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WORK EXPERIENCE OF THE POPULATION — 2019

A total of 168.6 million persons worked at some point during 2019, 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 2019 was 64.9 percent, an increase of 0.5 percentage point from 2018. The number of persons who experienced some unemployment during 2019 edged up 401,000 to 13.6 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 2019 data:

- The proportion of workers who worked full time, year round in 2019 was 70.2 percent, little different 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—was 8.0 percent in 2019, little changed from 2018. (See table 3.)
- About 2.0 million individuals looked for a job but did not work at all in 2019, down from 2.2 million in 2018. (See table 3.)

Persons with Employment

Overall, 64.9 percent of the population worked in 2019, up from 64.4 percent in 2018. The proportion of men who worked at some time during 2019 was 70.1 percent, up slightly from the prior year (+0.4 percentage point). The proportion of women increased 0.7 percentage point to 60.1 percent in 2019. (See table 1.)

Among the major race and ethnicity groups, the proportions who worked at some time during 2019 increased for Whites (65.1 percent), Asians (66.1 percent), and Hispanics (67.9 percent). The proportion for Blacks (62.8 percent) showed little change from 2018. (See table 2.)

Among those with work experience in 2019, 80.8 percent usually worked full time, the same as a year earlier. The proportion of women who usually worked full time edged up 0.5 percentage point over the year to 74.9 percent in 2019. The share of men, however, declined 0.5 percentage point to 86.2 percent. Among those who worked at some point in 2019, Asians (84.3 percent) were more likely to work full time than Blacks (81.7 percent), Hispanics (81.3 percent), and Whites (80.4 percent). (See tables 1 and 2.)

Of the total who worked during 2019, 80.4 percent were employed year round (working 50 to 52 weeks, either full or part time), down 0.4 percentage point from 2018. The share of men working year round declined 0.7 percentage point to 82.4 percent in 2019, while the percentage of women working year round was little changed at 78.2 percent. (See table 1.)

Persons with Unemployment

Overall, 170.7 million persons worked or looked for work at some time in 2019, up 2.0 million from the prior year. Of those, the number who experienced some unemployment during 2019 edged up 401,000 to 13.6 million. (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) was 8.0 percent in 2019. This is little different from the series low of 7.8 percent reached in 2018 (the series began in 1958). (See table 3.)

In 2019, men continued to have a higher work-experience unemployment rate than women, at 8.3 percent and 7.6 percent, respectively. The rates for both men and women changed little from the prior year. (See table 3.)

Among the major race and ethnicity groups, the work-experience unemployment rate for Blacks increased to 11.5 percent in 2019, while the rates for Whites (7.3 percent), Asians (6.1 percent), and Hispanics (10.0 percent) saw little or no change. Among Whites and Blacks, the rate for men was higher than the rate for women, while the rates for men and women were little different from each other for Asians and Hispanics. (See table 4.)

The number of individuals who both worked and experienced unemployment in 2019 rose to 11.5 million. Among these workers, 46.1 percent looked for work for 15 weeks or more, and 20.9 percent had two or more spells of unemployment. Men continued to be more likely than women to experience multiple spells of unemployment (22.4 percent and 19.2 percent, respectively). Asians were less likely than Whites, Blacks, or Hispanics to experience two or more spells of unemployment in 2019. (See tables 3 and 4.)

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 2020 refer to the 2019 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 1-week 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
2019 estimates (in thousands)		
Annual average of		
monthly estimates	157,538	6,001
Annual supplement data	168,632	13,572

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 2020 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 2019?" or "Did you do any temporary, part-time, or seasonal work even for a few days during 2019?"

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 2019, 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, 2018-2019

Fate at of Familian and	Tot	tal	Me	Men Womer		
Extent of Employment	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019
NUMBER OF EMPLOYED						
Civilian noninstitutional population Total who worked or looked for work Percent of the population. Total who worked during the year¹. Percent of the population.	258,527 168,617 65.2 166,402 64.4	259,757 170,663 65.7 168,632 64.9	125,027 88,364 70.7 87,163 69.7	125,638 89,200 71.0 88,074 70.1	133,500 80,253 60.1 79,239 59.4	134,119 81,463 60.7 80,558 60.1
Full time ²	134,458 117,172 1,876 5,166 3,689 3,994 2,561	136,229 118,324 2,011 5,175 3,649 4,181 2,889	75,541 66,451 1,058 2,618 1,939 2,096 1,379	75,882 66,364 1,136 2,771 1,961 2,163 1,486	58,917 50,721 818 2,548 1,750 1,898 1,181	60,347 51,960 874 2,404 1,687 2,019 1,403
Part time ³	31,944 17,363 831 2,834 2,709 4,286 3,920	32,404 17,236 821 2,795 2,774 4,576 4,200	11,622 6,000 302 970 997 1,701 1,651	12,192 6,165 285 1,038 1,100 1,823 1,781	20,323 11,364 529 1,864 1,711 2,585 2,269	20,212 11,072 536 1,758 1,674 2,753 2,419
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION Total who worked during the year ¹	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Full time ²	80.8 70.4 1.1 3.1 2.2 2.4 1.5	80.8 70.2 1.2 3.1 2.2 2.5 1.7	86.7 76.2 1.2 3.0 2.2 2.4 1.6	86.2 75.4 1.3 3.1 2.2 2.5 1.7	74.4 64.0 1.0 3.2 2.2 2.4 1.5	74.9 64.5 1.1 3.0 2.1 2.5
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	19.2 10.4 0.5 1.7 1.6 2.6	19.2 10.2 0.5 1.7 1.6 2.7 2.5	13.3 6.9 0.3 1.1 1.1 2.0 1.9	13.8 7.0 0.3 1.2 1.2 2.1 2.0	25.6 14.3 0.7 2.4 2.2 3.3 2.9	25.1 13.7 0.7 2.2 2.1 3.4 3.0

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. Dash indicates no data or data that do not meet publication criteria (values not shown where base is less than 75,000).

Table 2. Work experience of the population during the year by race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and sex, 2018-2019

Extent of employment, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	То	tal	Men		Women	
	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019
WHITE						
Civilian noninstitutional population Total who worked or looked for work Percent of the population Total who worked during the year¹ Percent of the population	200,567	201,193	98,110	98,480	102,457	102,712
	131,215	132,264	70,101	70,444	61,114	61,820
	65.4	65.7	71.5	71.5	59.6	60.2
	129,712	131,032	69,271	69,766	60,442	61,266
	64.7	65.1	70.6	70.8	59.0	59.6
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. 1 to 26 weeks.	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	80.4	80.4	86.8	86.4	73.1	73.7
	70.1	70.0	76.6	75.7	62.8	63.5
	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.7	6.5	6.1
	3.8	4.0	3.9	4.0	3.8	4.1
	19.6	19.6	13.2	13.6	26.9	26.3
	10.7	10.5	6.9	7.0	15.1	14.5
	4.0	3.9	2.7	2.7	5.5	5.2
	4.9	5.2	3.6	4.0	6.3	6.6
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN Civilian noninstitutional population Total who worked or looked for work Percent of the population. Total who worked during the year¹ Percent of the population.	32,923	33,232	15,047	15,194	17,877	18,038
	21,013	21,441	9,723	9,996	11,290	11,444
	63.8	64.5	64.6	65.8	63.2	63.4
	20,533	20,881	9,478	9,668	11,055	11,213
	62.4	62.8	63.0	63.6	61.8	62.2
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. 1 to 26 weeks.	100.0 82.4 71.6 6.3 4.5 17.6 9.2 3.2 5.2	100.0 81.7 70.2 6.6 4.9 18.3 9.5 3.5	100.0 85.1 74.5 6.2 4.4 14.9 7.2 2.4 5.2	100.0 84.3 71.9 7.1 5.3 15.7 7.9 3.1 4.7	100.0 80.0 69.1 6.3 4.5 20.0 10.8 3.9 5.2	100.0 79.5 68.7 6.2 4.6 20.5 10.9 3.8 5.8
ASIAN						
Civilian noninstitutional population Total who worked or looked for work Percent of the population Total who worked during the year¹ Percent of the population.	16,260	16,413	7,685	7,717	8,575	8,696
	10,589	10,935	5,597	5,753	4,992	5,182
	65.1	66.6	72.8	74.5	58.2	59.6
	10,486	10,845	5,541	5,711	4,945	5,133
	64.5	66.1	72.1	74.0	57.7	59.0
Percent who worked during the year¹	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	84.7	84.3	89.9	88.4	78.8	79.6
	75.6	74.5	80.7	80.3	69.9	68.1
	5.8	5.2	6.0	4.1	5.5	6.5
	3.3	4.5	3.2	4.1	3.4	5.0
	15.3	15.7	10.1	11.6	21.2	20.4
	9.0	8.5	5.6	6.2	12.9	11.1
	2.8	3.1	1.8	2.3	4.0	3.9
	3.5	4.1	2.7	3.0	4.3	5.4

