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WORK EXPERIENCE OF THE POPULATION — 2017

A total of 165.2 million persons worked at some point during 2017, 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 2017 was 64.2 percent, little changed from 2016. The number of persons who experienced some unemployment during 2017 declined by 1.1 million to 14.5 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 2017 data:

- The proportion of workers who worked full time, year round in 2017 was 69.5 percent, up 0.7 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 8.6 percent in 2017. (See table 3.)
- About 2.4 million individuals looked for a job but did not work at all in 2017, down slightly from 2.6 million in 2016. (See table 3.)

Persons with Employment

Overall, 64.2 percent of the population worked in 2017, little different from 64.3 percent in 2016. The proportions of men and women who worked at some time during 2017 were 70.1 percent and 58.8 percent, respectively. These proportions showed little change from the prior year. (See table 1.)

Among the major race and ethnicity groups, the proportions of Whites (64.6 percent), Blacks (61.9 percent), Asians (64.4 percent), and Hispanics (66.1 percent) who worked at some time during 2017 showed little or no change from 2016. (See table 2.)

Among those with work experience in 2017, 80.4 percent usually worked full time, up 0.6 percentage point from a year earlier. The proportion of men who usually worked full time increased 0.8 percentage point over the year to 86.6 percent in 2017. The share of women who usually worked full time was little

changed at 73.5 percent. Among those who worked at some point in 2017, Asians (84.0 percent) were more likely to work full time than Whites (80.0 percent), Blacks (81.8 percent), and Hispanics (81.1 percent). (See tables 1 and 2.)

Of the total who worked during 2017, 80.1 percent were employed year round (working 50 to 52 weeks, either full or part time), up from 79.4 percent in 2016. The share of women working year round increased by 1.2 percentage points to 78.0 percent in 2017, while the percentage of men working year round was little changed at 82.0 percent. (See table 1.)

Persons with Unemployment

Overall, 167.5 million persons worked or looked for work at some time in 2017, up by 1.3 million from the prior year. Of those, 14.5 million experienced some unemployment during 2017, down by 1.1 million from 2016. (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. In 2017, the work-experience unemployment rate declined 0.8 percentage point to 8.6 percent. Since reaching a recent peak of 16.4 percent in 2009, the rate has declined by 7.8 percentage points. (See table 3.)

Among the major race and ethnicity groups, the work-experience unemployment rates for Whites (8.0 percent) and Hispanics (9.9 percent) declined from 2016 to 2017, while the rates for Blacks (12.3 percent) and Asians (7.0 percent) were little changed. (See table 4.)

In 2017, men continued to have a higher work-experience unemployment rate than women, 9.0 percent compared with 8.3 percent. Among Whites, the rate for men was higher than the rate for women, while among Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics, the rates for men and women were little different from each other. (See tables 3 and 4.)

Among those who experienced unemployment in 2017, the median number of weeks spent looking for work was 13.4. The number of persons who looked for a job but did not work at all in 2017 edged down by 208,000 over the year to 2.4 million. Of the 12.1 million individuals who both worked and experienced unemployment in 2017, 20.2 percent had two or more spells of unemployment, down 1.9 percentage points from the share in 2016. (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 2018 refer to the 2017 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
2017 estimates (in thousands)		
Annual average of		
monthly estimates	153,337	6,982
Annual supplement data	165,163	14,461

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 2018 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 2017?" or "Did you do any temporary, part-time, or seasonal work even for a few days during 2017?"

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 2017, 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, 2016-2017

E	Tot	tal	Me	en	Women		
Extent of Employment	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	
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	254,413	257,097	122,944	124,331	131,469	132,766	
	166,221	167,538	87,368	88,360	78,853	79,177	
	65.3	65.2	71.1	71.1	60.0	59.6	
	163,638	165,163	86,063	87,147	77,574	78,016	
	64.3	64.2	70.0	70.1	59.0	58.8	
Full time ²	130,560	132,784	73,881	75,471	56,679	57,312	
	112,554	114,845	64,299	65,625	48,255	49,221	
	1,948	2,180	1,157	1,231	791	949	
	5,057	4,899	2,501	2,581	2,556	2,318	
	3,821	3,946	2,049	2,227	1,772	1,718	
	4,248	4,127	2,293	2,220	1,955	1,907	
	2,932	2,787	1,582	1,587	1,350	1,200	
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.	33,078	32,379	12,182	11,675	20,896	20,703	
	17,438	17,457	6,120	5,841	11,318	11,616	
	893	806	298	304	595	502	
	2,779	2,871	931	977	1,848	1,894	
	2,938	2,560	1,110	890	1,828	1,670	
	4,507	4,395	1,772	1,806	2,735	2,590	
	4,523	4,289	1,952	1,857	2,570	2,432	
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION Total who worked during the year ¹	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Full time ²	79.8	80.4	85.8	86.6	73.1	73.5	
	68.8	69.5	74.7	75.3	62.2	63.1	
	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.0	1.2	
	3.1	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.3	3.0	
	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.3	2.2	
	2.6	2.5	2.7	2.5	2.5	2.4	
	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.5	
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	20.2	19.6	14.2	13.4	26.9	26.5	
	10.7	10.6	7.1	6.7	14.6	14.9	
	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.8	0.6	
	1.7	1.7	1.1	1.1	2.4	2.4	
	1.8	1.6	1.3	1.0	2.4	2.1	
	2.8	2.7	2.1	2.1	3.5	3.3	
	2.8	2.6	2.3	2.1	3.3	3.1	

