

## Youth Unemployment

In February 2012, the Washington State seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 8.2 percent. This was substantially below the February 2011 rate of 9.5 percent, and even further below the February 2010 rate of 10.2 percent. The state rate is just below the national rate of 8.3 percent for February 2012.

In Washington State, approximately 34.1 percent of those youth (16 to 19 years old) seeking employment were unemployed in 2010 – this is the highest youth unemployment rate for our state in over 15 years, and well above the 2009 unemployment rate of 30.5%.

According to a recent (August 2011) U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics news release: “The number of unemployed youth in July 2011 was 4.1 million, down from 4.4 million a year ago. The youth unemployment rate declined by 1.0 percentage point over the year to 18.1 percent in July 2011, after hitting a record high for July in 2010. Among major demographic groups, unemployment rates were lower than a year earlier for young men

(18.3 percent) and Asians (15.3 percent), while jobless rates were little changed for young women (17.8 percent), whites (15.9 percent), blacks (31.0 percent), and Hispanics (20.1 percent).”

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 permanent 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 59.5 percent in July (2011), the lowest July rate on record.” This rate was down by 1.0 percentage point from the previous year (July 2010), and 18.0 percentage points below the peak for that month in 1989, which was 77.5 percent.

**TABLE 29**  
**Juvenile Unemployment**  
**for 16-19 Year Olds**  
**2000 - 2010**

Year	Approximate Number Unemployed	Approximate Unemployment Rate
2010	45,000	34.1%
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 December 2011 ;

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.