



The Trend in Long-Term Unemployment and Characteristics of Workers Unemployed for More than 99 Weeks

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Summary

One of the characteristics of the recession that began in the United States in December 2007 and officially ended in June 2009 was the unprecedented rise in long-term unemployment. The long-term unemployed are usually defined as workers who have been unemployed for more than six months. But, many workers have been looking for work for more than a year, or for more than 99 weeks. Workers who have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks are defined here as the “very long-term unemployed.”

On December 16, 2010, President Barack Obama signed P.L. 111-312, the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010, which reauthorizes the Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program for 13 months (to January 3, 2012). In some states with high unemployment, unemployed workers may receive up to 99 weeks of unemployment compensation (UC) benefits. Issues for Congress include whether to authorize the EUC program beyond January 3, 2012, and whether to provide the very long-term unemployed with more than 99 weeks of UC benefits.

As the national unemployment rate rose during and after the recent recession, so did long-term unemployment rates (i.e., the number of long-term unemployed divided by the size of the labor force). From December 2007 to October 2010, the unemployment rate for persons unemployed for more than 99 weeks rose from 0.1% to 1.0%. Although the estimate may not be precise, in October 2010 there were an estimated 1.4 million very long-term unemployed.

An analysis of differences in the share of the unemployed who are very long-term unemployed (i.e., the number of long-term unemployed divided by the number of unemployed) shows that from October 2009 to September 2010,

- unemployed men were as likely as unemployed women to be out of work for more than 99 weeks (7.9% and 7.6%, respectively);
- among the unemployed, older workers were more likely than younger workers to be out of work for more than 99 weeks (10.7% of unemployed workers ages 45 and older, compared to 6.0% of unemployed workers under the age of 35);
- married unemployed workers were more likely than unemployed workers who have never been married to be out of work for more than 99 weeks (8.1% and 7.1%, respectively);
- unemployed workers at all educational levels were equally likely to have been looking for work for more than 99 weeks; and
- unemployed black workers were more likely than unemployed white workers to have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks (9.9% and 7.3%, respectively); on the other hand, unemployed Hispanic workers were less likely than unemployed non-Hispanic workers to have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks (7.0% and 8.0%, respectively).

Whether the number of very long-term unemployed workers will rise or fall during the last two months of 2010 and beyond may depend on several factors. The number of monthly layoffs appears to have returned to the same level as before the recession. But, employment and the number of monthly job openings have not returned to their pre-recession levels. In addition, workers who have been unemployed the longest are often the last to be hired after a recession.

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During the recession that began in the United States in December 2007 and officially ended in June 2009, the U.S. economy lost over 8 million jobs.¹ Unemployment increased more among men than women, more among younger workers than older workers, and more among blacks and Hispanics than among whites or non-Hispanics.² The number of jobs has increased since the end of the recession, but job growth has been slow and many economists predict that unemployment may remain high for several months or even years to come.³

One of the characteristics of the recent recession was the unprecedented rise in long-term unemployment. The long-term unemployed are usually defined as workers who have been looking for work for more than six months. But many workers have been looking for work for a year or more. The trend in long-term unemployment may vary by duration of unemployment. Thus, the first part of this report examines the trend in long-term unemployment using four definitions of the long-term unemployed: persons who have been looking for work for more than 26 weeks, more than 52 weeks, more than 78 weeks, and more than 99 weeks. The report uses 99 weeks as a measure of long-term unemployment because in some states with high unemployment, unemployed workers may receive 26 weeks of regular Unemployment Compensation (UC), 53 weeks of Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC), and 20 weeks of Extended Benefits (EB)—for a total of up to 99 weeks of UC benefits.⁴ In this report, workers who have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks are defined as the “very long-term unemployed.”⁵

¹ From December 2007 to December 2009, employment in the United States fell by an estimated 8.4 million jobs (from 138.0 million to 129.6 million, seasonally adjusted). U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment, Hours, and Earnings from the Current Employment Statistics Survey*, <http://www.bls.gov/ces/>. (Hereafter cited as BLS, *Employment, Hours, and Earnings from the Current Employment Statistics Survey*.) These employment estimates are from the Current Employment Statistics (CES) survey, which is a survey of nonfarm establishments. The survey does not include self-employed persons, agricultural workers, private household workers, unpaid family workers, or persons on active military duty. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings*, vol. 57, October 2010, p. 215, <http://www.bls.gov/opub/ee/empearn201010.pdf>.

The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) dates the beginning and end of recessions. According to NBER, the U.S. economy entered a recession in December 2007. The recession officially ended in June 2009, making it the longest recession since the Great Depression. National Bureau of Economic Research, *U.S. Business Cycle Expansions and Contractions*, <http://www.nber.org/cycles/cyclesmain.html>.

For an analysis of job growth since the end of the recession, see CRS Report R41434, *Job Growth During the Recovery*, by Linda Levine.

² **Table A-1** in the **Appendix** shows changes in unemployment from 2007 to the 12-month period from October 2009-September 2010 for persons ages 16 and over in different demographic groups.

³ According to projections by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the unemployment rate for the years 2011 through 2015 will be 9.0%, 8.1%, 6.6%, 5.3%, and 5.0%, respectively. Congressional Budget Office, *The Budget and Economic Outlook: An Update*, August 2010, Table C-1, <http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/117xx/doc11705/08-18-Update.pdf>.

⁴ Under the regular Unemployment Compensation (UC) program, unemployed workers in most states are eligible for up to 26 weeks of unemployment benefits. In June 2008, Congress enacted the Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program. Congress has amended the program several times since. In states with high unemployment, unemployed workers may receive up to 53 weeks of EUC benefits. Authorization for the EUC program expired on November 30, 2010. Unemployed workers who qualified for EUC benefits by November 27, 2010, may continue to receive benefits under the program. After November 2010, unemployed workers will receive, at most, 20 weeks of EUC benefits. In states with high unemployment, unemployed workers may receive up to 20 weeks of benefits under the Extended Benefits (EB) program. For a description of the different unemployment benefit programs, see CRS Report RS22915, *Temporary Extension of Unemployment Benefits: Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC08)*, by Katelin P. Isaacs, Julie M. Whittaker, and Alison M. Shelton.

⁵ Persons who have exhausted the maximum 99 weeks of UC benefits have been called “99ers.”

Because unemployment during the recession increased more among some groups of workers than others, the second part of the report analyzes the characteristics of the very long-term unemployed.⁶

Issues for Congress

Authorization for the EUC program expired on November 30, 2010. On December 16, 2010, President Barack Obama signed P.L. 111-312 (H.R. 4853, the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010). Among other things, P.L. 111-312 reauthorizes the EUC program for 13 months (to January 3, 2012).⁷ Under the extension, unemployed workers in those states with the highest rates of unemployment would be eligible for up to 53 weeks of EUC benefits. Unemployed workers would not receive more than 99 total weeks of benefits. Issues for Congress include whether to authorize the EUC program beyond January 3, 2012, and whether to provide the very long-term unemployed with more than 99 weeks of UC benefits.

Overview of Data and Methodology

The analysis in this report is based on data from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS), which is a household survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor. The monthly CPS is the source of the national monthly unemployment rate and other labor market information.

The first part of the report examines the trend in long-term unemployment, by month, over the period from January 2007 to October 2010. Because the analysis of individual characteristics may rely on small sample sizes, the second part of the report uses monthly average data for the 12-month period from October 2009 to September 2010.

The first part of the report examines long-term unemployment rates. The long-term unemployment rate is the number of long-term unemployed divided by the size of the labor force, where the labor force is the sum of persons who are employed or unemployed. The second part of the report analyzes differences in the share of the unemployed who are very long-term unemployed, which is the number of long-term unemployed divided by the number of workers who are unemployed.

Workers who are counted as unemployed in the CPS may or may not be receiving UC benefits. Conversely, persons who are receiving UC benefits may or may not be counted as unemployed in the CPS. In the CPS, persons are counted as unemployed if they do not have a job, they actively looked for work in the four weeks before they were interviewed, and they are currently available

⁶ For a comparison of long-term unemployment rates during recent recessions, see CRS Report R41179, *Long-Term Unemployment and Recessions*, by Gerald Mayer and Linda Levine. (Hereafter cited as CRS Report R41179, *Recessions and Long-Term Unemployment*.) For a discussion of the effect of long-term unemployment on income and health, see Pew Research Center, *The Impact of Long-term Unemployment: Lost Income, Lost Friends—and Loss of Self-respect*, July 22, 2010, <http://pewsocialtrends.org/assets/pdf/760-recession.pdf>.

