

# News

United States  
Department  
of Labor



Bureau of Labor Statistics

Washington, D.C. 20212

Technical information: (202) 691-6392  
<http://www.bls.gov/lau/>

USDL 03-90

Media contact: 691-5902

For release: 10:00 A.M. EST  
Friday, February 28, 2003

## STATE AND REGIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT, 2002 ANNUAL AVERAGES

Annual average unemployment rates rose between 2001 and 2002 in nearly all of the states and in each of the Census regions and divisions, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. Employment-population ratios declined in 40 states. At the national level, the jobless rate rose by 1.1 percentage points to 5.8 percent in 2002, while the employment-population ratio dropped by 1.0 percentage point to 62.7 percent.

### State Unemployment

Rising unemployment persisted across the U.S. in 2002. Compared with the prior year, jobless rates were higher in 47 states, lower in 2 states, and unchanged in 1 state and the District of Columbia. Two states in the Mountain division—Colorado and Utah—reported the largest unemployment rate increases from 2001 (+2.0 and +1.7 percentage points, respectively). Massachusetts and New Jersey recorded the next largest increases (+1.6 percentage points each). Seventeen additional states registered over-the-year rate increases of at least a full percentage point. These 21 states with at least 1.0-percentage point increases in their unemployment rate were spread across the nation: 6 each were in the Northeast and West, 5 were in the South, and 4 were in the Midwest. In 2002, only Hawaii and South Dakota reported annual unemployment rate declines (-0.4 and -0.3 percentage point, respectively). (See table 1 and chart 1.)

For the second year in a row, the states with the highest jobless rates were located in the Pacific division. Alaska registered the highest rate in 2002, 7.7 percent, followed by Oregon, 7.5 percent, and Washington, 7.3 percent. Twelve additional states and the District of Columbia posted unemployment rates of 6.0 percent or more for the year. The lowest jobless rates in 2002 were in two West North Central states: South Dakota, 3.1 percent, and Nebraska, 3.6 percent. Overall, 32 states had unemployment rates below the national average, 16 states and the District of Columbia had rates above it, and 2 states had rates equal to it. All seven states in the West North Central division and all six in New England posted rates below the U.S. rate. In contrast, four of the five Pacific states recorded rates above that of the nation. (See chart 2.)

### Regional Unemployment

The Northeast and West regions experienced the largest jobless rate increases from 2001 (+1.2 percentage points each), while the Midwest and South recorded smaller rate increases (+1.0 and +0.9 point, respectively). For the 11th consecutive year, the West registered the highest regional unemployment rate, 6.5 percent. The Midwest reported the lowest rate, 5.5 percent. The range between the highest and

lowest regional unemployment rates—1.0 percentage point—increased slightly, after narrowing substantially since the mid-1990s.

Among the nation's nine geographic divisions, the Mountain division posted the largest over-the-year unemployment rate increase (+1.3 percentage points), closely followed by the Middle Atlantic, New England, and Pacific divisions (+1.2 points each). The smallest jobless rate increases from 2001 were recorded in the East South Central and West North Central divisions (+0.7 percentage point each). The Pacific also continued to register the highest jobless rate—for the 11th straight year—6.8 percent. The West South Central division had the next highest rate, 6.0 percent. The West North Central division recorded the lowest unemployment rate, 4.6 percent, followed by New England, 4.9 percent, which had reported the lowest divisional rate for the prior 2 years.

### State employment-population ratios

In 2002, 40 states and the District of Columbia posted declines in their employment-population ratios—the proportion of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years and over with a job—while 9 states reported increases. The largest employment-population ratio declines occurred in Michigan (-3.0 percentage points) and Delaware (-2.6 points). Four other states recorded decreases of 2.0 percentage points or more from 2001, and 20 additional states and the District of Columbia registered declines of at least 1.0 point. The largest increases in employment-population ratios were in South Dakota and Arkansas (+1.2 percentage points and +1.0 point, respectively). Iowa and Vermont were the only other states that reported increases of at least 0.5 percentage point. (See table 2 and chart 3.)

