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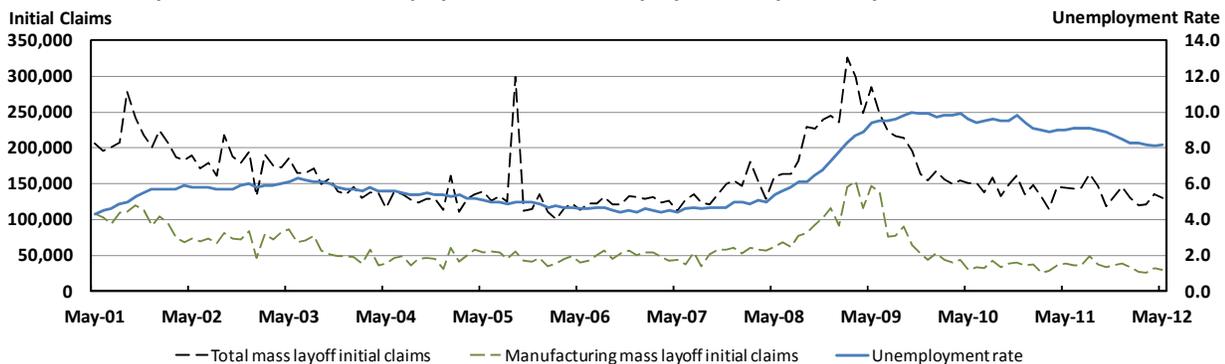
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MASS LAYOFFS — MAY 2012

Employers took 1,380 mass layoff actions in May involving 130,191 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 May decreased by 8 from April, and the number of associated initial claims decreased by 5,409. Year-to-date mass layoff events (6,768) and initial claims (636,484) both recorded their lowest figures since 2007. In May, 264 mass layoff events were reported in the manufacturing sector, seasonally adjusted, resulting in 29,675 initial claims. (See table 1.)

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



The national unemployment rate was 8.2 percent in May, essentially unchanged from the prior month but down from 9.0 percent a year earlier. Total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 69,000 over the month and by 1,782,000 over the year.

Industry Distribution (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

The number of mass layoff events in May was 1,201, not seasonally adjusted, resulting in 109,259 initial claims for unemployment insurance. (See table 2.) Over the year, the number of average weekly mass layoff events decreased by 42 to 300, while associated average weekly initial claims decreased by 2,663 to 27,315. Thirteen of the 19 major industry sectors in the private economy reported over-the-year decreases in average weekly initial claims, with the largest decrease occurring in manufacturing. (See

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

Industry	Initial Claims	May peak	
		Year	Initial claims
Food service contractors	10,326	2009	11,216
Temporary help services ¹	6,857	2002	16,992
Child day care services	5,962	2011	6,616
Motion picture and video production	4,131	1999	8,985
Department stores, except discount	2,868	2009	3,379
School and employee bus transportation	2,632	2008	6,323
Discount department stores	2,390	2002	3,981
Light truck and utility vehicle manufacturing	(²)	2009	3,570
Professional employer organizations ¹	1,517	2009	5,898
Industrial building construction	1,423	2003	3,463

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

² Data do not meet BLS or state agency disclosure standards.

table 3.) In May 2012, the six-digit industry with the largest number of private nonfarm initial claims was food service contractors. (See table A.)

In May 2012, the manufacturing sector accounted for 17 percent of mass layoff events and 19 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. Sixteen of the 21 manufacturing subsectors experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly initial claims, with the largest decrease occurring in food manufacturing. (See table 3.)

Geographic Distribution (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

Among the census regions, the South registered the largest number of initial claims in May. Two of the 4 regions experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly initial claims, with the largest decrease occurring in the South. (See table 4.)

