

News

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EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG YOUTH—SUMMER 2008

From April to July 2008, the number of employed youth 16 to 24 years old increased by 1.9 million to 21.0 million, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. July is the traditional summertime peak for youth employment. This summer's increase in youth employment was lower than last year's 2.3 million increase. Unemployment among youth increased by 1.2 million between April and July 2008; this was more than twice the increase in youth unemployment during the same period in 2007. (Because this analysis focuses on the seasonal changes in youth employment and unemployment that occur every spring and summer, the data are not seasonally adjusted.)

Labor Force

The youth labor force—16- to 24-year-olds working or actively looking for work—grows sharply between April and July each year. During these months, large numbers of high school and college students take or search for summer jobs, and many graduates enter the labor market to look for or begin permanent employment. This summer, the youth labor force grew by 3.1 million to a total of 24.4 million in July. (See table 1.)

The labor force participation rate for youth—the proportion of their population working or looking for work—was 65.1 percent in July 2008, essentially the same as in July 2007 and about 12 percentage points below its peak for that month in 1989 (77.5 percent). Over the 1989-2008 period, the proportion of youth enrolled in school in July trended up; youth enrolled in school are much less likely than those not in school to be in the labor force.

The July 2008 labor force participation rate for 16- to 24-year-old men (68.1 percent) was about the same as a year earlier, and the rate for women (62.1 percent) was unchanged over the year. For several decades prior to 1989, young men's July labor force participation rate showed no clear trend, ranging from 81 to 86 percent. Since July 1989, however, their participation rate has trended down by about 15 percentage points. Young women's July labor force participation rate peaked in 1989 after a long-term upward trend; their rate has trended down by about 10 percentage points since then.

The July 2008 participation rates for whites (68.1 percent), blacks (54.7 percent), and Hispanics (60.1 percent) were little changed from a year earlier. For all three groups, labor force participation rates were more than 10 percentage points lower than their peak levels reached in July 1989. The participation rate for Asian youth in July 2008 (50.6 percent) also was little different from July 2007. (See table 2.)

Employment

In July 2008, 21.0 million 16- to 24-year-olds were employed. The employment-population ratio for youth—the proportion of the 16- to 24-year-old civilian noninstitutional population that was employed—was 56.0 percent, down 2.0 percentage points from July 2007. The ratio has fallen by about 13 percentage points since its peak in July 1989; the steep decline from July 2007 to July 2008 may reflect, in part, weaker labor market conditions during the summer of 2008. (See table 2.)

The July employment-population ratio for young men was 57.9 percent in July 2008, down from 60.3 percent in July 2007. The employment-population ratios for women (54.2 percent) and whites (59.7 percent) in July 2008 also were lower than a year earlier. The ratios for blacks (41.2 percent), Asians (46.4 percent), and Hispanics (50.5 percent) were about unchanged.

In July 2008, 23 percent of employed youth worked in the leisure and hospitality industry (which includes food services) and 18 percent worked in retail trade. In addition, nearly two-fifths of employed youth worked in education and health services, professional and business services, government, manufacturing, and construction combined. (See table 3.)

Unemployment

In July 2008, 3.4 million youth were unemployed and the youth unemployment rate was 14.0 percent, the highest rate for July since 1992. As with the decline in employment, the increase in youth unemployment in the summer of 2008 partly reflected a weaker job market. The July 2008 unemployment rates for young men (15.0 percent), women (12.8 percent), whites (12.3 percent), blacks (24.8 percent), and Hispanics (16.0 percent) increased from a year earlier. The jobless rate for Asians (8.4 percent) was about unchanged from July 2007. (See table 2.)

Technical Note

The estimates in this release were obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS), a national sample survey of 60,000 households conducted monthly for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) by the U.S. Census Bureau. The data in this release relate to the employment status of youth (16- to 24-year-olds) during the months of April-July. This period was selected as being the most representative time frame in which to measure the full summertime transition from school to work. July is the peak summer month of youth employment.

Beginning in January 2008, data reflect revised population controls used in the CPS. For a discussion of the introduction of the revised population controls and the impact that their introduction had on the CPS data, see "Adjustments to Household Survey Population Estimates in January 2008" available at <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cps08adj.pdf> on the BLS Web site.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; TDD message referral phone: 1-800-877-8339.

Reliability

Statistics based on the CPS are subject to both sampling and nonsampling error. When a sample, rather than the entire population, is surveyed, there is a chance that the sample estimates may differ from the "true" population values they represent. The exact difference, or *sampling error*, varies depending upon the particular sample selected, and this variability is measured by the standard error of the estimate. There is about a 90-percent chance, or level of confidence, that an estimate based on a sample will differ by no more than 1.6 standard errors from the "true" population value because of sampling error. BLS analyses are generally conducted at the 90-percent level of confidence.

