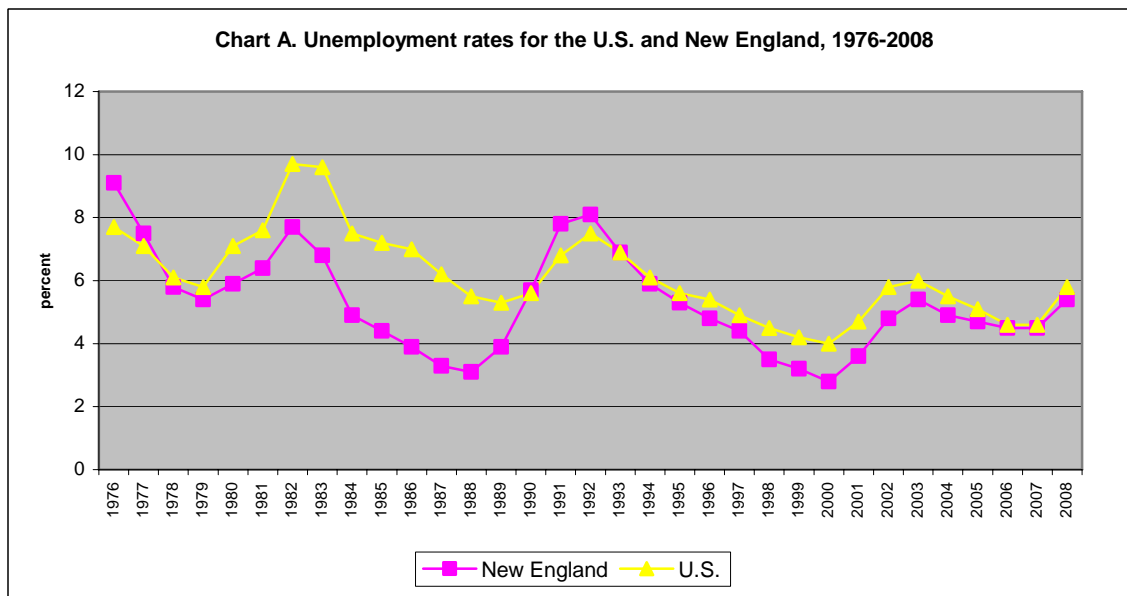




## NEW ENGLAND AND STATE UNEMPLOYMENT IN 2008

### New England Unemployment Rate at 5.4 Percent

The unemployment rate in New England rose 0.9 percentage point over the year to 5.4 percent in 2008, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Nationally, the U.S. jobless rate rose 1.2 percentage points to reach 5.8 percent in 2008. (See table 1.) Regional Commissioner Denis M. McSweeney noted that New England's unemployment rate was measurably lower than the national average in 2008, but had not been significantly different from that for the nation in the prior two years. It should be noted that the jobless rate in New England has rarely exceeded the U.S. average in the 33 years that these data have been collected. (See chart A.)



New England is one of nine geographic divisions in the United States. Jobless rates in the divisions ranged from 4.8 percent in the West South Central to 6.8 percent in the Pacific in 2008. Five divisions, including New England, recorded annual average unemployment rates that were significantly lower than that for the nation and two divisions, the Pacific and East North Central, reported rates that were appreciably higher than the U.S. average. (See table 2.)

All nine geographic divisions reported statistically significant over-the-year unemployment rate increases in 2008 ranging from a 1.6-percentage point rise in the Pacific to a 0.5-percentage point increase in the West South Central.

Of the six states that make up the New England division, four had jobless rates appreciably different from the U.S. average in 2008. New Hampshire (3.8 percent), Vermont (4.8 percent), and Massachusetts (5.3 percent) had rates significantly lower than that for the nation. These 3 states were among 26 states in the country to report measurably lower rates. Nationally, New Hampshire, as well as Oklahoma, reported the sixth lowest jobless rate. In contrast, Rhode Island (7.8 percent) posted the highest unemployment rate in New England and the second highest jobless rate nationwide; only Michigan, with a rate of 8.4 percent, was higher. Rhode Island was among 14 states nationwide, along with the District of Columbia, to report a jobless rate significantly above that for the United States. The remaining New England states of Maine (5.4 percent) and Connecticut (5.7 percent) joined eight others nationally in having unemployment rates that were not measurably different than that for the nation in 2008. (See table 1.)

Five of the six New England states posted a statistically significant jobless rate change over the year, all of them increases. Rhode Island's rate rose 2.6 percentage points, the largest increase in New England, as well as the nation. Other measurably higher increases occurred in Connecticut (+1.1 percentage points) and Massachusetts, Maine, and Vermont (+0.8 percentage point each). The remaining New England state, New Hampshire, posted an unemployment rate in 2008 that was not measurably different from that of a year earlier.

#### **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 monthly sample survey of approximately 60,000 households nationwide that is conducted for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) by the Census Bureau. All subnational estimates presented in this release were derived from updated time-series models with monthly benchmarking to national Current Population Survey (CPS) estimates. Subnational data reflect revised population controls and model reestimation. Historical data were revised back to 2004. Data for regions, divisions, states, and the District of Columbia are available back to 1976.

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 Unemployment release (<http://www.bls.gov/lau/home.htm#news>). Analysis in this news release reflects the use of model-based error measures when making comparisons with the U.S. and the prior year. BLS uses a 90-percent confidence level in determining whether changes or differences in subnational unemployment rates are statistically significant. Model-based error measures are available on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/lau/lastderr.htm>.

