



# West Virginia Economic Update

September 18, 2015

## Summary

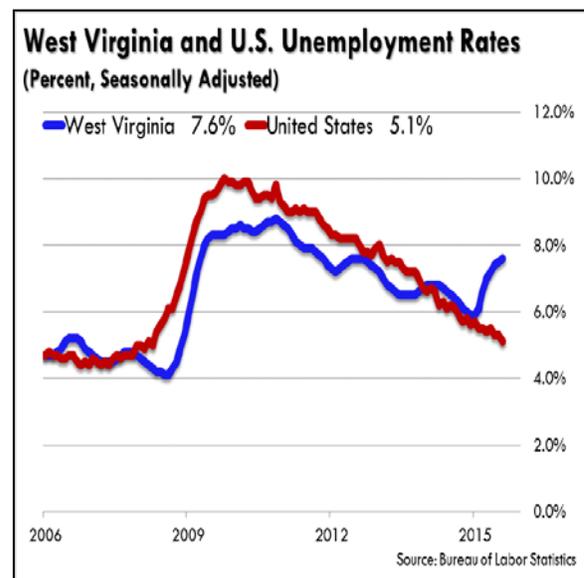
Nonfarm payroll employment in West Virginia increased by 700 jobs and the unemployment rate rose to 7.6 percent in August according to data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

## West Virginia Unemployment Rate

During August, the unemployment rate in West Virginia increased by 0.1 percentage point to 7.6 percent. The number of people counted as unemployed rose by 696 in August to 59,811, while the labor force grew by 3,123 to 786,989. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 50 posted lower unemployment rates for the month than West Virginia. A year earlier, the unemployment rate in West Virginia stood at 6.4 percent.

The 10 year peak for the unemployment rate in West Virginia was 8.8 percent in November 2010. The series high for the unemployment rate in West Virginia occurred in February 1983 when the unemployment rate reached 18.8 percent. The 10 year low for the unemployment rate was 4.1 percent in August 2008. This also represents the series low for the unemployment rate in West Virginia. BLS began publishing the state unemployment rate series in 1976.

The national unemployment rate declined by 0.2 percentage point to 5.1 percent in August. August's unemployment rate was 1.0 percentage point lower than a year earlier. The ten year high for the national unemployment rate was 10.0 percent in October 2009. The ten year low was 4.4 percent in May 2007.



## West Virginia Payroll Employment

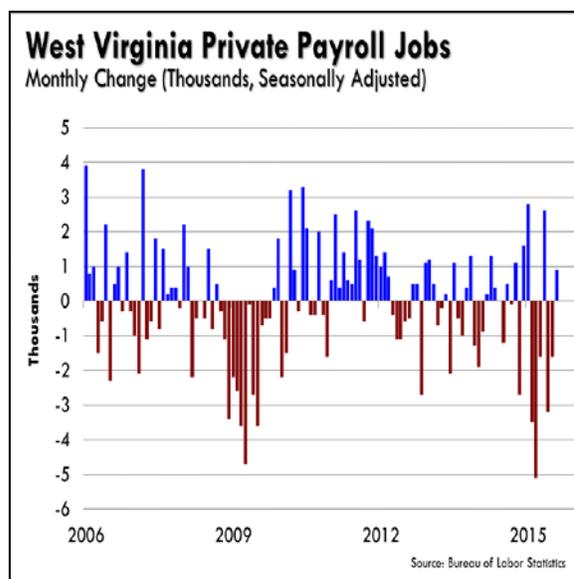
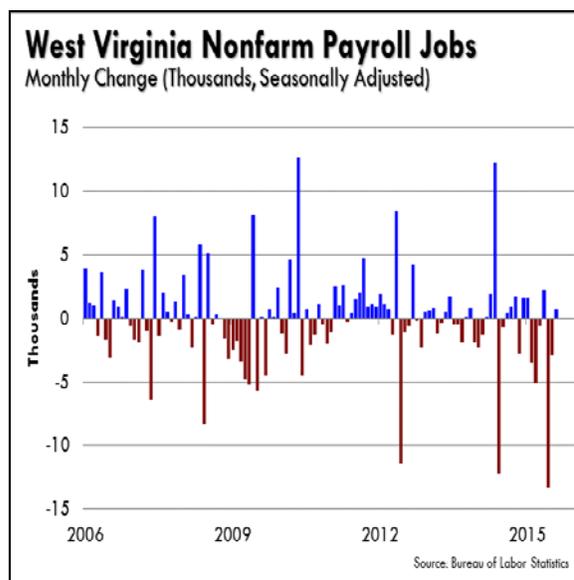
West Virginia nonfarm payrolls increased by 700 jobs, or 0.09 percent, on a seasonally adjusted basis during August. In the prior month, nonfarm payrolls declined by 2,900. Over the past 12 months nonfarm payrolls in West Virginia declined by 19,500, or 2.56 percent. West Virginia nonfarm payroll employment has increased in 6 of the past 12 months.

Nationally nonfarm payrolls increased by 173,000 jobs in August, or 0.12 percent. Over the 12 month period ending in August 2015 nonfarm payrolls grew by 2,919,000 jobs, or 2.09 percent. West Virginia ranks 51st among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for percentage gain in nonfarm payroll employment over the past 12 months.

During August, West Virginia private sector payrolls increased by 900, or 0.15 percent. Private sector payrolls declined by 1,600 jobs in the prior month. Over the past 12 months, private sector payrolls in West Virginia declined by 8,800, or 1.44 percent. West Virginia private sector payroll employment has increased in 5 of the past 12 months.

