

News

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EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG YOUTH—SUMMER 2009

From April to July 2009, the number of employed youth 16 to 24 years old increased by 1.6 million to 19.3 million, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. This year, however, the proportion of young people who were employed in July was 51.4 percent, the lowest July rate on record for the series, which began in 1948. (July is the traditional summertime peak for youth employment.) Unemployment among youth increased by 1.1 million between April and July 2009, about the same as in the summer of 2008. (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 2.6 million to a total of 23.7 million in July. (See table 1.)

The labor force participation rate for youth—the proportion of their population working or looking for work—was 63.0 percent in July 2009, down by 2.1 percentage points from July 2008 and 14.5 percentage points below its peak for that month in 1989 (77.5 percent). The youth participation rate was the lowest July rate since 1955 (62.8 percent).

The July 2009 labor force participation rate for 16- to 24-year-old men, at 64.9 percent, was down by 3.2 percentage points from a year earlier, and the rate for women, at 61.1 percent, was little changed 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 18 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 11 percentage points since then.

The July 2009 participation rates for whites fell by 2.1 percentage points to 66.0 percent. The rates for blacks at 52.9 percent and Hispanics at 59.4 percent were little changed from a year earlier. For all three groups, labor force participation rates were significantly lower than their peak levels reached in

July 1989. The participation rate for Asian youth in July 2009, at 49.3 percent, was little different from July 2008. (See table 2.)

Employment

In July 2009, 19.3 million 16- to 24-year-olds were employed. This summer's increase in youth employment was lower than last year's (1.6 million vs. 1.9 million). The employment-population ratio for youth—the proportion of the 16- to 24-year-old civilian noninstitutional population that was employed—was 51.4 percent in July, down 4.6 percentage points from July 2008. The ratio has fallen by nearly 18 percentage points since its peak in July 1989. The steep decline from July 2008 to July 2009 reflects, in part, continued weak labor market conditions due to the recession that began in December 2007. (See table 2.)

The employment-population ratio for young men was 52.2 percent in July 2009, down from 57.9 percent in July 2008. The employment-population ratios for women (50.5 percent), whites (55.2 percent), blacks (36.4 percent), Asians (41.3 percent), and Hispanics (46.5 percent) in July 2009 also were lower than a year earlier.

In July 2009, 25 percent of employed youth worked in the leisure and hospitality industry (which includes food services). Another 20 percent worked in the retail trade industry. (See table 3.)

Unemployment

In July 2009, 4.4 million youth were unemployed, up by nearly 1.0 million from July 2008. The youth unemployment rate was 18.5 percent in July 2009, the highest July rate on record for the series, which began in 1948. As with the decline in employment, the increase in youth unemployment in the summer of 2009 reflected a weak job market. The July 2009 unemployment rates for young men (19.7 percent), women (17.3 percent), whites (16.4 percent), blacks (31.2 percent), Asians (16.3 percent), and Hispanics (21.7 percent) increased from a year earlier. (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 2009, 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 2009" available at <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cps09adj.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; Federal Relay Service: (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 2009

(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	37,536	37,549	37,566	37,586	50	0.1
Civilian labor force	21,060	21,439	23,379	23,691	2,631	12.5
Participation rate	56.1	57.1	62.2	63.0	6.9	12.3
Employed	17,739	17,588	18,726	19,304	1,566	8.8
Employment-population ratio	47.3	46.8	49.8	51.4	4.1	8.7
Unemployed	3,321	3,851	4,653	4,387	1,066	32.1
Looking for full-time work	2,449	2,975	3,676	3,430	981	40.1
Looking for part-time work	872	876	977	957	85	9.7
Unemployment rate	15.8	18.0	19.9	18.5	2.7	17.4
Not in labor force	16,476	16,111	14,188	13,895	-2,582	-15.7
Men						
Civilian noninstitutional population	18,913	18,919	18,926	18,935	22	.1
Civilian labor force	10,972	11,228	12,154	12,298	1,326	12.1
Participation rate	58.0	59.4	64.2	64.9	6.9	12.0
Employed	8,915	8,896	9,564	9,880	966	10.8
Employment-population ratio	47.1	47.0	50.5	52.2	5.0	10.7
Unemployed	2,057	2,333	2,590	2,418	360	17.5
Looking for full-time work	1,584	1,869	2,121	1,973	389	24.6
Looking for part-time work	473	464	469	444	-29	-6.1
Unemployment rate	18.8	20.8	21.3	19.7	.9	4.8
Not in labor force	7,941	7,690	6,772	6,637	-1,304	-16.4
Women						
Civilian noninstitutional population	18,623	18,631	18,640	18,650	27	.1
Civilian labor force	10,088	10,211	11,225	11,393	1,305	12.9
Participation rate	54.2	54.8	60.2	61.1	6.9	12.8
Employed	8,824	8,692	9,162	9,424	600	6.8
Employment-population ratio	47.4	46.7	49.2	50.5	3.1	6.6
Unemployed	1,264	1,519	2,063	1,969	705	55.8
Looking for full-time work	865	1,106	1,556	1,456	592	68.5
Looking for part-time work	399	412	507	513	113	28.4
Unemployment rate	12.5	14.9	18.4	17.3	4.8	38.0
Not in labor force	8,536	8,420	7,415	7,257	-1,278	-15.0
White						
Civilian noninstitutional population	28,989	28,993	29,001	29,010	21	.1
Civilian labor force	16,966	17,434	18,914	19,147	2,181	12.9
Participation rate	58.5	60.1	65.2	66.0	7.5	12.8
Employed	14,630	14,619	15,512	16,000	1,370	9.4
Employment-population ratio	50.5	50.4	53.5	55.2	4.7	9.3
Unemployed	2,336	2,815	3,403	3,147	811	34.7
Looking for full-time work	1,669	2,152	2,644	2,403	734	44.0
Looking for part-time work	667	663	758	744	77	11.5
Unemployment rate	13.8	16.1	18.0	16.4	2.7	19.4
Not in labor force	12,023	11,559	10,087	9,863	-2,160	-18.0
Black or African American						
Civilian noninstitutional population	5,645	5,650	5,656	5,662	18	.3
Civilian labor force	2,721	2,611	2,947	2,995	274	10.1
Participation rate	48.2	46.2	52.1	52.9	4.7	9.7
Employed	1,991	1,848	2,034	2,060	69	3.5
Employment-population ratio	35.3	32.7	36.0	36.4	1.1	3.2
Unemployed	731	763	913	935	205	28.0
Looking for full-time work	597	620	774	772	175	29.3
Looking for part-time work	134	143	139	163	29	21.9
Unemployment rate	26.9	29.2	31.0	31.2	4.4	16.3
Not in labor force	2,923	3,039	2,709	2,667	-256	-8.8