West Virginia continued to have the lowest employment-population ratio, 52.6 percent, a decline of 2.0 percentage points from 2001. The seven states recording the next lowest ratios also were located in the South—Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina—with employment-population ratios ranging between 56.4 and 59.1 percent. New York, at 59.3 percent, was the only other state with a ratio below 60.0 percent. Minnesota again reported the highest proportion of employed persons, 72.4 percent, despite a 0.7-percentage point decline from 2001. Three other Midwestern states—Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota—registered the next highest ratios, all of which were over 70.0 percent. Twenty-seven states recorded employment-population ratios higher than the U.S. figure of 62.7 percent, while 21 states and the District of Columbia posted lower ratios. All states in the New England and West North Central divisions had ratios above that of the U.S., while all of those in the Middle Atlantic and East South Central divisions had ratios below it.

### Regional employment-population ratios

All four regions reported declines in their proportion of employed persons from 2001, ranging from -1.5 percentage points in the Midwest to -0.2 point in the Northeast. The Midwest and West continued to register ratios (65.0 and 63.0 percent, respectively) above the U.S. average, while the Northeast (61.9 percent) and South (61.5 percent) again had lower ratios.

Of the nine geographic divisions, the East North Central recorded the largest decrease in its employment-population ratio relative to 2001 (-1.9 percentage points). The next largest decreases were in the Pacific, South Atlantic, and West South Central divisions (-1.0 percentage point each). The two Northeast divisions—the Middle Atlantic and New England—registered the smallest declines in 2002 (-0.2 and -0.3 percentage point, respectively). Once again, the West North Central recorded the highest employment-population ratio (68.7 percent) and the East South Central registered the lowest (59.3 percent).

NOTE

All estimates presented in this release, except those for Puerto Rico, were derived from the Current Population Survey, a sample survey of about 60,000 households conducted monthly for the Bureau of Labor Statistics by the U.S. Census Bureau. A description of the survey and information about the reliability of the state estimates appear in *Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment, 2000*, Bulletin 2550. Effective with this release, annual averages for regions, divisions, states, and the District of Columbia, shown in tables 1 and 2, reflect updated population controls, incorporating the results of Census 2000. This decennial adjustment generally results in changes to levels for the current and previous years and may also affect unemployment rates and employment-population ratios, unlike the more routine population control updates in other years.

The length of the annual series varies by state and ranges from 27 to 33 years. The region and division annual series begin in 1976.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

**Table 1. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years of age and over by region, division, and state, 2001-02 annual averages**

(Numbers in thousands)

Region, division, and state	Population		Civilian labor force		Employed		Unemployed		Unemployment rate		Error range of rate, 2002 <sup>1</sup>		
	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002	2001	2002			
United States <sup>2</sup>	215,092	217,570	143,734	144,863	136,933	136,485	6,801	8,378	4.7	5.8	5.7	-	5.9
Northeast	41,678	42,028	27,070	27,576	25,883	26,026	1,187	1,550	4.4	5.6	5.4	-	5.8
New England	10,909	11,020	7,422	7,556	7,150	7,190	272	367	3.7	4.9	4.7	-	5.1
Connecticut	2,604	2,623	1,755	1,773	1,698	1,696	57	77	3.3	4.3	3.8	-	4.8
Maine	1,019	1,034	686	686	658	656	27	30	3.9	4.4	3.9	-	4.9
Massachusetts	5,003	5,046	3,393	3,486	3,268	3,301	125	185	3.7	5.3	4.9	-	5.7
New Hampshire	972	989	700	706	676	672	25	33	3.5	4.7	4.2	-	5.2
Rhode Island	827	840	548	556	522	528	26	28	4.7	5.1	4.6	-	5.6
Vermont	484	489	340	349	328	336	12	13	3.6	3.7	3.3	-	4.1
Middle Atlantic	30,769	31,008	19,648	20,020	18,734	18,836	915	1,183	4.7	5.9	5.7	-	6.1
New Jersey	6,513	6,585	4,305	4,368	4,125	4,113	180	255	4.2	5.8	5.4	-	6.2
New York	14,701	14,816	9,132	9,362	8,689	8,790	443	573	4.9	6.1	5.8	-	6.4
Pennsylvania	9,555	9,607	6,212	6,290	5,920	5,934	291	356	4.7	5.7	5.3	-	6.1
Midwest	49,197	49,600	34,265	34,125	32,711	32,247	1,554	1,878	4.5	5.5	5.3	-	5.7
East North Central	34,465	34,721	23,637	23,410	22,496	22,024	1,141	1,385	4.8	5.9	5.7	-	6.1
Illinois	9,440	9,524	6,473	6,378	6,125	5,963	349	415	5.4	6.5	6.1	-	6.9
Indiana	4,626	4,656	3,134	3,175	2,998	3,012	136	163	4.4	5.1	4.6	-	5.6
Michigan	7,594	7,650	5,158	5,001	4,886	4,691	271	310	5.3	6.2	5.8	-	6.6
Ohio	8,664	8,701	5,844	5,828	5,596	5,497	248	331	4.2	5.7	5.3	-	6.1
Wisconsin	4,141	4,190	3,028	3,028	2,891	2,861	137	167	4.5	5.5	4.9	-	6.1
West North Central	14,732	14,879	10,628	10,716	10,215	10,223	413	493	3.9	4.6	4.4	-	4.8
Iowa	2,261	2,277	1,625	1,667	1,572	1,601	54	67	3.3	4.0	3.5	-	4.5
Kansas	2,041	2,041	1,383	1,414	1,324	1,342	59	72	4.3	5.1	4.5	-	5.7
Minnesota	3,805	3,855	2,889	2,918	2,783	2,790	106	128	3.7	4.4	3.9	-	4.9
Missouri	4,288	4,330	3,020	2,990	2,879	2,825	141	165	4.7	5.5	5.0	-	6.0
Nebraska	1,298	1,311	953	959	923	925	29	34	3.1	3.6	3.1	-	4.1
North Dakota	490	492	346	346	336	332	10	14	2.9	4.0	3.5	-	4.5
South Dakota	569	574	412	421	398	408	14	13	3.4	3.1	2.7	-	3.5
South	76,681	77,831	50,296	50,711	47,922	47,861	2,374	2,849	4.7	5.6	5.5	-	5.7
South Atlantic	40,140	40,766	26,479	26,682	25,283	25,255	1,197	1,427	4.5	5.3	5.1	-	5.5
Delaware	612	622	429	423	414	405	15	18	3.4	4.2	3.7	-	4.7
