

## WISCONSIN JOBS CONTINUE TO SLUMP

Wisconsin lost 8,600 jobs between October and November 2009, bringing the total loss in employment since the start of the recession to 163,800 jobs—a 5.7 percent loss. As shown in Figure 1, the heaviest losses occurred between October 2008 and April 2009, followed by a leveling off between April and August. Unfortunately, job loss has picked up speed again, with nearly 30,000 jobs lost in the last three months.

Wisconsin's unemployment rate in November was 8.2 percent, down 0.8 percentage points from a June/July peak of 9.0 percent. Although the decline in Wisconsin's unemployment level in recent months is positive news, the rate remains nearly four percentage points higher than its pre-recession level (4.5 percent in December 2007). Recent job losses suggest that unemployment may climb in months to come. (Table 1, Figure 3 on back page)

Wisconsin's male workers have borne the brunt of job loss this recession, not surprising given their concentration in industries that have been hardest hit (i.e. manufacturing and construction, see below). In 2007 Q4, average unemployment rates for Wisconsin women (4.4 percent) and men (4.7 percent) were roughly equal. By 2009 Q3, the gender gap had widened significantly, with average unemployment rates in Wisconsin rising to 71 percent for women and 10.2 percent for men.

## MANUFACTURING DIPS, CONSTRUCTION STEADY

Wisconsin lost 600 manufacturing jobs between October and November, coming on top of a 2,900 loss in manufacturing employment between September and October. Despite this recent two-month drop, manufacturing jobs have held relatively steady over the last six months, a positive sign that this important industry might be stabilizing. Still, Wisconsin's manufacturing sector has 62,800 fewer jobs than when the recession started, representing a 13 percent loss within this sector and accounting for nearly 40 percent of Wisconsin's total job loss.

Table 1

CHANGES IN UNEMPLOYMENT AND NUMBER OF JOBS IN WISCONSIN, DECEMBER 2007 TO NOVEMBER 2009

	December 2007	November 2009	Change	Percent Change
Unemployment	4.5%	8.2%	3.7	
All jobs	2,889,000	2,725,200	-163,800	-5.7%
Manufacturing jobs	500,000	437,200	-62,800	-12.6%
Construction jobs	123,800	105,500	-18,300	-14.8%

Figure 1

TOTAL JOB LOSS IN WISCONSIN, DECEMBER 2007 TO NOVEMBER 2009

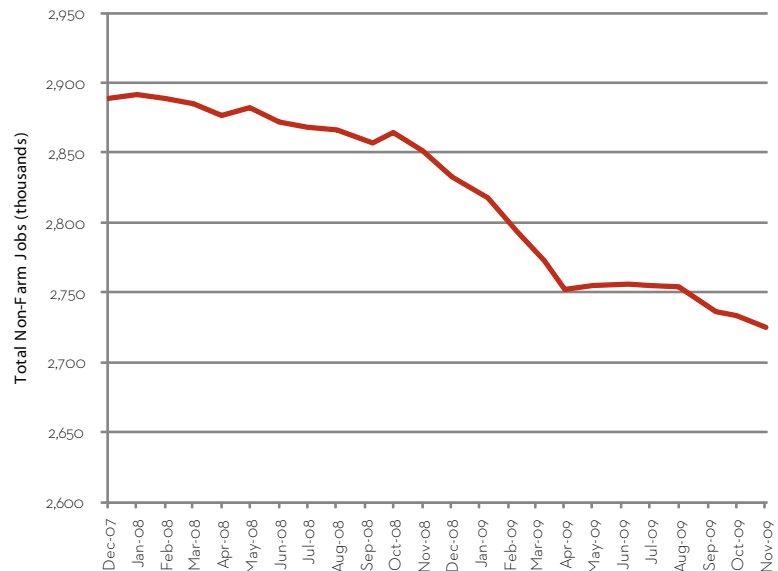
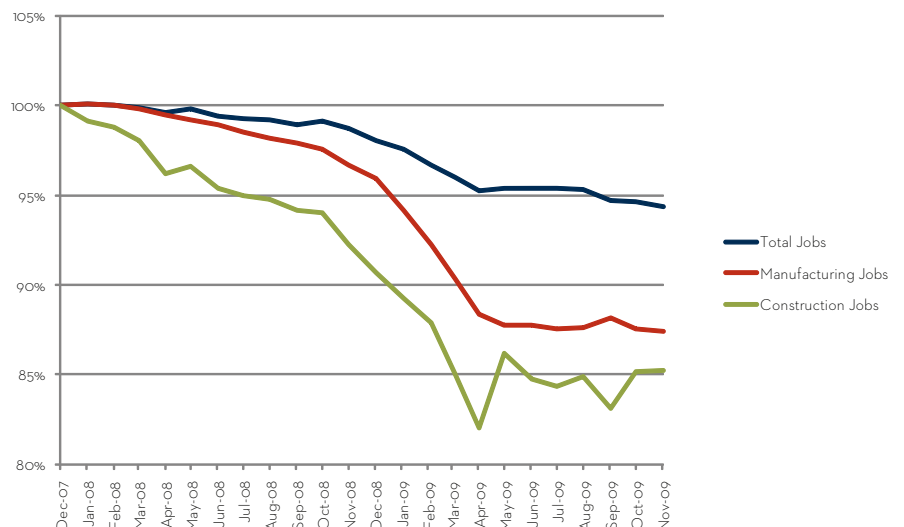


Figure 2

PERCENT CHANGE IN MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION, AND TOTAL JOBS IN WISCONSIN, DECEMBER 2007 TO NOVEMBER 2009

