

Unemployment in 1982: the cost to workers and their families

The March 1983 work experience survey provides a close look at joblessness by extent and duration and the effect on family income and the incidence of poverty

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Joblessness reached a postwar high in 1982. On "average," 10.7 million persons were unemployed during the year, 9.7 percent of the labor force. By the end of the year, when the economy finally ended its deep recessionary slide, unemployment had risen even higher, with the number of jobless persons (seasonally adjusted) reaching 12.0 million in December and with the rate of joblessness peaking at 10.8 percent.

What these numbers, based on data from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS),¹ do not really tell us is how many different persons among the entire population encountered unemployment during the course of the year, how long they were unemployed, how many weeks they still managed to work, and how their earnings and family income compared with those of workers who remained free of unemployment. For this additional information on the "pervasiveness" of unemployment and for a glance at its impact on the economic well-being of American workers, we must turn to special data from the "work experience" survey.

The work experience survey, conducted each March as a special supplement to the CPS, relates to the activities of the entire civilian population over the previous calendar year. It obtains a complete count of all the persons with some employment or unemployment, as well as data on the

earnings of workers and the income of their families from other sources. Because there are many persons who change their labor force status during the course of a year, the number with some employment or unemployment as estimated through the work experience survey is generally much higher than the annual averages for employment and unemployment based on data from the monthly surveys.

For 1982, the work experience survey shows that the number of persons with a job for at least part of the year was 116.3 million. This number was 17 percent higher than the "average" civilian employment level for the year. And the number of persons with some unemployment, as measured through the same retrospective survey, was 26.5 million, about 2.5 times the "average" number for the year. Overall, 22.0 percent of all persons with any labor force activity during 1982 (in terms of having either worked or looked for work) were found to have experienced some unemployment during the year. This percentage was more than double the annual average employment rate for the same year (9.7 percent).

In this article, we look at how the work experience numbers for 1982 changed *vis-a-vis* similar data for previous years, particularly 1981. We then examine the earnings and family income of the workers who encountered some joblessness. Finally, we look at workers who, because of unfavorable economic conditions, had to work part time during the year or who, because of their perception of the job market, remained on the sidelines for at least part of the year.

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The recessionary impact on jobs

For most of 1982, the American economy was in the throes of a deep recession which had begun the previous year and which had brought about a substantial decline in the demand for goods and some services. For example, real GNP (the gross national product measured in constant dollars) declined by 3.0 percent from the third quarter of 1981 to the fourth quarter of 1982. Although the recession is considered to have bottomed as of November 1982,² it was not until the following January that any significant improvement was noticed in the monthly statistics on employment and unemployment. All of 1982 was thus a poor year in terms of the demand for workers, and the work experience data for the year are a reflection of this situation.

Of course, even 1980 and 1981, affected by a previous recession, were not banner years in terms of employment growth. This is clearly shown in the following tabulation, which contrasts the rather meager jobs gain over the 1979-

82 period with the much larger average gains posted during the 1970 decade when, except for the 1973-75 period, the economy was on a more steady upward path:

	1969	1979	1980	1981	1982
Persons with some employment during the year (millions)	92.5	115.0	115.8	116.8	116.3
Persons with year-round full-time jobs (millions) ...	52.8	64.7	64.9	65.3	64.0

Over the 1969-79 period, the year-to-year gains in the number of persons with some employment averaged 2.3 million. Of this average annual gain, a little more than half, or 1.2 million, was in year-round full-time jobs. In sharp contrast, over the 1979-82 period, which was plagued by two back-to-back recessions, the number of persons with

Table 1. Work experience of population during the year by extent of employment, gender, race, and Hispanic origin, 1981-82

[Numbers in thousands]

