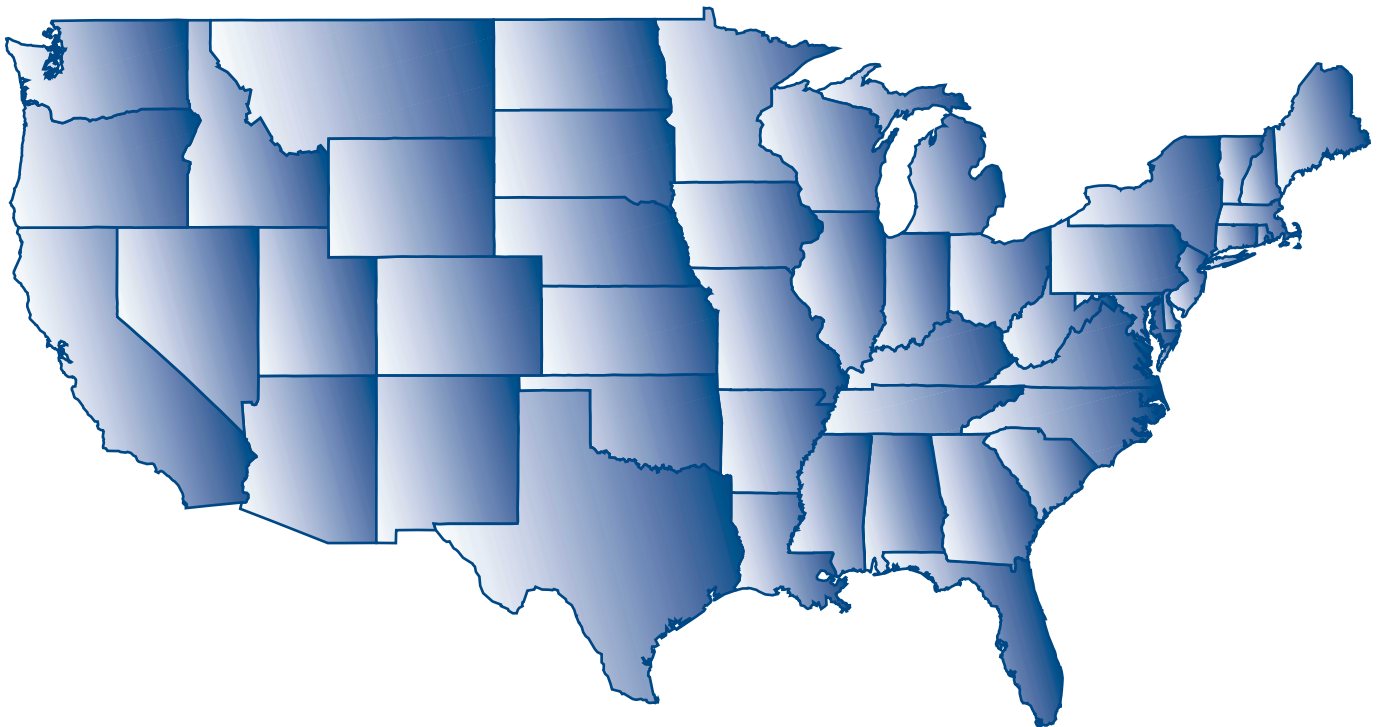


Where the Jobs Aren't Local Unemployment Spreads



June 2002

**EMPLOYMENT
POLICIES
INSTITUTE**

The local area unemployment crisis

The economy continued its nationwide decline in 2001, and many more communities fell further off the pace. Unemployment rose across the country in dozens of counties and cities with unemployment rates from 9% to more than 20%. As the economy continues to struggle toward recovery, jobs are more difficult to come by, and the areas that are already the worst off will have little chance at improvement.

This study identifies 277 counties and cities (each with a population of at least 10,000 people) experiencing unemployment rates that are 9.0% and above, nearly double the national average for 2001. The results of this study are based on annual average unemployment rates for 2001. Comparing 2001 to 2000, an additional 105 counties fell into the “high unemployment” category, with annual unemployment rates of 9.0% or higher. For the nation as a whole, the unemployment rate in 2001 was 4.8%, up substantially from 4.0% in 2000.

