

## U.S. labor market continued to improve in 2012

*The labor market continued to gain strength slowly in 2012 as unemployment eased and employment grew*

Lisa Williamson

The U.S. labor market continued to improve slowly in 2012 as unemployment trended downward and employment grew. In the fourth quarter of the year, 12.2 million people were unemployed and the unemployment rate was 7.8 percent, nearly a full percentage point lower than a year earlier. Total civilian employment grew at a faster pace in 2012 than in 2011. (For a comparison of the employment measures available from the Current Population Survey (CPS) and the Current Employment Statistics survey (CES), see the box on page 4.) Still, even with the modest improvement in the job market, a number of labor market problems persisted. For example, the proportion of unemployed people who had been without work for 6 months or longer remained close to historically high levels.

This article takes a detailed look at changes in key labor market measures from the CPS in 2012 by various demographic characteristics. Among the measures examined are earnings, unemployment duration, and the employment situations of veterans, people with a disability, and the foreign born.

*Unemployment continued to trend downward for most major demographic groups in 2012. Over the year, the number of unemployed*

people fell by 1.2 million, to 12.2 million. A large drop in unemployment in the first quarter was followed by little movement in the second quarter and small declines in the third and fourth quarters. The unemployment rate declined 0.9 percentage point from the end of 2011, to 7.8 percent in the fourth quarter of 2012. (See table 1 and chart 1.)

In 2012, the unemployment rate for adult men (ages 20 and older) continued to decline faster than the rate for adult women. The jobless rate for adult men dropped by 1.0 percentage point, to 7.3 percent, in the fourth quarter, while the rate for adult women was down 0.6 percentage point, to 7.2 percent. The jobless rate for teenagers 16 to 19 years of age showed little movement over the year and stood at 23.6 percent in the fourth quarter.

Unemployment rates for the major race and ethnicity groups declined in 2012.<sup>1</sup> The unemployment rate for Whites was down 0.8 percentage point, to 6.9 percent. The jobless rates for Blacks and Hispanics fell by 1.4 percentage points each, to 13.9 percent and 9.8 percent, respectively. The rate for Asians (not seasonally adjusted) edged down over the year, from 6.9 percent to 5.9 percent.

Unemployment rates in 2012 also declined for people at all levels of educational attainment. (See chart 2.) Among workers

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## The CPS and the CES

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, the Bureau) produces two monthly employment series that are obtained independently of each other. The estimate of total nonfarm jobs is derived from the Current Employment Statistics survey (CES), also called the establishment or payroll survey. The estimate of total civilian employment is based on the Current Population Survey (CPS), also called the household survey. The two surveys use different definitions of employment, as well as different survey and estimation methods.

The CES is a survey of employers that provides a measure of the number of payroll jobs in nonfarm industries. The CPS is a survey of households that provides a measure of employed people ages 16 years and older in the civilian noninstitutional population.

Employment estimates from the CPS give information about workers in both the agricultural and nonagricultural sectors and in all types of work arrangements: workers with wage and salary jobs (including employment in a private household), those engaging in self-employment, and those doing unpaid work for at least 15 hours a week in a business or farm operated by a family member.

CES payroll employment estimates are restricted to nonagricultural wage and salary jobs and exclude private household workers. As a result, employment estimates from the CPS are higher than those from the CES. In the CPS, however, employed people are counted only once, regardless of whether they hold more than one job during the survey reference period. By contrast, because the CES counts the number of jobs rather than the number of people, each nonfarm job is counted once, even when two

or more jobs are held by the same person.

The reference periods for the surveys also differ. In the CPS, the reference period is the calendar week that includes the 12th day of the month. In the CES, employers report the number of workers on their payrolls for the pay period that includes the 12th of the month. Because pay periods vary in length among employers and may be longer than 1 week, the CES employment estimates can reflect longer reference periods.

For purposes of comparison, some adjustments can be made to CPS employment estimates to make them more similar in definitional scope to CES employment figures. The Bureau routinely carries out these adjustments to evaluate how the two employment series are tracking. The long-term trends in the two surveys' employment measures are quite comparable. Nonetheless, throughout the history of the surveys, there have been periods when the short-term trends diverged or when growth in one series significantly outpaced growth in the other. For example, following the end of the 2001 recession, CPS employment began to trend upward while CES employment continued to decline for a number of months.

The Bureau publishes a monthly report with the latest trends and comparisons of employment as measured by the CES and the CPS. (See "Employment from the BLS household and payroll surveys: summary of recent trends" (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics), [www.bls.gov/web/ces\\_cps\\_trends.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/web/ces_cps_trends.pdf).) This report includes a summary of possible causes of differences in the surveys' employment trends, as well as links to additional research on the topic.

**Table 1. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years and older, by age and selected characteristics, quarterly averages, seasonally adjusted, 2011–2012**

[Levels in thousands]

Characteristic	Fourth quarter, 2011	2012			
		First quarter	Second quarter	Third quarter	Fourth quarter
<b>Total, 16 years and older</b>					
Civilian labor force	154,017	154,629	154,866	154,899	155,469
Participation rate (percent)	64.1	63.8	63.7	63.6	63.7
Employed	140,660	141,883	142,228	142,463	143,303
Employment–population ratio	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.7
Unemployed	13,356	12,747	12,638	12,437	12,166
Unemployment rate (percent)	8.7	8.2	8.2	8.0	7.8
<b>Men, 20 years and older</b>					
Civilian labor force	79,359	79,273	79,303	79,299	79,647
Participation rate (percent)	73.3	73.3	73.1	72.9	72.9
Employed	72,759	73,185	73,225	73,332	73,872
Employment–population ratio	67.2	67.6	67.5	67.4	67.6
Unemployed	6,600	6,087	6,078	5,967	5,776
Unemployment rate (percent)	8.3	7.7	7.7	7.5	7.3
<b>Women, 20 years and older</b>					
Civilian labor force	68,903	69,592	69,711	69,762	70,002
Participation rate (percent)	59.6	59.4	59.4	59.2	59.3
Employed	63,507	64,319	64,575	64,696	64,985
Employment–population ratio	55.0	54.9	55.0	54.9	55.0
Unemployed	5,396	5,272	5,137	5,066	5,017
Unemployment rate (percent)	7.8	7.6	7.4	7.3	7.2
<b>Total, 16 to 19 years</b>					
Civilian labor force	5,755	5,765	5,852	5,838	5,819
Participation rate (percent)	34.4	33.8	34.4	34.4	34.5
Employed	4,394	4,378	4,429	4,435	4,446
Employment–population ratio	26.3	25.6	26.0	26.2	26.3
Unemployed	1,361	1,387	1,423	1,403	1,373
Unemployment rate (percent)	23.6	24.1	24.3	24.0	23.6
<b>White</b>					
Civilian labor force	124,599	123,712	123,783	123,502	123,703
Participation rate (percent)	64.4	64.2	64.1	63.9	63.8
Employed	115,021	114,591	114,662	114,608	115,206
Employment–population ratio	59.4	59.5	59.4	59.3	59.5
Unemployed	9,578	9,121	9,121	8,894	8,497
Unemployment rate (percent)	7.7	7.4	7.4	7.2	6.9
<b>Black or African American</b>					
Civilian labor force	18,002	18,320	18,383	18,386	18,498
Participation rate (percent)	61.5	61.6	61.6	61.4	61.5
Employed	15,246	15,778	15,866	15,845	15,930
Employment–population ratio	52.1	53.0	53.1	52.9	53.0
Unemployed	2,756	2,543	2,517	2,541	2,568
Unemployment rate (percent)	15.3	13.9	13.7	13.8	13.9

See notes at end of table.

**Table 1. Continued—Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years and older, by age and selected characteristics, quarterly averages, seasonally adjusted, 2011–2012**

[Levels in thousands]

Characteristic	Fourth quarter, 2011	2012			
		First quarter	Second quarter	Third quarter	Fourth quarter
<b>Asian<sup>1</sup></b>					
Civilian labor force	7,462	8,096	8,082	8,242	8,331
Participation rate (percent)	64.4	63.6	63.4	64.1	64.4
Employed	6,949	7,575	7,630	7,778	7,836
Employment–population ratio	59.9	59.5	59.9	60.5	60.6
Unemployed	513	521	452	464	496
Unemployment rate (percent)	6.9	6.4	5.6	5.6	5.9
<b>Hispanic or Latino ethnicity</b>					
Civilian labor force	23,319	24,122	24,467	24,428	24,551
Participation rate (percent)	67.0	66.3	66.8	66.2	66.1
Employed	20,707	21,594	21,828	21,955	22,139
Employment–population ratio	59.5	59.4	59.6	59.5	59.6
Unemployed	2,612	2,528	2,640	2,472	2,413
Unemployment rate (percent)	11.2	10.5	10.8	10.1	9.8

