

CONFLICTING EMPLOYMENT DATA IN WASHINGTON



The federal Bureau of Labor Statistics has recently released some conflicting data and statistics about the economy in Washington, especially during the month of December. The monthly survey for the different households in the Washington area has estimated that the number of unemployed individuals dropped to 8.5 percent in December from 8.7 percent during the month of November. This happened to be the lowest unemployment rate for Washington since the month of February in 2009. At that period of time, the unemployment rate was at 8.3 percent. However, in the meantime, the survey for Washington businesses shows that there has been a job loss of nearly 11,000 jobs from just November through December. Greg Weeks, the head of the labor-market information at the Employment Security Department, has said, "There is a lot of volatility in the numbers we get from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and one month of numbers isn't enough to gauge what's happening in the job market." Weeks also says, "If you look at the trend over time, jobs are gradually increasing and the unemployment rate is coming down." There were certain industry sectors that displayed some of the highest job growth during the month of December. These sectors include education and health services, manufacturing, aerospace, and transportation. Health services and education took the lead, adding 2,200 jobs. However, while some of the industry sectors displayed gains, there were some industries that suffered from losses as well. Such industries include business services, retail trade, leisure and hospitality, construction, financial activities, and government. The industry with the most losses was professional and business services with an estimated amount of 4,300 job losses. Financial activities had the least number of job losses, with 800 jobs being cut. The government sector cut about 800 jobs. Higher education, in the meantime, cut nearly 1,300 jobs. However, the local government managed to add 1,000 jobs while federal employment remained the same with no losses or additions in the amount of jobs available. From December of 2010 through December of 2011, the number of individuals employed in the Washington area had increased by close to 30,000 jobs.

However, about 297,430 individuals in the Washington area were still unemployed and searching for employment during December. On January 17th, over 70,000 workers in Washington ran out of their unemployment benefits and were still seeking employment. The WorkSource system and Employment Security have partnered together to offer many services for those who are seeking employment. Such services are completely free and include an assortment of tips on interviews, help with resumes and skills, along with receiving job referrals. This can help many of the unemployed individuals in the area who have been seeking work for quite a while.

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