



*Monthly Employment Watch:
Milwaukee and the Nation's Largest Cities*

A monthly report on employment trends in the nation's largest cities

Prepared by:

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January 2011

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About This Report

Each month, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Center for Economic Development, drawing on data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Local Area Unemployment Statistics*, monitors employment trends in Milwaukee and the nation's 50 largest cities. In addition, the Center also compares employment trends in Milwaukee to a smaller and more directly comparable group of "peer" cities, the 20 largest cities of the Northeast-Midwest "Frostbelt" region. The data compiled by the Center display year-over-year total employment for three different time periods: a) the most recent year (2009-2010), b) October 2008 – October 2010, thereby encompassing a large portion of the current recession, and c) since 2000, the peak of the last business cycle. Year-over-year comparisons are used because the BLS local area data are not seasonally adjusted; thus, for example, month-by-month comparisons would be distorted by seasonal fluctuations. By looking at monthly "over-the-year" employment trends in three different time periods, and two different samples of cities, we hope to provide a fuller sense of how Milwaukee's employment growth stacks up against other big cities over time, and how Milwaukee's position has changed over time.

Change in Format of Monthly Employment Watch

In the past, UWM Center for Economic Development has reported each month the latest ***preliminary*** data released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Local Area Unemployment Statistics*. However, the preliminary data are corrected and revised by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in subsequent months, and these changes often significantly affect the rankings of cities in our tables. Consequently, we will now use the ***revised*** data from the *Local Area Unemployment Statistics* in *The Monthly Employment Watch*. In practice, this will result in an additional one-month lag in the reported employment data; for example in this January 2011 report, instead of using the newly available November 2010 preliminary employment data, we will use the revised and corrected October 2010 BLS numbers (the most recent revised data). Although we may sacrifice a month of "timeliness" in the data, we believe that using the revised numbers will make *The Monthly Employment Watch* a more reliable, a less potentially misleading, presentation of the relative employment performance of cities.

The Monthly Employment Watch: October

The City of Milwaukee labor market continues its slow improvement from the trough of the Great Recession, according to the latest monthly employment data for cities released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. “Year-over-year” employment declined in Milwaukee between October 2009 and 2010 by only 627, the second best monthly employment performance in the city since the Great Recession began in December 2007. This modest monthly employment loss is in stark contrast to a year ago, in October 2009, when the city registered an “over-the-year” employment loss of 14,293 – the trough of the recession in the city. As Figure 1 and Table 1 show, the annual employment losses posted in Milwaukee since October 2009 have steadily diminished. Indeed, preliminary data for November 2010 –not reported here since it is still preliminary and unrevised—suggest that Milwaukee may now be registering small, “over-the-year” employment increases.

The road back, however, will be long and arduous. Since the beginning of the Great Recession, employment in Milwaukee has dropped over 16,400; since the beginning of the decade, city employment is down over 23,600.

Milwaukee’s comparative October 2010 “over-the-year” employment performance, compared to the nation’s 50 largest cities, also suggests some improvement in the local labor market. Although Milwaukee has consistently ranked in mid-40s among the nation’s 50 largest cities in employment “growth” throughout the past decade (occasionally ranking as low as 49th), Table 1 shows that between October 2009 and October 2010, Milwaukee ranked 36th among the nation’s 50 largest cities (and 14th among the nation’s 20 largest Northeast-Midwest cities, as shown on Table 5). Although these are not stellar rankings by any means, they do reveal some improvement over the city’s recent historical performance. For the entire decade, Milwaukee now ranks 40th; again, hardly outstanding, but a slight improvement from recent trends.

In October 2010, Milwaukee’s 10.4 percent official unemployment rate placed the city 34th among the nation’s 50 largest cities.

