



March 2012 Unemployment Rate

Frequently Asked Questions

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1. **What are the Florida labor statistics for March 2012 and what changes are there over the month and over the year?**
 - Florida's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for March 2012 was 9.0 percent. This represented 836,000 jobless out of a labor force of 9,282,000.
 - Florida's March unemployment rate fell by 0.4 percentage point from February's rate of 9.4 percent, the largest over-the-month decline since October 1992. The jobless rate in Florida was below 10.0 percent for the fourth consecutive month.
 - The March unemployment rate of 9.0 percent was the lowest since January 2009, when it was 8.7 percent.
 - The unemployment rate has decreased over the month for nine consecutive months.
 - Florida's unemployment rate was down 1.7 percentage points from the March year-ago rate of 10.7 percent. It was the 16th consecutive month of over-the-year declines in Florida's unemployment rate.
 - Total nonagricultural employment in Florida was 7,328,700 in March 2012, an increase of 10,800 jobs (+0.1 percent) over the month.
 - Florida's nonagricultural employment gained 89,800 jobs over the year, an increase of 1.2 percent.
 - Florida's annual job growth rate has been positive for the past 20 months. Prior to August 2010, the state had been losing jobs for three years and reached a low point of -7.0 percent in March and April 2009.

2. **How do Florida's labor statistics compare to the nation?**
 - Florida's March 2012 unemployment rate of 9.0 percent was higher than the March national rate of 8.2 percent by 0.8 percentage point.

3. **When was the last time Florida's labor market conditions were similar to the March 2012 data?**
 - The March unemployment rate was 2.4 percentage points below the highest rate on record, 11.4 percent in January and February 2010. The March rate was the lowest since January 2009 when it was 8.7 percent.

- Prior to August 2010, the state had been losing jobs since August 2007 (for three years) and reached a low point of -7.0 percent in March and April 2009. The rates of job decline between January and September 2009 were steeper than those recorded during the 1973-1975 recession.

4. What industries in Florida are experiencing job growth over the year?

- Florida had seven industries experiencing positive over the year job growth in March:
 - Trade, transportation, and utilities gained 30,400 jobs (\$37,109 avg. annual wage). Due to food and beverage stores.
 - Professional and business services gained 26,300 jobs (\$49,185 avg. annual wage). Due to employment services.
 - Private education and health services gained 24,800 jobs (\$43,686 avg. annual wage). Due to ambulatory health care services.
 - Leisure and hospitality gained 23,300 jobs (\$21,447 avg. annual wage). Due to food services and drinking places.
 - Financial activities gained 5,800 jobs (\$57,042 avg. annual wage). Due to real estate.
 - Manufacturing gained 3,300 jobs (\$51,848 avg. annual wage). Due to fabricated metal product manufacturing.
 - Other services gained 2,200 jobs (\$29,609 avg. annual wage). Due to personal and laundry services.

5. What industries are reflecting the economic downturn?

- Over the year, three major industry sectors are in decline:
 - Construction lost 13,500 jobs (\$41,087 avg. annual wage). Due to specialty trade contractors.
 - Total government declined by 12,000 jobs (\$47,361 avg. annual wage). Due to state government.
 - Information was down by 700 jobs (\$61,506 avg. annual wage). Due to telecommunications.

6. How have Florida's unemployment rates and industries performed since the last peak of Florida's economic expansion?

- Florida's unemployment rate was 3.3 percent in January to August 2006 (the lowest unemployment rate in more than thirty years), then peaked at 11.4 in January and February 2010, and has since improved to 9.0 percent in March 2012.
- Florida's nonagricultural employment annual growth rate peaked in September 2005 at +5.2 percent, declined to -7.0 percent in March and April 2009, and has since improved to +1.2 percent in March 2012.
- Florida started losing jobs in April 2007 (over the month) after reaching a peak employment level of 8,074,800 in March of 2007. In December 2009, Florida was at the highest level of jobs lost, a decline of 924,700 jobs from the peak month. By March 2012, the state had lost 746,100 jobs from the peak level.

- Construction has lost more jobs in this economic downturn than any other sector. Construction employment peaked in June 2006 with 691,900 jobs and has lost 370,600 jobs (-53.5 percent) since the peak.

7. What metro areas and counties in Florida have the lowest and highest unemployment rates?

Metro Areas

- The Crestview-Ft. Walton Beach-Destin (6.1 percent), Gainesville (6.7 percent), and Tallahassee (7.0 percent) metro areas have the lowest unemployment rates in the state. The areas with low unemployment rates have relatively high proportions of government employment.
- The Palm Coast (12.2 percent), Ocala (10.3 percent), and Port St. Lucie (10.2 percent) metro areas have the highest rates. Long-term weakness in construction and losses in wholesale and retail trade contributed to the high unemployment rates in these areas.

Counties

- Monroe County had the state's lowest unemployment rate (5.1 percent) in March 2012, followed by Walton County (5.7 percent); Okaloosa County (6.1 percent); and Alachua, Franklin, and Leon counties (6.6 percent each). Many of the counties with the lowest unemployment rates are those with relatively high proportions of government employment.
- Flagler County had the highest unemployment rate (12.2 percent), followed by Hernando County (11.3 percent) and St. Lucie County (10.9 percent). Over-the-year losses in wholesale trade and long-term losses in construction employment contributed to Flagler County's high unemployment rate.

8. How does seasonality affect labor statistics statewide and by local area?

- Monthly employment and unemployment rates (not seasonally adjusted) at the state and local levels may have sharp fluctuations due to seasonal events that follow a somewhat regular pattern each year. Seasonal events include tourism, agricultural harvests, holidays, and the opening and closings of schools. The effects these events have on labor statistics can be eliminated through seasonal adjustment, a statistical technique that smoothes the seasonal impacts and makes it easier to observe underlying trends. Seasonally adjusted unemployment rate estimates are available for Florida and recently became available for all metropolitan areas on a lagged basis, but are not available for all counties. Seasonally adjusted nonagricultural employment is available for Florida by industry and for selected metro areas at the total level only.
- Seasonal increases in employment in March were mainly in the leisure and hospitality industry.
- All 67 counties had a drop in unemployment rates over the year and over the month.

9. What metro areas of the state are gaining and losing the most jobs?

- Eleven metro areas of the 22 in the state have over-the-year job gains in March 2012. The areas with the largest gains were Miami-Miami Beach-Kendall (+23,400 jobs, +2.3

percent), Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater (+20,200 jobs, +1.8 percent), and Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford (+8,600 jobs, +0.9 percent).

- The metro areas losing the most jobs were Port St. Lucie (-2,700 jobs, -2.2 percent), Pensacola-Ferry Pass-Brent (-2,700 jobs, -1.7 percent), and Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach (-2,100 jobs, -1.3 percent).

10. What metro areas of the state have the highest job growth rate and the lowest job growth rate?

- Sebastian-Vero Beach (+5.1 percent), Miami-Miami Beach-Kendall (+2.3 percent), and Crestview-Ft. Walton Beach-Destin (+2.2 percent) were experiencing the highest percent job growth over the year.
- The metro areas with the steepest rates of job decline over the year were Punta Gorda (-2.6 percent), Port St. Lucie (-2.2 percent), and Pensacola-Ferry Pass-Brent (-1.7 percent).

11. What is the outlook for Florida's job market?

Based on the Florida Economic Estimating Conference held December 13, 2011:

- The unemployment rate for Florida was forecasted to decrease to 10.6 percent by 2012:Qtr1. *Florida has already dropped below this with the March 2012 rate of 9.0 percent.*
- The forecast expects the unemployment rate to decrease to 8.7 percent in fiscal year 2014.
- Nonagricultural employment is expected to increase by 0.9 percent or 65,700 jobs over the year in 2012:Qtr1. *Florida has already exceeded this with the March 2012 rate of 1.2 percent.*

12. How do unemployment rates differ by age, gender, and race?

- Florida 2011 annual average unemployment rates from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey:
 - Unemployment rates by age are:
 - 16 to 19 years 28.6 percent
 - 20 to 24 years 15.5 percent
 - 25 to 54 years 9.1 percent
 - 55 years and over 8.3 percent
 - Unemployment rates by gender are:
 - Male 10.7 percent
 - Female 9.2 percent
 - Unemployment rates by race and ethnicity are:
 - White 8.7 percent
 - Black 17.1 percent
 - Hispanic 11.6 percent

13. What are the types of categories of unemployment?

National – Monthly

- Unemployed persons by reason for unemployment (as a percent of total unemployment), March 2012 for the United States (seasonally adjusted):
 - Job losers 54.7% (down from 55.5% a month ago)
 - Job leavers 8.7% (up from 7.9% a month ago)
 - Reentrants 25.5% (down 25.9% from a month ago)
 - New entrants 11.2% (up from 10.7% a month ago)

Florida – 12-month Moving Average

- Unemployed persons by reason for unemployment (as a percent of total unemployment), 12-month average ending March 2012 for Florida (not seasonally adjusted):
 - Job losers 60.6% (down from 61.1% a month ago)
 - Job leavers 6.9% (up from 6.8% a month ago)
 - Reentrants 23.5% (up from 23.3% a month ago)
 - New entrants 9.0% (up from 8.8% a month ago)

