

UNEMPLOYMENT LEVELS FALLING IN CERTAIN AREAS



The levels of unemployment for the District and Maryland have continued to decrease since the month of December. However, within that same time period, the unemployment levels remained the same in Virginia, not decreasing or increasing by a single percentage. This information was recently released by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. Many government jobs have declined, especially since there has been a lot of uncertainty on the different types of cuts that will take place with federal spending. However, private-sector jobs seem to be growing in all three jurisdictions. The state of Virginia added quite a few new restaurant jobs. The District and Maryland both added a number of healthcare positions, enabling many unemployed individuals to find the work they needed. The percentage of individuals without a job in the District was at 10.4 percent in December, slightly decreasing from 10.6 percent from the prior month. The percentage of jobless individuals in Maryland dropped to 6.7 percent from 6.9 percent the prior month. However, Virginia did not see a decrease but did not see an increase either. The unemployment level in Virginia remained steady, at 6.2 percent. James Bohnaker, an economist for Moody's Analytics, says, "This is another round of encouraging data showing momentum. Bohnaker also says, "The labor force picked up in December from November." He concluded by saying, "We're seeing more workers come into the labor force and unemployment go down." The unemployment rate in Maryland has dropped to a level that it has not seen since February of 2009. The state of Maryland has managed to gain more than 2,000 jobs in the leisure and hospitality sector, along with 2,300 new jobs in the education and health sector. Michael Raia, a spokesman for Alexander M. Sanchez, the secretary of the Maryland Department of Labor, has said, "The state's commitment to implementing health-care reform . . . certainly is a catalyst for the health-care sector adding 8,100 jobs since January." There have been 4,300 new government jobs added during the month of December in the state. However, there were some sectors that lost jobs in Maryland, including professional and business services, along with construction and retail as well. In Virginia, the unemployment levels simply stayed the same. Ann D. Lang, the senior economist for the Virginia Employment Commission, has said, "We didn't have enough [of a change] to lower the unemployment rate." However, while the unemployment rate has remained steady, the state has still had quite a few gains, especially when it came down to private sector employment, including professional and business services as well as leisure and hospitality jobs. Virginia did, however, lose some jobs, including those in the manufacturing sector, construction sector, and some jobs within the government sector.

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