Figure 1
Milwaukee:
Monthly Over-the-Year Employment Change

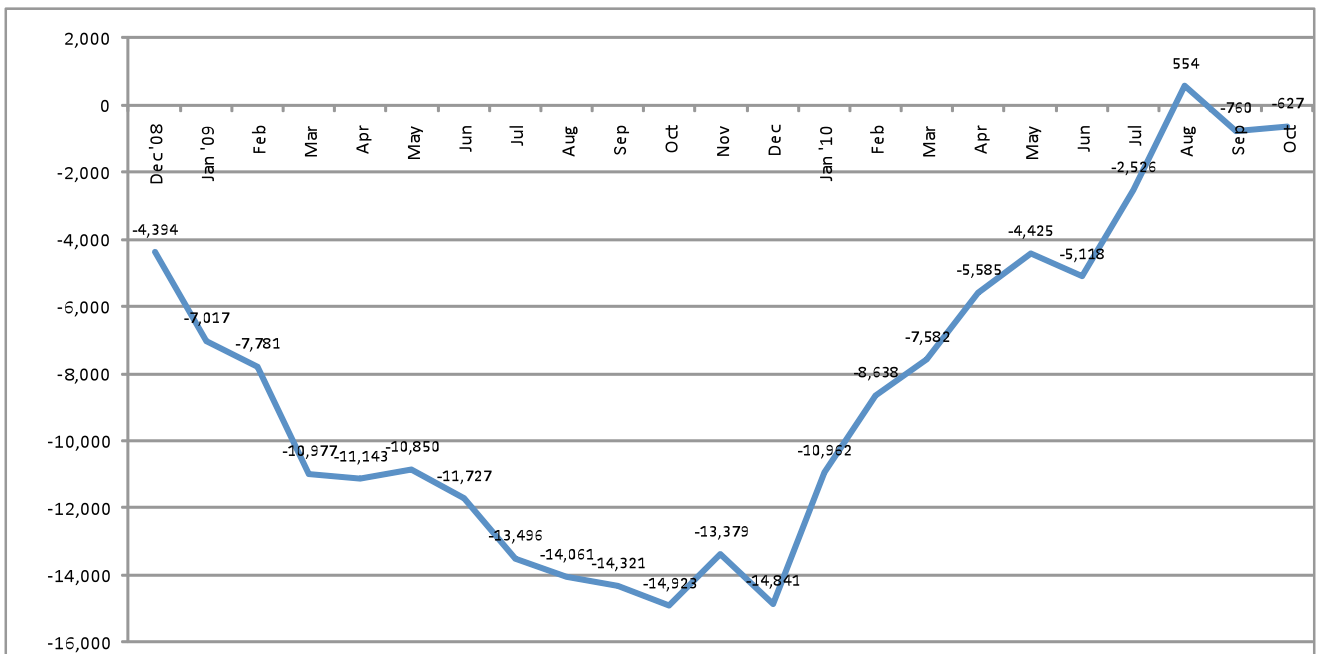


Table 1:
Monthly “Year-over-Year” Employment Change in the City of Milwaukee*

Month	Employment Change	% Change
January (2007-2008)	-390	-0.2
February	-1,197	-0.5
March	-215	-0.1
April	974	0.4
May	-225	-0.1
June	-861	-0.3
July	-456	-0.2
August	-419	-0.2
September	-991	-0.4
October	-915	-0.4
November	-3,430	-1.3
December	-4,394	-1.7
January (2008-2009)	-7,017	-2.7
February	-7,781	-3.0
March	-10,977	-4.3
April	-11,143	-4.3
May	-10,850	-4.2
June	-11,727	-4.5
July	-13,496	-5.2
August	-14,061	-5.4
September	-14,321	-5.5
October	-14,923	-5.7
November	-13,379	-5.2
December	-14,841	-5.8
January (2009-2010)	-10,962	-4.4
February	-8,638	-3.5
March	-7,582	-3.1
April	-5,585	-2.3
May	-4,425	-1.8
June	-5,118	-2.1
July	-2,526	-1.0
August	554	0.2
September	-760	-0.3
October	-627	-0.3

* These figures vary from earlier *Monthly Employment Watch* tables, which reported preliminary BLS monthly employment estimates. The data in Table 1 reflect revisions and re-estimates by BLS and are considered more accurate.