 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: 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, 2016-2017

Extent of employment, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	То	ital	Men		Women	
	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017
WHITE						
Civilian noninstitutional population Total who worked or looked for work Percent of the population. Total who worked during the year!	198,597 130,021 65.5 128,370	200,003 130,598 65.3 129,141	97,043 69,608 71.7 68.796	97,879 70,199 71.7 69.456	101,554 60,413 59.5 59.574	102,123 60,399 59.1 59.685
Total who worked during the year ¹ Percent of the population	64.6	64.6	70.9	71.0	58.7	58.4
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 79.6 68.7 6.7 4.1 20.4 10.9 4.2 5.4	100.0 80.0 69.4 6.6 4.0 20.0 10.8 3.9 5.2	100.0 86.1 75.1 6.7 4.2 13.9 7.0 2.8 4.1	100.0 86.7 75.6 6.9 4.2 13.3 6.6 2.6 4.1	100.0 72.0 61.2 6.8 4.0 28.0 15.3 5.9 6.8	100.0 72.2 62.2 6.3 3.8 27.8 15.7 5.4 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.	32,126 20,534 63.9 19,897 61.9	32,636 20,877 64.0 20,215 61.9	14,652 9,573 65.3 9,255 63.2	14,904 9,775 65.6 9,439 63.3	17,475 10,962 62.7 10,643 60.9	17,733 11,102 62.6 10,776 60.8
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 80.7 68.9 6.2 5.6 19.3 9.9 3.3 6.0	100.0 81.8 69.9 7.1 4.8 18.2 9.5 3.3 5.4	100.0 84.4 71.7 6.4 6.2 15.6 7.8 2.7 5.0	100.0 85.6 73.0 7.5 5.1 14.4 7.3 2.3 4.8	100.0 77.6 66.5 6.0 5.1 22.4 11.8 3.8 6.8	100.0 78.5 67.2 6.7 4.6 21.5 11.5 4.2 5.9
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	15,399 10,135 65.8 9,982 64.8	15,938 10,382 65.1 10,259 64.4	7,253 5,343 73.7 5,263 72.6	7,509 5,511 73.4 5,454 72.6	8,146 4,792 58.8 4,719 57.9	8,429 4,871 57.8 4,805 57.0
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 83.0 73.6 5.3 4.1 17.0 9.3 3.1 4.6	100.0 84.0 73.6 6.3 4.1 16.0 9.2 2.9 3.9	100.0 88.4 79.5 5.1 3.8 11.6 6.1 1.9 3.6	100.0 89.8 79.6 6.1 4.1 10.2 5.9 1.5 2.9	100.0 77.0 67.1 5.4 4.4 23.0 12.9 4.4 5.7	100.0 77.4 66.8 6.5 4.2 22.6 13.1 4.5

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Work experience of the population during the year by race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and sex, 2016-2017 --Continued

Extent of employment, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	Total		Men		Women	
	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017
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 of the population.	66.1	42,417 28,480 67.1 28,039 66.1	20,435 15,472 75.7 15,236 74.6	21,130 16,040 75.9 15,819 74.9	12,151 58.9 11,909 57.7	21,287 12,440 58.4 12,221 57.4
Percent who worked during the year ¹ Full time ²	100.0 81.0 69.1	100.0 81.1 69.0	100.0 87.5 75.4	100.0 87.4 74.6	100.0 72.6 61.0	100.0 72.9 61.7
27 to 49 weeks	7.2 4.7 19.0	7.4 4.7 18.9	7.9 4.2 12.5	8.1 4.7 12.6	6.3 5.3 27.4	6.6 4.6 27.1
50 to 52 weeks	10.4 3.4 5.2	10.7 3.2 5.0	6.8 2.1 3.7	7.0 2.0 3.6	15.2 5.1 7.1	15.6 4.8 6.7

