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## BLS RELEASES MASS LAYOFF STATISTICS

**BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS** Recently, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has released the statistics about the mass layoffs done in the United States for the month of September and companies in a few of the biggest states in the union are letting employees go at a startling rate. California, Pennsylvania, New York and Florida were the first four in the listings, with the greatest numbers of mass layoffs in the nation. For those of you who are not familiar with the term a "Mass layoff" refers to any layoff in which a single employer lets go 50 or more members of the staff, in a single state, at one time. While 50 is the minimum number layoffs of much larger proportions, such as New York states impending layoff of roughly 3,500 state employees, would qualify in this case. On the whole the news was not good. According to the statistics released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics there were a grand total of 1,495 mass layoffs in the United States in the last month. Those 1,495 mass layoffs represent a loss of 153,229 jobs. This means that the average mass layoff included a loss of 102 jobs. Of course, these numbers may actually be a little bit light when it comes to measuring the unemployment in a state. This is for two reasons. Firstly, as we mentioned before these statistics only measure mass layoffs. Any jobs lost as a result of a reduction of 49 staff members or less is not counted in these numbers. Secondly, these numbers only include employees who were able to file for unemployment benefits. Workers who could not file for benefits, or who choose not to file immediately, were not counted in the total number of jobs lost. In addition the report only includes what the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics calls an "initial claimant". The bureau defines an initial claimant as "a person who files any notice of unemployment to initiate a request either for a determination of entitlement to and eligibility for compensation, or for a subsequent period of unemployment within a benefit year or period of eligibility." Believe it or not, these numbers are actually encouraging. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics report, "number of mass layoff events in September decreased by 92 from August, and the number of associated initial claims decreased by 12,318. Florida had 78 mass layoff actions in August, well below June and July levels." So, while there are less job loss claims the question remains, are companies simply not laying off more people, or have so many people been laid off that companies have less people to lay off. Then again, a rosier view of the situation could simply be that less people are filing because more are finding jobs. According to the released information the number four spot on the list, Florida which had 69 mass layoffs in September, also has the largest over-the-month increase in employment. That state added 23,300 new jobs over the same period.

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