

Executive Summary

This is the 13th edition of state-by-state snapshots issued by the Joint Economic Committee during the 112th Congress and includes data through December 2011.

This month's report shows that while 212,000 private-sector positions were added in the U.S. during December, the gains were not evenly distributed, with fewer than half of the states adding private-sector positions during the month. For all of 2011, more than 1.9 million private-sector positions were added nationwide and all but three states gained private-sector jobs. Additionally, more than 90 percent of states saw their unemployment rate decline in the past year.

Overall, the economic picture brightened in the fourth quarter (October–December). December's ISM reading of 53.9 percent marked the 29th consecutive month of expansion in the manufacturing sector. Retail sales showed modest growth, recording a gain of 0.1 percent in December, following a 0.4 percent gain in November. Industrial production increased by 0.4 percent in December, rebounding from a 0.3 percent decline in November. Manufacturing output jumped by 0.9 percent in December, the largest monthly gain since last December.

Against this national backdrop, this report highlights progress at the state level in creating private-sector jobs and reducing unemployment and tracks the employment gains in key sectors, including manufacturing and professional and business services.

Report highlights include:

- Twenty-one states and the District of Columbia added private-sector jobs in December. This was the smallest number of states to add private-sector positions since September 2010. Indiana had the largest private-sector gains (12,000), followed by Texas (10,100) and California (9,200). For all of 2011, 47 states and the District of Columbia gained private-sector jobs, with Texas (260,000), California (206,700) and Florida (121,800) recording the largest gains. New York, Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania also posted private-sector job gains exceeding 75,000 jobs each. Only Alaska, Delaware and Missouri lost private-sector positions over the past 12 months. From December 2010 - December 2011, North Dakota (7.5 percent), Utah (3.8 percent) and Louisiana (3.2 percent) had the largest percentage gains in private-sector employment.

- Thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia saw their unemployment rates decline in December, with eighteen states recording statistically significant decreases. The remaining 32 states and the District of Columbia did not experience statistically significant changes. Alabama (-0.6 percentage point) and Michigan (-0.5 percentage point) experienced the largest decreases, followed by Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee and Utah (-0.4 percentage point each). In the past 12 months, Nevada reported the largest decline in the unemployment rate (-2.3 percentage points), followed by Florida (-2.1 percentage points) and New Mexico (-2.0 percentage points). Nineteen other states recorded statistically significant declines over the past year. Nevada (12.6 percent) and California (11.1 percent) had the highest unemployment rates in December while North Dakota (3.3 percent) had the lowest. The national unemployment rate during the month was 8.5 percent, down from 9.4 percent a year earlier.
- Manufacturing employment expanded in 28 states in December. The largest gains were in Michigan (4,200), followed by Indiana (3,600) and Wisconsin (3,300). Nationally, after being flat for four months, manufacturing employment increased by 23,000 in December. For the full year, the United States added 225,000 manufacturing jobs. Eight states – Michigan (26,400), Texas (25,200), Ohio (18,300), Washington (14,600), Illinois (12,200), Pennsylvania (12,100) South Carolina (11,600) and Oklahoma (10,600) – each added more than 10,000 manufacturing positions during 2011.
- Twenty-three states and the District of Columbia added jobs in the professional and business services sector in December. California (13,400), Virginia (5,800) and Indiana (4,800) posted the largest increases. In the past year, 45 states and the District of Columbia have added professional and business services jobs, with California, Texas and New York recording the largest gains. In 2011, more than 450,000 jobs were added in the professional and business services sector.
- Twenty-one states added jobs in the leisure and hospitality sector during December. Texas (4,100), Florida (3,300) and Virginia (3,200) saw the largest gains. In all of 2011, 38 states and the District of Columbia added leisure and hospitality jobs. During this period, 268,000 leisure and hospitality jobs were added.

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