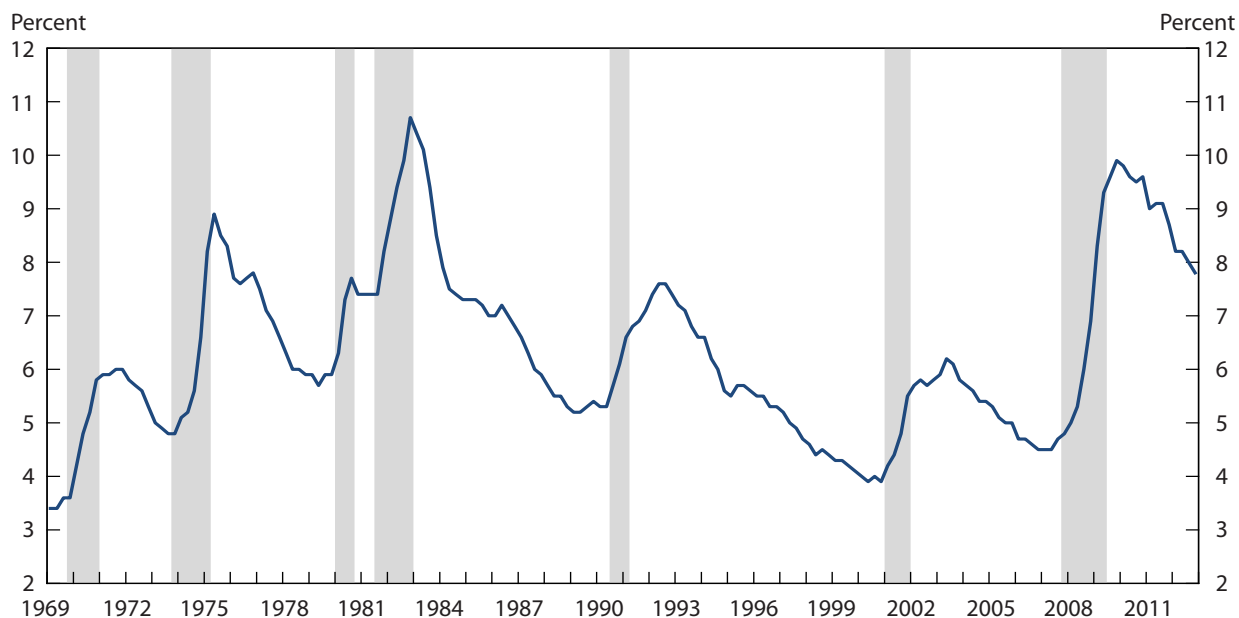
<sup>1</sup> Data for Asians are not seasonally adjusted.

NOTE: Race and Hispanic ethnicity totals do not sum to overall total, 16 years and older, because data are not presented for all races and because persons of Hispanic ethnicity may be of any race and are also

included in the race groups. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

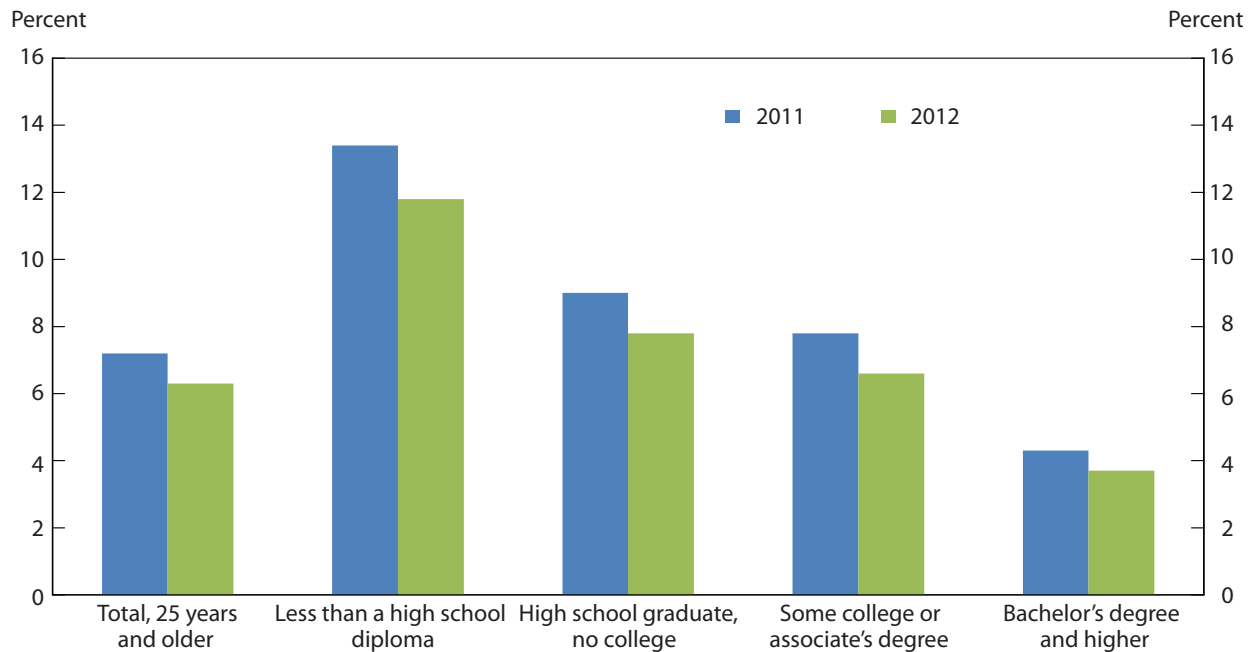
SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

**Chart 1. Unemployment rate for people 16 years and older, quarterly averages, seasonally adjusted, 1969–2012**



NOTE: Shaded regions represent recessions as designated by the National Bureau of Economic Research. Turning points are quarterly.  
SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

**Chart 2. Unemployment rate for people 25 years and older, by educational attainment, seasonally adjusted, fourth quarter, 2011, and fourth quarter, 2012**



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

25 years and older, the rate for those with less than a high school diploma fell by 1.4 percentage points, to 12.0 percent, at the end of the year. The unemployment rate for those with some college fell 1.0 percentage point, to 6.8 percent, and the rate for high school graduates declined by 0.8 percentage point, to 8.2 percent. For those with at least a bachelor's degree, the jobless rate decreased 0.5 percentage point, to 3.8 percent. (See table 2.)

*The number of job losers decreased in 2012 for the third consecutive year.* The number of people who were unemployed because they lost their job fell by 1.2 million from the fourth quarter of the previous year. This category includes people on temporary layoff (who expect to be recalled to their jobs) as well as those not on temporary layoff. The latter group is further divided among permanent job losers and those who completed temporary jobs. A large portion of unemployment is made up of permanent job losers, a category that accounted for a disproportionate amount of the overall decrease in unemployment. (See table 3 and chart 3.)

The number of unemployed reentrants to the labor force was about the same in the fourth quarter of 2012 as its year-earlier level, 3.4 million. Reentrants are people who had been in the labor force previously, had spent

time out of the labor force, and were actively seeking work once again. Reentrants accounted for slightly more than one-quarter of the unemployed at the end of 2012. The number of unemployed job leavers—those who voluntarily left their jobs and started to seek another job—was about unchanged over the year. The number of new entrants in 2012—people who never previously worked but were searching for work—also was similar to what it was in 2011.

*Despite some easing, long-term unemployment remained stubbornly high in 2012.* The number of long-term unemployed people (those who were jobless for 27 weeks or longer) fell by 861,000, to 4.9 million.<sup>2</sup> This group made up 40.0 percent of total unemployment in the fourth quarter, down slightly from 42.9 percent in the fourth quarter of 2011. (See table 3 and chart 4.)

After expanding for 3 consecutive years and reaching a record high 4.5 million in the second quarter of 2010, the number of people unemployed for a year or longer (not seasonally adjusted) was down by 605,000 from 2011, almost twice the size of the decrease from the previous year. In the fourth quarter of 2012, 29.2 percent of the unemployed had been jobless for a year or longer, down

**Table 2. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 25 years and older, by educational attainment, quarterly averages, seasonally adjusted, 2011–2012**

[Levels in thousands]

Characteristic	Fourth quarter, 2011	2012			
		First quarter	Second quarter	Third quarter	Fourth quarter
<b>Less than a high school diploma</b>					
Civilian labor force	11,698	11,463	11,405	11,275	11,156
Participation rate (percent)	46.9	46.1	45.1	45.5	45.4
Employed	10,127	9,989	9,958	9,926	9,818
Employment–population ratio	40.6	40.2	39.3	40.1	39.9
Unemployed	1,571	1,474	1,447	1,349	1,338
Unemployment rate (percent)	13.4	12.9	12.7	12.0	12.0
<b>High school graduate, no college</b>					
Civilian labor force	37,093	36,737	36,868	36,803	36,683
Participation rate (percent)	60.1	59.2	59.6	59.7	59.5
Employed	33,757	33,708	33,849	33,629	33,690
Employment–population ratio	54.7	54.3	54.7	54.6	54.6
Unemployed	3,337	3,030	3,019	3,173	2,993
Unemployment rate (percent)	9.0	8.2	8.2	8.6	8.2
<b>Some college or associate's degree</b>					
Civilian labor force	36,983	37,275	37,281	37,453	37,444
Participation rate (percent)	69.0	69.2	69.0	68.4	68.7
Employed	34,081	34,532	34,465	34,935	34,902
Employment–population ratio	63.6	64.1	63.8	63.8	64.0
Unemployed	2,902	2,743	2,815	2,518	2,542
Unemployment rate (percent)	7.8	7.4	7.6	6.7	6.8
<b>Bachelor's degree and higher</b>					
Civilian labor force	47,128	47,836	48,079	48,204	48,796
Participation rate (percent)	76.0	76.0	76.4	75.7	75.6
Employed	45,111	45,845	46,154	46,231	46,924
Employment–population ratio	72.7	72.9	73.3	72.6	72.7
Unemployed	2,016	1,991	1,925	1,973	1,871
Unemployment rate (percent)	4.3	4.2	4.0	4.1	3.8

NOTE: Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

from 2011 but still very high by historical standards.<sup>3</sup>

The number of people who were jobless for 99 weeks or longer, 1.7 million, was down by 223,000 over the year. Despite this decline, at the end of 2012 about 1 person in 7 who were unemployed had been jobless for about 2 years or longer, the same proportion as in 2011 (not seasonally adjusted).