Among the states, California recorded the highest number of mass layoff initial claims in May, followed by Pennsylvania, Illinois, New York, and Texas. Thirty-four states and the District of Columbia experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly initial claims, led by Alabama, Mississippi, Ohio, and Florida. (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 Mass Layoffs news release for June is scheduled to be released on Friday, July 20, 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, June 2008 to May 2012, seasonally adjusted

Date	Total		Private nonfarm		Manufacturing	
	Events	Initial claimants	Events	Initial claimants	Events	Initial claimants
2008						
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
April	1,388	135,600	1,222	120,213	287	33,243
May	1,380	130,191	1,222	117,654	264	29,675

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

Date	Total		Private nonfarm		Manufacturing	
	Events	Initial claimants	Events	Initial claimants	Events	Initial claimants
2008						
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
April	1,421	146,358	1,293	132,697	256	32,518
May	1,201	109,259	1,081	100,434	186	18,800

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	
	May 2011	May 2012	May 2011	May 2012	May 2011	May 2012	May 2011	May 2012
Total ²	1,367	1,201	119,911	109,259	342	300	29,978	27,315
Total, private	1,243	1,099	109,881	101,354	311	275	27,470	25,339
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	22	18	1,350	920	6	5	338	230
Total, private nonfarm	1,221	1,081	108,531	100,434	305	270	27,133	25,109
Mining	5	5	308	262	1	1	77	66
Utilities	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)
Construction	137	129	9,875	9,617	34	32	2,469	2,404
Construction of buildings	26	26	1,932	2,250	7	7	483	563
Heavy and civil engineering construction	45	40	3,536	3,198	11	10	884	800
Specialty trade contractors	66	63	4,407	4,169	17	16	1,102	1,042
Manufacturing	270	186	25,199	18,800	68	47	6,300	4,700
Food	64	48	6,036	4,487	16	12	1,509	1,122
Beverage and tobacco products	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)
Textile mills	12	7	1,045	685	3	2	261	171
Textile product mills	(³)	4	(³)	266	(³)	1	(³)	67
Apparel	10	10	1,174	711	3	3	294	178
Leather and allied products	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)	-
Wood products	10	4	755	262	3	1	189	66
Paper	9	6	934	628	2	2	234	157
Printing and related support activities	14	16	1,182	1,373	4	4	296	343
Petroleum and coal products	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)	-
Chemicals	8	5	503	546	2	1	126	137
Plastics and rubber products	14	5	1,082	300	4	1	271	75
Nonmetallic mineral products	6	5	635	488	2	1	159	122
Primary metals	11	9	1,053	641	3	2	263	160
Fabricated metal products	11	6	848	384	3	2	212	96
Machinery	12	12	2,054	1,175	3	3	514	294
Computer and electronic products	12	12	731	913	3	3	183	228
Electrical equipment and appliances	7	4	1,049	723	2	1	262	181
Transportation equipment	45	19	4,146	3,836	11	5	1,037	959
Furniture and related products	12	9	888	1,049	3	2	222	262
Miscellaneous manufacturing	5	(³)	456	(³)	1	(³)	114	(³)
Wholesale trade	21	16	1,777	976	5	4	444	244
Retail trade ⁴	108	117	8,244	11,529	27	29	2,061	2,882
Building material and garden supply stores	7	8	516	767	2	2	129	192
Food and beverage stores	18	18	1,391	1,302	5	5	348	326
Clothing and clothing accessories stores	11	14	761	773	3	4	190	193
General merchandise stores	34	49	3,079	6,414	9	12	770	1,604
Transportation and warehousing ⁴	38	38	3,371	4,628	10	10	843	1,157
Truck transportation	8	7	611	362	2	2	153	91
Transit and ground passenger transportation	12	13	1,186	2,844	3	3	297	711
Support activities for transportation	4	3	191	161	1	1	48	40
Information	36	39	5,394	5,349	9	10	1,349	1,337
Finance and insurance	24	31	1,616	2,478	6	8	404	620
Real estate and rental and leasing	7	4	457	428	2	1	114	107
Professional and technical services	50	56	4,062	3,780	13	14	1,016	945
Management of companies and enterprises	(³)	4	(³)	516	(³)	1	(³)	129
Administrative and waste services	203	169	15,938	12,483	51	42	3,985	3,121
Educational services	15	11	1,201	843	4	3	300	211
Health care and social assistance	102	95	11,059	9,725	26	24	2,765	2,431
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	24	26	1,835	1,920	6	7	459	480
Accommodation and food services	148	120	15,483	14,142	37	30	3,871	3,536
Accommodation	33	13	2,660	970	8	3	665	243
Food services and drinking places	115	107	12,823	13,172	29	27	3,206	3,293
Other services, except public administration	28	29	2,361	2,595	7	7	590	649
Unclassified	-	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)	-	(³)
Government	124	102	10,030	7,905	31	26	2,508	1,976
Federal	12	7	1,160	519	3	2	290	130
State	32	24	2,136	1,856	8	6	534	464
State government education	22	15	1,404	1,008	6	4	351	252
Local	80	71	6,734	5,530	20	18	1,684	1,383
Local government education	43	37	3,068	2,359	11	9	767	590

