

Economic Perspectives

970,000 Floridians jobless in June — Unemployment rate now 10.6% July 20, 2009

Florida employers shed another 27,000 jobs in June leaving approximately 970,000 Floridians jobless out of a workforce of 9,192,000. The state's unemployment rate is now 10.6% — the highest since 1975 when Florida unemployment was 11.0%. The June unemployment rate is 0.3% higher than the May revised rate of 10.3% and 4.6 percentage points over the June 2008 rate. An estimated 392,800 Florida jobs have been lost year over year.

Florida's job losses on a percentage basis have been worse than the national rate of loss reacting to the extraordinary housing downturn in Florida as compared to much of the rest of the nation. Florida's job losses began in August 2007 and the state has lost jobs every month since. The state's historic low for unemployment was in July 2006 — near the peak of the housing boom — when the rate was 3.3% and still being fuelled by construction and allied services.

Job losses began with the construction sector in the third quarter of 2007 and have now expanded to nearly every employment sector. In June, as expected, the sector losing the most jobs was professional and business services. The sector has now lost 88,500 jobs or 7.7% of its total. The trade, transportation and utilities sector followed with a loss of 86,300 jobs year over year.

Unemployment rates in Seacoast served counties — June 2009

County	June '09	May '09 Adjusted	June '08
Orange	10.8	10.3	5.6
Seminole	10.2	9.7	5.4
Lake	11.2	10.8	6.1
Osceola	11.4	11.0	6.0
Brevard	10.7	10.3	6.2
Indian River	14.1	13.1	8.2
St. Lucie	14.1	13.4	8.6
Martin	11.2	10.5	6.8
Palm Beach	11.1	10.4	6.5
Broward	9.4	9.0	5.3
Okeechobee	12.0	10.8	7.7
Glades	10.1	8.7	7.2
Hendry	13.9	11.7	10.7
Desoto	9.5	8.6	6.1
Highlands	10.4	9.4	6.8
Hardee	10.2	8.3	6.3

Source: Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation | U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

That is 5.4% of the sector's total employment.

Construction continued to lose jobs and has now lost 80,400 jobs year over year. Losses in all of these sectors had their roots in the housing bust.

Leisure and hospitality job losses have steadily been increasing as both personal and business travel have slowed dramatically and consumers cut back spending on restaurant meals.

Local government employment remains in the loss column with 5,200 jobs lost year over year. The sector surprised by growing long into the recession but is now losing jobs as a result of deteriorating property values and tax revenues.

Private education and health services grew by a net 5,800 jobs. Within the sector, education lost jobs and all of the gain (+10,000) was in health services.

Geographically, all Florida metro areas lost jobs year over year in June. The hardest hit areas have consistently been those that had the most rapid and sometimes uncontrolled growth during the housing boom. Indian River and St. Lucie counties — both Seacoast served counties — each turned in a dismal performance with 14.1% unemployment rates. Martin County was slightly better at a still unimpressive 11.2% and Palm Beach County at 11.1%. All Seacoast served counties with the exception of Broward (9.4%) and DeSoto (9.5%) now have double digit unemployment rates.

The United States is now in the 20th month of the current recession making it the longest and perhaps the deepest since World War II. Unemployment — both U.S. and Florida will likely continue to rise through 2010 and remain painfully high even after the recession officially ends.

Florida Counties With Highest Unemployment
Seacoast Counties in red

County	Rate
Flagler	15.5%
St. Lucie	14.1%
Indian River	14.1%
Hendry	13.9%
Hernando	13.1%

In Perspective
States With Highest Unemployment

State	Rate
Michigan	15.2%
Rhode Island	12.4%
Oregon	12.2%
South Carolina	12.1%
Nevada	12.0%
California	11.6%

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics