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EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG YOUTH — SUMMER 2011

From April to July 2011, the number of employed youth 16 to 24 years old rose by 1.7 million to 18.6 million, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. This year, the share of young people who were employed in July was 48.8 percent, the lowest July rate on record for the series, which began in 1948. (The month of July typically is the summertime peak in youth employment.) Unemployment among youth increased by 745,000 between April and July, more than last year's increase of 571,000, but well below the levels seen in 2008 and 2009 (1.2 and 1.1 million, respectively). (Because this analysis focuses on the seasonal changes in youth employment and unemployment that occur each 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 search for or take summer jobs, and many graduates enter the labor market to look for or begin permanent employment. This summer, the youth labor force grew by 2.4 million, or 11.8 percent, to a total of 22.7 million in July. (See table 1.)

The labor force participation rate for all youth—the proportion of the population 16 to 24 years old working or looking for work—was 59.5 percent in July, the lowest July rate on record. The July 2011 rate was down by 1.0 percentage point from July 2010 and was 18.0 percentage points below the peak for that month in 1989 (77.5 percent).

The July 2011 labor force participation rate for 16- to 24-year-old men, at 61.4 percent, fell by 1.3 percentage points from a year earlier. The rate for women, at 57.6 percent, edged down over the year. For several decades prior to 1989, the July labor force participation rate for young men showed no clear trend, ranging from 81 to 86 percent. Since July 1989, however, their participation rate for the month declined, falling by about 21 percentage points. The July labor force participation rate for young women peaked in 1989 at 72.4 percent, following a long-term upward trend; their rate has since fallen by about 15 percentage points.

The July 2011 labor force participation rate for Hispanic youth was 53.6 percent, down by 2.5 percentage points over the year. The rate for whites decreased by 1.0 percentage point to 62.2 percent. The participation rate for young blacks, at 50.2 percent, was down slightly, while the rate for Asian youth (47.9 percent) was little different from last year. (See table 2.)

Employment

In July 2011, 18.6 million 16- to 24-year-olds were employed, about the same as last year. This summer's increase in youth employment—from April to July—was 1.7 million, down slightly from last summer (1.8 million). The employment-population ratio for youth—the proportion of the 16- to 24-year-old civilian noninstitutional population that was employed—was 48.8 percent in July, a record low for the series, though only marginally lower than in July 2010. (See table 2.)

In July 2011, the employment-population ratios were little changed from a year earlier for all major demographic groups—young men (50.2 percent), women (47.3 percent), whites (52.3 percent), blacks (34.6 percent), Asians (40.5 percent), and Hispanics (42.9 percent).

Twenty-six percent of employed youth worked in the leisure and hospitality sector (which includes food services), about the same as in July 2010. Another 21 percent were employed in the retail trade industry, also about the same proportion as last year. (See table 3.)

Unemployment

The number of unemployed youth in July 2011 was 4.1 million, down from 4.4 million a year ago. The youth unemployment rate declined by 1.0 percentage point over the year to 18.1 percent in July 2011, after hitting a record high for July in 2010. Among major demographic groups, unemployment rates were lower than a year earlier for young men (18.3 percent) and Asians (15.3 percent), while jobless rates were little changed for young women (17.8 percent), whites (15.9 percent), blacks (31.0 percent), and Hispanics (20.1 percent). (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 of each year, data reflect revised population controls used in the CPS. Additional information about population controls is available on the BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#pop.

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.

A full discussion of the reliability of data from the CPS and information on estimating standard errors is available at www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#reliability.

Definitions

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

Employed persons are all those who, during the survey reference week (which is generally the week including the 12th day of the month), (a) did any work at all as paid employees; (b) worked in their own business, profession, or on their own farm; (c) worked 15 hours or more as unpaid workers in a family-operated enterprise; or (d) were temporarily absent from their jobs because of illness, vacation, labor dispute, or another reason.

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. Persons are classified using the 2007 Census industry classification system. The class-of-worker breakdown assigns workers to the following categories: Private and government wage and salary workers, self-employed workers, and unpaid family workers. Wage and salary workers receive wages, salary, 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, trade, or farm. Unpaid family workers are persons working without pay for 15 hours a week or more on a farm or in a business operated by a family member in their household.

