



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Virginia Employment Commission

703 East Main Street

Dolores A. Esser  
Commissioner

Post Office Box 1358  
Richmond, Virginia 23218-1358

For Release: January 29, 2010

Contacts: Ann D. Lang, Senior Economist  
Economic Information Services Division  
(804) 786-3177 or (804) 786-7496

## Virginia's December 2009 Unemployment Rate Rises to 6.7 Percent, Up 0.3 Percentage Point from November

—Unemployment up due to holiday furloughs and permanent closings—

**RICHMOND**—Virginia's not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose 0.3 percentage point from 6.4 percent in November 2009 to 6.7 percent in December 2009. The number of unemployed workers rose from 263,100 in November to 274,900 in December, an increase of 11,800. This increase resulted from traditional holiday furloughs and permanent employer closings. The statistical reference period for December 2009 was the normal reference week that contained the 12<sup>th</sup> day, the week of December 6-12, and was late enough in the month to capture some of the year-end furloughs that started earlier than usual. Although more holiday workers were hired this December than last, there were fewer hires than past holiday seasons, contributing to increased unemployment. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate also rose 0.3 percentage point from 6.6 percent in November 2009 to 6.9 percent in December 2009. Virginia's unemployment rates continue to remain below the national rates. Virginia's not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 6.7 percent in December was 3.0 percentage points below the unadjusted national rate of 9.7 percent. The December seasonally adjusted rate of 6.9 percent for Virginia was 3.1 percentage points below the seasonally adjusted national rate of 10.0 percent.

The December Virginia not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 6.7 percent was above the December 2008 rate of 5.1 percent. The seasonally adjusted state December rate of 6.9 percent was also above the year ago December rate of 5.0 percent. However, Virginia's seasonally adjusted rate of 6.9 percent gave it the ninth-best ranking among all the states, tied with Hawaii and Vermont. (Only seasonally adjusted jobless rates are used for the state rankings.) The eight small states with lower seasonal rates than Virginia were: North Dakota (4.4 percent); Nebraska and South Dakota (4.7 percent); Iowa, Kansas, and Oklahoma (6.6 percent); and Montana and Utah (6.7 percent). The next lowest large state was Texas with 8.3 percent seasonally adjusted unemployment, ranking it nineteenth among all the states.

(more)

(804) 786-1485

VRC/TDD 1 (800) 828-1120  
Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

E-Mail [vec@vaworkforce.com](mailto:vec@vaworkforce.com)

The state's ten metropolitan areas experienced an increase in unemployment from November 2009 to December 2009. As usual Northern Virginia still had the lowest jobless rate, 4.9 percent, of all ten metro areas, up from 4.7 percent in November 2009. The Danville area, where unemployment increased from 11.3 percent in November to 11.8 percent in December, was still the highest Virginia metro area.

Among Virginia's 134 individual jurisdictions in December 2009, Arlington County, at 4.0 percent, had the lowest jobless rate. In addition to Arlington County, four other jurisdictions— Loudoun County, Fairfax County, Albemarle County, and Alexandria city—had unemployment rates at, or below, the 5.0 percent level considered to be "full employment." Martinsville city, at 20.3 percent unemployment, was the highest. There were 24 Virginia jurisdictions, mostly along the North Carolina border, with double-digit unemployment in December 2009.

**UNEMPLOYMENT\***  
*(Not Seasonally Adjusted)*

	December 2009		November 2009		December 2008	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
<b>United States</b>	14,740,000	9.7	14,407,000	9.4	10,999,000	7.1
<b>Virginia</b>	274,900	6.7	263,100	6.4	212,000	5.1
<b>Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford</b>	6,120	7.5	5,900	7.1	4,980	6.1
<b>Charlottesville</b>	5,690	5.4	5,420	5.1	4,380	4.1
<b>Danville</b>	6,090	11.8	5,900	11.3	5,930	11.1
<b>Harrisonburg</b>	3,710	5.7	3,620	5.5	2,870	4.4
<b>Lynchburg</b>	9,090	7.2	8,400	6.6	6,660	5.3
<b>Northern Virginia</b>	71,550	4.9	68,310	4.7	55,160	3.8
<b>Richmond</b>	49,920	7.8	48,190	7.5	35,930	5.6
<b>Roanoke</b>	11,390	7.3	11,040	7.0	7,960	5.1
<b>Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, Virginia/North Carolina</b>	56,870	6.9	54,440	6.6	44,130	5.4
<b>Winchester, Virginia/West Virginia</b>	4,840	7.7	4,740	7.5	4,060	6.3

\* Current month's estimates are preliminary.

The number of Virginia residents drawing unemployment benefits in December 2009 was 81,000, up from 80,000 in November and 68,000 in December 2008. Initial claims for benefits averaged 10,100 per week in December, up from the 8,100 per week in November, but below the 12,000 per week in December 2008. Cumulative initial claims for December 2009 total 49,423, compared to 36,017 in November 2009 and 63,750 in December 2008.

Nonagricultural wage and salary payroll employment rose by 1,900 jobs in December to a level of 3,676,600. Trade and transportation added 4,300 jobs in December for a total of 648,100, as merchants hired extra holiday workers. Other services increased 4,200 jobs for December employment of 184,900 and professional and business services added 2,500 jobs for December employment of 638,900. Gains also occurred in finance, up 500 jobs to 187,100, and education and health services, up 100 jobs to 457,100. Mine employment was unchanged from November to December at 11,100.

Due to seasonal reductions at resort hotels, tourist attractions, and recreation facilities, the leisure and hospitality industry experienced the largest employment decline in December, with losses of 4,100 jobs for an employment level of 330,000. The total government employment level of 712,400 was down 3,500 jobs this month, due to year-end holiday breaks at schools. Declines also occurred in construction, down 900 jobs to 193,100; manufacturing, down 700 jobs to 235,600; and information, down 500 jobs to 78,300.

Virginia's 182,500 manufacturing production workers earned an average weekly wage of \$842.62 this December, which was down \$4.91 from the November weekly wage, but was \$112.59 higher than the December 2008 weekly wage. The production workweek, at 43.3 hours, was a half an hour shorter than in November, but was 3.1 hours longer than last December. The hourly factory pay rate increased \$0.11 in December to \$19.46 and was \$1.30 above December 2008.

The statistical reference week this month was the week of December 6-12, 2009.

####