

Executive Summary

This is the 21st edition of state-by-state snapshots issued by the Joint Economic Committee during the 112th Congress and includes state-level data through August 2012.

This month's report shows that one-half of the states gained private-sector jobs in August. Nationally, private-sector job gains totaled 103,000 during the month. Retail sales increased in August by 0.9 percent, after a gain of 0.6 percent in July. Manufacturing activity, as measured by the ISM Manufacturing Index, contracted for the third consecutive month.

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

Report highlights include:

- Twenty-five states added private-sector jobs in August. Texas (35,800) had the largest private-sector gains, followed by Florida (28,400) and California (19,400). In the past 12 months, 42 states and the District of Columbia gained private-sector jobs, with California (322,100), Texas (279,800) and New York (136,800) recording the largest gains. Alaska reported no change in private-sector positions over the past 12 months. Maine, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Wisconsin and West Virginia lost private-sector positions during the last year. From August 2011 – August 2012, North Dakota (8.2 percent), Texas (3.2 percent) and Oklahoma (3.1 percent) had the largest percentage gains in private-sector employment. During this period, nearly 2.0 million private-sector positions were added nationally.
- Seven states had statistically significant increases in the unemployment rate during August while two states reported decreases that were significant. Connecticut (+0.5 percentage point) and Michigan (+0.4 percentage point) experienced the largest increases and five states reported statistically significant increases of + 0.3 percentage point or less. Hawaii and Utah each reported declines of -0.2 percentage point during the month. In the past 12 months, 16 states and the District of Columbia reported statistically significant decreases in the unemployment rate, with Mississippi (-1.8 percentage points) recording the largest decline. New York was the only state to show a significant increase in the unemployment rate in the past year. Nevada (12.1 percent) had the highest unemployment rate in August, followed by Rhode Island (10.7 percent) and California (10.6 percent). North Dakota again had the lowest unemployment rate (3.0 percent). The national unemployment rate during the month was 8.1 percent, down from 9.1 percent a year earlier.

- Manufacturing employment expanded in just 14 states in August, as the nation lost 15,000 manufacturing jobs during the month. Missouri added 4,900 manufacturing jobs, Oregon gained 2,600 and Georgia saw a gain of 2,100. In the past 12 months, 33 states added manufacturing positions, with the gains being concentrated in the Midwest. Illinois (24,600), Indiana (23,100) and Ohio (20,200) recorded the largest gains in the past year. Overall, 199,000 manufacturing positions have been added across the country in the last 12 months.
- Twenty-five states added jobs in the professional and business services sector in August. Florida (11,700), Texas (6,900) and New Jersey (6,100) posted the largest increases. In the past year, 39 states have added professional and business services jobs, with California, New York and Texas recording the largest gains. In the last year, 576,000 jobs were added in the professional and business services sector, accounting for nearly three in ten private-sector jobs added during this period.
- Twenty-seven states added jobs in the leisure and hospitality sector during August. Wisconsin (5,900), Texas (4,600) and Florida (4,500) saw the largest gains. In the past 12 months, 42 states and the District of Columbia added leisure and hospitality jobs. During this period, leisure and hospitality employment increased by 315,000 positions.

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