

# Best States for Jobs

By Anthony Balderrama, CareerBuilder.com writer

Location is everything, according to the real estate adage. Many people learn the wisdom of these words after they move into their first apartment on a tight budget and have a view of a landfill and the smells that come from it.

The same holds true for job hunting. Your chances of finding the right job – or any job, really – depend on where you live. The unemployment rate is the ratio of job seekers to the working population. Therefore, a low percentage means few people are having any difficulty finding work.

If you're looking for a job, you want to be in a state that has an unemployment rate lower than the national average, which is 5 percent according to the most recent data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Here are the 15 best states to find work ranked by their unemployment rates.

## 1. South Dakota

Unemployment rate: 3 percent\*

Population: 796,214\*\*

Mean annual wage: \$30,460

Top industry: Trade, transportation and utilities (19.9 percent)\*\*\*

## 2. Idaho

Unemployment rate: 3 percent

Population: 1,499,402

Mean annual wage: \$34,810

Top industry: Trade, transportation and utilities (20.2 percent)

## 3. Wyoming

Unemployment rate: 3.1 percent

Population: 522,830

Mean annual wage: \$34,290

Top industry: Government (23 percent)

## 4. Nebraska

Unemployment rate: 3.2 percent

Population: 1,774,571

Mean annual wage: \$34,300

Top industry: Trade, transportation and utilities (21.1 percent)

## 5. Utah

Unemployment rate: 3.2 percent

Population: 2,645,330

Mean annual wage: \$35,540

Top industry: Trade, transportation and utilities (19.7 percent)

## 6. Hawaii

Unemployment rate: 3.2 percent

Population: 1,283,388

Mean annual wage: \$38,630  
Top industry: Government (19.6 percent)

#### **7. North Dakota**

Unemployment rate: 3.3 percent  
Population: 639,715  
Mean annual wage: \$32,440  
Top industry: Trade, transportation and utilities (21.4 percent)

#### **8. Virginia**

Unemployment rate: 3.5 percent  
Population: 7,712,091  
Mean annual wage: \$41,450  
Top industry: Government (18 percent)

#### **9. Montana**

Unemployment rate: 3.6 percent  
Population: 957,861  
Mean annual wage: \$31,290  
Top industry: Trade, transportation and utilities (20.5 percent)

#### **10. New Hampshire**

Unemployment rate: 3.6 percent  
Population: 1,315,828  
Mean annual wage: \$39,250  
Top industry: Trade, transportation and utilities (23.3 percent)

#### **11. New Mexico**

Unemployment rate: 3.7 percent  
Population: 1,969,915  
Mean annual wage: \$33,980  
Top industry: Government (23.2 percent)

#### **12. Delaware**

Unemployment rate: 3.8 percent  
Population: 864,764  
Mean annual wage: \$41,680  
Top industry: Trade, transportation and utilities (18.7 percent)

#### **13. Maryland**

Unemployment rate: 3.8 percent  
Population: 5,618,344  
Mean annual wage: \$44,030  
Top industry: Government (18.2 percent)

#### **14. Iowa**

Unemployment rate: 4 percent  
Population: 2,988,046

Mean annual wage: \$33,250

Top industry: Trade, transportation and utilities (20.4 percent)

## 15. Vermont

Unemployment rate: 4 percent

Population: 621,254

Mean annual wage: \$36,350

Top industry: Trade, transportation and utilities (19.4 percent)

\*Unemployment rates, mean annual wages and industry percentages obtained from BLS in January 2008. Percentages based on nonfarm payrolls, seasonally adjusted.

\*\*Population figures based on U.S. Census Bureau data.

\*\*\*Top industries are those that employ the largest percentage of a state's labor force.

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## Worst States For Jobs

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If you've rewritten that résumé several times and sent out dozens of applications but your job search still shows no promise, you might not be the problem.

One frequently overlooked but critical factor in finding a new job is your state's unemployment rate. You can have the experience and skills of an employer's dream, but they won't do you any good if there just aren't enough jobs available.

The unemployment rate is the percentage of job seekers in the work force who are still looking for work. The higher the percentage, the more difficult it is to find a job. The national unemployment rate is 5 percent, based on the most recent data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

If you're looking for a job, you should see how your state compares to the rest of the country. Here are the 10 worst states to find work ranked by their unemployment rates.

## 1. Michigan

Unemployment rate: 7.6 percent

Population: 10,071,822

Mean annual wage: \$41,230

Top industry: Trade, transportation and utilities (18.4 percent)\*\*\*

## 2. Mississippi

Unemployment rate: 6.8 percent

Population: 2,918,785

Mean annual wage: \$30,460

Top industry: Government (21.2 percent)

## 3. South Carolina

Unemployment rate: 6.6 percent

Population: 4,407,709

Mean annual wage: \$33,400

Top industry: Trade, transportation and utilities (19.4 percent)

## 4. Alaska

Unemployment rate: 6.5 percent

Population: 683,478

Mean annual wage: \$43,920

Top industry: Government (25.9 percent)

## 5. California

Unemployment rate: 6.1 percent

Population: 36,553,215

Mean annual wage: \$44,180

Top industry: Trade, transportation and utilities (18.9 percent)

## 6. District of Columbia

Unemployment rate: 6.1 percent

Population: 588,292

Mean annual wage: \$61,500

Top industry: Government (33.3 percent)

## 7. Ohio

Unemployment rate: 6 percent

Population: 11,466,917

Mean annual wage: \$37,360

Top industry: Trade, transportation and utilities (19.3 percent)

## 8. Arkansas

Unemployment rate: 5.9 percent

Population: 2,834,797

Mean annual wage: \$30,870

Top industry: Trade, transportation and utilities (20.6 percent)

## 9. Nevada

Unemployment rate: 5.8 percent

Population: 2,565,382

Mean annual wage: \$36,000

Top industry: Leisure and hospitality (26.5 percent)

## 10. Kentucky

Unemployment rate: 5.7 percent

Population: 4,241,474

Mean annual wage: \$33,490

Top industry: Trade, transportation and utilities (20.4 percent)