

Graduating in May? Check out the job market

KC unemployment rate stable at 5.7%

[Fadhel Kaboub](#)

Apr . 12 . 2004

If you are planning on graduating in May, you are probably still busy writing your term papers and preparing for finals, but did you start planning for your first job after graduation day? Not that lousy part time job you had last summer, but a real full time job with benefits and plenty of opportunities to use all the skills you have worked hard to cultivate while in college. Of course, your resume is important and so are your degrees, motivation, and prior work experiences. But what's more important is usually the state of the economy. Perhaps not necessarily the national economy, but certainly the local economy in the city where you plan to settle down for your first job.

Many graduates from KC area colleges stay in town for their first real job. After all Kansas City is nice place to live, not too expensive, and a suitable place to make a good living while paying off your student loans and credit card debt. That's why a look at the local employment situation is not such a bad idea.

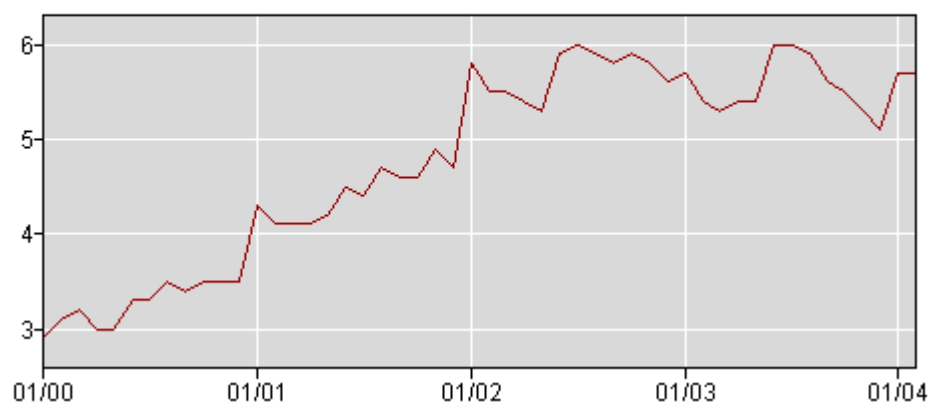
On Friday April 9, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released a report on the employment situation for the month of February 2004 for 331 metropolitan areas in the United States. Kansas City, MO-KS MSA ranked 186th in the BLS survey with a 5.7 percent unemployment rate (unchanged since January) compared with a 5.1 percent in Dec. 2003, and a 6.1 percent in Feb 2003 (not seasonally adjusted).

The BLS estimated the size of the Kansas City, MO-KS MSA labor force at 1,017,700, with 58,300 of them unemployed. "In February, 266 metropolitan areas recorded lower unemployment rates than a year earlier, 48 areas had higher rates, and 17 areas had rates that were unchanged," said the BLS report.

The employment situation is certainly much better than what it was a year ago, both nationally and locally in the KC metro area, but we still have a long way to go before we go back to the 3 and 4 percent unemployment rates of the late 1990s.

Kansas City, MO-KS MSA

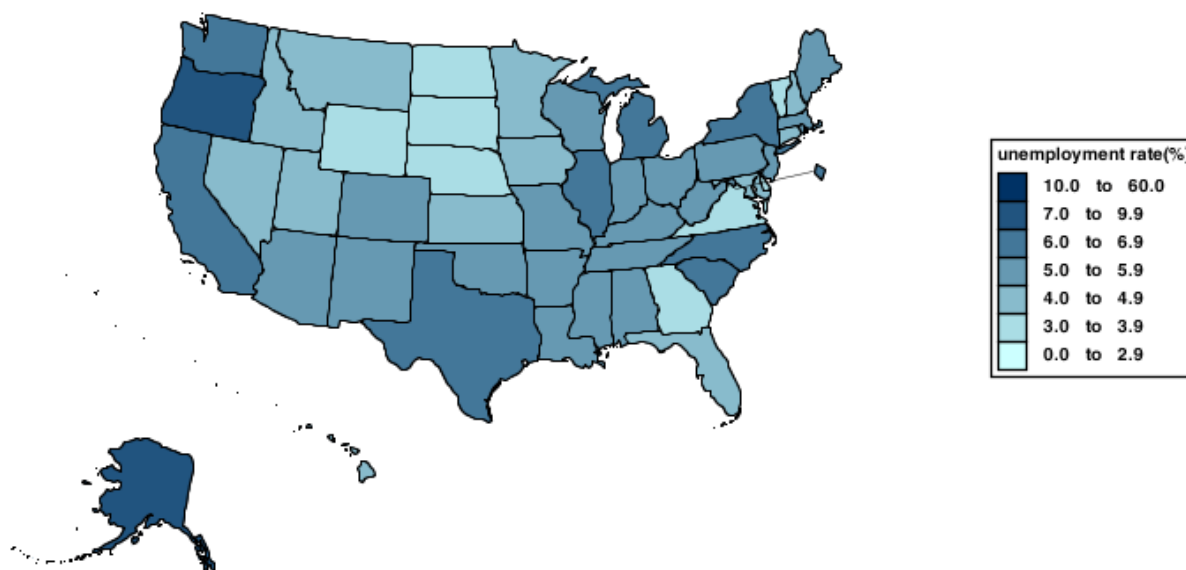
unemployment rate



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

The BLS report shows that Kansas City, MO-KS MSA falls into the midrange of metropolitan areas nationally, so staying in KC for your first job hunt might be a good strategy. But you don't want to go to any of the unemployment champion cities in California that have recorded double-digit unemployment rates in the BLS report: Merced (18.0 percent), Visalia-Tulare-Porterville (17.6 percent), Yuba City, (16.4 percent), Salinas (15.4 percent), and Fresno (15.2 percent).

Unemployment rates by State, seasonally adjusted, February 2004



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

A quick look at the overall unemployment situation in the BLS map above indicates that the state of Missouri in general is doing fairly well in terms of unemployment rates.

The next BLS metropolitan area employment release for March 2004 is scheduled to be issued on April 28, so make sure you check it out before you start your job hunt this summer.

Read related articles:

[Labor market optimism despite surge in unemployment rate](#)

[Feb. unemployment rate stable at 5.6% as labor force participation fell to 65.9%](#)

www.kcaurora.com

Copyright © 2004 The Kansas City Aurora