For release 10:00 a.m. (EST) Tuesday, December 5, 2017

USDL-17-1614

Technical information: (202) 691-6378 • cpsinfo@bls.gov • www.bls.gov/cps

Media contact: (202) 691-5902 • PressOffice@bls.gov

WORK EXPERIENCE OF THE POPULATION — 2016

A total of 163.6 million persons worked at some point during 2016, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. The proportion of the civilian noninstitutional population age 16 and over who worked at some time during 2016 was 64.3 percent, little changed from 2015. The number of persons who experienced some unemployment during 2016 declined by 1.4 million to 15.6 million.

These data are based on information collected in the Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) to the Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a monthly survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The ASEC collects information on employment and unemployment experienced during the prior calendar year. Additional information about the CPS and the ASEC, including concepts and definitions, is provided in the Technical Note.

Highlights from the 2016 data:

- The proportion of workers who worked full time, year round in 2016 was 68.8 percent, up 0.8 percentage point from the prior year. (See table 1.)
- The "work-experience unemployment rate"—defined as the number of persons unemployed at some time during the year as a proportion of the number of persons who worked or looked for work during the year—declined by 0.8 percentage point to 9.4 percent in 2016. (See table 3.)
- About 2.6 million individuals looked for a job but did not work at all in 2016, down from 3.2 million in 2015. (See table 3.)

Persons with Employment

Overall, 64.3 percent of the population worked in 2016, little different from 64.2 percent in 2015. The proportions of men and women who worked at some time during 2016 were 70.0 percent and 59.0 percent, respectively. These proportions showed little or no change from the prior year. (See table 1.)

The proportion of Blacks (61.9 percent) who worked at some time during 2016 increased by 1.3 percentage points from 2015, while the shares of Whites (64.6 percent), Asians (64.8 percent), and Hispanics (66.1 percent) showed little change. (See table 2.)

Among those with work experience in 2016, 79.8 percent usually worked full time, little changed from a year earlier. In 2016, men (85.8 percent) continued to be more likely than women (73.1 percent) to work

full time during the year. These proportions were little changed from the prior year. Among those who worked at some point in 2016, Asians (83.0 percent) were more likely to work full time than Whites (79.6 percent), Blacks (80.7 percent), and Hispanics (81.0 percent). (See tables 1 and 2.)

Of the total who worked during 2016, 79.4 percent were employed year round (working 50 to 52 weeks, either full or part time), up from 78.6 percent in 2015. In 2016, the percentages of both men (81.8 percent) and women (76.8 percent) working year round increased from a year earlier. (See table 1.)

Persons with Unemployment

Overall, 166.2 million persons worked or looked for work at some time in 2016, up by 726,000 from the prior year. Of those, 15.6 million experienced some unemployment during 2016, down by 1.4 million from 2015. (See table 3.)

The work-experience unemployment rate (those looking for work during the year as a percent of those who worked or looked for work during the year) continued to decline. At 9.4 percent in 2016, the work-experience unemployment rate was 0.8 percentage point lower than in 2015. The work-experience unemployment rates for Whites (8.8 percent), Blacks (13.1 percent), and Hispanics (11.1 percent) declined from 2015 to 2016, while the rate for Asians (7.3 percent) was unchanged. (See tables 3 and 4.)

In 2016, men continued to have a slightly higher work-experience unemployment rate than women, 9.5 percent versus 9.2 percent. Among Blacks, the rate for men was higher than the rate for women, while among Whites, Asians, and Hispanics, the rates for men and women were little different from each other.

Among those who experienced unemployment in 2016, the median number of weeks spent looking for work was 14.5. The number of persons who looked for a job but did not work at all in 2016 declined by 584,000 over the year to 2.6 million. Of the 13.0 million individuals who both worked and experienced unemployment in 2016, 22.1 percent had two or more spells of unemployment, little different than the share in 2015. (See table 3.)

Technical Note

The data presented in this release were collected in the Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) to the Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a monthly sample survey of about 60,000 eligible households, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Data from the CPS are used to obtain the monthly estimates of the nation's employment and unemployment levels. The ASEC, conducted in the months of February through April, includes questions about work activity during the prior calendar year. For instance, data collected in 2017 refer to the 2016 calendar year. Because the reference period is a full year, the number of persons with some employment or unemployment greatly exceeds the average levels for any given month, which are based on a 1week reference period, and the corresponding annual average of the monthly estimates. As shown below, for example, the number experiencing any unemployment was about twice the number unemployed in an average month during the year.

