

**National
Good Times,
Local Bad Times:
The Local Area
Unemployment Crisis**

July 2000

**EMPLOYMENT
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National good times, local bad times: The local area unemployment crisis

"Today our economy is the strongest it has ever been, but there are places that have still not been touched by our prosperity."

President Bill Clinton
May 24, 2000

"We all know that there are inner cities and poor rural areas and small- and medium-sized towns in between that still have not felt the warm sunlight of our prosperity."

President Bill Clinton
May 26, 1999

The Local Area Unemployment Crisis

Despite a booming economy and a low national unemployment rate, many parts of the United States are lagging behind. Residents in scores of counties and cities nationwide are struggling with unemployment rates of 9%, 15%, 18% and more. In short, the nation's economic prosperity is not being felt in every community.

This study identifies the 191 counties and cities (with populations of at least 10,000 people) experiencing unemployment rates that are more than twice the national average. The results of this study are based on annual average unemployment rates for 1999. For the nation as a whole, the unemployment rate in 1999 was 4.2%. In all of the counties and cities cited here, local unemployment rates measured 9.0% or above.

Policy Implications

The 191 counties and cities identified here are encountering difficulty keeping many citizens productively employed. For national policy makers, these pockets of economic distress are important. All too often, federal policy takes a one-size-fits-all approach that assumes labor markets across the country are uniform. They're not. The counties and cities cited here could suffer enormous economic damage if the federal government implements policies that lack the flexibility needed to deal with local or regional economic variations.

Congressional proposals that raise labor costs would have a disproportionate impact in these areas. Likewise, federal policies targeted at boosting employment prospects would be extremely valuable in these counties and cities that need the most help. With any policy, Congress should make sure these communities do not wind up any further behind than they already are.

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July 2000

*For more information on public policies affecting
entry-level labor markets, visit www.EPIONline.org.*

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Counties and cities with populations greater than 10,000 and unemployment rates 9% or more

County/City	State	Pop.	Annual Unemployment
Yuma County	AZ	135,614	29.9
Starr County	TX	56,577	24.4
Luna County	NM	24,360	24.0
Imperial County	CA	145,287	23.2
Maverick County	TX	48,639	21.6
Zavala County	TX	11,889	17.4
Santa Cruz County	AZ	39,150	17.1
Holmes County	MS	21,562	16.9
Willacy County	TX	19,650	16.6
Tulare County	CA	358,470	16.4
Jefferson Davis County	MS	13,770	15.8
Colusa County	CA	18,844	15.7
Dimmit County	TX	10,349	15.7
Taylor County	KY	22,942	15.6
Mingo County	WV	31,480	15.2
Duval County	TX	13,647	14.9
Glacier County	MT	12,603	14.9
Hidalgo County	TX	534,907	14.5
Mcdowell County	WV	29,306	14.5
West Carroll Parish	LA	12,175	14.5
Wilcox County	AL	13,414	14.3
Buchanan County	VA	28,477	13.9
Butler County	AL	21,522	13.9
Lewis County	KY	13,471	13.9
Apache County	AZ	68,562	13.8
Green County	KY	10,595	13.7
Morgan County	OH	14,525	13.7
Newton County	TX	14,346	13.7
Rolette County	ND	14,229	13.7
Fresno County	CA	763,069	13.5

County/City	State	Pop.	Annual Unemployment
Concordia Parish	LA	20,572	13.4
Navajo County	AZ	98,327	13.4
Jefferson County	GA	17,858	13.3
Magoffin County	KY	14,036	13.3
Mason County	WV	26,018	13.3
Merced County	CA	200,746	13.3
Zapata County	TX	11,436	13.3
Camden City	NJ	83,546	13.2
Gulf County	FL	13,562	13.2
Kings County	CA	123,241	13.0
Marion County	SC	34,475	13.0
Sutter County	CA	78,423	13.0
Williamsburg County	SC	36,840	13.0
Port Arthur City	TX	56,827	12.9
Carter County	KY	27,106	12.8
Lowndes County	AL	13,029	12.7
Shannon County	SD	12,468	12.6
Martin County	KY	11,901	12.5
Roane County	WV	15,413	12.4
Hendry County	FL	29,463	12.2
Logan County	WV	40,183	12.2
Marlboro County	SC	29,492	12.2
Monroe County	KY	11,157	12.2
Washington County	AL	17,742	12.2
Kemper County	MS	10,487	12.1
Lincoln County	MT	18,819	12.1
Monroe County	AL	23,960	12.0
Dickenson County	VA	16,716	11.9
Jasper County	TX	33,494	11.9
Lincoln County	WV	22,346	11.9