Since the late 1940's, the national annual unemployment rate has averaged over 9% only twice, in 1982 and 1983, and has not averaged above 8% since. The national average unemployment rate increased for the first time in nine years between 2000 and 2001, by

nearly a full percentage point. Many of the 277 communities listed here could not create jobs during our nation's longest expansion in history, and we now find them falling deeper into “localized depression.”

Policy Implications

These 277 counties and cities are encountering difficulties in keeping many citizens productively employed. For national policymakers, 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, when in fact they are 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 increase 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. As with any policy, Congress should make sure these communities do not wind up further behind than they already are.

Andre Neveu
Economist

June 2002

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

**EMPLOYMENT
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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	160,026	24.4
LUNA COUNTY	NM	25,016	23.7
MAVERICK COUNTY	TX	47,297	23.3
IMPERIAL COUNTY	CA	142,361	21.3
STARR COUNTY	TX	53,597	20.0
HOLMES COUNTY	MS	21,609	18.0
COLUSA COUNTY	CA	18,804	17.6
MARION COUNTY	SC	35,466	17.3
DICKENSON COUNTY	VA	16,395	16.9
BIG HORN COUNTY	MT	12,671	16.8
HIGHLAND PARK CITY	MI	19,192	16.6
WILLACY COUNTY	TX	20,082	16.4
WASHINGTON COUNTY	AL	18,097	15.8
ZAVALA COUNTY	TX	11,600	15.8
TULARE COUNTY	CA	368,021	15.4
KLICKITAT COUNTY	WA	19,161	15.1
WEST CARROLL PARISH	LA	12,314	15.0
MORGAN COUNTY	OH	14,897	15.0
CARTER COUNTY	KY	26,889	14.7
WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY	SC	37,217	14.6
CHICKASAW COUNTY	MS	19,440	14.5
MERCED COUNTY	CA	210,554	14.0
FORT PIERCE CITY	FL	37,076	14.0
MISSISSIPPI COUNTY	AR	51,979	13.9
KINGS COUNTY	CA	129,461	13.8
FRESNO COUNTY	CA	799,407	13.7
PERRY COUNTY	AL	11,861	13.6
TELFAIR COUNTY	GA	11,794	13.4
MARLBORO COUNTY	SC	28,818	13.4
ROANE COUNTY	WV	15,446	13.4
WILCOX COUNTY	AL	13,183	13.2
WINSTON COUNTY	MS	20,160	13.2

County/City	State	Pop.	Annual Unemployment
SOCORRO CITY	TX	27,530	13.2
HIDALGO COUNTY	TX	569,463	13.1
FLINT CITY	MI	130,853	13.1
LEWIS COUNTY	KY	14,092	12.9
MONROE COUNTY	KY	11,756	12.9
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY	AZ	38,381	12.8
CONCORDIA PARISH	LA	20,247	12.8
MONTMORENCY COUNTY	MI	10,315	12.8
HUMPHREYS COUNTY	MS	11,206	12.8
WATSONVILLE CITY	CA	36,783	12.8
SUNFLOWER COUNTY	MS	34,369	12.7
YANCEY COUNTY	NC	17,774	12.7
MAGOFFIN COUNTY	KY	13,332	12.6
FAIRFIELD COUNTY	SC	23,454	12.6
SHANNON COUNTY	SD	12,466	12.6
NEWTON COUNTY	TX	15,072	12.6
WINSTON COUNTY	AL	24,843	12.5
DILLON COUNTY	SC	30,722	12.5
PORT ARTHUR CITY	TX	56,574	12.5
SUTTER COUNTY	CA	78,930	12.3
HENDRY COUNTY	FL	36,210	12.3
MOREHOUSE PARISH	LA	31,021	12.2
TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY	MS	14,903	12.2
MADERA COUNTY	CA	123,109	12.1
APACHE COUNTY	AZ	69,423	12.0
SHOSHONE COUNTY	ID	13,771	12.0
CAMDEN CITY	NJ	82,402	12.0
MC CREARY COUNTY	KY	17,080	11.8
ANNISTON CITY	AL	25,622	11.8
DALLAS COUNTY	AL	46,365	11.7
YUBA COUNTY	CA	60,219	11.7
VINTON COUNTY	OH	12,806	11.7

