The Trend in Long-Term Unemployment and Characteristics of Workers Unemployed for More than 99 Weeks

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Summary

One of the characteristics of the recession that began in the United States in December 2007 and officially ended in June 2009 was the unprecedented rise in long-term unemployment. The long-term unemployed are usually defined as workers who have been unemployed for more than six months. But, many workers have been looking for work for more than a year, or for more than 99 weeks. Workers who have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks are defined here as the "very long-term unemployed." They are sometimes called "99ers."

Authorization for Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC08) is scheduled to expire on January 3, 2012. Legislation has been introduced to expand and extend the program. On September 8, 2011, President Obama proposed an extension of the program. Issues for Congress include whether to authorize the EUC08 program beyond January 3, 2012, and whether to provide the very long-term unemployed with more than 99 weeks of unemployment benefits.

As the national unemployment rate rose during and after the recent recession, so did long-term unemployment rates (i.e., the number of long-term unemployed divided by the size of the labor force). From December 2007 to June 2011, the unemployment rate for persons unemployed for more than 99 weeks rose from 0.1% to 1.3%. As of June 2011, there were an estimated 2.0 million very long-term unemployed. This estimate, which is from the Current Population Survey (CPS), is not a count of the number of workers who have exhausted all unemployment benefits.

An analysis of differences in the share of the unemployed who are very long-term unemployed (i.e., the number of long-term unemployed divided by the number of unemployed) shows that from July 2010 to June 2011,

- unemployed men were more likely than unemployed women to be out of work for more than 99 weeks (12.3% compared to 10.8%);
- older workers were more likely than younger workers to be unemployed for more than 99 weeks. While 8.1% of unemployed workers under the age of 35 had been looking for work for more than 99 weeks, twice the percentage (16.3%) of workers ages 45 and over had been out of work for more than 99 weeks.
- unemployed workers with a high school degree were as likely as workers with a Bachelor's degree to have been out of work for more than 99 weeks;
- married unemployed workers were more likely than unemployed workers who have never been married to be out of work for more than 99 weeks (12.8% and 9.8%, respectively); and
- unemployed black workers were more likely than unemployed white workers to have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks (9.9% and 7.3%, respectively); on the other hand, unemployed non-Hispanic workers were more likely than unemployed Hispanic workers to have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks (8.0% and 7.0%, respectively).

The number of very long-term unemployed may or may not continue to rise. On the one hand, the number of monthly layoffs has fallen since the official end of the 2007-2009 recession. On the other hand, both the number of jobs and of job openings have increased. But, the numbers have not returned to their pre-recession levels. In addition, as employers hire new workers, those who have been unemployed the longest may be among the last to be hired.

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During and after the recession that began in the United States in December 2007 and officially ended in June 2009, the U.S. economy lost almost 9 million jobs.[1] Unemployment increased more among men than women, more among younger workers than older workers, and more among blacks and Hispanics than among whites or non-Hispanics.[2] The number of jobs has increased since the end of the recession, but job growth has been slow and many economists predict that unemployment may remain high for several months or even years to come.[3]

One of the characteristics of the recent recession was the unprecedented rise in long-term unemployment. The long-term unemployed are usually defined as workers who have been looking for work for more than six months. But many workers have been looking for work for longer periods. The first part of this report examines the trend in long-term unemployment using four definitions of the long-term unemployed: persons who have been looking for work for more than 26 weeks, more than 52 weeks, more than 78 weeks, and more than 99 weeks. The report uses 99 weeks as a measure of long-term unemployment because in some states with high unemployment, unemployed workers may receive 26 weeks of regular Unemployment Compensation (UC), 53 weeks of Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC08), and 20 weeks of Extended Benefits (EB)—for a total of up to 99 weeks of UC benefits.[4] In this report, workers who have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks are defined as the "very long-term unemployed." Persons who have exhausted the maximum 99 weeks of UC benefits have been called "99ers."

Because unemployment during the recession increased more among some groups of workers than others, the second part of the report analyzes selected characteristics of the very long-term unemployed.[5]

[1] From December 2007, the official beginning of the recent recession, to February 2010, employment in the United States fell by an estimated 8.7 million jobs (from 138.0 million to 129.3 million, seasonally adjusted). U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment, Hours, and Earnings from the Current Employment Statistics Survey*, http://www.bls.gov/ces/. (Hereafter cited as BLS, *Employment, Hours, and Earnings from the Current Employment Statistics Survey.*)

The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) dates the beginning and end of recessions. According to NBER, the U.S. economy entered a recession in December 2007. The recession officially ended in June 2009, making it the longest recession since the Great Depression. National Bureau of Economic Research, *U.S. Business Cycle Expansions and Contractions*, http://www.nber.org/cycles/cyclesmain.html.

[2] **Table A-1** in the **Appendix** shows changes in unemployment from calendar year 2007 to the 12-month period from July 2010 to June 2010 for persons ages 16 and over in different demographic groups.

[3] According to projections by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the unemployment rate for the years 2011 through 2015 will be 8.9%, 8.7%, 8.7%, 7.9%, and 6.1%, respectively. Congressional Budget Office, *The Budget and Economic Outlook: An Update*, August 2011, Table B-1, http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/123xx/doc12316/08-24-BudgetEconUpdate.pdf.

[4] For a description of the different unemployment benefit programs, see CRS Report RS22915, *Temporary Extension of Unemployment Benefits: Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC08)*, by Katelin P. Isaacs and Julie M. Whittaker.

[5] For a comparison of long-term unemployment rates during recent recessions, see CRS Report R41179, *Long-Term Unemployment and Recessions*, by Gerald Mayer and Linda Levine. (Hereafter cited as CRS Report R41179, *Recessions and Long-Term Unemployment.*)

Issues for Congress

Authorization for the EUC08 program is scheduled to expire on January 3, 2012.[6] Legislation has been introduced to expand and extend the program.[7] On September 8, 2011, President Barack Obama proposed an extension of the program.[8] Issues for Congress include whether to authorize the EUC08 program beyond January 3, 2012, and whether to provide the very long-term unemployed with more than 99 weeks of UC benefits.[9]

Overview of Data and Methodology

The analysis in this report is based on data from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS), which is a household survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor. The monthly CPS is the source of the national monthly unemployment rate and other labor market information.

The first part of the report examines the trend in long-term unemployment, by month, over the period from January 2007 to June 2011. Because the analysis of individual characteristics may rely on small sample sizes, the second part of the report uses monthly average data for the 12-month period from July 2010 to June 2011.

The first part of the report examines long-term unemployment rates. The long-term unemployment rate is the number of long-term unemployed divided by the size of the labor force, where the labor force is the sum of persons who are employed or unemployed. The second part of the report analyzes differences in the share of the unemployed who are very long-term

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[6] Congress enacted the Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC08) program as Title IV of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008, P.L. 100-252. Congress has amended the program several times since. On December 16, 2010, President Barack Obama signed P.L. 111-312 (H.R. 4853, the "Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010"). Among other things, P.L. 111-312 reauthorized the EUC08 program for 13 months, to January 3, 2012. "Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act Of 2010," *Congressional Record*, v. 156., December 16, 2010, p. H8588.

[7] For a discussion of unemployment insurance legislation introduced in the 112th Congress, see CRS Report R41662, *Unemployment Insurance: Legislative Issues in the 112th Congress*, by Katelin P. Isaacs and Julie M. Whittaker.

[8] White House, *America Jobs Act: Fact Sheet and Overview*, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/09/08/fact-sheet-and-overview.

[9] During the first half of 2011, several states enacted legislation to reduce the maximum number of weeks of regular UC. In most states, unemployed workers are eligible for up to 26 weeks of regular unemployment benefits. Montana provides up to 28 weeks and Massachusetts up to 30 weeks of regular UC. The following states have reduced the maximum number of weeks of regular UC:

- Arkansas, from 26 to 25 weeks, effective March 30, 2011,
- Missouri, from 26 to 20 weeks, effective April 13, 2011,
- South Carolina, from 26 to 20 weeks, effective June 14, 2011,
- Florida, from 26 weeks to 12 to 23 weeks, depending the state unemployment rate, effective January 1, 2012,
- Illinois, from 26 to 25 weeks, effective January 1, 2012, and
- Michigan, from 26 to 20 weeks, effective January 15, 2012.

CRS Report R41859, *Unemployment Insurance: Consequences of Changes in State Unemployment Compensation Laws*, by Katelin P. Isaacs.

unemployed, which is the number of long-term unemployed divided by the number of workers who are unemployed.

The CPS does not collect information on the number of unemployed workers who have exhausted all available UC benefits. Workers who are counted as unemployed in the CPS may or may not be receiving UC benefits. Conversely, persons who are receiving UC benefits may or may not be counted as unemployed in the CPS. In the CPS, persons are counted as unemployed if they do not have a job, they actively looked for work in the four weeks before they were interviewed, and they are currently available for work.[10] Persons receiving UC benefits may not meet the CPS definition of who is unemployed; for example, they may not be looking for work because they are in an education or training program. Also, persons receiving UC benefits could fit the CPS definition of someone who is employed; for example, they could be in a work-sharing program.[11]

The Trend in Long-Term Unemployment

This part of the report compares the national unemployment rate to the long-term unemployment rates for workers who have been unemployed for more than 26 weeks, more than 52 weeks, more than 78 weeks, and more than 99 weeks. The four groups of the long-term unemployed are not mutually exclusive. Workers who have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks are in the group of unemployed workers who have been looking for work for more than 78 weeks. Workers unemployed for more than 78 weeks are in the group that has been unemployed for more than 52 weeks, and so on.

