

# Jobs Count

The aim of **Jobs Count** is to provide a monthly update of the state of working West Virginia.

[www.jobscount.org](http://www.jobscount.org)

west virginia  
Center on  
Budget & Policy

## December 2011 Update

### Momentum Lost Along With 1,000 Jobs in December

After adding 3,400 jobs in October and November, West Virginia took a step back in December, losing 1,000 jobs as 2011 came to a close. December was the worst month for job creation in West Virginia since May 2011. Total jobs in the state now number 754,500 (**Figure 1**), while the unemployment rate remains unchanged at 7.9 percent (**Table 1**). West Virginia's jobs count is now 5,800 jobs below its pre-recession levels.

#### Construction Hit Hard

The construction sector had its worst month in over a year with 1,600 jobs lost in December, a decline of 4.7 percent (**Figure 2**). Construction's losses in December wiped out almost five months of growth, with employment in the sector at its lowest level since June.

The mining and logging sector also experienced a disappointing decline, losing 600 jobs in December, falling 1.8 percent. December reversed a three-month trend of job growth for mining and logging, during which the sector added 1,400 jobs.

Other employment sectors with job losses in December included the manufacturing sector, the trade, transportation and utilities sector, and the government sector. All three of these sectors experienced job losses less than one percent.

#### Education and Health Services Lone Bright Spot

Only one employment sector had job growth greater than one percent in December: education and health services. The sector had its best one-month performance in more than a year, adding 1,700 jobs, an increase of 1.7 percent (**Figure 2**).

The 1,700 jobs added to the education and health services sector were more than the total added for the four other employment sectors that saw positive growth in December. The financial activities sector, the professional and business services sector, the leisure and hospitality sector, and the other services sector combined to add 1,000 jobs this month. Each sector saw less than a one percent increase.

Table 1

#### Unemployment Unchanged

	December 2007	December 2011	Change	Percent Change
Unemployment	4.1%	7.9%	3.8%	
Total jobs	760,300	754,500	-5,800	-0.8%
Manufacturing	57,900	49,000	-8,900	-15.4%
Construction	38,200	32,300	-5,900	-15.4%
Mining/Logging	28,800	32,000	3,200	11.1%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics, Seasonally Adjusted. *Unemployment figures* from BLS, Local Area Unemployment Statistics.

Figure 1

#### More than 1,000 Jobs Lost in December

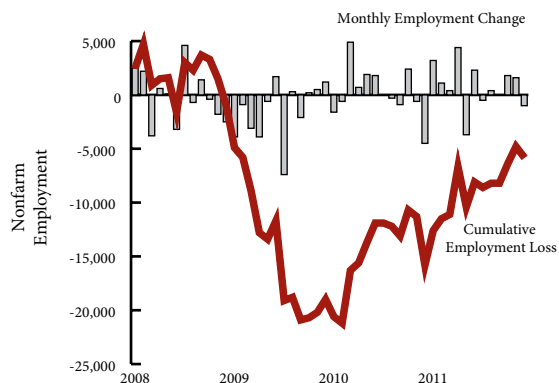
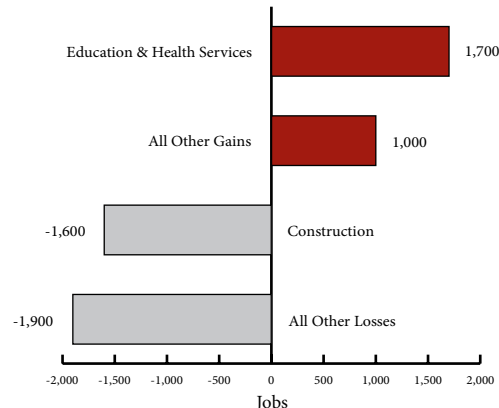


Figure 2

#### Two Sectors Dominate in December



Source for Figures 1 and 2: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics, Seasonally Adjusted.