>Local Unemployment Crisis

County/City	State	Pop.	Annual Unemployment
BULLOCK COUNTY	AL	11,714	11.6
CLARKE COUNTY	AL	27,867	11.6
QUITMAN COUNTY	MS	10,117	11.6
WAYNE COUNTY	MO	13,259	11.6
MADISON PARISH	LA	13,728	11.5
ST JAMES PARISH	LA	21,216	11.5
ROBESON COUNTY	NC	123,339	11.5
KINSTON CITY	NC	24,832	11.5
PICKENS COUNTY	AL	20,949	11.4
MASON COUNTY	MI	28,274	11.4
CLEVELAND COUNTY	NC	96,287	11.4
JASPER COUNTY	TX	35,604	11.4
NOXUBEE COUNTY	MS	12,548	11.3
LINCOLN COUNTY	MT	18,837	11.3
YAKIMA COUNTY	WA	222,581	11.3
EAST ST LOUIS CITY	IL	36,656	11.3
GLENN COUNTY	CA	26,453	11.2
CHEBOYGAN COUNTY	MI	26,448	11.2
WASHINGTON COUNTY	MS	62,977	11.2
SWAIN COUNTY	NC	12,968	11.2
COMPTON CITY	CA	92,864	11.2
COLUMBUS CITY	MS	25,757	11.2
DESHA COUNTY	AR	15,341	11.1
BIENVILLE PARISH	LA	15,752	11.1
CATAHOULA PARISH	LA	10,920	11.1
PRESQUE ISLE COUNTY	MI	14,411	11.1
GLACIER COUNTY	MT	13,247	11.1
HALIFAX COUNTY	NC	57,370	11.1
ORANGEBURG COUNTY	SC	91,582	11.1
MARTINSVILLE CITY	VA	15,416	11.1
FENTRESS COUNTY	TN	16,625	11.0
LAWRENCE COUNTY	TN	39,926	11.0
COWLITZ COUNTY	WA	92,948	11.0
GARY CITY	IN	110,271	11.0
TRINITY COUNTY	CA	13,022	10.9
WEBSTER COUNTY	MS	10,294	10.9
UNION COUNTY	SC	29,881	10.9

County/City	State	Pop.	Annual Unemployment
CARROLL COUNTY	VA	29,245	10.9
STEVENS COUNTY	WA	40,066	10.9
PONTIAC CITY	MI	68,149	10.9
MARION COUNTY	IL	41,691	10.8
MORROW COUNTY	OR	10,995	10.8
MATAGORDA COUNTY	TX	37,957	10.8
ADAMS COUNTY	WA	16,428	10.8
OKANOGAN COUNTY	WA	39,564	10.8
MASON COUNTY	WV	25,957	10.8
FLORENCE CITY	AL	39,028	10.8
RACINE CITY	WI	80,902	10.8
HANCOCK COUNTY	GA	10,076	10.7
MONROE COUNTY	MS	38,014	10.7
ROLETTE COUNTY	ND	13,674	10.7
SUMTER COUNTY	AL	14,798	10.6
BETHEL CENSUS AREA	AK	16,006	10.6
IOSCO COUNTY	MI	27,339	10.6
JEFFERSON DAVIS COUNTY	MS	13,962	10.6
GRAYSON COUNTY	VA	17,917	10.6
GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY	WA	67,194	10.6
LAMAR COUNTY	AL	15,904	10.5
MARION COUNTY	AL	31,214	10.5
NAVAJO COUNTY	AZ	97,470	10.5
KERN COUNTY	CA	661,645	10.5
UPSON COUNTY	GA	27,597	10.5
RICHLAND PARISH	LA	20,981	10.5
RED RIVER COUNTY	TX	14,314	10.5
BELL GARDENS CITY	CA	44,703	10.5
HOLLISTER CITY	CA	31,374	10.5
WILSON CITY	NC	41,258	10.5
HAMILTON COUNTY	FL	13,327	10.4
CALHOUN COUNTY	MS	15,069	10.4
ANSON COUNTY	NC	25,275	10.4
SAGINAW CITY	MI	62,422	10.4
YOUNGSTOWN CITY	OH	82,757	10.4
CHICOT COUNTY	AR	14,117	10.3
MUHLENBERG COUNTY	KY	31,839	10.3

