

State unemployment rates, 1990-1999

The increases in unemployment rates reported by most states between 1990 and 1991 reflected the recession of July 1990 through March 1991. There was a lag in the response of state unemployment rates to the decline, however. It was not until 1992 that the three highest ranges of unemployment rates blanketed most states. From 1992 to 1999, State unemployment rates generally declined, in line with the prolonged expansion of the economy.

Throughout the 1990s, States with the lowest annual unemployment rates were concentrated in the agrarian center of the country. Alaska, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia suffered from persistently above-average rates of unemployment, while Nebraska consistently enjoyed rates of less than 3 percent.

These maps also identify other states that diverged from the national trend in unemployment:

- The states of Delaware, Kentucky, Missouri, and Oklahoma exhibited noticeable reductions in their unemployment rates between 1991 and 1992.
- Reductions in unemployment in California do not become

clear until 1997, fully 5 years into the Nation's recovery.

Unemployment in Nebraska was below 3 percent for every year except 1992. South Dakota remained within the 3.0- to 3.9-percent range and Iowa within the 4.0- to 4.9-percent range between 1990 and 1993.

- Hawaii averaged higher rates in the late 1990s, when the economy as a whole was undergoing an expansion, than in the early 1990s, when the economy was undergoing a recession. This reflects some state-specific factors, including the impact of the economic downturn in Asia.

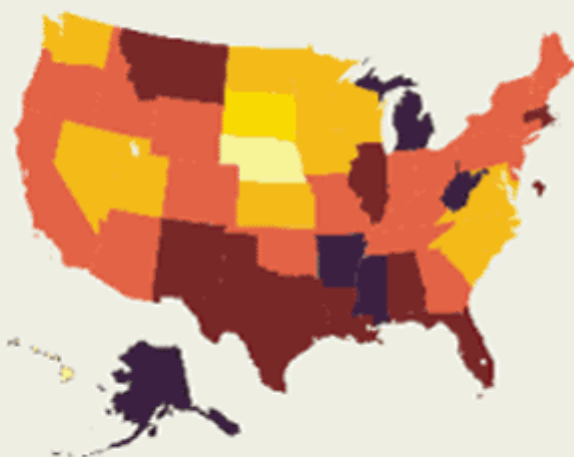


Unemployment rates by state, 1990-1999

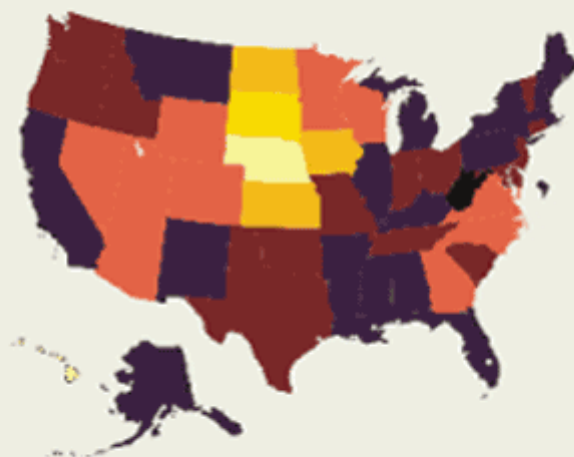
Recession affects the States in different ways and with varying timings. In the labor markets, notice the spread of the darker colors inward from the West Coast and the northeast during 1991. By 1992, most of the States were in the top half of the scale.

In 1999, in contrast, virtually all the states are in the lighter end of the color key.