Figure 1 shows the national unemployment rate and the long-term unemployment rate for workers unemployed for more than 26 weeks. As the overall unemployment rate increased during and after the 2007-2009 recession, so did the unemployment rate for workers unemployed for more than 26 weeks. In April 2010, the unemployment rate for workers unemployed for more than 26 weeks reached 4.6%, which was the highest rate recorded since BLS began collecting data on long-term unemployment in 1948.[12] The long-term unemployment rate fell to 4.0% in August 2010, where it largely remained through June 2011.

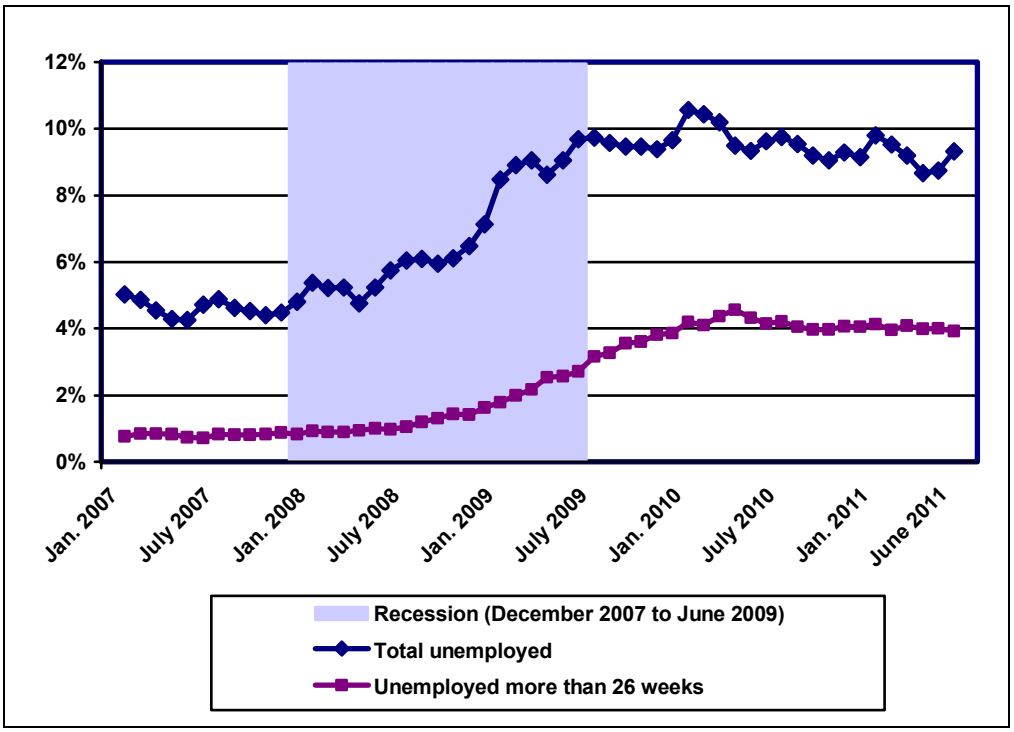
[10] Persons who are not working and are waiting to be called back to a job from which they have been laid off are also counted as unemployed. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey*, http://stats.bls.gov/cps**.** (Hereafter cited as BLS, *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey*.)

The **Appendix** provides more detail on the data and methodology used in this report.

[11] Work sharing programs, also called short-term compensation programs, provide partial UC benefits to workers whose work hours have been reduced. U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Unemployment Insurance, *Unemployment Compensation: Federal-State Partnership*, April 2011, http://workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/unemploy/pdf/partnership.pdf, p. 14.

[12] The data discussed in this section of the report are not seasonally adjusted. Month-to-month changes in unemployment are affected by both seasonal and nonseasonal factors. Seasonal factors include regular changes in the weather, holidays, and the opening and closing of schools. By removing changes in unemployment that are due to seasonal factors, it is possible to observe nonseasonal changes in unemployment (e.g., cyclical changes in unemployment). Richard B. Tiller and Thomas D. Evans, *Revision of Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Series in 2009*, p. 1, http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsrs2009.pdf.

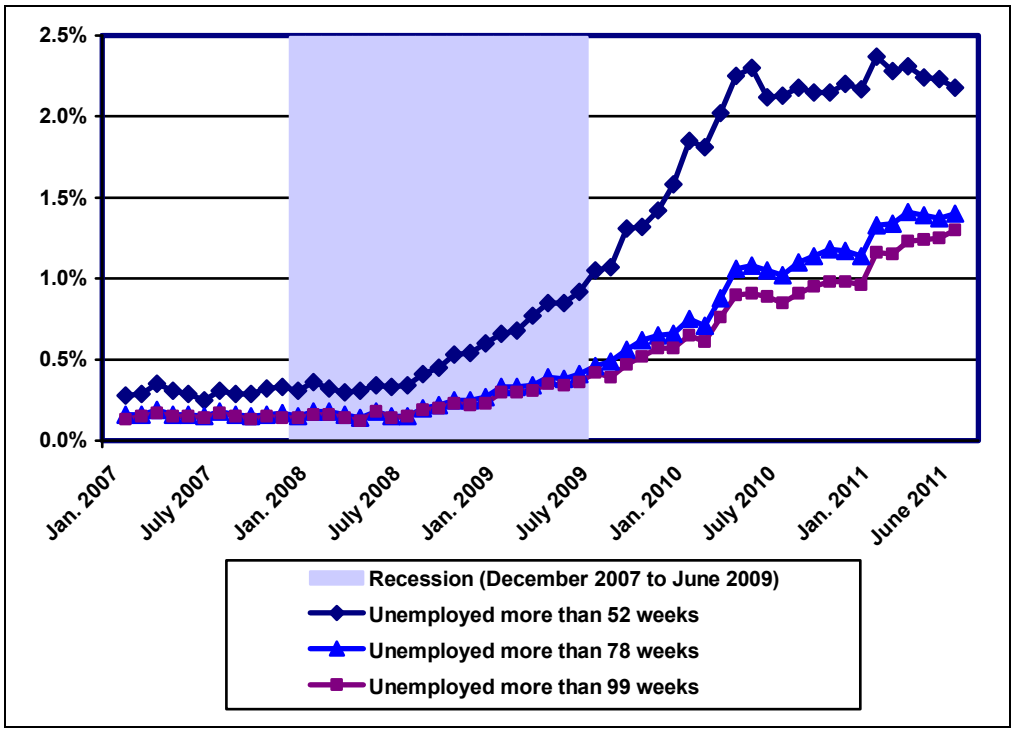
Figure 1. Unemployment Rates: Total Unemployed and Workers Unemployed for More than 26 Weeks, January 2007 to June 2011



Source: CRS analysis of data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Figure 2 shows the long-term unemployment rates for workers unemployed for more than 52, 78, and 99 weeks. Like the rate for workers unemployed for more than 26 weeks, as the national unemployment rate increased so did the unemployment rates for the other categories of the long-term unemployed. In June 2011, the unemployment rate for workers who were unemployed for more than a year was 2.2%, up from 0.3% in December 2007. For workers who were unemployed for more than 99 weeks, the unemployment rate increased from 0.1% in December 2007 to 1.3% in June 2011.

Figure 2. Unemployment Rates: Unemployed for More than 52, 78, and 99 Weeks, January 2007 to June 2011



Source: CRS analysis of data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Note: The groups of the long-term unemployed are not mutually exclusive. Workers who have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks have been unemployed for more than 78 weeks, and so on.