This information will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (617) 565-2072, Federal Relay Services: 1-800-877-8339.

**Table 1. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population for the U.S., New England, and the New England states, 2007-08 annual averages**  
(Numbers in thousands)

| Area                             | Civilian labor force |         | Employed |         | Unemployed |       | Unemployment rate |      | Error range of rate,<br>2008 <sup>2</sup> |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------|----------|---------|------------|-------|-------------------|------|---|
|                                  | 2007                 | 2008    | 2007     | 2008    | 2007       | 2008  | 2007              | 2008 |   |
| <b>United States<sup>1</sup></b> | 153,124              | 154,287 | 146,047  | 145,362 | 7,078      | 8,924 | 4.6               | 5.8  | 5.7 - 5.9                                 |
| <b>New England</b>               | 7,633                | 7,669   | 7,293    | 7,254   | 340        | 415   | 4.5               | 5.4  | 5.1 - 5.7                                 |
| <b>Connecticut</b>               | 1,850                | 1,876   | 1,766    | 1,769   | 85         | 107   | 4.6               | 5.7  | 5.3 - 6.1                                 |
| <b>Maine</b>                     | 703                  | 707     | 670      | 669     | 33         | 38    | 4.6               | 5.4  | 4.9 - 5.9                                 |
| <b>Massachusetts</b>             | 3,416                | 3,424   | 3,263    | 3,244   | 153        | 180   | 4.5               | 5.3  | 4.8 - 5.8                                 |
| <b>New Hampshire</b>             | 738                  | 739     | 712      | 711     | 26         | 28    | 3.5               | 3.8  | 3.5 - 4.1                                 |
| <b>Rhode Island</b>              | 572                  | 568     | 543      | 523     | 30         | 44    | 5.2               | 7.8  | 7.2 - 8.4                                 |
| <b>Vermont</b>                   | 354                  | 355     | 340      | 339     | 14         | 17    | 4.0               | 4.8  | 4.3 - 5.2                                 |

<sup>1</sup> Data for the U.S. are obtained directly from the national Current Population Survey.

<sup>2</sup> Error ranges are shown at the 90-percent confidence level and are based on unrounded data.

Note: Data for subnational areas reflect revised population controls and model reestimation.

Unemployment rates are in percent and based on unrounded levels.

**Table 2. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by region and division, 2007-08 annual averages**

(Numbers in thousands)

| Census region and division | Civilian labor force |        | Employed |        | Unemployed |       | Unemployment rate |      | Error range of rate, 2008 <sup>1</sup> |
|----------------------------|----------------------|--------|----------|--------|------------|-------|-------------------|------|--|
|                            | 2007                 | 2008   | 2007     | 2008   | 2007       | 2008  | 2007              | 2008 |  |
| <b>Northeast</b>           | 27,967               | 28,240 | 26,729   | 26,709 | 1,239      | 1,531 | 4.4               | 5.4  | 5.3 - 5.6                              |
| New England                | 7,633                | 7,669  | 7,293    | 7,254  | 340        | 415   | 4.5               | 5.4  | 5.1 - 5.7                              |
| Middle Atlantic            | 20,334               | 20,571 | 19,435   | 19,455 | 899        | 1,116 | 4.4               | 5.4  | 5.2 - 5.6                              |
| <b>South</b>               | 54,286               | 54,940 | 51,932   | 51,924 | 2,355      | 3,017 | 4.3               | 5.5  | 5.4 - 5.6                              |
| South Atlantic             | 29,154               | 29,480 | 27,935   | 27,797 | 1,219      | 1,683 | 4.2               | 5.7  | 5.5 - 5.9                              |
| East South Central         | 8,532                | 8,561  | 8,115    | 8,035  | 417        | 526   | 4.9               | 6.1  | 5.8 - 6.5                              |
| West South Central         | 16,600               | 16,899 | 15,881   | 16,092 | 719        | 807   | 4.3               | 4.8  | 4.5 - 5.0                              |
| <b>Midwest</b>             | 34,881               | 34,847 | 33,092   | 32,735 | 1,789      | 2,112 | 5.1               | 6.1  | 5.9 - 6.2                              |
| East North Central         | 24,005               | 23,919 | 22,678   | 22,343 | 1,327      | 1,576 | 5.5               | 6.6  | 6.4 - 6.8                              |
| West North Central         | 10,876               | 10,928 | 10,414   | 10,393 | 463        | 536   | 4.3               | 4.9  | 4.7 - 5.1                              |
| <b>West</b>                | 35,278               | 35,971 | 33,617   | 33,725 | 1,661      | 2,246 | 4.7               | 6.2  | 6.1 - 6.4                              |
| Mountain                   | 10,887               | 11,133 | 10,486   | 10,579 | 401        | 554   | 3.7               | 5.0  | 4.8 - 5.2                              |
| Pacific                    | 24,391               | 24,838 | 23,131   | 23,146 | 1,261      | 1,692 | 5.2               | 6.8  | 6.6 - 7.0                              |

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.

<sup>1</sup> Error ranges are shown at the 90-percent confidence level and are based on unrounded data.

Note: Data for subnational areas reflect revised population controls and model reestimation. As a result, they will not add to U.S. totals.

Unemployment rates are in percent and are based on unrounded levels.