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, 2016-2017

Event of unampleyment	То	tal	Men		Women	
Extent of unemployment	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017
NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED						
Total who worked or looked for work. Percent with unemployment	166,221	167,538	87,368	88,360	78,853	79,177
	9.4	8.6	9.5	9.0	9.2	8.3
Total with unemployment Did not work but looked for work	15,570	14,461	8,300	7,921	7,270	6,540
	2,583	2,375	1,304	1,213	1,278	1,162
	961	978	450	437	511	542
	1,622	1,397	855	777	767	620
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.	12,987	12,086	6,995	6,708	5,992	5,379
	480	426	280	265	199	160
	12,507	11,661	6,715	6,442	5,792	5,218
	2,553	2,771	1,259	1,414	1,294	1,358
	2,083	1,901	1,073	1,071	1,010	830
	1,559	1,582	844	902	715	680
	3,286	2,846	1,892	1,566	1,394	1,280
	3,027	2,559	1,647	1,489	1,380	1,070
Median weeks of unemployment for all workers	14.5	13.4	15.3	13.7	13.8	13.0
With 2 spells or more of unemployment	2,871	2,438	1,634	1,482	1,237	956
	1,441	1,123	787	625	655	498
	1,430	1,315	847	857	583	458
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
	37.2	41.2	34.5	36.0	40.0	46.6
	62.8	58.8	65.5	64.0	60.0	53.4
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	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	3.7	3.5	4.0	4.0	3.3	3.0
	96.3	96.5	96.0	96.0	96.7	97.0
	19.7	22.9	18.0	21.1	21.6	25.2
	16.0	15.7	15.3	16.0	16.9	15.4
	12.0	13.1	12.1	13.5	11.9	12.6
	25.3	23.5	27.0	23.4	23.3	23.8
	23.3	21.2	23.5	22.2	23.0	19.9
With 2 spells or more of unemployment	22.1	20.2	23.4	22.1	20.7	17.8
	11.1	9.3	11.2	9.3	10.9	9.3
	11.0	10.9	12.1	12.8	9.7	8.5

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, 2016-2017

	To	tal	Men		Women	
Extent of unemployment, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017
WHITE						
Total who worked or looked for work Percent with unemployment	130,021 8.8	130,598 8.0	69,608 8.8	70,199 8.5	60,413 8.7	60,399 7.5
Total with unemployment Did not work but looked for work Worked during the year	11,379 1,651 9,729	10,469 1,457 9,012	6,148 811 5,337	5,952 743 5,209	5,231 839 4,392	4,517 714 3,803
Median weeks of unemployment for all workers	13.9	12.6	14.6	13.0	13.1	11.9
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	100.0 3.8 96.2 20.7 28.9 46.7	100.0 3.9 96.1 24.1 30.1 42.0	100.0 4.2 95.8 18.7 28.4 48.7	100.0 4.4 95.6 21.6 30.7 43.3	100.0 3.2 96.8 23.0 29.6 44.2	100.0 3.1 96.9 27.5 29.2 40.2
With 2 spells or more of unemployment	22.5	20.3	23.2	22.4	21.5	17.4
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN						
Total who worked or looked for work	20,534 13.1	20,877 12.3	9,573 14.2	9,775 12.6	10,962 12.2	11,102 12.0
Total with unemployment	2,694 637 2,057	2,569 662 1,907	1,360 318 1,041	1,232 336 896	1,334 319 1,015	1,337 326 1,012
Median weeks of unemployment for all workers	19.0	16.9	20.2	16.6	17.6	17.3
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 3.7 96.3 13.8 24.9 57.6	100.0 2.5 97.5 15.9 27.1 54.4	100.0 3.0 97.0 13.1 23.5 60.4	100.0 2.8 97.2 16.6 26.4 54.2	100.0 4.5 95.5 14.6 26.2 54.7	100.0 2.2 97.8 15.4 27.8 54.6
With 2 spells or more of unemployment	22.5	20.1	27.4	19.1	17.5	21.0
ASIAN						
Total who worked or looked for work Percent with unemployment.	10,135 7.3	10,382 7.0	5,343 6.9	5,511 6.5	4,792 7.7	4,871 7.5
Total with unemployment Did not work but looked for work Worked during the year	741 153 588	725 123 602	371 79 292	359 57 302	370 73 296	366 66 300
Median weeks of unemployment for all workers	14.1	13.9	13.5	13.8	14.9	14.0
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 3.2 96.8 22.4 27.3 47.1	100.0 2.8 97.2 26.6 24.7 45.9	100.0 3.0 97.0 22.8 29.6 44.6	100.0 1.9 98.1 24.6 28.7 44.8	100.0 3.3 96.7 21.9 25.1 49.7	100.0 3.6 96.4 28.7 20.6 47.0
With 2 spells or more of unemployment	15.0	17.7	14.9	21.3	15.1	14.0

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 4. Extent of unemployment during the year by race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and sex, 2016-2017 -- Continued

	То	Total		Men		Women	
Extent of unemployment, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	
HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY							
Total who worked or looked for work Percent with unemployment	27,623 11.1	28,480 9.9	15,472 11.1	16,040 10.1	12,151 11.0	12,440 9.6	
Total with unemployment Did not work but looked for work Worked during the year		2,813 441 2,372	1,724 236 1,488	1,616 222 1,395	1,334 243 1,091	1,196 219 977	
Median weeks of unemployment for all workers	14.8	13.3	14.6	13.7	15.0	12.7	
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	3.6 96.4 21.3 25.8	100.0 3.3 96.7 22.7 29.4 44.6	100.0 4.5 95.5 20.2 26.5 48.8	100.0 2.9 97.1 21.0 30.6 45.5	100.0 2.3 97.7 22.9 24.8 50.0	100.0 3.9 96.1 25.1 27.6 43.3	
With 2 spells or more of unemployment	22.1	23.3	23.7	27.3	19.9	17.6	

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.