⁷ H.R. 4853, Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act Of 2010, *Congressional Record*, v. 156., December 16, 2010, p. H8588.

for work.⁸ Persons receiving UC benefits may not meet the CPS definition of who is unemployed; for example, they may not be looking for work because they are in an education or training program. Also, persons receiving UC benefits could fit the CPS definition of someone who is employed; for example, they could be in a work-sharing program.⁹

The Trend in Long-Term Unemployment

This part of the report compares the national unemployment rate to the long-term unemployment rates for workers who have been unemployed for more than 26 weeks, more than 52 weeks, more than 78 weeks, and more than 99 weeks. The four groups of the long-term unemployed are not mutually exclusive. Workers who have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks are in the group of unemployed workers who have been looking for work for more than 78 weeks. Workers unemployed for more than 78 weeks are in the group that has been unemployed for more than 52 weeks, and so on.

Figure 1 shows the national unemployment rate and the long-term unemployment rate for workers unemployed for more than 26 weeks. As the overall unemployment rate increased during and after the recession, so did the unemployment rate for workers unemployed for more than 26 weeks. In April 2010, the unemployment rate for workers unemployed for more than 26 weeks reached 4.6%, before dropping to 4.0% in October 2010. The 4.6% long-term unemployment rate in April 2010 was the highest rate recorded since BLS began collecting data on long-term unemployment in 1948.¹⁰

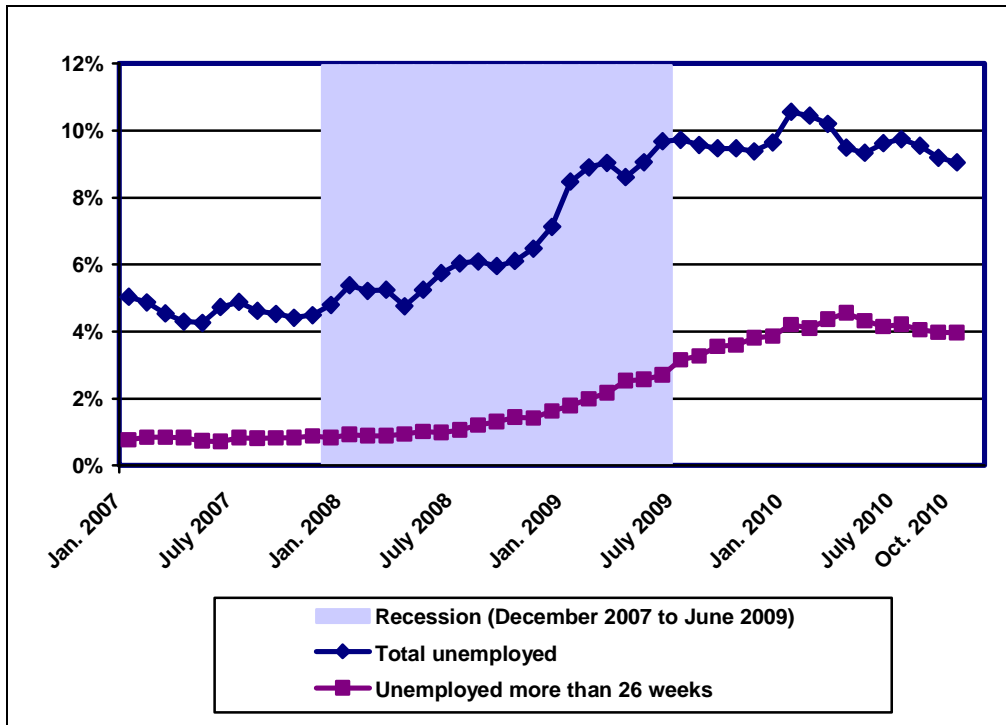
⁸ Persons who are not working and are waiting to be called back to a job from which they have been laid off are also counted as unemployed. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey*, <http://stats.bls.gov/cps>. (Hereafter cited as BLS, *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey*.)

The **Appendix** provides more detail on the data and methodology used in this report.

⁹ Work sharing programs, also called short-term compensation programs, provide partial UC benefits to workers whose work hours have been reduced. U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Unemployment Insurance, *Unemployment Compensation: Federal-State Partnership*, pp. 14-15, <http://workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/unemploy/pdf/partnership.pdf>.

¹⁰ The data discussed in this section of the report are not seasonally adjusted. Month-to-month changes in unemployment are affected by both seasonal and nonseasonal factors. Seasonal factors include regular changes in the weather, holidays, and the opening and closing of schools. By removing changes in unemployment that are due to seasonal factors, it is possible to observe nonseasonal changes in unemployment (e.g., cyclical changes in unemployment). Richard B. Tiller and Thomas D. Evans, *Revision of Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Series in 2009*, p. 1, <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsrs2009.pdf>.

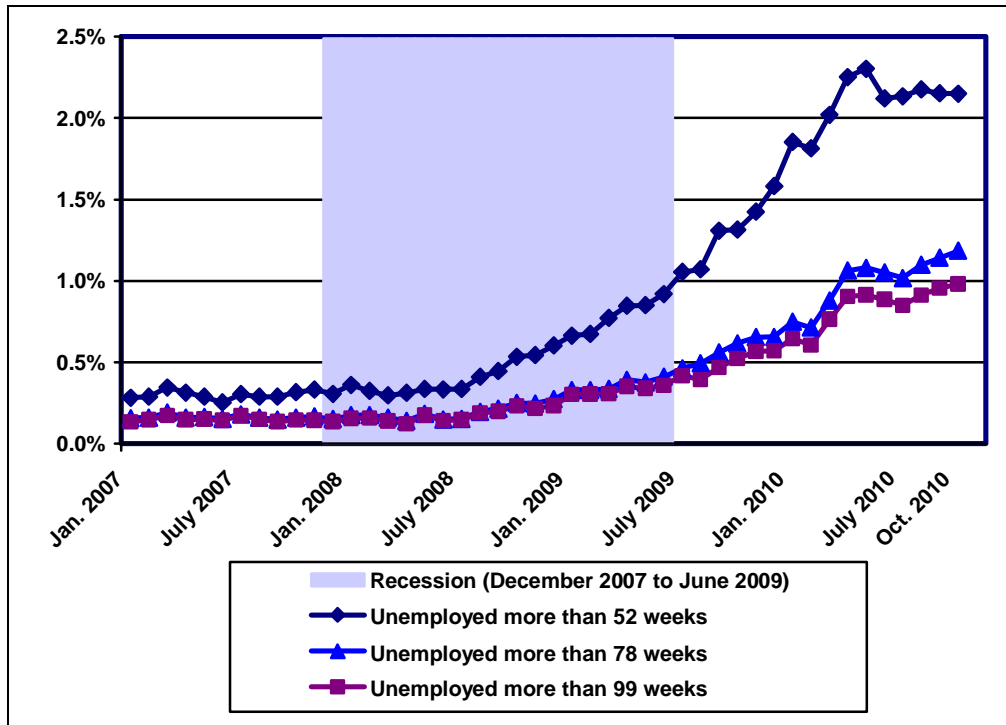
Figure 1. Unemployment Rates: Total Unemployed and Workers Unemployed for More than 26 Weeks, January 2007 to October 2010



Source: CRS analysis of data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Figure 2 shows the long-term unemployment rates for workers unemployed for more than 52, 78, and 99 weeks. Like the rate for workers unemployed for more than 26 weeks, as the national unemployment rate increased so did the unemployment rates for the other groups of the long-term unemployed. In October 2010, the unemployment rate for workers who were unemployed for more than a year was 2.1%, up from 0.3% in December 2007. For workers who were unemployed for more than 99 weeks, the unemployment rate increased from 0.1% in December 2007 to 1.0% in October 2010.

Figure 2. Unemployment Rates: Unemployed for More than 52, 78, and 99 Weeks, January 2007 to October 2010



Source: CRS analysis of data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Note: The groups of the long-term unemployed are not mutually exclusive. Workers who have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks have been unemployed for more than 78 weeks, and so on.