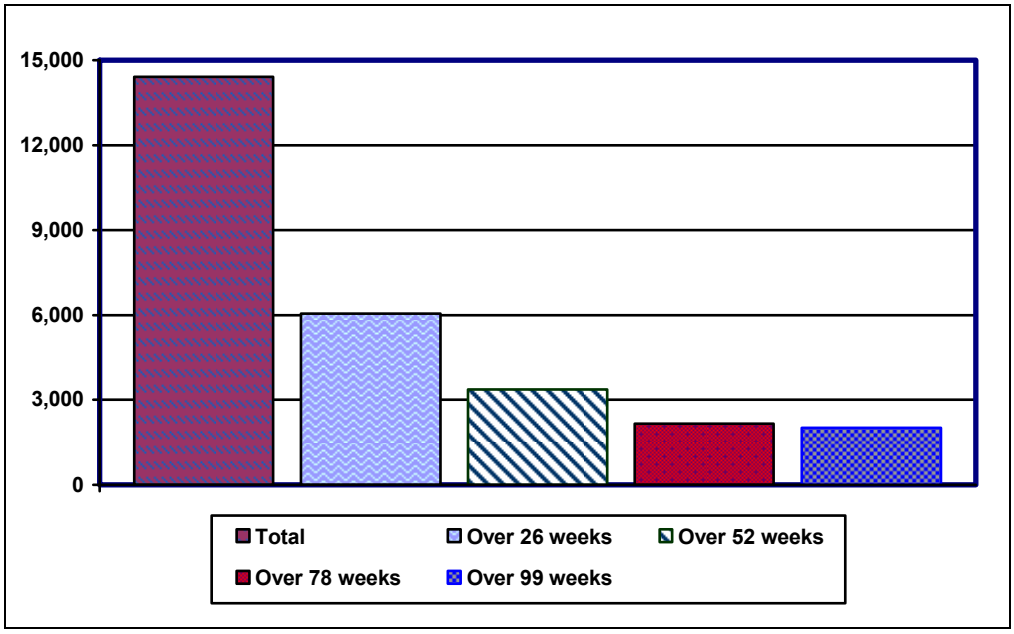
Reliability of Estimates of the Very Long-Term Unemployed

For each of the unemployment rates shown in **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**, **Figure 3** shows the number of unemployed workers in June 2011. Of the estimated 14.4 million workers who were unemployed, almost 2.2 million were unemployed for more than 78 weeks and an estimated 2.0 million were unemployed for more than 99 weeks. These numbers suggest that most workers who have been looking for work for more than 78 weeks have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks.

The CPS provides useful information on the number of long-term unemployed. But, the estimates may not be precise. In the CPS, many respondents round off the number of weeks that they have been unemployed. For example, many workers who report that they have been unemployed for a year may actually have been unemployed for more than a year or less than a year. For the 12 months from July 2010 to June 2011, almost 1.0 million unemployed persons said that they had been out of work for 52 weeks, but fewer than 25,000 said that they had been unemployed for either 51 or 53 weeks. (See **Table A-2** in the **Appendix**.) Similarly, many respondents who report that they have been unemployed for two years may actually have been unemployed for less than two years and, perhaps, for 99 weeks or less. From July 2010 to June 2011, an average of almost 700,000 persons said that they had been unemployed for two years, but fewer than 10,000 people said that they had been unemployed for 99 weeks.

Figure 3. Number of Unemployed Workers: Total and by Duration of Unemployment, June 2011

(numbers are in 1,000s)



Source: CRS analysis of data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Note: The groups of the long-term unemployed are not mutually exclusive. Workers who have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks have been unemployed for more than 78 weeks, and so on.

The estimate of the number of workers who have been out of work for two years may also be affected by how responses to the CPS are recorded. Until January 2011, if a respondent reported being unemployed for more than two years, the person's duration of unemployment was recorded as two years. Starting in January 2011, the CPS allows respondents to report durations of unemployment of up to five years.[13]

Thus, estimates of the number of workers who have been unemployed for two years may be affected by two factors. The responses of some workers who said that they have been out of work for more than two years may have been capped at two years. On the other hand, some workers who said that they have been unemployed for two years may actually have been unemployed for less than two years, but rounded off their response to two years. It is the responses of persons who were actually unemployed for 99 weeks or less and who rounded up their duration of unemployment to two years that may cause the CPS to overestimate the number of workers who

[13] U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Changes to Data Collected on Unemployment Duration*, http://www.bls.gov/cps/duration.htm.

Before January 2011, the CPS could report a person as being unemployed for more than two years. In the CPS survey, a household is in the survey for four consecutive months, out of the survey for the next eight months, and then back in the survey for the next four months. The duration of unemployment for individuals in the survey for consecutive months is calculated automatically by adding to the number of weeks unemployed since the previous month. Thus, an individual who was coded as being unemployed for two years could be reported as being unemployed for more than two years if they were in the survey for consecutive months after having been recorded as being unemployed for two years.

have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks. These persons would have to make up a large share of those recorded as unemployed for two years for the CPS to significantly overstate the number of persons unemployed for more than 99 weeks. Even if many respondents do not report the exact number of weeks that they have been unemployed, it is still be possible to analyze the trend in long-term unemployment if the extent of underreporting and overreporting is consistent over time.

Many individuals who are not working may not fit the CPS definition of being unemployed. In the CPS, a person is counted as unemployed if he or she is not working, has actively looked for work in the four weeks before the survey, and is currently available for work. Thus, although the CPS shows that an estimated 2.0 million workers were unemployed for more than 99 weeks in June 2011, other persons may not have worked for more than 99 weeks but did not meet the CPS definition of being unemployed.

Will the Number of the Very Long-Term Unemployed Rise or Fall?

Whether or not the number of very long-term unemployed rises or falls in the months ahead may depend on several factors. During the recession, the number of unemployed workers increased, while both the number of employed persons and the number of job openings fell. Since the end of the recession, the number of monthly layoffs has fallen. Both employment and the number of job openings have increased, but neither has returned to their pre-recession levels. Finally, during an economic recovery workers who have been unemployed the longest are often the last to be hired.

As of June 2011 (the most recent data used for this report), it has been two years since the official end of the recent recession. **Table 1** shows the peak unemployment rates for each measure of long-term unemployment shown in **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**. Because these rates are from unpublished data, they are not seasonally adjusted. Nevertheless, the estimates in **Table 1** indicate that the longer the duration of unemployment, the later the peak unemployment rate. For all unemployed workers, the peak unemployment rate occurred seven months after the end of the recession. For workers unemployed for more than a year, the peak unemployment rate occurred 19 months after the end of the recession. For workers unemployed for more than 78 weeks, the peak unemployment rate occurred 21 months after the end of the recession. For workers unemployed for more 99 weeks, the peak unemployment rate occurred in June 2011. Since the most recent data used in this report are for June 2011, it is not known if the post-recession peak unemployment rate for the very long-term unemployed has been reached.

Table 1. Peak Unemployment Rates by Duration of Unemployment, December 2007 Through June 2011

Characteristic	Peak Unemployment Rate	Month of the Peak Unemployment Rate	Number of Months After the End of the Recession Before the Peak Unemployment Rate
Total Unemployed	10.6%	January 2010	7
Unemployed more than 26 weeks	4.6%	April 2010	10
Unemployed more than 52 weeks	2.4%	January 2011	19
Unemployed more than 78 weeks	1.4%	March 2011	21
Unemployed more than 99 weeks	1.3%	June 2011	24 (may go higher[a])

Source: CRS analysis of data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Notes: BLS publishes seasonally adjusted data for the total number of workers unemployed and the number of workers unemployed for more than 26 weeks. Using seasonally adjusted data, the peak monthly unemployment rate between January 2007 and June 2011 occurred in October 2009 (10.1%), four months after the end of the recession. For workers unemployed for more than 26 weeks, the peak unemployment rate (4.4%) occurred in June 2010, 12 months after the end of the recession.

a. The most recent data used in this report are for June 2011, which was two years after the official end of the recession. Thus, the post-recession peak unemployment rate may or may not have been reached.

Layoffs

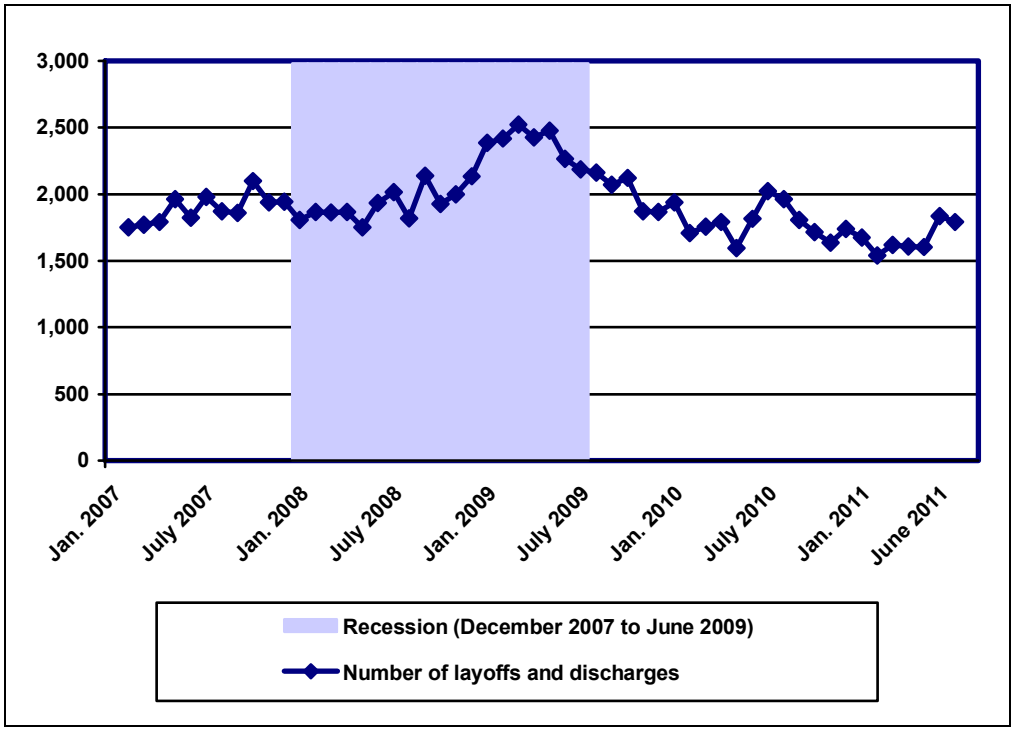
The pattern of layoffs since the end of the recession could contribute to a reduction in the number of very long-term unemployed. In June 2011, workers who were unemployed for more than 99 weeks lost their jobs before August 2009. In the year before August 2009, there were an average of 2.3 million layoffs and discharges per month. [14] See **Figure 4**. If they remained unemployed, workers who were laid off before August 2009 already appear in the number of very long-term unemployed. From August 2009 through June 2011, there were an average of 1.8 million layoffs and discharges a month. [15] Thus, since August 2009 there have been roughly half a million fewer layoffs and discharges a month than in the year before August 2009. In coming months, fewer monthly layoffs and discharges since August 2009 may contribute to fewer very long-term unemployed.