14. What is the duration of unemployment in Florida?

- Duration of unemployment for Florida in 2011:

Duration	Unemployed	
	Level	Percent of Total
Total:	907,000	100.0
Less than 5 weeks	130,000	14.3
5 to 14 weeks	168,000	18.5
15 to 26 weeks	127,000	14.0
27 to 51 weeks	133,000	14.7
52 weeks and over	348,000	38.4
Average weeks of unemployment:	48.6	

15. What impact does education have on unemployment rates?

- Unemployment rates by educational attainment, March 2012 for the United States (seasonally adjusted, labor force members aged 25 and older):
 - Less than a high school diploma 12.6%
 - High school graduates, no college 8.0%
 - Some college or associate degree 7.5%
 - Bachelor's degree and higher 4.2%

16. How much higher would the unemployment rate for Florida be if it included discouraged workers, those working part-time involuntarily, and other marginally attached workers?

- The March 2012 unemployment rate in Florida is 9.0 percent.
- The rate would be 9.8 percent (up 0.8 percent from base rate) if discouraged workers are included.
- The underutilization rate would be 16.6 (up 7.6 percent from base rate) if the discouraged, all other marginally attached, and workers employed part-time involuntarily are included.

17. Are there any signs of improvement in economic conditions?

National Improvements

- At the national level, there have been improvements in gross domestic product, private inventory investment, nonresidential fixed investment, exports, residential fixed investment, corporate profits, personal consumption expenditures, personal income, mortgage delinquency rate, credit card debt, credit card delinquencies, manufacturing activity (32nd consecutive month), new orders and unfilled orders for manufactured goods, retail sales, consumer sentiment (University of Michigan index), leading economic index (Conference Board), building permits, housing starts (over the year), existing home sales (over the year), auto sales, truck tonnage, hiring expectations, and over the year job gains in all major industries (March) except information and government.

Florida Improvements

- Florida's unemployment rate is the lowest since January 2009 (the lowest in three years).
- The number of unemployed in Florida is below one million for the 14th consecutive month.
- Florida's unemployment rate is down 1.7 percentage points from the revised March year-ago rate of 10.7 percent. It is the 16th consecutive month of over-the-year declines in Florida's unemployment rate.
- The current unemployment rate is down by 2.4 percentage points from the recession peak rate of 11.4 percent reached in January and February 2010.
- Initial claims for unemployment compensation were down by 20.3 percent from one year ago.
- Seven major industries gained jobs over the year.
- Eleven out of twenty-two metro areas gained jobs over the year.
- Florida's annual job growth rate has been positive for the past 20 months. Prior to this, the state had been losing jobs for three years.
- Florida housing starts are up over the month and over the year.
- Tax revenue was up 7.3 percent in March compared to a year ago. This marked the 24th straight month of annual increases.
- Florida visitation was up 0.3 percent over the year in 2011:Q4 with overseas visitors up 13.9 percent. An estimated 85.9 million visitors came to Florida in 2011, an increase of 4.4 percent over 2010. This represents a record year for visitation to Florida, exceeding the previous high of 84.5 million in 2007.

- In February 2012, exports originating from Florida were \$5.3 billion, an increase of 9.4 percent from \$4.8 billion in February 2011.

18. What are the top jobs in demand according to The Conference Board, Help-Wanted OnLine data series?

- Florida job postings compiled by the Help Wanted OnLine data series from The Conference Board increased in March 2012, totaling 236,705 (seasonally adjusted) openings. Labor demand in March was up by 2,413 openings (+1.0 percent) over the month from the 234,292 postings in February 2012. Florida had an over-the-year decrease of 5,143 job postings (-2.1 percent) compared to March 2011. Nationally, demand increased sharply by 246,300 new job openings posted in March compared to the previous month.

Top Advertised Occupations for Florida-March 2012	Online Ads March 2012	Online Ads March 2011
Florida Total Ads	236,705	241,848
Registered Nurses	13,301	14,897
Retail Salespersons	8,856	8,569
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Retail Sales Workers	6,949	6,552
Customer Service Representatives	5,672	5,845
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Food Preparation and Serving Work	5,038	3,209
Occupational Therapists	4,010	5,751
Physical Therapists	3,997	6,745
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technica	3,976	4,304
Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer	3,897	3,065
Web Developers	3,852	3,676
Computer Systems Analysts	3,840	3,376
Executive Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	3,472	3,535
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Office and Administrative Support	3,178	2,755
Telemarketers	3,039	3,412
Medical and Health Services Managers	2,914	3,868
Sales Representatives, Services, All Other	2,854	2,920
Accountants	2,742	2,262
Computer Support Specialists	2,609	2,643
Sales Agents, Financial Services	2,557	2,890
Waiters and Waitresses	2,465	2,372

Source: The Conference Board, Help-Wanted OnLine data series, prepared by Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Labor Market Statistics Center.