*Data on labor force status flows capture the underlying changes as people move among being unemployed, employed, and not in the labor force.* Each month, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, the Bureau) reports on the number of people

employed, the number unemployed, and the number not in the labor force, as measured by the CPS. A great deal of movement contributes to the relatively small over-the-month net changes that usually occur among these labor force measures. The overall changes are captured by data on labor force status flows; the data show that millions of people move between employment and unemployment each month and millions of others leave or enter the labor force.<sup>4</sup> In 2012, 17.4 million people, or 7.1 percent of the population 16 years and older, changed their labor force status in an average month.

A greater understanding of the continued high level

**Table 3. Unemployed people, by reason and duration of unemployment, quarterly averages, seasonally adjusted, 2011–2012**

[Levels in thousands]

Reason and duration	Fourth quarter, 2011	2012			
		First quarter	Second quarter	Third quarter	Fourth quarter
<b>Reason for unemployment</b>					
Job losers and persons who completed temporary jobs	7,663	7,167	6,990	6,843	6,458
On temporary layoff	1,209	1,178	1,182	1,265	1,080
Not on temporary layoff	6,454	5,989	5,808	5,579	5,377
Permanent job losers	5,103	4,718	4,515	4,370	4,162
Persons who completed temporary jobs	1,351	1,271	1,293	1,209	1,215
Job leavers	1,004	1,026	942	929	973
Reentrants	3,371	3,302	3,343	3,334	3,410
New entrants	1,282	1,354	1,342	1,274	1,306
Percent distribution:					
Job losers and persons who completed temporary jobs	57.5	55.8	55.4	55.3	53.2
On temporary layoff	9.1	9.2	9.4	10.2	8.9
Not on temporary layoff	48.5	46.6	46.0	45.1	44.3
Job leavers	7.5	8.0	7.5	7.5	8.0
Reentrants	25.3	25.7	26.5	26.9	28.1
New entrants	9.6	10.5	10.6	10.3	10.8
<b>Duration of unemployment</b>					
Less than 5 weeks	2,615	2,551	2,665	2,699	2,635
5 to 14 weeks	2,993	2,825	2,892	2,925	2,814
15 weeks or longer	7,726	7,337	7,087	6,835	6,698
15 to 26 weeks	2,009	1,932	1,833	1,815	1,843
27 weeks or longer	5,717	5,405	5,254	5,020	4,856
Average (mean) duration, in weeks	40.1	39.8	39.5	39.2	39.2
Median duration, in weeks	20.8	20.2	19.6	17.9	18.8
Percent distribution:					
Less than 5 weeks	19.6	20.1	21.1	21.7	21.7
5 to 14 weeks	22.4	22.2	22.9	23.5	23.2
15 weeks or longer	57.9	57.7	56.1	54.9	55.1
15 to 26 weeks	15.1	15.2	14.5	14.6	15.2
27 weeks or longer	42.9	42.5	41.6	40.3	40.0

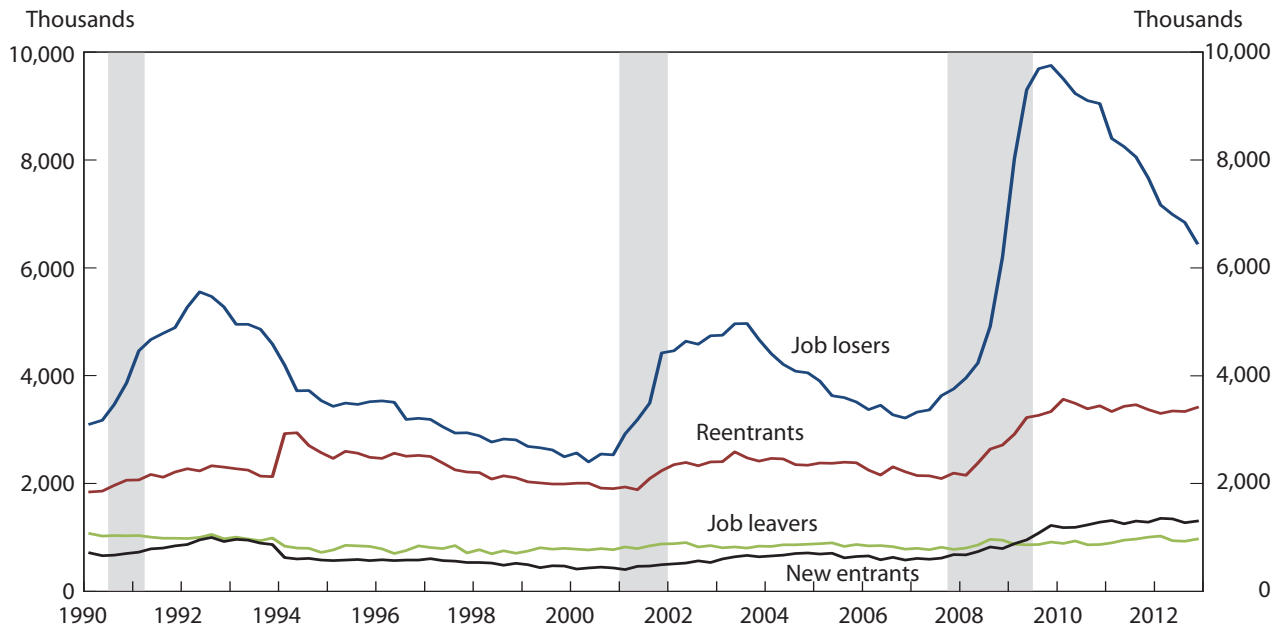
NOTE: Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

of unemployment in 2012 can be obtained by examining the updated status (employed, unemployed, or not in the labor force) of people who were unemployed the previous month. Chart 5 shows the proportions of unemployed people who found employment, remained unemployed, and left the labor force. Historically, these data indicate that people are more likely to remain unemployed from one

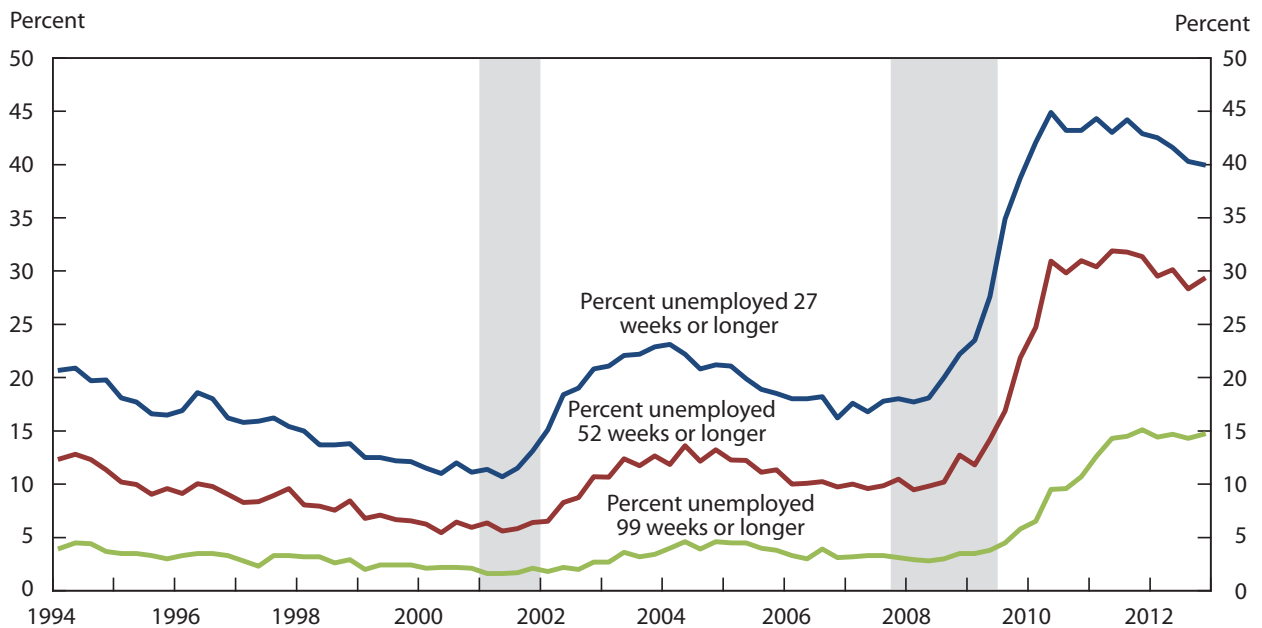
month to the next than to find employment or leave the labor force. The data show that the likelihood of remaining unemployed over a given month continued to be greater than the combined likelihood of finding employment and leaving the labor force. The share of the unemployed who remained unemployed from one month to the next, about 59 percent in December 2012 (calculated as a 3-month