Extent of employment	Total		Men		Women	
	1981	1982	1981	1982	1981	1982
TOTAL						
Civilian noninstitutional population	171,666	173,656	81,231	82,260	90,436	91,395
Total who worked or looked for work	119,658	120,235	65,950	66,160	53,708	54,074
Percent of the population	69.7	69.2	81.2	80.4	59.4	59.2
Total who worked during the year	116,794	116,277	64,769	64,365	52,025	51,912
Percent of the population	68.0	67.0	79.7	78.2	57.5	56.8
Full time ¹ :						
50 to 52 weeks	65,292	63,973	41,806	40,129	23,486	23,844
48 to 49 weeks	2,446	2,317	1,567	1,381	880	936
40 to 47 weeks	5,888	5,772	3,436	3,377	2,452	2,395
27 to 39 weeks	6,102	6,017	3,335	3,575	2,767	2,441
14 to 26 weeks	6,138	6,263	3,286	3,654	2,852	2,609
1 to 13 weeks	4,804	5,233	2,379	2,800	2,425	2,433
Part time ² :						
50 to 52 weeks	9,133	9,812	2,946	3,118	6,187	6,694
48 to 49 weeks	827	815	215	253	612	562
40 to 47 weeks	2,425	2,416	811	912	1,614	1,503
27 to 39 weeks	3,345	3,463	1,059	1,210	2,286	2,253
14 to 26 weeks	4,711	4,623	1,782	1,714	2,929	2,910
1 to 13 weeks	5,684	5,574	2,149	2,241	3,535	3,332
White						
Civilian noninstitutional population	149,136	150,427	71,018	71,808	78,118	78,618
Total who worked or looked for work	104,668	104,942	58,378	58,560	46,290	46,381
Percent of the population	70.2	69.8	82.2	81.6	59.3	59.0
Total who worked during the year	102,825	102,192	57,615	57,273	45,210	44,918
Percent of the population	68.9	67.9	81.1	79.8	57.9	57.1
Black						
Civilian noninstitutional population	18,480	18,823	8,236	8,398	10,244	10,425
Total who worked or looked for work	12,153	12,276	6,030	5,994	6,123	6,282
Percent of the population	65.8	65.2	73.2	71.4	59.8	60.3
Total who worked during the year	11,211	11,168	5,653	5,521	5,558	5,647
Percent of the population	60.7	59.3	68.6	65.7	54.3	54.2
Hispanic origin						
Civilian noninstitutional population	9,227	9,384	4,393	4,406	4,834	4,978
Total who worked or looked for work	6,293	6,331	3,678	3,646	2,615	2,685
Percent of the population	68.2	67.5	83.7	82.7	54.1	53.9
Total who worked during the year	6,125	6,078	3,605	3,544	2,520	2,534

¹Usually worked 35 hours or more per week.

²Usually worked 1 to 34 hours per week.

NOTE: Detail for races and Hispanic-origin groups will not sum to totals because data

for the "other races" group are not presented and Hispanics are included in both the white and black population groups.

any type of job during the year posted an average annual gain of only 0.4 million. And the proportion with year-round full-time jobs showed an actual decline for this period, reflecting primarily the severity of the 1981-82 recession.

As indicated in greater detail in table 1, the number of persons with some employment during the year was half a million lower in 1982 than it had been in 1981. There was an even bigger drop—of 1.3 million—in the number of year-round full-time workers, that is, those working 35 or more hours a week 50 to 52 weeks. The drop in their number reflects the sharp cutbacks in the workweek as well as actual layoffs of workers. The large increase—from 9.1 to 9.8 million—in the number of persons working mostly part time the entire year was a further reflection of the cyclical cutback in hours.

Table 1 also shows that it was men who accounted for nearly all of the employment declines between 1981 and 1982, particularly among those with year-round, full-time jobs. The number of women with some employment was almost the same for 1982 as for 1981—about 52 million. And there were actually more women with year-round full-time employment in 1982 than a year earlier. The relative stability in the employment of women reflects both their growing attachment to the job market as well as the fact that, in this as in other recessions, the sharpest rise in unemployment occurred in goods-producing industries—such as construction, autos, and steel—which are largely staffed by men. Although women have been moving gradually even into nontraditional fields, they are still concentrated in the less cyclically sensitive service-producing industries. However, even these industries did not show much growth during 1982, and this caused at least a pause in the historical rise in female employment.

The number of blacks and Hispanics with jobs was not significantly lower in 1982 than in 1981. However, the fact that their employment level did not increase at all means that there was a drop in their employment/population ratios as their populations increased at a relatively rapid pace.

The increase in joblessness

With employment showing a sizable decline for men and a virtual stalemate for women, it is not surprising that there was a sharp rise in 1982 in the number of persons with a period of unemployment during the year. The total rose to 26.5 million from 23.4 million in 1981, with an increase of 2.3 million among men and nearly 850,000 among women. Taken as a proportion of the labor force, these numbers represented 23.3 percent of all men and 20.4 percent of all women with some job market activity in 1982. (See table 2.)

Not only were there more persons with some unemployment in 1982 than in 1981, they were also unemployed for longer periods. As shown in table 2, of those with some work during the year—and they were the great majority of the unemployed—the proportion with relatively short unemployment spells of 1 to 4 weeks shrank from 4.0 to 3.5 million. At the same time, the proportions unemployed 27 weeks or more (that is, in excess of 6 months) increased from 3.6 to 5.0 million. Also of interest is the fact that the number of persons with two or more spells of unemployment during the year increased from 7.0 million to 7.6 million during 1982. Taking into account all spells, the average (median) duration of unemployment was 15.4 weeks in 1982 versus 13.3 weeks in 1981.

As a further reflection of the cyclical drop in the demand for labor, there were nearly 4.0 million persons in 1982,

Table 2. Extent of unemployment during the year by gender, 1981-82

(Numbers in thousands)

Extent of employment	Total		Men		Women	
	1981	1982	1981	1982	1981	1982
Total who worked or looked for work	119,658	120,235	65,950	66,160	53,708	54,074
Percent with unemployment	19.5	22.0	20.0	23.3	19.0	20.4
Total with unemployment	23,382	26,493	13,175	15,441	10,207	11,052
Did not work but looked for work	2,863	3,958	1,181	1,795	1,682	2,163
1 to 14 weeks	1,499	1,730	430	508	1,069	1,221
15 weeks or more	1,364	2,228	751	1,286	613	942
Worked during the year	20,518	22,535	11,994	13,646	8,525	8,889
Year-round workers ¹ with 1 or 2 weeks of unemployment	1,170	1,155	733	747	437	408
Part-year workers ² with unemployment	19,348	21,380	11,260	12,900	8,088	8,481
1 to 4 weeks	3,991	3,483	1,985	1,736	2,006	1,747
5 to 10 weeks	4,040	4,184	2,296	2,372	1,744	1,813
11 to 14 weeks	2,815	2,808	1,667	1,721	1,148	1,087
15 to 26 weeks	4,940	5,863	3,057	3,911	1,884	1,952
27 weeks or more	3,562	5,041	2,256	3,159	1,306	1,882
With 2 or more spells of unemployment	6,986	7,573	4,478	4,913	2,508	2,660
2 spells	3,750	3,854	2,329	2,421	1,421	1,433
3 or more spells	3,237	3,719	2,149	2,492	1,087	1,227
Median weeks of unemployment	13.3	15.4	14.2	16.9	12.0	13.5

¹Worked 50 weeks or more.

²Worked less than 50 weeks.

compared with about 2.9 million in 1981, who looked for work but found none during the year. While many may have been sporadic jobseekers, more than half reported that they had looked for work for 15 or more weeks.

The already high incidence of unemployment among blacks and Hispanics rose even higher in 1982. Among blacks, 33.4 percent of all those with some labor force activity reported some unemployment, up from 30.5 percent in 1981. Among Hispanics, the proportion with some unemployment was 27.1 percent, up from 23.7 percent in 1981. (See table 3.)

An even greater difference between unemployed blacks and other jobless workers was the proportion who, although

seeking work, failed to obtain any employment during the year. For white and Hispanic jobseekers, the proportions who never held a job in 1982 were very close, 13 and 15 percent. Among blacks, the proportion of jobseekers who apparently never found any work was much higher—27 percent.

