

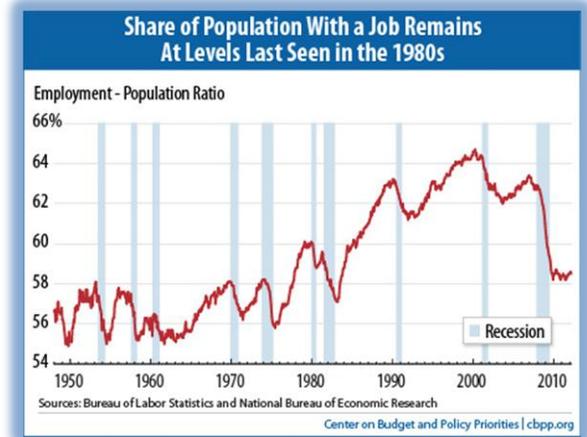
March U.S. Unemployment Report:

Individuals with fewer skills, those with less education, youth, minorities and veterans continue to feel the burden of disproportionate unemployment impacts

[The Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) released job growth and unemployment numbers today indicating that the U.S. economy gained 120,000 jobs in March, 2012. Though official unemployment rates were little changed, the March unemployment report shines a light on how various groups are faring in the economic recovery. While employers are adding some jobs to their payrolls, the decline in unemployment in March was a result of the growing number of discouraged workers dropping out of the labor force. According to the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#), the share of the US population with a job remains at levels not seen since the 1980's.

Key Findings:

- The official national unemployment rate was little changed at 8.2 percent, or 12.7 million people.
- The number of long-term unemployed, or those unemployed for 27 weeks or longer, remained little changed at 5.3 million people.
- The long-term unemployed accounted for 42.5 percent of the unemployed.
- In March there were 2.4 million people marginally attached to the labor market, essentially unchanged from a year earlier.



Center on Budget and Policy Priorities – cbpp.org

The marginal decrease in the official unemployment rate obscures the disproportionate impact the sluggish economy has had on individuals with fewer skills, those with less education, youth, minorities, and veterans.

For Example:

- The unemployment rate for all men 20 years and older was 9.6 percent in March 2012. The unemployment rate for **African American men** 20 years and older in March 2012 was 18 percent. This was an increase from February and was more than double the rate of their White counterparts. The unemployment rate for **Hispanic or Latino men** 20 years and older was slightly over 11 percent.
- The unemployment rate for all teenagers in March 2012 was 25 percent. The unemployment rate for White youth ages 16-19 was over 20 percent. **The unemployment rate for African American youth was 39 percent.** The unemployment rate for Hispanic or Latino youth was 31 percent.
- Individuals over the age of 25 with less than a high school diploma **had an unemployment rate of over 15 percent**, compared to 10 percent among high school graduates and 7.7 percent of those with a bachelor's degree. Veterans had an unemployment rate of 9 percent in March 2012.

Action is Needed to Address the Prolonged Impacts of High Unemployment

Far too many of our nation's job seekers continue to experience long periods of joblessness and vulnerable populations face significantly higher unemployment rates than the national average – leading to prolonged hardship for millions of American families. An America where everyone gets a fair shot means that access to employment opportunities, earned income to meet basic needs, and on-ramps to basic education and training programs to move up the career ladder should be available to all, even our most disadvantaged job seekers.

At time when our future economic prosperity hangs in the balance, we urge the administration and Congress to work together for the benefit of all American workers. Specifically, we encourage re-focusing on the following priorities:

- Fully fund workforce development and adult basic education programs in the FY13 budget.
- [Reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act and include Transitional Jobs](#) as an allowable use of training funds to ensure that individuals with barriers to employment have access to work opportunities.
- Take up and pass measures like the [Pathways Back to Work Act](#) to provide Subsidized Employment and Transitional Jobs for youth and low-income adults. Such investments will build upon and take advantage of the existing capacity and knowledge base within the field; build upon earlier investments in Subsidized Employment and Transitional Jobs programs made by other federal agencies, such as the Department of Labor and the Department of Health and Human Services; and provides support for programs that demonstrate capacity to serve as on-ramps to the new jobs being created through related federal actions to spur job creation.
- [Provide maximum flexibility under key federal programs and streamline services](#) and regulation to facilitate the development and expansion of Subsidized Employment and Transitional Jobs. These programs include the Community Development Block Grants, Food Stamp Employment and Training, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, HEARTH Act, Senior Community Service Employment Program and the Community Services Block Grant.

We urge the administration and Congress to lead the country back to economic prosperity by focusing on efforts that give every American a fair shot in getting and keeping a job and accessing critical basic education and training opportunities. Contact the National Transitional Jobs Network at ntjn@heartlandalliance.org for more information.

The National Transitional Jobs Network (NTJN), a project of Heartland Alliance, is a coalition of city, state, and federal policy makers; community workforce organizations; and anti-poverty nonprofit service providers and advocacy organizations committed to advancing and strengthening Transitional Jobs (TJ) programs around the country so that people with barriers to employment can gain success in the workplace and improve their economic lives and the economic conditions of their communities. Together we ensure that policies will account for the hard-to-employ, that the public understands the need to invest in these services, that programs are able to effectively serve as many people as possible, and that best practices and technical assistance are widely shared and implemented across the country. The NTJN is the singular national clearinghouse for resources, tools, and expertise for building Transitional Jobs programs, is the primary organization for gathering and disseminating best practices to improve the model nationally, and leads the national dialogue about employment and advancement strategies for the hard to employ. The NTJN is the national voice for stakeholders working to help the hardest to employ get and keep jobs.