**Chart 3. Reasons for unemployment, quarterly averages, seasonally adjusted, 1990–2012**



NOTE: Shaded regions represent recessions as designated by the National Bureau of Economic Research. Turning points are quarterly.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

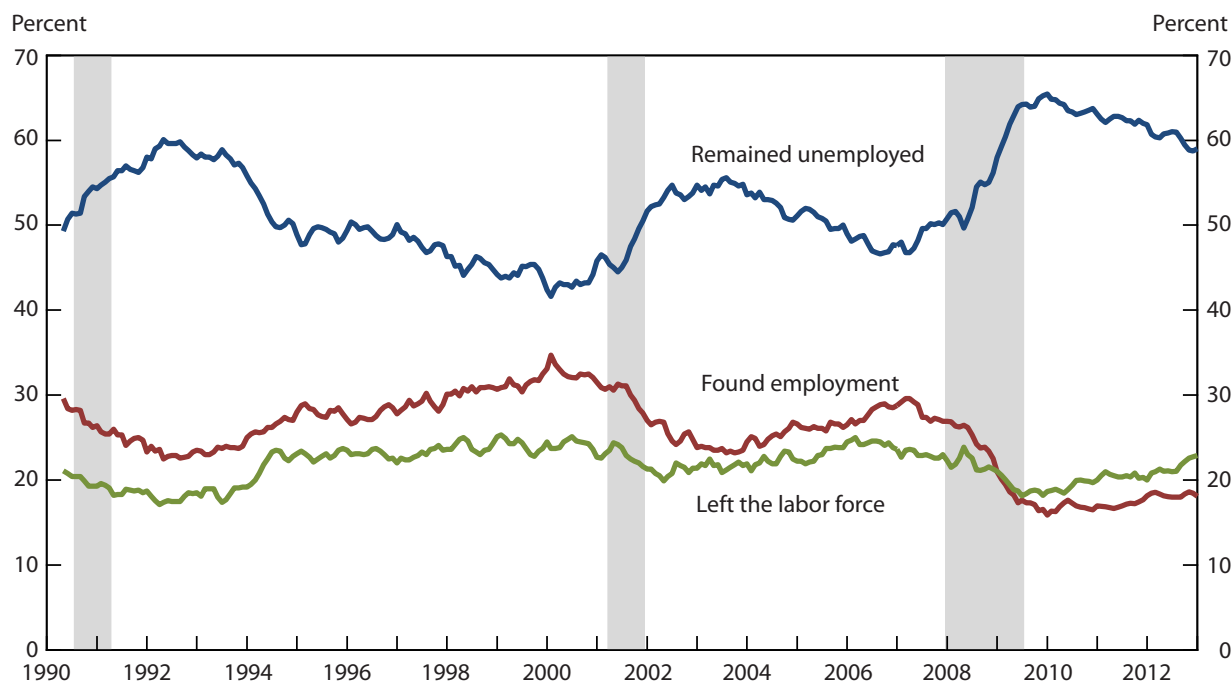
**Chart 4. Long-term unemployed as a percentage of total unemployed, quarterly averages, 1994–2012**



NOTE: Data for 27 weeks or longer are seasonally adjusted. Data for 52 weeks or longer and 99 weeks or longer are not seasonally adjusted. Shaded regions represent recessions as designated by the National Bureau of Economic Research. Turning points are quarterly.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.



**Chart 5. Percentage of the unemployed who found employment, remained unemployed, or left the labor force, 3-month moving average, seasonally adjusted, April 1990–December 2012**



NOTE: Shaded regions represent recessions as designated by the National Bureau of Economic Research.  
SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

moving average), continued to edge down over the year. The likelihood of unemployed people finding employment was about unchanged over the year, while the share of the unemployed who left the labor force trended upward in 2012. In December, the likelihood of unemployed people finding employment was 18.1 percent while the likelihood of their leaving the labor force was a higher 22.9 percent.

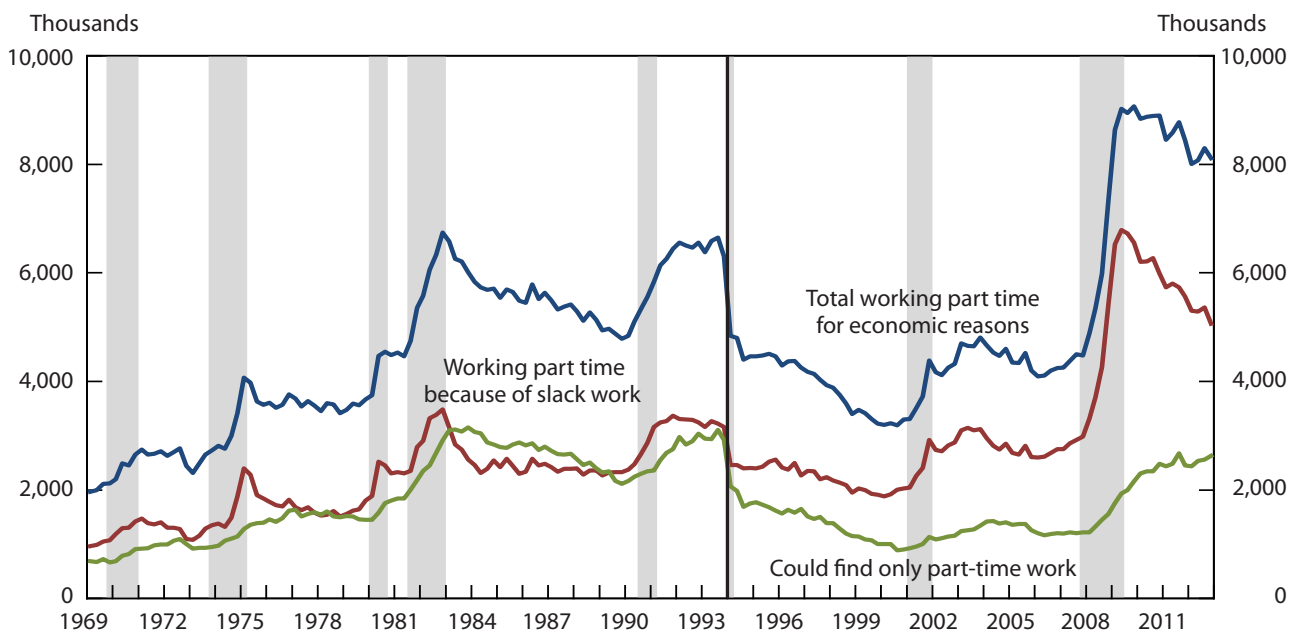
*Involuntary part-time employment declined in 2012.* The number of people employed part time for economic reasons, also referred to as involuntary part-time workers, decreased over the year, to 8.1 million—329,000 lower than its year-earlier level.<sup>5</sup> Still, even with the decline in 2012, the number of people employed part time for economic reasons remained almost double the prerecessionary<sup>6</sup> levels. (See chart 6.) Slack work or unfavorable business conditions, rather than an inability to find full-time work, typically has been the primary reason for working part time involuntarily.

*The number of people not in the labor force who wanted a job but were not looking for one continued to trend upward in 2012; however, the number of discouraged workers (not sea-*

*sonally adjusted) was little changed over the year.<sup>7</sup> People not in the labor force are neither employed nor unemployed. The number of people not in the labor force, 89.0 million in the fourth quarter of 2012, increased over the year. Because the labor force participation rate was about unchanged over the year, the increase was due almost entirely to population growth. The vast majority of the increase occurred among those who did not want a job. People 65 years and older continued to make up about 40 percent of those not in the labor force. The number of people not in the labor force who wanted a job but were not looking for one rose by 294,000 from its level a year earlier, to 6.4 million in the fourth quarter of 2012. (See table 4.) The proportion of these people edged up over the year, to 7.2 percent in the fourth quarter.*

Among the 6.4 million people who wanted a job but were not looking for one in the fourth quarter of 2012, 2.5 million (not seasonally adjusted) had searched for work sometime in the previous year and were available to work had a job been offered to them. These individuals are defined as “marginally attached to the labor force” and are not counted as unemployed because they had not actively searched for work in the 4 weeks preceding the survey

**Chart 6. Number of people employed part time for economic reasons, quarterly averages, seasonally adjusted, 1969–2012**



NOTE: Shaded regions represent recessions as designated by the National Bureau of Economic Research. Turning points are quarterly. Beginning in 1994 (denoted by vertical black line), data are affected by the redesign of the Current Population Survey and are not strictly comparable with data for previous years.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

**Table 4. Number of people not in the labor force, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted, 2008–2012**

[In thousands]

Category	Fourth quarter, 2008	Fourth quarter, 2009	Fourth quarter, 2010	Fourth quarter, 2011	Fourth quarter, 2012
Total not in the labor force	80,164	83,450	85,210	86,717	88,957
People who currently want a job	5,019	5,726	5,971	6,096	6,390
Marginally attached to the labor force <sup>1</sup>	1,831	2,394	2,581	2,562	2,517
Discouraged workers <sup>2</sup>	578	866	1,273	1,002	953
Other people marginally attached to the labor force <sup>3</sup>	1,253	1,528	1,308	1,559	1,564

<sup>1</sup> People who want a job, have searched for work during the previous 12 months, and were available to take a job during the reference week, but had not looked for work in the past 4 weeks.