The CPS data also are affected by *nonsampling error*. Nonsampling error can occur for many reasons, including the failure to sample a segment of the population, inability to obtain information for all respondents in the sample, inability or unwillingness of respondents to provide correct information, and errors made in the collection or processing of the data.

For a full discussion of the reliability of data from the CPS and information on estimating standard errors, see "Reliability of estimates from the CPS" available on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#reliability>.

Definitions

The principal definitions used in this release are described briefly below.

Employed persons are (a) all those who, during the survey reference week, did any work at all as paid employees, worked in their own business, profession, or on their own farm, or who worked 15 hours or more as unpaid workers in a family-operated enterprise; and (b) all those who did not work but had jobs or businesses from which they were temporarily absent due to illness, bad weather, vacation, child-care problems, labor disputes or personal reasons, whether or not they were paid by their employers for the time off and whether or not they were seeking other jobs.

Unemployed persons are all persons who had no employment during the reference week, were available for work, except for temporary illness, and had made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the 4 weeks preceding the survey. Persons who were waiting to be recalled to a job from which they had been laid off need not have been looking for work to be classified as unemployed.

Civilian labor force comprises all persons classified as employed or unemployed.

Unemployment rate represents the number of unemployed persons as a percent of the civilian labor force.

Not in the labor force includes all persons who are not classified as employed or unemployed.

Industry and class of worker for the employed relate to the job held in the survey reference week. Persons with two or more jobs are classified in the job at which they worked the greatest number of hours. In terms of class-of-worker categories, wage and salary workers are those who receive wages, salaries, commissions, tips, or pay-in-kind from a private employer or from a government unit; self-employed persons are those who work for profit or fees in their own business, profession, or trade, or operate a farm; and unpaid family workers are persons working without pay for 15 hours a week or more in an enterprise operated by a member of their family.

Table 1. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 to 24 years of age by sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, April-July 2008

(Numbers in thousands. Data are not seasonally adjusted.)

Employment status, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	April	May	June	July	April-July changes ¹	
					Number	Percent
TOTAL						
Civilian noninstitutional population	37,425	37,449	37,476	37,506	81	.2
Civilian labor force	21,357	22,206	23,916	24,429	3,072	14.4
Participation rate	57.1	59.3	63.8	65.1	8.1	14.1
Employed	19,161	19,254	20,466	21,021	1,860	9.7
Employment-population ratio	51.2	51.4	54.6	56.0	4.8	9.5
Unemployed	2,196	2,952	3,450	3,408	1,212	55.2
Looking for full-time work	1,501	2,083	2,533	2,552	1,051	70.1
Looking for part-time work	695	868	917	856	160	23.0
Unemployment rate	10.3	13.3	14.4	14.0	3.7	35.7
Not in labor force	16,067	15,243	13,560	13,076	-2,991	-18.6
Men						
Civilian noninstitutional population	18,882	18,893	18,906	18,919	37	.2
Civilian labor force	11,151	11,715	12,604	12,882	1,731	15.5
Participation rate	59.1	62.0	66.7	68.1	9.0	15.3
Employed	9,883	10,047	10,662	10,946	1,064	10.8
Employment-population ratio	52.3	53.2	56.4	57.9	5.5	10.5
Unemployed	1,268	1,668	1,941	1,935	667	52.6
Looking for full-time work	935	1,219	1,469	1,483	547	58.5
Looking for part-time work	333	449	472	453	120	36.0
Unemployment rate	11.4	14.2	15.4	15.0	3.7	32.1
Not in labor force	7,732	7,179	6,302	6,037	-1,694	-21.9
Women						
Civilian noninstitutional population	18,542	18,556	18,571	18,587	44	.2
Civilian labor force	10,207	10,491	11,312	11,547	1,341	13.1
Participation rate	55.0	56.5	60.9	62.1	7.1	12.9
Employed	9,278	9,207	9,804	10,075	796	8.6
Employment-population ratio	50.0	49.6	52.8	54.2	4.2	8.3
Unemployed	928	1,284	1,509	1,473	544	58.6
Looking for full-time work	566	864	1,064	1,070	504	89.1
Looking for part-time work	362	419	445	403	40	11.1
Unemployment rate	9.1	12.2	13.3	12.8	3.7	40.2
Not in labor force	8,336	8,065	7,258	7,039	-1,297	-15.6
White						
Civilian noninstitutional population	28,967	28,980	28,995	29,012	44	.2
Civilian labor force	17,213	17,933	19,453	19,760	2,547	14.8
Participation rate	59.4	61.9	67.1	68.1	8.7	14.6
Employed	15,630	15,806	16,952	17,323	1,692	10.8
Employment-population ratio	54.0	54.5	58.5	59.7	5.8	10.7
Unemployed	1,583	2,127	2,501	2,437	854	54.0
Looking for full-time work	1,033	1,463	1,764	1,759	726	70.3
Looking for part-time work	550	663	738	678	128	23.3
Unemployment rate	9.2	11.9	12.9	12.3	3.1	34.1
Not in labor force	11,754	11,047	9,542	9,252	-2,502	-21.3
Black or African American						
Civilian noninstitutional population	5,572	5,579	5,587	5,595	23	.4
Civilian labor force	2,673	2,778	2,934	3,062	389	14.5
Participation rate	48.0	49.8	52.5	54.7	6.7	14.1
Employed	2,236	2,174	2,227	2,302	67	3.0
Employment-population ratio	40.1	39.0	39.9	41.2	1.0	2.5
Unemployed	437	604	707	760	322	73.7
Looking for full-time work	335	470	602	647	312	93.1
Looking for part-time work	102	134	105	112	10	10.0
Unemployment rate	16.4	21.8	24.1	24.8	8.4	51.6
Not in labor force	2,898	2,801	2,653	2,533	-365	-12.6