>Local Unemployment Crisis

County/City	State	Pop.	Annual Unemployment
Ward County	TX	11,498	11.9
Russell County	KY	16,182	11.8
Montmorency County	MI	10,014	11.7
Taos County	NM	27,116	11.7
Vinton County	OH	12,362	11.7
Wayne County	TN	16,413	11.7
Compton City	CA	92,269	11.6
Madera County	CA	116,760	11.6
Noxubee County	MS	12,497	11.6
Orangeburg County	SC	87,519	11.6
Reeves County	TX	14,020	11.5
Swain County	NC	12,341	11.5
Trinity County	CA	12,927	11.5
Andrews County	TX	13,738	11.4
Kern County	CA	642,495	11.4
Meigs County	OH	24,012	11.4
Yuba County	CA	59,607	11.4
Shoshone County	ID	13,654	11.3
St Mary Parish	LA	56,795	11.3
Telfair County	GA	11,406	11.3
Barbour County	WV	15,979	11.2
Boone County	WV	26,302	11.2
Crenshaw County	AL	13,619	11.2
Dallas County	AL	46,669	11.1
Harlan County	KY	34,273	11.1
Lawrence County	TN	39,626	11.1
Clay County	WV	10,609	11.0
Jim Wells County	TX	40,212	11.0
Kenai Peninsula Borough	AK	48,993	11.0
Morris County	TX	13,140	11.0
Glenn County	CA	26,328	10.9
Presque Isle County	MI	14,596	10.9
Sumter County	AL	15,615	10.9
Wetzel County	WV	18,220	10.9
Braxton County	WV	13,211	10.8

County/City	State	Pop.	Annual Unemployment
Idaho County	ID	15,030	10.8
Mississippi County	AR	49,920	10.8
Lawrence County	KY	15,800	10.7
Morehouse Parish	LA	31,242	10.7
Morrow County	OR	10,513	10.7
Wyoming County	WV	26,987	10.7
Pickens County	AL	21,028	10.6
Stanislaus County	CA	436,790	10.6
Cheboygan County	MI	24,153	10.5
Claiborne County	MS	11,596	10.5
Emanuel County	GA	21,042	10.5
Fentress County	TN	16,357	10.5
Ector County	TX	123,748	10.4
Hardee County	FL	21,017	10.3
Siskiyou County	CA	43,570	10.3
St James Parish	LA	21,197	10.3
Stockton City	CA	240,143	10.3
Adams County	WA	15,235	10.2
Bullock County	AL	11,343	10.2
Orange County	TX	85,240	10.2
Terrell County	GA	11,205	10.2
Cape May County	NJ	98,009	10.1
Catahoula Parish	LA	10,905	10.1
Matagorda County	TX	37,828	10.1
Pend Oreille County	WA	11,604	10.1
Panola County	TX	22,978	10.0
Toombs County	GA	25,990	10.0
Fayette County	WV	46,785	9.9
Sunflower County	MS	33,257	9.9
Appling County	GA	16,675	9.8
Burke County	GA	23,217	9.8
Cameron County	TX	329,131	9.8
Dillon County	SC	29,718	9.8
Fayette County	AL	18,103	9.8
Humphreys County	MS	11,214	9.8

>Local Unemployment Crisis

County/City	State	Pop.	Annual Unemployment
Marshall County	MN	10,094	9.8
Martinsville City	VA	14,996	9.8
Tallahatchie County	MS	14,587	9.8
Yakima County	WA	220,785	9.8
Youngstown City	OH	84,650	9.8
Big Horn County	MT	12,573	9.7
Flint City	MI	131,668	9.7
Mackinac County	MI	11,103	9.7
Newark City	NJ	267,823	9.7
Niagara Falls City	NY	56,768	9.7
Nicholas County	WV	27,526	9.7
Paterson City	NJ	148,212	9.7
Ritchie County	WV	10,480	9.7
Sabine County	TX	10,553	9.7
Bonner County	ID	36,071	9.6
Jackson County	AR	17,516	9.6
Johnson County	TN	16,736	9.6
Lewis County	TN	11,127	9.6
Passaic City	NJ	60,817	9.6
Wabash County	IL	12,513	9.6
Webster County	WV	10,036	9.6
Adams County	OH	28,698	9.5
East St Louis City	IL	37,390	9.5
Lamar County	AL	16,034	9.5
Monterey County	CA	371,756	9.5
Washington County	MS	64,265	9.5
Conecuh County	AL	13,728	9.4
Duchesne County	UT	14,759	9.4
El Paso County	TX	701,908	9.4
Fairfield County	SC	22,573	9.4
Franklin County	WA	46,782	9.4
Perry County	AL	12,610	9.4

County/City	State	Pop.	Annual Unemployment
Carroll County	TN	29,450	9.3
Desha County	AR	14,855	9.3
Douglas County	OR	101,805	9.3
Grant County	WA	72,019	9.3
Hardeman County	TN	24,451	9.3
Jefferson County	NY	109,920	9.3
Lancaster County	VA	11,349	9.3
Lea County	NM	55,067	9.3
Monroe County	OH	15,454	9.3
Wilkinson County	GA	10,908	9.3
Chicot County	AR	14,858	9.2
Klickitat County	WA	19,530	9.2
Okanogan County	WA	38,432	9.2
Roosevelt County	MT	10,912	9.2
Wise County	VA	40,194	9.2
Adair County	KY	16,462	9.1
Chester County	SC	34,927	9.1
Choctaw County	AL	15,518	9.1
Letcher County	KY	26,069	9.1
Lewis County	NY	27,289	9.1
Sanders County	MT	10,233	9.1
Summers County	WV	13,863	9.1
Coahoma County	MS	31,094	9.0
Crook County	OR	17,686	9.0
Jersey City City	NJ	232,429	9.0
Plumas County	CA	20,370	9.0
St Francis County	AR	27,766	9.0
St Lucie County	FL	181,850	9.0
Union City City	NJ	57,621	9.0

Note: Annual unemployment numbers are available from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Population numbers are available from the U.S. Census Bureau.

For a complete list of counties organized by state go to www.EPIONline.org/countyunemployment.htm

