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EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG YOUTH—SUMMER 2004

From April to July 2004, the number of employed youth 16 to 24 years old increased by 2.3 million to 21.4 million, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. July is the traditional summertime peak for youth employment. This summer's increase in youth employment was slightly larger than last year's 2.1 million increase. Unemployment among youth rose by 631,000 between April and July 2004, about the same amount as in the prior year. (Because this analysis focuses on the seasonal changes in youth employment and unemployment that occur every spring and summer, the data are not seasonally adjusted.)

Labor Force

The youth labor force—16- to 24-year-olds working or actively looking for work—grows sharply between April and July each year. During these months, large numbers of high school and college students take or search for summer jobs, and many graduates enter the labor market to look for or begin permanent employment. This summer, the youth labor force grew by 2.9 million to a total of 24.5 million in July. (See table 1.)

The July labor force participation rate for youth (the proportion of their population working or looking for work) in 2004 (67.2 percent) was essentially the same as in July 2003 (67.3 percent)—the lowest rates for July since 1966. The proportion of 16- to 24-year-olds enrolled in school in July has grown over the last decade—from 16.3 percent in 1994 to 28.9 percent in 2004—and participation rates for students are typically lower than for non-students. Only about half of the youth enrolled in school were in the labor force in July, compared with about three-fourths of those not in school.

The July 2004 labor force participation rate for young men (70.4 percent) was about the same as in July 2003. In contrast, the participation rate for young women continued to move downward, to 63.9 percent in July 2004, the lowest level since 1975. This July's labor force participation rates for whites (69.9 percent), blacks (57.7 percent), Asians (52.3 percent), and Hispanics or Latinos (62.6 percent) were little changed over the year. (See table 2.)

Employment

There were 21.4 million 16- to 24-year-olds employed in July 2004. The employment-population ratio for youth—the proportion of the 16- to 24-year-old civilian noninstitutional population that was employed—at 58.9 percent, was about unchanged from July 2003. The ratio had fallen by 6.3 percentage points between July 1999 and July 2002. In July 2004, the ratio for young men edged up by 1.9 percentage points to 62.0 percent. The employment-population ratios for young women (55.8 percent), young whites (62.8

percent), young blacks (42.4 percent), young Asians (47.8 percent), and young Hispanics or Latinos (54.6 percent) were little changed from a year earlier.

In July 2004, 22 percent of employed youth worked in the leisure and hospitality industry and 19 percent worked in retail trade. In addition, large percentages of employed youth worked in education and health services, professional and business services, construction, manufacturing, and government. (See table 3.)

Unemployment

In July 2004, 3.0 million youth were unemployed. The youth unemployment rate—12.3 percent—was down from 13.3 percent in July 2003. The July 2004 unemployment rate for young men (12.0 percent) was lower than a year earlier. The jobless rates for young women (12.7 percent), young whites (10.1 percent), young blacks (26.6 percent), young Asians (8.6 percent), and young Hispanics or Latinos (12.7 percent) showed little or no change from a year earlier. (See table 2.)

Technical Note

The estimates in this release were obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS), a national sample survey of 60,000 households conducted monthly for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) by the U.S. Census Bureau. The data in this release relate to the employment status of youth (16- to 24-year-olds) during the months of April-July. This period was selected as being the most representative time frame in which to measure the full summertime transition from school to work. July is the peak summer month of youth employment.

Beginning in January 2004, data reflect revised population controls used in the CPS. For a discussion of the introduction of the revised population controls and the impact that their introduction had on the CPS data, see “Adjustments to Household Survey Population Estimates in January 2004” in the February 2004 issue of *Employment and Earnings* and available at <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cps04adj.pdf> on the BLS Web site.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone: 1-800-877-8339.

Reliability

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 exact difference, or *sampling error*, varies depending upon the particular sample selected, and this 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.

For a full discussion of the reliability of data from the CPS and information on estimating standard errors, see the

“Explanatory Notes and Estimates of Error” section of *Employment and Earnings*.

Definitions

The principal definitions used in this release are described briefly below.

Employed persons are (a) all those who, during the survey reference week, did any work at all as paid employees, worked in their own business, profession, or on their own farm, or who worked 15 hours or more as unpaid workers in a family-operated enterprise; and (b) all those who did not work but had jobs or businesses from which they were temporarily absent due to illness, bad weather, vacation, child-care problems, labor disputes or personal reasons, whether or not they were paid by their employers for the time off and whether or not they were seeking other jobs.

