The Fourth District’s unemployment rate was 5.0% in October, down 0.3 percentage point (pp) from the previous month and 0.7 pp from the previous year. From September to October, employment increased 0.3%, unemployment decreased 3.6%, and the labor force increased 1.8%. By comparison, the U.S. unemployment rate was 4.4% in October, down 0.2 pp from the previous month.

Among the District’s counties, 137 out of 169 had unemployment rates higher than the national average in October; seven of them were more than double the U.S. rate. However, there has been recent improvement: Rates in 122 counties dropped over the month, and rates in almost all counties (163) fell during the previous two months. Similarly, unemployment rates declined over the month in most of the District’s major metropolitan areas. Pittsburgh’s rate fell below the national average, joining Lexington. Several other metro areas came close to the U.S. average.

Over the past year, the nation has increased employment by 1.4%; however, none of the District’s metro areas have kept up, partly because they have trailed U.S. growth in both goods-producing and service-providing industries. In fact, although the nation increased goods-producing employment 0.7% over the year, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Dayton, Pittsburgh, and Lexington all lost jobs in that sector. The leisure and hospitality industry, however, experienced positive growth in all of the District’s metro areas, and, in several of them, outpaced U.S. growth.