<sup>2</sup> Those who did not actively look for work in the past 4 weeks for reasons such as they thought that no work was available, that they could not find work, that they lacked schooling or training, that their employer would think that they were too young or too old, and that they might face

other types of discrimination.

<sup>3</sup> Those who did not actively look for work in the past 4 weeks for reasons such as they had school or family responsibilities, they were in ill health, and they had transportation problems, as well as a number for whom the reason for their nonparticipation was not identified.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

week.<sup>8</sup> Among those in this group, some were currently not looking for work specifically for one of the following reasons: they felt that no jobs were available for them, that they could not find work, that they lacked schooling or training, that an employer would think that they were too young or too old, or that they might face other types of discrimination. The number of these “discouraged workers,” 953,000 in the fourth quarter of 2012, was little changed over the year.

The remaining 1.6 million people marginally attached to the labor force are those who had not searched for work in the 4 weeks preceding the survey for reasons such as they had school or family responsibilities, they were in ill health, or they had transportation problems, as well as those for whom the reason for their nonparticipation was not identified in the CPS. The number of these individuals was virtually the same in the fourth quarter of 2012 as a year earlier.

All five alternative measures of labor underutilization declined in 2012. The Bureau uses CPS data to construct alternative measures of labor underutilization.<sup>9</sup> Known as U-1, U-2, and U-4 through U-6 (U-3 is the “official” unemployment rate), these measures tend to show similar cyclical patterns yet provide additional insight into the degree to which labor resources are being underutilized. Like the official unemployment rate, the alternative measures are presented as a percentage of the labor force (adjusted as necessary). Alternative measure U-1 shows the number of individuals unemployed 15 weeks or longer as a percentage of the labor force, while U-2 presents job losers and people who completed temporary jobs as a percentage of the labor force. Alternative measures U-4 through U-6 are broader than the official unemployment measure: To U-3, U-4 adds discouraged workers, U-5 adds all people marginally attached to the labor force (including discouraged workers), and U-6 adds all people marginally attached to the labor force plus people employed part time for economic reasons.

All five alternative measures were down over the year. By the end of 2012, U-1 had declined to 4.3 percent and U-2 to 4.2 percent. Two measures, U-4 and U-5, decreased by 0.9 percentage point from the end of 2011. The

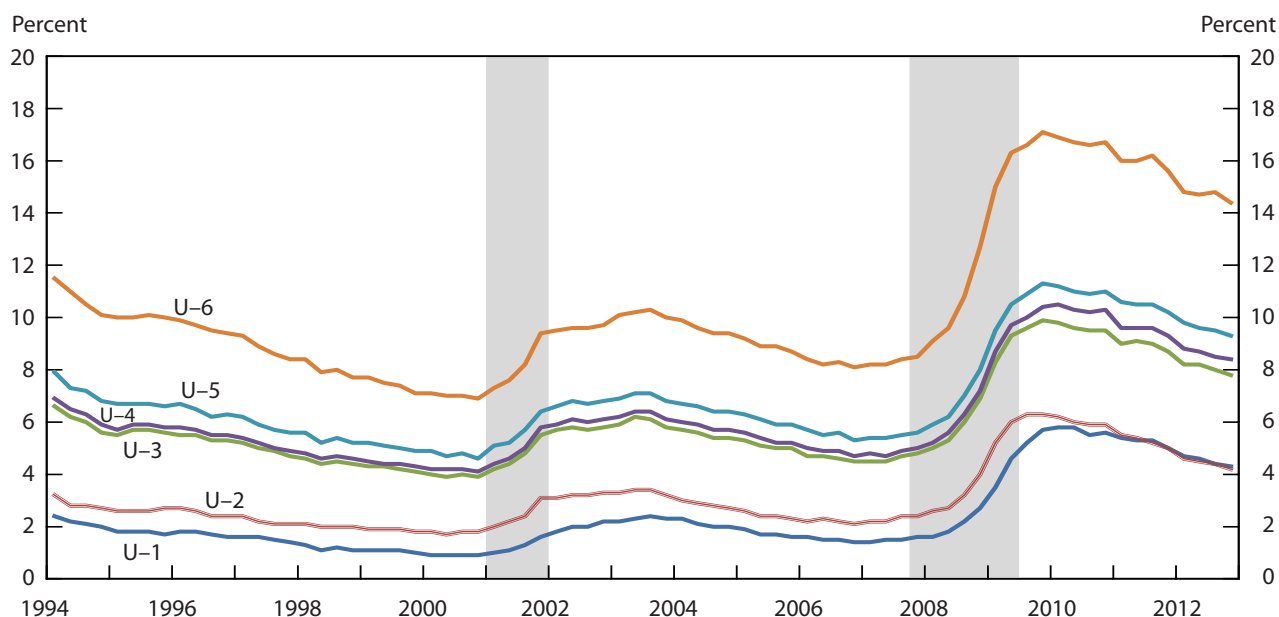
broadest measure, U-6, declined by 1.2 points, to 14.4 percent. (See chart 7.)

Throughout most of the series’ history, U-2 exceeded U-1. However, recently the pattern has changed, reflecting the persistently high levels of long-term unemployment and the declining number of people unemployed because they lost their job.

The civilian labor force increased to 155.5 million in 2012, rising above its prerecession level. The labor force participation rate—the proportion of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years and older that is in the labor force—was little different at the end of 2012 from a year earlier, after accounting for the effects of annual population adjustments to population controls. (See chart 8 and box on page 14.)

The labor force participation rates for the major race and ethnicity groups declined or were little changed in 2012 after accounting for the adjustments to population controls. The rate for Whites declined to 63.8 percent, and the rate for Hispanics edged down to 66.1 percent. The rates for Blacks and Asians were unchanged from their rates in 2011. (See table 1.)

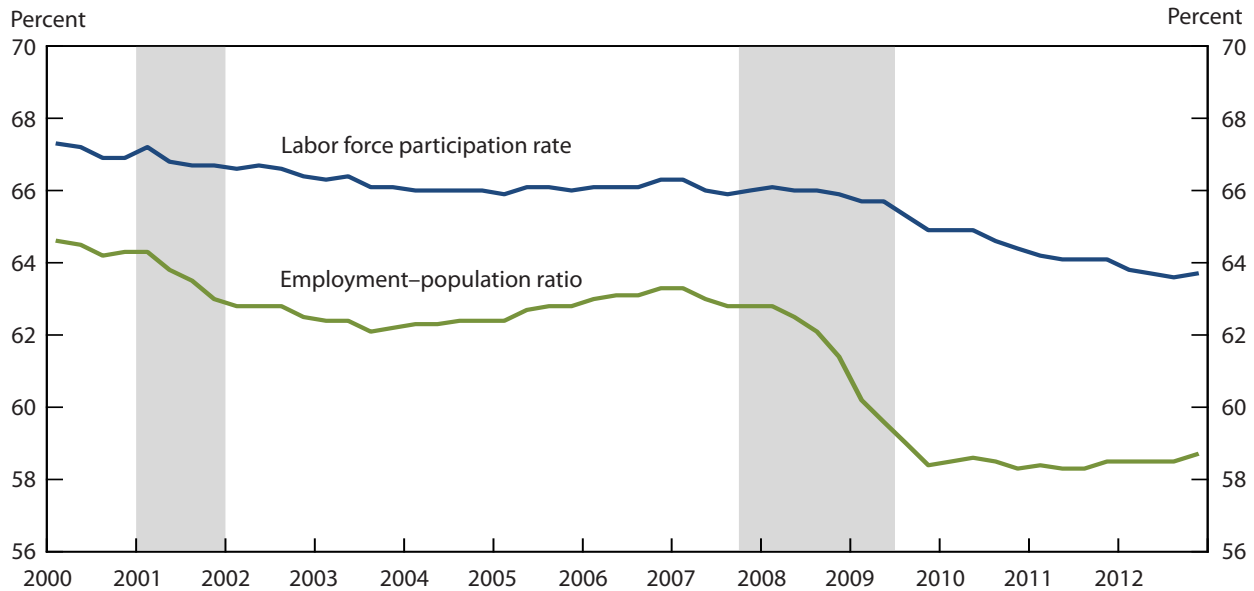
**Chart 7. Measures of labor underutilization, quarterly averages, seasonally adjusted, 1994–2012**



