

State of Working Georgia: Jobs Count

Despite Small Uptick, Georgia Still Near Bottom in Job Growth

According to new data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Georgia enjoyed a slight improvement in job growth at the close of 2011, yet the state still lags near the bottom when compared to other states.

Trends in Job Creation

As described in [State of Working Georgia 2011](#), Georgia's performance on job creation has steadily worsened since the 1990s, culminating in the Great Recession and jobless recovery.

After losing more than a quarter million jobs in the Great Recession, since June 2009, Georgia has lost more jobs than any other state (68,300) and ranks 49th of 51 (including the District of Columbia) in percentage job growth. When looking at the Great Recession and jobless recovery as a whole, Georgia has lost 340,000 jobs—third most nationwide behind California and Florida.

Job creation in Georgia was shockingly poor in 2011, as the state placed 49th in percentage job growth (-0.4%) and dead last with the highest number of jobs lost (13,900). In fact, Georgia was one of only four states to shed jobs in 2011 and lost approximately three-and-a-half times more than the closest competitor (Missouri, 3,800).

Georgia experienced a small uptick in the final three months of 2011, which added 12,300 jobs. However the three months prior to that increase (July to September) saw more than 20,000 lost statewide.

Comparative Job Growth in Georgia Over Two Decades (Seasonally adjusted)

	% Change in Jobs	National Rank
1990s	32.0%	7
2000s	-3.1%	36
2001 Recession	-2.0%	42
2001-2007 Recovery	6.3%	22
Great Recession	-6.6%	40
2009-2011 "Recovery"	-2.1%	49
2011	-0.4%	49

Source: Economic Policy Institute analysis of Current Employment Statistics, 1990-December 2011

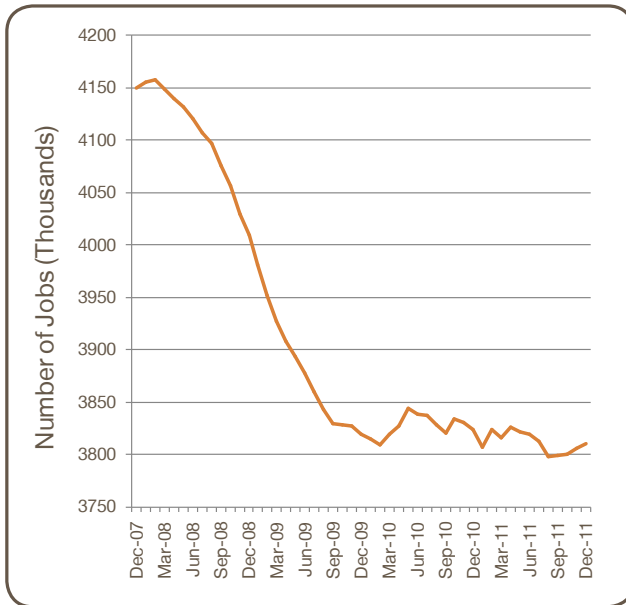
Great Recession leads to Daunting "Jobs Deficit" in Georgia

To return to pre-recession levels of employment, the state must not only replace the jobs that were lost but also create new ones for additional incomers to the state. The combination of jobs previously lost and those that must be created is referred to as a state's "jobs deficit." In Georgia, this deficit stands at 552,900 jobs as of December 2011. To fill the gap, Georgia would need to create approximately 19,000 jobs per month for the next three years according to the independent Economic Policy Institute.

Unemployment Falling but Measure Requires Caution

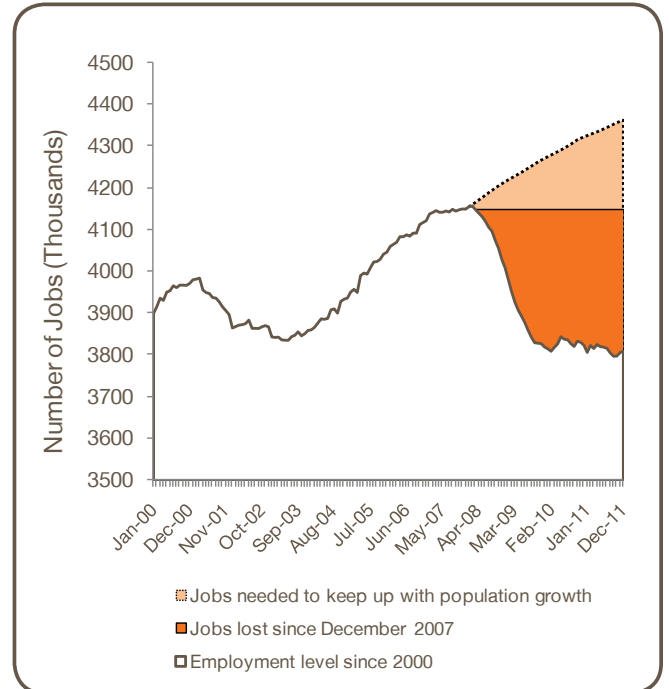
Although Georgia's unemployment rate dropped from 10.3 to 9.7 percent between September and December 2011, unemployment can unfortunately be a misleading measure of the overall jobs picture. Unlike the data cited previously, which count how many employees are on payrolls at a given time, the unemployment rate leaves certain workers out of the equation. Specifically it only includes individuals who have been actively seeking employment in the previous four weeks, rather than all people without a job at a given time. As a result, unemployment will vary not only due to positive trends in the economy (i.e. people finding work) but also negative ones (i.e. people involuntarily leaving the workforce). This means that even though Georgia's unemployment rate is on a positive trajectory, observers should be cautious when using it to draw conclusions.

Job Decline in Georgia Since Start of Great Recession



Source: Economic Policy Institute analysis of Current Employment Statistics survey data

Jobs Deficit in Georgia (as of December 2011)



Source: Economic Policy Institute analysis of Current Employment Statistics, 2000-2011

To view additional data on how ordinary Georgians have fared over prior years and decades, please see the full [State of Working Georgia 2011](#) report.