	Employed	Unemployed
2016 estimates (in thousands)		
Annual average of		
monthly estimates	151,436	7,751
Annual supplement data	163,638	15,570

In addition, estimates from the supplement differ from those obtained in the basic CPS because the questions used to classify workers as either employed or unemployed are different. More important, perhaps, is that the supplement contains fewer questions for categorizing respondents. In regard to unemployment in particular, the supplement has no questions on the type of job search activity or on the respondent's availability to work. Also, individuals can be counted as both employed and unemployed in the work experience supplement data, whereas, for a specific monthly reference week, each person is only counted in one category and employment activity takes precedence over job search activity.

The data presented in this release are not strictly comparable with data for earlier years due to the introduction of updated population controls used in the CPS. The population controls are updated each year in January to reflect the latest information about population change. Additional information is available at www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#pop.

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.

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

Concepts and definitions

The principle concepts and definitions used in connection with the data in this release are described briefly below.

Persons who worked. In the 2017 supplement, persons are considered to have worked if they responded "yes" to either the question "Did you work at a job or business at any time during 2016?" or "Did you do any temporary, part-time, or seasonal work even for a few days during 2016?"

Unemployed persons. Persons who worked during the year but not in every week are counted as unemployed if they also reported looking for work or being on layoff from a job during the year. Those who reported no work activity during the year are considered unemployed if they responded "yes" to the question "Even though you did not work in 2016, did you spend any time trying to find a job or on layoff?"

Work-experience unemployment rate. The number of persons unemployed at some time during the year as a proportion of the number of persons who worked or looked for work during the year.

Labor force participants. Persons who either worked or were unemployed during the year.

Usual full- and part-time employment. These data refer to the number of hours a worker typically works during most weeks of the year. Workers are classified as full time if they usually worked 35 hours or more in a week; part-time employment refers to workers whose typical workweek was between 1 and 34 hours.

Year-round and part-year employment. Workers are classified as year round if they worked 50 to 52 weeks. Part-year employment refers to workers who worked fewer than 50 weeks.

Other information

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Work experience of the population during the year by sex and extent of employment, 2015-16

E	Tot	tal	Me	en	Women		
Extent of Employment	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	
NUMBER OF EMPLOYED							
Civilian noninstitutional population Total who worked or looked for work Percent of the population Total who worked during the year ¹ Percent of the population	252,766 165,495 65.5 162,329 64.2	254,413 166,221 65.3 163,638 64.3	122,110 87,149 71.4 85,518 70.0	122,944 87,368 71.1 86,063 70.0	130,656 78,347 60.0 76,811 58.8	131,469 78,853 60.0 77,574 59.0	
Full time ²	129,254 110,308 2,200 5,509 3,861 4,468 2,909	130,560 112,554 1,948 5,057 3,821 4,248 2,932	73,181 63,173 1,374 2,648 1,992 2,482 1,510	73,881 64,299 1,157 2,501 2,049 2,293 1,582	56,074 47,135 826 2,860 1,869 1,985 1,399	56,679 48,255 791 2,556 1,772 1,955 1,350	
Part time ³ 50 to 52 weeks. 48 to 49 weeks. 40 to 47 weeks. 27 to 39 weeks. 14 to 26 weeks. 1 to 13 weeks.	33,075 17,280 882 2,809 2,775 4,567 4,762	33,078 17,438 893 2,779 2,938 4,507 4,523	12,338 6,028 298 1,059 1,054 1,773 2,126	12,182 6,120 298 931 1,110 1,772 1,952	20,737 11,252 584 1,750 1,720 2,794 2,637	20,896 11,318 595 1,848 1,828 2,735 2,570	
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION Total who worked during the year!	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Total who worked during the year¹ Full time². 50 to 52 weeks. 48 to 49 weeks. 40 to 47 weeks. 27 to 39 weeks. 14 to 26 weeks. 1 to 13 weeks.	79.6 68.0 1.4 3.4 2.4 2.8 1.8	79.8 68.8 1.2 3.1 2.3 2.6 1.8	85.6 73.9 1.6 3.1 2.3 2.9	85.8 74.7 1.3 2.9 2.4 2.7	73.0 61.4 1.1 3.7 2.4 2.6 1.8	73.1 62.2 1.0 3.3 2.3 2.5 1.7	
Part time ³	20.4 10.6 0.5 1.7 1.7 2.8 2.9	20.2 10.7 0.5 1.7 1.8 2.8 2.8	14.4 7.0 0.3 1.2 1.2 2.1 2.5	14.2 7.1 0.3 1.1 1.3 2.1 2.3	27.0 14.6 0.8 2.3 2.2 3.6 3.4	26.9 14.6 0.8 2.4 2.4 3.5 3.3	

