

MASSACHUSETTS UNEMPLOYMENT RATE CONTINUES TO PLUNGE



The unemployment rate for the state of Massachusetts fell last month, to its lowest level in close to three years. The reason for this is that employers added more jobs for the second consecutive month; showing signs in the area that hiring could possibly accelerate, according to The Boston Globe. There have been signs within the state that the employment problem is improving. Those signs include an increase in job advertisements, large and small employers claiming they are going to hire, and fewer amounts of people are applying for unemployment benefits. "The fact that we have two months of positive payroll [employment] growth and three months of positive labor [force] growth - it's all good," said Northeastern University economics professor Alan Clayton-Matthews. "It's an indication that the economy is growing and it appears that many unemployed workers are finding jobs." Unemployment in the state fell to 7 percent in the month of November, which decreased from 7.3 percent in the month of October, according to the Executive office of Labor and Workforce Development. This is the lowest unemployment rate for the state since December of 2008 while also dropping significantly below the country's rate of 8.6 percent. There were 5,000 jobs added in November and this came after payrolls in the state increased by 12,000 in the month of October. Over the previous 12 months, there were 55,000 jobs added in the state, which comes down to an average of 4,600 per month. Across the country, there were 120,000 jobs added in November, helping the unemployment rate drop significantly. The number of people applying for unemployment benefits has dropped to 366,000, which is the lowest number since May of 2008. "The good story is that despite the shocks, the economy is moving forward," said Brian Bethune, an economics professor at Amherst College. "If we could get better labor mobility, if we could get over this housing market funk that's been going on for too long, we could see some clear skies." Clayton-Matthews added: "I think the pace [of recovery] will remain slow at least for the next six months," he said. "If we get a couple more months of this [type of good news] then I'm going to change my mind. But I need more proof." Michael Goodman, a public policy professor at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, said that the state has done much better than the country during the recovery from the recession. Goodman also said that the labor force of Massachusetts is better educated than the country's workforce, which aids in the lowering of the unemployment rate. "Our workers are more productive as a group so that has allowed employers to hang on to more of them during the downturn," Goodman said. Out of the ten private industries in the state, six of them added jobs last month. Leisure and hospitality saw the biggest increase, which was 4,300 jobs. There were 900 jobs added in education and health services and 700 jobs added in financial services.