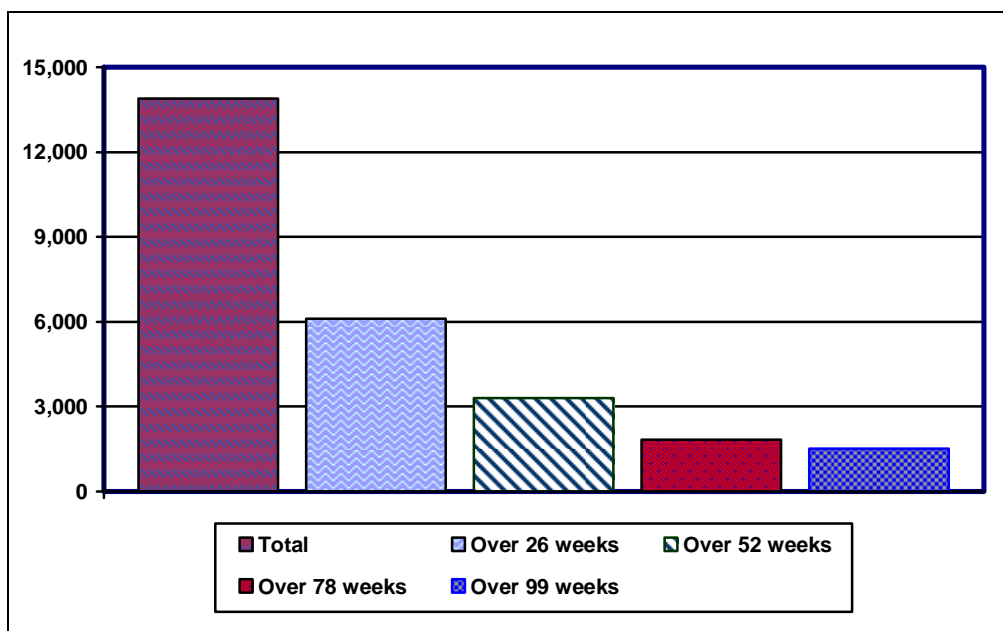
Reliability of Estimates of the Very Long-Term Unemployed

For each of the unemployment rates shown in **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**, **Figure 3** shows the number of unemployed workers in October 2010. Of the estimated 14.0 million workers who were unemployed, over 1.8 million were unemployed for more than 78 weeks and over 1.5 million were unemployed for more than 99 weeks. These numbers suggest that most workers who have been looking for work for more than 78 weeks have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks.

The CPS provides useful information on the number of very long-term unemployed. But, the estimate may not be precise. In the CPS, many respondents round off the number of weeks that they have been unemployed. For example, many workers who report that they have been unemployed for a year may actually have been unemployed for more than a year or less than a year. For the 12 months from October 2009 to September 2010, an average of about 1.0 million unemployed persons said that they had been out of work for 52 weeks, but fewer than 50,000 said that they had been unemployed for either 51 or 53 weeks. (See **Table A-2** in the **Appendix**.) Similarly, many respondents who report that they have been unemployed for two years may actually have been unemployed for less than two years and, perhaps, for 99 weeks or less. From October 2009 to September 2010, an average of almost 600,000 persons said that they had been unemployed for two years, but fewer than 5,000 people said that they had been unemployed for 99 weeks.

Figure 3. Number of Unemployed Workers: Total and by Duration of Unemployment, October 2010

(in 1,000s)



Source: CRS analysis of data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Note: The groups of the long-term unemployed are not mutually exclusive. Workers who have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks have been unemployed for more than 78 weeks, and so on.

The estimate of the number of workers who have been out of work for two years may also be affected by how responses to the CPS are recorded. According to BLS, until January 2011 if a respondent reports being unemployed for more than two years, the person's duration of unemployment is entered as two years. However, for the period from October 2009 to September 2010, data from the CPS show that over half a million workers were unemployed for more than two years, which suggests that some responses were not capped at two years.¹¹

Thus, estimates of the number of workers who have been unemployed for two years may be affected by two factors. The responses of some workers who said that they have been out of work for more than two years may have been capped at two years. But, some workers who said that they have been unemployed for two years may actually have been unemployed for less than two years. It is the responses of persons who were actually unemployed for 99 weeks or less and who rounded up their duration of unemployment to two years that may cause the CPS to overestimate the number of workers who have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks. But these persons would have to make up a large share of those recorded as unemployed for two years for the CPS to significantly overstate the number of persons unemployed for more than 99 weeks.

¹¹ Beginning in January 2011, the CPS will allow respondents to report durations of unemployment of up to five years. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Changes to Data Collected on Unemployment Duration*, <http://www.bls.gov/cps/duration.htm>.

Even if many respondents do not report the exact number of weeks that they have been unemployed, it may still be possible to analyze the trend in long-term unemployment. If the extent of underreporting and overreporting is consistent over time, CPS data will provide information on the trend in long-term unemployment.

Will the Number of the Very Long-Term Unemployed Rise or Fall?

Whether or not the number of very long-term unemployed rises or falls during the last two months of 2010 and beyond may depend on several factors. During the recession, the number of unemployed workers increased, while both the number of employed persons and the number of job openings fell. Since the end of the recession, the number of monthly layoffs may have returned to the same level as before the recession. Both employment and the number of job openings have increased, but neither has returned to their pre-recession levels. Many workers who were laid off during the recession and are still unemployed have not, as of October 2010, been unemployed for more than 99 weeks. If a large number of these workers remain unemployed, the number of very long-term unemployed could increase. Finally, during an economic recovery workers who have been unemployed the longest are often the last to be hired.

As of October 2010 (the most recent data used for this report), it has been 16 months since the official end of the recent recession. **Table 1** shows the peak unemployment rates for each measure of long-term unemployment shown in **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**. Because these rates are from unpublished data, they are not seasonally adjusted. Nevertheless, the estimates in **Table 1** indicate that the longer the duration of unemployment, the later the peak unemployment rate. For all unemployed workers, the peak unemployment rate occurred seven months after the end of the recession. For workers unemployed for more than a year, the peak unemployment rate occurred 11 months after the end of the recession. For workers unemployed for more than 78 or 99 weeks, the peak unemployment rate occurred in October 2010—16 months after the end of the recession. Since the most recent data used in this report are for October 2010, it is not known if the post-recession peak unemployment rate for the very long-term unemployed has been reached.

Table 1. Peak Unemployment Rates by Duration of Unemployment, December 2007 Through October 2010

Characteristic	Peak Unemployment Rate	Month of the Peak Unemployment Rate	Number of Months After the End of the Recession Before the Peak Unemployment Rate
Total Unemployed	10.6%	January 2010	7
Unemployed more than 26 weeks	4.6%	April 2010	10
Unemployed more than 52 weeks	2.3%	May 2010	11
Unemployed more than 78 weeks	1.2%	October 2010	16 (may go higher ^a)
Unemployed more than 99 weeks	1.0%	October 2010	16 (may go higher ^a)

Source: CRS analysis of data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Data are not seasonally adjusted.

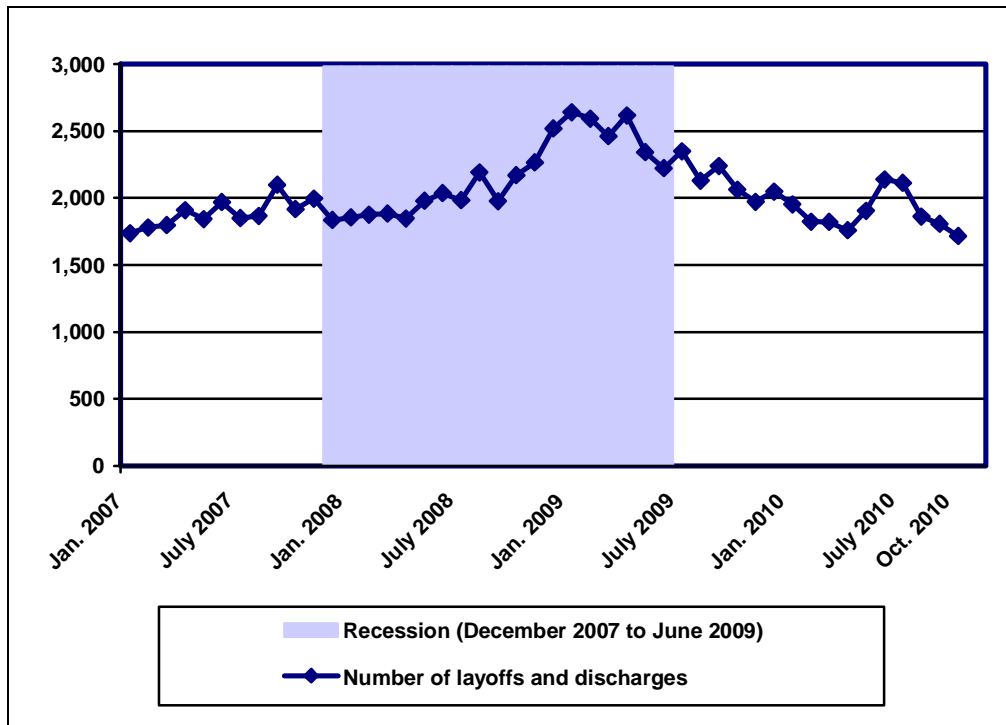
Notes: BLS publishes seasonally adjusted data for the total number of workers unemployed and the number of workers unemployed for more than 26 weeks. Using seasonally adjusted data, the peak monthly unemployment rate between January 2007 and October 2010 occurred in October 2009 (10.1%), four months after the end of the recession. For workers unemployed for more than 26 weeks, the peak unemployment rate (4.4%) occurred in June 2010, 12 months after the end of the recession.

- a. The most recent data used in this report are for October 2010, which was 16 months after the official end of the recession. Thus, the post-recession peak unemployment rate may or may not have been reached.