 ¹ Time worked includes paid vacation and sick leave.
 ² Usually worked 35 hours or more per week.
 ³ Usually worked 1 to 34 hours per week.
 NOTE: Data refer to persons 16 years and over. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 2. Work experience of the population during the year by race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and sex, 2015-16

Extent of ample mont upon and Historia and other effective	То	tal	Men		Women	
Extent of employment, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
WHITE						
Civilian noninstitutional population	197,883	198,597	96,722	97,043	101,161	101,554
Total who worked or looked for work	130,378 65.9	130,021 65.5	69,916 72.3	69,608 71.7	60,462 59.8	60,413 59.5
Percent of the population	128.343	128.370	68.847	68.796	59.496	59.574
Percent of the population	64.9	64.6	71.2	70.9	58.8	58.7
Percent who worked during the year ¹	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Full time ²	79.5	79.6	85.9	86.1	72.0	72.0
50 to 52 weeks	67.8	68.7	74.2	75.1	60.4	61.2
27 to 49 weeks	7.2	6.7	7.1	6.7	7.3	6.8
1 to 26 weeks	4.4	4.1	4.5	4.2	4.3	4.0
Part time ³	20.5	20.4	14.1	13.9	28.0	28.0
50 to 52 weeks	10.8	10.9	6.8	7.0	15.4	15.3
27 to 49 weeks	4.1	4.2	2.8	2.8	5.5	5.9
1 to 26 weeks	5.7	5.4	4.4	4.1	7.1	6.8
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN						
Civilian noninstitutional population	31,750	32,126	14,455	14,652	17,295	17,475
Total who worked or looked for work	20,034	20,534	9,397	9,573	10,636	10,962
Percent of the population	63.1	63.9	65.0	65.3	61.5	62.7
Total who worked during the year ¹	19,229	19,897	8,972	9,255	10,258	10,643
Percent of the population.	60.6	61.9	62.1	63.2	59.3	60.9
Percent who worked during the year ¹	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Full time ²	79.6	80.7	82.5	84.4	77.0	77.6
50 to 52 weeks	67.5	68.9	70.3	71.7	65.1	66.5
27 to 49 weeks	6.9	6.2	6.7	6.4	7.0	6.0
1 to 26 weeks	5.2	5.6	5.5	6.2	4.9	5.1
Part time ³	20.4	19.3	17.5	15.6	23.0	22.4
50 to 52 weeks	10.2	9.9	8.6	7.8	11.5	11.8
27 to 49 weeks	3.8 6.5	3.3 6.0	3.1 5.7	2.7 5.0	4.3 7.2	3.8 6.8
1 to 26 weeks	0.5	6.0	5.7	5.0	1.2	0.0
ASIAN						
Civilian noninstitutional population	14,840	15,399	6,961	7,253	7,879	8,146
Total who worked or looked for work	9,658	10,135	5,100	5,343	4,558	4,792
Percent of the population	65.1	65.8	73.3	73.7	57.9	58.8
Total who worked during the year ¹	9,495	9,982	5,035	5,263	4,460	4,719
Percent of the population.	64.0	64.8	72.3	72.6	56.6	57.9
Percent who worked during the year ¹	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Full time ²	83.2	83.0	88.4	88.4	77.3	77.0
50 to 52 weeks	73.4	73.6	79.6	79.5	66.4	67.1
27 to 49 weeks	5.5	5.3	4.8	5.1	6.4	5.4
1 to 26 weeks	4.2	4.1	4.0	3.8	4.5	4.4
Part time ³	16.8	17.0	11.6	11.6	22.7	23.0
50 to 52 weeks	9.7	9.3	6.5	6.1	13.2	12.9
27 to 49 weeks	2.9 4.3	3.1 4.6	1.8 3.3	1.9 3.6	4.1 5.5	4.4 5.7
1 to 26 weeks	4.3	4.6	3.3	3.6	5.5	5.7

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Work experience of the population during the year by race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and sex, 2015-16 -Continued

Extent of employment, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	Total		Men		Women	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY						
Civilian noninstitutional population Total who worked or looked for work Percent of the population Total who worked during the year¹ Percent who worked during the year¹ Full time² 50 to 52 weeks 27 to 49 weeks 1 to 26 weeks Part time³ 50 to 52 weeks 27 to 49 weeks 27 to 49 weeks	40,382 26,976 66.8 26,459 65.5 100.0 80.5 67.5 8.1 4.9 19.5 10.8 3.3	41,081 27,623 67.2 27,145 66.1 100.0 81.0 69.1 7.2 4.7 19.0 10.4 3.4	20,112 15,255 75.8 15,011 74.6 100.0 87.0 73.7 8.7 4.6 13.0 6.6 2.4	20,435 15,472 75.7 15,236 74.6 100.0 87.5 75.4 7.9 4.2 12.5 6.8 2.1	20,270 11,721 57.8 11,448 56.5 100.0 72.0 59.4 7.4 5.2 28.0 16.4 4.6	20,645 12,151 58.9 11,909 57.7 100.0 72.6 61.0 6.3 5.3 27.4 15.2 5.1

¹ Time worked includes paid vacation and sick leave.
² Usually worked 35 hours or more per week.
³ Usually worked 1 to 34 hours per week.

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (White, Black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals shown in table 1 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. Extent of unemployment during the year by sex, 2015-16

Extent of unemployment	То	Total		Men		Women	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	
NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED							
Total who worked or looked for work Percent with unemployment	165,495	166,221	87,149	87,368	78,347	78,853	
	10.2	9.4	10.4	9.5	10.0	9.2	
Total with unemployment Did not work but looked for work	16,925	15,570	9,063	8,300	7,862	7,270	
	3,167	2,583	1,630	1,304	1,536	1,278	
	1,112	961	487	450	625	511	
	2,054	1,622	1,143	855	911	767	
Worked during the year	13,759	12,987	7,433	6,995	6,326	5,992	
	392	480	245	280	147	199	
	13,366	12,507	7,188	6,715	6,179	5,792	
	2,618	2,553	1,367	1,259	1,251	1,294	
	2,102	2,083	1,159	1,073	943	1,010	
	1,916	1,559	993	844	923	715	
	3,572	3,286	2,000	1,892	1,571	1,394	
	3,159	3,027	1,668	1,647	1,491	1,380	
Median weeks of unemployment for all workers	14.7	14.5	14.8	15.3	14.6	13.8	
With 2 spells or more of unemployment	2,971	2,871	1,762	1,634	1,209	1,237	
	1,376	1,441	767	787	609	655	
	1,595	1,430	995	847	600	583	
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION							
Did not work but looked for work. 1 to 14 weeks	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
	35.1	37.2	29.9	34.5	40.7	40.0	
	64.9	62.8	70.1	65.5	59.3	60.0	
Worked during the year Year-round workers¹ with 1 or 2 weeks of unemployment Part-year workers² with unemployment 1 to 4 weeks 5 to 10 weeks 11 to 14 weeks 15 to 26 weeks 27 weeks or more.	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
	2.9	3.7	3.3	4.0	2.3	3.3	
	97.1	96.3	96.7	96.0	97.7	96.7	
	19.0	19.7	18.4	18.0	19.8	21.6	
	15.3	16.0	15.6	15.3	14.9	16.9	
	13.9	12.0	13.4	12.1	14.6	11.9	
	26.0	25.3	26.9	27.0	24.8	23.3	
	23.0	23.3	22.4	23.5	23.6	23.0	
With 2 spells or more of unemployment	21.6	22.1	23.7	23.4	19.1	20.7	
	10.0	11.1	10.3	11.2	9.6	10.9	
	11.6	11.0	13.4	12.1	9.5	9.7	

Worked 50 or 51 weeks.
 Worked less than 50 weeks.
 NOTE: Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 4. Extent of unemployment during the year by race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and sex, 2015-16

