



Research Brief

The Commonwealth's Official Source for Population and Economic Statistics

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Labor Day and Pennsylvania Workers

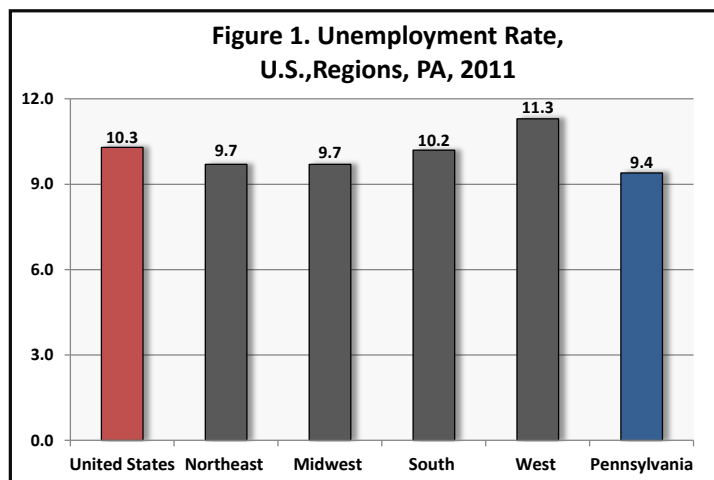
PENN STATE HARRISBURG – Each year since 1894 the first Monday in September known as Labor Day has been set aside to pay tribute to the social and economic achievement of American workers.

Pennsylvania has played a central role in America's labor movement. Throughout its history, working men and women of the Keystone State have led the nation toward improved working conditions. Labor strikes in the anthracite coal mines, steel mills, railroads and even a six day sit-down chocolate worker strike are just a handful of the events that mark the journey of workers fighting against low pay, unsafe or unsanitary working environments, long hours, and other undesirable working conditions.

Pennsylvania's Labor Force

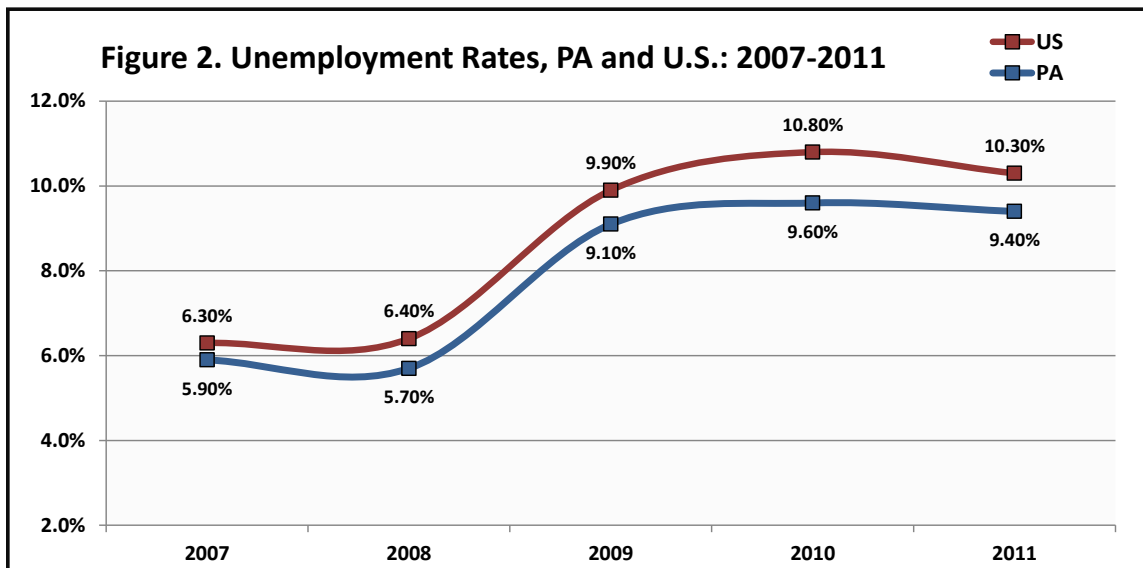
Pennsylvania boasts the nation's sixth largest labor force. In 2011, more than 6.4 million Pennsylvanians age 16 years and older were in the labor force, according to the American Community Survey (ACS). In terms of proportions, however, the state ranked 37th in the percentage of the population 16 years and older in the labor force. Overall, 62.6 percent of Pennsylvanians were in the labor force in 2011.