Unemployment and family income

With unemployment generally longer in 1982 than in 1981, its effect on earnings and on family income became obviously more burdensome. However, even in the unfavorable labor market climate of 1982 there were many workers for whom unemployment was a rather fleeting problem,

Table 3. Extent of unemployment during the year by race, Hispanic origin, and gender, 1981-82

(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristic	Total		Men		Women	
	1981	1982	1981	1982	1981	1982
WHITE						
Total who worked or looked for work	104,668	104,942	58,378	58,560	46,290	46,381
Percent with unemployment	18.3	20.7	18.8	22.0	17.7	19.1
Total with unemployment	19,140	21,730	10,963	12,883	8,177	8,847
Did not work but looked for work	1,843	2,750	763	1,287	1,080	1,463
Worked during the year	17,297	18,981	10,200	11,596	7,097	7,384
Percent distribution	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Year-round workers ¹ with 1 or 2 weeks of unemployment	6.0	5.3	6.5	5.6	5.4	4.8
Part-year workers ² with unemployment	94.0	94.7	93.5	94.4	94.6	95.2
1 to 4 weeks	20.2	16.2	17.0	13.3	24.6	20.7
5 to 14 weeks	33.6	31.6	33.2	30.5	34.2	33.4
15 weeks or more	40.2	46.9	43.3	50.6	35.8	41.1
With 2 or more spells of unemployment	33.8	33.3	37.2	35.7	29.0	29.5
Median weeks of unemployment	13.0	14.9	14.0	16.4	11.7	13.0
BLACK						
Total who worked or looked for work	12,153	12,276	6,030	5,994	6,123	6,282
Percent with unemployment	30.5	33.4	31.2	36.5	29.7	30.4
Total with unemployment	3,703	4,096	1,884	2,186	1,819	1,910
Did not work but looked for work	942	1,108	377	473	565	635
Worked during the year	2,761	2,988	1,507	1,713	1,254	1,275
Percent distribution	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Year-round workers ¹ with 1 or 2 weeks of unemployment	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.6	4.0	3.3
Part-year workers ² with unemployment	95.9	96.0	95.9	95.4	96.0	96.7
1 to 4 weeks	15.4	10.8	13.5	8.7	17.7	13.5
5 to 14 weeks	31.8	27.5	31.5	26.7	32.1	28.7
15 weeks or more	48.7	57.6	50.8	60.0	46.2	58.5
With 2 or more spells of unemployment	34.7	36.2	37.1	38.3	31.9	33.4
Median weeks of unemployment	15.3	18.9	17.3	19.8	14.4	17.5
HISPANIC ORIGIN						
Total who worked or looked for work	6,293	6,331	3,678	3,646	2,615	2,685
Percent with unemployment	23.7	27.1	24.2	28.5	22.9	25.3
Total with unemployment	1,491	1,717	891	1,038	600	679
Did not work but looked for work	167	253	72	101	95	152
Worked during the year	1,324	1,464	819	937	505	527
Percent distribution	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Year-round workers ¹ with 1 or 2 weeks of unemployment	4.4	2.9	4.8	3.4	3.7	2.0
Part-year workers ² with unemployment	95.6	97.1	95.2	96.6	96.3	98.0
1 to 4 weeks	17.2	13.0	13.8	10.6	22.9	17.1
5 to 14 weeks	32.2	31.2	31.8	30.1	32.9	33.0
15 weeks or more	46.2	53.0	49.6	55.9	40.6	47.9
With 2 or more spells of unemployment	37.6	33.9	40.4	36.6	33.0	29.2
Median weeks of unemployment	14.5	16.8	15.9	17.7	12.8	14.7

¹Worked 50 weeks or more.

²Worked less than 50 weeks.

NOTE: Detail for racial and Hispanic-origin groups will not sum to totals because data for the "other races" group are not presented and Hispanics are included in both the white and black population groups.

