

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS in New Hampshire



April 2006

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Foreign workers fill certain jobs in New Hampshire's economy

Recent discussions about foreign workers have spurred many questions. Just how many illegal immigrants are there nationally and locally? Although there are some estimates, that question is difficult at best to answer with any degree of accuracy because illegals don't want to be identified or counted because of their illegal status.

Seasonal demand requests

For the most part legal foreign workers in New Hampshire's economy fill specific needs. Through foreign worker programs, employers can request approval for workers they have located and recruited who have the skills required for vacant positions.

There are different types of work visas for different labor pools of foreign workers. Temporary laborers typically fill needed short-term positions. New Hampshire processes requests for two types of temporary foreign workers, seasonal and agricultural. These requests must be submitted from 45 to 60 days minimum to 120 days maximum before the date of hire. The length of employment is valid up to 364 days, however because of the seasonal designation, any request lasting longer than 10 months requires more thorough review as to why it still qualifies as a seasonal position and not year-round.

Foreign labor helps employers in the state meet seasonal demands. A count of program year 2005 temporary foreign work requests in the state revealed that housekeepers and landscape laborers were the two top requests made. The majority of these requests were received in the late fall, and early winter so the job could be filled early in the spring. Two of every five temporary jobs held by foreign workers were in the leisure and hospitality industry, an indication of that sector's strength in New Hampshire and need for workers. Food service workers, waitstaff, and line cooks made up over 20 percent of all seasonal work requests, and housekeepers and hotel clerks contributed another 23 percent. Ski instructors and lift attendants as well as amusement park attendants were among the temporary foreign requests to cover both the winter and summer recreational seasons. Many employers in the state find these positions difficult to fill. The industry

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2005 New Hampshire Seasonal Occupation Requests

Count	Occupations requested
189	Housekeeper
183	Landscape Laborer
106	Ski Instructors
84	Waitstaff
74	Food Service Worker
66	Line Cook
60	Amusement Park Attendants
57	Hotel Clerk
45	Quarry Stone Carver
20	Cashier

need is for full time help; however due to the low wages and seasonality, it makes them less attractive to residents.

Prevailing wage requests

Another source for tracking the demand for foreign workers is prevailing wage determinations. The prevailing wage requests can cover any type of foreign work visa, temporary or permanent. The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) requires that the hiring of a foreign worker will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of U.S. workers working in the occupation of intended employment. To comply with the statute, the U.S. Department of Labor’s regulations require the wages offered to a foreign worker must be the prevailing wage rate for the occupational classification in the area of employment.¹

The requirement to pay prevailing wages, as a minimum, is true of most employment-based visa programs involving the U.S. Department of Labor. Programs that require the employer to pay the prevailing wage, or the same wage paid to others doing the same job, provide detailed information as part of the application process. The prevailing wage requests do include the desired experience level of the occupation and specialty, and the immediate need is verified in the request. These prevailing wage requests may shed some light on where occupational skills shortages are occurring in the New Hampshire labor market, although it is uncertain if any specific skill will remain in demand in the future.

Types of occupations

New Hampshire processes in the neighborhood of 600 prevailing wage applications for positions during a program year. By far the most requests during

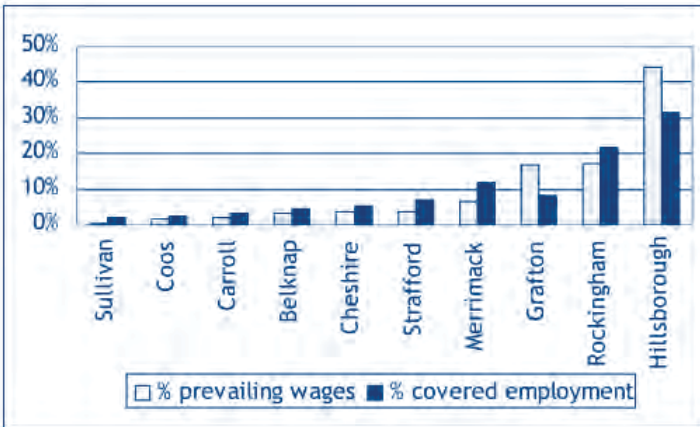
the 2005 program year² were made for occupations in the Computer and mathematical group, which contributed 216 of the 531 total requests. No other occupational group had as many requests. Management occupations were next on the list, providing just over ten percent of foreign work requests, because of experience and specialty training required. The Architecture and engineering occupations filled the needs of another 8.3 percent of employers. Employers requesting specialty training of positions in the Life, physical, and social sciences and the Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations covered another 6.6 percent of foreign workers in each group.

