



Economic News Release

Metropolitan Area Employment and Unemployment Summary

For release 10:00 a.m. (ET) Tuesday, May 19, 2026 USDL-26-0761

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METROPOLITAN AREA EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT -- MARCH 2026

Unemployment rates were higher in March than a year earlier in 174 of the 387 metropolitan areas, lower in 172 areas, and unchanged in 41 areas, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. A total of 25 areas had jobless rates of less than 3.0 percent and 10 areas had rates of at least 8.0 percent. Nonfarm payroll employment increased over the year in 8 metropolitan areas, decreased in 8 areas, and was essentially unchanged in 371 areas. The national unemployment rate in March was 4.3 percent, not seasonally adjusted, little changed from a year earlier.

This news release presents statistics from two monthly programs. The civilian labor force and unemployment data are based on the same concepts and definitions as those used for the national household survey estimates. These data pertain to people by where they reside. The employment data are from an establishment survey that measures nonfarm employment, hours, and earnings by industry. These data pertain to jobs on payrolls defined by where the establishments are located. For more information about the concepts and statistical methodologies used by these two programs, see the Technical Note.

Metropolitan Area Unemployment Data Changes

In accordance with standard practices, historical data in tables 1 and 2 of this news release have been revised. For detailed information on the revisions, see the box note at the end of the news release.

Metropolitan Area Unemployment (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

In March, Rapid City, SD, had the lowest unemployment rate, 2.0 percent. The next lowest rates were in Burlington-South Burlington, VT, and Urban Honolulu, HI, 2.2 percent each. El Centro, CA, had the highest rate, 16.9 percent. A total of 219 areas had March jobless rates below the U.S. rate of 4.3 percent, 150 areas had rates above it, and 18 areas had rates equal to that of the nation. (See table 1.)

The largest over-the-year unemployment rate increase in March occurred in Wildwood-The Villages, FL (+2.2 percentage points). Thirty-four other areas had rate increases of at least 1.0 percentage point. Sandusky, OH, had the largest over-the-year rate decrease in March (-2.0 percentage points). Fifteen other areas had rate declines of at least 1.0 percentage point.

Of the 56 metropolitan areas with a 2020 Census population of 1 million or more, Urban Honolulu, HI, had the lowest jobless rate in March, 2.2 percent. Fresno, CA, had the highest rate, 8.9 percent. Twenty-nine large areas had over-the-year unemployment rate increases, 19 had decreases, and 8 had no change. The largest rate increases occurred in Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT (+1.2 percentage points); Jacksonville, FL (+1.1 points); and Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL, and Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL (+1.0 point each). The largest jobless rate decline occurred in Columbus, OH (-1.3 percentage points), followed by Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN (-1.1 points).

Metropolitan Division Unemployment (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

Thirteen of the most populous metropolitan areas are made up of 37 metropolitan divisions, which are essentially separately identifiable employment centers. In March, Miami-Miami Beach-Kendall, FL, had the lowest division unemployment rate, 2.9 percent. Detroit-Dearborn-Livonia, MI, had the highest rate among the divisions, 6.3 percent. (See table 2.)

In March, 22 metropolitan divisions had over-the-year unemployment rate increases, 11 had decreases, and 4 had no change. The largest increase occurred in Tampa, FL (+1.1 percentage points). The largest unemployment rate declines from March 2025 occurred in Lakewood-New Brunswick, NJ, and Newark, NJ (-0.5 percentage point each).

Metropolitan Area Nonfarm Employment (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

In March 2026, nonfarm payroll employment increased over the year in 8 metropolitan areas, decreased in 8 areas, and was essentially unchanged in 371 areas. The largest over-the-year employment increases occurred in San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA (+17,900), Raleigh-Cary, NC (+15,400), and Fresno, CA (+9,300). The largest over-the-year percentage gains in employment occurred in Barnstable Town, MA (+5.1 percent), and Traverse City, MI (+4.7

percent), followed by Atlantic City-Hammonton, NJ, and Merced, CA (+3.5 percent each). The largest over-the-year employment decreases occurred in Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV (-107,900), Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA (-32,600), and Toledo, OH (-7,800). The largest over-the-year percentage decreases occurred in Sierra Vista-Douglas, AZ (-5.1 percent), Yuma, AZ (-4.1 percent), and Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV (-3.2 percent). (See table 3.)

Over the year, nonfarm employment increased in 3 metropolitan areas with a 2020 Census population of 1 million or more, decreased in 2 areas, and was essentially unchanged in 51 areas. The over-the-year increases in employment occurred in Fresno, CA (+2.1 percent), Raleigh-Cary, NC (+2.0 percent), and San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA (+1.6 percent). Over the year, employment decreased in Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV (-3.2 percent), and Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA (-2.6 percent).

Metropolitan Division Nonfarm Employment (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

In March, nonfarm payroll employment decreased over the year in 4 metropolitan divisions and was essentially unchanged in 33 divisions. The over-the-year decreases in employment occurred in New York-Jersey City-White Plains, NY-NJ (-64,100, or -1.0 percent), Washington, DC-MD (-57,900, or -5.1 percent), Arlington-Alexandria-Reston, VA-WV (-27,800, or -1.7 percent), and Frederick-Gaithersburg-Bethesda, MD (-22,200, or -3.6 percent). (See table 4.)

The State Employment and Unemployment news release for April is scheduled to be released on Friday, May 22, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. (ET). The Metropolitan Area Employment and Unemployment news release for April is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, June 3, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. (ET).

Changes to Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) Data

Effective with this release, the civilian labor force and unemployment data for the non-modeled metropolitan areas and divisions presented in tables 1 and 2 have been revised for 2025 to incorporate updated inputs and adjustment to new state control totals. Revised estimates for 2016 through 2025 were loaded into the BLS time-series database for all non-modeled substate areas. For more information, see www.bls.gov/lau/launews1.htm.

Due to the lapse in federal appropriations, October 2025 data collection did not occur for the Current Population Survey (CPS), which provides the primary inputs to LAUS estimation. Along with the annual processing revisions, averages for 2025 based on the 11 months for which CPS data collection occurred were published for all non-modeled substate areas in the BLS time-series database. These 11-month averages are not strictly comparable to annual averages for prior years.

Additional information about the impact of the shutdown on the household survey is available online at www.bls.gov/cps/methods/2025-federal-government-shutdown-impact-cps.htm.

- [Metropolitan Area Employment and Unemployment Technical Note](#)
- [Table 1. Civilian labor force and unemployment by state and metropolitan area](#)
- [Table 2. Civilian labor force and unemployment by state, selected metropolitan area, and metropolitan division \(1\)](#)
- [Table 3. Employees on nonfarm payrolls by state and metropolitan area, not seasonally adjusted](#)
- [Table 4. Employees on nonfarm payrolls by state, selected metropolitan area, and metropolitan division, not seasonally adjusted](#)
- [HTML version of the entire news release](#)

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Last Modified Date: May 19, 2026

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