

News

United States Department of Labor



Bureau of Labor Statistics

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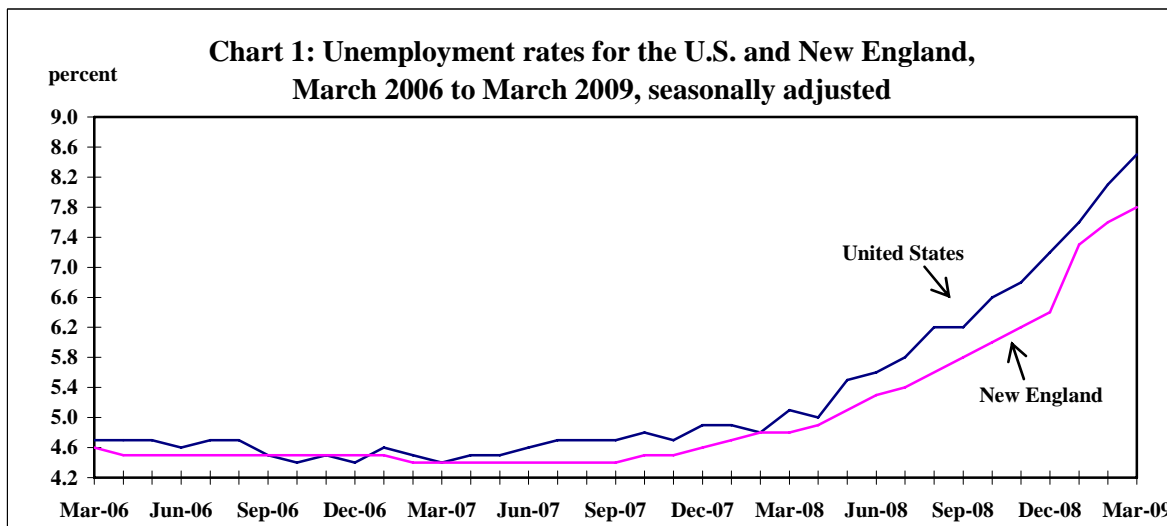
Internet address: <http://www.bls.gov/ro1/>
For information: Cynthia Gillham (617) 565-2327
Media contact: Tim Consedine (617) 565-2324

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NEW ENGLAND AND STATE UNEMPLOYMENT: MARCH 2009

The New England unemployment rate advanced 0.2 percentage point to 7.8 percent in March, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Over the year, the New England jobless rate rose 3.0 percentage points. Regional Commissioner Denis M. McSweeney noted that New England's rate was the highest it had been since December 1992. Nationally, the unemployment rate rose from 8.1 to 8.5 percent in March and was up 3.4 percentage points from a year earlier. (See chart 1.)

New England is one of nine geographic divisions nationwide. Among the nine geographic divisions, the Pacific and East North Central reported the highest unemployment rates in March, 10.8 and 10.0 percent, respectively. The West South Central registered the lowest rate, 6.5 percent. Five of the 9 divisions experienced statistically significant over-the-month unemployment rate increases: the Pacific (+0.7 percentage point), East South Central (+0.6 point), East North Central (+0.5 point), Mountain (+0.3 point), and West South Central (+0.2 point). All nine divisions had significant over-the-year rate increases, with the Pacific recording the largest (+4.8 percentage points).



In March, four New England states posted jobless rates that were significantly different from that of the United States. New Hampshire (6.2 percent), Vermont (7.2 percent), and Connecticut (7.5 percent) recorded lower-than-average unemployment rates in March. These 3 states were among 25 states in the country to report measurably lower rates. In contrast, the unemployment rate in Rhode

Island, at 10.5 percent, was measurably higher than that for the United States. Rhode Island was among 12 states and the District of Columbia with unemployment rates significantly higher than the national average. The remaining New England states of Massachusetts and Maine had rates little different from the U.S. average in March. These 2 states joined 11 others having unemployment rates that were not appreciably different from that for the nation. (See table 1.)

It should be noted that the unemployment rate in Rhode Island continued to be at its highest point since the Bureau first began collecting state labor force data, in 1976. In Maine, the jobless rate was at its highest point in over 17 years. In Connecticut and Vermont, they were at their highest points in over 16 years, and in Massachusetts, the rate was at its highest point in 16 years.

