

Passaic County has the jobless blues

11.2% rate second-highest to Bronx in N.J., N.Y. study

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Passaic County, with an unemployment rate of 11.2 percent, had the second-highest rate in a study of 23 New Jersey and New York counties in June, federal authorities said Friday.

The county lagged only Bronx County, which had an unemployment rate of 11.7 percent, the New York office of the U.S. Bureau of

Labor statistics said.

Bergen County ranked 14th, with a rate of 8.2 percent, and Hudson County, with unemployment of 10.9 percent, was third highest.

New Jersey had a 9.2 percent unemployment rate in June, slightly lower than the national rate of 9.5 percent. That was the same as the rate for New York City in June. New York State's rate for the month was 8.7 percent.

Patrick O'Keefe, director of eco-

nomic research at the Roseland accounting firm J.H. Cohn, said the high Passaic and Hudson figures were likely driven up by the higher-than-average unemployment in urban communities, such as Paterson, Passaic and Jersey City, where job seekers' "skills, education and experience place them at a significant long-term disadvantage in the labor market."

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