Table 4. Earnings and family income of workers by industry, unemployment status, and incidence of poverty, 1982

[Numbers in thousands]

Industry	Workers with no unemployment				Workers with some unemployment				
	Number	Median annual earnings	Median family income	Percent in poverty	Number	Percent of all workers	Median annual earnings	Median family income	Percent in poverty
Total	93,742	\$12,328	\$27,930	5.6	22,535	19.4	\$ 5,358	\$19,503	16.6
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	3,451	4,031	17,175	22.7	797	18.8	2,917	13,226	33.8
Mining	924	24,897	33,149	3.0	346	27.2	15,104	23,083	9.2
Construction	4,460	14,678	25,701	5.9	2,816	38.7	7,978	18,645	17.5
Manufacturing	17,248	17,243	29,010	2.8	5,914	25.5	8,563	21,210	10.5
Durable goods	9,932	18,658	30,156	2.1	3,718	27.2	10,184	22,369	7.7
Lumber, wood products, and furniture	821	12,004	22,568	6.5	475	36.7	6,841	18,671	18.3
Stone, clay, and glass products	429	17,739	29,534	2.3	203	32.1	12,469	20,863	6.0
Primary metal industries	645	22,999	30,467	1.6	404	38.5	13,064	24,644	4.5
Fabricated metal products	1,216	16,776	28,784	2.4	409	25.2	9,659	21,986	9.2
Machinery, except electrical	2,169	20,485	31,343	1.0	771	26.2	11,210	23,657	3.9
Electric machinery, equipment, and supplies	1,753	17,174	30,202	2.5	565	24.4	9,039	22,175	7.3
Automobiles	704	23,177	33,299	2.0	411	36.8	16,672	27,560	3.5
Aircraft and other transportation equipment	1,143	23,149	34,645	.9	221	16.2	10,204	23,090	4.8
Professional and photographic equipment, and watches	600	17,934	33,446	.4	104	14.7	8,094	22,722	10.5
Miscellaneous manufacturing industries	452	12,183	26,313	2.9	156	25.6	5,812	16,219	16.5
Nondurable goods	7,316	14,915	27,368	3.7	2,196	23.1	6,528	18,539	15.1
Transportation, communications, and other public utilities	6,465	20,245	30,838	2.6	1,103	14.6	8,133	21,831	12.2
Wholesale trade	4,122	16,426	30,088	3.4	715	14.8	6,722	21,033	12.3
Retail trade	15,859	6,515	25,700	7.9	4,322	21.4	2,833	19,038	19.3
Finance, insurance, and real estate	5,994	13,392	31,552	2.3	708	10.6	5,353	18,118	11.4
Business and repair services	4,378	11,367	26,520	7.0	1,250	22.2	4,458	19,088	19.6
Private households	1,340	920	17,080	20.6	332	19.9	551	11,671	37.5
Personal services, except private households	2,689	5,685	20,630	12.0	647	19.4	2,996	15,307	23.2
Entertainment and recreational services	1,177	4,528	27,333	7.5	423	26.4	2,898	17,514	21.4
Professional and related services	20,890	11,903	29,425	4.3	2,670	11.3	4,090	19,677	18.2
Public administration	4,746	17,295	30,748	2.6	492	9.4	5,015	18,645	18.5

although of some economic consequence. For example, 1.2 million were year-round workers, meaning they were employed for at least 50 weeks and were without work no more than a week or two. (See table 2.) An additional 3.5 million, classified as part-year workers, were unemployed up to 4 weeks. Altogether, nearly 5 million persons, or almost one-fifth of the unemployed in 1982, experienced relatively short spells of joblessness. The effect of such spells on earnings and total family income could not have been very large.

When spells of unemployment were much longer—and it should be reemphasized that the overall median exceeded 15 weeks—the losses in earnings and family income were obviously much larger. In such cases, the total income available for the year to the family of the affected worker depended on three factors: (1) the type of job lost and its wage level; (2) the amount of earnings that might accrue to the family from the jobs of other members; and (3) the income obtained from other sources, including unemployment insurance benefits and other transfer payments.

For workers with some unemployment in 1982, median annual pay was not much over \$5,000. Nevertheless, their family income averaged nearly \$20,000, reflecting the importance of having more than one jobholder in the family—which has become the rule rather than the exception—as well as possible transfer payments.

