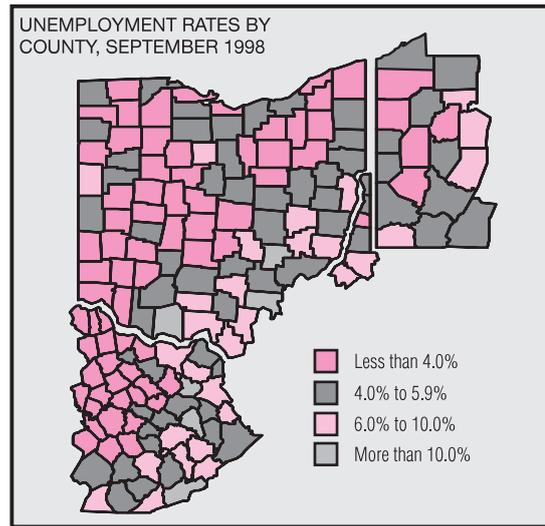
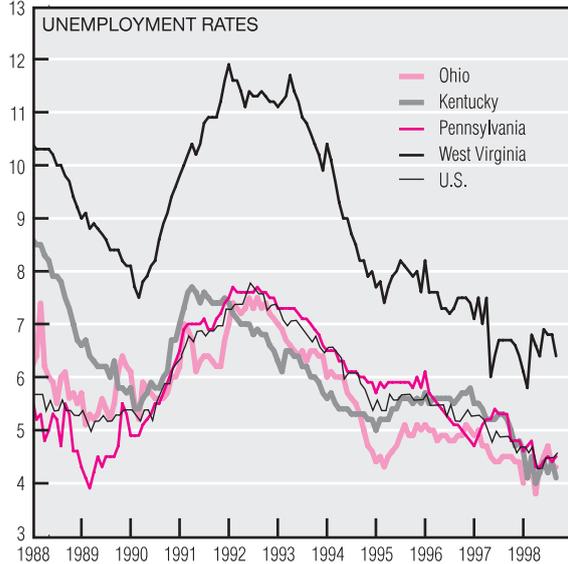
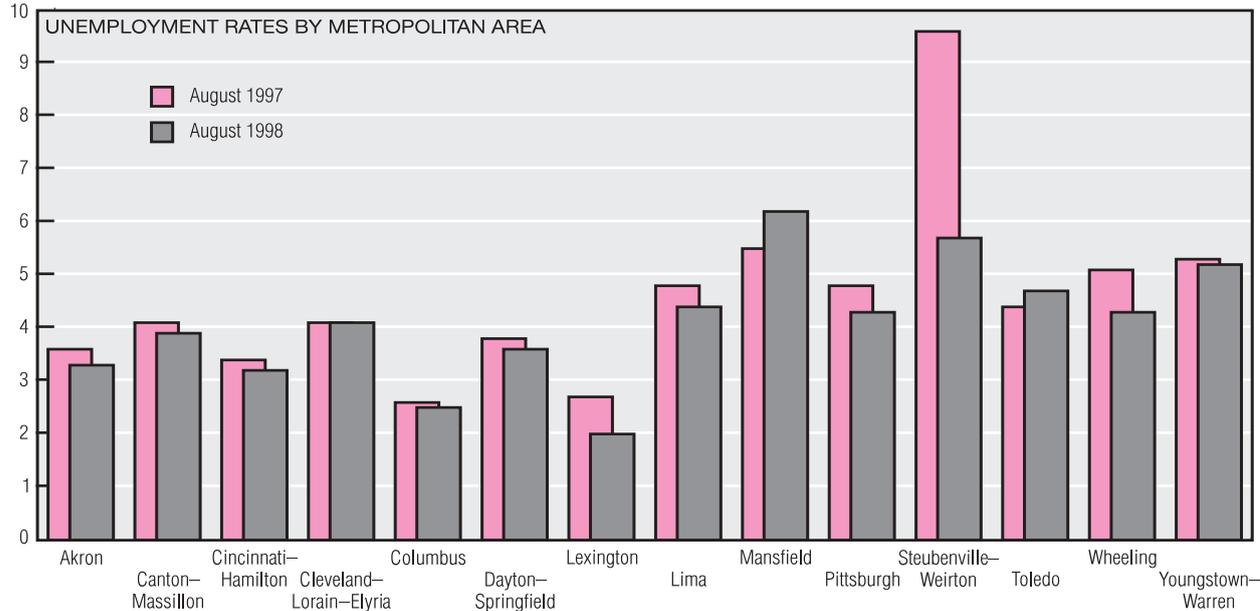


# Fourth District Unemployment

Percent of labor force, seasonally adjusted



Percent



SOURCES: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics; Kentucky Department for Employment Services, Labor Force Estimates Division; Ohio Bureau of Employment Services, Labor Market Information Division; Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, Bureau of Research and Statistics; and West Virginia Bureau of Employment Programs, Labor Market Information.

Over the last year, unemployment has been dropping steadily in most of the Fourth Federal Reserve District. Kentucky and Pennsylvania have shown the most improvement, with unemployment down 1.1% and 0.8%, respectively, since September 1997. Unemployment rates declined in all but two of the District's metropolitan areas (Mansfield and Toledo) over the year ended September 1998. Nearly half the counties in the District have unemployment rates below 4.0%, and rates in Ohio, Kentucky,

and Pennsylvania are below the national average.

Despite the bright outlook for most of the District, there is wide variation in unemployment rates among different areas. Kentucky is a prime example. In several counties near Lexington, unemployment has dipped below 2.0%, and rates are quite low in the entire I-75 corridor, which traces the Fourth District's western boundary. However, this current wave of prosperity has missed several of the counties near Kentucky's eastern

border. Magoffin County recorded a September unemployment rate of 13.3%, while Harlan County posted a rate of 11.7%.

West Virginia's unemployment rate continues to exceed rates in other District states. However, the West Virginia counties that are part of the Fourth District appear to be doing better than the rest of the state. The high unemployment rate in the Steubenville-Weirton metropolitan area has eased over the last year, while Wheeling's rate has fallen to 4.3%.