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EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG YOUTH — SUMMER 2023

In July 2023, 55.0 percent of young people (persons ages 16 to 24) were employed, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. This measure was little changed from 55.3 percent in July 2022. The July 2023 figure remains below its level of 56.2 percent in July 2019, prior to the onset of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. (The month of July typically is the summertime peak in youth employment.) The unemployment rate for youth was 8.7 percent in July 2023, little different than the rates in July 2022 (8.5 percent) and in July 2019 (9.1 percent). (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. In 2023, the youth labor force grew by 2.2 million, or 10.4 percent, from April (21.5 million) to July (23.7 million). (See table 1.)

The labor force participation rate for all youth was 60.2 percent in July 2023, little different from a year earlier. (The labor force participation rate is the proportion of the civilian noninstitutional population that is employed or unemployed. To be classified as unemployed, a person must either be looking and available for work or on temporary layoff.) (See table 2.)

In 2023, the July labor force participation rate for 16- to 24-year-old men, at 60.4 percent, was down over the year. The July rate for young women, at 60.0 percent, was little different from a year earlier. Continuing a long-standing pattern, Whites had the highest youth labor force participation rate and Asians had the lowest rate (62.6 percent and 49.8 percent, respectively) in July 2023. The participation rates for Black (53.5 percent) and Asian (49.8 percent) youth showed little change over the year. After adjusting for population controls, the participation rates for White (62.6 percent) and Hispanic (57.5 percent) youth also showed little change over the year.

Employment

In July 2023, there were 21.6 million employed 16- to 24-year-olds. Between April and July, the number of employed youth rose by 1.4 million, or 6.9 percent. The employment-population ratio for youth—the proportion of the 16- to 24-year-old civilian noninstitutional population with a job—was 55.0 percent in July 2023, little changed from the prior year. (See tables 1 and 2.)

In July 2023, the employment-population ratios for young men (54.9 percent) and Blacks (43.8 percent) were lower than they were a year earlier. The ratios for young women (55.1 percent), Asians (47.0 percent), and Hispanics (51.5 percent) were little changed.

In July 2023, 25 percent (5.3 million) of employed 16- to 24-year-olds worked in the leisure and hospitality industry, the largest share of youth workers. An additional 18 percent of employed youth worked in the retail trade industry, and 13 percent worked in education and health services. (See table 3.)

Unemployment

Typically, the number of unemployed young people increases with the onset of summer, as people who were not in the labor force while attending school begin seeking employment. Unemployment among youth rose by 826,000 from April to July 2023. About 7 in 10 of the unemployed youth were looking for full-time work in July 2023, little different from the prior year. (See tables 1 and 2.)

The youth unemployment rate, at 8.7 percent in July 2023, was little changed from July 2022. The July 2023 unemployment rate was lower for young Asians (5.6 percent) than in the prior summer, while the rates for young men (9.2 percent), women (8.2 percent), Whites (7.0 percent), Blacks (18.0 percent), and Hispanics (10.5 percent) showed little or no change.

Adjustments to Population Estimates for Youth

Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data. The January 2023 adjustments had a disproportionately large effect on the population ages 16 to 24. Consequently, data for 2023 are not strictly comparable to those for earlier years. For more information, see Adjustments to Household Survey Population Estimates in January 2023 on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#pop.

Technical Note

The estimates in this release were obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS), a national sample survey of about 60,000 eligible 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 website at www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#pop.

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Reliability of the estimates

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 component of this difference that occurs because samples differ by chance is known as *sampling error*, and its 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.

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

Definitions

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

Employed. 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 member's business. Persons who were temporarily absent from their jobs because of illness, bad weather, vacation, labor dispute, or another reason also are counted as employed.

Unemployed. The unemployed are those who had no employment during the reference week, were available for work at that time, and had made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the 4-week period ending with the reference week. 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. Looking for full-time work refers to 35 hours or more per week; part-time work refers to fewer than 35 hours per week.

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

Unemployment rate. The unemployment rate is the number of unemployed persons as a percent of the civilian labor force.

Labor force participation rate. The labor force participation rate is the labor force as a percent of the population.

Employment-population ratio. The employment-population ratio is the employed as a percent of the population.

Not in the labor force. Included in this group are all persons in the civilian noninstitutional population who are neither employed nor unemployed.

Industry and class of worker. This information applies to the job held during the reference week. Persons with two or more jobs are classified in the job at which they worked the greatest number of hours. Beginning with data for 2020, persons are classified using the 2017 Census industry classification system. The class-of-worker breakdown assigns workers to the following categories: Private and government wage and salary workers, unincorporated self-employed workers, and unpaid family workers.

Wage and salary workers. Included in this group are persons who receive wages, salary, commissions, tips, or pay in kind from a private employer or from a government entity.

Self-employed workers. Included in this group are those who work for profit or fees in their own unincorporated business, profession, trade, or farm. Only unincorporated self-employed are included in the self-employed category. Self-employed persons whose businesses are incorporated are included with private wage and salary workers.

Unpaid family workers. Included in this group 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 2023

[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.....	39,316	39,323	39,331	39,342	26	0.1
Civilian labor force.....	21,452	21,891	23,516	23,681	2,229	10.4
Participation rate.....	54.6	55.7	59.8	60.2	5.6	10.3
Employed.....	20,219	20,268	21,449	21,623	1,404	6.9
Employment-population ratio.....	51.4	51.5	54.5	55.0	3.6	7.0
Unemployed.....	1,233	1,622	2,066	2,059	826	67.0
Looking for full-time work.....	833	1,188	1,483	1,437	604	72.5
Looking for part-time work.....	400	435	584	621	221	55.3
Unemployment rate.....	5.7	7.4	8.8	8.7	3.0	52.6
Not in labor force.....	17,864	17,432	15,815	15,660	-2,204	-12.3
Men						
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	19,829	19,832	19,836	19,842	13	0.1
Civilian labor force.....	10,902	11,184	11,991	11,987	1,085	10.0
Participation rate.....	55.0	56.4	60.4	60.4	5.4	9.8
Employed.....	10,215	10,305	10,856	10,886	671	6.6
Employment-population ratio.....	51.5	52.0	54.7	54.9	3.4	6.6
Unemployed.....	687	879	1,135	1,101	414	60.3
Looking for full-time work.....	479	703	846	799	320	66.8
Looking for part-time work.....	208	176	289	302	94	45.2
Unemployment rate.....	6.3	7.9	9.5	9.2	2.9	46.0
Not in labor force.....	8,927	8,649	7,846	7,855	-1,072	-12.0
Women						
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	19,487	19,490	19,494	19,500	13	0.1
Civilian labor force.....	10,550	10,707	11,525	11,694	1,144	10.8
Participation rate.....	54.1	54.9	59.1	60.0	5.9	10.9
Employed.....	10,004	9,964	10,593	10,736	732	7.3
Employment-population ratio.....	51.3	51.1	54.3	55.1	3.8	7.4
Unemployed.....	546	744	931	958	412	75.5
Looking for full-time work.....	354	485	636	638	284	80.2
Looking for part-time work.....	192	259	295	319	127	66.1
Unemployment rate.....	5.2	6.9	8.1	8.2	3.0	57.7
Not in labor force.....	8,937	8,783	7,970	7,806	-1,131	-12.7
White						
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	28,667	28,664	28,661	28,661	-6	0.0
Civilian labor force.....	16,407	16,651	17,894	17,938	1,531	9.3
Participation rate.....	57.2	58.1	62.4	62.6	5.4	9.4
Employed.....	15,523	15,535	16,527	16,681	1,158	7.5
Employment-population ratio.....	54.1	54.2	57.7	58.2	4.1	7.6
Unemployed.....	884	1,116	1,368	1,257	373	42.2
Looking for full-time work.....	572	788	964	876	304	53.1
Looking for part-time work.....	312	328	404	381	69	22.1
Unemployment rate.....	5.4	6.7	7.6	7.0	1.6	29.6
Not in labor force.....	12,260	12,013	10,767	10,723	-1,537	-12.5
Black or African American						
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	5,768	5,769	5,770	5,771	3	0.1
Civilian labor force.....	2,835	2,934	3,011	3,086	251	8.9
Participation rate.....	49.1	50.9	52.2	53.5	4.4	9.0
Employed.....	2,618	2,609	2,605	2,530	-88	-3.4
Employment-population ratio.....	45.4	45.2	45.2	43.8	-1.6	-3.5
Unemployed.....	217	325	406	556	339	156.2
Looking for full-time work.....	154	269	303	420	266	172.7
Looking for part-time work.....	63	56	102	136	73	115.9
Unemployment rate.....	7.7	11.1	13.5	18.0	10.3	133.8
Not in labor force.....	2,933	2,835	2,759	2,685	-248	-8.5