[14] Layoffs and discharges are involuntary separations initiated by the employer. A layoff is expected to last more than seven days, and may be permanent. Discharges may result from mergers, closings, or terminations. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, June 2010*, http://stats.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/jolts.pdf.

[15] **Figure 4** shows that the number of layoffs increased from April 2010 to June 2010. To some extent, this increase may have been related to the end of the 2010 decennial Census, as temporary workers hired for the Census were laid off.

Figure 4. Monthly Layoffs and Discharges, January 2007 to June 2011

(numbers are in 1,000s)



Source: Data are from the BLS Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS). Data are seasonally adjusted.

Job Openings and Employment

The pattern of job openings since the end of the recession may not, however, contribute to a reduction in the number of very long-term unemployed. The number of monthly job openings has increased since the end of the recession, but the number has not returned to pre-recession levels. (Job openings are defined here as the number of hires per month plus the number of unfilled job openings on the last business day of the month.) In the months leading up to the recession there were an average of almost 10 million job openings per month. From July 2010 through June 2011, there were an average of almost 7 million job openings a month, roughly 3 million fewer openings a month since before the recession. See **Figure 5**.

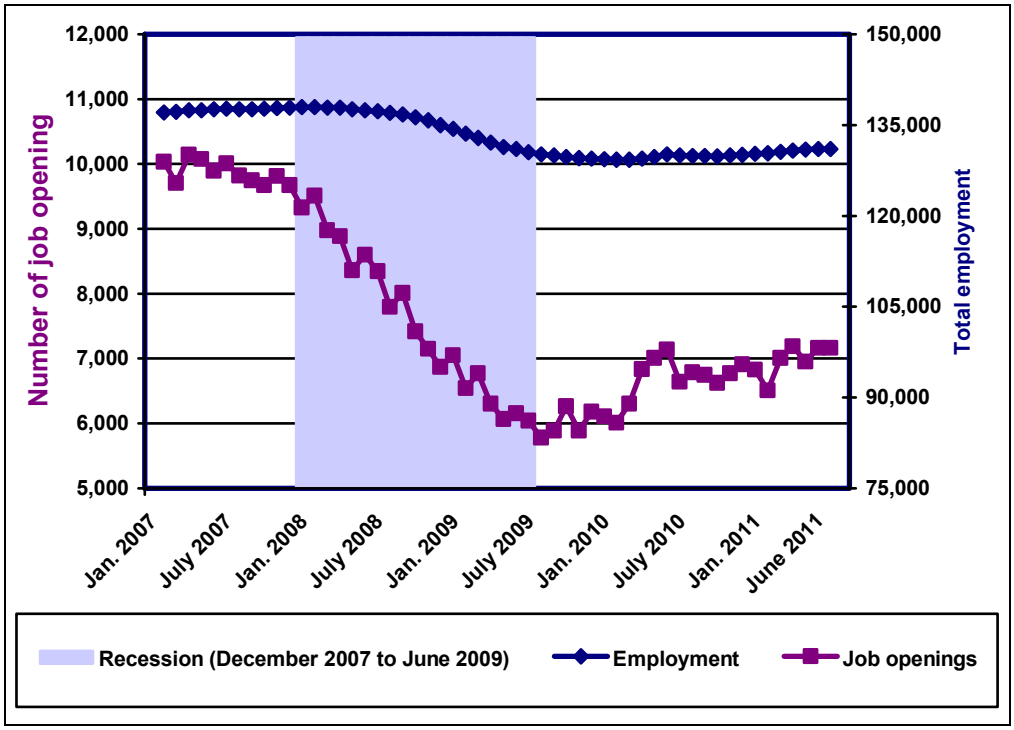
Similarly, employment has increased since the end of the recession but has not returned to pre-recession levels.[16] In December 2007, there were an estimated 138.0 million jobs. Employment fell to 129.2 million in February 2010, and increased to 131.0 million in June 2011 (approximately 1.8 million more jobs than in February 2010).[17] Thus, employment in June 2011 was almost 6.9 million below the level of employment in December 2007. See **Figure 5**.

[16] For an analysis of job growth since the end of the recession, see CRS Report R41434, *Job Growth During the Recovery*, by Linda Levine.

[17] BLS, *Employment, Hours, and Earnings from the Current Employment Statistics Survey*.

Figure 5. Number of Monthly Job Openings and Total Employment, January 2007 to June 2011

(numbers are in 1,000s)



Source: Data are from the BLS Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) and the BLS Current Employment Statistics (CES) Survey.

Notes: The number of job openings is the sum of the monthly number of hires and the number of unfilled job openings on the last business day of the month. JOLTS and CES data are seasonally adjusted.

Hiring the Very Long-Term Unemployed

After a recession, workers who have been unemployed the longest are often the last to be hired. Currently, employers have a large pool of labor from which to hire full-time workers. For these reasons, the number of very long-term unemployed could remain high for some months to come.

Because of the depth of the recession, there are a large number of unemployed and underemployed workers. In June 2011, there were an estimated 14.4 million persons unemployed (not seasonally adjusted). Another 982,000 persons had become discouraged and had stopped looking for work (also not seasonally adjusted).[18] Employers can also increase the number of

[18] U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *The Employment Situation: June 2011*, http://stats.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empsit_07082011.pdf, Tables A-1 and A-16. (Hereafter cited as BLS, *The Employment Situation: June 2011*.)

Discouraged workers are not looking for work because they believe that there are no jobs available or that there are no jobs for which they would qualify. Discouraged workers are not counted as unemployed. Workers may also leave the labor force for other reasons. For example, they may retire, return to school, or choose to stay at home to take care of children or other family members. BLS, *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey*.

A spell of unemployment ends when a worker finds a job or leaves the labor force. In 2009, from one month to the next, an average of 19.6% of workers ages 16 and over who were unemployed in one month had left the labor force by (continued...)

hours worked for those employees who are employed part-time but who would like to work full-time. In June 2011, almost 2.4 million workers were employed part-time because they could not find full-time jobs. Other persons were working part-time because there was not enough work or because there was a seasonal slowdown in demand (an estimated 5.8 million workers).[19] In addition, as economic conditions improve, other persons may enter (or re-enter) the labor force.

Some research indicates that, as the demand for workers increases following a recession, employers generally hire the short-term unemployed before they hire the long-term unemployed.[20] Thus, the number of long-term unemployed could remain high for some time to come.

Figure 6 shows the trend in the number of workers unemployed for more than 78 weeks and more than 99 weeks. Despite some month-to-month reductions, since the beginning of the 2007-2009 recession there has been a steady increase in the number of workers unemployed for more than 78 weeks or more than 99 weeks.

(...continued)

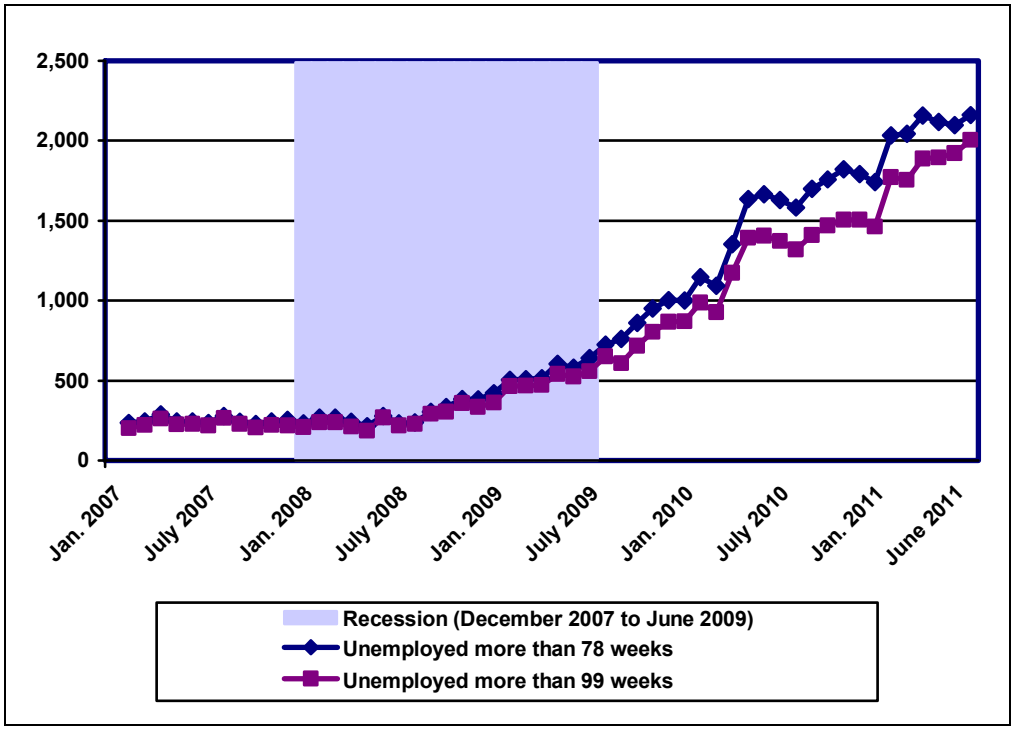
the next month. An average of 17.3% of workers who were unemployed in one month had found work by the next month. In 2007, from one month to the next, an average of 24.2% of unemployed workers left the labor force and an average of 27.6% of unemployed workers found work. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Issues in Labor Statistics: Long-Term Unemployment Experience of the Jobless*, June 2010, p. 4, http://www.bls.gov/opub/ils/pdf/opbils82.pdf.