2005 New Hampshire Prevailing Wage Requests

Occupational Group	Occupational Group Title	
11-0000	Management Occupation	56
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	11
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	216
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	44
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	35
21-0000	Community and Social Services Occupations	5
23-0000	Legal Occupations	1
25-0000	Education, Training, and Library Occupations	33
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	4
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	35
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	1
33-0000	Protective Service Occupations	0
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	27
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	15
39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	7
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	5
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	2
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	1
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	10
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	8
51-0000	Production Occupations	15
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	0

One of every four prevailing wage requests in New Hampshire during the 2005 program year was for Computer software engineers, specializing in applications. Additionally, these prevailing wage requests specified the experience level of the requested occupations. For this particular occupation in the state, over 70 percent indicated the need to have between two and four years of experience, and an additional

2005 New Hampshire Prevailing Wage vs. Covered Employment



20 percent wanted specialty experience, supervisory responsibilities, or higher education levels.

Geographic concentration

There are areas of the state that have more needs for foreign labor requests. Again the most detailed information is accessible from the prevailing wage requests.

Foreign labor requests are centralized in areas where the employers cannot fill the vacant positions. By far the majority of requests in New Hampshire require mathematical or healthcare specialties. It makes sense the locations requesting

Continued on page 8

Unemployment Compensation Claims Activity

Total Regular Unemployment Compensation Programs:	Change from Previous										
	Feb-06		Jan-06		Feb-05		Month		Year		
	Net	Percent	Net	Percent	Net	Percent	Net	Percent	Net	Percent	
Initial Claims	3,967	5,832	4,127	-1,865	-32.0%	-160	-3.9%				
Continued Weeks	35,388	42,863	40,994	-7,475	-17.4%	-5,606	-13.7%				

Claims Activity

Unemployment Compensation Fund

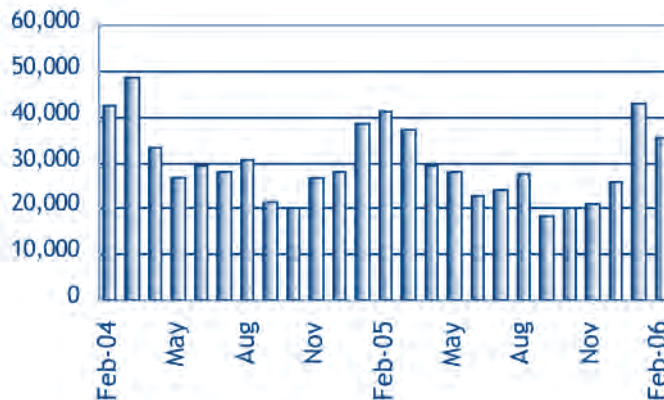
Unemployment compensation fund balance at the end of February	\$253,870,736.55
Average payment for a week of total unemployment:	\$253.80
Net benefits paid:	\$7,165,647.28
Net contributions received during the month:	\$3,457,364.33
Interest Received:	\$0.00
Reed Act Distribution:	\$0.00
Reed Act Withdrawal for Administrative Costs:	\$0.00

Trust Fund

Continued Weeks Claimed

Feb 2004 - Feb 2006

The seasonal over-the-month drop in continued weeks claimed was the largest drop, both numerically and percentage wise, since 1992.



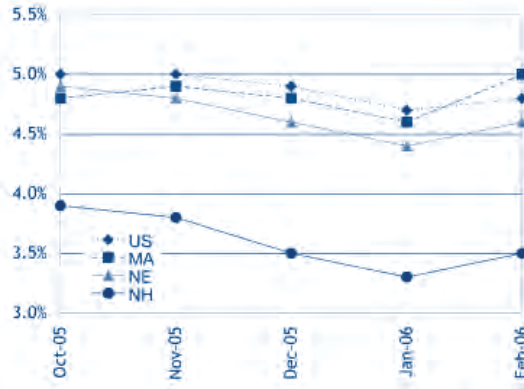
			Change from Previous	
Feb-06	Jan-06	Feb-05	Month	Year
198.7	198.3	191.8	0.2%	3.6%

United States All Urban Areas (CPI-U) (1982-1984=100)

Consumer Price Index

N.H and U.S. Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates

Again, New Hampshire tied with Vermont as having the lowest unemployment rate in New England and the Northeast.