>Local Unemployment Crisis

County/City	State	Pop.	Annual Unemployment
CLAY COUNTY	MS	21,979	10.3
MACON COUNTY	MO	15,762	10.3
VANCE COUNTY	NC	42,954	10.3
WARREN COUNTY	NC	19,972	10.3
CHESTER COUNTY	SC	34,068	10.3
GRANT COUNTY	WA	74,698	10.3
STOCKTON CITY	CA	245,020	10.3
NIAGARA FALLS CITY	NY	55,928	10.3
PHILLIPS COUNTY	AR	26,445	10.2
STANISLAUS COUNTY	CA	446,997	10.2
WILKES COUNTY	GA	10,687	10.2
ALCONA COUNTY	MI	11,719	10.2
WEXFORD COUNTY	MI	30,484	10.2
PANOLA COUNTY	MS	34,274	10.2
MITCHELL COUNTY	NC	15,687	10.2
EAST CLEVELAND CITY	OH	29,077	10.2
DREW COUNTY	AR	18,723	10.1
JEFF DAVIS COUNTY	GA	12,684	10.1
LAWRENCE COUNTY	KY	15,569	10.1
DOUGLAS COUNTY	MO	13,084	10.1
SCOTLAND COUNTY	NC	35,998	10.1
WASCO COUNTY	OR	23,791	10.1
PULASKI COUNTY	VA	35,127	10.1
PEND OREILLE COUNTY	WA	11,732	10.1
BIBB COUNTY	AL	20,826	10.0
BREATHITT COUNTY	KY	16,100	10.0
MORGAN COUNTY	KY	13,948	10.0
LEFLORE COUNTY	MS	37,947	10.0
HUNTINGTON PARK CITY	CA	59,000	10.0
MIAMI CITY	FL	369,253	10.0
DANVILLE CITY	IL	32,938	10.0
HARVEY CITY	IL	29,167	10.0
NORTH CHICAGO CITY	IL	36,097	10.0
LAWRENCE CITY	MA	69,794	10.0
BUTLER COUNTY	AL	21,399	9.9
FRANKLIN PARISH	LA	21,263	9.9
WORCESTER COUNTY	MD	46,543	9.9

County/City	State	Pop.	Annual Unemployment
STONE COUNTY	MO	28,658	9.9
LAUDERDALE COUNTY	TN	27,101	9.9
SABINE COUNTY	TX	10,469	9.9
JEFFERSON COUNTY	GA	17,266	9.8
WAYNE COUNTY	TN	16,842	9.8
ORANGE COUNTY	TX	84,966	9.8
HALE COUNTY	AL	17,185	9.7
MONROE COUNTY	AL	24,324	9.7
OUACHITA COUNTY	AR	28,790	9.7
TAOS COUNTY	NM	29,979	9.7
RICHMOND COUNTY	NC	46,564	9.7
CROOK COUNTY	OR	19,182	9.7
GEORGETOWN COUNTY	SC	55,797	9.7
DIMMIT COUNTY	TX	10,248	9.7
WYTHE COUNTY	VA	27,599	9.7
BELL CITY	CA	35,331	9.7
LYNWOOD CITY	CA	63,935	9.7
RIVIERA BEACH CITY	FL	29,655	9.7
DETROIT CITY	MI	965,084	9.7
KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH	AK	49,691	9.6
GLADES COUNTY	FL	10,576	9.6
HARDEE COUNTY	FL	26,938	9.6
TAYLOR COUNTY	FL	19,256	9.6
FINNEY COUNTY	KS	40,523	9.6
MONTGOMERY COUNTY	MS	12,189	9.6
BEAUFORT COUNTY	NC	44,958	9.6
EDGECOMBE COUNTY	NC	55,606	9.6
GIBSON COUNTY	TN	48,152	9.6
EMERY COUNTY	UT	10,860	9.6
FREEPORT CITY	IL	26,031	9.6
WARREN CITY	OH	47,845	9.6
BELOIT CITY	WI	35,728	9.6
POINSETT COUNTY	AR	25,614	9.5
SCREVEN COUNTY	GA	15,374	9.5
IDAHO COUNTY	ID	15,511	9.5
DE SOTO PARISH	LA	25,494	9.5
COLUMBUS COUNTY	NC	54,749	9.5