Unemployed persons are all persons who had no employment during the reference week, were available for work, except for temporary illness, and had made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the 4 weeks preceding the survey. Persons who were waiting to be recalled to a job from which they had been laid off need not have been looking for work to be classified as unemployed.

Civilian labor force comprises all persons classified as employed or unemployed.

Unemployment rate represents the number of unemployed persons as a percent of the civilian labor force.

Not in the labor force includes all persons who are not classified as employed or unemployed.

Industry and class of worker for the employed relate to the job held in the survey reference week. Persons with two or more jobs are classified in the job at which they worked the greatest number of hours. In terms of class-of-worker categories, wage and salary workers are those who receive wages, salaries, commissions, tips, or pay-in-kind from a private employer or from a government unit; self-employed persons are those who work for profit or fees in their own business, profession, or trade, or operate a farm; and unpaid family workers are persons working without pay for 15 hours a week or more in an enterprise operated by a member of their family.

Table 1. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 to 24 years of age by sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, April-July 2004

(Numbers in thousands. Data are not seasonally adjusted.)

Employment status, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	April	May	June	July	April-July changes ¹	
					Number	Percent
TOTAL						
Civilian noninstitutional population	36,370	36,383	36,399	36,415	45	0.1
Civilian labor force	21,571	21,921	23,778	24,465	2,894	13.4
Participation rate	59.3	60.2	65.3	67.2	7.9	13.3
Employed	19,184	19,237	20,587	21,447	2,263	11.8
Employment-population ratio	52.7	52.9	56.6	58.9	6.1	11.7
Unemployed	2,387	2,684	3,191	3,018	631	26.5
Looking for full-time work	1,543	1,895	2,303	2,212	669	43.3
Looking for part-time work	843	789	888	806	-37	-4.4
Unemployment rate	11.1	12.2	13.4	12.3	1.3	11.5
Not in labor force	14,800	14,463	12,622	11,950	-2,849	-19.3
Men						
Civilian noninstitutional population	18,330	18,338	18,347	18,356	27	.1
Civilian labor force	11,272	11,356	12,521	12,925	1,653	14.7
Participation rate	61.5	61.9	68.2	70.4	8.9	14.5
Employed	9,885	9,893	10,807	11,373	1,488	15.1
Employment-population ratio	53.9	54.0	58.9	62.0	8.0	14.9
Unemployed	1,387	1,463	1,714	1,552	165	11.9
Looking for full-time work	938	1,058	1,258	1,176	238	25.4
Looking for part-time work	450	405	456	377	-73	-16.3
Unemployment rate	12.3	12.9	13.7	12.0	-.3	-2.4
Not in labor force	7,057	6,982	5,826	5,431	-1,626	-23.0
Women						
Civilian noninstitutional population	18,041	18,046	18,052	18,059	18	.1
Civilian labor force	10,298	10,565	11,257	11,540	1,241	12.1
Participation rate	57.1	58.5	62.4	63.9	6.8	11.9
Employed	9,299	9,343	9,780	10,074	775	8.3
Employment-population ratio	51.5	51.8	54.2	55.8	4.2	8.2
Unemployed	999	1,221	1,477	1,465	466	46.7
Looking for full-time work	606	837	1,045	1,036	430	71.0
Looking for part-time work	393	384	432	429	36	9.1
Unemployment rate	9.7	11.6	13.1	12.7	3.0	30.9
Not in labor force	7,742	7,481	6,795	6,519	-1,223	-15.8
White						
Civilian noninstitutional population	28,390	28,395	28,403	28,410	20	.1
Civilian labor force	17,676	17,882	19,421	19,859	2,184	12.4
Participation rate	62.3	63.0	68.4	69.9	7.6	12.3
Employed	15,953	15,977	17,174	17,848	1,895	11.9
Employment-population ratio	56.2	56.3	60.5	62.8	6.6	11.8
Unemployed	1,723	1,905	2,246	2,011	288	16.7
Looking for full-time work	1,056	1,296	1,567	1,406	349	33.1
Looking for part-time work	667	609	679	605	-61	-9.2
Unemployment rate	9.7	10.7	11.6	10.1	.4	3.9
Not in labor force	10,714	10,513	8,982	8,551	-2,164	-20.2
Black or African American						
Civilian noninstitutional population	5,231	5,235	5,240	5,245	14	.3
Civilian labor force	2,462	2,619	2,799	3,029	566	23.0
Participation rate	47.1	50.0	53.4	57.7	10.7	22.7
Employed	1,991	2,017	2,085	2,224	233	11.7
Employment-population ratio	38.1	38.5	39.8	42.4	4.3	11.4
Unemployed	471	603	714	804	333	70.7
Looking for full-time work	360	471	568	666	306	85.0
Looking for part-time work	111	132	146	138	27	24.5
Unemployment rate	19.1	23.0	25.5	26.6	7.4	38.8
Not in labor force	2,768	2,616	2,440	2,216	-552	-20.0

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 to 24 years of age by sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, April-July 2004 — Continued

(Numbers in thousands. Data are not seasonally adjusted.)

