

JOBLESS RATES DECLINE IN MASSACHUSETTS DURING 2011



The vast majority of town and cities in the Massachusetts area saw a decline in the percentage of unemployed individuals throughout 2011. Most of these cities and towns ended the year of 2011 with much lower unemployment rates from the previous year of 2010. These figures were recently released by the governor's labor office. There were only a few communities, just about 11 different communities, which ended the year with higher unemployment rates during the month of December in 2011 from the previous year, in December of 2010. Overall, the figures should that the labor market in Massachusetts has shown much improvement. An economics professor at Northeastern University, Alan Clayton-Matthews, seems to agree with this. During the month of November through December, the unemployment rate actually headed upward a bit in a little over three quarters of the different cities and towns within the area. And, while the unemployment rate stayed at a leveled pace in all three Boston-Cambridge-Quincy areas, the unemployment rate actually increased a bit within all of the other regions in Massachusetts. This information was released in figures from the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. Rena Kottcamp, a research director for the state Division of Unemployment Assistance, says monthly changes depict seasonal jobs that usually dry up after summer is over. Kottcamp says, "Some decreases in employment – landscapers and some of those things – you didn't see." Kottcamp also says, "All of that is showing up in December." Kottcamp also pointed out that an increase in hiring during the holiday season will show up in the report for January employment numbers. She also stressed the importance of the decline in the unemployment rate from the previous year. Kottcamp says, "As we keep moving forward, we're just seeing some what I call normal seasonal changes." Some other data that has been released is showing the economy in Massachusetts may simply not be growing as fast as it once was. In fact, several employers in Massachusetts have made recent job cuts, leaving hundreds unemployed. Clayton-Matthews says, "It looks like the state has slowed in the second half of the year." Many analysts are making warnings that the economy in Massachusetts could be in for a rude awakening, especially because the European debt crisis could cause some damage to the economy throughout 2012. Of course, in general, the state has made some progress when it came down to lowering the rate of unemployed individuals. Statewide, the number of seasonally adjusted jobless individuals was at 6.8 percent which was actually a decline from the previous month of November, when the jobless rate was at 7 percent. This is also the lowest jobless level that the state has seen since the end of 2008.