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 2011
 [Numbers in thousands. Data are not seasonally adjusted.]

Employment status, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	April	May	June	July	April-July changes	
					Number	Percent
TOTAL						
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	38,191	38,192	38,194	38,196	5	0.0
Civilian labor force.....	20,335	20,673	22,428	22,742	2,407	11.8
Participation rate.....	53.2	54.1	58.7	59.5	6.3	11.8
Employed.....	16,970	17,045	18,180	18,632	1,662	9.8
Employment-population ratio.....	44.4	44.6	47.6	48.8	4.4	9.9
Unemployed.....	3,365	3,628	4,248	4,110	745	22.1
Looking for full-time work.....	2,417	2,675	3,184	3,238	821	34.0
Looking for part-time work.....	948	953	1,064	872	-76	-8.0
Unemployment rate.....	16.5	17.5	18.9	18.1	1.6	9.7
Not in labor force.....	17,856	17,518	15,765	15,454	-2,402	-13.5
Men						
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	19,421	19,422	19,423	19,425	4	0.0
Civilian labor force.....	10,540	10,815	11,795	11,930	1,390	13.2
Participation rate.....	54.3	55.7	60.7	61.4	7.1	13.1
Employed.....	8,590	8,778	9,471	9,746	1,156	13.5
Employment-population ratio.....	44.2	45.2	48.8	50.2	6.0	13.6
Unemployed.....	1,950	2,037	2,324	2,184	234	12.0
Looking for full-time work.....	1,475	1,596	1,791	1,809	334	22.6
Looking for part-time work.....	476	441	532	375	-101	-21.2
Unemployment rate.....	18.5	18.8	19.7	18.3	-0.2	-1.1
Not in labor force.....	8,881	8,607	7,628	7,494	-1,387	-15.6
Women						
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	18,770	18,770	18,771	18,772	2	0.0
Civilian labor force.....	9,795	9,859	10,633	10,812	1,017	10.4
Participation rate.....	52.2	52.5	56.6	57.6	5.4	10.3
Employed.....	8,381	8,268	8,709	8,886	505	6.0
Employment-population ratio.....	44.6	44.0	46.4	47.3	2.7	6.1
Unemployed.....	1,414	1,591	1,925	1,926	512	36.2
Looking for full-time work.....	942	1,079	1,392	1,428	486	51.6
Looking for part-time work.....	472	512	532	497	25	5.3
Unemployment rate.....	14.4	16.1	18.1	17.8	3.4	23.6
Not in labor force.....	8,975	8,911	8,137	7,960	-1,015	-11.3
White						
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	29,385	29,381	29,379	29,377	-8	0.0
Civilian labor force.....	16,296	16,635	18,041	18,266	1,970	12.1
Participation rate.....	55.5	56.6	61.4	62.2	6.7	12.1
Employed.....	13,895	14,077	15,027	15,367	1,472	10.6
Employment-population ratio.....	47.3	47.9	51.2	52.3	5.0	10.6
Unemployed.....	2,401	2,558	3,013	2,899	498	20.7
Looking for full-time work.....	1,684	1,862	2,220	2,203	519	30.8
Looking for part-time work.....	717	696	793	696	-21	-2.9
Unemployment rate.....	14.7	15.4	16.7	15.9	1.2	8.2
Not in labor force.....	13,089	12,746	11,338	11,111	-1,978	-15.1
Black or African American						
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	5,760	5,761	5,762	5,763	3	0.1
Civilian labor force.....	2,714	2,669	2,918	2,893	179	6.6
Participation rate.....	47.1	46.3	50.6	50.2	3.1	6.6
Employed.....	1,959	1,881	2,002	1,996	37	1.9
Employment-population ratio.....	34.0	32.6	34.7	34.6	0.6	1.8
Unemployed.....	755	788	916	897	142	18.8
Looking for full-time work.....	593	633	759	778	185	31.2
Looking for part-time work.....	161	156	157	118	-43	-26.7
Unemployment rate.....	27.8	29.5	31.4	31.0	3.2	11.5
Not in labor force.....	3,047	3,092	2,844	2,870	-177	-5.8