NOTE: Shaded regions represent recessions as designated by the National Bureau of Economic Research. Turning points are quarterly. Measures of labor underutilization are as follows: U-1 = people unemployed 15 weeks or longer, as a percentage of the civilian labor force; U-2 = job losers and people who completed temporary jobs, as a percentage of the civilian labor force; U-3 = total unemployed, as a percentage of the civilian labor force (official unemployment rate); U-4 = total unemployed plus discouraged workers, as a percentage of the civilian labor force plus discouraged workers; U-5 = total unemployed, plus discouraged workers, plus all other marginally attached workers, as a percentage of the civilian labor force plus all marginally attached workers; U-6 = total unemployed, plus all marginally attached workers, plus total employed part time for economic reasons, as a percentage of the civilian labor force plus all marginally attached workers.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

**Chart 8. Labor force participation rate and employment–population ratio, quarterly averages, seasonally adjusted, 2000–2012**



NOTE: Shaded regions represent recessions as designated by the National Bureau of Economic Research. Turning points are quarterly.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

### Adjustments to Population Estimates for the CPS

Updated population controls are introduced annually for the Current Population Survey (CPS) with the publication of January data in the *Employment Situation* news release. The updated controls in January 2012 incorporated the Census 2010 population base for the first time; previous years' data shown in tables in this article used the Census 2000 population base. Consequently, data for 2012 are not strictly comparable to those for earlier years. For the analysis presented in this article, the effects of the updated population controls have been taken into account.

The adjustment increased the estimated size of the civilian noninstitutional population in December 2011 by 1,510,000, the civilian labor

force by 258,000, employment by 216,000, unemployment by 42,000, and people not in the labor force by 1,252,000. Although the total unemployment rate was unaffected, the labor force participation rate and the employment–population ratio were each reduced by 0.3 percentage point. This was because the population increase was primarily among people 55 and older and, to a lesser degree, people 16 to 24 years of age. Both of these age groups have lower levels of labor force participation than the general population does. For more information, see “Adjustments to Household Survey Population Estimates in January 2012” (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, February 2012), [www.bls.gov/cps/cps12adj.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/cps/cps12adj.pdf).

Total civilian employment grew at a faster pace in 2012 than in 2011. As measured in the household survey, employment reached 143.3 million in the fourth quarter of 2012. After accounting for the effects of population controls, the overall employment–population ratio rose over the year. The employment–population ratio is the proportion of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years and older that is employed. (See chart 8 and box on page 14.) The ratio fell from 2007 to 2009 and has shown little definitive change until recently. After accounting for population adjustments, the employment–population ratio for adult men rose from its 2011 value while the ratios for adult women and teens were little changed. (See table 1.)

The employment–population ratios for Whites and Blacks increased over the year, to 59.5 percent and 53.0 percent, respectively. The ratios for Asians (not seasonally adjusted), 60.6 percent, and Hispanics, 59.6 percent, were not significantly different from the previous year’s ratios.

The number of workers holding more than one job, 7.0 million in the fourth quarter of 2012, was about the same as in the previous year. The percentage of the employed who were multiple jobholders also continued to hold steady, at about 4.9 percent throughout the year.

The number of self-employed workers increased in 2012 as a result of increases in the numbers of both the incorporated self-employed and the unincorporated self-employed. In the fourth quarter of 2012, 14.8 million workers were self-employed. The self-employment rate—the proportion of total employment made up of the self-employed—was 10.3 percent, little different from a year earlier. Of all self-employed workers, 9.7 million, or nearly two-thirds, had unincorporated businesses; the remaining 5.2 million had incorporated businesses.

*Although unemployment rates varied across occupations, jobless rates fell over the year for all five of the major occupational categories.* Unemployment rates continued to be highest in the natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupational group, at 10.8 percent in the fourth quarter of 2012. The rate for sales and office occupations and for production, transportation, and material moving oc-

cupations each fell about a full percentage point over the year, to 7.1 percent and 9.1 percent, respectively. The jobless rate for service occupations was 8.9 percent in the fourth quarter of 2012, 0.7 percentage point lower than it was the previous year. The lowest rate continued to be in management, professional, and related occupations and was down by 0.5 percentage point, to 3.8 percent at the end of 2012.<sup>10</sup> (See table 5.)

Employment rose over the year in management, professional, and related occupations, the largest of the five major occupational categories. Almost 2 in 5 employed people were classified under this broad occupational group in the fourth quarter of 2012. Women made up 51.5 percent of the category, although they accounted for only 47.0 percent of the employed. However, the over-the-year employment growth in this occupational category was about equally split between women and men. Employment in other major occupational categories was little changed over the year. (See table 6.)

**Table 5. Unemployment rates, by occupational group, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted, 2011–2012**  
[In percent]

Occupational group	Fourth quarter, 2011	Fourth quarter, 2012
Management, professional, and related occupations	4.3	3.8
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	4.6	3.8
Professional and related occupations	4.0	3.7
Service occupations	9.6	8.9
Health care support occupations	8.0	6.2
Protective service occupations	6.7	5.2
Food preparation and serving related occupations	10.8	10.2
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	11.3	11.4
Personal care and service occupations	8.7	7.9
Sales and office occupations	8.1	7.1
Sales and related occupations	7.9	7.1
Office and administrative support occupations	8.4	7.1
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	11.9	10.8
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	16.1	14.8
Construction and extraction occupations	14.7	13.3
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	6.4	6.0
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	10.0	9.1
Production occupations	9.9	8.6
Transportation and material moving occupations	10.1	9.5

NOTE: Effective with January 2012 data, occupations reflect the introduction of the 2010 Census occupation classification system into the Current Population Survey, or household survey. This system is derived from the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification system. Historical data have not been revised. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

**Table 6. Employment, by occupational group and gender, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted, 2011–2012**

[In thousands]

Occupational group	Total		Men		Women	
	Fourth quarter, 2011	Fourth quarter, 2012	Fourth quarter, 2011	Fourth quarter, 2012	Fourth quarter, 2011	Fourth quarter, 2012
Total, 16 years and older	140,912	143,549	74,975	76,109	65,937	67,440
Management, professional, and related occupations	52,820	54,936	25,675	26,638	27,144	28,299
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	21,839	22,799	12,459	12,852	9,380	9,947
Professional and related occupations	30,981	32,137	13,217	13,785	17,764	18,352
Service occupations	24,856	25,184	10,965	10,930	13,891	14,254
Health care support occupations	3,377	3,592	442	466	2,936	3,127
Protective service occupations	3,168	3,031	2,541	2,383	626	648
Food preparation and serving related occupations	7,778	7,727	3,580	3,480	4,197	4,247
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	5,559	5,595	3,359	3,390	2,200	2,205
Personal care and service occupations	4,975	5,239	1,043	1,211	3,932	4,028
Sales and office occupations	33,178	33,335	12,616	12,675	20,562	20,660
Sales and related occupations	15,585	15,563	8,001	7,977	7,584	7,586
Office and administrative support occupations	17,593	17,772	4,615	4,698	12,978	13,074
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	13,216	13,001	12,678	12,445	538	555
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	985	924	791	713	194	211
Construction and extraction occupations	7,261	7,147	7,067	6,954	195	193
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	4,969	4,929	4,820	4,779	150	151
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	16,843	17,093	13,041	13,421	3,802	3,672
Production occupations	8,408	8,549	5,965	6,269	2,443	2,280
Transportation and material moving occupations	8,435	8,544	7,076	7,153	1,359	1,391

NOTE: Effective with January 2012 data, occupations reflect the introduction of the 2010 Census occupation classification system into the Current Population Survey, or household survey. This system is derived from the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification system. Historical data have not been revised. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

Median weekly earnings for full-time wage and salary workers were up from 2011, but somewhat less than the rate of inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U). Median weekly earnings were \$768 in 2012, up by 1.6 percent from the 2011 figure. (See table 7; data in this section are annual averages.)

Men's median weekly earnings rose at a faster pace in 2012 than did those of women. Men's earnings increased by 2.6 percent over the year, compared with 1.0 percent for women. The women's-to-men's earnings ratio declined to 80.9 percent in 2012. The ratio has been in the 80-percent to 82-percent range since 2004. In 1979, the first year for which comparable data on usual weekly earnings became available, women's earnings were 62.3 percent of

men's. (See chart 9.)

Among full-time wage and salary workers, median usual weekly earnings continued to be higher for Whites and Asians than for Blacks and Hispanics.

Workers at all levels of educational attainment saw increases in their median usual weekly earnings in 2012. Workers 25 years and older with less than a high school diploma saw the largest over-the-year increase in median weekly earnings, 4.4 percent, to \$471 in 2012. Earnings of workers with only a high school diploma were up 2.2 percent, to \$652 per week. Workers with some college or an associate's degree earned \$749 per week, and those with a bachelor's degree or higher earned \$1,165. (See table 7.)