Unemployment Rates by Region

	Feb-06	Jan-06	Feb-05
United States	4.8%	4.7%	5.4%
Northeast	4.6%	4.5%	4.9%
New England	4.6%	4.4%	4.7%
Connecticut	4.5%	4.6%	5.0%
Maine	4.6%	4.5%	4.8%
Massachusetts	5.0%	4.6%	4.9%
New Hampshire	3.5%	3.3%	3.7%
Rhode Island	5.1%	4.7%	5.0%
Vermont	3.5%	3.4%	3.6%
Mid Atlantic	4.6%	4.5%	5.0%
New Jersey	4.7%	4.5%	4.4%
New York	4.7%	4.6%	5.1%
Pennsylvania	4.5%	4.3%	5.2%

Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Estimates

By Place of Residence

	Oct-05	Nov-05	Dec-05	Jan-06	Feb-06
New Hampshire					
Unemployment Rate	3.6%	3.5%	3.5%	3.3%	3.5%
Civilian Labor Force	734,266	734,000	733,942	736,154	735,865
Number Employed	707,696	708,115	708,524	711,511	710,462
Number Unemployed	26,570	25,885	25,418	24,643	25,403
United States (in thousands)					
Unemployment Rate	4.9%	5.0%	4.9%	4.7%	4.8%
Civilian Labor Force	150,043	150,183	150,153	150,114	150,449
Number Employed	142,625	142,611	142,779	143,074	143,257
Number Unemployed	7,418	7,572	7,375	7,040	7,193

These 2005 Benchmark Estimates are awaiting final review by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Washington, D.C.

Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment Estimates

By Place of Establishment

Supersector	Oct-05	Nov-05	Dec-05	Jan-06	Feb-06
Total Nonfarm	636,400	635,400	636,600	639,400	637,800
Construction	30,100	30,000	30,100	30,000	30,100
Manufacturing	78,600	78,600	78,300	78,100	77,600
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	140,900	140,500	140,600	141,800	140,200
Information	Data not available		12,800	13,000	13,100
Financial Activities	39,600	39,700	39,900	40,200	40,500
Professional and Business Services	59,900	60,000	60,100	60,300	60,600
Educational and Health Services	Data not available		99,200	100,300	100,800
Leisure and Hospitality	64,500	63,900	64,600	65,000	64,500
Other Services	21,200	21,100	21,000	21,100	21,000
Government	89,100	88,600	89,000	88,600	88,400

Please note that not all supersectors meet the statistical criteria for publication in this category. We seasonally adjust the total nonfarm data series and all the published supersectors independently. Therefore, the sum of the published parts will not equal the total.

Labor Force Estimates

New Hampshire	Feb-06	Jan-06	Feb-05
Number of workers	preliminary	revised	
Total Civilian Labor Force	731,430	732,990	724,640
Employed	702,460	705,090	693,850
Unemployed	28,970	27,900	30,790
Unemployment Rate (percent of labor force)	4.0%	3.8%	4.2%

Unemployment Rates by Area

	Feb-06	Jan-06	Feb-05
U.S and Regional States			
United States	5.1%	5.1%	5.8%
Northeast	5.2%	5.1%	5.5%
New England	5.2%	5.1%	5.3%
Connecticut	5.0%	5.1%	5.5%
Maine	5.6%	5.3%	5.8%
Massachusetts	5.5%	5.3%	5.4%
New Hampshire	4.0%	3.8%	4.2%
Rhode Island	6.0%	5.7%	5.7%
Vermont	4.2%	4.1%	4.3%
Mid Atlantic	5.2%	5.1%	5.6%
New Jersey	5.2%	5.0%	5.0%
New York	5.2%	5.2%	5.7%
Pennsylvania	5.3%	4.9%	6.0%

