

Understanding the Economy: State-by-State Snapshots

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the third edition of state-by-state snapshots issued by the Joint Economic Committee Democratic staff under the leadership of Vice Chair Amy Klobuchar. The report includes state-level data through March 2013.

This month's report shows that nearly half of the states added private-sector jobs in March. Nationally, private-sector job gains fell below 100,000 during the month for the first time since June 2012. Even with the slowed growth in March, the private sector has added more than 1.2 million positions in the past six months. Retail sales fell by 0.4 percent in March, following a 1.0 percent gain in February. Manufacturing output edged down 0.1 percent, after rising by 0.9 percent in February.

Against this backdrop, our report highlights the progress being made at the state level in both creating private-sector jobs and reducing unemployment. It also tracks employment changes in key sectors, including manufacturing and professional and business services.

Report highlights include:

- **Twenty-four states and the District of Columbia added private-sector jobs in March.** The states with the largest March gains were Florida (32,400), California (24,700) and New York (14,100). Over the last twelve months, all states and the District of Columbia have added private-sector jobs, with Texas (317,200) and California (294,200) recording the largest gains. In that same period, North Dakota posted the largest percentage gains in private sector employment (5.5 percent), followed by Utah (5.3 percent) and Texas (3.5 percent). All told, nearly 2.0 million private-sector positions were added nationally between March 2012 and March 2013.
- **Thirteen states had statistically significant decreases in their unemployment rates during March.** Alaska, Florida, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont and Virginia reported the largest decreases, each showing a 0.3 percentage point decline in their unemployment rate last month. In the past 12 months, 11 states reported statistically significant decreases in their unemployment rates. Nevada made the largest improvement, shaving 1.9 percentage points from its unemployment rate in the past year. Even with the progress, Nevada (9.7 percent) had the highest unemployment rate in March. North Dakota again had the lowest unemployment rate (3.3 percent). The national unemployment rate during the month was 7.6 percent, down from 8.2 percent a year earlier.

- **Manufacturing employment expanded in 19 states in March.** The states that posted the largest gains in this sector were New Jersey (2,900), Wisconsin (2,800) and Ohio (1,800). In the past 12 months, 32 states added manufacturing positions, with the largest gains in the Midwest. Michigan (15,700) and Indiana (13,000) recorded the biggest gains in the past year. Overall, 71,000 manufacturing positions have been added across the country in the last 12 months.
- **Twenty states added jobs in the professional and business services sector in March.** California (15,800), Florida (7,300) and Georgia (6,700) posted the largest increases. In the past year, 42 states and the District of Columbia have added professional and business services jobs, with California, Texas and New York recording the largest gains. During this period, 533,000 jobs were added in the professional and business services sector nationwide.
- **Twenty-three states and the District of Columbia added jobs in the leisure and hospitality sector during March.** Florida (12,500), California (7,600) and Pennsylvania (6,100) saw the largest gains. In the past 12 months, 39 states and the District of Columbia added leisure and hospitality jobs. During this time, leisure and hospitality employment increased by more than 290,000 jobs.

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