Table 4 also shows that only 17 percent of the workers with some unemployment in 1982 were in families whose income for the year fell below the Federally designated

poverty thresholds.³ What is also interesting is the association of the type of industry in which these jobless persons had worked with their annual earnings, family income, and the probability of falling into poverty. In general, the persons whose principal jobs were in the various durable goods manufacturing industries, in which average wages tend to be much higher than in most other industries,⁴ had the lowest probability of poverty. For example, of the workers who lost jobs in the auto industry, only 3.5 percent wound up with family income below the poverty line. In contrast, about one-third of the jobless agricultural workers and one-fifth of those who had been in the various service industries had family income below the poverty line. Indeed, there were some industries, notably agriculture, household services, and personal services, in which the probability of impoverishment was relatively high even for workers with no unemployment whatsoever during the year. This is primarily a reflection of the wide disparity in wages among the various industries.

The number of wage earners in a family also affects the likelihood of poverty among the unemployed. Altogether, 17.5 million families had one or more members out of work in 1982. About 18 percent of such families reported total income below the poverty line. (See table 5.) However, if the family was headed by a married couple and had two jobholders or more, the probability of poverty was only 6 percent. And about 10.5 million families, or well over half of these with some unemployment, were working couples,

or if one spouse did not work, had a second earner in the family, cushioning the effects of unemployment.

However, among the households maintained solely by a woman, the incidence of poverty was very high when unemployment struck. About 3.1 million such households experienced some unemployment, and 44 percent were in poverty, largely because they seldom had more than one earner. This highlights the financial vulnerability of families with only one working member, particularly a woman. Because women who head their own families are even more likely than women in general to be concentrated in relatively low paying jobs,⁵ the incidence of poverty among the families which they head was comparatively high (17 percent) even when these families escaped unemployment.

Workers living alone or with unrelated individuals also faced a relatively high incidence of poverty when they became unemployed. More than one-third reported annual income for 1982 below the poverty line. Obviously, such persons are also not likely to benefit from someone else's earnings during periods of joblessness.

Race and ethnic origin makes a considerable difference in terms of the incidence of unemployment-related poverty. As indicated below, black and Hispanic families with unemployment in 1982 were much more likely to be poor than were comparable white families:

Percent with income below poverty

Type of family	White	Black	Hispanic
All families	14.0	38.1	30.0
Married-couple families	10.6	17.6	25.8
One earner	23.2	38.1	44.3
Two or more earners	5.9	10.1	16.7
Families maintained by women	33.4	64.6	50.8
Families maintained by men	18.6	33.9	21.1
Persons not in families ..	32.7	49.9	52.5

Not all of the differences in the rates of poverty among these racial-ethnic groups can be ascribed to the degree of severity of unemployment. The differences are also related to wage levels, size of the family, and other factors, such as the amount of transfer payments the families may have drawn upon. It is important to note that, even when free of unemployment, black and Hispanic families had much higher rates of poverty than white families—15 percent versus 5 percent.

Involuntary part-time work

A total of 16.1 million workers reported that they had been limited involuntarily to part-time work for varying

Table 5. Income by family type, number of earners, unemployment status, and incidence of poverty, 1982

[Numbers in thousands]