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Work experience of the population during the year by race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and sex, 2018-2019 --Continued

Extent of employment, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	То	Total		Men		Women	
	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019	
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	43,196	43,889	21,503	21,837	21,692	22,051	
	29,240	30,259	16,341	16,762	12,899	13,497	
	67.7	68.9	76.0	76.8	59.5	61.2	
	28,781	29,797	16,095	16,518	12,686	13,280	
	66.6	67.9	74.8	75.6	58.5	60.2	
Full time ²	81.2	81.3	87.2	87.1	73.6	74.0	
	69.7	69.1	75.8	74.5	62.0	62.3	
	7.2	7.8	7.5	8.3	6.8	7.0	
	4.3	4.4	3.9	4.3	4.8	4.6	
Part time ³	18.8	18.7	12.8	12.9	26.4	26.0	
	10.8	10.3	7.4	6.7	15.0	14.7	
	3.5	3.3	2.2	2.4	5.1	4.3	
	4.5	5.2	3.1	3.7	6.3	7.0	

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. Dash indicates no data or data that do not meet publication criteria (values not shown where base is less than 75,000).

Table 3. Extent of unemployment during the year by sex, 2018-2019

Event of unampleyment	То	Total		Men		Women	
Extent of unemployment	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019	
NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED							
Total who worked or looked for work Percent with unemployment	168,617	170,663	88,364	89,200	80,253	81,463	
	7.8	8.0	8.2	8.3	7.4	7.6	
Total with unemployment Did not work but looked for work	13,171	13,572	7,210	7,420	5,962	6,153	
	2,215	2,030	1,202	1,126	1,014	905	
	891	783	453	434	438	349	
	1,324	1,247	748	691	576	556	
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.	10,956	11,542	6,008	6,294	4,948	5,248	
	452	432	287	257	165	175	
	10,504	11,110	5,721	6,037	4,783	5,073	
	2,350	2,378	1,097	1,137	1,253	1,241	
	1,651	1,849	888	1,004	763	845	
	1,430	1,566	783	871	647	695	
	2,793	2,813	1,621	1,633	1,172	1,180	
	2,281	2,504	1,333	1,392	948	1,112	
Median weeks of unemployment for all workers	13.9	13.8	14.7	14.4	12.8	13.1	
With 2 spells or more of unemployment	2,381	2,418	1,419	1,408	961	1,010	
	1,124	1,185	622	721	502	464	
	1,256	1,232	797	687	459	546	
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	
	40.2	38.6	37.7	38.6	43.2	38.6	
	59.8	61.4	62.3	61.4	56.8	61.4	
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 4.1 95.9 21.4 15.1 13.0 25.5 20.8	100.0 3.7 96.3 20.6 16.0 13.6 24.4 21.7	100.0 4.8 95.2 18.3 14.8 13.0 27.0 22.2	100.0 4.1 95.9 18.1 16.0 13.8 25.9 22.1	100.0 3.3 96.7 25.3 15.4 13.1 23.7	100.0 3.3 96.7 23.7 16.1 13.2 22.5 21.2	
With 2 spells or more of unemployment	21.7	20.9	23.6	22.4	19.4	19.2	
	10.3	10.3	10.4	11.5	10.1	8.8	
	11.5	10.7	13.3	10.9	9.3	10.4	

Worked 50 or 51 weeks.
 Worked less than 50 weeks.
 NOTE: Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data. Dash indicates no data or data that do not meet publication criteria (values not shown where base is less than 75,000).

