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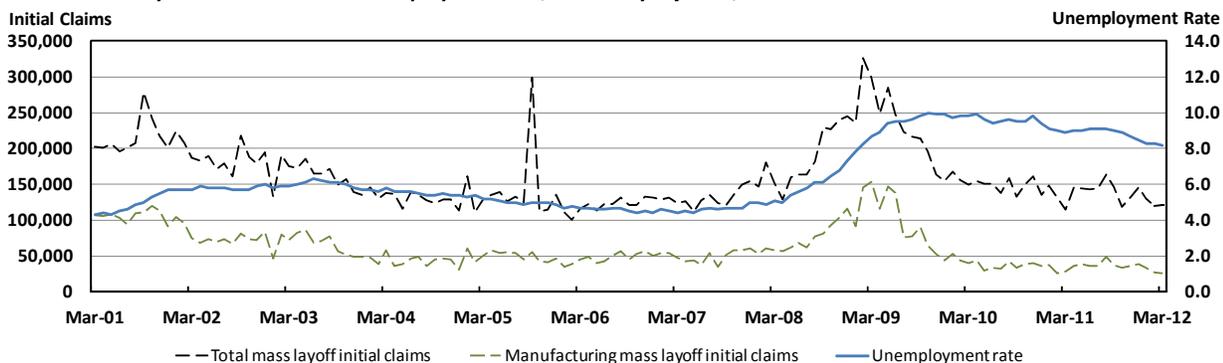
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MASS LAYOFFS — MARCH 2012

Employers took 1,273 mass layoff actions in March involving 121,310 workers, seasonally adjusted, as measured by new filings for unemployment insurance benefits during the month, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Each mass layoff involved at least 50 workers from a single employer. Mass layoff events in March decreased by 20 from February, while the number of associated initial claims increased by 1,847. In March, 261 mass layoff events were reported in the manufacturing sector, seasonally adjusted, resulting in 26,348 initial claims. Both manufacturing figures were lower when compared to February. (See table 1.)

Chart 1. Mass layoff initial claims and unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted, March 2001-March 2012



The national unemployment rate was 8.2 percent in March, little changed from the prior month but down from 8.9 percent a year earlier. Total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 120,000 over the month and by 1,899,000 over the year.

Industry Distribution (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

The number of mass layoff events in March was 1,125, not seasonally adjusted, resulting in 117,817 initial claims for unemployment insurance. (See table 2.) Over the year, the number of average weekly mass layoff events decreased by 2 to 225, while associated average weekly initial claims increased by 2,289 to 23,563. Eleven of the 19 major industry sectors in the private economy reported over-the-year

Table A. Six-digit NAICS industries with the largest number of mass layoff initial claims in March 2012, private nonfarm, not seasonally adjusted

Industry	Initial Claims	March peak	
		Year	Initial claims
Temporary help services ¹	11,732	2002	14,338
Food service contractors	9,629	2012	9,629
School and employee bus transportation	6,815	2008	8,073
Motion picture and video production	6,367	2005	7,192
Payroll services	2,563	2001	5,099
Warehouse clubs and supercenters	1,900	2012	1,900
Discount department stores	1,776	2007	3,670
Supermarkets and other grocery stores	1,713	2009	2,220
Professional employer organizations ¹	1,663	2009	4,892
Automobile manufacturing	1,627	1996	15,411

¹ See the Technical Note for more information on these industries.

increases in average weekly initial claims, with the largest increase occurring in information. (See table 3.) Over the month, the six-digit industry with the largest number of private nonfarm initial claims was in temporary help services. (See table A.)

In March, the manufacturing sector accounted for 22 percent of mass layoff events and 21 percent of associated initial claims in the private economy. Within manufacturing, the numbers of mass layoff claimants were highest in food and in transportation equipment. Twelve of the 21 manufacturing subsectors experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly initial claims, with the largest decrease occurring in wood products. (See table 3.)