District of Columbia	462	460	313	304	293	285	20	20	6.4	6.4	5.8	-	7.0
Florida	12,687	12,926	8,020	8,084	7,639	7,642	381	442	4.8	5.5	5.2	-	5.8
Georgia	6,223	6,337	4,220	4,292	4,053	4,071	167	221	4.0	5.1	4.6	-	5.6
Maryland	4,065	4,126	2,841	2,898	2,727	2,772	114	126	4.0	4.4	3.9	-	4.9
North Carolina	6,187	6,262	4,202	4,171	3,971	3,890	231	281	5.5	6.7	6.1	-	7.3
South Carolina	3,096	3,145	1,952	1,968	1,848	1,851	104	117	5.3	6.0	5.4	-	6.6
Virginia	5,379	5,454	3,680	3,735	3,556	3,583	125	152	3.4	4.1	3.6	-	4.6
West Virginia	1,432	1,436	822	804	782	755	40	49	4.8	6.1	5.5	-	6.7
East South Central	13,083	13,200	8,285	8,293	7,868	7,821	417	472	5.0	5.7	5.4	-	6.0
Alabama	3,411	3,432	2,135	2,103	2,022	1,978	112	124	5.3	5.9	5.3	-	6.5
Kentucky	3,144	3,184	1,985	1,966	1,878	1,857	107	110	5.4	5.6	5.0	-	6.2
Mississippi	2,122	2,136	1,305	1,298	1,234	1,210	71	88	5.5	6.8	6.1	-	7.5
Tennessee	4,407	4,448	2,860	2,926	2,733	2,776	126	150	4.4	5.1	4.5	-	5.7
West South Central	23,457	23,864	15,531	15,735	14,771	14,785	760	950	4.9	6.0	5.7	-	6.3
Arkansas	2,044	2,060	1,248	1,285	1,185	1,216	63	70	5.0	5.4	4.8	-	6.0
Louisiana	3,314	3,336	2,053	2,006	1,931	1,883	122	123	5.9	6.1	5.4	-	6.8
Oklahoma	2,590	2,619	1,671	1,693	1,607	1,617	64	76	3.8	4.5	3.9	-	5.1
Texas	15,510	15,849	10,560	10,751	10,048	10,070	512	681	4.8	6.3	6.0	-	6.6
West	47,962	48,899	32,428	32,947	30,722	30,811	1,706	2,136	5.3	6.5	6.3	-	6.7
Mountain	13,844	14,158	9,502	9,707	9,074	9,148	427	559	4.5	5.8	5.5	-	6.1
Arizona	3,928	4,033	2,580	2,672	2,458	2,507	121	165	4.7	6.2	5.5	-	6.9
Colorado	3,328	3,394	2,379	2,437	2,291	2,298	89	140	3.7	5.7	5.2	-	6.2
Idaho	970	989	681	684	647	645	34	40	5.0	5.8	5.2	-	6.4
Montana	698	706	463	464	442	442	22	21	4.6	4.6	4.0	-	5.2
Nevada	1,564	1,616	1,104	1,122	1,045	1,060	59	62	5.3	5.5	5.0	-	6.0
New Mexico	1,360	1,382	861	878	820	830	42	48	4.8	5.4	4.8	-	6.0
Utah	1,619	1,655	1,161	1,180	1,110	1,108	51	72	4.4	6.1	5.5	-	6.7
Wyoming	378	383	272	270	262	259	11	11	3.9	4.2	3.7	-	4.7
Pacific	34,118	34,742	22,926	23,240	21,647	21,663	1,279	1,577	5.6	6.8	6.6	-	7.0
Alaska	440	449	320	323	299	298	21	25	6.4	7.7	7.0	-	8.4
California	25,600	26,083	17,183	17,405	16,260	16,242	923	1,163	5.4	6.7	6.4	-	7.0
Hawaii	872	889	591	582	564	557	27	25	4.6	4.2	3.7	-	4.7
Oregon	2,673	2,716	1,817	1,834	1,702	1,695	115	138	6.3	7.5	6.8	-	8.2
Washington	4,533	4,605	3,015	3,097	2,822	2,871	193	226	6.4	7.3	6.6	-	8.0
Puerto Rico <sup>3</sup>	2,873	2,934	1,297	1,356	1,150	1,190	147	166	11.4	12.3	( <sup>4</sup> )		

