



Joblessness widespread among young recent graduates of color

Young workers of color who graduated from high school and college in 2010 are experiencing disproportionately high joblessness, a new Economic Policy Institute Briefing Paper finds. African-American, Asian-American and Hispanic recent graduates have been particularly hard-hit by the recession.

[Graduate Employment Gap: Students of Color Losing Ground](#), by EPI researcher Algernon Austin, examines unemployment data for 16-to-24-year-olds who graduated from high school or college in 2010, and who are not currently enrolled in school. It also looks at employment-to-population ratios, or employment rates, because jobless young people are often not counted in the unemployment rate.

The unemployment rate for 16-to-24-year-old African-Americans high school graduates increased 11 points since the beginning of the recession, to 31.3%. The rate for Hispanic high school graduates increased 15 points to 23.8%, and the rate for Asian-American high school graduates increased 15.3 percentage points to 21.6%. The unemployment rate for white high school graduates, at 21.4%, is the lowest and increased 11% since the beginning of the recession. In 2007, Hispanic and Asian-American high school graduates had lower unemployment rates than white high school graduates; the recession erased these unemployment-rate advantages. Employment rate data for high school graduates confirm these findings.

College graduates have fared better than high school graduates since the start of the recession. African-American college graduates have an unemployment rate of 15.4%, up from 8.4% at the beginning of the recession. Hispanic college graduates had an unemployment rate of 4.1% at the beginning of the recession and have one of 11.8% now. The unemployment rate for white college graduates has grown from 4.0% to 7.9% since the recession began, and from 6.5% to 6.9% for Asian-American college graduates.

Notably, unemployment rates have gone down for African-American, Hispanic and, particularly, Asian-American college graduates since the second half of 2009. The employment data, however, suggests much more widespread joblessness among Asian-American college graduates.

Finally, not only do African-American college graduates experience the highest unemployment rates of all of the racial groups, they also have the highest levels of student loan debt. In 2008, more than a quarter of African-American bachelor's degree recipients had debt in the 75th percentile or more, which translates to \$30,500 or more.

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