Geographic Distribution (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

Among the census regions, the West registered the largest number of initial claims in March. Two of the 4 regions experienced over-the-year increases in average weekly initial claims, with the largest increase occurring in the West. (See table 4.)

Among the states, California recorded the highest number of mass layoff initial claims in March, followed by Pennsylvania, Texas, and North Carolina. Twenty-two states experienced over-the-year increases in average weekly initial claims, led by California, North Carolina, Ohio, and Arkansas. (See table 4.)

Note

The monthly data series in this release cover mass layoffs of 50 or more workers beginning in a given month, regardless of the duration of the layoffs. For private nonfarm establishments, information on the length of the layoff is obtained later and issued in a quarterly release that reports on mass layoffs lasting more than 30 days (referred to as “extended mass layoffs”). The quarterly release provides more

information on the industry classification and location of the establishment and on the demographics of the laid-off workers. The monthly data series in this release are subjected to average weekly analysis, which mitigates the effect of differing lengths of months. See the Technical Note for more detailed definitions and for a description of average weekly analysis.

The Extended Mass Layoffs news release for the First Quarter 2012 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, May 16, 2012, at 10:00 a.m. (EDT). The Mass Layoffs news release for April is scheduled to be released on Tuesday, May 22, 2012, at 10:00 a.m. (EDT).

Technical Note

The Mass Layoff Statistics (MLS) program is a federal-state program that uses a standardized automated approach to identifying, describing, and tracking the effects of major job cutbacks, using data from each state's unemployment insurance database. Each month, states report on employers which have at least 50 initial claims filed against them during a consecutive 5-week period. These employers then are contacted by the state agency to determine whether these separations lasted 31 days or longer, and, if so, other information concerning the layoff is collected. States report on layoffs lasting more than 1 month on a quarterly basis.

A given month contains an aggregation of the weekly unemployment insurance claims filings for the Sunday through Saturday weeks in that month. All weeks are included for the particular month, except if the first day of the month falls on Saturday. In this case, the week is included in the prior month's tabulations. This means that some months will contain 4 weeks and others, 5 weeks. The number of weeks in a given month may be different from year to year, and the number of weeks in a year may vary. Therefore, data users who intend to perform analysis of over-the-year change in the not seasonally adjusted series should use the average weekly mass layoff figures displayed in tables 3 and 4 of this release. The average weekly adjustment process produces a consistent series for each month across all years, permitting over-the-year analysis to be performed using strictly comparable data.

The MLS program resumed operations in April 1995 after it had been terminated in November 1992 due to lack of funding. Prior to April 1995, monthly layoff statistics were not available.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339

Definitions

Average weekly mass layoff events and initial claimants. The number of events and initial claimants in a given month divided by the number of weeks contained within that month.

Employer. Employers in the MLS program include those covered by state unemployment insurance laws. Information on employers is obtained from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, which is administered by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Industry. Employers are classified according to the 2007 version of the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). For temporary help and professional employer

organization industries, monthly MLS-related statistics generally reflect layoffs related to underlying client companies in other industries. An individual layoff action at a client company can be small, but when initial claimants associated with many such layoffs are assigned to a temporary help or professional employer organization firm, a mass layoff event may trigger.

Initial claimant. A person who files any notice of unemployment to initiate a request either for a determination of entitlement to and eligibility for compensation, or for a temporary period of unemployment within a benefit year or period of eligibility.

Mass layoff event. Fifty or more initial claims for unemployment insurance benefits filed against an employer during a 5-week period, regardless of duration.

Seasonal adjustment

Effective with the release of data for January 2005, BLS began publishing six seasonally adjusted monthly MLS series. The six series are the numbers of mass layoff events and mass layoff initial claims for the total, private nonfarm, and manufacturing sectors.

Seasonal adjustment is the process of estimating and removing the effect on time series data of regularly recurring seasonal events such as changes in the weather, holidays, and the beginning and ending of the school year. The use of seasonal adjustment makes it easier to observe fundamental changes in time series, particularly those associated with general economic expansions and contractions.