Layoffs

In October 2010, the number of layoffs and discharges was similar to the number of layoffs and discharges during the months immediately preceding the recession.¹² Nevertheless, the pattern of layoffs during the recession could contribute to an increase in the number of long-term unemployed. In October 2010, workers who were unemployed for more than 99 weeks lost their jobs before December 2008. During the year before December 2008 (from December 2007—the beginning of the recession—through November 2008), there were fewer layoffs per month than there were during the eight months starting in December 2008—almost 2.0 million per month during the year before December 2008 versus 2.5 million per month during eight months afterwards.¹³ Thus, if they are still unemployed, workers who were laid off from December 2008 or later have not, as of October 2010, been unemployed for more than 99 weeks. See **Figure 4**.

Figure 4. Monthly Layoffs and Discharges, January 2007 to October 2010
(in 1,000s)



Source: Data are from the BLS Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS). Data are seasonally adjusted.

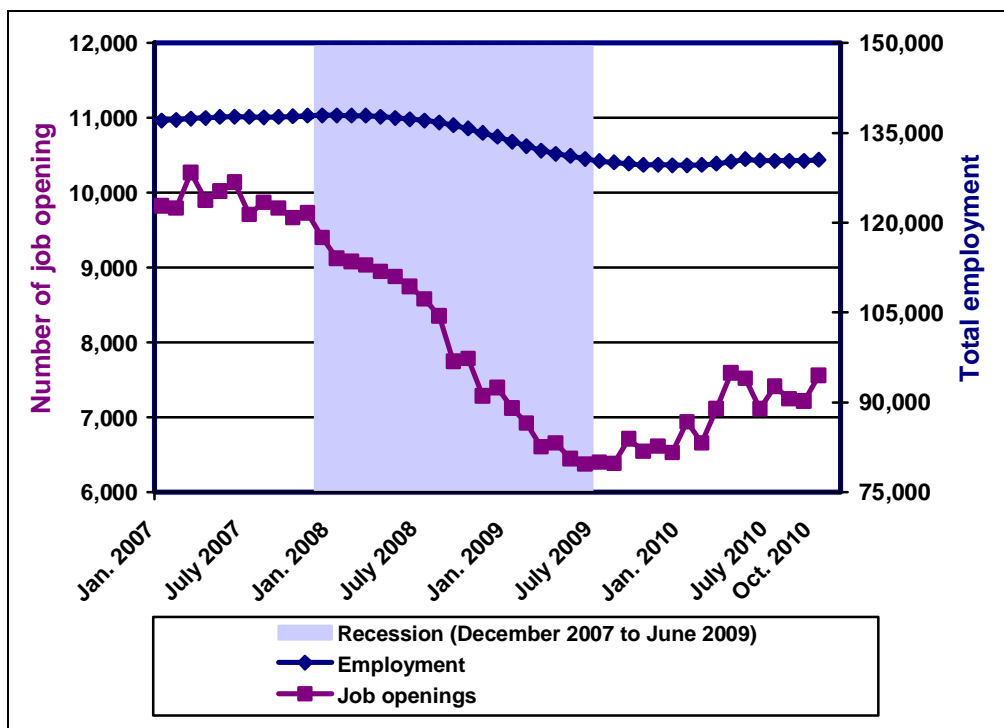
¹² **Figure 4** shows that the number of layoffs increased from April 2010 to June 2010. To some extent, this increase may have been related to the end of the 2010 decennial Census, as temporary workers hired for the Census were laid off.

¹³ Layoffs and discharges are involuntary separations initiated by the employer. A layoff is expected to last more than seven days, and may be permanent. Discharges may result from mergers, closings, or terminations. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, June 2010*, <http://stats.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/jolts.pdf>.

Job Openings and Employment

The number of monthly job openings has increased since the end of the recession, but the number has not returned to pre-recession levels. (Job openings are defined here as the number of hires per month plus the number of unfilled job openings on the last business day of the month.) In the months leading up to the recession there were an average of almost 10 million job openings per month. In June 2009, the last month of the recession, there were an estimated 6.4 million job openings. By mid-2010, the number of job openings had increased to approximately 7.4 million per month—about 2.6 million lower than pre-recession levels. See **Figure 5**.

Figure 5. Number of Monthly Job Openings and Total Employment, January 2007 to October 2010
(in 1,000s)



Source: Data are from the BLS Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) and the BLS Current Employment Statistics (CES) Survey.

Notes: The number of job openings is the sum of the monthly number of hires and the number of unfilled job openings on the last business day of the month. JOLTS and CES data are seasonally adjusted.

Similarly, employment has increased in recent months but has not returned to pre-recession levels. In December 2007, there were an estimated 138.0 million jobs. Employment fell to 129.6 million in December 2009, and increased to 130.5 million in October 2010 (approximately 900,000 jobs higher than in December 2009).¹⁴ Thus, employment in October 2010 was almost 7.5 million below the level of employment in December 2007. See **Figure 5**.

Hiring the Very Long-Term Unemployed

After a recession, workers who have been unemployed the longest are often the last to be hired. Currently, employers have a large pool of labor from which to hire full-time workers. For these reasons, the number of very long-term unemployed could remain high for some time to come.

Because of the depth of the recession, there are a large number of unemployed and underemployed workers. In October 2010, there were an estimated 14.0 million persons unemployed (not seasonally adjusted). Another 1.2 million persons had become discouraged and had stopped looking for work (also not seasonally adjusted).¹⁵ Employers can also increase the number of hours worked for those employees who are employed part-time but who would like to work full-time. In October 2010, almost 2.6 million workers were employed part-time because they could not find full-time jobs. Other persons were working part-time because there was not enough work or because there was a seasonal slowdown in demand (an estimated 6.2 million workers).¹⁶ In addition, as economic conditions improve, other persons may enter (or re-enter) the labor force.

Some research indicates that, as the demand for workers increases following a recession, employers generally hire the short-term unemployed before they hire the long-term unemployed.¹⁷ Thus, the number of long-term unemployed could remain high for some time to come.

¹⁴ BLS, *Employment, Hours, and Earnings from the Current Employment Statistics Survey*.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *The Employment Situation: October 2010*, http://stats.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empsit_11052010.pdf, Tables A-1 and A-16. (Hereafter cited as BLS, *The Employment Situation: October 2010*.)

Discouraged workers are not looking for work because they believe that there are no jobs available or that there are no jobs for which they would qualify. Discouraged workers are not counted as unemployed. Workers may also leave the labor force for other reasons. For example, they may retire, return to school, or choose to stay at home to take care of children or other family members. BLS, *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey*.

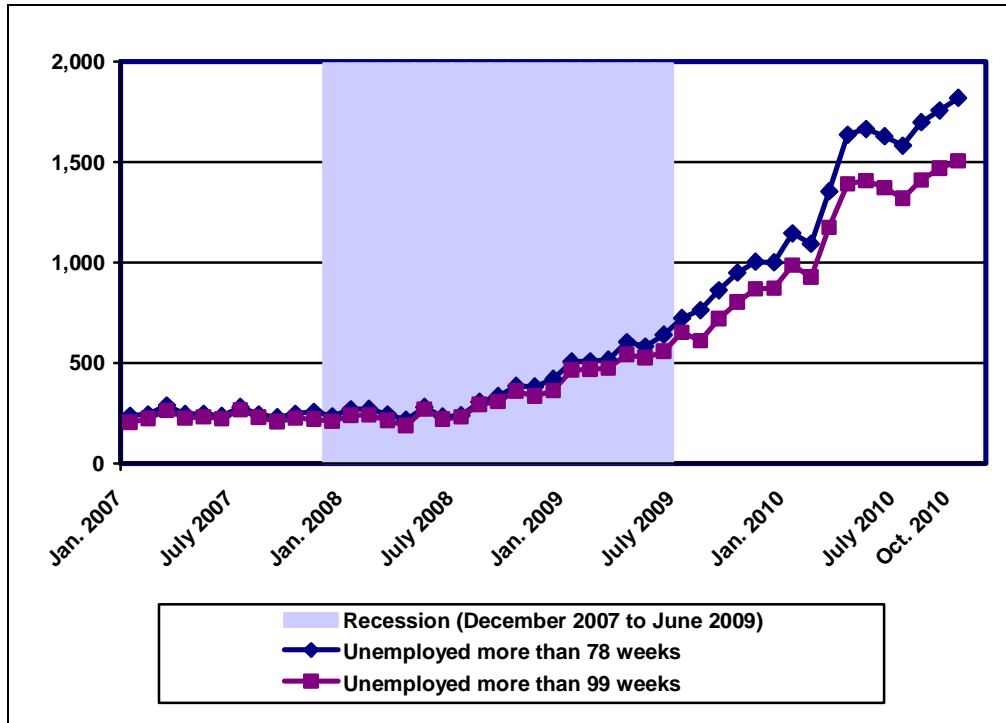
A spell of unemployment ends when a worker finds a job or leaves the labor force. In 2009, from one month to the next, an average of 19.6% of workers ages 16 and over who were unemployed in one month had left the labor force by the next month. An average of 17.3% of workers who were unemployed in one month had found work by the next month. In 2007, from one month to the next, an average of 24.2% of unemployed workers left the labor force and an average of 27.6% of unemployed workers found work. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Issues in Labor Statistics: Long-Term Unemployment Experience of the Jobless*, June 2010, p. 4, <http://www.bls.gov/opub/ils/pdf/opbils82.pdf>.