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 to 24 years of age by sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, April-July 2008 — Continued

(Numbers in thousands. Data are not seasonally adjusted.)

Employment status, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	April	May	June	July	April-July changes ¹	
					Number	Percent
Asian						
Civilian noninstitutional population	1,489	1,498	1,526	1,516	27	1.8
Civilian labor force	650	693	722	767	118	18.1
Participation rate	43.6	46.3	47.3	50.6	7.0	16.0
Employed	609	624	628	703	94	15.5
Employment-population ratio	40.9	41.7	41.1	46.4	5.5	13.4
Unemployed	41	69	94	64	23	57.0
Looking for full-time work	33	46	57	38	5	13.6
Looking for part-time work	8	23	37	26	19	246.8
Unemployment rate	6.3	9.9	13.1	8.4	2.1	32.9
Not in labor force	839	805	804	748	-91	-10.8
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity						
Civilian noninstitutional population	6,622	6,637	6,653	6,669	47	.7
Civilian labor force	3,800	3,817	3,994	4,007	206	5.4
Participation rate	57.4	57.5	60.0	60.1	2.7	4.7
Employed	3,313	3,310	3,389	3,367	54	1.6
Employment-population ratio	50.0	49.9	50.9	50.5	.5	.9
Unemployed	487	508	605	639	152	31.2
Looking for full-time work	346	376	442	487	140	40.5
Looking for part-time work	141	131	163	153	12	8.2
Unemployment rate	12.8	13.3	15.1	16.0	3.1	24.4
Not in labor force	2,821	2,820	2,659	2,662	-159	-5.7

¹ Changes are calculated using unrounded data.

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for

all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 2. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 to 24 years of age by sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, July 2005-2008

(Numbers in thousands. Data are not seasonally adjusted.)

Employment status, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	2005	2006	2007	2008
TOTAL				
Civilian noninstitutional population	36,681	36,989	37,443	37,506
Civilian labor force	24,436	24,664	24,339	24,429
Participation rate	66.6	66.7	65.0	65.1
Employed	21,749	21,914	21,717	21,021
Employment-population ratio	59.3	59.2	58.0	56.0
Unemployed	2,688	2,750	2,622	3,408
Looking for full-time work	1,916	2,028	1,892	2,552
Looking for part-time work	771	722	730	856
Unemployment rate	11.0	11.2	10.8	14.0
Not in labor force	12,244	12,324	13,104	13,076
Men				
Civilian noninstitutional population	18,501	18,675	18,926	18,919
Civilian labor force	12,871	13,024	12,845	12,882
Participation rate	69.6	69.7	67.9	68.1
Employed	11,393	11,568	11,421	10,946
Employment-population ratio	61.6	61.9	60.3	57.9
Unemployed	1,478	1,456	1,424	1,935
Looking for full-time work	1,077	1,152	1,059	1,483
Looking for part-time work	401	303	365	453
Unemployment rate	11.5	11.2	11.1	15.0
Not in labor force	5,630	5,651	6,081	6,037
Women				
Civilian noninstitutional population	18,180	18,314	18,517	18,587
Civilian labor force	11,566	11,641	11,494	11,547
Participation rate	63.6	63.6	62.1	62.1
Employed	10,356	10,346	10,296	10,075
Employment-population ratio	57.0	56.5	55.6	54.2
Unemployed	1,209	1,295	1,198	1,473
Looking for full-time work	839	876	833	1,070
Looking for part-time work	370	419	365	403
Unemployment rate	10.5	11.1	10.4	12.8
Not in labor force	6,614	6,673	7,023	7,039
White				
Civilian noninstitutional population	28,566	28,736	29,012	29,012
Civilian labor force	19,712	20,002	19,734	19,760
Participation rate	69.0	69.6	68.0	68.1
Employed	17,944	18,193	17,899	17,323
Employment-population ratio	62.8	63.3	61.7	59.7
Unemployed	1,768	1,808	1,835	2,437
Looking for full-time work	1,234	1,289	1,304	1,759
Looking for part-time work	533	520	531	678
Unemployment rate	9.0	9.0	9.3	12.3
Not in labor force	8,854	8,735	9,278	9,252
Black or African American				
Civilian noninstitutional population	5,317	5,426	5,539	5,595
Civilian labor force	3,097	3,133	2,998	3,062
Participation rate	58.3	57.7	54.1	54.7
Employed	2,378	2,361	2,382	2,302
Employment-population ratio	44.7	43.5	43.0	41.2
Unemployed	719	772	616	760
Looking for full-time work	544	617	488	647
Looking for part-time work	176	155	128	112
Unemployment rate	23.2	24.7	20.5	24.8
Not in labor force	2,220	2,293	2,541	2,533