The MLS data are seasonally adjusted using the X-12-ARIMA seasonal adjustment method on a concurrent basis. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available monthly estimates, including those for the current month, in developing seasonal adjustment factors. Revisions to the most recent 5 years of seasonally adjusted data will be made once a year with the issuance of December data. Before the data are seasonally adjusted, prior adjustments are made to the original data to adjust them for differences in the number of weeks used to calculate the monthly data. Because weekly unemployment insurance claims are aggregated to form monthly data, a particular month's value could be calculated with 5 weeks of data in 1 year and 4 weeks in another. The effects of these differences could seriously distort the seasonal factors if they were ignored in the seasonal adjustment process. These effects are modeled in the X-12-ARIMA program and are permanently removed from the final seasonally adjusted series.

Table 1. Mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance, April 2008 to March 2012, seasonally adjusted

Date	Total		Private nonfarm		Manufacturing	
	Events	Initial claimants	Events	Initial claimants	Events	Initial claimants
2008						
April	1,290	128,643	1,157	117,639	453	57,044
May	1,567	160,475	1,432	150,893	470	62,776
June	1,612	163,425	1,471	152,133	491	68,862
July	1,589	163,572	1,452	153,060	465	62,210
August	1,763	181,853	1,632	172,147	578	77,464
September	2,159	229,180	1,990	215,749	629	82,011
October	2,201	226,853	2,043	213,454	698	93,252
November	2,406	239,239	2,247	225,404	907	103,836
December	2,437	244,889	2,261	230,621	935	116,181
2009						
January	2,254	235,371	2,083	221,653	726	92,293
February	3,059	326,392	2,901	310,378	1,251	145,839
March	2,999	299,322	2,800	282,414	1,230	154,168
April	2,566	249,129	2,349	232,632	1,007	116,051
May	2,710	284,468	2,516	267,869	1,181	147,184
June	2,466	247,597	2,257	230,502	1,048	137,649
July	2,186	222,941	1,979	203,911	636	75,728
August	2,340	216,047	2,115	197,172	751	77,894
September	2,261	214,018	2,048	198,761	786	91,125
October	1,969	195,752	1,772	178,172	571	65,217
November	1,757	164,454	1,588	151,172	472	52,855
December	1,719	155,056	1,543	140,835	424	44,096
2010						
January	1,707	168,044	1,529	154,187	471	53,817
February	1,631	156,292	1,465	141,831	374	43,620
March	1,676	149,816	1,469	134,518	356	40,705
April	1,637	154,558	1,452	138,503	368	44,506
May	1,608	150,996	1,357	130,273	302	29,932
June	1,695	151,435	1,475	132,742	325	33,298
July	1,519	138,091	1,316	122,162	304	32,253
August	1,588	159,329	1,399	136,697	390	43,154
September	1,510	133,576	1,295	115,349	328	34,333
October	1,654	149,589	1,446	132,146	354	38,937
November	1,592	161,145	1,410	145,494	360	39,977
December	1,477	135,849	1,271	121,171	322	36,267
2011						
January	1,536	148,952	1,348	131,869	337	37,477
February	1,434	131,569	1,242	116,745	297	26,696
March	1,275	115,391	1,118	102,722	251	28,988
April	1,548	145,836	1,383	131,317	341	37,053
May	1,600	144,412	1,404	127,793	374	39,180
June	1,513	143,384	1,334	128,410	344	36,265
July	1,562	145,078	1,348	125,285	346	36,312
August	1,551	164,275	1,347	149,874	382	49,194
September	1,447	147,353	1,306	134,038	364	38,026
October	1,335	118,924	1,205	107,330	341	33,926
November	1,332	131,627	1,192	120,760	324	36,563
December	1,384	145,648	1,238	130,583	351	39,081
2012						
January	1,434	129,920	1,298	119,102	341	33,597
February	1,293	119,463	1,153	108,577	282	27,388
March	1,273	121,310	1,125	109,421	261	26,348