Map	Feb-06	Jan-06	Feb-05
Key Labor Market Areas			
1 Colebrook NH-VT LMA, NH Portion	4.7%	4.1%	4.3%
2 Berlin NH MicroNECTA	4.4%	4.4%	4.9%
3 Littleton NH-VT LMA, NH Portion	3.7%	3.7%	4.0%
4 Haverhill NH LMA	5.4%	5.1%	4.7%
5 Conway NH-ME LMA, NH Portion	3.6%	3.6%	4.1%
6 Plymouth NH LMA	3.5%	3.5%	3.7%
7 Moultonborough NH LMA	3.2%	2.9%	3.3%
8 Lebanon NH-VT MicroNECTA, NH Portion	2.7%	2.5%	2.5%
9 Laconia NH MicroNECTA	3.9%	3.8%	4.1%
10 Wolfeboro NH LMA	3.4%	3.6%	3.8%
11 Franklin NH MicroNECTA	4.6%	4.4%	4.8%
12 Claremont NH MicroNECTA	3.3%	3.3%	3.4%
13 Newport NH LMA	3.2%	3.3%	3.3%
14 New London NH LMA	2.7%	2.6%	2.8%
15 Concord NH MicroNECTA	3.7%	3.7%	3.9%
16 Rochester-Dover NH-ME MetroNECTA, NH Portion	3.7%	3.6%	4.1%
17 Charlestown NH LMA	4.3%	3.9%	3.9%
18 Hillsborough NH LMA	3.7%	3.3%	3.8%
19 Manchester NH MetroNECTA	3.9%	3.8%	4.2%
20 Keene NH MicroNECTA	3.4%	3.1%	3.4%
21 Peterborough NH LMA	4.1%	3.9%	4.2%
22 Nashua NH-MA NECTA Division, NH Portion	4.2%	4.0%	4.6%
23 Exeter Area, NH Portion, Haverhill-N. Andover-Amesbury MA-NH NECTA Division	5.1%	4.7%	5.6%
24 Portsmouth NH-ME MetroNECTA, NH Portion	3.7%	3.5%	4.1%
25 Hinsdale Town, NH Portion, Brattleboro VT-NH LMA	3.1%	2.2%	2.1%
26 Pelham Town, NH Portion, Lowell-Billerica-Chelmsford MA-NH NECTA Division	5.3%	5.4%	6.4%
27 Salem Town, NH Portion, Lawrence-Methuen-Salem MA-NH NECTA Division	5.7%	5.5%	6.3%

These 2005 Benchmark Estimates are awaiting final review by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Washington, D.C.

Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

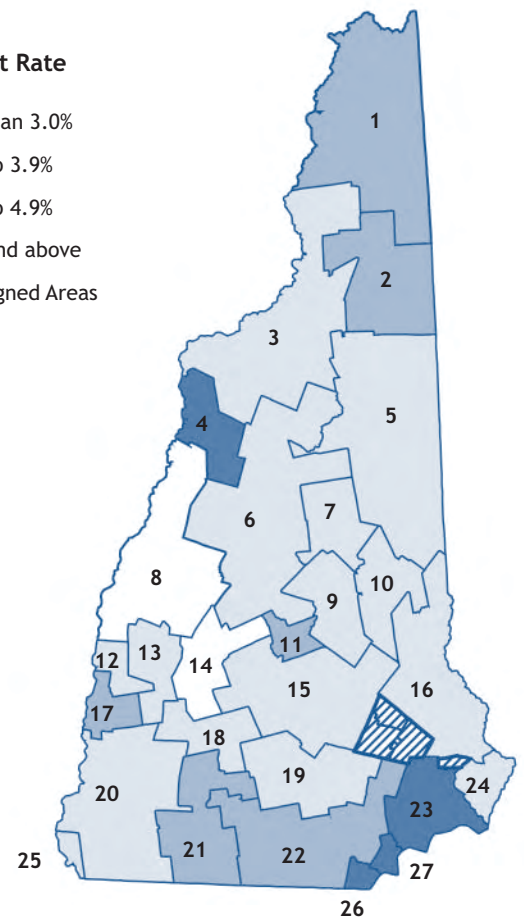
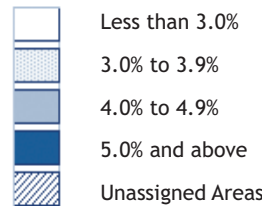
Not Seasonally Adjusted

By Place of Residence

Counties	Feb-06	Jan-06	Feb-05
Belknap	4.0%	3.8%	4.1%
Carroll	3.5%	3.5%	4.0%
Cheshire	3.6%	3.3%	3.6%
Coos	4.3%	4.2%	4.6%
Grafton	3.3%	3.1%	3.1%
Hillsborough	4.1%	4.0%	4.4%
Merrimack	3.6%	3.5%	3.8%
Rockingham	4.4%	4.2%	5.0%
Strafford	3.7%	3.6%	4.1%
Sullivan	3.3%	3.2%	3.3%

February

Unemployment Rate



New Hampshire unemployment and labor force estimates are calculated using a regression model which depends on Current Population Survey (CPS) estimates. Labor Market Area estimates are calculated using the Bureau of Labor Statistics "Handbook Method" and then adjusted to the State levels.