In 2011, 9.4 percent of Pennsylvania workers 16 years and over were unemployed. Nationally, more than one out of every ten workers (10.3 percent) was available for work, but unable to find it in 2011. At the regional-level, unemployment rates were highest in the West and South Regions of the country, 11.3 percent and 10.2 percent, respectively. The Northeast and Midwest Regions each had unemployment rates of 9.7 percent in 2011 (see Figure 1.)



The percent of unemployed Pennsylvania workers has increased significantly between 2007 and 2011. According to the 2007 ACS, only 5.9 percent of workers were unemployed in the commonwealth. That figure rose to 9.4 percent in 2011 due in large part to the recession. A similar pattern was

experienced for the nation as a whole: between 2007 and 2011, the unemployment rate jumped from 6.3 percent to 10.3 percent (see Figure 2.)



Full-Time, Year-Round Employees

Nearly seven out of ten (68.1 percent) Pennsylvanians in the workforce were employed full time, year-round in 2011. Full time, year round employees in Pennsylvania had median earnings of \$42,415 in 2011. The median annual earnings for women working year round, full time were \$37,150 during 2011, while men with a similar effort earned \$48,223. The earnings gap between male and female workers exists regardless of the class of worker (see Table 1.)

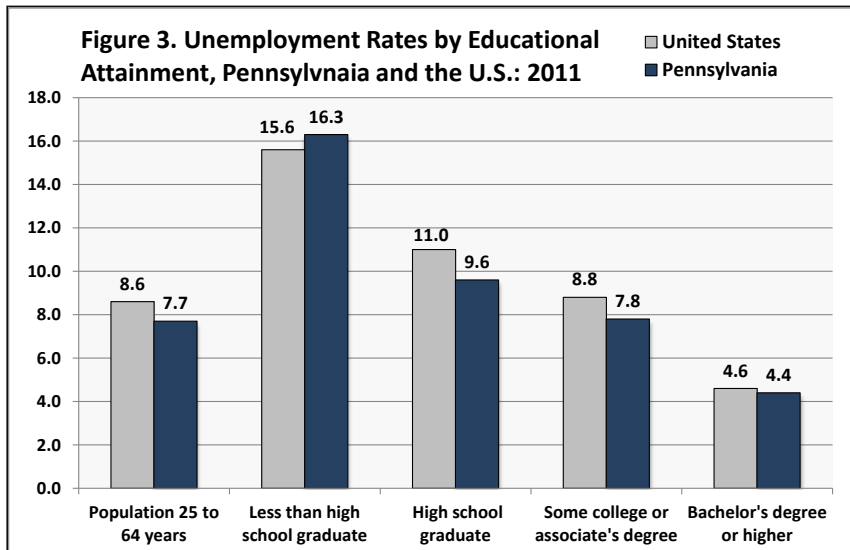
Table 1. Median Earnings by Sex and Class of Worker for the Full-Time, Year-Round Civilian Employed Population, Pennsylvania 2011

Class of Worker	Median Earnings (Dollars)			Women's Earnings as % of Men's
	Total	Male	Female	
Full-time, year-round civilian employed population	\$42,415	\$48,233	\$37,150	77.0%
Private for-profit wage and salary workers	\$41,742	\$47,445	\$35,039	73.9%
Employee of private company workers	\$41,484	\$47,031	\$34,920	74.2%
Self-employed in own incorporated business workers	\$54,154	\$58,832	\$41,122	69.9%
Private not-for-profit wage and salary workers	\$42,717	\$50,257	\$40,430	80.4%
Local government workers	\$46,954	\$50,918	\$43,537	85.5%
State government workers	\$48,083	\$51,577	\$43,993	85.3%
Federal government workers	\$56,497	\$58,450	\$53,497	91.5%
Self-employed in own not incorporated business	\$31,428	\$35,322	\$22,390	63.4%

