

4.2 Workforce Growth and Employment

The Importance

The size of the region’s workforce is a measure of a region’s potential productivity while employment rates are a measure of how close a region is to that potential. Employment data over time reveal the health of a region’s economic base. Consistently low unemployment rates indicate a stable economic base and a steady flow of capital into a region.

About this indicator

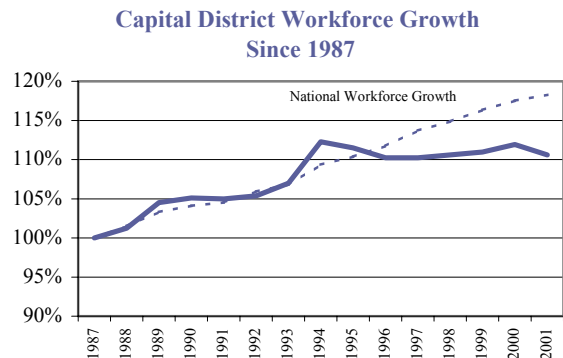
This indicator uses New York State Department of Labor monthly and annual employment and unemployment data to examine workforce trends. It uses 2000 Census data to explore the workforce as compared to the overall population. The indicator also uses 2001 United States Department of Labor annual unemployment data to compare the Albany MSA unemployment with the peer MSA unemployment.

Sources for this Indicator

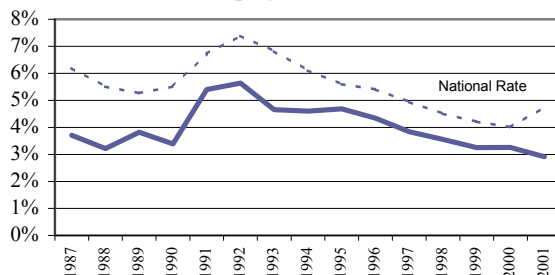
- United States Department of Labor annual unemployment data.
- New York State Department of Labor monthly unemployment data.
- The 2000 United States Census data for employed civilian population 16 years and older.

Employment in the Capital District

The Capital District’s workforce (the total number of reported employed and unemployed persons) has remained nearly unchanged since 1994. This has been a change from an earlier trend when the workforce grew by 12% between 1987 and 1994.



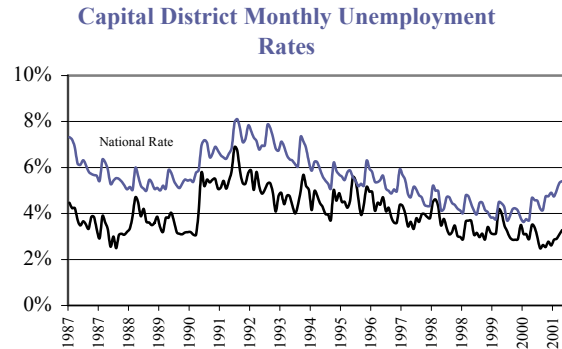
Capital District Annual Average Unemployment Rates



Average annual unemployment in the Region has been well below the National rate for the past 15 years. It hit its peak in 1992 at 5.6% and has dropped consistently since, approaching full employment by hitting 2.9% in 2001.

4.2 ECONOMICS

With the exception of 2001 and 2002, unemployment rates in the Region have followed the National trends. Since 2000, the National unemployment rate has risen above 5%. At the same time, the Capital District's unemployment rate has hit a historic low. However, that trend may change with the New York State budget looking at significant shortfalls in 2003.



A little less than half of the Capital District's population is employed. Fifty percent of the Capital District's males and 47% of its women are employed. Nationally, 49% of men and 43% of women are employed. This indicates, as would be expected, that the Capital District has fewer than its share of retirees, and that women in the Capital District are more likely to be employed than the National average.

Regional Comparison

The 2001 unemployment data shows that the Albany MSA has the lowest unemployment rate of the peer regions. The other capital regions also fared well as compared to the National rate and the rates for the other Upstate regions. All the capital regions had unemployment rates of between 3% and 4% while the Nation's rate was 4.8%. Rochester and Syracuse were above 4% while Buffalo was well above 5%.