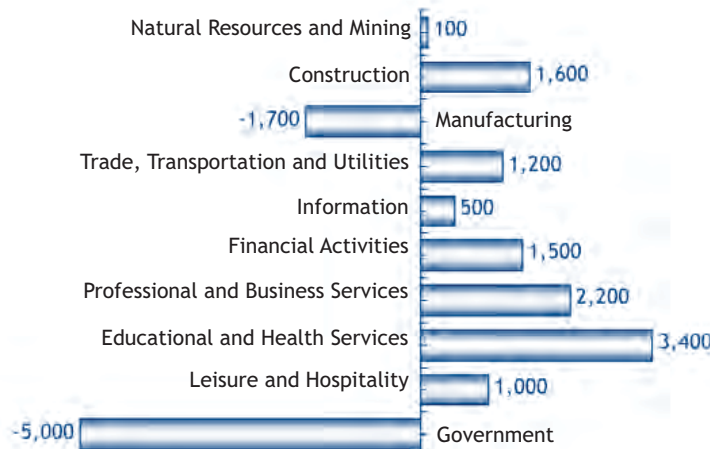
Seasonal reductions in Trade, transportation and utilities were countered by the return of educators, both private and public for a net decline of 1,000 jobs over-the-month.

Monthly Not Seasonally Adjusted New Hampshire Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment

Current Employment Statistics Employment by Super Sector by place of establishment	Number of Jobs			Change from previous:	
	Feb-06 preliminary	Jan-06 revised	Feb-05	Month	Year
	Total All Super Sectors	626,800	627,800	620,200	-1,000
Private Employment Total	535,800	539,900	526,100	-4,100	9,700
Natural Resources and Mining	1,000	1,000	900	0	100
Construction	27,300	27,900	25,800	-600	1,500
Manufacturing	77,500	78,100	79,900	-600	-2,400
Durable Goods	59,500	59,800	61,000	-300	-1,500
Non-Durable Goods	18,000	18,300	18,900	-300	-900
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	136,900	140,400	136,700	-3,500	200
Wholesale Trade	27,000	27,200	26,900	-200	100
Retail Trade	94,700	97,900	94,400	-3,200	300
Transportation and Utilities	15,200	15,300	15,400	-100	-200
Information	13,000	13,000	12,500	0	500
Financial Activities	40,200	40,100	38,100	100	2,100
Professional and Business	58,900	58,700	56,700	200	2,200
Educational and Health	101,000	100,200	96,600	800	4,400
Leisure and Hospitality	59,300	59,800	58,200	-500	1,100
Other Services	20,700	20,700	20,700	0	0
Government Total	91,000	87,900	94,100	3,100	-3,100

Change in Nonfarm Employment

Feb 2005 to Feb 2006



Monthly Analysis of Current Employment Statistics (CES) Data

For further analysis please read the *Detailed Monthly Analysis of Industry Employment Data* on our Web site at <www.nhes.state.nh.us/elmi/nonfarm.htm>

Seasonally Adjusted: Preliminary seasonally adjusted estimates for February showed that New Hampshire’s total nonfarm employment fell by 1,600 jobs. With this decline, the state’s total employment remains 4,500 jobs above the level of one year ago.

Trade, transportation, and utilities (supersector 40), with its 1,600-job drop, provided the primary force in the movement of February’s employment trend line in this category. Manufacturing (supersector 30) and leisure and hospitality (supersector 70) each contributed 500 jobs to the decline. Gov-

ernment (supersector 90) dropped 200 jobs, and other services (supersector 80) completed February’s job loss with a 100-job reduction.

Educational and health services (supersector 65) stemmed the downward tide with a 500-job addition. Joining the supersector 65 effort, financial activities (supersector 55) and professional and business services (supersector 60) each increased their work force by 300 jobs. Construction (supersector 20) and information (supersector 50) rounded the month’s activity with each expanding by 100 jobs.