19. What is the ratio of unemployed Floridians to advertised job openings in the state?

- In March 2012, there were 836,000 unemployed Floridians and 236,705 advertised job openings in the state (Help Wanted OnLine), for a ratio of 3.5 job seekers to every advertised job. In February 2012, the ratio of jobseekers to advertised jobs was 3.7. Nationally, the ratio was 2.7 jobseekers to advertised jobs in March, down from 2.9 in February.

20. What do housing indicators show for Florida?

Foreclosures (RealtyTrac)

- Housing foreclosures were 26,785 in March 2012. This is up 421 (+1.6 percent) over the month and up 7,048 (+35.8 percent) over the year.
- The highest number of Florida foreclosures was reached in April 2009 at 64,588. Florida foreclosures were up by 222 percent since the low point in December 2006.
- Florida registered the fourth highest rate of foreclosures in the nation for the month of March (1 in every 336 units). Florida trailed Arizona (1 in every 300 units); Nevada (1 in every 301 units); and California (1 in every 303 units).
- Florida's 26,758 properties receiving a foreclosure filing in March 2012 (a +35.8 percent increase from March 2011) was still the second highest in the nation. California led the nation in foreclosure filings with a total of 45,122.

Real Property Mortgage Foreclosures (State Courts)

- Housing foreclosures were 16,328 in February 2012. This is up 1,055 (+6.9 percent) over the month and up 8,096 (+98.3 percent) over the year.
- The highest number of Florida foreclosures in the current series dating back to January 2008 was reached in March 2009 at 39,114. Florida foreclosures have decreased by 58.3 percent since that high mark.

Housing Starts

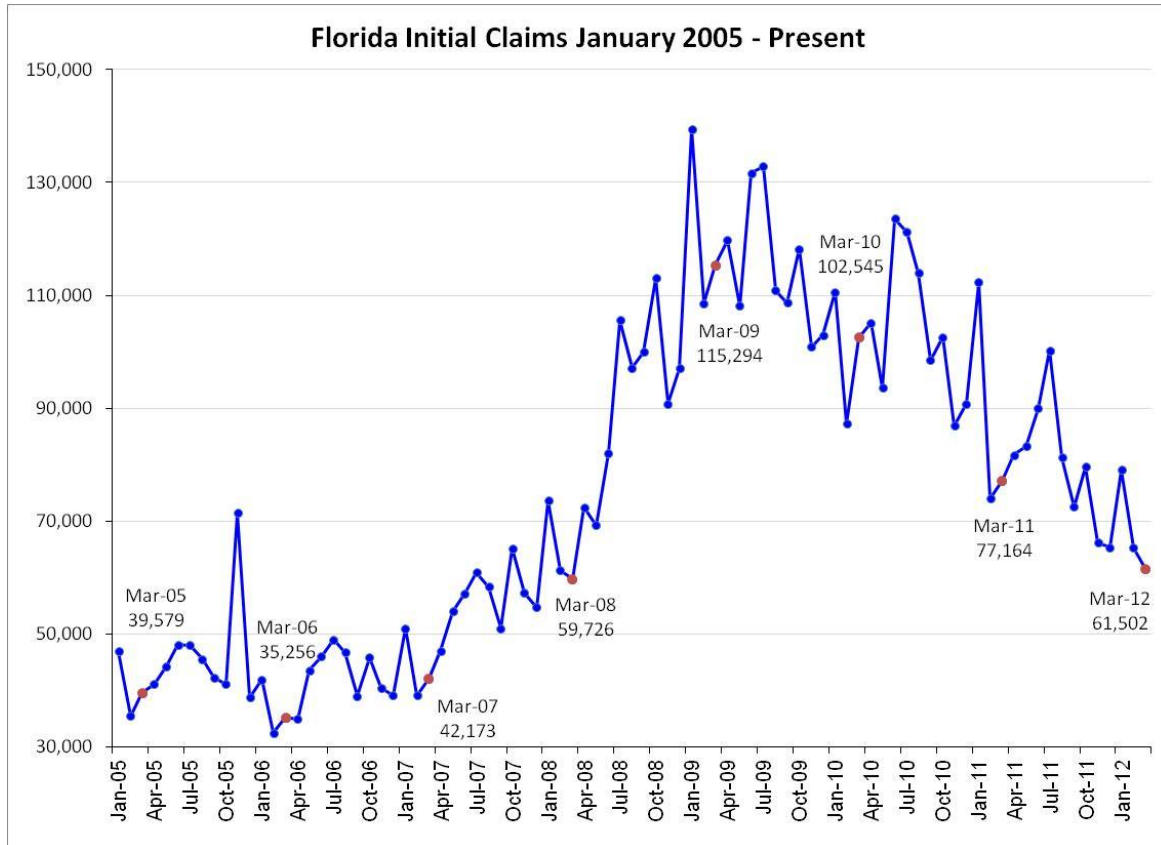
- Florida housing starts were 2,973 in February 2012. This is up 349 units (+13.3 percent) over the month and up 863 (+40.9 percent) compared to the same month a year ago.
- Florida housing starts have declined by 85.2 percent since their peak month in August 2005 when construction starts were 20,044 units.
- The latest figure was among the lowest in the series of single unit housing starts for Florida published by the St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank going back to January 1988.