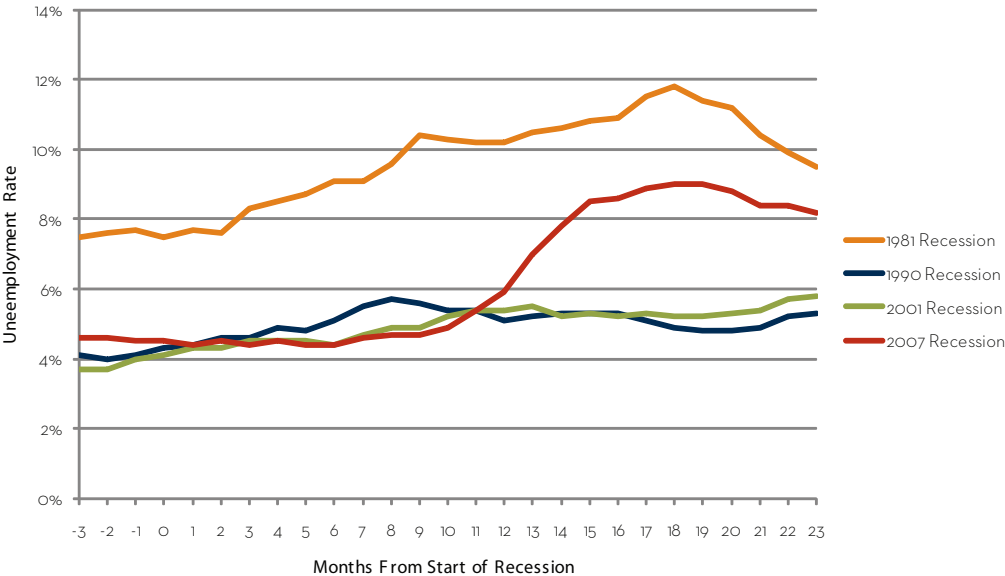


The construction sector gained 100 jobs between October and November, a slight increase following a more considerable spike between September and October (2,500 jobs gained). Nevertheless, the construction industry has seen its job numbers shrink rapidly over the course of the recession, with a decline of 15 percent (18,300 jobs) since December 2007. (Table 1, Figure 2)

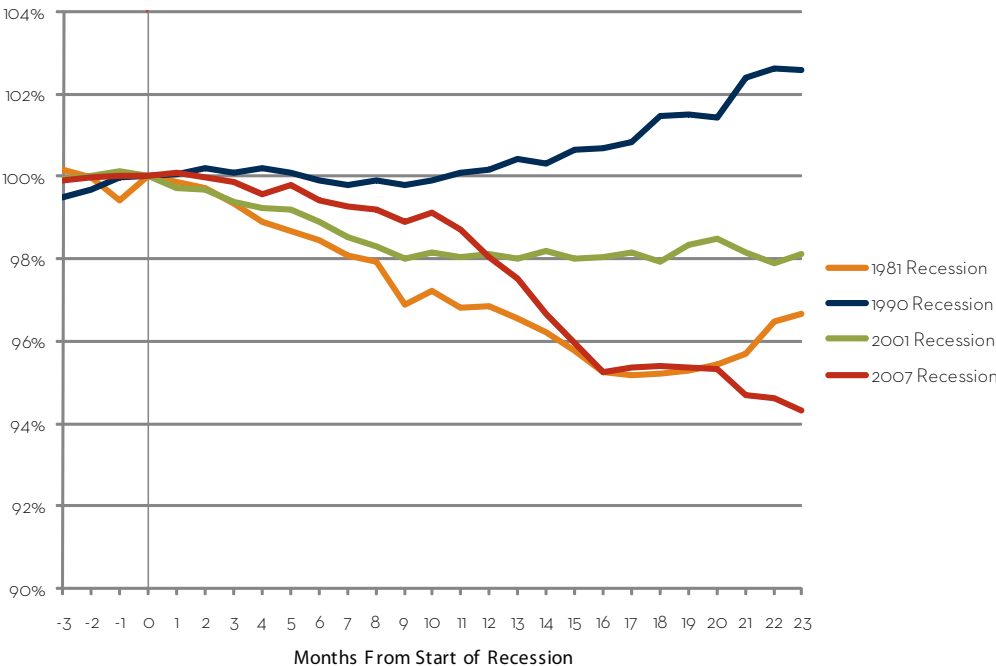
**JOB LOSS NOTABLY WORSE THAN 1980s DECLINE**

The severity and length of the current recession stand out in comparison to the three most recent downturns of 2001, 1990, and 1981. Indeed, this downturn has now far surpassed the infamous recession of the early 1980s with respect to percent of jobs lost (5.7 percent). Although Wisconsin’s unemployment rate is still below 1980s levels, it has not necessarily reached its peak. (Figures 3 and 4)

**Figure 3**  
**WISCONSIN UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN CURRENT RECESSION, COMPARED WITH 1981, 1990, AND 2001 RECESSIONS**



**Figure 4**  
**PERCENT CHANGE IN WISCONSIN JOBS IN CURRENT RECESSION, COMPARED WITH 1981, 1990, AND 2001 RECESSIONS**



Wisconsin Job Watch, a monthly publication of the Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS), provides a snapshot of Wisconsin’s job picture and reports on key recession trends. The numbers provided in this report are based on seasonally-adjusted Bureau of Labor Statistics data compiled by the Economic Policy Institute ([www.epi.org](http://www.epi.org)).

The Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS) is a policy center and field laboratory for high road economic development – a competitive market economy of shared prosperity, environmental sustainability, and capable democratic government. Housed at University of Wisconsin-Madison, COWS has been supporting progressive policy innovation since 1991. For more information, visit [www.cows.org](http://www.cows.org).



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