[19] BLS, *The Employment Situation: June 2011*, Summary Table A. The estimates of part-time workers are seasonally adjusted.

[20] Michael W. Elsby, Bart Hobijn, and Aysegul Sahin, *The Labor Market in the Great Recession*, National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 15979, pp. 24-25, http://www.nber.org/papers/w15979.

Figure 6. Number of Workers Unemployed for More than 78 Weeks and More than 99 Weeks, January 2007 Through June 2011

(numbers are in 1,000s)



Source: CRS analysis of data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Note: The groups of the long-term unemployed are not mutually exclusive. Workers who have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks have been unemployed for more than 78 weeks.

Characteristics of the Very Long-Term Unemployed

This part of the report analyzes selected characteristics of the very long-term unemployed. The analysis is based on monthly average data for the period from July 2010 to June 2011. The data underlying the analysis in this section are provided in **Table A-3** in the **Appendix**.

Gender

During the 12 months from July 2010 to June 2011, unemployed workers were more likely to be male than female. Men were also more likely than women to have been out of work for more than 99 weeks.

Men made up 56.8% of unemployed workers, compared to 52.9% of the employed. Among all unemployed workers, 11.7% had been looking for work for more than 99 weeks. But, 12.3% of

unemployed men had been out of work for more than 99 weeks, compared to 10.8% of unemployed women.[21]

Age

During the period from July 2010 to June 2011, unemployed workers were more likely to be younger, but older unemployed workers were more likely to be out of work for more than 99 weeks.

Almost half (49.0%) of unemployed workers were under the age of 35, compared to 34.1% of employed workers. On the other hand, almost half (46.4%) of workers unemployed for more than 99 weeks were ages 45 and over.

Among unemployed workers under the age of 35, 8.1% had been unemployed for more than 99 weeks. Twice the percentage, 16.3%, of unemployed workers ages 45 and over had been looking for work for more than 99 weeks.

Education

During the 12 months from July 2010 to June 2011, a majority of unemployed workers had a high school education or less. But, unemployed workers with a high school degree only or with a Bachelor's degree were equally likely to have been looking for work for more than 99 weeks.

Among unemployed workers, 55.8% had a high school education or less, compared to 37.3% of persons who had jobs.

Among unemployed workers with a high school degree, 12.4% had been looking for work for more than 99 weeks. By comparison, 11.3% of unemployed workers with a Bachelor's degree had been out of work for more than 99 weeks. The difference in these percentages is not statistically significant, however. On the other hand, unemployed workers with a high school degree were more likely than workers with some college to have been looking for work for more than 99 weeks. An estimated 11.2% of unemployed workers with some college had been out of work for more than 99 weeks. The difference between unemployed workers with a high school degree and some college was statistically significant.

Marital Status

Married workers are less likely to be unemployed than workers who have never been married. But, among unemployed workers married workers are more likely than workers who have never been married to be unemployed for more than 99 weeks.

For the 12-month period from July 2010 to June 2011, among unemployed workers, 36.5% were married, compared to 56.9% of employed workers. On the other hand, 46.5% of unemployed workers had never been married, compared to 28.3% of persons with jobs.

[21] Unless otherwise noted, the percentage comparisons in this report are significant at the 90% confidence level or better. See the discussion of confidence intervals in the **Appendix**.

Among unemployed workers, 12.8% of married workers had been looking for work for more than 99 weeks, compared to 9.8% of unemployed workers who were never married. Similarly, unemployed workers who were widowed, divorced, or separated were more likely (14.2%) than those who were never married (9.8%) to have been out of work for more than 99 weeks.

Race and Hispanic Origin

Black and Hispanic workers are more likely than white workers to be unemployed. In addition, unemployed black workers are more likely than unemployed white workers to have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks. On the other hand, unemployed Hispanic and non-Hispanic workers are equally likely to have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks.

Among unemployed workers, 19.9% were black and 19.4% were Hispanic.[22] Among unemployed black workers, 13.3% were unemployed for more than 99 weeks, compared to 11.0% of white workers. On the other hand, 11.8% of unemployed Hispanic workers had been unemployed for more than 99 weeks, compared to 11.0% of non-Hispanic workers. The difference between Hispanic and non-Hispanic workers was not statistically significant.

Citizenship

Noncitizens are more likely than native-born citizens to be unemployed, but unemployed noncitizens are as likely as citizens to be unemployed for more than 99 weeks.[23]

Noncitizens accounted for 9.8% of unemployed workers, compared to 8.6% of all employed workers. But, noncitizens were as likely (11.0%) as native-born citizens (11.4%) to be unemployed for more than 99 weeks.[24]

Industry

Unemployed individuals who had worked in the construction, manufacturing, or leisure and hospitality industries were more likely to be among the unemployed than individuals who worked in other industries. In addition, unemployed workers in construction and manufacturing, but not leisure and hospitality, were more likely than other unemployed workers to have been looking for work for more than 99 weeks.

In the 12-month period from July 2010 to June 2011, 13.9% of unemployed workers had been employed in the construction industry. Among those with jobs, 6.5% worked in construction (a difference between the shares of the unemployed and employed of 7.4 percentage points). An

[22] Hispanics can be of any race.

[23] The CPS asks respondents if they are citizens of the United States. The survey also asks citizens if they were born a U.S. citizen or if they are naturalized citizens. The CPS does not ask noncitizens if they are legal immigrants, nonimmigrants who are in the United States temporarily (e.g., guest workers), or whether they are in the country without authorization. Therefore, in this report, the definition of noncitizens includes legal immigrants, legal nonimmigrants, and unauthorized aliens.

[24] If naturalized citizens are combined with native-born citizens, the difference between unemployed citizens and noncitizens who were out of work for more than 99 weeks was not statistically significant.

estimated 11.8% of unemployed workers had been employed in manufacturing, while, among those with jobs, 10.2% worked in manufacturing. **Table A-3**.

Among workers who lost jobs, 11.9% had been looking for work for more than 99 weeks. However, among unemployed workers who had been employed in manufacturing, 15.9% had been out of work for more than 99 weeks. Among unemployed construction workers, 13.2% had been unemployed for more than 99 weeks.

Workers in the leisure and hospitality industry were overrepresented among unemployed workers but underrepresented among the very long-term unemployed. Approximately 12.9% of unemployed workers had been employed in the leisure and hospitality industries, while 9.1% of those with jobs were employed in these industries. On the other hand, 9.5% of unemployed workers from the leisure and hospitality industries had been out of work for more than 99 weeks (compared to 11.9% of all unemployed workers).

Workers in educational and health services were underrepresented among both the unemployed and the very long-term unemployed. While 13.4% of unemployed workers had been employed in educational and health service industries, 22.9% of those with jobs worked in these industries. An estimated 9.8% of unemployed workers from the educational and health services industries had been looking for work for more than 99 weeks (again, compared to 11.9% of all unemployed workers).

Occupation

To a large extent, unemployment by occupation reflects unemployment in the construction, manufacturing, and leisure and hospitality industries. A disproportionate share of unemployed workers had been employed in construction and extraction occupations (12.3%, compared to 5.1% of the employed), production occupations (8.6%, compared to 5.9% of the employed), transportation and material moving occupations (8.4%, compared to 6.0% of the employed), and service occupations (21.5%, compared to 17.7% of the employed).[25] See **Table A-3**.

In addition to being overrepresented among unemployed workers, unemployed production workers were also more likely than other workers to have been out of work for more than 99 weeks. While 11.9% of all unemployed workers had been looking for work for more than 99 weeks, 15.3% of unemployed production workers had been out of work for more than 99 weeks. By contrast, unemployed construction and extraction workers and transportation and material moving workers were neither more nor less likely than other workers to have been looking for work for more than 99 weeks.

