

The March Review

This month brings our annual look at national labor market developments for the previous calendar year.

In our first article, Eleni Theodosiou presents an in-depth look at the labor market in 2011. Despite overall improvement in several major employment and unemployment measures, the unemployment rates for most worker groups remained quite high in 2011. Also, the proportion of unemployed persons who had been without work for exceptionally long periods of time was still near historically high levels.

Turning to the measures of non-farm payroll employment, Parth Tikiwala and Frank Conlon present a visual essay of the employment trends in 2011. Total employment continued to grow in 2011; however, it still has not made a complete recovery from the 2007–2009 recession. While state and local government employment still show weakness, strength continues among the health care industries. Mining, though a small industry, increased its payrolls by nearly 13 percent in 2011.

In Eleanor J. Choi and James R. Spletzer's article, the authors examine how the average size of business establishments has declined in recent years. The authors assert that business establishments are starting

smaller and staying smaller. In the 1990s the average size of a new establishment was around 7.6 employees; in contrast, the average size of a new establishment in 2011 was 4.7 employees.

The final article, authored by Randy E. Ilg and Eleni Theodosiou, examines the length of time workers spent as unemployed before either finding a job or abandoning their job search. In 2011, the median duration of job search for those who eventually landed a job was 10 weeks; this is little changed from a high of 10.4 weeks in 2010. In 2011, unemployed men's job search among those who eventually found a job (10.2 weeks) was slightly longer than that for women (9.6 weeks). Unemployed men also searched longer for a job than women in 2011 before giving up and leaving the labor force, spending 22.6 weeks looking compared with 20.2 weeks for women.

Career guidance

The redesigned 2012–2013 edition of the Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) is now available from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Considered the nation's most widely used source of career information, the OOH contains 341 occupational profiles that provide comprehensive and up-to-date information on 536 detailed occupations. The informa-

tion in the OOH has proven invaluable to counselors, students, jobseekers, career changers, and many others. The OOH can be accessed online at www.bls.gov/ooh.

Veterans' employment

The unemployment rate for veterans was 8.3 percent in 2011, essentially unchanged from 2010. The unemployment rate for veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces at any time since September 2001—a group referred to as Gulf War-era II veterans—was 12.1 percent in 2011. In August 2011, 26 percent of Gulf War-era II veterans reported having a service-connected disability, compared with about 14 percent of all veterans.

The news release regarding these data is available online at http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/vet_03202012.htm. Additional information is available from the Current Population Survey at <http://www.bls.gov/cps/>. □

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