Employment status, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	April	May	June	July	April-July changes ¹	
					Number	Percent
Asian						
Civilian noninstitutional population	1,477	1,472	1,506	1,503	26	1.7
Civilian labor force	704	683	779	786	83	11.7
Participation rate	47.6	46.4	51.7	52.3	4.7	9.8
Employed	641	628	668	719	78	12.2
Employment-population ratio	43.4	42.6	44.4	47.8	4.4	10.2
Unemployed	63	56	111	68	5	7.3
Looking for full-time work	49	51	79	46	-3	-5.8
Looking for part-time work	14	4	32	22	7	53.0
Unemployment rate	9.0	8.1	14.2	8.6	-.4	-3.9
Not in labor force	773	789	727	716	-57	-7.3
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity						
Civilian noninstitutional population	6,255	6,262	6,268	6,275	19	.3
Civilian labor force	3,643	3,689	3,810	3,926	283	7.8
Participation rate	58.2	58.9	60.8	62.6	4.3	7.4
Employed	3,235	3,263	3,377	3,428	194	6.0
Employment-population ratio	51.7	52.1	53.9	54.6	2.9	5.7
Unemployed	408	425	433	498	90	22.0
Looking for full-time work	307	338	340	373	66	21.5
Looking for part-time work	101	87	93	125	24	23.7
Unemployment rate	11.2	11.5	11.4	12.7	1.5	13.2
Not in labor force	2,613	2,573	2,458	2,349	-264	-10.1

¹ Changes are calculated using unrounded data.

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. In addition, persons whose ethnicity is identified

as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race and, therefore, are classified by ethnicity as well as by race. Data reflect revised population controls introduced in January 2004.

Table 2. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 to 24 years of age by sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, July 2001-04

(Numbers in thousands. Data are not seasonally adjusted.)

Employment status, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	2001	2002	2003	2004
TOTAL				
Civilian noninstitutional population	34,846	35,322	35,905	36,415
Civilian labor force	24,627	24,536	24,150	24,465
Participation rate	70.7	69.5	67.3	67.2
Employed	22,042	21,501	20,950	21,447
Employment-population ratio	63.3	60.9	58.3	58.9
Unemployed	2,585	3,034	3,200	3,018
Looking for full-time work	1,898	2,250	2,448	2,212
Looking for part-time work	687	785	753	806
Unemployment rate	10.5	12.4	13.3	12.3
Not in labor force	10,219	10,786	11,755	11,950
Men				
Civilian noninstitutional population	17,468	17,758	18,042	18,356
Civilian labor force	12,950	12,837	12,635	12,925
Participation rate	74.1	72.3	70.0	70.4
Employed	11,576	11,231	10,838	11,373
Employment-population ratio	66.3	63.2	60.1	62.0
Unemployed	1,374	1,606	1,796	1,552
Looking for full-time work	1,051	1,172	1,416	1,176
Looking for part-time work	322	434	381	377
Unemployment rate	10.6	12.5	14.2	12.0
Not in labor force	4,518	4,921	5,407	5,431
Women				
Civilian noninstitutional population	17,378	17,563	17,863	18,059
Civilian labor force	11,677	11,699	11,516	11,540
Participation rate	67.2	66.6	64.5	63.9
Employed	10,466	10,271	10,112	10,074
Employment-population ratio	60.2	58.5	56.6	55.8
Unemployed	1,211	1,428	1,404	1,465
Looking for full-time work	846	1,077	1,032	1,036
Looking for part-time work	364	351	372	429
Unemployment rate	10.4	12.2	12.2	12.7
Not in labor force	5,701	5,865	6,348	6,519
White ¹				
Civilian noninstitutional population	27,570	27,959	28,066	28,410
Civilian labor force	20,324	20,262	19,749	19,859
Participation rate	73.7	72.5	70.4	69.9
Employed	18,508	18,092	17,566	17,848
Employment-population ratio	67.1	64.7	62.6	62.8
Unemployed	1,816	2,169	2,182	2,011
Looking for full-time work	1,323	1,566	1,611	1,406
Looking for part-time work	494	604	571	605
Unemployment rate	8.9	10.7	11.1	10.1
Not in labor force	7,246	7,697	8,317	8,551
Black or African American ¹				
Civilian noninstitutional population	5,078	5,199	5,159	5,245
Civilian labor force	3,074	2,989	2,930	3,029
Participation rate	60.5	57.5	56.8	57.7
Employed	2,464	2,319	2,150	2,224
Employment-population ratio	48.5	44.6	41.7	42.4
Unemployed	610	670	780	804
Looking for full-time work	460	549	655	666
Looking for part-time work	150	121	125	138
Unemployment rate	19.8	22.4	26.6	26.6
Not in labor force	2,004	2,211	2,229	2,216