**Table 2 -- Employment Growth in the Nation's 50 Largest Cities:
2009-2010**

Rank	City	October 2009	October 2010	% Change
1	Nashville	291,751	301,993	3.51%
2	Detroit	280,883	289,536	3.08%
3	Portland	273,652	281,082	2.72%
4	Memphis	271,455	278,404	2.56%
5	Austin	395,443	405,015	2.42%
6	Boston	285,643	292,384	2.36%
7	Chicago	1,160,986	1,187,257	2.26%
8	Washington, D.C.	293,569	299,961	2.18%
9	Charlotte	309,682	316,153	2.09%
10	Mesa City	235,192	239,572	1.86%
11	Phoenix	774,039	788,452	1.86%
12	Virginia Beach	209,903	213,322	1.63%
13	San Jose	401,167	407,481	1.57%
14	Dallas	547,657	556,058	1.53%
15	Miami	168,286	170,858	1.53%
16	San Diego	618,912	628,126	1.49%
17	Cleveland	160,918	163,311	1.49%
18	New York	3,567,790	3,617,125	1.38%
19	Fort Worth	304,210	308,122	1.29%
20	San Antonio	595,181	601,605	1.08%
21	Fresno	196,890	198,434	0.78%
22	St. Louis	137,800	138,650	0.62%
23	Louisville	324,263	325,904	0.51%
24	Houston	997,055	1,001,646	0.46%
25	Tucson	260,068	261,108	0.40%
26	Baltimore	248,389	249,351	0.39%
27	Minneapolis	203,090	203,334	0.12%
28	Columbus	387,118	387,558	0.11%
29	Denver	290,962	291,284	0.11%
30	El Paso	241,639	241,797	0.07%
31	Long Beach	204,636	204,688	0.03%
32	Los Angeles	1,651,698	1,652,113	0.03%
33	Honolulu	415,708	415,675	-0.01%
34	San Francisco	412,215	412,024	-0.05%
35	Seattle	345,646	345,017	-0.18%
36	Milwaukee	244,957	244,330	-0.26%
37	Atlanta	208,978	208,244	-0.35%
38	Jacksonville	372,802	371,459	-0.36%
39	Oakland	169,278	168,497	-0.46%
40	Indianapolis	373,896	371,688	-0.59%
41	Sacramento	186,616	184,855	-0.94%
42	Philadelphia	561,692	556,296	-0.96%
43	Albuquerque	245,204	242,828	-0.97%
44	Colorado Springs	194,723	192,768	-1.00%
45	Kansas City	201,124	198,915	-1.10%
46	Oklahoma City	243,138	239,675	-1.42%
47	Omaha	224,127	219,539	-2.05%
48	Wichita	176,601	172,780	-2.16%
49	Tulsa	177,862	173,024	-2.72%
50	Las Vegas	248,315	236,937	-4.58%

**Table 3 - Employment Growth in the Nation's 50 Largest Cities:
2008-2010**

Rank	City	October 2008	October 2010	% Change
1	Austin	394,985	405,015	2.54%
2	San Antonio	594,242	601,605	1.24%
3	Dallas	553,325	556,058	0.49%
4	Fort Worth	307,611	308,122	0.17%
5	El Paso	242,035	241,797	-0.10%
6	Houston	1,005,502	1,001,646	-0.38%
7	Miami	172,749	170,858	-1.09%
8	Tucson	265,034	261,108	-1.48%
9	Virginia Beach	216,568	213,322	-1.50%
10	Boston	296,868	292,384	-1.51%
11	Nashville	307,419	301,993	-1.77%
12	Phoenix	805,091	788,452	-2.07%
13	Mesa City	244,628	239,572	-2.07%
14	Louisville	333,079	325,904	-2.15%
15	Seattle	352,936	345,017	-2.24%
16	New York	3,709,597	3,617,125	-2.49%
17	Minneapolis	208,537	203,334	-2.50%
18	Portland	288,339	281,082	-2.52%
19	Chicago	1,219,460	1,187,257	-2.64%
20	Washington, D.C.	308,962	299,961	-2.91%
21	Memphis	287,487	278,404	-3.16%
22	Honolulu	429,281	415,675	-3.17%
23	Oklahoma City	248,195	239,675	-3.43%
24	Fresno	205,674	198,434	-3.52%
25	Columbus	401,785	387,558	-3.54%
26	Cleveland	169,504	163,311	-3.65%
27	San Diego	652,557	628,126	-3.74%
28	St. Louis	144,323	138,650	-3.93%
29	Detroit	302,686	289,536	-4.34%
30	Baltimore	261,101	249,351	-4.50%
31	Omaha	230,404	219,539	-4.72%
32	San Jose	428,278	407,481	-4.86%
33	Denver	307,820	291,284	-5.37%
34	Colorado Springs	203,889	192,768	-5.45%
35	Philadelphia	589,022	556,296	-5.56%
36	Tulsa	183,259	173,024	-5.58%
37	Sacramento	195,896	184,855	-5.64%
38	Albuquerque	257,482	242,828	-5.69%
39	Milwaukee	259,880	244,330	-5.98%
40	San Francisco	438,345	412,024	-6.00%
41	Long Beach	217,793	204,688	-6.02%
42	Los Angeles	1,757,895	1,652,113	-6.02%
43	Jacksonville	395,578	371,459	-6.10%
44	Oakland	179,812	168,497	-6.29%
45	Wichita	184,582	172,780	-6.39%
46	Atlanta	223,145	208,244	-6.68%
47	Charlotte	339,284	316,153	-6.82%
48	Indianapolis	402,375	371,688	-7.63%
49	Kansas City	217,957	198,915	-8.74%
50	Las Vegas	261,564	236,937	-9.42%

**Table 4 - Employment Growth in the Nation's 50 Largest Cities:
2000 – 2010**

Rank	City	October 2000	October 2010	% Change
1	Fort Worth	256,116	308,122	20.31%
2	Mesa City	202,108	239,572	18.54%
3	Phoenix	665,155	788,452	18.54%
4	San Antonio	519,155	601,605	15.88%
5	Miami	148,577	170,858	15.00%
6	Tucson	227,438	261,108	14.80%
7	El Paso	221,088	241,797	9.37%
8	Houston	919,669	1,001,646	8.91%
9	Seattle	319,876	345,017	7.86%
10	Fresno	184,174	198,434	7.74%
11	Atlanta	194,872	208,244	6.86%
12	Virginia Beach	200,030	213,322	6.65%
13	San Diego	594,913	628,126	5.58%
14	Charlotte	299,639	316,153	5.51%
15	Albuquerque	231,604	242,828	4.85%
16	New York	3,455,188	3,617,125	4.69%
17	Omaha	210,181	219,539	4.45%
18	Austin	394,073	405,015	2.78%
19	Colorado Springs	187,977	192,768	2.55%
20	Washington, D.C.	292,781	299,961	2.45%
21	Sacramento	182,227	184,855	1.44%
22	Las Vegas	235,551	236,937	0.59%
23	Honolulu	414,441	415,675	0.30%
24	Wichita	172,552	172,780	0.13%
25	Columbus	388,733	387,558	-0.30%
26	Jacksonville	373,187	371,459	-0.46%
27	Nashville	304,019	301,993	-0.67%
28	Boston	295,776	292,384	-1.15%
29	Denver	298,605	291,284	-2.45%
30	Oklahoma City	246,253	239,675	-2.67%
31	Portland	292,510	281,082	-3.91%
32	Long Beach	213,832	204,688	-4.28%
33	Los Angeles	1,725,919	1,652,113	-4.28%
34	Memphis	293,839	278,404	-5.25%
35	Louisville	345,773	325,904	-5.75%
36	Baltimore	265,559	249,351	-6.10%
37	Dallas	597,479	556,058	-6.93%
38	Minneapolis	219,260	203,334	-7.26%
39	Philadelphia	600,761	556,296	-7.40%
40	Milwaukee	267,992	244,330	-8.83%
41	Chicago	1,303,436	1,187,257	-8.91%
42	Indianapolis	410,716	371,688	-9.50%
43	St. Louis	153,324	138,650	-9.57%
44	San Francisco	460,731	412,024	-10.57%
45	Oakland	188,508	168,497	-10.62%
46	Kansas City	225,280	198,915	-11.70%
47	Cleveland	188,435	163,311	-13.33%
48	Tulsa	200,124	173,024	-13.54%
49	San Jose	481,021	407,481	-15.29%
50	Detroit	354,156	289,536	-18.25%