Although unemployed workers who last worked in service occupations were overrepresented among unemployed workers, they were underrepresented among the very long-term unemployed. Among workers who lost their jobs, 21.5% had been employed in service occupations, while 17.7% of those with jobs were employed in service occupations. By contrast, 10.0% of unemployed workers in service occupations had been looking for work for more than 99 weeks (compared to 11.9% of all unemployed workers).

[25] Service occupations include jobs in healthcare support, protective services, food preparation and serving, building and grounds cleaning and maintenance, and personal care and service.

Conclusion

The number of very long-term unemployed increased from January 2007 to June 2011. The number may or may not continue to rise. On the one hand, the number of workers laid off each month has fallen since the official end of the 2007-2009 recession. On the other hand, although both the number of jobs and of job openings have increased, the numbers have not returned to their pre-recession levels. In addition, as employers hire new workers, those who have been unemployed the longest may be among the last to be hired.

Data for the 12-month period from July 2010 to June 2011 show that unemployed men were more likely than women to be unemployed for more than 99 weeks. Also, workers who had been looking for work for more than 99 weeks were more likely to be older, married, and, in some instances, minorities. If married workers have a stronger attachment to the labor force than unmarried workers, they may continue to look for work. Those who stay in the labor force but cannot find work will continue to be counted among the very long-term unemployed.

Almost two out of five (38.6%) unemployed workers had been employed in construction, leisure and hospitality, or manufacturing. Unemployed workers in construction and manufacturing were more likely than other unemployed workers to have been looking for work for more than 99 weeks. As output in these industries grows, there should be more job opportunities for the unemployed.

Rapid economic growth will likely benefit the very long-term unemployed. On the other hand, changes in the relative levels of employment by industry or occupation or changes in technology may slow the pace at which employers hire the very long-term unemployed.

Policy Responses

The very long-term unemployed may be out of work because of cyclical unemployment, structural unemployment, or both. Cyclical unemployment occurs when there is a decline in aggregate demand that causes employers to layoff workers or hire fewer workers. Structural unemployment occurs when there is a mismatch in a labor market between the skills that workers possess and the skills that employers want.[26]

The policy responses to cyclical unemployment and structural unemployment are different. The usual policy responses to cyclical unemployment are fiscal and monetary policies to increase aggregate demand. Fiscal policies consist of changes in government spending or taxes. Monetary policies consist of actions by the Federal Reserve to affect interest rates or the money supply.

As the demand for consumer goods increases and business investment improves, employers can be expected to hire more workers. In general, employers may hire the short-term unemployed before they hire the very long-term unemployed. But, employers can be provided with incentives to hire the very long-term unemployed. These incentives can include tax breaks or direct subsidies. Alternatively, the very long-term unemployed can be provided with incentives to

[26] Ronald G. Ehrenberg and Robert S. Smith, *Modern Labor Economics: Theory and Public Policy*, 7th ed., Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 2000, pp. 574, 581.

encourage them to accept available jobs. For example, wage insurance can compensate the long-term employed who accept jobs that pay less than the jobs they lost. Reemployment bonuses can encourage the very long-term unemployed to accept new jobs and shorten their spell of unemployment.[27]

Structural unemployment may call for other policy responses. In some cases, structural unemployment may be due to a geographic mismatch in skills. Workers in a labor market may not have the skills that employers want. But there may be workers in other labor markets with the desired skills. [28] In this case, policy responses may include incentives for employers to hire where there are workers available or incentives for workers to locate where there are jobs available.[29]

Another way for public policy to respond to structural unemployment is with education and training. Public policy can help workers obtain the skills demanded by employers. It can also create incentives for employers to train the very long-term unemployed to learn the skills that employers need.

For those very long-term unemployed who cannot find work, Congress could extend the UC benefit period to more than 99 weeks.[30] An extension of UC benefits could help stimulate demand, but it could also create disincentives for the very long-term unemployed to look for work or accept job offers.[31]

If the very long-term unemployed cannot find work, if they accept jobs that pay substantially less than their previous jobs, or if they leave the labor force, another policy option is to ensure income support for workers in lower-income households. This support could come from existing programs, in which case congressional interest may be in the level of funding for these programs or in the eligibility rules for benefits.

Since the very long-term unemployed are more likely than other workers to be older, some may have retired or will retire. Workers ages 62 and over may be eligible for Social Security retirement benefits.[32] Disabled workers under the age of 65 may be eligible for Social Security

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[27] For more discussion of policy responses to long-term unemployment, see CRS Report R41179, *Long-Term Unemployment and Recessions*.

[28] Labor markets may be local, regional, national, or international. For some skills, employers may recruit from the local labor market (e.g., for jobs requiring few skills). For other skills (e.g., for top executives), employers may recruit from the national or international labor market.

[29] For unemployed home owners, it may be difficult to relocate if they want to sell their homes, especially if their mortgages are more than the market value of their homes. For a discussion of foreclosure prevention programs, see CRS Report R40210, *Preserving Homeownership: Foreclosure Prevention Initiatives*, by Katie Jones.

[30] For a discussion of policy proposals for persons who have exhaust their UC benefits, see CRS Report RL33362, *Unemployment Insurance: Programs and Benefits*, by Katelin P. Isaacs and Julie M. Whittaker.

Workers who are unemployed because their jobs have moved overseas or because of increased imports may be eligible for income support and training under the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. Workers ages 50 and over who are eligible for TAA may receive Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA), which provides workers with a wage supplement. See CRS Report RS22718, *Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers (TAA) and Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA)*, by John J. Topoleski.

[31] For a review of recent research on the effect of UC benefits on unemployment, see CRS Report R41179, *Long-Term Unemployment and Recessions*.

[32] For more information on Social Security retirement benefits, see CRS Report RL33544, *Social Security Reform: Current Issues and Legislation*, by Dawn Nuschler.

disability benefits.[33] Low-income disabled workers may be eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI).[34]

Other programs that may assist low-income households include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps), which provides benefits to low-income households to buy food.[35] The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program provides cash assistance and other benefits to low-income families with children.[36] Low-income households may be eligible for health care services under the Medicaid program.[37] The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps lower income households with home utility costs.[38]

[33] The Social Security Administration (SSA) has reported that the recent recession generated an "unprecedented surge" in claims for Social Security disability benefits. Social Security Administration, *FY2011 Budget Overview*, p. 11, http://www.socialsecurity.gov/budget.

[34] For more information on Social Security disability benefits and the SSI program, see CRS Report RL32279, *Primer on Disability Benefits: Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI)*, by Umar Moulta-Ali.

[35] See CRS Report R41076, *The Federal Response to Calls for Increased Aid from USDA's Food Assistance Programs*, by Joe Richardson.

[36] See CRS Report R40946, *The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Block Grant: An Introduction*, by Gene Falk.

[37] See CRS Report RL33202, *Medicaid: A Primer*, by Elicia J. Herz.

[38] See CRS Report RL31865, *The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP): Program and Funding*, by Libby Perl.

Appendix. Data and Methodology

This appendix provides a more detailed description of data and methodology used in this report.

Data

The analysis in this report is based on data from the monthly Current Employment Statistics (CES) Survey and the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

The CES is a survey of nonfarm establishments conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The sample includes approximately 160,000 businesses and government agencies. The survey does not include self-employed persons, agricultural workers, private household workers, unpaid family workers, or persons on active military duty. [39]

The CPS is a household survey conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor. The monthly CPS collects information from approximately 50,000 households. The sample for the monthly CPS is representative of the civilian noninstitutional population of the United States. The sample does not include persons living in institutions (such as mental hospitals, nursing homes, or correctional facilities).[40]

In the CPS, persons are counted as employed if they did any work for pay during the survey week, if they did at least 15 hours of unpaid work in a family-run business, or if they were temporarily absent from their regular job because of illness, vacation, bad weather, industrial dispute, or various personal reasons. Persons are counted as unemployed if they did not have a job, actively looked for work in the four weeks before the survey, and are currently available for work. Persons who are not working and are waiting to be called back to a job from which they have been temporarily laid off are also counted as unemployed.[41]

In the CPS, "duration of unemployment" is the number of weeks that a person who is classified as unemployed has been looking for work. For someone on layoff, duration of unemployment is the number of weeks since the person was laid off. A period of two weeks or more during which a person is employed or stopped looking for work is considered a break in the continuous period of unemployment.[42]

In this report, estimates of the employed include both wage and salary workers and self-employed persons who work in unincorporated businesses.

As noted in the introduction, during the December 2007-June 2009 recession, unemployment increased more among men than women, more among younger than older workers, and more among blacks and Hispanics than among white or non-Hispanics. **Table A-1** shows changes in

[39] U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, vol. 58, February 2011, p. 197, http://www.bls.gov/opub/ee/empearn201102.pdf.

[40] U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey (CPS)*, http://www.census.gov/cps/.

[41] BLS, *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey*.

[42] U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *BLS Information*, Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey, 2009 Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement*, October 2009, http://www.census.gov/apsd/techdoc/cps/cpsmar09.pdf, p. 9-1.

unemployment rates for different groups of workers. From 2007 to the 12-month period from July 2010 to June 2011, unemployment increased by 5.2 percentage points among men and 4.1 points among women. It increased by 7.3 points among young workers (ages 16 to 24) and by 4.5 points among workers ages 25 to 54. Among black workers, unemployment increased by 3.4 percentage points more than it increased among white workers (7.6 versus 4.2 points). Unemployment increased by 6.5 points among Hispanic workers, but by 4.3 points among non-Hispanic workers.

