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New England and State Unemployment — February 2015

The New England unemployment rate was unchanged at 5.3 percent in February, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Deborah A. Brown noted that New England’s jobless rate declined from a year ago when it was 6.3 percent. The national jobless rate edged down to 5.5 percent from January and was 1.2 percentage points lower than in February 2014. (See [chart 1](#).)

New England is 1 of 9 geographic divisions nationwide. Among the nine geographic divisions, the Pacific had the highest jobless rate, 6.5 percent in February. The West North Central division had the lowest unemployment rate at 4.2 percent. All nine divisions had statistically significant rate declines from a year earlier.

Chart 1. Unemployment rates for the United States and New England, February 2012 to February 2015, seasonally adjusted



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In February, 4 of the 6 New England states had jobless rates that were significantly different from that of the United States. New Hampshire and Vermont (3.9 percent each) had significantly lower unemployment rates and were among 19 states in the country to do so. In contrast, Connecticut (6.4 percent) and Rhode Island (6.3

percent) were among the 13 states and the District of Columbia with unemployment rates measurably higher than the national average. The remaining 18 states had unemployment rates not appreciably different from that of the nation.

Maine and Vermont (-0.2 percentage point each) had statistically significant unemployment rate changes over the month. Nationwide, eight other states had significant rate declines from January. The remaining 40 states and the District of Columbia reported unemployment rates that were not measurably different from those of a month earlier, though some had changes that were at least as large numerically as the significant changes.

Over the year, five New England states had statistically significant unemployment rate decreases. Rhode Island had the largest decline (-2.1 percentage points) and was tied with Kentucky for the largest rate decline nationwide. Massachusetts (-1.1 percentage points), Maine (-0.9 point), New Hampshire (-0.7 point), and Connecticut (-0.6 point) also had jobless rate decreases from one year ago. Across the country, 37 additional states reported statistically significant unemployment rate declines from February 2014. Three states had statistically significant over-the-year rate increases. The remaining five states, including Vermont, and the District of Columbia had unemployment rates that were not appreciably different from a year ago.

The Regional and State Employment and Unemployment news release for March 2015 is scheduled to be released on Tuesday, April 21, 2015, at 10:00 a.m. (EDT).

Technical Note

This release presents civilian 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 sample survey of approximately 60,000 households nationwide that is conducted for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) by the Census Bureau. The LAUS program produces data for subnational areas, including the nine geographic divisions (New England, Middle Atlantic, South Atlantic, East South Central, West South Central, East North Central, West North Central, Mountain, and Pacific) and the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The LAUS data for geographic divisions and states are model-based. The models for geographic divisions use inputs from the CPS only, while the models for the states and the District of Columbia use inputs from the CPS in conjunction with estimates of nonfarm payroll employment from the Current Employment Statistics survey and counts of unemployment insurance claimants from the state workforce agencies. Each month, not-seasonally-adjusted estimates for geographic divisions are controlled to the national totals from the CPS, and state estimates are then controlled to the estimates for their divisions. Data for all divisions, as well as the 50 states and the District of Columbia, are available in the Regional and State Employment and Unemployment release www.bls.gov/lau/home.htm#news issued monthly by BLS, while national statistics are highlighted in the Employment Situation www.bls.gov/cps/home.htm#news.

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 re-estimation. In most years, historical data for the most recent five years (both seasonally adjusted and not seasonally adjusted) are revised near the beginning of each calendar year, prior to or coincident with the release of January estimates.

Model-based error measures for seasonally adjusted data and for over-the-month and over-the-year changes are available online at www.bls.gov/lau/lastderr.htm. BLS uses a 90-percent confidence level in determining whether changes in LAUS unemployment rates are statistically significant. The average magnitude of the current year over-the-month change in a state unemployment rate that is required for statistical significance at

the 90-percent confidence level is just over 0.2 percentage point; the average amount of the current over-the-year change in a state rate for significance is about 0.9 point. More details can be found on the website. Measures of nonsampling error are not available.

This information will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200, Federal Relay Services: (800)-877-8339.