Table 4. Extent of unemployment during the year by race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and sex, 2018-2019

	Tot	tal	Men		Women	
Extent of unemployment, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019
WHITE						
Total who worked or looked for work Percent with unemployment	131,215 7.3	132,264 7.3	70,101 7.6	70,444 7.7	61,114 7.0	61,820 6.9
Total with unemployment Did not work but looked for work Worked during the year	9,590 1,503 8,088	9,720 1,232 8,488	5,332 830 4,501	5,428 677 4,751	4,258 672 3,586	4,292 555 3,738
Median weeks of unemployment for all workers	13.3	13.1	13.8	13.8	12.5	12.0
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.	100.0 4.0 96.0 22.3 29.6 44.2	100.0 4.0 96.0 21.6 31.6 42.8	100.0 5.0 95.0 18.8 30.2 46.0	100.0 4.2 95.8 18.7 31.4 45.6	100.0 2.7 97.3 26.6 28.8 41.9	100.0 3.7 96.3 25.2 31.9 39.3
With 2 spells or more of unemployment	22.2	20.4	23.8	21.9	20.1	18.5
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN						
Total who worked or looked for work	21,013 10.6	21,441 11.5	9,723 11.5	9,996 12.5	11,290 9.8	11,444 10.5
Total with unemployment	2,230 480 1,749	2,456 560 1,896	1,119 246 873	1,252 328 923	1,111 235 876	1,205 232 973
Median weeks of unemployment for all workers	17.4	18.6	20.4	19.3	14.5	17.8
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.	100.0 4.7 95.3 16.9 22.8 55.6	100.0 3.2 96.8 15.5 22.5 58.7	100.0 4.3 95.7 13.3 19.3 63.1	100.0 3.4 96.6 13.7 21.8 61.0	100.0 5.1 94.9 20.4 26.3 48.2	100.0 3.1 96.9 17.3 23.2 56.4
With 2 spells or more of unemployment	20.2	24.7	23.2	25.6	17.3	23.8
ASIAN						
Total who worked or looked for work	10,589 5.8	10,935 6.1	5,597 6.4	5,753 6.2	4,992 5.0	5,182 6.0
Total with unemployment Did not work but looked for work Worked during the year	610 103 507	666 90 576	359 56 303	355 41 313	251 47 204	311 49 262
Median weeks of unemployment for all workers	13.9	16.3	14.1	15.1	13.6	18.7
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	100.0 4.7 95.3 20.1 29.7 45.5	100.0 4.6 95.4 19.5 24.0 51.9	100.0 6.6 93.4 20.0 26.5 47.0	100.0 6.8 93.2 17.2 25.8 50.1	100.0 2.0 98.0 20.2 34.5 43.3	100.0 2.0 98.0 22.2 21.8 54.0
With 2 spells or more of unemployment	16.3	13.8	15.6	16.7	17.5	10.3

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 4. Extent of unemployment during the year by race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and sex, 2018-2019 -- Continued

	То	Total		Men		Women	
Extent of unemployment, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019	
HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY							
Total who worked or looked for work Percent with unemployment	29,240 9.7	30,259 10.0	16,341 9.5	16,762 9.9	12,899 9.8	13,497 10.1	
Total with unemployment Did not work but looked for work Worked during the year	459	3,024 462 2,563	1,559 246 1,312	1,657 244 1,413	1,269 213 1,056	1,367 218 1,150	
Median weeks of unemployment for all workers	14.7	14.4	13.9	15.0	16.2	13.8	
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	3.3 96.7 20.2 27.5	100.0 2.7 97.3 18.1 31.3 47.9	100.0 4.4 95.6 19.5 30.1 45.9	100.0 2.3 97.7 17.3 30.5 49.9	100.0 1.8 98.2 21.1 24.3 52.8	100.0 3.1 96.9 19.1 32.3 45.5	
With 2 spells or more of unemployment	24.4	24.8	26.4	24.5	21.9	25.2	

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. Dash indicates no data or data that do not meet publication criteria (values not shown where base is less than 75,000).