**Table 7. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers, by selected characteristics, annual averages, 2011–2012**

Characteristic	Current dollars			Constant (1982–1984) dollars		
	2011	2012	Percent change, 2011–2012	2011	2012	Percent change, 2011–2012
Total, 16 years and older	\$756	\$768	1.6	\$336	\$335	–0.3
Men	832	854	2.6	370	372	.5
Women	684	691	1.0	304	301	–1.0
White	775	792	2.2	344	345	.3
Men	856	879	2.7	381	383	.5
Women	703	710	1.0	313	309	–1.3
Black or African American	615	621	1.0	274	271	–1.1
Men	653	665	1.8	290	289	–3
Women	595	599	.7	264	261	–1.1
Asian	866	920	6.2	385	401	4.2
Men	970	1,055	8.8	431	459	6.5
Women	751	770	2.5	334	335	.3
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	549	568	3.5	244	247	1.2
Men	571	592	3.7	254	258	1.6
Women	518	521	.6	230	227	–1.3
Total, 25 years and older	797	815	2.3	—	—	—
Less than a high school diploma	451	471	4.4	—	—	—
High school graduate, no college	638	652	2.2	—	—	—
Some college or associate's degree	739	749	1.4	—	—	—
Bachelor's degree or higher	1,150	1,165	1.3	—	—	—

NOTE: Dash indicates data not available.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey and Consumer Price Index.

Real median usual weekly earnings (adjusted to constant 1982–1984 dollars with the CPI-U) were about unchanged in 2012. (See table 7.)

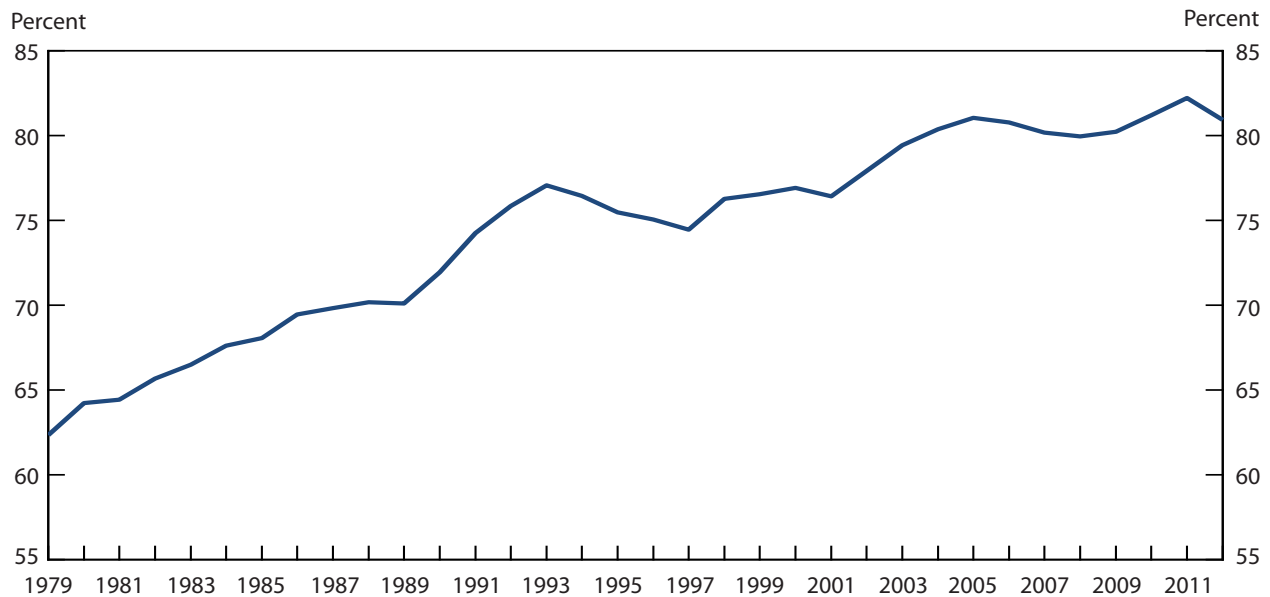
*In 2012, unemployment rates (not seasonally adjusted) for both veterans and nonveterans continued to decline over the year.* The CPS defines veterans as men and women 18 years and older who previously served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces and were civilians at the time the survey was conducted.<sup>11</sup> Veterans were more likely than nonveterans to be men: in the fourth quarter of 2012, only about 1 in 10 veterans were women. Veterans also were more likely to be older than nonveterans: about one-half of the total veteran noninstitutional population served during World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam era. Overall, 50.8 percent of male veterans 18 years and older were in the labor force in the fourth quarter of 2012, compared with 76.4 percent of their nonveteran counter-

parts. This disparity in participation rates reflects the fact that male veterans are much more likely than male nonveterans to be 65 years or older. (See table 8.)

The unemployment rate for male veterans fell 1.3 percentage points, to 6.3 percent in the fourth quarter of 2012. The unemployment rate for female veterans was 9.3 percent in the same quarter, not statistically different from the previous year's percentage.

The jobless rate for Gulf War-era II veterans (those who had served since September 2001) was 10.2 percent in the fourth quarter of 2012, higher than the overall rate for veterans. This difference partially reflects the fact that Gulf War-era II veterans tend to be younger than veterans from other periods of service and younger individuals, regardless of their veteran status, usually have higher unemployment rates than those who are older. The rate for male Gulf War-era II veterans edged down over the year, to 9.5 percent in the fourth quarter of 2012. The rate

**Chart 9. Women’s median usual weekly earnings as a percentage of men’s, full-time wage and salary workers, annual averages, 1979–2012**



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

for female Gulf War era II veterans (14.7 percent) was not statistically different from that of the previous year.

*Over the year, there was little change in the employment situation for people with a disability.* In the fourth quarter of 2012, 20.9 percent of people with a disability were in the labor force, a percentage unchanged from that for the same quarter in 2011. By comparison, in the fourth quarter of 2012 the rate was 69.3 percent (not seasonally adjusted) for those with no disability.

The low labor force participation rate among people with a disability reflects, in part, the fact that a large proportion of those with a disability are 65 years and older, an age group that, in general, has a low rate of labor force participation. Nonetheless, both men and women 16 to 64 years old with a disability also were much less likely to be in the labor force than were their counterparts with no disability. (See table 9.)

The employment–population ratio for people with a disability was 18.3 percent in the fourth quarter of 2012, little different from the percentage in 2011. In the same quarter, those with no disability had an employment–population ratio of 64.2 percent, more than 3 times that of people with a disability.

In the fourth quarter of 2012, the unemployment rate

for people with a disability, 12.4 percent, continued to be higher than the rate for those with no disability, 7.3 percent.

*Both foreign-born and native-born individuals experienced a decline in their unemployment rates in 2012.* By the end of the year, the unemployment rate for the foreign born had declined 1.0 percentage point, to 7.7 percent (not seasonally adjusted), and that for the native born declined 0.8 percentage point, to 7.5 percent. (See table 10.) Foreign-born workers are people who reside in the United States but were born outside the country or one of its outlying areas, such as Puerto Rico or Guam, to parents, neither of whom was a U.S. citizen. The foreign born comprise legally admitted immigrants; refugees; temporary residents, such as students and temporary workers; and undocumented immigrants.

In the fourth quarter of 2012, foreign-born workers were 16 percent of the U.S. civilian labor force. The labor force participation rates of both the foreign born and the native born were little changed over the year and stood at 66.2 percent and 63.1 percent, respectively, in the fourth quarter. For the same period, the employment–population ratio of the foreign born, 61.1 percent, exhibited no statistically significant change while that of native-born workers rose a significant 0.3 percentage point, to 58.4 percent.



**Table 8. Employment status of people 18 years and older, by veteran status, period of service, and gender, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted, 2011–2012**

[Levels in thousands]

Employment status, veteran status, and period of service	Total		Men		Women	
	Fourth quarter, 2011	Fourth quarter, 2012	Fourth quarter, 2011	Fourth quarter, 2012	Fourth quarter, 2011	Fourth quarter, 2012
<b>Veterans, 18 years and older</b>						
Civilian labor force	11,154	10,892	10,049	9,771	1,105	1,120
Participation rate (percent)	52.0	51.7	51.1	50.8	61.2	61.5
Employed	10,305	10,169	9,285	9,153	1,020	1,016
Employment–population ratio	48.0	48.3	47.2	47.6	56.5	55.8
Unemployed	849	722	764	618	85	104
Unemployment rate (percent)	7.6	6.6	7.6	6.3	7.7	9.3
<b>Gulf War–era II veterans</b>						
Civilian labor force	1,957	2,101	1,708	1,804	250	296
Participation rate (percent)	82.2	82.6	84.4	84.8	69.8	71.1
Employed	1,721	1,885	1,513	1,633	208	253
Employment–population ratio	72.2	74.1	74.7	76.7	58.1	60.7
Unemployed	237	215	195	172	42	43
Unemployment rate (percent)	12.1	10.2	11.4	9.5	16.8	14.7
<b>Gulf War–era I veterans</b>						
Civilian labor force	2,482	2,539	2,130	2,177	352	362
Participation rate	84.1	83.4	86.3	85.4	73.0	73.2
Employed	2,344	2,404	2,006	2,072	338	332
Employment–population ratio	79.5	79.0	81.3	81.3	70.0	67.1
Unemployed	138	136	123	105	14	30
Unemployment rate (percent)	5.5	5.3	5.8	4.8	4.1	8.4
<b>World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam-era veterans</b>						
Civilian labor force	3,321	2,983	3,226	2,895	95	88
Participation rate (percent)	32.4	30.7	32.5	30.8	29.5	27.8
Employed	3,095	2,810	3,002	2,729	93	81
Employment–population ratio	30.2	28.9	30.3	29.0	28.8	25.6
Unemployed	227	173	224	166	2	7
Unemployment rate (percent)	6.8	5.8	7.0	5.7	2.5	7.9
<b>Veterans of other service periods</b>						
Civilian labor force	3,393	3,269	2,985	2,894	408	374
Participation rate (percent)	57.6	56.9	56.9	56.2	63.4	63.1
Employed	3,145	3,070	2,763	2,720	382	350
Employment–population ratio	53.4	53.4	52.6	52.8	59.3	59.1
Unemployed	248	198	222	175	26	24
Unemployment rate (percent)	7.3	6.1	7.4	6.0	6.4	6.4
<b>Nonveterans, 18 years and older</b>						
Civilian labor force	140,782	142,503	71,182	71,752	69,600	70,751
Participation rate (percent)	67.0	66.6	76.9	76.4	59.2	58.9
Employed	129,253	132,016	65,092	66,320	64,162	65,697
Employment–population ratio	61.5	61.7	70.3	70.6	54.6	54.7
Unemployed	11,529	10,487	6,090	5,432	5,439	5,055
Unemployment rate (percent)	8.2	7.4	8.6	7.6	7.8	7.1

