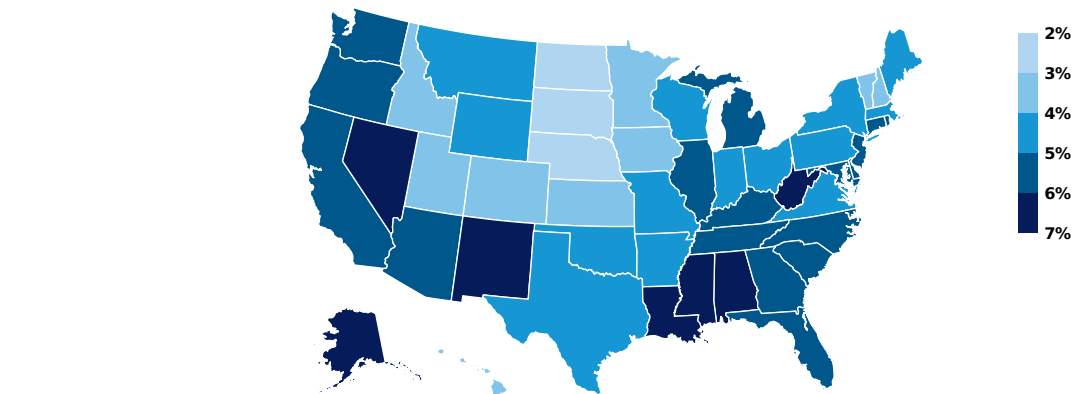
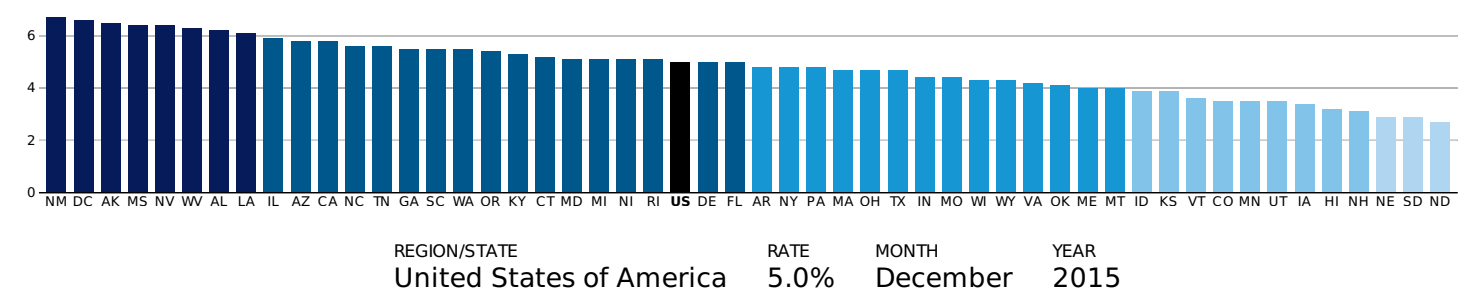


EMPLOYMENT

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

Unemployment Rate (percent, seasonally adjusted)

The national unemployment rate was 5.0 percent as of December 2015.



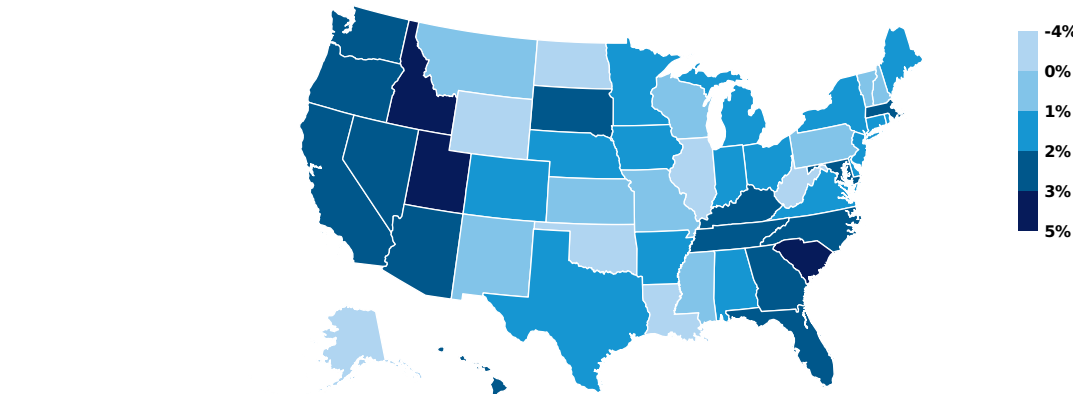
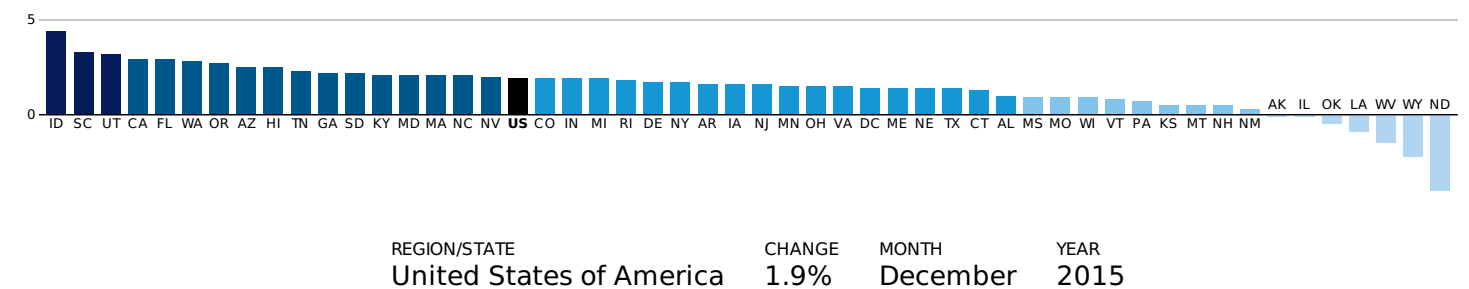
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics. (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/laus.t03.htm>)

