

# Economic Perspectives

## One million Floridians jobless in August September 21, 2009

Florida employers shed another 15,000 jobs in August leaving 984,000 jobless out of a civilian labor force of 9,194,000. The state's unemployment rate is now 10.7% — the highest since October 1975 when it was 11.0%. The August rate is only fractionally changed from the revised July rate of 10.8% but 4.2 percentage points higher than August 2008 when statewide unemployment was 6.5%. Florida's civilian labor force declined slightly (-0.64%) year over year. The state's headline rates are seasonally adjusted which smooths out some peaks and valleys in the data. Not seasonally adjusted, there were 1,013,000 jobless Floridians translating to an unemployment rate of 10.9%.

Florida employers have shed 372,700 jobs since August 2008. The August job numbers continue a downward trend begun two years ago in August 2007 when the housing market began to collapse and construction came to a halt. In recent months however, job losses have been moderating but stabilization appears unlikely before late 2010 with robust growth not returning until at least 2014.

The downturn in Florida employment began in the construction industry with residential construction the hardest hit. The impact was cushioned when many of the lost residential construction jobs were absorbed in the commercial sector. Today, commercial construction has reached a record low and job losses continue to mount. Year over year in August, Florida lost 62,700 construction jobs.

### Unemployment rates in Seacoast served counties — August 2009

County	August '09	July '09 Revised	August '08
Orange	10.8	11.1	6.4
Seminole	10.3	10.5	6.2
Lake	11.8	11.6	7.1
Osceola	11.8	11.7	6.8
Brevard	10.8	11.1	7.3
Indian River	15.2	15.3	10.0
St. Lucie	14.7	14.9	10.3
Martin	11.5	11.5	7.9
Palm Beach	11.3	11.4	7.6
Broward	9.5	9.7	6.1
Okeechobee	12.8	13.1	10.0
Glades	10.0	10.7	8.3
Hendry	16.4	16.7	14.5
Desoto	11.3	11.5	8.4
Highlands	11.4	11.5	8.4
Hardee	12.6	12.9	9.0

In August, the business and professional services sector lost the most jobs. Losses totaled 93,300 jobs or 8.2% of the sector work force year over year. Similarly, financial activities lost 28,900 jobs which is 5.5% of its work force. State and local governments also shed 8,900 jobs in August year over year.

Many of these losses can be traced to the crash of the state's housing industry. An extraordinary number of jobs were created in both the private and public sectors to service what was then expected to be continued growth in housing. That demand began to disappear in 2007 and today, there is no leading indicator to suggest jobs will return to their pre-boom level any time soon. Like the nation, many of Florida's job losses in this recession are permanent rather than cyclical and the loss is rippling through the broader economy, including commercial real estate where the demand for office space, for example, has diminished dramatically.

In other Florida employment sectors, manufacturing lost 45,000 jobs (12.2%), trade, transportation and utilities lost 85,100 jobs (5.4%) and leisure and hospitality lost 35,200 jobs (3.7%). All are year over year losses.

The only industry to gain jobs was the private education and health care sector. All of the gain was in healthcare and social services which grew by 9,100 jobs. Private education declined by 4,200 jobs year over year in August.

There are approximately 366,768 unemployed persons in Seacoast markets. That is 36% of the state total. Approximately one-third of the Seacoast market unemployed are in the four county Metro Orlando area.

The three Treasure Coast counties have a combined 34,970 unemployed persons.

### Florida Counties With Highest Unemployment Seacoast Counties in red

County	Rate
Hendry	16.4%
Flagler	15.7%
Indian River	15.2%
St. Lucie	14.7%
Lee	13.5%

### In Perspective States With Highest Unemployment

State	Rate
Michigan	14.7%
Nevada	13.0
Rhode Island	12.6%
California	12.1
South Carolina	11.6%
Washington, D.C	11.2%

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics