

Unemployment rate largely unchanged, youth, veterans, minorities and those with less education disproportionately impacted

[The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) released job growth and unemployment numbers on July 6, 2012, indicating that the U.S. economy gained 80,000 jobs in June 2012. The unemployment rate was unchanged at 8.2 percent – down from 9.1 percent a year ago.

Key Findings:

- The official national unemployment rate **was unchanged at 8.2 percent, or 12.7 million people**. Unemployment rates continue to be stubbornly high – well above the unemployment rates reported following previous recessions. For example, three years after the official end of the recession in 1982, the national unemployment rate hovered at 7 percent.
- The number of long-term unemployed, or those **unemployed for 27 weeks or longer, was unchanged at 5.4 million people**. The long-term unemployed accounted for 41.9 percent of the unemployed. The share of long-term unemployed as compared to the total number of people unemployed is at a record high.
- The Labor Department's most comprehensive alternative unemployment rate measure — which includes people who want to work but are discouraged from looking and people working part time because they can't find full-time jobs — **was 14.9 percent in June 2012**. Combined, this makes **over 23 million people** are unemployed and underemployed.
- The economy gained 80,000 jobs in June 2012. **Private sector payrolls have grown every month for the last 28 months after job losses during the recession** were far more dramatic than all other modern recessions.

Still, the official unemployment rate obscures the disproportionate effects of unemployment felt by minorities, youth, veterans and those with less education. For example:

- The unemployment rate for all men 20 years and older was 7.8 percent in June 2012. The unemployment rate for **African American men** 20 years and older in June 2012 was 14.0 percent – **double the rate** of their White counterparts whose unemployment rate in June 2012 was 6.7 percent. The unemployment rate for **Hispanic or Latino men** 20 years and older was 9.5 percent.
- The unemployment rate for all women 20 years and older was 7.4 percent in June 2012. The unemployment rate for African American women 20 years and older in June 2012 was 12.7 percent – **almost double the rate** of their White counterparts whose unemployment rate in June 2012 was 6.6 percent. The unemployment rate for **Hispanic or Latino women** 20 years and older was 10.3 percent.
- The unemployment rate for all teenagers (16 to 19 years) in June 2012 was 23.7 percent. The unemployment rate for White youth ages 16-19 was 23.5 percent. **The unemployment rate for African American teens was 44.2 percent**. Among Hispanic or Latino teens, the unemployment rate was 31.0 percent.
- Individuals over the age of 25 with less than a high school diploma **had an unemployment rate of 12.6 percent**. Among high school graduates with no college, the unemployment rate in June 2012 was 8.4 percent. Those with some college education or an associate's degree fared better, with an unemployment rate of 7.5 percent in June 2012.
- Gulf War Era II Veterans, (those that served in the armed forces since 2001 and have returned to civilian life) **had an unemployment rate of 9.5 percent in June 2012 – down from 13.3 percent a year ago**.

Action Needed to Get Americans Back to Work Now

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, contributing to prolonged hardship for millions of American families. Over 3.5 million adults in the United States ages 18 to 64 have no high school diploma or GED, are not in school, or in the labor force, and have no disability.¹ Many of these individuals have experienced long spells of unemployment long before the most recent economic crisis and may not even be represented in the official unemployment figures. Prolonged unemployment is associated with rising crime, lost productivity in communities, poorer physical and psychological health among potential workers, and generational poverty and hardship experienced by American families. **With access to employment, education, training and support current job seekers can be America’s next generation of skilled workers.** Without these resources, large numbers of Americans may continue to be left out of the labor market, unable to make ends meet, provide for their families, and contribute to the health and growth of their communities. Too many Americans are already feeling the strains of long-term unemployment, hardship, and poverty, which can erode skills and knowledge and make getting a job in the future more difficult.

At a time when our future economic prosperity hangs in the balance, we urge decision-makers to work together for the benefit of all job seekers.

Specifically, we encourage decision-makers to focus on the following:

- ✓ Find a balanced approach to deficit reduction that does not include [further cuts to nondefense discretionary](#) programs.
- ✓ Take up and pass measures like the [Pathways Back to Work Act](#) and those proposed by the [National Transitional Jobs Network and others](#) to provide Subsidized Employment and Transitional Jobs for youth and low-income adults. Such investments will take advantage of the existing capacity and knowledge base within the field; build upon earlier investments and provides support for programs to serve as on-ramps to the jobs of the future.
- ✓ [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, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as “food stamps”), Employment and Training, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), HEARTH Act, Senior Community Service Employment Program, and the Community Services Block Grant.

Millions of Americans Face Barriers to Getting and Keeping Employment

- Over 700,000 individuals return from prison each year
- An estimated 636,017 people are homeless at any given point
- 1 in 4 low-income single mothers – about 1.5 million – are jobless and not receiving benefits
- 1 in 5 black working-age men have no high school degree
- 14.4 percent of Americans have less than a high school diploma
- An estimated 30 million adults in the United States can only read at the 5th grade level

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 access in the workplace and improve their economic lives and the economic conditions of their communities. 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.

¹ Social IMPACT Research Center’s analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2010 American Community Survey 1-year estimates program.