Why Measure Employment and the Labor Force?

Since America's founding, the labor force has been fundamental to our country's development and success. Therefore, it is impossible to measure the true well-being of the country without measuring all aspects of the labor force and employment.

In order for the country to know what is needed—how folks are doing and where they need help—we must conduct surveys such as the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) to produce that information.

Because our country is so populous (over 300 million people), we can only survey a scientific sample of the whole population. Thus, your answers to this survey represent thousands of Americans!

Americans work hard everyday, achieving triumphs and facing struggles. By studying both our successes and setbacks, we can help our nation make informed decisions. By law, all personal information collected for this study is kept strictly confidential.

Thank you for participating in this survey, and for helping represent our nation's most important asset...

People Just Like You.

SIPP

Employment and Labor Force

Mission and Purpose

Data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) are used to evaluate changes in:

- Income
- Movement into and out of government assistance programs
- Effects of our changing family and social situations for individuals and households.

For more information, visit SIPP online at:

<www.census.gov/sipp>

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Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
census.gov

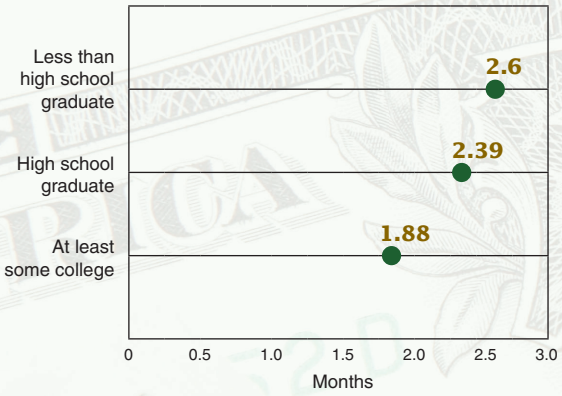
United States Census Bureau

Unemployment Duration

From 2004–2007, there were 66.4 million spells of unemployment.

- The median unemployment spell lasted 1.8 months.
- Persons who attended at least some college had shorter unemployment spells than those who did not.

Median Duration of Unemployment by Educational Attainment for People 21 and Older: 2004–2007 (in months)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2004 Panel.

Unemployment Compensation

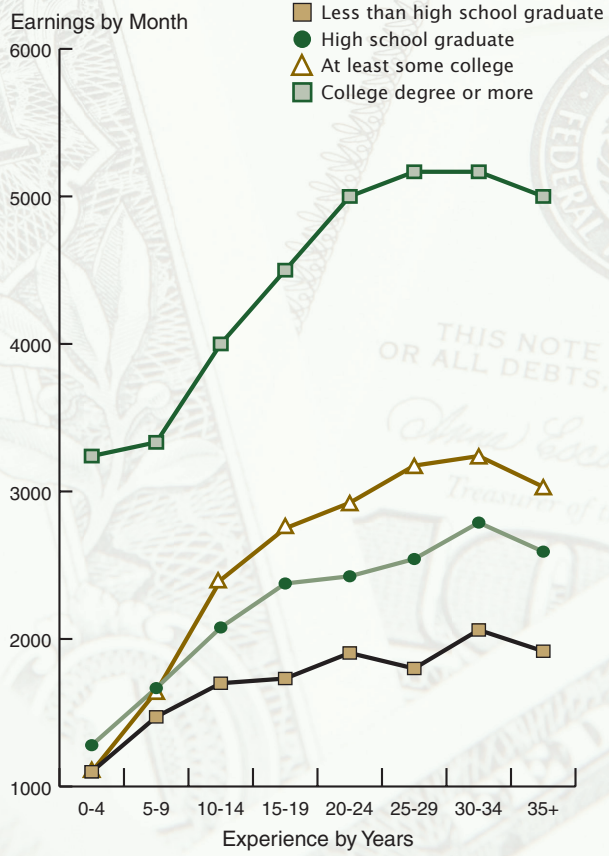
- In the first quarter of 2011, approximately 32 percent of households with someone looking for work had received some type of unemployment compensation.
- In the second quarter of 2011, only 26.8 percent of the same type of households received unemployment compensation.

–5.2%

Employment History

- College graduates earn more at the start of their employment.
- Graduates also increase earnings faster as they accumulate experience.

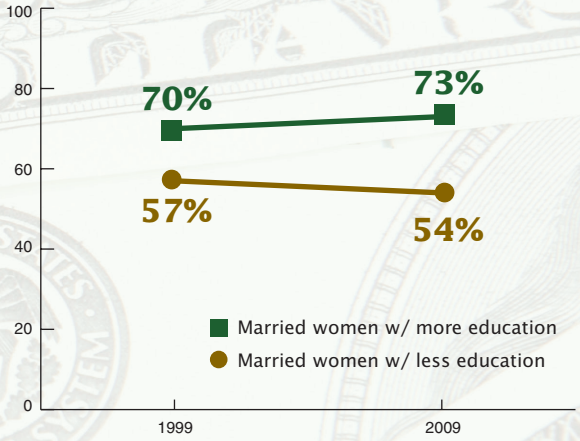
Median Monthly Earnings by Experience and Education: 2008



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 2008 Panel, Wave 1.

Labor Force Status

- From 1999–2009, married women with more education than their husbands had an increase in labor force participation from 70 percent to 73 percent.
- During the same years, married women with less education than their husbands decreased their labor force participation from 57 percent to 54 percent.



Employment Status

- The two main reasons given for not working are retirement (38 percent) and schooling (19 percent).
- From January through June 2011, roughly 11 percent of all households in SIPP had one or more persons on layoff or looking for work.