Table 2. Mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance, April 2008 to March 2012, not seasonally adjusted

Date	Total		Private nonfarm		Manufacturing	
	Events	Initial claimants	Events	Initial claimants	Events	Initial claimants
2008						
April	1,272	130,810	1,172	121,625	394	48,188
May	1,552	159,471	1,438	150,462	388	51,698
June	1,622	166,742	1,315	140,916	309	42,097
July	1,891	200,382	1,687	186,018	760	108,733
August	1,427	139,999	1,343	133,146	414	51,912
September	1,292	129,586	1,202	122,505	361	46,391
October	2,125	221,784	1,917	205,553	689	100,457
November	2,574	241,589	2,389	226,657	997	107,620
December	3,377	351,305	3,232	340,220	1,378	172,529
2009						
January	3,806	388,813	3,633	375,293	1,461	172,757
February	2,262	218,438	2,173	210,755	945	103,588
March	2,191	228,387	2,107	221,397	940	114,747
April	2,547	256,930	2,385	243,321	887	100,872
May	2,738	289,628	2,572	274,047	1,005	123,683
June	2,519	256,357	2,051	216,063	674	85,726
July	3,054	336,654	2,659	296,589	1,133	154,208
August	1,428	125,024	1,334	117,193	436	41,151
September	1,371	123,177	1,258	115,141	448	51,126
October	1,934	193,904	1,678	172,883	566	69,655
November	1,870	164,496	1,679	150,751	517	55,053
December	2,310	214,648	2,166	203,655	615	64,540
2010						
January	2,860	278,679	2,682	265,074	962	104,846
February	1,183	102,818	1,091	96,022	282	30,728
March	1,197	111,727	1,111	105,514	273	29,745
April	1,840	199,690	1,697	184,654	424	55,178
May	1,354	123,333	1,170	109,203	216	19,334
June	1,861	171,190	1,355	125,872	212	21,083
July	2,124	206,254	1,732	172,248	532	64,200
August	976	92,435	897	83,021	230	23,088
September	920	77,654	806	67,987	187	19,403
October	1,642	148,638	1,373	127,865	351	40,861
November	1,676	158,048	1,477	142,591	389	41,383
December	1,931	184,130	1,763	172,881	465	52,816
2011						
January	2,558	246,463	2,372	229,765	693	75,006
February	1,024	85,585	919	78,718	222	18,471
March	908	85,095	844	80,014	191	20,869
April	1,750	189,919	1,625	176,478	397	47,104
May	1,367	119,911	1,221	108,531	270	25,199
June	1,661	159,930	1,238	122,821	226	22,986
July	2,176	216,774	1,759	174,078	602	71,814
August	961	99,213	875	93,159	228	26,916
September	1,189	117,232	1,095	107,300	296	32,058
October	1,101	96,914	950	83,748	265	28,447
November	1,393	127,750	1,245	117,474	349	37,799
December	2,433	263,665	2,258	247,916	658	75,033
2012						
January	1,705	141,703	1,587	132,754	415	38,021
February	895	73,974	820	69,076	196	16,555
March	1,125	117,817	1,040	110,954	242	24,241

Table 3. Industry distribution: Mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance, not seasonally adjusted