In March, New Hampshire was the only New England state to post a significant increase in its unemployment rate over the month, up 0.5 percentage point. Nationally, 20 states recorded statistically significant over-the-month unemployment rate increases in March. The remaining New England states were among 30 states and the District of Columbia that registered March unemployment rates that were not appreciably different from those of a month earlier, though some had changes that were at least as large numerically as the significant changes.

Over the year, every New England state recorded a measurable jobless rate increase, led by Rhode Island, up 3.7 percentage points. Massachusetts and Maine recorded rate increases of 3.1 percentage points. Vermont, New Hampshire, and Connecticut had smaller, but also statistically significant rate increases, from March 2008. Nationwide, every state and the District of Columbia recorded significant rate increases in their over-the-year jobless rates. Oregon reported the largest jobless rate increase from a year earlier (+6.6 percentage points), followed by South Carolina (+5.5 points), North Carolina (+5.4 points), and Michigan (+5.0 points).

Technical Note

This release presents labor force and unemployment data from the Current Population Survey (CPS) and the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program. Estimates for the U.S. are obtained directly from the CPS, which is a sample survey of approximately 60,000 households nationwide that is conducted for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) by the Census Bureau. The LAUS program produces data for the nine geographic divisions in the United States: New England, Middle Atlantic, South Atlantic, East South Central, West South Central, East North Central, West North Central, Mountain, and Pacific. Data for all divisions, as well as the 50 states, are available in the Regional and State Employment and Unemployment release <http://www.bls.gov/lau/home.htm#news> issued monthly by BLS, while national statistics are highlighted in the Employment Situation <http://www.bls.gov/cps/home.htm#news>.

Labor force and unemployment data for prior years reflect adjustments made at the end of each year. The adjusted estimates reflect updated population data from the U.S. Census Bureau, any revisions in the other data sources, and model reestimation. In most years, historical data for the most recent five years (both seasonally adjusted and not seasonally adjusted) are revised near the beginning of each calendar year, prior to or coincident with the release of January estimates.

This information will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (617) 565-2072, Federal Relay Services: 1-800-877-8333.

Table 1. Labor force status for the U.S., New England, and New England states, seasonally adjusted

(Numbers in thousands)