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 2023 — 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.....	2,417	2,404	2,393	2,422	5	0.2
Civilian labor force.....	962	1,018	1,189	1,205	243	25.3
Participation rate.....	39.8	42.3	49.7	49.8	10.0	25.1
Employed.....	931	949	1,069	1,137	206	22.1
Employment-population ratio.....	38.5	39.5	44.7	47.0	8.5	22.1
Unemployed.....	31	69	120	68	37	119.4
Looking for full-time work.....	26	64	90	37	11	42.3
Looking for part-time work.....	5	5	30	31	26	520.0
Unemployment rate.....	3.2	6.7	10.1	5.6	2.4	75.0
Not in labor force.....	1,455	1,386	1,204	1,217	-238	-16.4
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity						
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	9,654	9,670	9,686	9,704	50	0.5
Civilian labor force.....	5,358	5,277	5,677	5,578	220	4.1
Participation rate.....	55.5	54.6	58.6	57.5	2.0	3.6
Employed.....	4,999	4,941	5,141	4,993	-6	-0.1
Employment-population ratio.....	51.8	51.1	53.1	51.5	-0.3	-0.6
Unemployed.....	359	336	537	585	226	63.0
Looking for full-time work.....	270	261	426	423	153	56.7
Looking for part-time work.....	89	75	111	162	73	82.0
Unemployment rate.....	6.7	6.4	9.5	10.5	3.8	56.7
Not in labor force.....	4,296	4,393	4,009	4,125	-171	-4.0

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 2020-2023
 [Numbers in thousands. Data are not seasonally adjusted.]

Employment status, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	July 2020	July 2021	July 2022	July 2023
TOTAL				
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	37,472	37,250	37,954	39,342
Civilian labor force.....	21,479	22,522	22,943	23,681
Participation rate.....	57.3	60.5	60.4	60.2
Employed.....	17,507	20,268	20,992	21,623
Employment-population ratio.....	46.7	54.4	55.3	55.0
Unemployed.....	3,973	2,254	1,951	2,059
Looking for full-time work.....	2,651	1,697	1,415	1,437
Looking for part-time work.....	1,321	557	536	621
Unemployment rate.....	18.5	10.0	8.5	8.7
Not in labor force.....	15,993	14,728	15,011	15,660
Men				
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	18,813	18,692	19,065	19,842
Civilian labor force.....	10,990	11,547	11,763	11,987
Participation rate.....	58.4	61.8	61.7	60.4
Employed.....	8,966	10,294	10,733	10,886
Employment-population ratio.....	47.7	55.1	56.3	54.9
Unemployed.....	2,024	1,253	1,031	1,101
Looking for full-time work.....	1,388	976	798	799
Looking for part-time work.....	636	277	232	302
Unemployment rate.....	18.4	10.9	8.8	9.2
Not in labor force.....	7,823	7,145	7,302	7,855
Women				
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	18,659	18,559	18,890	19,500
Civilian labor force.....	10,489	10,976	11,180	11,694
Participation rate.....	56.2	59.1	59.2	60.0
Employed.....	8,541	9,975	10,259	10,736
Employment-population ratio.....	45.8	53.7	54.3	55.1
Unemployed.....	1,949	1,001	921	958
Looking for full-time work.....	1,263	721	617	638
Looking for part-time work.....	686	280	304	319
Unemployment rate.....	18.6	9.1	8.2	8.2
Not in labor force.....	8,170	7,583	7,710	7,806
White				
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	27,474	27,333	27,798	28,661
Civilian labor force.....	16,322	17,168	17,411	17,938
Participation rate.....	59.4	62.8	62.6	62.6
Employed.....	13,595	15,635	16,197	16,681
Employment-population ratio.....	49.5	57.2	58.3	58.2
Unemployed.....	2,727	1,533	1,213	1,257
Looking for full-time work.....	1,819	1,170	837	876
Looking for part-time work.....	908	363	376	381
Unemployment rate.....	16.7	8.9	7.0	7.0
Not in labor force.....	11,152	10,165	10,388	10,723
Black or African American				
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	5,494	5,452	5,551	5,771
Civilian labor force.....	2,884	3,004	3,060	3,086
Participation rate.....	52.5	55.1	55.1	53.5
Employed.....	2,151	2,594	2,574	2,530
Employment-population ratio.....	39.2	47.6	46.4	43.8
Unemployed.....	733	410	486	556
Looking for full-time work.....	537	325	380	420
Looking for part-time work.....	196	85	106	136
Unemployment rate.....	25.4	13.6	15.9	18.0
Not in labor force.....	2,610	2,448	2,490	2,685