See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 to 24 years of age by sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, July 2001-04 — Continued

(Numbers in thousands. Data are not seasonally adjusted.)

Employment status, sex, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	2001	2002	2003	2004
Asian ¹				
Civilian noninstitutional population	1,767	1,724	1,464	1,503
Civilian labor force	949	966	740	786
Participation rate	53.7	56.0	50.5	52.3
Employed	842	815	642	719
Employment-population ratio	47.7	47.3	43.8	47.8
Unemployed	107	151	98	68
Looking for full-time work	75	97	63	46
Looking for part-time work	32	54	34	22
Unemployment rate	11.2	15.6	13.2	8.6
Not in labor force	818	758	724	716
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity				
Civilian noninstitutional population	5,957	6,004	6,079	6,275
Civilian labor force	3,908	3,900	3,772	3,926
Participation rate	65.6	65.0	62.0	62.6
Employed	3,434	3,390	3,244	3,428
Employment-population ratio	57.7	56.5	53.4	54.6
Unemployed	474	510	528	498
Looking for full-time work	381	419	406	373
Looking for part-time work	93	91	121	125
Unemployment rate	12.1	13.1	14.0	12.7
Not in labor force	2,049	2,104	2,307	2,349

¹ Beginning in 2003, persons who selected this race group only; persons who selected more than one race group are not included. Prior to 2003, persons who reported more than one race group were included in the group they identified as the main race. Also, beginning in 2003, Asians exclude Pacific Islanders.

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African

American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. In addition, persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race and, therefore, are classified by ethnicity as well as by race. Data for 2003 and 2004 reflect revised population controls introduced in January 2003 and January 2004.

Table 3. Employed persons 16 to 24 years of age by industry, class of worker, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, July 2003-04

(Numbers in thousands. Data are not seasonally adjusted.)

Industry and class of worker	Total		White		Black or African American		Asian		Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	
	2003	2004	2003	2004	2003	2004	2003	2004	2003	2004
Total employed	20,950	21,447	17,566	17,848	2,150	2,224	642	719	3,244	3,428
Agriculture and related industries	352	338	341	318	4	6	1	—	87	86
Nonagricultural industries	20,599	21,110	17,225	17,530	2,146	2,218	640	718	3,157	3,343
Private wage and salary workers	18,773	19,188	15,771	15,997	1,893	1,959	585	634	2,958	3,115
Mining	45	41	43	41	—	—	—	—	3	7
Construction	1,442	1,543	1,343	1,378	55	75	8	14	370	463
Manufacturing	1,318	1,515	1,119	1,257	132	107	26	103	288	331
Durable goods	762	954	674	829	57	39	12	49	111	167
Nondurable goods	557	562	444	428	75	68	14	54	177	164
Wholesale trade	476	452	402	381	46	45	15	13	74	66
Retail trade	3,944	4,140	3,210	3,386	448	482	171	153	494	526
Transportation and utilities	465	503	354	383	100	94	3	13	56	92
Information	438	353	352	288	51	42	15	4	63	45
Financial activities	1,130	1,052	909	896	109	112	79	25	153	163
Professional and business services	1,653	1,701	1,389	1,424	178	179	44	44	310	302
Education and health services	2,127	2,110	1,722	1,688	268	268	67	81	275	306
Leisure and hospitality	4,727	4,703	4,053	3,980	418	445	132	145	745	703
Other services	1,009	1,075	874	897	89	110	26	39	128	111
Government	1,439	1,434	1,134	1,089	218	236	39	75	148	136
Federal	159	189	93	138	53	40	10	3	16	11
State	412	445	306	329	65	76	20	37	46	54
Local	867	799	735	621	99	120	9	36	86	71
Self-employed and unpaid family workers	386	488	321	444	35	23	16	9	51	91

— Dash represents or rounds to zero.

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. In addition, persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any

race and, therefore, are classified by ethnicity as well as by race. Data for 2003 and 2004 reflect revised population controls introduced in January 2003 and January 2004.