

A Review and a Preview

National labor market data for 2012 in its entirety are now available. What follows is the National Council of La Raza's (NCLR) analysis of [2012 Latino employment trends](#) and [what we will watch for in 2013](#).

Latino Employment Statistics for 2012

The [latest report](#) from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) rounds out a year of labor market stagnation. The national unemployment rate held steady at 7.8% as employment rose by 155,000 in December. The data show that 604,000 more Latinos were working and 191,000 fewer Latinos were unemployed at the end of the year than at the start of the year. However, these are not decidedly positive signs for Latino workers because growth in the number of Latinos *not* in the labor force was nearly as large as growth in the number of Latinos in the labor force. There are many reasons for adults over age 16 to be out of the labor force, including attending school and parenting. However, some portion of this population is made up of discouraged workers who have given up the job search. While it is risky to read too deeply into monthly statistics, it is important to consider this factor—as well as the other factors in [Table 1](#)—when drawing the complete picture of Latino employment.

Table 1. The Employment Situation for Latino Workers in 2012

	December 2012	Net Change January–December 2012
Employed — <i>Working people over age 16, including those temporarily absent from their jobs</i>	22 million	604,000
Unemployed — <i>Those who are available to work, make an effort to find a job, or expect to be called back from a layoff but are not working</i>	2.3 million	–191,000
Civilian Labor Force — <i>The sum of employed and unemployed people</i>	25 million	504,000
Not in the Labor Force — <i>People over age 16 classified as neither employed nor unemployed</i>	1.3 million	431,000
Unemployment Rate — <i>Share of the labor force that is unemployed</i>	9.6%	–0.9%
Labor Force Participation Rate — <i>Share of the population over age 16 that is in the labor force</i>	65.9%	–0.3%
Employment-Population Ratio — <i>Share of the population over age 16 that is working</i>	59.6%	–0.4%

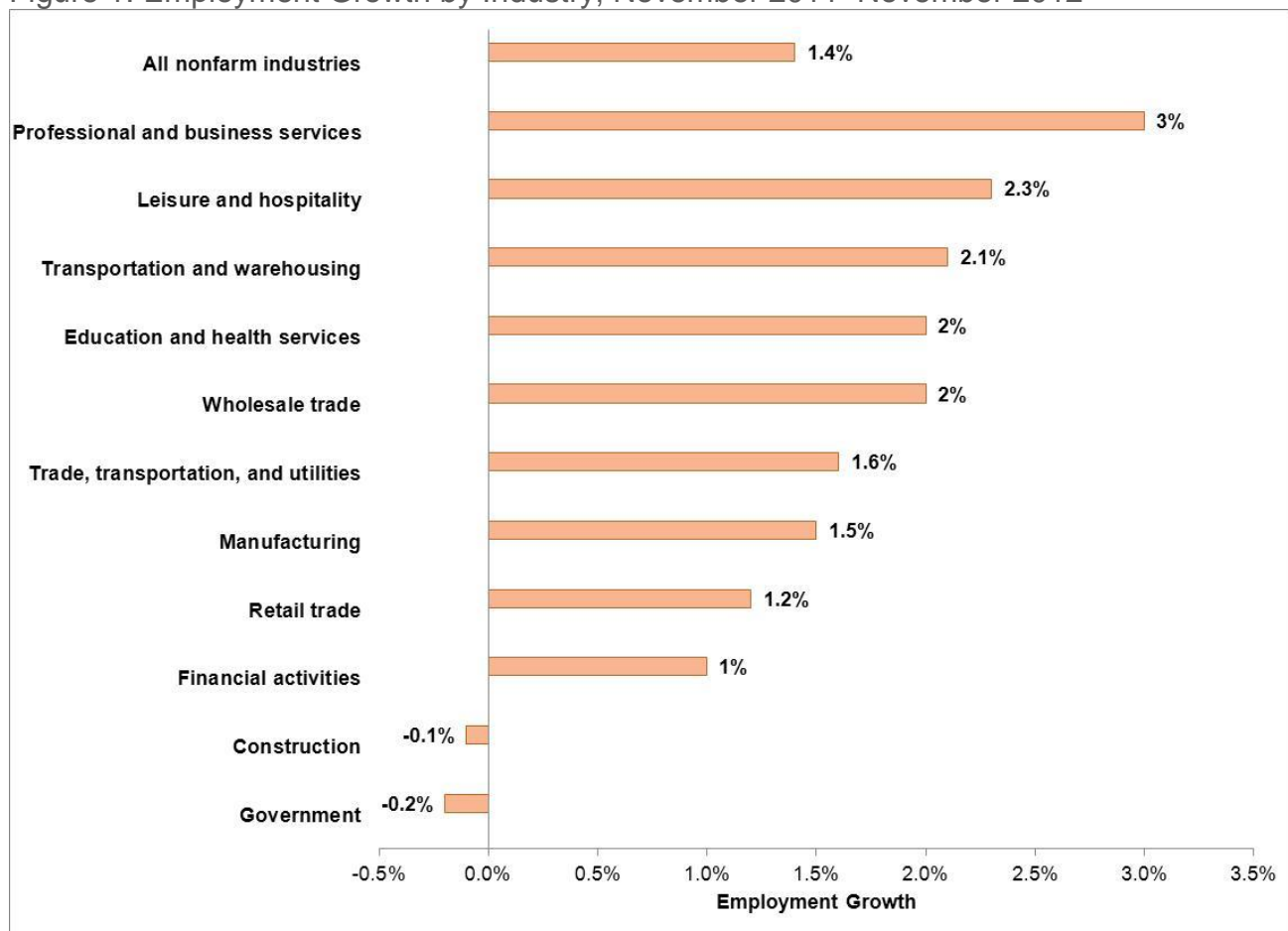
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey*, Table A-3, "Employment status of the Hispanic or Latino population by sex and age," <http://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/cpsatab3.htm>

