

# EMPLOYMENT

## Nonmetro employment still has not recovered from Great Recession

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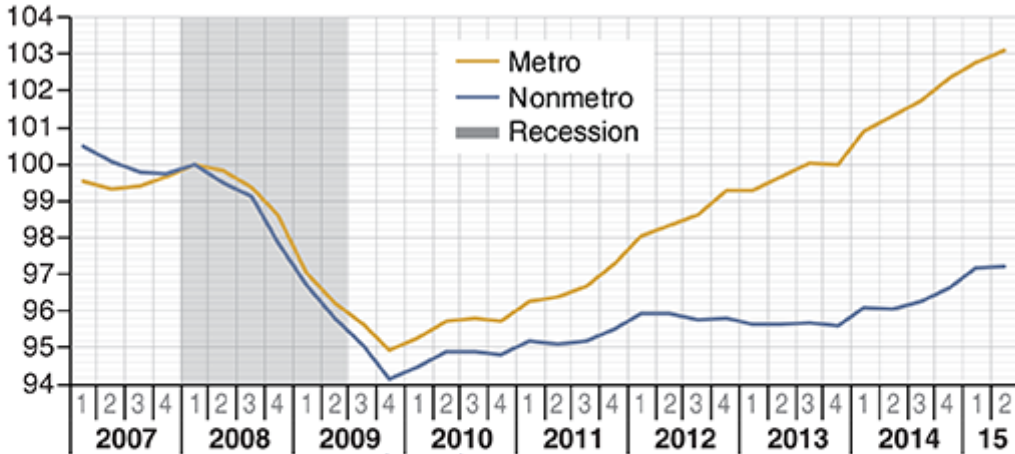
### NONMETRO

The number of **employed nonmetro residents** peaked in the **1st quarter of 2007** and had begun to fall prior to the official onset of the **recession in December 2007**.

### METRO

**Metro employment**, by contrast, grew during 2007 and **peaked** in the 1st quarter of 2008. Metro employment then **fell** for the next 2 years, and by the end of 2009, it was **5% below** its peak value.

● Employment Index (2008 Q1=100)



By the end of 2009, nonmetro employment had fallen by more than **6%**.

Employment recovered over the course of 2010, growing at a comparable pace in metro and non-metro counties.

Nonmetro employment growth was near zero for several years before picking up in 2014, and, as of the 2nd quarter of 2015, the number of nonmetro jobs was still below its value at the start of the recession.

1st quarter 2007  
20,682,000

2nd quarter 2015  
20,011,000\*

\*seasonally adjusted

Nonmetro employment was **3.2%** below its level in the 1st quarter of 2007.

By contrast, by this time, **metro employment** had exceeded its pre-recession peak level by **3.1%**.

### STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

**About half** of the nonmetro employment growth deficit relative to metro counties between 2010 and 2013 was due to the fact that **nonmetro population growth was near zero** over this period, while **metro populations were growing**. Employers also created more jobs in areas that have younger and better educated workforces, and both of these factors work against **nonmetro counties**. Together, these effects outweighed the benefits of a more favorable mix of industries in **nonmetro counties**, in particular a **higher employment share** in **agricultural and extractive industries** that have fared well.

See [Rural Employment Trends in Recession and Recovery](#).

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service.

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