Nationally private-sector payroll jobs increased by 140,000 jobs in August, or 0.12 percent. Over the past 12 months, the nation's economy has added 2,789,000 jobs in the private sector, an increase of 2.37 percent. West Virginia ranks 51st among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for percentage gain in private sector payroll employment over the past 12 months.

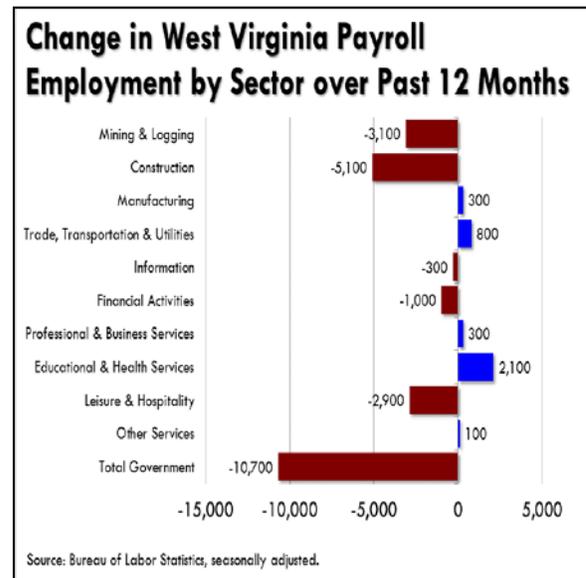
During August, total government payroll employment in West Virginia declined by 200, or 0.14 percent. Federal government payroll employment was unchanged. State government payroll employment declined by 300, or 0.61 percent, while local government payroll employment increased by 100, or 0.14 percent.



Over the past year, total government payroll employment declined by 10,700, or 7.03 percent. State government payroll employment declined by 400, or 0.81 percent. Local government payroll employment declined by 9,300, or 11.68 percent.

The best performing sectors on a seasonally adjusted basis during August were Educational & Health Services (+900) and Trade, Transportation & Utilities (+700). The poorest performing sector during the month was Manufacturing (-600).

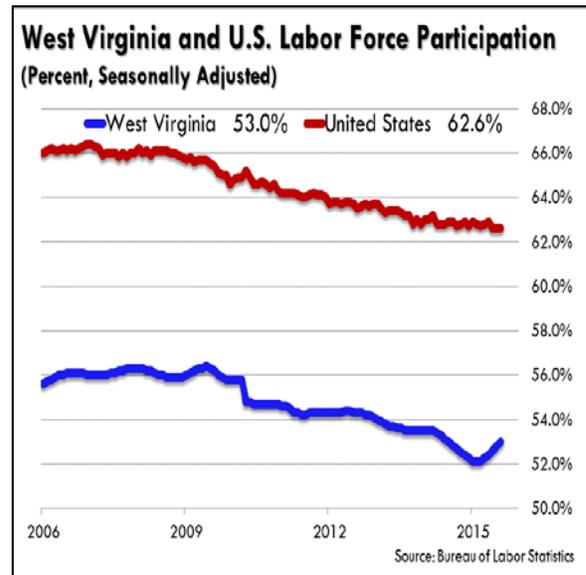
The best performing sectors during the last twelve months were Educational & Health Services (+2,100) and Trade, Transportation & Utilities (+800). The poorest performing sectors for the year were Total Government (-10,700) and Construction (-5,100).



### Other West Virginia Labor Force Statistics

The labor force participation rate in West Virginia rose to 53.0 percent in August from 52.8 percent the prior month. At 53.0 percent, West Virginia has the lowest labor force participation rate in the nation. The labor force participation rate in West Virginia is unchanged from a year earlier. The labor force participation rate is the percentage of the civilian noninstitutionalized population age 16 and older who are employed or actively looking for work.

The 10 year high for the labor force participation rate in West Virginia was 56.4 percent in June 2009. The series high for the labor force participation rate in West Virginia occurred in March 2001 when the labor force participation rate hit 57.0 percent. The 10 year low for the labor force participation rate was 52.1 percent in March 2015. The series low for the labor force participation rate occurred in October 1976 when the labor force participation rate hit 50.3 percent.



The national labor force participation rate was unchanged at 62.6 percent in August. That rate was 0.3 percentage point lower than a year earlier. At 62.6 percent, the labor force participation rate is at its lowest level since October 1977.

The employment-to-population ratio, or the percentage of the West Virginia civilian noninstitutionalized population 16 years and older counted as employed, rose to 48.9 percent in August from 48.8 percent the prior month. At 48.9 percent, West Virginia has the lowest employment-to-population ratio in the nation. The employment-to-population ratio in West Virginia is 0.6 percentage point lower than a year earlier.

The 10 year high for the employment-to-population ratio in West Virginia was 53.8 percent in March 2008. The series high for the employment-to-population ratio in West Virginia occurred in April 2001 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 54.1 percent. The 10 year low for the employment-to-population ratio was 48.6 percent in April 2015. The series low for the employment-to-population ratio occurred in March 1983 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 42.2 percent.

The national employment-to-population ratio rose by 0.1 percentage point to 59.4 percent in August. That rate was 0.4 percentage point higher than a year earlier. The employment-to-population ratio stood at 59.4 percent when the recession ended in June 2009. The all-time high for the employment-to-population ratio was 64.7 percent in April 2000. The 10 year high for the employment-to-population ratio was 63.4 percent in December 2006. The recent low occurred in October 2013 when the employment-to-population ratio dipped to 58.2 percent. The last time the employment-to-population posted a reading lower than 58.2 percent was July 1983.

State employment and unemployment data for September is scheduled for release on Tuesday, October 20. The national employment situation report for September will be released on Friday, October 2.