NOTE: Veterans served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces and were not on active duty at the time of the survey. Nonveterans never served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces. Veterans could have served anywhere in the world during these periods of service: Gulf War–era II (September 2001–present), Gulf War–era I (August 1990–August 2001), Vietnam era (August 1964–April 1975), Korean War (July 1950–January 1955), World War II (December 1941–December 1946), and other service

periods (all other periods). Veterans who served in more than one wartime period are classified as being only in the most recent one. Veterans who served during one of the selected wartime periods and another period are classified as being only in the selected period. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

**Table 9. Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population, by gender, age, and disability status, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted, 2011–2012**

[Levels in thousands]

Employment status, gender, and age	People with a disability		People with no disability	
	Fourth quarter, 2011	Fourth quarter, 2012	Fourth quarter, 2011	Fourth quarter, 2012
<b>Total, 16 years and older</b>				
Civilian labor force	5,710	6,010	148,005	149,202
Participation rate (percent)	20.9	20.9	69.4	69.3
Employed	4,955	5,263	135,958	138,286
Employment–population ratio	18.2	18.3	63.8	64.2
Unemployed	755	748	12,047	10,916
Unemployment rate (percent)	13.2	12.4	8.1	7.3
<b>Men, 16 to 64 years</b>				
Civilian labor force	2,618	2,724	75,328	75,227
Participation rate (percent)	34.6	35.0	82.4	82.4
Employed	2,217	2,337	68,899	69,577
Employment–population ratio	29.3	30.0	75.3	76.2
Unemployed	401	388	6,429	5,650
Unemployment rate (percent)	15.3	14.2	8.5	7.5
<b>Women, 16 to 64 years</b>				
Civilian labor force	2,215	2,242	66,204	67,128
Participation rate (percent)	30.0	29.0	70.6	70.8
Employed	1,931	1,962	61,005	62,238
Employment–population ratio	26.2	25.4	65.0	65.6
Unemployed	285	280	5,199	4,890
Unemployment rate (percent)	12.9	12.5	7.9	7.3
<b>Total, 65 years and older</b>				
Civilian labor force	877	1,044	6,473	6,847
Participation rate (percent)	7.1	7.9	23.2	23.3
Employed	807	964	6,053	6,471
Employment–population ratio	6.5	7.3	21.7	22.1
Unemployed	69	80	419	376
Unemployment rate (percent)	7.9	7.6	6.5	5.5

NOTE: A person with a disability has at least one of the following conditions: is deaf or has serious difficulty hearing; is blind or has serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses; has serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition; has serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs;

has difficulty dressing or bathing; or has difficulty doing errands alone, such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping, because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

IN SUM, MOST MAJOR EMPLOYMENT and unemployment measures from the CPS continued to point to gradual improvement in the U.S. labor market in 2012. The unemployment level and the unemployment rate declined over the year, although the proportion of unemployed people who had been jobless for long periods continued to be high by historical standards. Employment, as meas-

ured by the CPS, showed a greater increase in 2012 than in the previous year, while the employment–population ratio rose. The number of people employed part time for economic reasons declined in 2012 but remained at a relatively high level. Median weekly earnings for all full-time wage and salary workers increased over the year, and real earnings were about unchanged. □

**Table 10. Employment status of the foreign- and native-born populations, by gender, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted, 2011–2012**

[Levels in thousands]

Employment status and nativity	Total		Men		Women	
	Fourth quarter, 2011	Fourth quarter, 2012	Fourth quarter, 2011	Fourth quarter, 2012	Fourth quarter, 2011	Fourth quarter, 2012
<b>Foreign born, 16 years and older</b>						
Civilian labor force	24,794	25,244	14,493	14,428	10,301	10,817
Participation rate (percent)	67.3	66.2	79.4	78.2	55.4	55.0
Employed	22,642	23,292	13,301	13,423	9,342	9,869
Employment–population ratio	61.4	61.1	72.8	72.7	50.2	50.2
Unemployed	2,152	1,952	1,193	1,004	959	948
Unemployment rate (percent)	8.7	7.7	8.2	7.0	9.3	8.8
<b>Native born, 16 years and older</b>						
Civilian labor force	128,921	129,968	67,567	67,977	61,354	61,991
Participation rate (percent)	63.3	63.1	68.6	68.4	58.4	58.1
Employed	118,270	120,257	61,674	62,686	56,596	57,571
Employment–population ratio	58.1	58.4	62.6	63.1	53.9	54.0
Unemployed	10,651	9,711	5,893	5,292	4,758	4,419
Unemployment rate (percent)	8.3	7.5	8.7	7.8	7.8	7.1

NOTE: The foreign born are those residing in the United States who were not U.S. citizens at birth. That is, they were born outside the United States or one of its outlying areas, such as Puerto Rico or Guam, to parents, neither of whom was a U.S. citizen. The native born are people who were born in the United States or one of its outlying areas, such as Puerto Rico or Guam,

or who were born abroad of at least one parent who was a U.S. citizen. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Those of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity may be of any race. About 90 percent of people of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity identify themselves as White in the CPS.

<sup>2</sup> The duration of joblessness is the length of time (through the current reference week) that people classified as unemployed have been looking for work. This statistic measures the duration of the current spell of unemployment, rather than that of a completed spell of unemployment.

<sup>3</sup> For additional information, see Thomas Luke Spreen, “Ranks of those unemployed for a year or more up sharply,” *Issues in Labor Statistics*, Summary 10-10 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, October 2010), <http://www.bls.gov/opub/ils/pdf/opbils87.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> For more information and analysis, see Randy E. Ilg, “How long before the unemployed find jobs or quit looking?” *Issues in Labor Statistics*, Summary 11-1 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2011), <http://www.bls.gov/opub/ils/pdf/opbils89.pdf>; Harley J. Frazis, “Labor force flows in the most recent recession,” *Issues in Labor Statistics*, Summary 10-08 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, July 2010), <http://www.bls.gov/opub/ils/pdf/opbils85.pdf>; Harley J. Frazis and Randy E. Ilg, “Trends in labor force flows during recent recessions,” *Monthly Labor Review*, April 2009, pp. 3–18, <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2009/04/art1full.pdf>; and Randy E. Ilg and Eleni Theodossiou, “Job search of the unemployed by duration of unemployment,” *Monthly Labor Review*, March 2012, pp. 41–49, <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2012/03/art3full.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> For additional information, see Emy Sok, “Involuntary part-

time work on the rise,” *Issues in Labor Statistics*, Summary 08-08 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, December 2008), <http://www.bls.gov/opub/ils/pdf/opbils71.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Beginning and ending dates of recessions are determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research. The most recent recession began in December 2007 and ended in June 2009.

<sup>7</sup> “People not in the labor force who want a job” denotes those who reported wanting a job without having necessarily looked for one; this group includes all people who responded “yes” to the question, “Do you currently want a job, either full or part time?”

<sup>8</sup> For additional analysis of people marginally attached to the labor force, see Sharon Cohany, “Ranks of discouraged workers and others marginally attached to the labor force rise during recession,” *Issues in Labor Statistics*, Summary 09-04 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, April 2009), <http://www.bls.gov/opub/ils/pdf/opbils74.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> For further information, see Steven E. Haugen, “Measures of Labor Underutilization from the Current Population Survey,” Working Paper 424 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, March 2009), <http://www.bls.gov/ore/pdf/ec090020.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Unemployment rates by occupation are based on the last job an individual held. Excluded are unemployed people who have no previous work experience.

<sup>11</sup> Veterans who served in more than one wartime period are classified into only the most recent one.