Extent of unampleyment race and Hispanic or Lating othericity	Total		Men		Women	
Extent of unemployment, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
WHITE						
Total who worked or looked for work	130,378 9.5	130,021 8.8	69,916 9.7	69,608 8.8	60,462 9.3	60,413 8.7
Total with unemployment Did not work but looked for work		11,379 1,651 9,729	6,764 1,069 5,694	6,148 811 5,337	5,645 966 4,680	5,231 839 4,392
Median weeks of unemployment for all workers	14.1	13.9	14.3	14.6	13.9	13.1
Percent who worked during the year¹ Year-round workers² with 1 or 2 weeks of unemployment Part-year workers³ with unemployment 1 to 4 weeks 5 to 14 weeks 15 weeks or more	3.0 97.0 19.9 30.2	100.0 3.8 96.2 20.7 28.9 46.7	100.0 3.6 96.4 18.8 30.1 47.5	100.0 4.2 95.8 18.7 28.4 48.7	100.0 2.4 97.6 21.2 30.4 46.0	100.0 3.2 96.8 23.0 29.6 44.2
With 2 spells or more of unemployment	21.4	22.5	23.2	23.2	19.1	21.5
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN						
Total who worked or looked for work Percent with unemployment	20,034 15.0	20,534 13.1	9,397 16.2	9,573 14.2	10,636 13.8	10,962 12.2
Total with unemployment Did not work but looked for work Worked during the year	2,995 804 2,191	2,694 637 2,057	1,523 426 1,097	1,360 318 1,041	1,473 379 1,094	1,334 319 1,015
Median weeks of unemployment for all workers	19.5	19.0	20.3	20.2	18.9	17.6
Percent who worked during the year¹ Year-round workers² with 1 or 2 weeks of unemployment. Part-year workers³ with unemployment. 1 to 4 weeks. 5 to 14 weeks. 15 weeks or more.	2.2 97.8 14.8 24.8	100.0 3.7 96.3 13.8 24.9 57.6	100.0 2.6 97.4 16.2 22.4 58.8	100.0 3.0 97.0 13.1 23.5 60.4	100.0 1.8 98.2 13.4 27.2 57.6	100.0 4.5 95.5 14.6 26.2 54.7
With 2 spells or more of unemployment	22.0	22.5	25.0	27.4	19.1	17.5
ASIAN						
Total who worked or looked for work	9,658 7.3	10,135 7.3	5,100 6.5	5,343 6.9	4,558 8.3	4,792 7.7
Total with unemployment Did not work but looked for work Worked during the year	163	741 153 588	330 65 265	371 79 292	379 99 280	370 73 296
Median weeks of unemployment for all workers	14.6	14.1	14.1	13.5	15.1	14.9
Percent who worked during the year¹ Year-round workers² with 1 or 2 weeks of unemployment Part-year workers³ with unemployment 1 to 4 weeks 5 to 14 weeks 15 weeks or more	2.6 97.4 21.5 27.2	100.0 3.2 96.8 22.4 27.3 47.1	100.0 2.2 97.8 21.5 28.9 47.4	100.0 3.0 97.0 22.8 29.6 44.6	100.0 2.9 97.1 21.4 25.5 50.2	100.0 3.3 96.7 21.9 25.1 49.7
With 2 spells or more of unemployment	18.3	15.0	19.5	14.9	17.2	15.1

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 4. Extent of unemployment during the year by race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and sex, 2015-16 — Continued

	Total		Men		Women	
Extent of unemployment, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY						
Total who worked or looked for work Percent with unemployment	26,976 12.1	27,623 11.1	15,255 11.8	15,472 11.1	11,721 12.4	12,151 11.0
Total with unemployment Did not work but looked for work Worked during the year		3,057 478 2,579	1,799 244 1,555	1,724 236 1,488	1,458 273 1,185	1,334 243 1,091
Median weeks of unemployment for all workers	16.0	14.8	15.6	14.6	16.7	15.0
Percent who worked during the year¹ Year-round workers² with 1 or 2 weeks of unemployment Part-year workers³ with unemployment. 1 to 4 weeks 5 to 14 weeks 15 weeks or more.	2.7 97.3 18.0 26.9	100.0 3.6 96.4 21.3 25.8 49.4	100.0 3.3 96.7 16.8 28.4 51.4	100.0 4.5 95.5 20.2 26.5 48.8	100.0 2.0 98.0 19.6 24.8 53.6	100.0 2.3 97.7 22.9 24.8 50.0
With 2 spells or more of unemployment	23.8	22.1	26.5	23.7	20.3	19.9

¹ Time worked includes paid vacation and sick leave.
² Worked 50 or 51 weeks.
³ Worked less than 50 weeks.

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (White, Black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals shown in table 3 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.