

EMPLOYMENT

Breaking down state data on unemployment rates, total (nonfarm) payroll employment, and government employment.

Unemployment Rate

(percent, seasonally adjusted)

The national unemployment rate was 5.1 percent as of December 2015.

West Virginia

WV

US

As of December 2015

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

(<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/l>)

The national unemployment rate was 5.1 percent in August 2015. West Virginia's unemployment rate was 7.6 percent, a 0.1 percentage point increase from July and significantly above its 5.9 percent rate in January 2015. It remained the only state with an unemployment rate above 7.0 percent. The next-highest unemployment rates were in the District of Columbia and Nevada (both 6.8 percent), New Mexico (6.7 percent), and Alaska (6.6 percent).

Conversely, two states had an unemployment rate below 3.0 percent in August: Nebraska (2.8 percent) and North Dakota (2.9 percent). Another six states had an unemployment rate below 4.0 percent: Hawaii (3.5 percent), New Hampshire and Vermont (both 3.6 percent), and Iowa, South Dakota, and Utah (all 3.7 percent).

Unemployment Rate: Level vs. One-Year-Change

The national unemployment rate decreased 1.0 percentage points to a value of 5.1 percent between December 2014 and December 2015.

Alabama

RATE
5.1%
CHANGE
-1.0
percentage

points

As of December 2015

Source: Both datasets from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
(<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/l>)

The national unemployment rate fell 1.0 percentage point between August 2014 and August 2015. The largest unemployment rate increase over the year was in the state with the highest unemployment rate, West Virginia (1.2 points). Six other states had unemployment rates increase over the year: South Dakota (0.4 points), Kansas, Minnesota, New Mexico, and Oklahoma (all 0.3 percent), and North Dakota (0.2 points). Five of these six states had August unemployment rates below 5.0 percent despite the year-over-year increase. The exception was New Mexico; the state's 6.7 percent unemployment rate was the fourth-highest rate in August. The unemployment rate decreased by 1.0 percentage point or more in DC (-1.0 points) and eight states: Rhode Island (-1.8 points), Michigan (-1.7 points), California (-1.3 points), Indiana and Georgia (both -1.2 points), and Connecticut, Maine, and Mississippi (all -1.1 points). The August unemployment rate was still above 6.0 percent in DC (6.8 percent), Mississippi (6.3 percent), and California (6.1 percent).

Total Employment (percent change year over year)

Total (public and private) nonfarm payroll employment increased 2.1 percent from December 2014 to December 2015.

Utah

UT

US

As of December 2015

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.
(<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/l>)

Total national (public and private) nonfarm payroll employment increased 2.1 percent from August 2014 to August 2015. Total employment increased in all but three states: West Virginia (-2.6 percent), North Dakota (-0.7 percent), and Alaska (-0.4 percent). West Virginia's decline was mostly the result of a decline in government employment (see the next section), but the state

also lost jobs in the mining and construction sectors. The largest increase in employment was in Utah (4.0 percent). Utah had significant employment growth in three sectors: leisure and hospitality, education and health services, and professional services. Employment grew 3.0 percent or more over the past 12 months in six additional states: Oregon (3.5 percent), Florida and Nevada (both 3.3 percent), Washington (3.2 percent), and California and South Carolina (both 3.0 percent).

Total Employment vs. Public Employment

Total public-sector employment increased 0.6 percent from December 2014 to December 2015, staying well below the 2.1 percent increase in total employment.

Alabama

TOTAL	PUBLIC
2.1%	0.6%

As of December 2015

Source: Both datasets from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

(<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/l>)

Total public-sector employment increased 0.6 percent from August 2014 to August 2015. The largest decrease in government employment over the year was in West Virginia (-7.0 percent). The decline was largely responsible for the state's 2.6 percent decline in total employment. West Virginia lost over 14,000 local government jobs between May and July 2015. The next-largest declines in government employment were in New Hampshire (-4.2 percent) and Minnesota (-2.1 percent). In total, government employment declined in 17 states over the year ending in August. The largest increase in public-sector employment was in Indiana (3.6 percent). The state's total employment increased 2.5 percent over the year. Public-sector employment also increased more than 3.0 percent in two other states: Idaho (3.4 percent) and Missouri (3.1 percent). Only one state, North Dakota, had an increase in government jobs (0.9 percent) and a decrease in total employment (-0.7 percent).

Click here for a Note: The unemployment rate is from a US Bureau of Labor Statistics survey based on place of residence. The employment data are from a US Bureau of Labor Statistics survey based on place of work.

All data are seasonally
adjusted.

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