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Unemployment in the San Francisco Bay Area by County — May 2015
8 of 9 Area Counties Posted Unemployment Rates Lower than the National Average

In May, Marin and San Mateo Counties had the lowest unemployment rate, 3.3 percent, in the San Francisco Bay Area, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Richard J. Holden, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that Solano County, at 5.9 percent, was the only county in the area with an unemployment rate higher than the U.S. average of 5.3 percent. The area's remaining six counties had jobless rates ranging from 3.5 percent in San Francisco County, to 4.8 percent in Contra Costa County. (See chart 1. 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 San Francisco Bay Area counties, May 2015, not seasonally adjusted
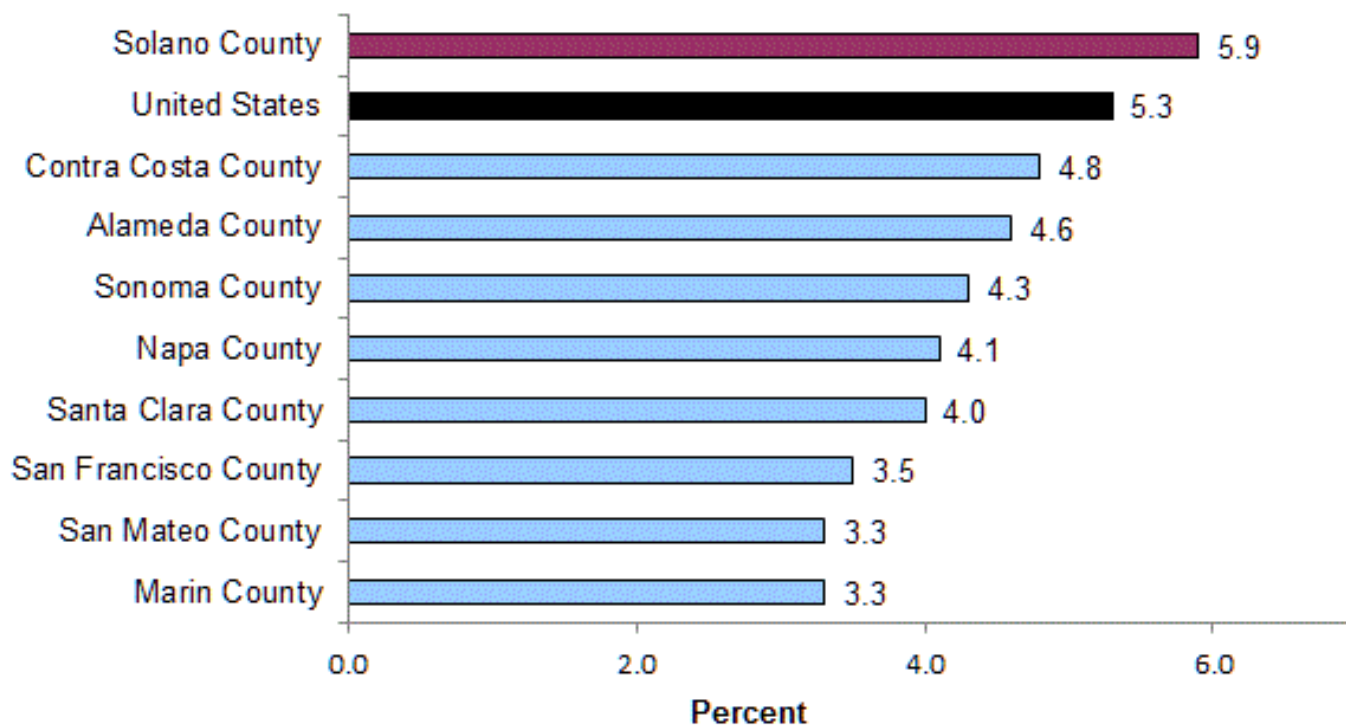
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In May 2015, all nine counties in the area had over-the-year unemployment rate decreases, ranging from 1.3 percentage points in Solano County to 0.7 points in Marin, San Francisco and San Mateo Counties. Nationally, the unemployment rate was down 0.8 percentage points from May a year ago. (See table A).

Table A. Unemployment rates for the United States, California, and San Francisco Bay Area Counties, not seasonally adjusted

Area	Unemployment rate			Change from	
	May 2013	May 2014	May 2015	May 2013 to May 2015[1]	May 2014 to May 2015[1]
United States..	7.3	6.1	5.3	-2.0	-0.8
California	8.6	7.2	6.2	-2.4	-1.0
Alameda County.......................................	7.0	5.6	4.6	-2.4	-1.0
Contra Costa County................................	7.1	5.9	4.8	-2.3	-1.1
Marin County	4.8	4.0	3.3	-1.5	-0.7
Napa County	6.1	5.0	4.1	-2.0	-0.9
San Francisco County..............................	5.3	4.2	3.5	-1.8	-0.7
San Mateo County....................................	5.0	4.0	3.3	-1.7	-0.7
Santa Clara County	6.3	5.0	4.0	-2.3	-1.0
Solano County..	8.7	7.2	5.9	-2.8	-1.3
Sonoma County..	6.6	5.2	4.3	-2.3	0.9

(1) Data for California and San Francisco Bay Area counties are preliminary for the most recent month.

Unemployment rates fell in all San Francisco Bay Area counties from May 2013 to May 2015. The largest decreases occurred in Solano County, down 2.8 percentage points, followed by Alameda County, down 2.4 points. Marin County had the smallest two-year decrease, down 1.5 points. The nationwide decrease in the unemployment rate from May 2013 to May 2015 was 2.0 percentage points.

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.

Method 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 definition. The **San Francisco Bay Area** includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties in California.

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.