¹⁶ BLS, *The Employment Situation: October 2010*, Summary Table A. The estimates of part-time workers are seasonally adjusted.

¹⁷ Michael W. Elsby, Bart Hobijn, and Aysegul Sahin, *The Labor Market in the Great Recession*, National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper 15979, pp. 24-25, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w15979>.

Figure 6 shows the trend in the number of workers unemployed for more than 78 weeks and more than 99 weeks. From May 2010 to July 2010, the number of long-term unemployed fell. The number increased, however, from July 2010 to October 2010.

Figure 6. Number of Workers Unemployed for More than 78 Weeks and More than 99 Weeks, January 2007 Through October 2010
(in 1,000s)



Source: CRS analysis of data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Note: The groups of the long-term unemployed are not mutually exclusive. Workers who have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks have been unemployed for more than 78 weeks.

Characteristics of the Very Long-Term Unemployed

This part of the report analyzes selected characteristics of the very long-term unemployed. The analysis is based on monthly average data for the period from October 2009 to September 2010. The data underlying the analysis in this section are provided in **Table A-3** in the **Appendix**.

Gender

During the 12 months from October 2009 to September 2010, unemployed workers were more likely to be male than female. But, equal percentages of unemployed men and women were out of work for more than 99 weeks.

Men made up 58.7% of unemployed workers, compared to 52.7% of the employed. Among unemployed men, 7.9% were unemployed for more than 99 weeks. Among unemployed women, 7.6% were unemployed for more than 99 weeks, which was not statistically different from the percentage of men unemployed for more than 99 weeks.¹⁸

Age

During the period from October 2009 to September 2010, unemployed workers were more likely to be younger, but older unemployed workers were more likely to be out of work for more than 99 weeks.

Almost half (48.7%) of unemployed workers were under the age of 35, compared to 34.0% of employed workers. On the other hand, 44.4% of workers unemployed for more than 99 weeks were 45 or older. Similarly, workers ages 45 and older were more likely than younger workers to be unemployed for more than 99 weeks. An estimated 10.7% of unemployed workers ages 45 and older were unemployed for more than 99 weeks, compared to 6.0% of unemployed workers under the age of 35.

Education

A majority of unemployed workers had a high school education or less, but unemployed workers at all educational levels were equally likely to have been looking for work for more than 99 weeks.

Among unemployed workers, 56.7% had a high school education or less, compared to 37.7% of persons who were working. Among unemployed workers, there were no statistically significant differences by level of education in the percentage of unemployed workers out of work for more than 99 weeks.

Marital Status

Unemployed workers are more likely to have never been married than to be married. Unemployed workers are also more likely to be widowed, divorced, or separated than to be married. But, unemployed workers who are married are more likely than unemployed workers who have never been married to be unemployed for more than 99 weeks.

Among unemployed workers, 45.4% had never been married, compared to 27.8% of employed workers, while 37.6% of unemployed workers were married, compared to 57.6% of employed workers. But, among unemployed workers more married workers (8.1%) had been unemployed for more than 99 weeks than workers who had never been married (7.1%).

¹⁸ Unless otherwise noted, the percentage comparisons in this report are significant at the 90% confidence level or better. See the discussion of confidence intervals in the **Appendix**.

Race and Hispanic Origin

Black and Hispanic workers are more likely than white workers to be unemployed. In addition, unemployed black workers are more likely than unemployed white workers to have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks. On the other hand, unemployed Hispanic workers are less likely than unemployed non-Hispanic workers to have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks.

Among unemployed workers, 19.0% were black and 18.9% were Hispanic.¹⁹ Among unemployed black workers, 9.9% were unemployed for more than 99 weeks, compared to 7.3% of white workers. On the other hand, 7.0% of unemployed Hispanic workers had been unemployed for more than 99 weeks, compared to 8.0% of non-Hispanic workers.

Citizenship

Noncitizens are more likely than native-born citizens to be unemployed, but unemployed noncitizens are as likely as citizens to be unemployed for more than 99 weeks.²⁰

Noncitizens accounted for 10.0% of unemployed workers, compared to 8.6% of all employed workers. But, noncitizens were as likely (7.0%) as native-born citizens (7.7%) and native-born and naturalized citizens combined (7.9%) to be unemployed for more than 99 weeks.

Industry

Workers in the construction industry were more likely to be unemployed than workers who had been employed in other industries. To a lesser extent, workers who had been employed in manufacturing, leisure and hospitality, and professional and business services were also more likely to be among the unemployed.

Among unemployed workers, 15.2% had been employed in construction (compared to 6.6% of the employed), 12.7% worked in manufacturing (compared to 10.0% of the employed), 12.4% were employed in the leisure and hospitality industries (compared to 9.0% of the employed), and 12.5% were employed in professional and business services (compared to 11.0% of the employed).

Despite the disproportionate share of unemployment among construction workers, the percentage of unemployed construction workers who had been unemployed for more than 99 weeks (7.6%) was statistically the same as for all workers (7.8%). The same was the case for unemployed workers in manufacturing and in professional and business services. On the other hand, workers in leisure and hospitality were less likely (6.9%) than all workers to be unemployed for more than 99 weeks.

¹⁹ Hispanics can be of any race.

²⁰ The CPS asks respondents if they are citizens of the United States. The survey also asks citizens if they were born a U.S. citizen or if they are naturalized citizens. The CPS does not ask noncitizens if they are legal immigrants, nonimmigrants who are in the United States temporarily (e.g., guest workers), or whether they are in the country without authorization. Therefore, in this report, the definition of noncitizens includes legal immigrants, legal nonimmigrants, and unauthorized aliens.

Although workers in the transportation and utilities industries were underrepresented among unemployed workers (4.3% of the employed, compared to 5.1% of the unemployed), a significant share of unemployed workers in these industries (10.0%) had been out of work for more than 99 weeks.²¹

Occupation

To a large extent, unemployment by occupation reflects unemployment by industry. A disproportionate share of unemployed workers had been employed in construction and extraction occupations (13.7%), production occupations (9.0%), service occupations (20.4%), and transportation and material moving occupations (8.5%).

Although workers in construction and extraction occupations were overrepresented among unemployed workers, unemployed construction and extraction workers were less likely (6.8%) than all workers (7.8%) to have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks. Similarly, unemployed workers in service occupations were less likely (7.0%) than all workers to have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks. But, unemployed workers in production occupations were just as likely (8.3%) as all workers to have been unemployed for more than 99 weeks.

Three occupational categories had above-average percentages of unemployed workers who had been looking for work for more than 99 weeks. These occupational groups were office and administrative support workers (9.4%); management, business, and financial occupations (9.0%); and transportation and material moving occupations (9.0%). Of these occupations, only the latter category accounted for a disproportionate share of the unemployed.

For each of the three occupational groups listed above, the very long-term unemployed were concentrated in certain industries. Three-fourths of the very long-term unemployed in transportation and material moving occupations were employed in three industries: transportation and utilities (27.4%), wholesale and retail trade (24.7%), and manufacturing (22.2%). Two-thirds of the very long-term unemployed in office and administrative support occupations worked in four industries: wholesale and retail trade (25.9%), professional and business services (15.0%), financial activities (13.9%), and educational and health services (12.4%). Similarly, two-thirds of the very long-term unemployed in management, business, and financial occupations worked in four industries: construction (19.9%), financial activities (19.0%), professional and business services (13.6%), and manufacturing (12.6%).

Conclusion

The number of very long-term unemployed increased from July 2010 to October 2010. The number could continue to rise or, at the least, remain high for some months to come. On the one hand, the number of monthly layoffs appears to have returned to the same level as before the recession. On the other hand, although the number of jobs and number of job openings have

²¹ Transportation and utilities industries include air, truck, and rail transportation; taxi and bus service; the Postal Service; electric power generation and distribution; and natural gas distribution. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey, 2009 Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement*, October 2009, <http://www.census.gov/aptd/techdoc/cps/cpsmar09.pdf>, p. A-13. (Hereafter cited as Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey, 2009 Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement*.)

increased, the numbers have not returned to their pre-recession levels. In addition, as the economy recovers workers who have been unemployed the longest may be among the last to be hired.

