

## Youth Unemployment

In December 2010, the Washington unemployment rate was 9.3 percent, seasonally adjusted. The rate was only slightly changed from the December 2009 rate of 9.2, but well above the December 2008 rate of 6.9 percent (a 2.3 percent increase from December 2008 to December 2009). The state rate is slightly below the national rate (9.4 percent for December 2010).

In Washington State, approximately 30.5 percent of those youth (16 to 19 years old) seeking employment were unemployed in 2009 – this is the highest youth unemployment rate for our state in over 15 years, and well above the 2008 unemployment rate of 25.7%.

According to a recent (August 2010) U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics news release: “In July 2010, 4.4 million youth were unemployed, essentially the same as in July 2009. The youth unemployment rate edged up over the year to 19.1 percent in July 2010, the highest July rate on record for the series, which began in 1948. In recent years, higher youth unemployment reflects the weak

job market. Among major demographic groups, the unemployment rates for young men (20.5 percent), blacks (33.4 percent), and Asians (21.6 percent) continued to trend up from a year earlier; the jobless rates for young women (17.5 percent), whites (16.2 percent), and Hispanics (22.1 percent) were virtually unchanged.”

The month of July is typically the summertime peak for youth employment – from April through July of each year, the number of youth age 16 to 24 years old seeking employment grows sharply, as a large number of high school and college students search for or take summer jobs, and many graduates enter the labor market to begin or look for employment. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, “the labor force participation rate for all youth—the proportion of the population 16 to 24 years old working or looking for work—was 60.5 percent in July (2010), the lowest July rate on record.” This rate is down by 2.5 percentage points from the previous year (July 2009), and 17.0 percentage points below the 1989 peak, which was 77.5 percent.

**TABLE 25**  
**Juvenile Unemployment**  
**for 16-19 Year Olds**  
**2000 - 2009**

Year	Approximate Number Unemployed	Approximate Unemployment Rate
2009	44,000	30.5%
2008	39,000	25.7%
2007	28,000	17.6%
2006	31,000	18.0%
2005	29,000	18.9%
2004	32,000	21.9%
2003	37,000	21.7%
2002	39,000	20.7%
2001	37,000	19.8%
2000	36,000	18.6%

Source: Labor Market and Economic Analysis (LMEA), Department of Employment Security, updated October 2010 ; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics; 2000 to 2004 data from the "Employment Status of the Civilian Noninstitutional Population by Sex, Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin," annual averages, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.