The majority of those working full-time, year round (71.6 percent) were employed by private for-profit businesses. Workers in private for-profit companies had median earnings of \$41,742 in 2011. Federal government workers, which made up 2.7 percent of full-time, year-round workers, enjoyed the largest median earnings (\$56,497) in 2011. These workers were followed closely by the 3.3 percent of workers who were self-employed in their owned incorporated businesses. These workers earned \$54,154 on average annually.

Unemployment by Education Attainment

One of the best ways for workers to improve their employability is to invest in higher education. Overall, the unemployment rate for Pennsylvanians age 25 to 64 years was 7.7 percent in 2011. However, that number grew to 9.6 percent for individuals whose highest level of education was high school and soared to 16.3 percent for those lacking a high school diploma. Nationally, the unemployment rate for the population age 25 to 64 was 11.0 percent for high school graduates and 15.6 percent for those without a diploma. For Pennsylvanians who have earned a bachelor's degree or higher the unemployment rate dipped to 4.4 percent in 2011, similar to the national rate of 4.6 percent. Only three states, Nevada, Oregon and California – had unemployment rates among those with a bachelor's degree or higher at 6.0 percent or more.



Other Socio-economic Characteristics of the Labor Force

Younger Pennsylvania workers were more likely to be unemployed as opposed to their older counterparts. In 2011, the unemployment rate for worker age 16 to 19 years was 25.1 percent. This figure dropped considerably to 16.6 percent for those age 20 to 24 years and continued to fall for successive age cohorts - 25 to 44 years (8.8 percent), 45 to 54 years (6.9 percent) and 55 to 64 years (6.5 percent).

Blacks and Hispanics workers in Pennsylvania experienced unemployment at much higher rates than the total population in 2011. The unemployment rate for Blacks was 19.6 percent, while the rate for Hispanics was lower at 16.8 percent (compared to 9.4 percent overall).

Other Interesting Facts about Pennsylvania workers:

- Pennsylvania workers with a disability had an unemployment rate of 18.1 percent in 2011. Forty percent of those with a disability participated in the labor force compared to 62.6 for the total population.
- The mean travel time to work in Pennsylvania was 25.9 minutes in 2011, slightly higher than the 25.5 minute mean travel time nationally.
- The percent of workers employed in the manufacturing industry declined from 13.3 percent in 2007 to 12.5 percent in 2011. Nationally, 10.3 percent of the workforce was employed in manufacturing.
- In 2011, 88.4 percent of employed Pennsylvania workers age 18 to 64 years had health insurance coverage. Only 60.9 percent of unemployed workers 18 to 64 years had access to health insurance coverage.
- More than two-thirds (67.7 percent) of married-couple families with children under 6 years old in Pennsylvania had both husband and wife in the labor force in 2011.

2011 ACS 1-Year Estimates

The 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates are based on an annual, nationwide household sample of about 295,000 addresses per month, or nearly 3 percent of the population a year. Geographic areas for which data are available are based on total populations of 65,000 or more. The estimates aggregate the sample responses from Pennsylvania households collected from January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011. Geographic areas for which data are available are based on total populations of 65,000 or more. As is the case with all surveys, statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling and non-sampling error.

The 2012 ACS 1-Year Estimates are tentatively scheduled for release on September 19, 2013. These estimates will aggregate samples responses from January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012.

The Pennsylvania State Data Center is the commonwealth's official source for population and economic statistics. It is based at Penn State Harrisburg's Institute of State and Regional Affairs. The Pennsylvania State Data Center is part of the U.S. Census Bureau's National State Data Center Program.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census; 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

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Editors: For additional data; contact the Pennsylvania State Data Center's State Capital Office at 717.772.2710 or for faculty comment on this topic; contact Penn State Harrisburg's Public Information Office at 717.948.6029.

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