Area	Dec. 2007	Mar. 2008	Apr. 2008	May 2008	June 2008	Jul. 2008	Aug. 2008	Sep. 2008	Oct. 2008	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008	Jan. 2009	Feb. 2009	Mar. 2009 ^p
Connecticut^b														
Civilian labor force	1,860.1	1,868.1	1,865.8	1,869.2	1,871.9	1,877.9	1,883.2	1,881.9	1,884.8	1,888.4	1,894.2	1,889.5	1,890.3	1,884.6
Employed	1,769.1	1,769.2	1,769.2	1,769.2	1,769.2	1,769.2	1,769.2	1,769.2	1,769.3	1,769.3	1,769.4	1,751.6	1,750.8	1,742.7
Unemployed	91.1	98.9	96.7	100.0	102.7	108.7	114.0	112.7	115.5	119.1	124.8	138.0	139.5	141.9
Unemployment rate	4.9	5.3	5.2	5.4	5.5	5.8	6.1	6.0	6.1	6.3	6.6	7.3	7.4	7.5
Maine^b														
Civilian labor force	703.9	705.3	705.8	706.0	706.1	707.5	707.1	707.4	707.3	709.1	710.6	710.6	708.0	705.1
Employed	670.8	669.9	670.2	670.1	669.7	669.6	668.7	668.1	667.1	665.5	664.3	655.6	652.5	648.2
Unemployed	33.1	35.3	35.7	36.0	36.4	37.9	38.4	39.3	40.3	43.6	46.3	55.1	55.5	56.9
Unemployment rate	4.7	5.0	5.1	5.1	5.2	5.4	5.4	5.6	5.7	6.2	6.5	7.7	7.8	8.1
Massachusetts^b														
Civilian labor force	3,415.3	3,418.6	3,420.3	3,422.3	3,424.1	3,425.6	3,426.5	3,426.7	3,427.5	3,429.6	3,432.6	3,426.5	3,427.4	3,421.8
Employed	3,262.0	3,257.9	3,255.9	3,253.4	3,250.3	3,246.5	3,241.7	3,236.0	3,229.2	3,221.3	3,212.9	3,174.2	3,162.2	3,155.9
Unemployed	153.3	160.7	164.4	168.9	173.8	179.1	184.7	190.7	198.4	208.3	219.7	252.3	265.1	265.9
Unemployment rate	4.5	4.7	4.8	4.9	5.1	5.2	5.4	5.6	5.8	6.1	6.4	7.4	7.7	7.8
New Hampshire^b														
Civilian labor force	738.3	739.6	739.5	738.9	738.7	738.5	738.8	738.5	738.2	738.5	738.9	739.7	742.4	743.6
Employed	712.8	712.2	711.9	711.6	711.2	710.8	710.3	709.7	709.0	708.3	707.4	701.4	700.2	697.9
Unemployed	25.5	27.4	27.5	27.3	27.5	27.8	28.5	28.8	29.2	30.2	31.4	38.3	42.3	45.7
Unemployment rate	3.5	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.3	5.2	5.7	6.2
Rhode Island^b														
Civilian labor force	570.6	569.0	568.8	567.6	567.5	568.1	566.6	567.6	566.5	567.0	565.3	562.7	566.0	564.5
Employed	536.2	530.3	528.5	525.7	524.0	522.9	519.8	519.2	516.5	515.4	512.1	504.9	506.6	504.9
Unemployed	34.4	38.7	40.3	41.9	43.5	45.1	46.8	48.4	50.0	51.6	53.2	57.8	59.4	59.5
Unemployment rate	6.0	6.8	7.1	7.4	7.7	7.9	8.3	8.5	8.8	9.1	9.4	10.3	10.5	10.5
Vermont^b														
Civilian labor force	353.8	354.7	355.3	355.0	354.4	354.8	355.3	356.4	356.8	356.5	356.7	357.1	358.1	359.0
Employed	339.6	338.6	338.9	339.0	338.5	338.6	338.7	339.1	339.2	337.5	335.7	332.9	332.8	333.2
Unemployed	14.2	16.2	16.4	16.0	15.9	16.2	16.6	17.2	17.6	19.0	21.0	24.2	25.3	25.8
Unemployment rate	4.0	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.9	5.3	5.9	6.8	7.1	7.2
New England^b														
Civilian labor force	7,637.4	7,645.7	7,647.2	7,656.6	7,663.2	7,668.7	7,676.8	7,683.1	7,690.8	7,700.2	7,709.7	7,688.2	7,697.1	7,683.7
Employed	7,287.0	7,274.9	7,269.9	c 7,264.6	7,258.9	7,252.9	7,246.5	7,239.9	7,233.2	7,226.2	7,219.2	7,124.6	7,109.6	7,084.9
Unemployed	350.3	370.8	377.3	392.0	404.3	415.9	430.2	443.1	457.7	474.0	490.5	563.6	587.5	598.8
Unemployment rate	4.6	4.8	4.9	5.1	5.3	5.4	5.6	5.8	6.0	6.2	6.4	7.3	7.6	7.8
United States 1/														
Civilian labor force	153,836	153,843	153,932	154,510	154,400	154,506	154,823	154,621	154,878	154,620	154,447	b 153,716	154,214	154,048
Employed	146,294	146,023	146,257	145,974	145,738	145,596	145,273	145,029	144,657	144,144	143,338	b 142,099	141,748	140,887
Unemployed	7,541	7,820	7,675	8,536	8,662	8,910	9,550	9,592	10,221	10,476	11,108	11,616	12,467	13,161
Unemployment rate	4.9	5.1	5.0	5.5	5.6	5.8	6.2	6.2	6.6	6.8	7.2	7.6	8.1	8.5

^p = preliminary

1/ Data for the U.S. are obtained directly from the national Current Population Survey (CPS) and are not preliminary. Seasonally adjusted CPS data have been revised as a result of routine seasonal updates processed at the end of each calendar year.