(accessed January 4, 2013).

Industries to Watch in 2013

The Latino workforce is vital to several major industries that saw employment gains in 2012. As [Figure 1](#) shows, the employment growth leaders last year included several heavily Latino industries, such as [retail](#), which [NCLR has examined](#) for signs of recovery since the official end of the recession. In other growth industries, Hispanics represent more than their share of the overall workforce (14.5%), as shown in [Table 2](#). Continued employment growth in these industries in 2013 could create jobs for Latinos.

Figure 1. Employment Growth by Industry, November 2011–November 2012



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Employment Statistics*, Table B-1, “Employees on nonfarm payrolls by industry sector and selected industry detail,” <http://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/cesstab1.htm> (accessed December 27, 2012).

Good Jobs Are Still Scarce

Despite the positive employment outlook in several industries that employ large numbers of Latinos, there are reasons to be concerned that jobs created in 2013 will not bring economic security to Latino families. In several industries, Hispanic workers are concentrated in low-wage occupations. For instance, in the [transportation sector](#), Hispanics are concentrated in a handful of jobs that pay below the median wage for transportation and material moving occupations,

which is \$13.46 per hour. According to the National Employment Law Project, the majority of new jobs created in the recovery are [low-wage jobs](#).

Hispanic workers are also more likely to encounter other aspects of poor job quality, such as [occupational safety and health](#) risks. Latinos have the highest rate of on-the-job fatalities. In 2011, 729 Hispanic workers died from an occupational injury.¹ One growth sector with large Latino representation and a high injury rate is accommodation, a sub-industry of the leisure and hospitality industry. Hotel housekeepers, 41% of whom are Latino, face appalling injury rates.² Hotel housekeeping is extremely strenuous work, and musculoskeletal injuries, such as carpal tunnel syndrome, are common. According to a study published in the *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, Hispanic women have the highest rate of on-the-job injuries in U.S. hotels. The injury rate for Latina housekeepers is 10.6 per 100 worker years, nearly twice that of White housekeepers.³

Table 2. Employment in Selected Industries, November 2011–November 2012

Sector	Total employed, November 2011 [*]	Latino share of total employed [†]	Change in total employment, November 2011–November 2012 [‡]	Sector's share of total employment [§]
Professional and business services	18 million	14.7%	533,000	13.2%
Leisure and hospitality	14 million	19.6%	305,000	9.8%
Transportation and warehousing	4.4 million	16%	90,300	3.2%
Wholesale trade	5.7 million	15.6%	112,600	4.2%
Manufacturing	12 million	15%	174,000	8.9%

^{*} U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "The Employment Situation – November 2012," <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.toc.htm> (accessed December 27, 2012), Table B-1.

[†] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey*, 2011 Annual Averages, <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat18.htm> (accessed December 27, 2012), Table 18.

[‡] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Access to historical data for the "B" tables of the Employment Situation News Release," <http://www.bls.gov/ces/cesbtabs.htm> (accessed December 27, 2012).

[§] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "The Employment Situation – November 2012," Table B-1.

In 2013, NCLR will continue to advocate for the creation of high-quality jobs in growth industries that ensure living wages and benefits, offer opportunities for career advancement, and keep workers safe on the job.

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Endnotes

¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries*,
<http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/foi/cfch0010.pdf> (accessed October 5, 2012).

² Catherine Singley, *The Price of Luxury: Latinos in the Hotel and Accommodation Sector* (Washington, DC: National Council of La Raza, August 2011),
http://www.nclr.org/index.php/publications/the_price_of_luxury_latinos_in_the_hotel_and_accommodation_sector/ (accessed December 2012).

³ Susan Buchanan et al., "Occupational injury disparities in the US hotel industry," *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* 53, no. 2 (February 2010): 116–125.