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 2011 — 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	
					Number	Percent
Asian						
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	1,610	1,577	1,579	1,573	-37	-2.3
Civilian labor force.....	665	649	693	753	88	13.2
Participation rate.....	41.3	41.1	43.9	47.9	6.6	16.0
Employed.....	590	530	583	638	48	8.1
Employment-population ratio.....	36.7	33.6	36.9	40.5	3.8	10.4
Unemployed.....	75	119	110	115	40	53.3
Looking for full-time work.....	47	80	75	97	50	106.4
Looking for part-time work.....	28	39	35	18	-10	-35.7
Unemployment rate.....	11.3	18.3	15.9	15.3	4.0	35.4
Not in labor force.....	944	928	885	820	-124	-13.1
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity						
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	7,559	7,575	7,590	7,605	46	0.6
Civilian labor force.....	3,825	3,904	4,073	4,080	255	6.7
Participation rate.....	50.6	51.5	53.7	53.6	3.0	5.9
Employed.....	3,132	3,154	3,219	3,260	128	4.1
Employment-population ratio.....	41.4	41.6	42.4	42.9	1.5	3.6
Unemployed.....	693	750	854	820	127	18.3
Looking for full-time work.....	529	575	638	646	117	22.1
Looking for part-time work.....	163	175	216	174	11	6.7
Unemployment rate.....	18.1	19.2	21.0	20.1	2.0	11.0
Not in labor force.....	3,734	3,670	3,517	3,525	-209	-5.6

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 2008-2011

[Numbers in thousands. Data are not seasonally adjusted.]

Employment status, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	2008	2009	2010	2011
TOTAL				
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	37,506	37,586	37,944	38,196
Civilian labor force.....	24,429	23,691	22,938	22,742
Participation rate.....	65.1	63.0	60.5	59.5
Employed.....	21,021	19,304	18,564	18,632
Employment-population ratio.....	56.0	51.4	48.9	48.8
Unemployed.....	3,408	4,387	4,374	4,110
Looking for full-time work.....	2,552	3,430	3,374	3,238
Looking for part-time work.....	856	957	1,000	872
Unemployment rate.....	14.0	18.5	19.1	18.1
Not in labor force.....	13,076	13,895	15,006	15,454
Men				
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	18,919	18,935	19,126	19,425
Civilian labor force.....	12,882	12,298	11,997	11,930
Participation rate.....	68.1	64.9	62.7	61.4
Employed.....	10,946	9,880	9,537	9,746
Employment-population ratio.....	57.9	52.2	49.9	50.2
Unemployed.....	1,935	2,418	2,460	2,184
Looking for full-time work.....	1,483	1,973	1,949	1,809
Looking for part-time work.....	453	444	510	375
Unemployment rate.....	15.0	19.7	20.5	18.3
Not in labor force.....	6,037	6,637	7,129	7,494
Women				
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	18,587	18,650	18,819	18,772
Civilian labor force.....	11,547	11,393	10,942	10,812
Participation rate.....	62.1	61.1	58.1	57.6
Employed.....	10,075	9,424	9,027	8,886
Employment-population ratio.....	54.2	50.5	48.0	47.3
Unemployed.....	1,473	1,969	1,914	1,926
Looking for full-time work.....	1,070	1,456	1,425	1,428
Looking for part-time work.....	403	513	489	497
Unemployment rate.....	12.8	17.3	17.5	17.8
Not in labor force.....	7,039	7,257	7,877	7,960
White				
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	29,012	29,010	29,164	29,377
Civilian labor force.....	19,760	19,147	18,441	18,266
Participation rate.....	68.1	66.0	63.2	62.2
Employed.....	17,323	16,000	15,455	15,367
Employment-population ratio.....	59.7	55.2	53.0	52.3
Unemployed.....	2,437	3,147	2,987	2,899
Looking for full-time work.....	1,759	2,403	2,253	2,203
Looking for part-time work.....	678	744	733	696
Unemployment rate.....	12.3	16.4	16.2	15.9
Not in labor force.....	9,252	9,863	10,722	11,111
Black or African American				
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	5,595	5,662	5,756	5,763
Civilian labor force.....	3,062	2,995	2,972	2,893
Participation rate.....	54.7	52.9	51.6	50.2
Employed.....	2,302	2,060	1,980	1,996
Employment-population ratio.....	41.2	36.4	34.4	34.6
Unemployed.....	760	935	992	897
Looking for full-time work.....	647	772	843	778
Looking for part-time work.....	112	163	149	118
Unemployment rate.....	24.8	31.2	33.4	31.0
Not in labor force.....	2,533	2,667	2,783	2,870