Industry	Mass layoff totals				Average weekly mass layoffs ¹			
	Events		Initial claimants		Events		Initial claimants	
	March 2011	March 2012	March 2011	March 2012	March 2011	March 2012	March 2011	March 2012
Total ²	908	1,125	85,095	117,817	227	225	21,274	23,563
Total, private	874	1,083	82,046	113,790	219	217	20,512	22,758
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	30	43	2,032	2,836	8	9	508	567
Total, private nonfarm	844	1,040	80,014	110,954	211	208	20,004	22,191
Mining	3	8	247	823	1	2	62	165
Utilities	4	(³)	547	(³)	1	(³)	137	(³)
Construction	99	121	7,569	9,148	25	24	1,892	1,830
Construction of buildings	22	17	1,744	1,432	6	3	436	286
Heavy and civil engineering construction	37	42	2,928	3,118	9	8	732	624
Specialty trade contractors	40	62	2,897	4,598	10	12	724	920
Manufacturing	191	242	20,869	24,241	48	48	5,217	4,848
Food	45	69	4,338	7,701	11	14	1,085	1,540
Beverage and tobacco products	4	5	242	326	1	1	61	65
Textile mills	3	6	328	786	1	1	82	157
Textile product mills	3	4	481	335	1	1	120	67
Apparel	4	9	374	651	1	2	94	130
Leather and allied products	-	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)
Wood products	24	14	2,354	1,154	6	3	589	231
Paper	7	8	622	578	2	2	156	116
Printing and related support activities	5	4	359	341	1	1	90	68
Petroleum and coal products	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)
Chemicals	(³)	4	(³)	242	(³)	1	(³)	48
Plastics and rubber products	4	9	321	614	1	2	80	123
Nonmetallic mineral products	5	11	404	844	1	2	101	169
Primary metals	8	3	536	223	2	1	134	45
Fabricated metal products	12	18	916	1,084	3	4	229	217
Machinery	11	12	1,077	845	3	2	269	169
Computer and electronic products	10	14	808	1,432	3	3	202	286
Electrical equipment and appliances	8	13	2,886	2,417	2	3	722	483
Transportation equipment	19	25	2,887	3,362	5	5	722	672
Furniture and related products	10	6	1,099	613	3	1	275	123
Miscellaneous manufacturing	5	5	530	396	1	1	133	79
Wholesale trade	18	20	1,393	1,639	5	4	348	328
Retail trade ⁴	89	100	9,012	10,375	22	20	2,253	2,075
Building material and garden supply stores	12	8	995	953	3	2	249	191
Food and beverage stores	16	20	1,194	1,826	4	4	299	365
Clothing and clothing accessories stores	10	9	600	604	3	2	150	121
General merchandise stores	24	39	4,218	5,146	6	8	1,055	1,029
Transportation and warehousing ⁴	44	72	5,133	9,013	11	14	1,283	1,803
Truck transportation	5	6	307	358	1	1	77	72
Transit and ground passenger transportation	27	47	3,482	7,045	7	9	871	1,409
Support activities for transportation	6	4	814	302	2	1	204	60
Information	36	49	3,788	9,195	9	10	947	1,839
Finance and insurance	19	30	1,354	2,168	5	6	339	434
Real estate and rental and leasing	6	6	452	359	2	1	113	72
Professional and technical services	35	42	3,771	6,331	9	8	943	1,266
Management of companies and enterprises	3	5	194	517	1	1	49	103
Administrative and waste services	151	165	11,303	16,911	38	33	2,826	3,382
Educational services	4	9	265	552	1	2	66	110
Health care and social assistance	33	33	2,038	2,752	8	7	510	550
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	13	16	893	1,110	3	3	223	222
Accommodation and food services	88	112	10,491	15,122	22	22	2,623	3,024
Accommodation	16	23	1,163	2,121	4	5	291	424
Food services and drinking places	72	89	9,328	13,001	18	18	2,332	2,600
Other services, except public administration	8	6	695	405	2	1	174	81
Unclassified	-	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)
Government	34	42	3,049	4,027	9	8	762	805
Federal	5	4	532	271	1	1	133	54
State	10	17	1,389	1,460	3	3	347	292
State government education	3	5	755	427	1	1	189	85
Local	19	21	1,128	2,296	5	4	282	459
Local government education	7	4	386	823	2	1	97	165

¹ Average weekly analysis mitigates the effect of differing lengths of months. There were 4 weeks in March 2011 and 5 weeks in March 2012. Average weekly events and initial claimants may not sum to subtotals and totals due to rounding.

² Data were reported by all states and the District of Columbia.

³ Data do not meet BLS or state agency disclosure standards.