Table A-2 illustrates how respondents in the CPS may round off the number of weeks that they are unemployed. Until January 2011, BLS capped the duration of unemployment at two years. Beginning in January 2011, respondents can report up to five years of unemployment.

Table A-3 provides the data discussed in the second part of the report on the "Characteristics of the Very Long-Term Unemployed."

Table A-1. Labor Force Characteristics of Persons 16 and Over

(numbers are in 1,000s)

Characteristic	Averages of Monthly Data, 2007			Averages of Monthly Data, July 2010 to June 2011			Number and Percentage Point Changes	
	Labor Force	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	Labor Force	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
Men	82,136	3,882	4.7%	81,871	8,090	9.9%	4,208	5.2
Women	70,988	3,196	4.5%	71,745	6,145	8.6%	2,950	4.1
Total	153,124	7,078	4.6%	153,616	14,235	9.3%	7,158	4.6
Youth (16-24)	22,217	2,342	10.5%	20,926	3,736	17.9%	1,394	7.3
Adult (25-54)	104,353	3,904	3.7%	102,278	8,415	8.2%	4,511	4.5
White only	124,935	5,143	4.1%	124,726	10,378	8.3%	5,235	4.2
Black only	17,496	1,445	8.3%	17,840	2,835	15.9%	1,390	7.6
Other	10,693	489	4.6%	11,050	1,023	9.3%	533	4.7
Total	153,124	7,078	4.6%	153,616	14,235	9.3%	7,158	4.6
Hispanic	21,602	1,220	5.6%	22,767	2,755	12.1%	1,535	6.5
Non-Hispanic	131,522	5,858	4.5%	130,849	11,480	8.8%	5,623	4.3
Total	153,124	7,078	4.6%	153,616	14,235	9.3%	7,158	4.6

Source: CRS analysis of data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Table A-2. Number of Workers Unemployed by Duration of Unemployment, Averages of Monthly Data, July 2010 to June 2011

(numbers are in 1,000s)

Weeks Unemployed	Number Unemployed	Weeks Unemployed	Number Unemployed	Weeks Unemployed	Number Unemployed
50	13,024	76	2,429	99	9,467
51	24,603	77	7,256	100	12,612
52	966,704	78	150,456	102	1,780
53	23,568	79	4,489	103	1,592
54	5,478	80	2,281	104	669,952
				More than 104 weeks	973,205

Source: CRS analysis of data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Table A-3. Characteristics of the Unemployed, Averages of Monthly Data, July 2010 to June 2011

(numbers are in 1,000s)

Characteristic	Employed	Unemployed	Number Unemployed by Duration					Unemployment Rate	Distribution of the Unemployed by Duration Of Unemployment				
			0-26 Weeks	Over 26 Weeks	Over 52 Weeks	Over 78 Weeks	Over 99 Weeks		0-26 Weeks	Over 26 Weeks	Over 52 Weeks	Over 78 Weeks	Over 99 Weeks
Gender													
Male	73,781	8,090	4,498	3,592	2,024	1,139	994	9.9%	55.6%	44.4%	25.0%	14.1%	12.3%
Female	65,599	6,145	3,538	2,608	1,380	778	665	8.6%	57.6%	42.4%	22.5%	12.7%	10.8%
Total	139,380	14,235	8,036	6,199	3,404	1,917	1,659	9.3%	56.5%	43.5%	23.9%	13.5%	11.7%
Male	52.9%	56.8%	56.0%	57.9%	59.5%	59.4%	59.9%						
Female	47.1%	43.2%	44.0%	42.1%	40.5%	40.6%	40.1%						
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%						
Age													
16-24	17,190	3,736	2,622	1,115	473	241	217	17.9%	70.2%	29.8%	12.7%	6.4%	5.8%
25-34	30,385	3,248	1,880	1,369	720	396	347	9.7%	57.9%	42.1%	22.2%	12.2%	10.7%
35-44	30,475	2,523	1,316	1,207	680	377	325	7.6%	52.2%	47.8%	26.9%	14.9%	12.9%
45-54	33,003	2,644	1,261	1,383	819	462	398	7.4%	47.7%	52.3%	31.0%	17.5%	15.1%
55-64	21,874	1,630	744	886	565	347	293	6.9%	45.6%	54.4%	34.6%	21.3%	18.0%
65 and over	6,453	454	213	241	148	94	78	6.6%	46.9%	53.1%	32.5%	20.7%	17.1%
Total	139,380	14,235	8,036	6,199	3,404	1,917	1,659	9.3%	56.5%	43.5%	23.9%	13.5%	11.7%
16-24	12.3%	26.2%	32.6%	18.0%	13.9%	12.6%	13.1%						
25-34	21.8%	22.8%	23.4%	22.1%	21.2%	20.7%	20.9%						
35-44	21.9%	17.7%	16.4%	19.5%	20.0%	19.7%	19.6%						
45-54	23.7%	18.6%	15.7%	22.3%	24.1%	24.1%	24.0%						
55-64	15.7%	11.5%	9.3%	14.3%	16.6%	18.1%	17.7%						
65 and over	4.6%	3.2%	2.7%	3.9%	4.3%	4.9%	4.7%						
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%						

Characteristic	Employed	Unemployed	Number Unemployed by Duration					Unemployment Rate	Distribution of the Unemployed by Duration Of Unemployment				
			0-26 Weeks	Over 26 Weeks	Over 52 Weeks	Over 78 Weeks	Over 99 Weeks		0-26 Weeks	Over 26 Weeks	Over 52 Weeks	Over 78 Weeks	Over 99 Weeks
Education													
Less than high school	12,932	2,919	1,804	1,114	586	345	321	18.4%	61.8%	38.2%	20.1%	11.8%	11.0%
High school degree	39,052	5,031	2,772	2,259	1,253	711	624	11.4%	55.1%	44.9%	24.9%	14.1%	12.4%
Some college or Associate's degree	40,826	3,955	2,169	1,786	976	536	443	8.8%	54.8%	45.2%	24.7%	13.5%	11.2%
Bachelor's degree	30,295	1,742	972	770	433	238	197	5.4%	55.8%	44.2%	24.9%	13.7%	11.3%
Advanced or professional degree	16,276	588	318	270	155	88	73	3.5%	54.2%	45.8%	26.4%	15.0%	12.4%
Total	139,380	14,235	8,036	6,199	3,404	1,917	1,659	9.3%	56.5%	43.5%	23.9%	13.5%	11.7%
Less than high school	9.3%	20.5%	22.5%	18.0%	17.2%	18.0%	19.4%						
High school degree	28.0%	35.3%	34.5%	36.4%	36.8%	37.1%	37.6%						
Some college or Associate's degree	29.3%	27.8%	27.0%	28.8%	28.7%	27.9%	26.7%						
Bachelor's degree	21.7%	12.2%	12.1%	12.4%	12.7%	12.4%	11.9%						
Advanced or professional degree	11.7%	4.1%	4.0%	4.3%	4.6%	4.6%	4.4%						
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%						
Marital Status													
Married	79,376	5,198	2,782	2,416	1,385	788	664	6.1%	53.5%	46.5%	26.6%	15.2%	12.8%
Widowed, divorced, or separated	20,602	2,418	1,197	1,221	711	399	343	10.5%	49.5%	50.5%	29.4%	16.5%	14.2%
Never married	39,403	6,619	4,056	2,563	1,309	730	652	14.4%	61.3%	38.7%	19.8%	11.0%	9.8%
Total	139,380	14,235	8,036	6,199	3,404	1,917	1,659	9.3%	56.5%	43.5%	23.9%	13.5%	11.7%
Married	56.9%	36.5%	34.6%	39.0%	40.7%	41.1%	40.0%						
Widowed, divorced, or separated	14.8%	17.0%	14.9%	19.7%	20.9%	20.8%	20.7%						
Never married	28.3%	46.5%	50.5%	41.3%	38.4%	38.1%	39.3%						
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%						
Race													
White only	114,348	10,378	6,026	4,352	2,418	1,340	1,146	8.3%	58.1%	41.9%	23.3%	12.9%	11.0%
Black only	15,005	2,835	1,457	1,378	721	418	377	15.9%	51.4%	48.6%	25.4%	14.8%	13.3%
Other	10,027	1,023	553	469	265	159	136	9.3%	54.1%	45.9%	25.9%	15.5%	13.3%