In December 2015, and for the third consecutive month (<http://apps.urban.org/features/state-economic-monitor/historical.html>), the national unemployment rate was 5.0 percent. New Mexico’s unemployment rate (6.7 percent) was the highest of any state. Six additional states (Alabama, Alaska, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, and West Virginia) and the District of Columbia (DC) had December unemployment rates above 6.0 percent. West Virginia’s 6.3 percent unemployment rate is down 1.3 percentage points from its 2015 peak (<http://apps.urban.org/features/state-economic-monitor/historical.html>) (7.6 percent) in August. The lowest unemployment rates were in North Dakota (2.7 percent), and Nebraska and South Dakota (both 2.9 percent). The first two states to vote in the presidential nominating process also had low unemployment rates. Iowa’s 3.4 percent rate was the sixth lowest among the states and New Hampshire’s 3.1 percent rate was the fourth lowest.

The national unemployment rate fell 0.6 percentage points between December 2014 and December 2015. New Mexico, the state with the highest December unemployment rate, also had the greatest increase of any state (0.7 percentage points). New Mexico also had the highest unemployment rate and greatest year-over-year increase in November. Seven other states (Alabama, Alaska, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Texas, West Virginia, and Wyoming) had unemployment rate increases over the year. Among these eight states, four (Alabama, Alaska, New Mexico, and West Virginia) had December unemployment rates above 6.0 percent, but three (Oklahoma, Texas, and Wyoming) had rates below 5.0 percent. The unemployment rate decreased the most over the year in Rhode Island (-1.7 percentage points). In total, 14 states and DC had unemployment rates fall 1.0 percentage point or more over the year. Four of these states had December unemployment rates below 5.0 percent: Maine (4.0 percent), Indiana and Missouri (both 4.4 percent), and New York (4.8 percent).

Total Employment (percent change year over year)

Total (public and private) nonfarm payroll employment increased 1.9 percent from December 2014 to December 2015.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics. (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/laus.t05.htm>)

Total national (public and private) nonfarm payroll employment increased 1.9 percent from December 2014 to December 2015. Total employment increased in all but seven states: North Dakota (-4.0 percent), Wyoming (-2.2 percent), West Virginia (-1.5 percent), Louisiana (-0.9 percent), Oklahoma (-0.5 percent), and Alaska and Illinois (both -0.1 percent). Notably, all of these states (except Illinois) are reliant on natural resource extraction. More specifically, North Dakota’s and Wyoming’s biggest job losses were in the trade, transportation, and utilities sector, and West Virginia’s biggest decline was in construction. The largest increase in total employment was in Idaho (4.4 percent), which had year-over-year job growth in all sectors. Total employment also grew 3.0 percent or more over the past 12 months in South Carolina (3.3 percent) and Utah (3.2 percent). Another 14 states had 2.0 percent or more total employment growth.

Total public-sector employment increased 0.5 percent from December 2014 to December 2015. The largest decrease in government employment over the year was in New Hampshire (-2.8 percent). This is the seventh consecutive month (<http://apps.urban.org/features/state-economic-monitor/historical.html>) New Hampshire has had a year-over-year decline in public jobs, primarily local government jobs. In total, 15 states saw public employment drop over the year. The decline was 1.0 percent or greater in seven states: New Hampshire, Alaska (-2.1 percent), Louisiana (-1.8 percent), Rhode Island (-1.3 percent), Michigan (-1.2 percent), West Virginia (-1.1 percent), and Kansas (-1.0 percent). Public employment increased the most in Nevada (2.3 percent) and Oregon (2.2 percent). Wyoming was the only state that saw public sector employment grow more than 1.0 percent and total employment fall (-2.2 percent) over the year.

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.