⁴ Includes other industries not shown.

NOTE: Dash represents zero.

Table 4. Region and state distribution: Mass layoff events and initial claimants for unemployment insurance, not seasonally adjusted

Census region and state	Mass layoff totals				Average weekly mass layoffs ¹			
	Events		Initial Claimants		Events		Initial Claimants	
	March 2011	March 2012	March 2011	March 2012	March 2011	March 2012	March 2011	March 2012
Total ²	908	1,125	85,095	117,817	227	225	21,274	23,563
Northeast	169	198	15,540	18,520	42	40	3,885	3,704
Connecticut	5	(³)	410	(³)	1	(³)	103	(³)
Maine	5	5	575	415	1	1	144	83
Massachusetts	7	11	624	1,073	2	2	156	215
New Hampshire	(³)	3	(³)	339	(³)	1	(³)	68
New Jersey	19	21	1,494	2,065	5	4	374	413
New York	49	54	5,159	5,226	12	11	1,290	1,045
Pennsylvania	79	92	7,004	8,034	20	18	1,751	1,607
Rhode Island	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)
Vermont	(³)	8	(³)	1,123	(³)	2	(³)	225
South	250	289	26,112	31,925	63	58	6,528	6,385
Alabama	18	18	2,072	2,130	5	4	518	426
Arkansas	(³)	16	(³)	1,835	(³)	3	(³)	367
Delaware	-	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)
District of Columbia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Florida	56	55	4,060	4,836	14	11	1,015	967
Georgia	16	8	1,593	1,069	4	2	398	214
Kentucky	20	26	2,387	2,601	5	5	597	520
Louisiana	11	7	1,239	423	3	1	310	85
Maryland	4	3	431	182	1	1	108	36
Mississippi	14	12	1,413	1,314	4	2	353	263
North Carolina	18	60	1,917	6,060	5	12	479	1,212
Oklahoma	5	3	367	697	1	1	92	139
South Carolina	7	7	489	498	2	1	122	100
Tennessee	9	8	667	854	2	2	167	171
Texas	54	50	7,970	7,962	14	10	1,993	1,592
Virginia	13	13	1,102	1,206	3	3	276	241
West Virginia	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)
Midwest	172	219	17,168	24,470	43	44	4,292	4,894
Illinois	37	36	3,495	4,610	9	7	874	922
Indiana	12	18	1,336	1,830	3	4	334	366
Iowa	10	9	2,060	1,278	3	2	515	256
Kansas	5	11	727	1,588	1	2	182	318
Michigan	21	25	2,359	3,749	5	5	590	750
Minnesota	9	10	707	844	2	2	177	169
Missouri	21	20	1,755	1,614	5	4	439	323
Nebraska	3	(³)	279	(³)	1	(³)	70	(³)
North Dakota	-	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)
Ohio	22	48	1,891	4,638	6	10	473	928
South Dakota	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wisconsin	32	37	2,559	3,777	8	7	640	755
West	317	419	26,275	42,902	79	84	6,569	8,580
Alaska	(³)	3	(³)	178	(³)	1	(³)	36
Arizona	11	15	1,045	1,286	3	3	261	257
California	230	319	17,478	33,461	58	64	4,370	6,692
Colorado	5	9	557	1,165	1	2	139	233
Hawaii	5	(³)	659	(³)	1	(³)	165	(³)
Idaho	10	7	886	694	3	1	222	139
Montana	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)
Nevada	7	9	524	879	2	2	131	176
New Mexico	7	8	640	765	2	2	160	153
Oregon	20	20	2,337	2,153	5	4	584	431
Utah	3	5	423	385	1	1	106	77
Washington	14	19	1,099	1,546	4	4	275	309
Wyoming	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)
Puerto Rico	11	15	1,114	1,899	3	3	279	380

¹ See footnote 1, table 3.

³ Data do not meet BLS or state agency disclosure standards.

² See footnote 2, table 3.

NOTE: Dash represents zero.