**Table 5 - Employment Growth in the 20 Largest Frostbelt Cities
2009-2010**

Rank	City	October 2009	October 2010	% Change
1	Detroit	280,883	289,536	3.08%
2	Boston	285,643	292,384	2.36%
3	Chicago	1,160,986	1,187,257	2.26%
4	Washington, D.C.	293,569	299,961	2.18%
5	Cleveland	160,918	163,311	1.49%
6	New York	3,567,790	3,617,125	1.38%
7	Cincinnati	146,660	148,577	1.31%
8	Buffalo	110,473	111,270	0.72%
9	St. Louis	137,800	138,650	0.62%
10	Baltimore	248,389	249,351	0.39%
11	Minneapolis	203,090	203,334	0.12%
12	St. Paul (MN)	134,888	135,049	0.12%
13	Columbus	387,118	387,558	0.11%
14	Milwaukee	244,957	244,330	-0.26%
15	Pittsburgh	141,955	141,590	-0.26%
16	Indianapolis	373,896	371,688	-0.59%
17	Philadelphia	561,692	556,296	-0.96%
18	Kansas City	201,124	198,915	-1.10%
19	Omaha	224,127	219,539	-2.05%
20	Wichita	176,601	172,780	-2.16%

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**Table 6 - Employment Growth in the 20 Largest Frostbelt Cities
2008-2010**

Rank	City	October 2008	October 2010	% Change
1	Boston	296,868	292,384	-1.51%
2	New York	3,709,597	3,617,125	-2.49%
3	Minneapolis	208,537	203,334	-2.50%
4	St. Paul (MN)	138,505	135,049	-2.50%
5	Chicago	1,219,460	1,187,257	-2.64%
6	Washington, D.C.	308,962	299,961	-2.91%
7	Buffalo	115,257	111,270	-3.46%
8	Columbus	401,785	387,558	-3.54%
9	Cincinnati	154,088	148,577	-3.58%
10	Cleveland	169,504	163,311	-3.65%
11	St. Louis	144,323	138,650	-3.93%
12	Pittsburgh	147,520	141,590	-4.02%
13	Detroit	302,686	289,536	-4.34%
14	Baltimore	261,101	249,351	-4.50%
15	Omaha	230,404	219,539	-4.72%
16	Philadelphia	589,022	556,296	-5.56%
17	Milwaukee	259,880	244,330	-5.98%
18	Wichita	184,582	172,780	-6.39%
19	Indianapolis	402,375	371,688	-7.63%
20	Kansas City	217,957	198,915	-8.74%

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**Table 7 - Employment Growth in the 20 Largest Frostbelt Cities
2000 - 2010**

