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City Hall Woes on the Jobs Front

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Time was that government jobs were supposed to be safe.

Never mind.

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Notions on high and low finance.

Today's [jobs report](#) shows that the number of jobs in state and local government is down 3.3 percent from the peak reached in August 2008, the month before Lehman Brothers failed. (These numbers are after seasonal adjustment.)

That is the largest decline in such jobs registered since the Korean War, exceeding the fall during the early 1980s. The following chart shows the two downturns.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, via Haver Analytics

What is remarkable about the current decline has been its relentlessness. There is an occasional one-month bounce — there was one in August — but that is probably more a reflection of poor seasonal adjustments than of actual hiring.

The early 1980s fall was more rapid, but the number of state and local government jobs hit bottom in July 1982, four months before the official end of the recession, and began to recover. The 2007-9 recession ended two years ago, but you can't see any evidence of that in this chart.