Table 1. Labor force status for the United States, New England, and New England states, seasonally adjusted (numbers in thousands)

Area	Feb 2014	Mar 2014	Apr 2014	May 2014	June 2014	July 2014	Aug 2014	Sept 2014	Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015	Feb 2015
United States ⁽¹⁾													
Civilian labor force	155,688	156,180	155,420	155,629	155,700	156,048	156,018	155,845	156,243	156,402	156,129	(2) 157,180	157,002
Employed	145,301	145,796	145,724	145,868	146,247	146,401	146,451	146,607	147,260	147,331	147,442	(2) 148,201	148,297
Unemployed	10,387	10,384	9,696	9,761	9,453	9,648	9,568	9,237	8,983	9,071	8,688	8,979	8,705
Unemployment rate	6.7	6.6	6.2	6.3	6.1	6.2	6.1	5.9	5.7	5.8	5.6	5.7	5.5
New England													
Civilian labor force	7,756.3	7,761.6	7,766.6	7,772.0	7,778.7	7,786.5	7,794.9	7,803.2	7,810.4	7,816.4	7,821.1	7,829.2	7,849.8
Employed	7,270.5	7,283.2	7,295.3	7,307.2	7,319.8	7,332.9	7,346.3	7,359.4	7,371.8	7,382.8	7,391.6	7,411.3	7,436.4
Unemployed	485.8	478.3	471.3	464.8	458.9	453.6	448.7	443.8	438.6	433.6	429.5	417.9	413.4
Unemployment rate	6.3	6.2	6.1	6.0	5.9	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.6	5.5	5.5	5.3	5.3
Connecticut													
Civilian labor force	1,877.6	1,879.7	1,881.0	1,881.8	1,882.7	1,884.3	1,886.8	1,889.9	1,893.3	1,896.5	1,899.4	1,904.5	(P) 1,909.8
Employed	1,746.1	1,750.2	1,753.9	1,757.2	1,760.3	1,763.5	1,766.7	1,770.1	1,773.6	1,776.8	1,779.5	1,784.2	(P) 1,787.9
Unemployed	131.6	129.5	127.1	124.6	122.4	120.9	120.0	119.8	119.7	119.7	119.9	120.2	(P) 122.0
Unemployment rate	7.0	6.9	6.8	6.6	6.5	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	(P) 6.4
Maine													
Civilian labor force	703.6	702.6	701.7	700.8	699.8	698.7	697.5	696.4	695.3	694.4	693.7	692.3	(P) 690.7
Employed	661.9	661.7	661.3	660.8	660.1	659.2	658.3	657.4	656.7	656.1	655.7	656.3	(P) 656.3
Unemployed	41.6	41.0	40.4	40.0	39.8	39.5	39.3	39.0	38.7	38.3	38.0	36.1	(P) 34.4
Unemployment rate	5.9	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.5	5.2	(P) 5.0
Massachusetts													
Civilian labor force	3,533.5	3,539.6	3,545.0	3,550.1	3,555.5	3,561.2	3,567.1	3,572.9	3,578.2	3,582.8	3,586.6	3,591.1	(P) 3,607.7
Employed	3,321.7	3,330.5	3,337.9	3,344.6	3,351.5	3,358.7	3,366.4	3,374.3	3,382.1	3,389.3	3,395.2	3,409.4	(P) 3,430.5
Unemployed	211.7	209.2	207.1	205.5	204.0	202.4	200.7	198.5	196.0	193.5	191.4	181.7	(P) 177.3
Unemployment rate	6.0	5.9	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.4	5.3	5.1	(P) 4.9
New Hampshire													
Civilian labor force	742.4	742.1	741.7	741.2	740.8	740.5	740.4	740.6	740.8	741.1	741.3	742.8	(P) 744.1
Employed	708.4	708.5	708.5	708.5	708.6	708.9	709.3	710.0	710.6	711.2	711.7	713.3	(P) 714.8
Unemployed	34.0	33.6	33.2	32.7	32.2	31.6	31.1	30.6	30.2	29.9	29.6	29.4	(P) 29.3
Unemployment rate	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.0	(P) 3.9
Rhode Island													
Civilian labor force	555.1	555.2	555.3	555.3	555.1	554.4	553.3	552.1	550.9	549.7	548.8	549.0	(P) 549.6
Employed	508.4	509.4	510.4	511.4	512.1	512.5	512.5	512.3	512.0	511.8	511.6	513.1	(P) 514.8
Unemployed	46.7	45.8	44.9	43.9	42.9	41.9	40.9	39.8	38.8	37.9	37.2	35.9	(P) 34.8
Unemployment rate	8.4	8.2	8.1	7.9	7.7	7.6	7.4	7.2	7.0	6.9	6.8	6.5	(P) 6.3
Vermont													
Civilian labor force	349.1	348.9	348.8	348.8	348.8	348.9	348.9	348.9	348.8	348.8	348.8	348.7	(P) 348.4
Employed	335.0	334.9	334.8	334.7	334.6	334.5	334.4	334.4	334.3	334.3	334.3	334.6	(P) 334.7
Unemployed	14.1	14.0	14.0	14.1	14.2	14.4	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.2	(P) 13.7
Unemployment rate	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.1	(P) 3.9