Median Existing-Home Prices

- Florida median home prices were \$139,000 in March. This is up \$5,500 (+4.1 percent) over the month and up \$13,000 (+10.3 percent) over the year.
- The highest median price was reached in June 2006 at \$256,200. Florida median home prices were down \$117,200 (-45.7 percent) since this peak price.
- Sales of foreclosures and other distressed properties continue to downwardly distort the median price because they generally sell at a discount relative to traditional homes.

21. What is Florida's current level of initial unemployment compensation claims?

- Florida had 61,502 initial claims for unemployment compensation in March 2012. This was a decrease of 20.3 percent from the previous year. Claims are 89.3 percent above the low of 32,489 in February 2006.



Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Unemployment Compensation Program.

22. What are the latest Florida exports statistics in goods and services?

- In February 2012, exports originating from Florida were \$5.3 billion, an increase of 9.4 percent from \$4.8 billion in February 2011.
- Exports originating from Florida increased by 17.3 percent over the year to \$64.8 billion in 2011. Florida's top export destinations were Switzerland, Brazil, and Venezuela. In 2011, Venezuela replaced Canada as the third largest export destination in dollar value. The top export commodities include waste and scrap of precious metals; civilian aircraft, engines, and parts; cellular phones; and phosphate.

23. **What services does the department provide to workers impacted by the economic downturn?**

For Florida's job seekers, programs and services offered include:

- **One-Stop Career Centers** – Florida's nearly 90 One-Stop Career Centers, locally operated by Regional Workforce Boards, provide local access to job placement services, local workforce information and job training opportunities.
<http://www.floridajobs.org/onestop/onestopdir/>
- **Employ Florida Marketplace** - The Employ Florida Marketplace Online Job Bank provides 24/7 access to a wide variety of local, state and national job openings.
<http://www.employflorida.com/>
- **Mobile One-Stop Career Centers** – Florida's Mobile One-Stop Career Centers allow citizens in rural areas, at job fairs and during emergency situations to access critical workforce information and services. <http://www.floridajobs.org/workforce-board-resources/program-resources/program-resources/mobile-one-stop-career-center>

For Florida's businesses, programs and services offered include:

- **Employ Florida Marketplace** - The Employ Florida Marketplace Online Job Bank provides businesses with exposure to thousands of potential employees with a vast array of skills, talents and experience. <http://www.employflorida.com/>
- **Labor Market Information** – The Department of Economic Opportunity's Labor Market Statistics Center produces data, such as employment, unemployment and wage information, that assist workforce/economic development, education, employers and job seekers. These statistics assist with economic analysis, business recruitment, career counseling and other critical business decision-making.
<http://www.floridajobs.org/labor-market-information>
- **Incumbent and Employed Worker Training** - Incumbent and Employed Worker Training programs increase opportunities for workers who acquire new skills by reimbursing Florida's businesses for a portion of the cost of training their employees.
<http://www.workforceflorida.com/employers/iwt.htm>
- For information about the **Employed Worker Training** program, administered by your local Regional Workforce Board:
[\(http://www.floridajobs.org/onestop/onestopdir/\)](http://www.floridajobs.org/onestop/onestopdir/)
- **Work Opportunity Tax Credit** - The Work Opportunity Tax Credit offers a financial incentive to private, for-profit employers to hire individuals from certain targeted groups, who experience high rates of unemployment due to a variety of employment barriers.
<http://www.floridajobs.org/business-growth-and-partnerships/for-employers/find-tax-credit-and-incentive-programs/work-opportunity-tax-credit-program>

For more information on these and other Department of Economic Opportunity programs, visit <http://www.floridajobs.org/>.