NOTE: Data refer to place of residence. Area definitions are based on Office of Management and Budget Bulletin No. 09-01, dated November 20, 2008, and are available at <http://www.bls.gov/lau/lausmsa.htm>. Estimates for the latest month are subject to revision the following month.

c = corrected

b = Reflects revised population controls, model reestimation, and new seasonal factors.

Table 2. Civilian labor force and unemployment by census region and division, seasonally adjusted¹

(Numbers in thousands)

Census region and division	Civilian labor force					Unemployed									
						Number					Percent of the labor force				
	Dec. 2007 ^b	Mar. 2008	Jan. 2009	Feb. 2009	Mar. 2009	Dec. 2007 ^b	Mar. 2008	Jan. 2009	Feb. 2009	Mar. 2009	Dec. 2007 ^b	Mar. 2008	Jan. 2009	Feb. 2009	Mar. 2009
Northeast	28,057.2	28,112.6	28,334.5	28,423.4	28,421.3	1,303.5	1,368.6	2,021.1	2,199.7	2,241.3	4.6	4.9	7.1	7.7	7.9
New England	7,637.4	7,645.7	7,688.2	7,697.1	7,683.7	350.3	370.8	563.6	587.5	598.8	4.6	4.8	7.3	7.6	7.8
Middle Atlantic	20,419.9	20,466.9	20,646.2	20,726.3	20,737.6	953.1	997.8	1,457.5	1,612.2	1,642.5	4.7	4.9	7.1	7.8	7.9
South	54,532.8	54,664.5	55,139.7	55,225.7	55,060.0	2,506.9	2,655.0	4,190.8	4,484.2	4,614.0	4.6	4.9	7.6	8.1	8.4
South Atlantic	29,282.8	29,353.8	29,530.8	29,569.0	29,413.6	1,335.6	1,450.3	2,428.0	2,646.1	2,687.9	4.6	4.9	8.2	8.9	9.1
East South Central	8,544.2	8,549.6	8,566.3	8,603.6	8,583.1	446.7	477.2	719.3	769.0	812.5	5.2	5.6	8.4	8.9	9.5
West South Central	16,705.9	16,761.1	17,042.6	17,053.1	17,063.3	724.5	727.5	1,043.5	1,069.1	1,113.6	4.3	4.3	6.1	6.3	6.5
Midwest	34,876.6	34,839.4	34,705.6	34,763.8	34,651.3	1,840.9	1,902.4	2,826.0	2,997.4	3,133.8	5.3	5.5	8.1	8.6	9.0
East North Central	23,986.5	23,943.9	23,767.2	23,805.9	23,686.8	1,362.3	1,411.8	2,118.6	2,260.3	2,368.0	5.7	5.9	8.9	9.5	10.0
West North Central	10,890.1	10,895.5	10,938.3	10,957.9	10,964.4	478.6	490.6	707.4	737.1	765.8	4.4	4.5	6.5	6.7	7.0
West	35,554.3	35,701.3	36,278.3	36,347.7	36,306.2	1,829.1	1,960.3	3,150.7	3,338.4	3,546.7	5.1	5.5	8.7	9.2	9.8
Mountain	11,000.1	11,047.5	11,201.3	11,191.0	11,135.9	455.0	481.5	739.6	789.3	818.8	4.1	4.4	6.6	7.1	7.4
Pacific	24,554.3	24,653.8	25,076.9	25,156.8	25,170.4	1,374.2	1,478.8	2,411.1	2,549.1	2,727.9	5.6	6.0	9.6	10.1	10.8

¹ Census region estimates are derived by summing the Census division model-based estimates

^c = corrected

NOTE: Data refer to place of residence. Regions are defined as the four Census regions, comprised as follows:

Northeast Region includes the New England Division - Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont; and the Middle Atlantic Division - New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.

South Region includes the South Atlantic Division - Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia; East South Central Division - Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee; and West South Central Division - Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Midwest Region includes the East North Central Division - Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin; and the West North Central Division - Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

West Region includes the Mountain Division - Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming; and the Pacific Division - Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington.

Estimates for the current year are subject to revision early in the following calendar year.

^b = Reflects revised population controls, model reestimation, and new seasonal factors.