Data for the 12-month period from October 2009 to September 2010 show that unemployed men were as likely as unemployed women to be unemployed for more than 99 weeks. But, among unemployed workers, workers who had been looking for work for more than 99 weeks were more likely to be older, married, and, in some instances, minorities. If married workers have a stronger attachment to the labor force than unmarried workers, they may continue to look for work. Those who stay in the labor force but cannot find work will continue to be counted among the very long-term unemployed.

Three occupational categories had above-average percentages of unemployed workers who had been unemployed for more than 99 weeks. But, for each occupational group the very long-term unemployed were concentrated in certain industries (e.g., transportation and utilities, wholesale and retail trade, financial activities, manufacturing, and construction). As output and employment in these industries grow, there should be more job opportunities in those occupations with above-average percentages of the very long-term unemployed.

The very long-term unemployed may benefit most from rapid job growth. On the other hand, changes in the relative levels of employment by industry or occupation or changes in technology may slow the pace at which employers hire the very long-term unemployed.

Policy Responses

The very long-term unemployed may be out of work because of cyclical unemployment, structural unemployment, or both. Cyclical unemployment occurs when there is a decline in aggregate demand that causes employers to layoff workers or hire fewer workers. Structural unemployment occurs when there is a mismatch in a labor market between the skills that workers possess and the skills that employers want.²²

The policy responses to cyclical unemployment and structural unemployment are different. The usual policy responses to cyclical unemployment are fiscal and monetary policies to increase aggregate demand. Fiscal policies consist of changes in government spending or taxes. Monetary policies consist of actions by the Federal Reserve to affect interest rates or the money supply.

As the demand for consumer goods increases and business investment improves, employers can be expected to hire more workers. In general, employers may hire the short-term unemployed before they hire the very long-term unemployed. But, employers can be provided with incentives to hire the very long-term unemployed. These incentives can include tax breaks or direct subsidies. Alternatively, the very long-term unemployed can be provided with incentives to encourage them to accept available jobs. For example, wage insurance can compensate the long-term employed who accept jobs that pay less than the jobs they lost. Reemployment bonuses can

²² Ronald G. Ehrenberg and Robert S. Smith, *Modern Labor Economics: Theory and Public Policy*, 7th ed., Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 2000, pp. 574, 581.

encourage the very long-term unemployed to accept new jobs and shorten their spell of unemployment.²³

Structural unemployment may call for other policy responses. In some cases, structural unemployment may be due to a geographic mismatch in skills. Workers in a labor market may not have the skills that employers want. But there may be workers in other labor markets with the desired skills.²⁴ In this case, policy responses may include incentives for employers to hire where there are workers available or incentives for workers to locate where there are jobs available.²⁵

Another way for public policy to respond to structural unemployment is with education and training. Public policy can help workers obtain the skills demanded by employers. It can also create incentives for employers to train the very long-term unemployed to learn the skills that employers need.

For those very long-term unemployed who cannot find work, Congress could extend the UC benefit period to more than 99 weeks.²⁶ An extension of UC benefits could help stimulate demand, but it could also create disincentives for the very long-term unemployed to look for work or accept job offers.²⁷

If the very long-term unemployed cannot find work, if they accept jobs that pay substantially less than their previous jobs, or if they leave the labor force, another policy option is to ensure income support for workers in lower-income households. This support could come from existing programs, in which case congressional interest may be in the level of funding for these programs or in the eligibility rules for benefits.

Since the very long-term unemployed are more likely than other workers to be older, some may have retired or will retire. Workers ages 62 and over may be eligible for Social Security retirement benefits.²⁸ Disabled workers under the age of 65 may be eligible for Social Security

²³ For more discussion of policy responses to long-term unemployment, see CRS Report R41179, *Long-Term Unemployment and Recessions*.

²⁴ Labor markets may be local, regional, national, or international. For some skills, employers may recruit from the local labor market (e.g., for jobs requiring few skills). For other skills (e.g., for top executives), employers may recruit from the national or international labor market.

²⁵ For unemployed home owners, it may be difficult to relocate if they want to sell their homes, especially if their mortgages are more than the market value of their homes. For a discussion of foreclosure prevention programs, see CRS Report R40210, *Preserving Homeownership: Foreclosure Prevention Initiatives*, by Katie Jones.

²⁶ For a discussion of policy proposals for persons who have exhaust their UC benefits, see CRS Report RL33362, *Unemployment Insurance: Available Unemployment Benefits and Legislative Activity*, by Katelin P. Isaacs, Julie M. Whittaker, and Alison M. Shelton.

Workers who are unemployed because their jobs have moved overseas or because of increased imports may be eligible for income support and training under the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. Workers ages 50 and over who are eligible for TAA may receive Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA), which provides workers with a wage supplement. See CRS Report RS22718, *Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers (TAA) and Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA)*, by John J. Topoleski.

²⁷ For a review of recent research on the effect of UC benefits on unemployment, see CRS Report R41179, *Recessions and Long-Term Unemployment*.

²⁸ For more information on Social Security retirement benefits, see CRS Report RL33544, *Social Security Reform: Current Issues and Legislation*, by Dawn Nuschler.

disability benefits.²⁹ Low-income disabled workers may be eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI).³⁰

Other programs that may assist low-income households include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps), which provides benefits to low-income households to buy food.³¹ The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program provides cash assistance and other benefits to low-income families with children.³² Low-income households may be eligible for health care services under the Medicaid program.³³ The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps lower income households with home utility costs.³⁴

²⁹ The Social Security Administration (SSA) has reported that the recent recession generated an “unprecedented surge” in claims for Social Security disability benefits. Social Security Administration, *FY2011 Budget Overview*, p. 11, <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/budget>.

³⁰ For more information on Social Security disability benefits and the SSI program, see CRS Report RL32279, *Primer on Disability Benefits: Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI)*, by Scott Szymendera.

³¹ See CRS Report R41076, *The Federal Response to Calls for Increased Aid from USDA’s Food Assistance Programs*, by Joe Richardson.

³² See CRS Report R40946, *The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Block Grant: An Introduction*, by Gene Falk.

³³ See CRS Report RL33202, *Medicaid: A Primer*, by Elicia J. Herz.

³⁴ See CRS Report RL31865, *The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP): Program and Funding*, by Libby Perl.

Appendix. Data and Methodology

This appendix provides a more detailed description of data and methodology used in this report.

Data

The analysis in this report is based on data from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a household survey conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor.

The sample for the monthly CPS is representative of the civilian noninstitutional population of the United States. The sample does not include persons living in institutions (such as mental hospitals, nursing homes, or correctional facilities). The monthly CPS collects information from approximately 50,000 households.³⁵

In the CPS, persons are counted as employed if they did any work for pay during the survey week, if they did at least 15 hours of unpaid work in a family-run business, or if they were temporarily absent from their regular job because of illness, vacation, bad weather, industrial dispute, or various personal reasons. Persons are counted as unemployed if they did not have a job, actively looked for work in the four weeks before the survey, and are currently available for work. Persons who are not working and are waiting to be called back to a job from which they have been temporarily laid off are also counted as unemployed.³⁶

In the CPS, “duration of unemployment” is the number of weeks that a person who is classified as unemployed has been looking for work. For someone on layoff, duration of unemployment is the number of weeks since the person was laid off. A period of two weeks or more during which a person is employed or stopped looking for work is considered a break in the continuous period of unemployment.³⁷

In this report, estimates of the employed include both wage and salary workers and self-employed persons who work in unincorporated businesses.

As noted in the introduction, during the December 2007-June 2009 recession, unemployment increased more among men than women, more among younger than older workers, and more among blacks and Hispanics than among white or non-Hispanics. **Table A-1** shows changes in unemployment rates for different groups of workers. From 2007 to the 12-month period from October 2009 to September 2010, unemployment increased by 6.0 percentage points among men and 4.1 points among women. It increased by 8.0 points among young workers (ages 16 to 24) and by 5.0 points among workers ages 25 to 54. Among black workers, unemployment increased by 3.0 percentage points more than it increased among white workers (7.7 versus 4.7 points). Unemployment increased by 6.8 points among Hispanic workers, but by 4.8 points among non-Hispanic workers.

³⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey (CPS)*, <http://www.census.gov/cps/>.

³⁶ BLS, *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey*.

³⁷ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *BLS Information*, <http://www.bls.gov/bls/glossary.htm#D>. U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey, 2009 Annual Social and Economic (ASEC) Supplement*, p. 9-1.

Table A-2 illustrates how respondents in the CPS may round off the number of weeks that they are unemployed. Currently, the stated practice of BLS is to cap the duration of unemployment at two years. This practice will officially change as of January 2011. **Table A-3** provides the data discussed in the second part of the report on the “Characteristics of the Very Long-Term Unemployed.”