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes

(1) Data for the U.S. are obtained directly from the national Current Population Survey (CPS) and are not preliminary. Seasonally adjusted CPS data have been revised as a result of routine seasonal updates processed at the end of each calendar year.

(2) Data affected by changes in population controls.

(P) Preliminary

Table 2. Civilian labor force and unemployment by census region and division, seasonally adjusted (numbers in thousands)

Census region and division	Civilian labor force				Unemployed							
	Feb 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015	Feb 2015	Number				Percent of the labor force			
					Feb 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015	Feb 2015	Feb 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015	Feb 2015
Northeast.....	28,264.1	28,258.4	28,296.0	28,330.0	1,863.7	1,603.3	1,586.4	1,584.6	6.6	5.7	5.6	5.6
New England.....	7,756.3	7,821.1	7,829.2	7,849.8	485.8	429.5	417.9	413.4	6.3	5.5	5.3	5.3
Middle Atlantic.....	20,507.7	20,437.3	20,466.8	20,480.2	1,377.8	1,173.8	1,168.5	1,171.2	6.7	5.7	5.7	5.7
South.....	56,911.4	57,050.4	57,140.4	57,205.9	3,582.6	3,194.7	3,131.8	3,073.2	6.3	5.6	5.5	5.4
South Atlantic.....	30,190.2	30,242.8	30,290.6	30,332.8	1,961.7	1,752.3	1,721.2	1,709.5	6.5	5.8	5.7	5.6
East South Central.....	8,474.3	8,316.8	8,332.5	8,349.2	609.7	529.6	525.4	504.3	7.2	6.4	6.3	6.0
West South Central.....	18,246.9	18,490.8	18,517.2	18,523.9	1,011.2	912.8	885.2	859.4	5.5	4.9	4.8	4.6
Midwest.....	34,384.5	34,552.3	34,612.1	34,578.4	2,211.7	1,840.0	1,815.4	1,763.0	6.4	5.3	5.2	5.1
East North Central.....	23,296.3	23,379.7	23,417.3	23,367.7	1,663.9	1,363.1	1,341.7	1,293.6	7.1	5.8	5.7	5.5
West North Central.....	11,088.2	11,172.6	11,194.8	11,210.7	547.7	476.9	473.7	469.4	4.9	4.3	4.2	4.2
West.....	36,360.3	36,745.4	36,821.5	36,862.8	2,611.4	2,350.2	2,309.1	2,255.6	7.2	6.4	6.3	6.1
Mountain.....	11,203.7	11,311.8	11,342.5	11,370.3	699.6	604.0	595.5	591.2	6.2	5.3	5.3	5.2
Pacific.....	25,156.6	25,433.6	25,478.9	25,492.5	1,911.8	1,746.2	1,713.6	1,664.4	7.6	6.9	6.7	6.5

Note: Census region estimates are derived by summing the Census division model-based estimates. Data refer to place of residence. 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 - 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 - Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington. Estimates for the current year are subject to revision early in the following calendar year.