# A Closer Look

## 2011 - A Year in Review

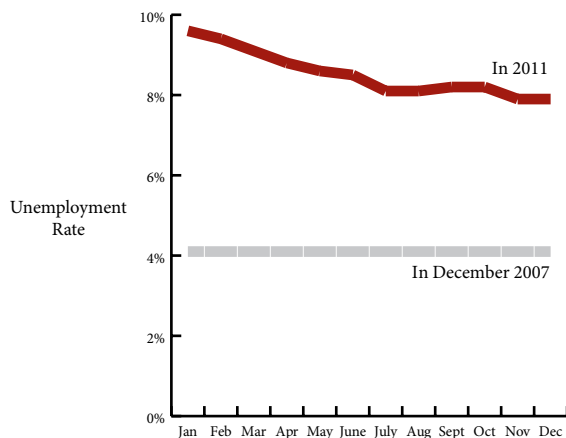
West Virginia's job market made solid progress in 2011. After starting the year at 9.6 percent, the state's unemployment rate fell steadily throughout the year, dropping below nine percent in April and below eight percent in November, ending the year at 7.9 percent (Figure 3). However, this rate is still far above the state's pre-recession level of less than four percent.

Three times as many jobs were added in 2011 than in 2010. After adding only 3,200 jobs in 2010, total nonfarm employment grew by 10,000 jobs in 2011, an increase of 1.3 percent. The state's fastest growing sector was construction, which added 3,000 jobs in 2011, an increase of 10.2 percent. Mining and logging also had a strong showing in 2011, with 1,400 jobs added, for a 4.6 percent increase.

Only two employment sectors saw job losses in 2011. Employment in the government sector fell by 1.4 percent, while the financial activities sector declined by 0.7 percent (Figure 4).

Table 2 shows job growth for each employment sector for both 2011 and 2010. Overall, the state's job market

Figure 3  
**Unemployment Rate Drops Steadily in 2011, Still Above Pre-Recession Levels**



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Seasonally Adjusted.

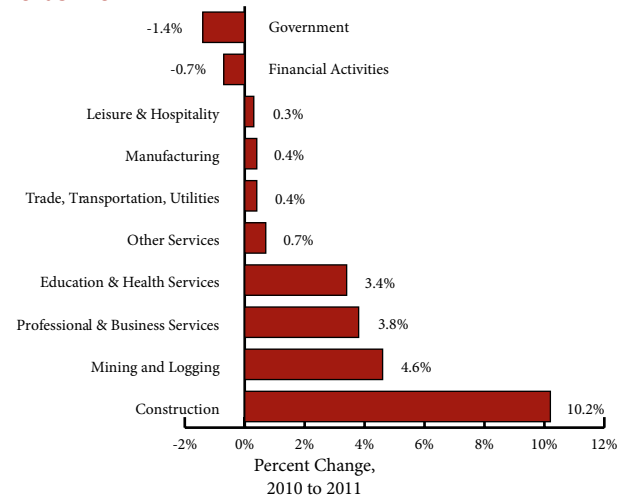
performed much better in 2011 than in 2010, with a few exceptions. The state's mining and logging sector added fewer jobs in 2011 than in 2010, although both years saw increases over 4.5 percent. The government sector lost jobs in 2011 after remaining flat in 2010.

Table 2  
**Job Changes 2010 and 2011**

Sector	Job Increase/Decrease 2010	Job Increase/Decrease 2011
Total Non-Farm	3,200	10,000
Mining & Logging	2,100	1,400
Construction	-4,000	3,000
Manufacturing	-200	200
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	800	600
Financial Activities	-300	-200
Professional & Business Services	1,000	2,300
Education & Health Services	1,000	4,100
Leisure & Hospitality	2,300	200
Other Services	0	400
Government	0	-2,100

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics, Seasonally Adjusted.

Figure 4  
**Most Sectors Experienced Some Growth from 2010 to 2011**



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics, Seasonally Adjusted.

The West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization. Our aim is to support public policies that contribute to a shared prosperity for all West Virginians. We study critical issues, share what we learn with the public and policymakers, and work with diverse groups on sound solutions to economic and social problems.