

State Unemployment Climbs; Four States Reach Records

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Unemployment rose in most states in December-even breaking records in a couple of states-a reversal from previous months when states showed improvement, according to government data released Friday.

Joblessness in four states-South Carolina (12.6 percent), Delaware (9 percent), Florida (11.8 percent) and North Carolina (11.2 percent)-and the District of Columbia (12.1 percent) reached record highs.

In all, 43 states and the District of Columbia saw their rates increase last month, while four states reported a decrease and three states had no change in their unemployment, according to the Labor Department.

The December data is a reversal from the previous month, when 36 states reported lower unemployment.

Earlier this month, the government reported that the national unemployment rate remained at 10 percent in December.

Michigan, again, had the highest jobless rate in the nation, though it eased to 14.6 percent from 14.7 percent in November.

"We haven't seen much movement for the past couple of months," said Rick Waclawek, director of Michigan's Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives.

Behind Michigan, Nevada had the second highest rate in the country with 13 percent, followed by Rhode Island (12.9 percent) and South Carolina (12.6 percent.)

North Dakota had the lowest jobless rate in country at 4.4 percent in December, followed by Nebraska and South Dakota at 4.7 percent each.

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