<sup>1</sup> Error ranges are shown at the 90-percent confidence level.

<sup>2</sup> Because of separate processing and weighting procedures, totals for the United States differ from the results obtained by aggregating data for regions, divisions, or states.

<sup>3</sup> The source of these data is the Puerto Rico Department of Labor and

Human Resources.

<sup>4</sup> Not available.

NOTE: Region and division data are derived from summing the component states. Sub-national data incorporate updated 2000 census-based population controls.

**Table 2. Employment-population ratio of persons 16 years of age and over by region, division, and state, 2001-02 annual averages**

(Percent)

Region, division, and state	Employment-population ratio <sup>1</sup>		Over-the-year change	Error range of employment-population ratio, 2002 <sup>1</sup>	
	2001	2002			
United States .....	63.7	62.7	-1.0	62.5	- 62.9
Northeast .....	62.1	61.9	-2	61.5	- 62.3
New England .....	65.5	65.2	-3	64.5	- 65.9
Connecticut .....	65.2	64.7	-5	63.1	- 66.3
Maine .....	64.6	63.5	-1.1	62.0	- 65.0
Massachusetts .....	65.3	65.4	.1	64.1	- 66.7
New Hampshire .....	69.5	68.0	-1.5	66.6	- 69.4
Rhode Island .....	63.1	62.9	-.2	61.7	- 64.1
Vermont .....	67.7	68.6	.9	67.2	- 70.0
Middle Atlantic .....	60.9	60.7	-.2	60.2	- 61.2
New Jersey .....	63.3	62.5	-.8	61.5	- 63.5
New York .....	59.1	59.3	.2	58.5	- 60.1
Pennsylvania .....	62.0	61.8	-.2	60.9	- 62.7
Midwest .....	66.5	65.0	-1.5	64.6	- 65.4
East North Central .....	65.3	63.4	-1.9	62.8	- 64.0
Illinois .....	64.9	62.6	-2.3	61.6	- 63.6
Indiana .....	64.8	64.7	-.1	63.2	- 66.2
Michigan .....	64.3	61.3	-3.0	60.1	- 62.5
Ohio .....	64.6	63.2	-1.4	62.0	- 64.4
Wisconsin .....	69.8	68.3	-1.5	66.8	- 69.8
West North Central .....	69.3	68.7	-.6	68.0	- 69.4
Iowa .....	69.5	70.3	.8	69.0	- 71.6
Kansas .....	65.5	65.8	.3	64.1	- 67.5
Minnesota .....	73.1	72.4	-.7	70.8	- 74.0
Missouri .....	67.1	65.2	-1.9	63.4	- 67.0
Nebraska .....	71.1	70.6	-.5	69.2	- 72.0
North Dakota .....	68.5	67.5	-1.0	65.6	- 69.4
South Dakota .....	69.9	71.1	1.2	69.4	- 72.8
South .....	62.5	61.5	-1.0	61.1	- 61.9
South Atlantic .....	63.0	62.0	-1.0	61.5	- 62.5
Delaware .....	67.7	65.1	-2.6	63.6	- 66.6
District of Columbia .....	63.4	61.9	-1.5	60.4	- 63.4
Florida .....	60.2	59.1	-1.1	58.2	- 60.0
Georgia .....	65.1	64.3	-.8	62.9	- 65.7
Maryland .....	67.1	67.2	.1	65.8	- 68.6
North Carolina .....	64.2	62.1	-2.1	60.8	- 63.4
South Carolina .....	59.7	58.9	-.8	57.4	- 60.4
Virginia .....	66.1	65.7	-.4	63.9	- 67.5
West Virginia .....	54.6	52.6	-2.0	50.9	- 54.3
East South Central .....	60.1	59.3	-.8	58.4	- 60.2
Alabama .....	59.3	57.6	-1.7	55.9	- 59.3
Kentucky .....	59.7	58.3	-1.4	56.4	- 60.2
Mississippi .....	58.2	56.6	-1.6	54.8	- 58.4
Tennessee .....	62.0	62.4	.4	60.7	- 64.1
West South Central .....	63.0	62.0	-1.0	61.3	- 62.7
Arkansas .....	58.0	59.0	1.0	57.5	- 60.5
Louisiana .....	58.3	56.4	-1.9	54.7	- 58.1
Oklahoma .....	62.1	61.7	-.4	60.1	- 63.3
Texas .....	64.8	63.5	-1.3	62.5	- 64.5
West .....	64.1	63.0	-1.1	62.6	- 63.4
Mountain .....	65.5	64.6	-.9	63.9	- 65.3
Arizona .....	62.6	62.2	-.4	60.6	- 63.8
Colorado .....	68.8	67.7	-1.1	65.9	- 69.5
Idaho .....	66.7	65.2	-1.5	63.5	- 66.9
Montana .....	63.3	62.7	-.6	60.9	- 64.5
Nevada .....	66.8	65.6	-1.2	64.1	- 67.1
New Mexico .....	60.3	60.0	-.3	58.3	- 61.7
Utah .....	68.6	66.9	-1.7	65.1	- 68.7
Wyoming .....	69.3	67.6	-1.7	66.0	- 69.2
Pacific .....	63.4	62.4	-1.0	61.9	- 62.9
Alaska .....	68.0	66.4	-1.6	64.0	- 68.8
California .....	63.5	62.3	-1.2	61.7	- 62.9
Hawaii .....	64.7	62.7	-2.0	61.3	- 64.1
Oregon .....	63.7	62.4	-1.3	61.0	- 63.8
Washington .....	62.3	62.3	.0	60.9	- 63.7
Puerto Rico <sup>2</sup> .....	40.0	40.6	.6	( <sup>3</sup> )	

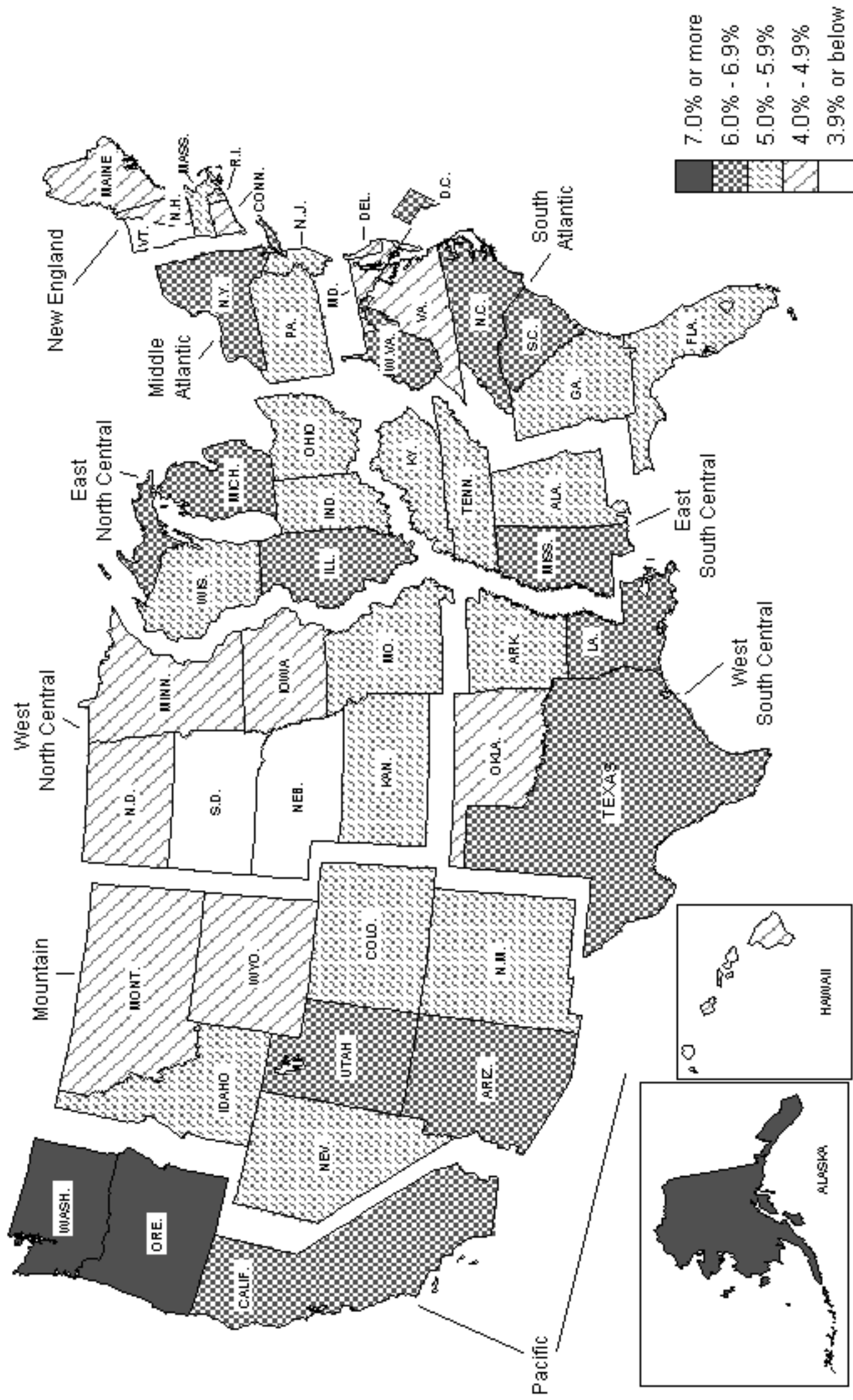
<sup>1</sup> Error ranges are shown at the 90-percent confidence level.  
<sup>2</sup> The source of these data is the Puerto Rico Department of

Labor and Human Resources.  
<sup>3</sup> Not available.



# Chart 2. Unemployment rates by state, 2002 annual averages

(U.S. rate = 5.8 percent)



# Chart 3. Employment-population ratios by state, 2002 annual averages

(U.S. average = 62.7 percent)