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 to 24 years of age by sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, July 2005-2008 — Continued

(Numbers in thousands. Data are not seasonally adjusted.)

Employment status, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	2005	2006	2007	2008
Asian				
Civilian noninstitutional population	1,497	1,474	1,511	1,516
Civilian labor force	794	687	747	767
Participation rate	53.1	46.6	49.4	50.6
Employed	699	631	689	703
Employment-population ratio	46.7	42.8	45.6	46.4
Unemployed	95	56	58	64
Looking for full-time work	58	33	32	38
Looking for part-time work	38	23	26	26
Unemployment rate	12.0	8.2	7.7	8.4
Not in labor force	702	787	764	748
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity				
Civilian noninstitutional population	6,335	6,406	6,597	6,669
Civilian labor force	3,800	3,943	3,928	4,007
Participation rate	60.0	61.5	59.5	60.1
Employed	3,428	3,534	3,465	3,367
Employment-population ratio	54.1	55.2	52.5	50.5
Unemployed	372	409	464	639
Looking for full-time work	292	287	341	487
Looking for part-time work	80	122	123	153
Unemployment rate	9.8	10.4	11.8	16.0
Not in labor force	2,536	2,463	2,669	2,662

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic

or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 3. Employed persons 16 to 24 years of age by industry, class of worker, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, July 2007-2008

(Numbers in thousands. Data are not seasonally adjusted.)

Industry and class of worker	Total		White		Black or African American		Asian		Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	
	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008
Total employed	21,717	21,021	17,899	17,323	2,382	2,302	689	703	3,465	3,367
Agriculture and related industries	345	418	326	412	4	1	6	1	97	68
Nonagricultural industries	21,372	20,604	17,574	16,911	2,377	2,301	683	702	3,368	3,299
Private wage and salary workers	19,375	18,601	15,975	15,246	2,107	2,089	625	643	3,070	3,033
Mining	97	107	91	95	4	4	-	3	10	3
Construction	1,558	1,217	1,439	1,122	56	42	5	9	477	364
Manufacturing	1,398	1,390	1,145	1,171	154	106	71	63	224	296
Durable goods	818	820	655	714	94	50	47	33	71	165
Nondurable goods	580	571	491	457	61	56	23	31	153	131
Wholesale trade	442	371	408	315	26	32	0	7	107	66
Retail trade	4,242	3,880	3,456	3,119	505	495	132	148	589	566
Transportation and utilities	479	464	380	335	71	89	14	10	90	96
Information	384	369	289	301	49	32	19	19	54	57
Financial activities	980	979	784	806	108	106	57	50	171	179
Professional and business services	1,672	1,659	1,355	1,355	208	172	62	83	259	281
Education and health services	2,238	2,175	1,749	1,645	353	388	69	78	308	227
Leisure and hospitality	4,710	4,926	3,861	4,063	490	550	173	127	612	691
Other services	1,174	1,064	1,019	918	82	74	23	46	168	206
Government	1,607	1,538	1,267	1,247	234	197	50	50	196	169
Federal	171	182	127	148	25	20	13	2	16	25
State	505	505	378	385	86	72	21	27	67	56
Local	930	852	763	714	123	105	16	22	113	88
Self-employed and unpaid family workers	390	464	332	418	36	15	9	9	102	96

- Dash represents or rounds to zero.

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for

all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.