Monthly Unadjusted Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment by Metropolitan Statistical Areas

Employment by Sector number of jobs by place of establishment	Manchester NH MetroNECTA			Nashua NH-MA NECTA Division, NH Portion			Portsmouth NH- ME MetroNECTA, NH Portion			Rochester-Dover NH-ME MetroNECTA, NH Portion		
	preliminary Feb-06	Change from previous:		preliminary Feb-06	Change from previous:		preliminary Feb-06	Change from previous:		preliminary Feb-06	Change from previous:	
		Month	Year		Month	Year		Month	Year		Month	Year
Total All Sectors	99,400	-600	2,200	131,800	-300	2,100	54,900	600	2,100	54,300	-100	200
Private Employment Total	87,900	-600	2,400	116,600	-500	2,300	45,400	300	2,100	42,100	-400	1,300
Natural Resources and Construction	5,000	-100	200	5,700	-100	600	1,700	0	100	1,900	-100	0
Manufacturing	9,500	0	100	25,500	-100	-500	3,600	0	0	6,600	-100	200
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	20,700	-300	900	30,700	-300	400	11,000	-100	0	11,200	-400	-100
Wholesale Trade	4,900	0	0	6,000	0	200	2,000	0	0	1,500	0	-100
Retail Trade	12,600	-400	600	20,500	-300	100	7,800	-100	-100	8,700	-400	0
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	Data not available			4,200	0	100	1,200	0	100	1,000	0	0
Information	3,500	100	200	2,200	0	200	1,900	200	100	1,200	0	0
Financial Activities	8,700	0	100	9,300	0	0	5,300	0	500	2,800	0	200
Professional and Business	11,500	-200	200	12,200	-100	-100	8,600	-100	600	3,800	0	300
Educational and Health	16,700	200	300	15,600	0	300	5,800	100	200	7,500	100	300
Leisure and Hospitality	8,300	-300	500	10,800	100	1,200	5,900	100	600	5,200	100	300
Services	4,000	0	-100	4,600	0	200	1,600	100	0	1,900	0	100
Government Total	11,500	0	-200	15,200	200	-200	9,500	300	0	12,200	300	-1,100

Average Earnings and Hours of Production Workers in Manufacturing

Sector	Average Weekly Earnings			Average Weekly Hours			Average Hourly Earnings		
	Feb-06 preliminary	Jan-06 revised	Feb-05	Feb-06 preliminary	Jan-06 revised	Feb-05	Feb-06 preliminary	Jan-06 revised	Feb-05
New Hampshire									
All Manufacturing	\$679.20	\$681.79	\$628.68	41.9	42.4	40.3	\$16.21	\$16.08	\$15.60
Durable Goods	\$698.15	\$701.57	\$639.27	42.7	43.2	40.9	\$16.35	\$16.24	\$15.63
Non-durable Goods	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.0	0.0	0.0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Manchester NH MetroNECTA									
All Manufacturing	\$752.69	\$766.19	\$653.18	41.7	42.9	38.4	\$18.05	\$17.86	\$17.01
Nashua NH-MA NECTA Division, NH Portion									
All Manufacturing	\$724.26	\$710.42	\$669.89	41.6	42.9	41.3	\$17.41	\$16.56	\$16.22

Note: Production workers and information for Portsmouth and Rochester are not currently available.

Unadjusted: New Hampshire employment, still in the throes of coming down from the peak season, declined by 1,000 jobs in February's unadjusted estimates.

With a 3,500-job reduction, trade, transportation, and utilities (supersector 40) proved to be the major stimulus behind February's employment shift. Both construction (supersector 20) and manufacturing (supersector 30) reduced their personnel strength by 600. Wrapping up the negative numbers, leisure and hospitality (supersector 70) cut staff by 500.

February's unadjusted trend line held steady at the January level for natural resources and mining (supersector 10), information (supersector 50), and other services (supersector 80).

The university system, returning from its holiday break, pushed government (supersector 90) employment totals up by 3,100 jobs. Educational and health services (supersector 80), experiencing similar phenomenon, added 800 jobs to the state's total. Professional and business services (supersector 65) added 200 jobs, and financial activity (supersector 55) completed February employment activity with a 100-job addition.

B. G. McKay

Continued from page 3

the most help would be in areas that have high concentrations of high tech and healthcare industries.

Only Hillsborough and Grafton Counties have a higher share of foreign worker prevailing wage determinations than their share of covered employment. A possible explanation for that is the concentration of high technology industries in Hillsborough County, and the growing needs in Grafton County with specialties arising from the health and education facilities located there.

Hillsborough County by far outweighed the volume of prevailing wage determinations among the counties, submitting 44.4 percent of all requests

for the year. The next highest levels of requests were received from Rockingham and Grafton Counties with 17.3 and 16.8 percent respectively. As for the types of occupations requested in the counties, Hillsborough claimed 63.2 percent of all the computer software engineers previously mentioned.

Anita Josten

1. U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Foreign Labor Certification Prevailing Wages, <http://workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/foreign/wages.asp>

*application status does not necessarily indicate acceptance

2. Program Year for the prevailing wage program runs from October 1 through September 30.

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