Family type and number of earners	With a member in the labor force			With no member unemployed			With at least one member unemployed		
	Number	Median family income	Percent in poverty	Number	Median family income	Percent in poverty	Number	Median family income	Percent in poverty
All families	53,334	25,519	9.9	35,812	27,774	6.1	17,521	20,887	17.6
Married-couple families	43,732	27,917	6.6	30,039	29,902	4.4	13,693	23,485	11.4
No earners	262	7,160	61.4	4	(¹)	(¹)	258	7,153	61.7
One earner	13,636	21,411	11.2	10,702	23,636	7.5	2,934	14,562	24.9
Husband	11,236	22,435	10.8	8,937	24,720	7.4	2,299	15,022	24.1
Wife	1,832	16,191	12.9	1,393	17,650	8.2	439	12,496	28.0
Other family member	568	21,518	13.0	372	24,067	5.3	197	15,123	27.5
Two or more earners	29,834	31,209	4.0	19,334	33,693	2.7	10,500	26,714	6.3
Husband and wife	25,922	31,031	3.5	17,150	33,432	2.4	8,772	26,384	5.6
Husband and other family member	3,241	34,144	6.8	1,852	37,639	5.1	1,389	30,576	9.0
Husband is not an earner	672	25,449	8.9	333	29,614	3.7	339	21,844	14.0
Families maintained by women	7,772	13,618	27.9	4,635	15,672	17.0	3,137	9,900	44.1
No earners	558	3,755	92.0	2	(¹)	(¹)	556	3,746	92.3
One earner	4,488	11,514	30.3	3,197	13,143	21.7	1,291	7,786	51.6
Two or more earners	2,725	20,974	10.9	1,436	22,943	6.6	1,289	18,380	15.7
Families maintained by men	1,830	21,312	11.8	1,138	25,177	5.8	692	16,678	21.7
No earners	44	(¹)	(¹)	—	—	—	44	(¹)	(¹)
One earner	893	17,414	16.7	620	20,254	8.4	273	10,151	35.5
Two or more earners	893	26,705	3.9	518	30,999	2.7	375	21,395	5.6
Persons not living in families	18,019	13,162	15.1	13,987	14,989	9.3	4,032	7,190	35.3
With earnings	17,617	13,436	13.6	13,979	14,995	9.3	3,638	8,039	30.3
Living alone	10,668	14,941	9.9	8,848	16,259	6.8	1,820	9,135	25.2
Men	5,468	17,160	9.9	4,335	19,073	6.1	1,133	10,503	24.7
Women	5,199	13,340	10.0	4,512	14,286	7.5	687	7,848	26.1
Others with earnings	6,949	11,285	19.3	5,131	13,096	13.7	1,818	7,074	35.3
Men	4,209	12,585	16.7	3,054	14,873	11.6	1,155	8,007	30.1
Women	2,740	9,583	23.4	2,077	10,730	16.7	662	5,850	44.3
Without earnings	402	1,502	80.4	8	(¹)	(¹)	394	1,459	81.4

¹Data not shown where base is less than 75,000.

periods during 1982. (See table 6.) About two-thirds cited a reduction in their workweek due to "slack work or material shortages" as the main cause. The other third attributed their involuntary part-time work to the fact that they had simply been unable to secure a full-time job in their initial search and had reluctantly settled for part-time work. The great majority of the workers who had suffered cutbacks in their workweeks had been working either in construction or durable goods manufacturing, and their problems were an obvious consequence of the weak demand for housing and other goods associated with the recession. Those who took a part-time job involuntarily because they could not find full-time work were employed for the most part in the various service-producing industries that were not hit so hard by the recession.

About 7.4 million or nearly one-half of the persons with involuntary part-time work had also suffered some unemployment in 1982. Being beset with both of these labor market problems, their earnings and family income were obviously much lower than those of fully employed workers. Almost one-fourth of them wound up with family income below the poverty line.

Table 6. Income and incidence of poverty of involuntary part-time workers by industry, gender, race, and Hispanic origin, 1982
 [Numbers in thousands]

Characteristic	Total	Slack work or material shortage	Could not find full-time job	Median family income	Percent in poverty
Total with involuntary part-time work	16,064	10,400	5,664	\$18,400	18.0
With unemployment also	7,392	4,427	2,964	16,456	22.8
With no unemployment	8,672	5,973	2,700	(¹)	(¹)
Men	9,043	6,651	2,391	18,938	17.1
Women	7,022	3,749	3,273	17,679	19.2
White	13,555	8,927	4,628	19,299	15.8
Black	2,180	1,253	927	12,997	31.9
Hispanic origin	1,060	724	336	14,389	30.1
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	784	549	235	13,225	34.4
Mining	181	169	12	24,256	8.2
Construction	2,057	1,762	294	17,621	18.5
Manufacturing	3,528	3,143	385	19,984	10.2
Durable goods	1,787	1,588	199	21,524	7.9
Nondurable goods	1,741	1,555	186	18,173	12.7
Transportation, communication, and other public utilities	826	607	219	21,109	14.8
Wholesale trade	436	332	105	21,672	14.0
Retail trade	3,512	1,498	2,014	18,369	20.2
Finance, insurance, and real estate	403	241	163	22,485	8.7
Business and repair services	930	623	307	16,507	21.4
Private households	358	75	283	10,166	38.0
Personal services, except private household	683	418	265	14,690	25.9
Entertainment and recreational services	291	139	152	16,380	22.5
Professional and related services	1,789	717	1,072	20,010	17.1
Public administration	287	129	158	17,294	21.5

¹Not available.