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 2009 — 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	1,506	1,507	1,508	1,500	-6	-.4
Civilian labor force	616	633	719	740	124	20.1
Participation rate	40.9	42.0	47.7	49.3	8.4	20.6
Employed	537	526	585	619	82	15.2
Employment-population ratio	35.7	34.9	38.8	41.3	5.6	15.7
Unemployed	79	107	134	121	42	53.0
Looking for full-time work	56	73	94	96	40	71.4
Looking for part-time work	23	34	41	24	2	7.5
Unemployment rate	12.8	16.9	18.7	16.3	3.5	27.4
Not in labor force	889	875	789	760	-130	-14.6
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity						
Civilian noninstitutional population	6,707	6,722	6,737	6,752	45	.7
Civilian labor force	3,694	3,704	3,892	4,014	319	8.6
Participation rate	55.1	55.1	57.8	59.4	4.4	7.9
Employed	3,060	2,942	3,096	3,143	83	2.7
Employment-population ratio	45.6	43.8	46.0	46.5	.9	2.0
Unemployed	634	763	796	871	237	37.3
Looking for full-time work	485	585	639	693	208	43.0
Looking for part-time work	150	178	156	178	28	19.0
Unemployment rate	17.2	20.6	20.5	21.7	4.5	26.4
Not in labor force	3,013	3,017	2,845	2,738	-275	-9.1

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. In addition, persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino

may be of any race and, therefore, are classified by ethnicity as well as by race. Data reflect revised population controls introduced with January 2009 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 2006-2009

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

Employment status, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	2006 ¹	2007 ¹	2008 ¹	2009 ¹
TOTAL				
Civilian noninstitutional population	36,989	37,443	37,506	37,586
Civilian labor force	24,664	24,339	24,429	23,691
Participation rate	66.7	65.0	65.1	63.0
Employed	21,914	21,717	21,021	19,304
Employment-population ratio	59.2	58.0	56.0	51.4
Unemployed	2,750	2,622	3,408	4,387
Looking for full-time work	2,028	1,892	2,552	3,430
Looking for part-time work	722	730	856	957
Unemployment rate	11.2	10.8	14.0	18.5
Not in labor force	12,324	13,104	13,076	13,895
Men				
Civilian noninstitutional population	18,675	18,926	18,919	18,935
Civilian labor force	13,024	12,845	12,882	12,298
Participation rate	69.7	67.9	68.1	64.9
Employed	11,568	11,421	10,946	9,880
Employment-population ratio	61.9	60.3	57.9	52.2
Unemployed	1,456	1,424	1,935	2,418
Looking for full-time work	1,152	1,059	1,483	1,973
Looking for part-time work	303	365	453	444
Unemployment rate	11.2	11.1	15.0	19.7
Not in labor force	5,651	6,081	6,037	6,637
Women				
Civilian noninstitutional population	18,314	18,517	18,587	18,650
Civilian labor force	11,641	11,494	11,547	11,393
Participation rate	63.6	62.1	62.1	61.1
Employed	10,346	10,296	10,075	9,424
Employment-population ratio	56.5	55.6	54.2	50.5
Unemployed	1,295	1,198	1,473	1,969
Looking for full-time work	876	833	1,070	1,456
Looking for part-time work	419	365	403	513
Unemployment rate	11.1	10.4	12.8	17.3
Not in labor force	6,673	7,023	7,039	7,257
White				
Civilian noninstitutional population	28,736	29,012	29,012	29,010
Civilian labor force	20,002	19,734	19,760	19,147
Participation rate	69.6	68.0	68.1	66.0
Employed	18,193	17,899	17,323	16,000
Employment-population ratio	63.3	61.7	59.7	55.2
Unemployed	1,808	1,835	2,437	3,147
Looking for full-time work	1,289	1,304	1,759	2,403
Looking for part-time work	520	531	678	744
Unemployment rate	9.0	9.3	12.3	16.4
Not in labor force	8,735	9,278	9,252	9,863
Black or African American				
Civilian noninstitutional population	5,426	5,539	5,595	5,662
Civilian labor force	3,133	2,998	3,062	2,995
Participation rate	57.7	54.1	54.7	52.9
Employed	2,361	2,382	2,302	2,060
Employment-population ratio	43.5	43.0	41.2	36.4
Unemployed	772	616	760	935
Looking for full-time work	617	488	647	772
Looking for part-time work	155	128	112	163
Unemployment rate	24.7	20.5	24.8	31.2
Not in labor force	2,293	2,541	2,533	2,667