Table 2. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 to 24 years of age by sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, July 2020-2023 — Continued
 [Numbers in thousands. Data are not seasonally adjusted.]

Employment status, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	July 2020	July 2021	July 2022	July 2023
Asian				
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	2,234	2,186	2,203	2,422
Civilian labor force.....	958	976	1,089	1,205
Participation rate.....	42.9	44.6	49.4	49.8
Employed.....	715	856	971	1,137
Employment-population ratio.....	32.0	39.1	44.1	47.0
Unemployed.....	243	120	117	68
Looking for full-time work.....	138	70	103	37
Looking for part-time work.....	106	50	15	31
Unemployment rate.....	25.4	12.3	10.8	5.6
Not in labor force.....	1,277	1,210	1,114	1,217
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity				
Civilian noninstitutional population.....	8,810	8,880	9,193	9,704
Civilian labor force.....	4,789	5,044	5,099	5,578
Participation rate.....	54.4	56.8	55.5	57.5
Employed.....	3,752	4,456	4,607	4,993
Employment-population ratio.....	42.6	50.2	50.1	51.5
Unemployed.....	1,037	588	493	585
Looking for full-time work.....	726	472	330	423
Looking for part-time work.....	311	116	163	162
Unemployment rate.....	21.7	11.7	9.7	10.5
Not in labor force.....	4,021	3,836	4,093	4,125

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 2022-2023

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

Industry and class of worker	Total		White		Black or African American		Asian		Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	
	July 2022	July 2023	July 2022	July 2023	July 2022	July 2023	July 2022	July 2023	July 2022	July 2023
Total employed.....	20,992	21,623	16,197	16,681	2,574	2,530	971	1,137	4,607	4,993
Agriculture and related industries.....	347	345	317	308	11	11	0	0	75	83
Nonagricultural industries.....	20,645	21,278	15,880	16,374	2,563	2,518	971	1,137	4,531	4,910
Private wage and salary workers ¹	19,014	19,507	14,661	15,043	2,346	2,297	886	1,016	4,216	4,556
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction.....	54	47	39	32	4	14	0	0	5	4
Construction.....	1,190	1,329	971	1,203	116	48	0	11	429	440
Manufacturing.....	1,339	1,465	1,008	1,141	161	163	101	86	246	315
Durable goods.....	846	915	648	706	87	107	55	70	154	173
Nondurable goods.....	493	550	360	436	73	56	46	16	92	142
Wholesale trade.....	236	250	168	197	25	22	27	12	52	38
Retail trade.....	3,916	3,800	3,008	2,883	587	540	122	183	919	941
Transportation and utilities.....	1,115	840	810	527	201	185	41	75	267	190
Information.....	205	189	162	156	21	23	9	7	42	27
Financial activities.....	593	649	487	505	53	72	51	46	88	123
Professional and business services...	1,794	1,835	1,362	1,395	183	200	156	161	381	445
Education and health services.....	2,468	2,712	1,871	2,083	347	319	145	171	457	497
Leisure and hospitality.....	5,115	5,344	3,972	4,108	581	575	201	243	1,083	1,248
Other services.....	988	1,047	806	811	67	135	33	22	248	289
Government wage and salary workers.....	1,223	1,343	908	985	176	182	49	104	221	237
Federal.....	223	205	132	108	56	74	14	10	41	10
State.....	355	441	296	323	21	46	15	57	57	76
Local.....	645	697	481	554	99	63	21	37	122	151
Self-employed, unincorporated, and unpaid family workers.....	408	428	311	346	41	38	37	17	94	117

¹ Includes self-employed workers whose businesses are incorporated.

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.