NOTE: Detail for racial and Hispanic-origin groups will not sum to totals because data for the "other races" group are not presented and Hispanics are included in both the white and black population groups.

Part-year workers

As already noted, of the 116.3 million persons with some employment in 1982, about 64 million worked all year in full-time jobs. An additional 9.8 million also worked the entire year but in jobs that were essentially of part-time nature. Thus, the total employed the entire year was 73.8 million. This means that there were 42.5 million persons with jobs for less than a full year or, more precisely, less than 50 weeks. About three-fifths of these part-year workers (25.6 million) had been in primarily full-time jobs, while two-fifths (16.9 million) had been in jobs that were both of a part-year or part-time nature.

Of the 42.5 million part-year workers, about two-fifths had been constrained by unemployment from working all year. The remainder cited a variety of reasons:

Reason for part-year work	Part-year workers (in thousands)	Percent distribution
Total	42,493	100.0
Unemployment	17,633	41.5
Illness or disability	2,690	6.3
Home responsibilities	6,741	15.9
School attendance	8,621	20.3
Military service	107	.3
Retirement	1,749	4.1
Other reasons	4,950	11.6

It should be noted that the number of persons citing unemployment as the main reason for working less than the full year—17.6 million—is considerably lower than the number with both employment and unemployment—22.5 million. There are two reasons for this. First, 1.2 million of these persons managed to work at least 50 weeks and were thus classified as employed the full year. Second, for many of the part-year workers with some unemployment, the *principal* reason for working less than the full year was not necessarily the period of joblessness but the fact that they left the labor force to go to school, to take care of their families, or for other personal reasons. As shown, "school attendance" and "home responsibilities" figure very prominently among the reasons for part-year work.

Discouraged part-year workers. An important subgroup of part-year workers was identified for the first time in the March 1983 survey. They are those who reported that their main reason for working only part of 1982 was that there was "no work available." Of the nearly 5 million part-year workers in the catchall "other reasons" category, about 2.2 million, or almost half, were found to have worded their answers in such a way as to indicate that the unavailability of jobs was their main reason for working only part of the year. While these persons were not actually reported as having "looked for work" during the year—and thus were not classified as unemployed—it would appear from their answers that they would have preferred to work all year and

that they would have looked had it not been for their "discouragement" over job prospects.

Of course, discouragement has long been measured on a current basis through a special set of questions in the Current Population Survey, with the data being published quarterly and annually. During 1982, the number of "discouraged workers," as measured monthly, averaged 1.6 million. The

March 1983 work experience survey was the first in which an attempt was made to measure "discouragement" retroactively, at least for the part-year workers. These statistics, although based on a different concept than those gathered during the course of the year, add a new perspective to our knowledge of the conditions of the labor market—and of the perception of these conditions on the part of American workers. □

—FOOTNOTES—

¹The Current Population Survey is a monthly household survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the primary purpose of determining the extent of employment and unemployment among the American population. The sample of households has been 60,000 in recent years.

²The National Bureau of Economic Research designated the 1981–82 recession as starting in July 1981 and ending in November 1982.

³The poverty thresholds, based primarily on a U.S. Department of Agriculture study of the consumption requirements of families by size, are updated each year to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index. For 1982, the poverty threshold for a family of four was \$9,862. It should be

noted, however, that in determining whether or not a family falls below the poverty line, only cash income is taken into account. In-kind income, while important to many families, is very difficult to measure and is not yet included in the official measurements.

⁴The average (mean) weekly earnings for all production and nonsupervisory jobs in durable goods manufacturing was \$356 in 1982, while the mean for all private nonfarm production and nonsupervisory jobs was only \$267.

⁵For 1982, the median usual weekly earnings for all women working in full-time wage and salary jobs was \$241; for men, the median was \$371.

A note on communications

The *Monthly Labor Review* welcomes communications that supplement, challenge, or expand on research published in its pages. To be considered for publication, communications should be factual and analytical, not polemical in tone. Communications should be addressed to the Editor-in-Chief, *Monthly Labor Review*, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C. 20212.
