Unemployment in Megalopolis is lower than the national average. As one of the more dynamic regions in the country, this region as a whole has seen a decline in unemployment since 1980.

There is substantial variation within the region, from Baltimore City with a civilian reemployment rate of 8.1% in 2000 to Fairfax County in Virginia with only a 0.6% rate. While there are pockets of relatively high unemployment rates in some more rural counties such as Cape May and Atlantic, both in New Jersey, the dominant picture is of higher unemployment rates in the central city areas such as Baltimore City, Bronx (7.3%), Philadelphia (6.1%), Washington DC (5.8%) and New York (4.8%) and lower rates in suburban counties. Particularly impressive is the low rate of unemployment in the growth zone of counties in southern Maryland and Northern Virginia. Counties such Loudon and Fairfax in Virginia have rates of 1.5% and 1.2% respectively. The suburban Washington economy, fuelled by federal spending, has experienced major growth of employment in the past twenty years so unemployment is relatively small. In contrast, the heavy industrial employment sector has declined, one of the reasons for the relatively high unemployment rates of industrial counties such as Carbon, PA (5.8%).

The older central cities have higher unemployment rates while the newer suburban areas have lower unemployment rates; this is a function of the differential location of people and jobs. The central cities contain a higher proportion of poorer, ill educated workers less able to compete successfully in a tight job market while more and more jobs are located in the suburban growth zones. Across Megalopolis there is often a mismatch between people who need jobs and where the jobs are located.