Table A-1. Labor Force Characteristics of Persons 16 and Over

(numbers are in 1,000s)

Characteristic	Averages of Monthly Data, 2007			Averages of Monthly Data, October 2009 to September 2010			Number and Percentage Point Changes	
	Labor Force	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	Labor Force	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
Men	82,136	3,882	4.7%	81,972	8,780	10.7%	4,899	6.0
Women	70,988	3,196	4.5%	71,863	6,170	8.6%	2,975	4.1
Total	153,124	7,078	4.6%	153,835	14,951	9.7%	7,873	5.1
Youth (16-24)	22,217	2,342	10.5%	20,918	3,888	18.6%	1,546	8.0
Adult (25-54)	104,353	3,904	3.7%	103,115	8,969	8.7%	5,065	5.0
White only	124,935	5,143	4.1%	125,172	11,053	8.8%	5,910	4.7
Black only	17,496	1,445	8.3%	17,767	2,841	16.0%	1,396	7.7
Other	10,693	489	4.6%	10,896	1,057	9.7%	567	5.1
Total	153,124	7,078	4.6%	153,835	14,951	9.7%	7,873	5.1
Hispanic	21,602	1,220	5.6%	22,658	2,828	12.5%	1,608	6.8
Non-Hispanic	131,522	5,858	4.5%	131,178	12,123	9.2%	6,265	4.8
Total	153,124	7,078	4.6%	153,835	14,951	9.7%	7,873	5.1

Source: CRS analysis of data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Table A-2. Number of Workers Unemployed by Duration of Unemployment, Averages of Monthly Data, October 2009 to September 2010

(numbers are in 1,000s)

Weeks Unemployed	Number Unemployed	Weeks Unemployed	Number Unemployed	Weeks Unemployed	Number Unemployed
50	13,620	76	3,100	99	4,320
51	33,190	77	5,650	100	7,510
52	1,037,380	78	151,250	102	260
53	26,120	79	4,430	103	780
54	6,740	80	1,810	104	591,830
				More than 104 weeks	566,340

Source: CRS analysis of data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Table A-3. Characteristics of the Unemployed, Averages of Monthly Data, October 2009 to September 2010
(numbers are in 1,000s)

	Employed	Unem- ployed	Number Unemployed by Duration					Unem- ployment Rate	Distribution of the Unemployed by Duration Of Unemployment				
			0-26 Weeks	Over 26 Weeks	Over 52 Weeks	Over 78 Weeks	Over 99 Weeks		0-26 Weeks	Over 26 Weeks	Over 52 Weeks	Over 78 Weeks	Over 99 Weeks
Gender													
Male	73,192	8,780	4,964	3,816	1,818	825	696	10.7%	56.5%	43.5%	20.7%	9.4%	7.9%
Female	65,693	6,170	3,679	2,491	1,151	551	470	8.6%	59.6%	40.4%	18.6%	8.9%	7.6%
Total	138,885	14,951	8,643	6,308	2,969	1,376	1,167	9.7%	57.8%	42.2%	19.9%	9.2%	7.8%
Male	52.7%	58.7%	57.4%	60.5%	61.2%	59.9%	59.7%						
Female	47.3%	41.3%	42.6%	39.5%	38.8%	40.1%	40.3%						
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%						
Age													
16-24	17,030	3,888	2,747	1,142	452	218	190	18.6%	70.6%	29.4%	11.6%	5.6%	4.9%
25-34	30,111	3,395	1,965	1,430	648	287	248	10.1%	57.9%	42.1%	19.1%	8.4%	7.3%
35-44	30,751	2,800	1,556	1,245	591	247	210	8.3%	55.5%	44.5%	21.1%	8.8%	7.5%
45-54	33,285	2,774	1,370	1,404	698	329	278	7.7%	49.4%	50.6%	25.2%	11.9%	10.0%
55-64	21,470	1,649	780	869	461	230	187	7.1%	47.3%	52.7%	27.9%	14.0%	11.3%
65 and over	6,238	445	227	218	119	65	54	6.7%	51.0%	49.0%	26.7%	14.5%	12.2%
Total	138,885	14,951	8,643	6,308	2,969	1,376	1,167	9.7%	57.8%	42.2%	19.9%	9.2%	7.8%
16-24	12.3%	26.0%	31.8%	18.1%	15.2%	15.8%	16.3%						
25-34	21.7%	22.7%	22.7%	22.7%	21.8%	20.8%	21.2%						
35-44	22.1%	18.7%	18.0%	19.7%	19.9%	18.0%	18.0%						
45-54	24.0%	18.6%	15.8%	22.3%	23.5%	23.9%	23.8%						
55-64	15.5%	11.0%	9.0%	13.8%	15.5%	16.7%	16.0%						
65 and over	4.5%	3.0%	2.6%	3.5%	4.0%	4.7%	4.6%						
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%						

	Employed	Unem- ployed	Number Unemployed by Duration					Unem- ployment Rate	Distribution of the Unemployed by Duration Of Unemployment				
			0-26 Weeks	Over 26 Weeks	Over 52 Weeks	Over 78 Weeks	Over 99 Weeks		0-26 Weeks	Over 26 Weeks	Over 52 Weeks	Over 78 Weeks	Over 99 Weeks
Education													
Less than high school	13,252	3,071	1,932	1,139	522	267	237	18.8%	62.9%	37.1%	17.0%	8.7%	7.7%
High school degree	39,154	5,418	3,020	2,398	1,140	513	439	12.2%	55.7%	44.3%	21.0%	9.5%	8.1%
Some college or Associate's degree	40,462	4,083	2,342	1,741	818	376	316	9.2%	57.4%	42.6%	20.0%	9.2%	7.7%
Bachelor's degree	30,141	1,791	1,021	770	365	164	129	5.6%	57.0%	43.0%	20.4%	9.1%	7.2%
Advanced or professional degree	15,875	588	328	260	124	56	46	3.6%	55.8%	44.2%	21.2%	9.6%	7.9%
Total	138,885	14,951	8,643	6,308	2,969	1,376	1,167	9.7%	57.8%	42.2%	19.9%	9.2%	7.8%
Less than high school													
High school degree	9.5%	20.5%	22.4%	18.1%	17.6%	19.4%	20.3%						
Some college or Associate's degree	28.2%	36.2%	34.9%	38.0%	38.4%	37.3%	37.6%						
Bachelor's degree	29.1%	27.3%	27.1%	27.6%	27.5%	27.3%	27.1%						
Advanced or professional degree	21.7%	12.0%	11.8%	12.2%	12.3%	11.9%	11.0%						
Total	11.4%	3.9%	3.8%	4.1%	4.2%	4.1%	4.0%						
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%						
Marital Status													
Married	79,965	5,615	3,107	2,508	1,203	553	457	6.6%	55.3%	44.7%	21.4%	9.9%	8.1%
Widowed, divorced, or separated	20,298	2,553	1,349	1,204	590	267	225	11.2%	52.9%	47.1%	23.1%	10.4%	8.8%
Never married	38,622	6,782	4,186	2,596	1,175	557	485	14.9%	61.7%	38.3%	17.3%	8.2%	7.1%
Total	138,885	14,951	8,643	6,308	2,969	1,376	1,167	9.7%	57.8%	42.2%	19.9%	9.2%	7.8%
Married	57.6%	37.6%	36.0%	39.8%	40.5%	40.2%	39.2%						
Widowed, divorced, or separated	14.6%	17.1%	15.6%	19.1%	19.9%	19.4%	19.3%						
Never married	27.8%	45.4%	48.4%	41.2%	39.6%	40.4%	41.5%						
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%						
Race													
White only	114,119	11,053	6,548	4,505	2,097	955	804	8.8%	59.2%	40.8%	19.0%	8.6%	7.3%
Black only	14,926	2,841	1,487	1,354	652	318	281	16.0%	52.4%	47.6%	22.9%	11.2%	9.9%
Other	9,840	1,057	607	450	220	103	82	9.7%	57.5%	42.5%	20.8%	9.7%	7.7%
Total	138,885	14,951	8,643	6,308	2,969	1,376	1,167	9.7%	57.8%	42.2%	19.9%	9.2%	7.8%