Characteristic	Employed	Unemployed	Number Unemployed by Duration					Unemployment Rate	Distribution of the Unemployed by Duration Of Unemployment				
			0-26 Weeks	Over 26 Weeks	Over 52 Weeks	Over 78 Weeks	Over 99 Weeks		0-26 Weeks	Over 26 Weeks	Over 52 Weeks	Over 78 Weeks	Over 99 Weeks
Total	139,380	14,235	8,036	6,199	3,404	1,917	1,659	9.3%	56.5%	43.5%	23.9%	13.5%	11.7%
White only	82.0%	72.9%	75.0%	70.2%	71.0%	69.9%	69.1%						
Black only	10.8%	19.9%	18.1%	22.2%	21.2%	21.8%	22.7%						
Other	7.2%	7.2%	6.9%	7.6%	7.8%	8.3%	8.2%						
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%						
Hispanic Origin													
Hispanic	20,012	2,755	1,657	1,097	595	333	303	12.1%	60.2%	39.8%	21.6%	12.1%	11.0%
Non-Hispanic	119,369	11,480	6,378	5,102	2,810	1,584	1,356	8.8%	55.6%	44.4%	24.5%	13.8%	11.8%
Total	139,380	14,235	8,036	6,199	3,404	1,917	1,659	9.3%	56.5%	43.5%	23.9%	13.5%	11.7%
Hispanic	14.4%	19.4%	20.6%	17.7%	17.5%	17.4%	18.3%						
Non-Hispanic	85.6%	80.6%	79.4%	82.3%	82.5%	82.6%	81.7%						
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%						
Citizenship													
Native-born, citizen	117,287	11,937	6,748	5,189	2,825	1,584	1,366	9.2%	56.5%	43.5%	23.7%	13.3%	11.4%
Foreign-born, naturalized	10,114	898	433	465	278	162	139	8.2%	48.2%	51.8%	31.0%	18.0%	15.5%
Foreign-born, non-citizen	11,980	1,400	855	545	301	171	154	10.5%	61.1%	38.9%	21.5%	12.2%	11.0%
Total	139,380	14,235	8,036	6,199	3,404	1,917	1,659	9.3%	56.5%	43.5%	23.9%	13.5%	11.7%
Native-born, citizen	84.1%	83.9%	84.0%	83.7%	83.0%	82.6%	82.3%						
Foreign-born, naturalized	7.3%	6.3%	5.4%	7.5%	8.2%	8.5%	8.4%						
Foreign-born, non-citizen	8.6%	9.8%	10.6%	8.8%	8.8%	8.9%	9.3%						
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%						

Characteristic	Employed	Unemployed	Number Unemployed by Duration					Unemployment Rate	Distribution of the Unemployed by Duration Of Unemployment				
			0-26 Weeks	Over 26 Weeks	Over 52 Weeks	Over 78 Weeks	Over 99 Weeks		0-26 Weeks	Over 26 Weeks	Over 52 Weeks	Over 78 Weeks	Over 99 Weeks
Industry													
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	2,215	213	161	52	22	14	12	8.8%	75.4%	24.6%	10.5%	6.4%	5.7%
Mining	770	63	35	28	14	5	4	7.5%	55.2%	44.8%	22.5%	8.2%	6.7%
Construction	8,990	1,790	992	798	467	267	236	16.6%	55.4%	44.6%	26.1%	14.9%	13.2%
Manufacturing	14,267	1,527	716	811	504	286	242	9.7%	46.9%	53.1%	33.0%	18.7%	15.9%
Wholesale and retail trade	19,757	1,952	1,073	879	485	272	232	9.0%	55.0%	45.0%	24.8%	13.9%	11.9%
Transportation and utilities	7,124	551	277	273	155	81	69	7.2%	50.3%	49.7%	28.1%	14.6%	12.6%
Information	3,147	281	137	144	85	40	32	8.2%	48.7%	51.3%	30.3%	14.1%	11.5%
Financial activities	9,256	650	310	340	183	100	81	6.6%	47.6%	52.4%	28.2%	15.4%	12.4%
Professional and business services	15,540	1,620	908	712	401	229	186	9.4%	56.1%	43.9%	24.8%	14.1%	11.5%
Educational and health services	31,939	1,735	1,040	695	359	196	169	5.2%	59.9%	40.1%	20.7%	11.3%	9.8%
Leisure and hospitality	12,732	1,668	1,031	637	317	174	158	11.6%	61.8%	38.2%	19.0%	10.4%	9.5%
Other services	6,731	572	322	250	140	89	82	7.8%	56.3%	43.7%	24.4%	15.6%	14.2%
Public administration	6,911	301	171	130	64	36	33	4.2%	56.7%	43.3%	21.3%	11.9%	11.0%
Total	139,380	12,922	7,173	5,750	3,195	1,789	1,536	8.5%	55.5%	44.5%	24.7%	13.8%	11.9%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	1.6%	1.6%	2.2%	0.9%	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%						
Mining	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%						
Construction	6.5%	13.9%	13.8%	13.9%	14.6%	14.9%	15.3%						
Manufacturing	10.2%	11.8%	10.0%	14.1%	15.8%	16.0%	15.8%						
Wholesale and retail trade	14.2%	15.1%	15.0%	15.3%	15.2%	15.2%	15.1%						
Transportation and utilities	5.1%	4.3%	3.9%	4.8%	4.8%	4.5%	4.5%						
Information	2.3%	2.2%	1.9%	2.5%	2.7%	2.2%	2.1%						
Financial activities	6.6%	5.0%	4.3%	5.9%	5.7%	5.6%	5.3%						
Professional and business services	11.1%	12.5%	12.7%	12.4%	12.5%	12.8%	12.1%						
Educational and health services	22.9%	13.4%	14.5%	12.1%	11.2%	11.0%	11.0%						
Leisure and hospitality	9.1%	12.9%	14.4%	11.1%	9.9%	9.7%	10.3%						
Other services	4.8%	4.4%	4.5%	4.3%	4.4%	5.0%	5.3%						
Public administration	5.0%	2.3%	2.4%	2.3%	2.0%	2.0%	2.1%						
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%						

Characteristic	Employed	Unemployed	Number Unemployed by Duration					Unemployment Rate	Distribution of the Unemployed by Duration Of Unemployment				
			0-26 Weeks	Over 26 Weeks	Over 52 Weeks	Over 78 Weeks	Over 99 Weeks		0-26 Weeks	Over 26 Weeks	Over 52 Weeks	Over 78 Weeks	Over 99 Weeks
Occupation													
Management, business, and financial	21,062	1,092	532	560	323	183	144	4.9%	48.7%	51.3%	29.5%	16.8%	13.1%
Professional and related	30,951	1,391	788	603	339	181	155	4.3%	56.6%	43.4%	24.4%	13.0%	11.1%
Service	24,655	2,778	1,677	1,101	558	309	278	10.1%	60.4%	39.6%	20.1%	11.1%	10.0%
Sales and related	15,362	1,539	839	700	377	209	178	9.1%	54.5%	45.5%	24.5%	13.6%	11.6%
Office and administrative support	17,901	1,697	898	799	438	254	210	8.7%	52.9%	47.1%	25.8%	15.0%	12.3%
Farming, fishing, and forestry	995	182	144	38	16	8	7	15.5%	79.0%	21.0%	8.8%	4.5%	4.1%
Construction and extraction	7,087	1,595	905	690	403	220	197	18.4%	56.7%	43.3%	25.3%	13.8%	12.4%
Installation, maintenance, and repair	4,885	448	231	217	132	77	65	8.4%	51.5%	48.5%	29.4%	17.1%	14.5%
Production	8,154	1,110	565	545	337	196	169	12.0%	50.9%	49.1%	30.3%	17.7%	15.3%
Transportation and material moving	8,328	1,090	595	495	274	152	132	11.6%	54.6%	45.4%	25.1%	13.9%	12.1%
Total	139,380	12,922	7,173	5,750	3,195	1,789	1,536	8.5%	55.5%	44.5%	24.7%	13.8%	11.9%
Management, business, and financial	15.1%	8.5%	7.4%	9.7%	10.1%	10.2%	9.3%						
Professional and related	22.2%	10.8%	11.0%	10.5%	10.6%	10.1%	10.1%						
Service	17.7%	21.5%	23.4%	19.1%	17.5%	17.3%	18.1%						
Sales and related	11.0%	11.9%	11.7%	12.2%	11.8%	11.7%	11.6%						
Office and administrative support	12.8%	13.1%	12.5%	13.9%	13.7%	14.2%	13.6%						
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.7%	1.4%	2.0%	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%						
Construction and extraction	5.1%	12.3%	12.6%	12.0%	12.6%	12.3%	12.9%						
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.5%	3.5%	3.2%	3.8%	4.1%	4.3%	4.2%						
Production	5.9%	8.6%	7.9%	9.5%	10.5%	11.0%	11.0%						
Transportation and material moving	6.0%	8.4%	8.3%	8.6%	8.6%	8.5%	8.6%						
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%						

Source: CRS analysis of data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Confidence Levels

Estimates based on survey responses from a sample of households have two kinds of error: nonsampling and sampling. Examples of nonsampling error include information that is misreported and errors made in processing collected information. Sampling error occurs because a sample, and not the entire population, of households is surveyed. The difference between an estimate based on a sample of households and the actual population value is known as sampling error. When using sample data, researchers typically construct confidence intervals around population estimates. Confidence intervals provide information about the accuracy of estimated values. With a 90% confidence interval and repeated samples from a population, 90% of intervals will include the average estimate of a population characteristic.

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