¹ Average weekly analysis mitigates the effect of differing lengths of months. There were 4 weeks in May 2011 and 4 weeks in May 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	
	May 2011	May 2012	May 2011	May 2012	May 2011	May 2012	May 2011	May 2012
Total ²	1,367	1,201	119,911	109,259	342	300	29,978	27,315
Northeast	210	197	17,726	18,817	53	49	4,432	4,704
Connecticut	11	11	769	864	3	3	192	216
Maine	4	(³)	318	(³)	1	(³)	80	(³)
Massachusetts	10	9	1,068	1,142	3	2	267	286
New Hampshire	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)
New Jersey	34	22	2,937	1,967	9	6	734	492
New York	56	65	4,743	6,199	14	16	1,186	1,550
Pennsylvania	90	79	7,541	7,483	23	20	1,885	1,871
Rhode Island	(³)	4	(³)	439	(³)	1	(³)	110
Vermont	(³)	3	(³)	334	(³)	1	(³)	84
South	468	358	43,457	33,270	117	90	10,864	8,318
Alabama	37	13	3,604	1,019	9	3	901	255
Arkansas	15	9	1,647	1,031	4	2	412	258
Delaware	5	(³)	334	(³)	1	(³)	84	(³)
District of Columbia	5	3	276	187	1	1	69	47
Florida	102	75	6,363	4,621	26	19	1,591	1,155
Georgia	40	28	4,038	2,906	10	7	1,010	727
Kentucky	33	20	3,431	1,886	8	5	858	472
Louisiana	29	21	2,531	1,884	7	5	633	471
Maryland	5	9	462	706	1	2	116	177
Mississippi	40	28	5,957	3,961	10	7	1,489	990
North Carolina	40	46	3,928	4,247	10	12	982	1,062
Oklahoma	9	5	902	361	2	1	226	90
South Carolina	11	4	949	327	3	1	237	82
Tennessee	21	20	1,838	1,762	5	5	460	441
Texas	50	53	4,762	5,130	13	13	1,191	1,283
Virginia	21	21	2,050	3,038	5	5	513	760
West Virginia	5	(³)	385	(³)	1	(³)	96	(³)
Midwest	288	249	26,017	26,349	72	62	6,504	6,587
Illinois	47	64	4,749	7,361	12	16	1,187	1,840
Indiana	28	23	2,189	2,078	7	6	547	520
Iowa	6	12	1,069	1,208	2	3	267	302
Kansas	12	11	1,365	1,092	3	3	341	273
Michigan	38	22	3,368	1,922	10	6	842	481
Minnesota	10	(³)	932	(³)	3	(³)	233	(³)
Missouri	32	28	2,620	4,491	8	7	655	1,123
Nebraska	8	9	860	924	2	2	215	231
North Dakota	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)
Ohio	63	37	5,170	3,401	16	9	1,293	850
South Dakota	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)
Wisconsin	41	35	3,472	3,298	10	9	868	825
West	401	397	32,711	30,823	100	99	8,178	7,706
Alaska	6	7	489	619	2	2	122	155
Arizona	15	14	1,394	1,245	4	4	349	311
California	285	307	22,874	22,995	71	77	5,719	5,749
Colorado	10	10	1,171	902	3	3	293	226
Hawaii	5	(³)	351	(³)	1	(³)	88	(³)
Idaho	6	3	370	201	2	1	93	50
Montana	(³)	3	(³)	223	(³)	1	(³)	56
Nevada	13	11	1,133	859	3	3	283	215
New Mexico	10	11	783	999	3	3	196	250
Oregon	21	15	1,586	1,416	5	4	397	354
Utah	8	5	554	366	2	1	139	92
Washington	16	8	1,463	736	4	2	366	184
Wyoming	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)	(³)
Puerto Rico	24	5	2,815	504	6	1	704	126

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.