	Employed	Unem- ployed	Number Unemployed by Duration					Unem- ployment Rate	Distribution of the Unemployed by Duration Of Unemployment				
			0-26 Weeks	Over 26 Weeks	Over 52 Weeks	Over 78 Weeks	Over 99 Weeks		0-26 Weeks	Over 26 Weeks	Over 52 Weeks	Over 78 Weeks	Over 99 Weeks
White only	82.2%	73.9%	75.8%	71.4%	70.6%	69.4%	68.9%						
Black only	10.7%	19.0%	17.2%	21.5%	22.0%	23.1%	24.1%						
Other	7.1%	7.1%	7.0%	7.1%	7.4%	7.5%	7.0%						
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%						
Hispanic Origin													
Hispanic	19,830	2,828	1,732	1,096	497	228	198	12.5%	61.2%	38.8%	17.6%	8.0%	7.0%
Non-Hispanic	119,055	12,123	6,911	5,212	2,472	1,149	968	9.2%	57.0%	43.0%	20.4%	9.5%	8.0%
Total	138,885	14,951	8,643	6,308	2,969	1,376	1,167	9.7%	57.8%	42.2%	19.9%	9.2%	7.8%
Hispanic	14.3%	18.9%	20.0%	17.4%	16.7%	16.5%	17.0%						
Non-Hispanic	85.7%	81.1%	80.0%	82.6%	83.3%	83.5%	83.0%						
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%						
Citizenship													
Native-born, citizen	117,048	12,568	7,248	5,319	2,481	1,146	971	9.7%	57.7%	42.3%	19.7%	9.1%	7.7%
Foreign-born, naturalized	9,823	895	464	431	238	113	91	8.3%	51.9%	48.1%	26.6%	12.6%	10.2%
Foreign-born, non-citizen	12,013	1,488	930	558	249	117	104	11.0%	62.5%	37.5%	16.8%	7.9%	7.0%
Total	138,885	14,951	8,643	6,308	2,969	1,376	1,167	9.7%	57.8%	42.2%	19.9%	9.2%	7.8%
Native-born, citizen	84.3%	84.1%	83.9%	84.3%	83.6%	83.3%	83.3%						
Foreign-born, naturalized	7.1%	6.0%	5.4%	6.8%	8.0%	8.2%	7.8%						
Foreign-born, non-citizen	8.6%	10.0%	10.8%	8.8%	8.4%	8.5%	8.9%						
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%						

	Employed	Unem- ployed	Number Unemployed by Duration					Unem- ployment Rate	Distribution of the Unemployed by Duration Of Unemployment				
			0-26 Weeks	Over 26 Weeks	Over 52 Weeks	Over 78 Weeks	Over 99 Weeks		0-26 Weeks	Over 26 Weeks	Over 52 Weeks	Over 78 Weeks	Over 99 Weeks
Industry													
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	2,166	230	174	57	22	9	8	9.6%	75.5%	24.5%	9.5%	3.7%	3.5%
Mining	719	78	40	38	18	4	3	9.8%	51.6%	48.4%	22.8%	5.2%	4.1%
Construction	9,222	2,089	1,227	862	411	187	159	18.5%	58.7%	41.3%	19.7%	9.0%	7.6%
Manufacturing	13,905	1,743	835	907	451	184	148	11.1%	47.9%	52.1%	25.9%	10.6%	8.5%
Wholesale and retail trade	19,623	2,045	1,145	900	436	208	177	9.4%	56.0%	44.0%	21.3%	10.2%	8.7%
Transportation and utilities	7,133	584	309	275	147	67	58	7.6%	52.9%	47.1%	25.1%	11.4%	10.0%
Information	3,187	318	158	160	82	36	29	9.1%	49.7%	50.3%	25.7%	11.3%	9.1%
Financial activities	9,443	678	340	338	167	74	61	6.7%	50.2%	49.8%	24.7%	10.9%	8.9%
Professional and business services	15,258	1,719	961	757	339	149	123	10.1%	55.9%	44.1%	19.7%	8.7%	7.1%
Educational and health services	32,036	1,693	1,058	635	280	142	121	5.0%	62.5%	37.5%	16.6%	8.4%	7.1%
Leisure and hospitality	12,459	1,698	1,077	621	274	134	116	12.0%	63.4%	36.6%	16.1%	7.9%	6.9%
Other services	6,771	576	343	234	110	52	43	7.8%	59.5%	40.5%	19.1%	8.9%	7.5%
Public administration	6,963	263	153	110	47	26	25	3.6%	58.3%	41.7%	18.0%	9.8%	9.4%
Total	138,885	13,713	7,820	5,893	2,783	1,272	1,070	9.0%	57.0%	43.0%	20.3%	9.3%	7.8%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	1.6%	1.7%	2.2%	1.0%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%						
Mining	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%	0.3%	0.3%						
Construction	6.6%	15.2%	15.7%	14.6%	14.8%	14.7%	14.8%						
Manufacturing	10.0%	12.7%	10.7%	15.4%	16.2%	14.5%	13.8%						
Wholesale and retail trade	14.1%	14.9%	14.6%	15.3%	15.7%	16.4%	16.6%						
Transportation and utilities	5.1%	4.3%	4.0%	4.7%	5.3%	5.2%	5.5%						
Information	2.3%	2.3%	2.0%	2.7%	2.9%	2.8%	2.7%						
Financial activities	6.8%	4.9%	4.4%	5.7%	6.0%	5.8%	5.7%						
Professional and business services	11.0%	12.5%	12.3%	12.9%	12.2%	11.7%	11.4%						
Educational and health services	23.1%	12.3%	13.5%	10.8%	10.1%	11.1%	11.3%						
Leisure and hospitality	9.0%	12.4%	13.8%	10.5%	9.8%	10.6%	10.9%						
Other services	4.9%	4.2%	4.4%	4.0%	4.0%	4.1%	4.0%						
Public administration	5.0%	1.9%	2.0%	1.9%	1.7%	2.0%	2.3%						
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%						

	Employed	Unem- ployed	Number Unemployed by Duration					Unem- ployment Rate	Distribution of the Unemployed by Duration Of Unemployment				
			0-26 Weeks	Over 26 Weeks	Over 52 Weeks	Over 78 Weeks	Over 99 Weeks		0-26 Weeks	Over 26 Weeks	Over 52 Weeks	Over 78 Weeks	Over 99 Weeks
Occupation													
Management, business, and financial	21,067	1,121	551	570	281	129	101	5.1%	49.1%	50.9%	25.0%	11.5%	9.0%
Professional and related	30,869	1,464	860	604	284	134	110	4.5%	58.7%	41.3%	19.4%	9.2%	7.5%
Service	24,551	2,802	1,755	1,047	457	222	197	10.2%	62.6%	37.4%	16.3%	7.9%	7.0%
Sales and related	15,345	1,612	931	682	322	139	114	9.5%	57.7%	42.3%	20.0%	8.6%	7.1%
Office and administrative support	18,029	1,723	923	800	391	193	162	8.7%	53.6%	46.4%	22.7%	11.2%	9.4%
Farming, fishing, and forestry	968	184	141	43	15	6	5	16.0%	76.5%	23.5%	8.4%	3.1%	2.7%
Construction and extraction	7,296	1,884	1,130	754	348	150	128	20.5%	60.0%	40.0%	18.4%	8.0%	6.8%
Installation, maintenance, and repair	4,845	514	263	251	131	55	44	9.6%	51.2%	48.8%	25.5%	10.7%	8.6%
Production	7,795	1,238	618	621	305	127	103	13.7%	49.9%	50.1%	24.7%	10.2%	8.3%
Transportation and material moving	8,119	1,170	648	522	249	118	106	12.6%	55.4%	44.6%	21.3%	10.0%	9.0%
Total	138,885	13,713	7,820	5,893	2,783	1,272	1,070	9.0%	57.0%	43.0%	20.3%	9.3%	7.8%
Management, business, and financial	15.2%	8.2%	7.0%	9.7%	10.1%	10.1%	9.4%						
Professional and related	22.2%	10.7%	11.0%	10.2%	10.2%	10.5%	10.3%						
Service	17.7%	20.4%	22.4%	17.8%	16.4%	17.5%	18.4%						
Sales and related	11.0%	11.8%	11.9%	11.6%	11.6%	10.9%	10.7%						
Office and administrative support	13.0%	12.6%	11.8%	13.6%	14.1%	15.2%	15.1%						
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.7%	1.3%	1.8%	0.7%	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%						
Construction and extraction	5.3%	13.7%	14.5%	12.8%	12.5%	11.8%	12.0%						
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.5%	3.7%	3.4%	4.3%	4.7%	4.3%	4.1%						
Production	5.6%	9.0%	7.9%	10.5%	11.0%	10.0%	9.6%						
Transportation and material moving	5.8%	8.5%	8.3%	8.9%	8.9%	9.2%	9.9%						
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%						

Source: CRS analysis of data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Confidence Levels

Estimates based on survey responses from a sample of households have two kinds of error: nonsampling and sampling. Examples of nonsampling error include information that is misreported and errors made in processing collected information. Sampling error occurs because a sample, and not the entire population, of households is surveyed. The difference between an estimate based on a sample of households and the actual population value is known as sampling error. When using sample data, researchers typically construct confidence intervals around population estimates. Confidence intervals provide information about the accuracy of estimated values. With a 90% confidence interval and repeated samples from a population, 90% of intervals will include the average estimate of a population characteristic.

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