>Local Unemployment Crisis

County/City	State	Pop.	Annual Unemployment	County/City	State	Pop.	Annual Unemployment
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY ...	NC	22,086	9.5	LAKESIDE CITY	WA	66,158	9.3
KLAMATH COUNTY	OR	63,775	9.5	GENEVA COUNTY	AL	25,764	9.2
CARROLL COUNTY	TN	29,475	9.5	CALDWELL PARISH	LA	10,560	9.2
LEWIS COUNTY	TN	11,367	9.5	LAKE COUNTY	MI	11,333	9.2
CHELAN COUNTY	WA	66,616	9.5	GEORGE COUNTY	MS	19,144	9.2
MAYWOOD CITY	CA	28,686	9.5	LINN COUNTY	MO	13,754	9.2
KANKAKEE CITY	IL	26,717	9.5	HOOD RIVER COUNTY	OR	20,411	9.2
MARION CITY	IN	30,046	9.5	CAMERON COUNTY	TX	335,227	9.2
NORTH LAS VEGAS CITY	NV	101,841	9.5	PINE BLUFF CITY	AR	52,249	9.2
LOWNDES COUNTY	AL	13,473	9.4	MAYWOOD VILLAGE	IL	25,743	9.2
VALDEZ-CORDOVA CENSUS AREA	AK	10,195	9.4	NEWARK CITY	NJ	263,087	9.2
LEE COUNTY	AR	12,580	9.4	HICKORY CITY	NC	33,368	9.2
SISKIYOU COUNTY	CA	44,301	9.4	VANCOUVER CITY	WA	118,743	9.2
TODD COUNTY	KY	11,971	9.4	CHOCTAW COUNTY	AL	15,922	9.1
GRANT PARISH	LA	18,698	9.4	ASHLEY COUNTY	AR	24,209	9.1
CLAIBORNE COUNTY	MS	11,831	9.4	BRADLEY COUNTY	AR	12,600	9.1
CLARKE COUNTY	MS	17,955	9.4	ORANGE COUNTY	IN	19,306	9.1
PEMISCOT COUNTY	MO	20,047	9.4	ARENAC COUNTY	MI	17,269	9.1
FRANKLIN COUNTY	WA	49,347	9.4	KALKASKA COUNTY	MI	16,571	9.1
LEWIS COUNTY	WA	68,600	9.4	MISSISSIPPI COUNTY	MO	13,427	9.1
BREMERTON CITY	WA	40,612	9.4	SAN JUAN COUNTY	UT	14,413	9.1
MONTEREY COUNTY	CA	401,762	9.3	JUNEAU COUNTY	WI	24,316	9.1
DORCHESTER COUNTY	MD	30,674	9.3	MUSKEGON CITY	MI	39,401	9.1
MACKINAC COUNTY	MI	11,943	9.3	KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH	AK	13,913	9.0
LAWRENCE COUNTY	MS	13,258	9.3	JACKSON PARISH	LA	15,397	9.0
WRIGHT COUNTY	MO	17,955	9.3	DOUGLAS COUNTY	OR	100,399	9.0
ASHE COUNTY	NC	24,384	9.3	MALHEUR COUNTY	OR	31,615	9.0
ADAMS COUNTY	OH	27,330	9.3	ELK COUNTY	PA	35,112	9.0
HUNTINGDON COUNTY	PA	45,586	9.3	PACIFIC COUNTY	WA	20,984	9.0
HAYWOOD COUNTY	TN	19,797	9.3	BELLEVILLE CITY	IL	40,429	9.0
HALIFAX COUNTY	VA	37,355	9.3	PORT HURON CITY	MI	32,337	9.0
GADSDEN CITY	AL	42,120	9.3				
EAST CHICAGO CITY	IN	30,457	9.3				
ATLANTIC CITY CITY	NJ	37,708	9.3				

Note: Annual unemployment numbers are available from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. County population figures are estimated to July 1, 2001 using the 2000 census. City populations are estimated to July 1, 1999 using the 1990 Census.

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