Table 2. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 to 24 years of age by sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, July 2008-2011 — Continued
 [Numbers in thousands. Data are not seasonally adjusted.]

Employment status, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	2008	2009	2010	2011
Asian				
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	1,516	1,500	1,576	1,573
Civilian labor force.....	767	740	762	753
Participation rate.....	50.6	49.3	48.3	47.9
Employed.....	703	619	597	638
Employment-population ratio.....	46.4	41.3	37.9	40.5
Unemployed.....	64	121	165	115
Looking for full-time work.....	38	96	122	97
Looking for part-time work.....	26	24	42	18
Unemployment rate.....	8.4	16.3	21.6	15.3
Not in labor force.....	748	760	814	820
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity				
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	6,669	6,752	7,128	7,605
Civilian labor force.....	4,007	4,014	3,995	4,080
Participation rate.....	60.1	59.4	56.1	53.6
Employed.....	3,367	3,143	3,111	3,260
Employment-population ratio.....	50.5	46.5	43.6	42.9
Unemployed.....	639	871	884	820
Looking for full-time work.....	487	693	703	646
Looking for part-time work.....	153	178	181	174
Unemployment rate.....	16.0	21.7	22.1	20.1
Not in labor force.....	2,662	2,738	3,133	3,525

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 2010-2011

[Numbers in thousands. Data are not seasonally adjusted.]

Industry and class of worker	Total		White		Black or African American		Asian		Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	
	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011
Total employed.....	18,564	18,632	15,455	15,367	1,980	1,996	597	638	3,111	3,260
Agriculture and related industries.....	372	382	358	369	10	4	0	0	97	121
Nonagricultural industries.....	18,192	18,251	15,097	14,998	1,970	1,992	597	638	3,015	3,139
Private wage and salary workers.....	16,311	16,472	13,528	13,575	1,782	1,773	525	589	2,709	2,899
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction.....	63	76	63	63	0	0	0	5	12	18
Construction.....	819	744	770	684	33	29	0	1	257	265
Manufacturing.....	1,015	1,106	849	896	91	116	51	58	213	192
Durable goods.....	598	688	507	590	44	49	27	35	113	99
Nondurable goods.....	417	418	342	306	47	67	23	24	100	93
Wholesale trade.....	297	342	249	278	29	47	7	14	54	112
Retail trade.....	3,659	3,869	2,959	3,104	473	502	126	153	495	662
Transportation and utilities.....	355	360	301	284	44	66	6	4	63	75
Information.....	361	329	254	271	59	22	34	21	66	47
Financial activities.....	794	716	686	595	42	66	48	36	117	117
Professional and business services....	1,395	1,326	1,130	1,071	166	141	48	69	282	262
Education and health services.....	2,169	1,936	1,692	1,520	337	285	79	75	253	246
Leisure and hospitality.....	4,595	4,770	3,879	4,016	449	456	106	127	759	763
Other services.....	789	898	697	795	58	42	21	27	138	138
Government wage and salary workers. ...	1,433	1,382	1,172	1,072	160	190	57	43	224	170
Federal.....	221	190	158	134	50	35	4	3	25	11
State.....	443	452	373	348	36	61	21	18	63	62
Local.....	769	739	642	590	74	95	32	22	136	97
Self-employed and unpaid family workers.....	447	397	397	350	28	29	15	5	82	70

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.