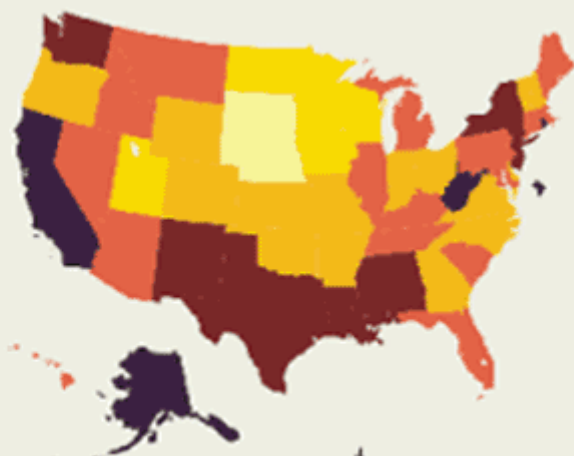
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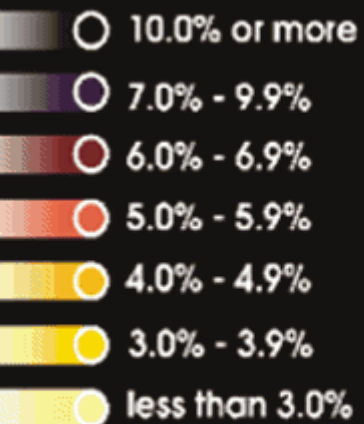
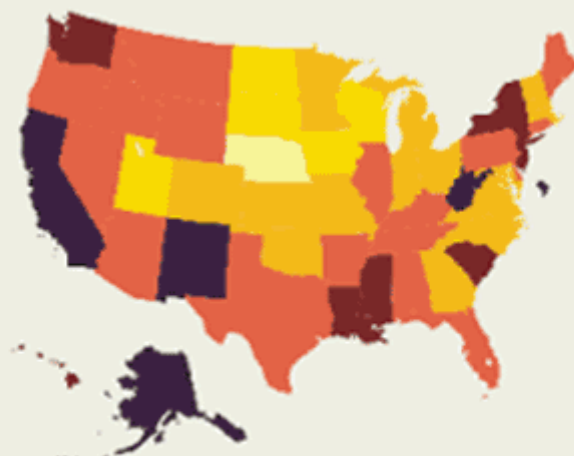
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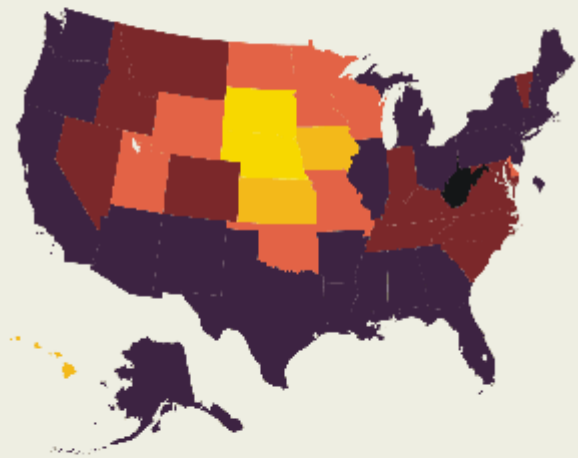
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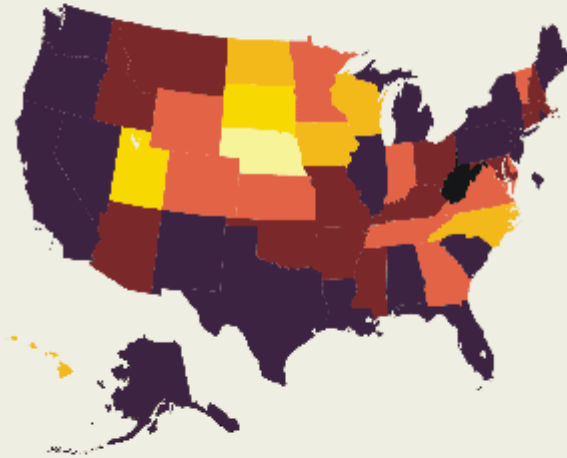
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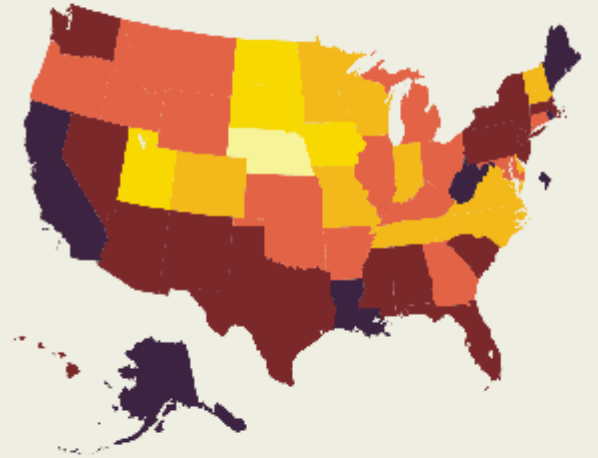
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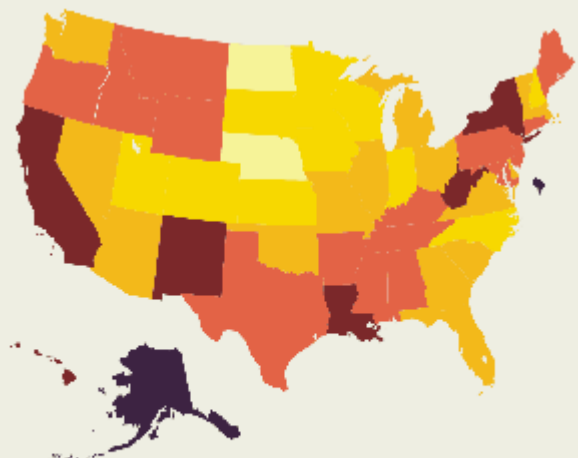
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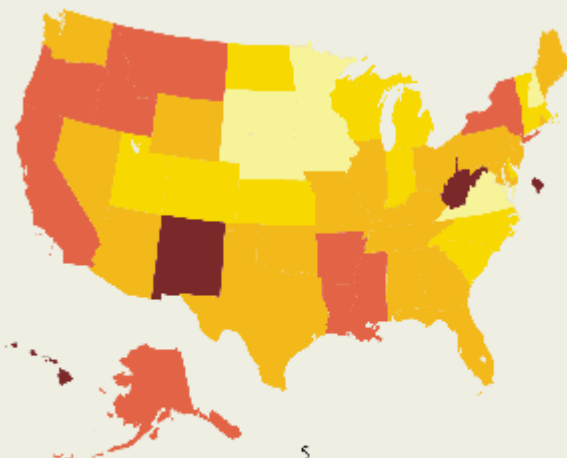
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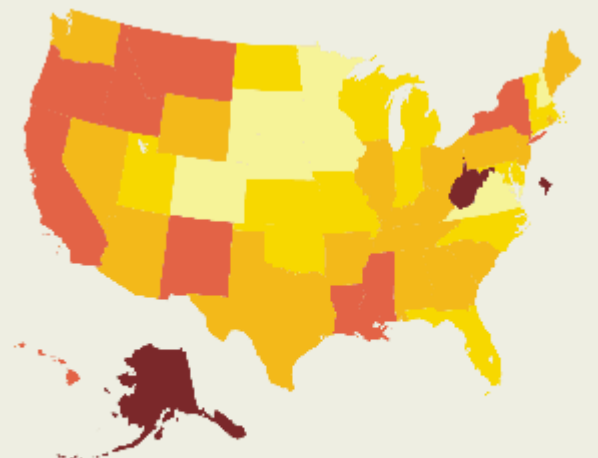
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About the Local Area Unemployment Statistics program

The Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program is a Federal-State cooperative effort that prepares monthly estimates of total employment and unemployment for approximately 6,850 geographic areas. These areas include census regions and divisions, states and the District of Columbia, metropolitan areas, nonmetropolitan labor market areas, counties and county equivalents, cities of 25,000 population or more, and cities and towns in New England regardless of population. BLS is responsible for the concepts, definitions, technical procedures, validation, and publication of the estimates that state employment security agencies prepare under agreement with BLS.

The concepts and definitions underlying LAUS data are consistent with those of the Current Population Survey (CPS), the household survey that is the official measure of the labor force for the Nation. Accordingly, data from this program reflect place of residence, not place of work. Annual average data, such as those used in this report for all states, the District of Columbia, and four large substate areas are derived directly from the CPS.

Monthly estimates for these areas are produced using estimating equations based on time-series regression techniques using data from the CPS, the Current Employment Statistics (CES) program, and state unemployment insurance (UI) systems. Estimates for virtually all substate labor market areas are produced through a building-block approach known as the "Handbook method." This procedure also uses data from several sources, including the CPS, the CES program, state

UI systems, and the decennial census. Below the labor market area level, estimates are prepared using disaggregation techniques based on the decennial census, annual population estimates, and current UI data.

The LAUS program publishes estimates according to a regular monthly schedule. A news release, "Regional and State Employment and Unemployment," summarizes monthly census region and division and state-level data and a later release, "Metropolitan Area Employment and Unemployment," gives an overview of metropolitan area data. Coincident with these news releases, data are made available through the BLS website at <http://www.bls.gov/lau/home.htm>. One week following the publication of "Metropolitan Area Employment and Unemployment," estimates for all remaining local areas become available on the website.

Detailed demographic characteristics of the labor force are not available on a current basis. However, demographic data for census regions and divisions, states, and certain metropolitan areas and central cities are estimated on an annual average basis from the CPS. These estimates are published in an annual bulletin entitled *Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment*, which can be obtained online in Adobe PDF format at <http://www.bls.gov/opub/gp/laugp.htm>.

Answers to questions concerning LAUS data can be obtained by calling (202) 691-6392 or sending e-mail to lausinfo@bls.gov.