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 2006-2009 — Continued

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

Employment status, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	2006 ¹	2007 ¹	2008 ¹	2009 ¹
Asian				
Civilian noninstitutional population	1,474	1,511	1,516	1,500
Civilian labor force	687	747	767	740
Participation rate	46.6	49.4	50.6	49.3
Employed	631	689	703	619
Employment-population ratio	42.8	45.6	46.4	41.3
Unemployed	56	58	64	121
Looking for full-time work	33	32	38	96
Looking for part-time work	23	26	26	24
Unemployment rate	8.2	7.7	8.4	16.3
Not in labor force	787	764	748	760
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity				
Civilian noninstitutional population	6,406	6,597	6,669	6,752
Civilian labor force	3,943	3,928	4,007	4,014
Participation rate	61.5	59.5	60.1	59.4
Employed	3,534	3,465	3,367	3,143
Employment-population ratio	55.2	52.5	50.5	46.5
Unemployed	409	464	639	871
Looking for full-time work	287	341	487	693
Looking for part-time work	122	123	153	178
Unemployment rate	10.4	11.8	16.0	21.7
Not in labor force	2,463	2,669	2,662	2,738

¹ Data not comparable with prior years due to revisions in the population controls.

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. In addition, persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race and, therefore, are classified by ethnicity as well as by race.

Table 3. Employed persons 16 to 24 years of age by industry, class of worker, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, July 2008-2009

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

Industry and class of worker	Total		White		Black or African American		Asian		Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	
	2008 ¹	2009 ¹	2008 ¹	2009 ¹	2008 ¹	2009 ¹	2008 ¹	2009 ¹	2008 ¹	2009 ¹
Total employed	21,021	19,304	17,323	16,000	2,302	2,060	703	619	3,367	3,143
Agriculture and related industries	418	381	412	361	1	7	1	–	68	72
Nonagricultural industries	20,604	18,923	16,911	15,639	2,301	2,053	702	619	3,299	3,071
Private wage and salary workers	18,601	16,986	15,246	14,061	2,089	1,831	643	569	3,033	2,825
Mining	107	44	95	44	4	–	3	–	3	3
Construction	1,217	871	1,122	806	42	35	9	14	364	251
Manufacturing	1,390	1,068	1,171	882	106	88	63	57	296	252
Durable goods	820	580	714	498	50	29	33	32	165	117
Nondurable goods	571	488	457	385	56	59	31	25	131	135
Wholesale trade	371	321	315	273	32	29	7	5	66	57
Retail trade	3,880	3,851	3,119	3,061	495	513	148	172	566	577
Transportation and utilities	464	413	335	322	89	66	10	8	96	95
Information	369	317	301	237	32	54	19	21	57	45
Financial activities	979	823	806	702	106	74	50	31	179	140
Professional and business services	1,659	1,350	1,355	1,097	172	145	83	49	281	233
Education and health services	2,175	2,141	1,645	1,705	388	306	78	61	227	307
Leisure and hospitality	4,926	4,799	4,063	4,053	550	461	127	122	691	745
Other services	1,064	988	918	879	74	62	46	30	206	119
Government	1,538	1,588	1,247	1,297	197	175	50	47	169	188
Federal	182	201	148	133	20	35	2	12	25	28
State	505	516	385	419	72	70	27	10	56	57
Local	852	871	714	745	105	71	22	25	88	103
Self-employed and unpaid family workers	464	350	418	282	15	46	9	4	96	58

¹ Data not comparable with prior years due to revisions in the population controls.

– 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. In addition, persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race and, therefore, are classified by ethnicity as well as by race.