Rank	City	October 2000	October 2010	% Change
1	New York	3,455,188	3,617,125	4.69%
2	Omaha	210,181	219,539	4.45%
3	Washington, D.C.	292,781	299,961	2.45%
4	Wichita	172,552	172,780	0.13%
5	Columbus	388,733	387,558	-0.30%
6	Boston	295,776	292,384	-1.15%
7	Cincinnati	152,477	148,577	-2.56%
8	Pittsburgh	149,638	141,590	-5.38%
9	Baltimore	265,559	249,351	-6.10%
10	Buffalo	118,855	111,270	-6.38%
11	Minneapolis	219,260	203,334	-7.26%
12	Philadelphia	600,761	556,296	-7.40%
13	Milwaukee	267,992	244,330	-8.83%
14	Chicago	1,303,436	1,187,257	-8.91%
15	Indianapolis	410,716	371,688	-9.50%
16	St. Paul (MN)	149,255	135,049	-9.52%
17	St. Louis	153,324	138,650	-9.57%
18	Kansas City	225,280	198,915	-11.70%
19	Cleveland	188,435	163,311	-13.33%
20	Detroit	354,156	289,536	-18.25%

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Table 9 -- Unemployment Rates in the Nation's 50 Largest Cities

Rank	City	October 2000	October 2008	October 2009	October 2010
1	Omaha	3.0	3.4	4.5	4.6
2	Honolulu	3.7	4.0	5.8	5.5
3	Virginia Beach	1.9	3.8	6.0	6.1
4	Oklahoma City	2.7	3.9	6.3	6.4
5	Austin	2.9	4.4	6.6	6.4
6	Minneapolis	2.9	5.2	7.3	6.7
7	San Antonio	4.0	4.9	6.7	6.9
8	Tulsa	2.8	3.8	7.2	7.3
9	Mesa City	3.0	5.6	8.0	7.6
10	Boston	2.6	5.5	8.5	7.6
11	Seattle	4.3	4.8	7.9	7.7
12	Houston	4.5	5.1	7.8	8.0
13	Fort Worth	4.3	5.4	8.2	8.1
14	Albuquerque	3.8	4.7	7.3	8.2
15	Dallas	4.3	5.9	8.6	8.4
16	Columbus	3.1	5.9	8.8	8.5
17	Colorado Springs	2.5	5.7	7.5	8.6
18	Charlotte	3.2	6.1	9.9	8.6
19	Nashville	3.3	5.8	9.2	8.7
20	Wichita	4.6	4.8	9.0	8.8
21	Denver	2.7	5.7	7.9	8.9
22	Tucson	4.1	7.1	9.5	9.1
23	New York	5.6	6.0	10.4	9.1
24	El Paso	5.9	6.1	8.5	9.1
25	San Francisco	3.3	5.7	9.6	9.4
26	Portland	4.8	6.6	10.2	9.4
27	Washington, D.C.	5.3	7.2	11.7	9.6
28	Indianapolis	2.1	5.9	9.0	9.6
29	Phoenix	3.9	7.2	10.2	9.7
30	Louisville	3.4	6.9	10.4	9.7
31	Chicago	4.8	7.2	11.6	10.2
32	San Diego	3.7	6.7	10.6	10.3
33	Baltimore	5.7	7.5	10.5	10.3
34	Milwaukee	4.5	6.6	10.8	10.4
35	Atlanta	4.6	7.8	11.0	10.5
36	Kansas City	4.1	8.2	10.1	10.5
37	Memphis	4.8	8.1	11.5	10.6
38	Cleveland	6.1	8.7	10.7	11.0
39	Jacksonville	3.3	6.7	11.2	11.2
40	Philadelphia	5.6	7.5	10.9	11.6
41	San Jose	3.1	7.4	13.0	11.8
42	St. Louis	5.4	8.2	12.3	12.0
43	Long Beach	5.6	9.3	13.4	13.7
44	Los Angeles	5.7	9.3	13.4	13.7
45	Miami	6.8	8.3	12.6	14.1
46	Sacramento	4.9	9.4	14.3	14.5
47	Las Vegas	5.0	8.1	13.5	14.5
48	Fresno	8.7	10.3	14.4	14.7
49	Oakland	5.3	10.6	17.1	16.6
50	Detroit	6.7	17.4	25.9	22.5

