1,404	98	85	6.5	5.7	5.3 - 6.2
Minnesota.....	2,970	2,969	2,777	2,802	192	168	6.5	5.6	5.3 - 6.0
Missouri.....	3,022	2,993	2,767	2,785	255	207	8.4	6.9	6.3 - 7.6
Nebraska.....	1,007	1,021	962	981	45	40	4.4	3.9	3.6 - 4.3
North Dakota.....	382	392	369	380	13	12	3.5	3.1	2.7 - 3.5
South Dakota.....	444	446	423	426	21	20	4.8	4.4	4.0 - 4.8

Footnotes:

(1) Error ranges are shown at the 90-percent confidence level and are based on unrounded data.

(2) Data for the U.S. are obtained directly from the national Current Population Survey.

Note: Data refer to place of residence. Unemployment rates are in percent and are based on unrounded levels. Data for subnational areas reflect revised population controls and model reestimation.

Table 2. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by region and division, 2011–12 annual averages (Numbers in thousands)

Census region and division ⁽¹⁾	Civilian labor force		Employed		Unemployed		Unemployment rate		Error range of rate, 2012 ⁽²⁾
	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	2011	2012	
Northeast.....	28,208	28,389	25,887	26,066	2,321	2,324	8.2	8.2	8.0 - 8.4
New England	7,735	7,720	7,134	7,161	601	560	7.8	7.2	6.9 - 7.5
Middle Atlantic	20,473	20,669	18,753	18,905	1,720	1,764	8.4	8.5	8.3 - 8.8
South	56,160	56,525	51,237	52,174	4,923	4,351	8.8	7.7	7.5 - 7.9
South Atlantic	29,753	30,008	26,999	27,538	2,754	2,469	9.3	8.2	8.0 - 8.4
East South Central	8,709	8,678	7,894	7,978	814	700	9.4	8.1	7.6 - 8.5
West South Central	17,698	17,840	16,343	16,658	1,354	1,182	7.7	6.6	6.4 - 6.9
Midwest	34,265	34,149	31,405	31,631	2,860	2,518	8.3	7.4	7.2 - 7.6
East North Central	23,282	23,200	21,144	21,300	2,139	1,899	9.2	8.2	7.9 - 8.5
West North Central	10,982	10,949	10,261	10,330	721	618	6.6	5.6	5.4 - 5.9
West	35,897	35,986	32,167	32,665	3,730	3,321	10.4	9.2	9.0 - 9.4
Mountain.....	11,011	11,029	10,030	10,161	981	867	8.9	7.9	7.6 - 8.2
Pacific.....	24,885	24,957	22,137	22,504	2,748	2,453	11.0	9.8	9.6 - 10.1

Footnotes:

(1) Regions are defined as the four Census regions, comprised as follows: Northeast Region includes the New England Division - Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont; and the Middle Atlantic Division - New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. South Region includes the South Atlantic Division - Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia; East South Central Division - Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee; and West South Central Division - Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. Midwest Region includes the East North Central Division - Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin; and the West North Central Division - Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota. West Region includes the Mountain Division - Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming; and the Pacific Division - Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington.

(2) Error ranges are shown at the 90-percent confidence level and are based on unrounded data.

Note: Data refer to place of residence. Unemployment rates are in percent and are based on unrounded levels. Data for subnational areas reflect revised population controls and model reestimation. As a result, they will not add to U.S. totals.

Chart 2. Unemployment rates by state, 2012 annual averages

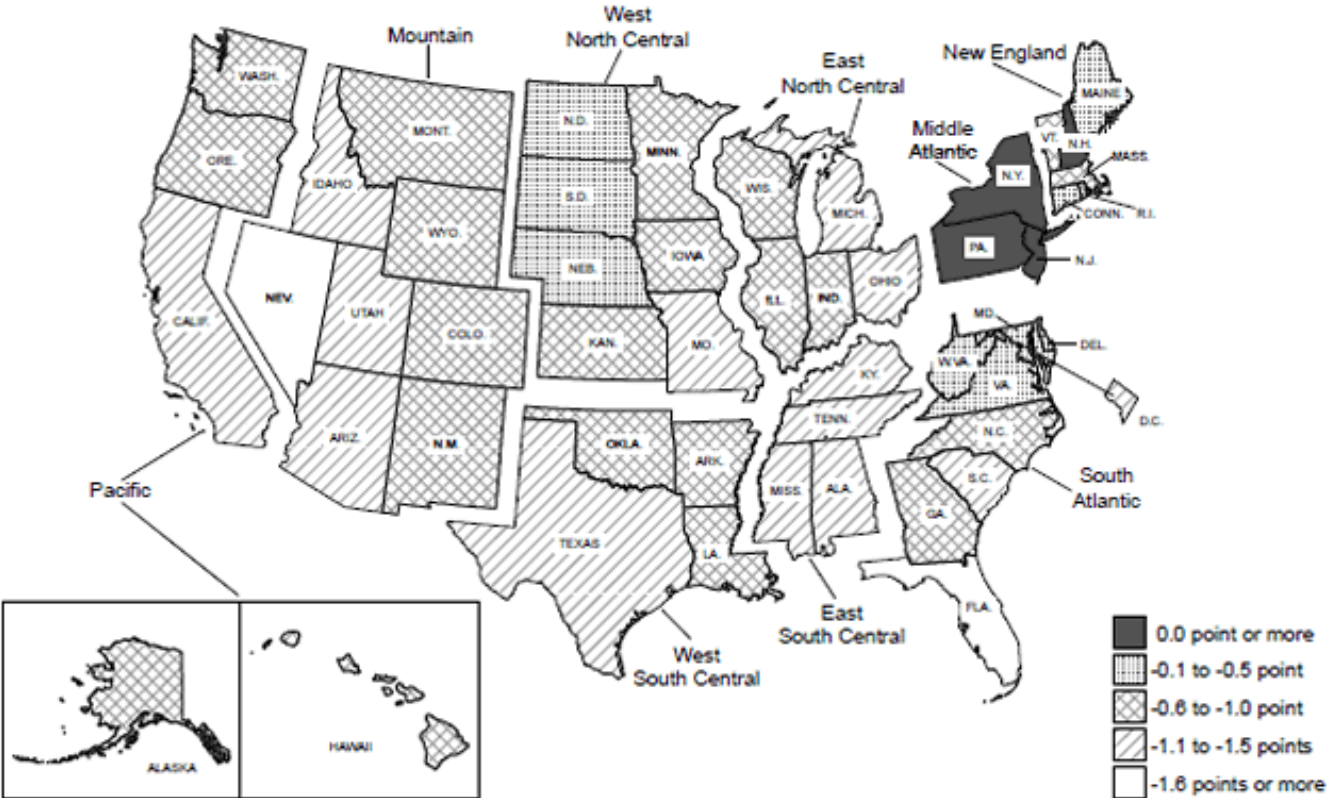
(U.S. rate = 8.1 percent)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Chart 3. Over-the-year change in unemployment rates by state, 2012 annual averages

(U.S. change = -0.8 percentage point)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.