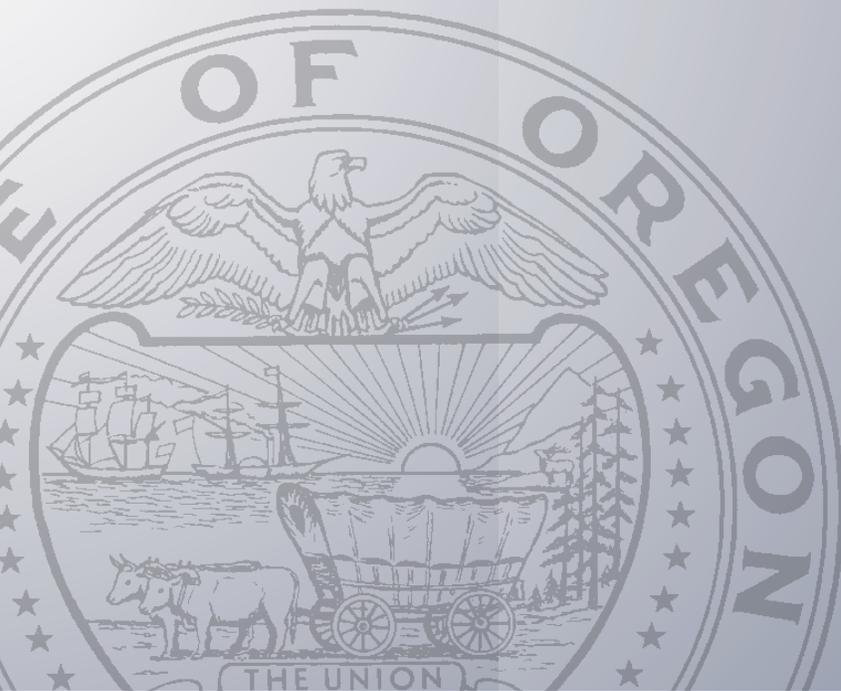




Endangered: Youth in the Labor Force



The mission of
The Oregon Employment Department is to
Support Business and Promote Employment

How we accomplish that mission:

- ◆ Support economic stability for Oregonians and communities during times of unemployment through the payment of unemployment benefits.
- ◆ Serve businesses by recruiting and referring the best qualified applicants to jobs, and provide resources to diverse job seekers in support of their employment needs.
- ◆ Develop and distribute quality workforce and economic information to promote informed decision making.

Contributions from Oregon's Local Workforce Investment Boards

This report is the latest in a long series of special topic reports from the Oregon Employment Department's Research Division.

It includes a new feature: the addition of policy and program insights from representatives of Oregon's seven Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs).

This collaboration was made possible by the efforts of the Oregon Workforce Partnership (OWP), a non-partisan, private/public, statewide association. OWP's mission is to build a more highly skilled workforce to support and expand the state's economy. OWP members – Oregon's seven Local Workforce Investment Boards – invest their resources to better align economic, education and training systems based on the needs of our businesses and communities.

The Employment Department appreciates its partnership with Jordana Barclay, OWP Executive Director, and the contributions from the LWIB Directors and staff listed below:

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Endangered: Youth in the Labor Force

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To download a free copy of this publication, visit QualityInfo.org.

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Executive Summary

- ◆ Oregon added tens of thousands of new jobs while recovering from the Great Recession, but recent job growth completely overlooked younger workers. There were actually fewer workers ages 14 to 21 in 2012 than in 2010.
- ◆ Unemployment rates for youth increased drastically during the recession and have not returned to previous levels. The unemployment rate of Oregon teens ages 16 to 19 years was 27.4 percent in 2013, while the rate was 12.5 percent among young adults ages 20 to 24 years.
- ◆ Young workers account for a disproportionate share of overall unemployment and falling labor force participation. Young people ages 16 to 24 make up 13 percent of the labor force, but accounted for 29 percent of Oregon's unemployed in 2013 and for more than one-quarter of the decline in the state's overall labor force participation rate since 2000.
- ◆ Youth use fewer job search methods than adults, and they are less likely to use personal networks and public employment agencies in their job search. Increasing the job search methods used by young workers could help them find more employment opportunities.
- ◆ The time young people spend unemployed has lengthened significantly. That is time not spent gaining on-the-job experience. Consequently, the share of unemployed young people with no previous work experience nearly doubled, making it harder for them to compete with experienced applicants.
- ◆ Postponing work experience harms young workers' ability to compete for jobs. Breaking this detrimental cycle could be a focus of public policy efforts. Helping teens find and be successful in their first work experiences could improve their long-term labor market outcomes.
- ◆ Counter to popular belief, the Great Recession did not increase the share of "idle" youth – those neither in the labor force nor enrolled in school. Roughly 10 percent of youth ages 16 to 24 are considered idle in Oregon and the U.S.
- ◆ The money earned by working teens, especially those from lower income families, helps improve their families' finances and stimulates the local economy.
- ◆ Youth today face increased requirements related to high-school graduation and college preparation, and those enrolled in school are less likely to be in the labor force than in the past. Many are forgoing early work experience to gain formal education, which could pay off long-term given the college wage premium.

Why Sound the Alarm?

FROM THE LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

Early work experiences allow youth to develop skills that help them acquire future employment and progress in their career. “It’s an opportunity for them to build a foundation of future employment, education, training, and financial security.” *Lyle Lang, Lane Workforce Partnership*

The job market struggles facing today’s youth are real and pose a danger to them and to the future of Oregon’s workforce. The unemployment rate among young Oregonians ages 16 to 24 was 17.1 percent in 2013, more than double the 6.5 percent rate for those ages 25 and over. Young people also make up an oversized share of the state’s total unemployment. Young people were just 13 percent of the labor force in 2013, but they accounted for 29 percent of unemployed Oregonians.

This report generally refers to youth as those ages 16 to 24 years, teens as those ages 16 to 19 years, and young adults as those ages 20 to 24 years. The age ranges may vary slightly depending on the data source.

Although stories about which groups suffered the most during the Great Recession and which groups are left behind during the recovery are common, too often the story of younger workers is laughed off with remarks about the youngest generation’s work ethic. This generation is different because it has not been given the chance to develop its work ethic. Youth in today’s labor force are an endangered species, and their survival depends on access to meaningful job opportunities.

If the cloud hanging over the job prospects of today’s youth has a silver lining, it’s that young people are enrolling in school at record rates. Many young people are forgoing early work experience to gain formal education because they anticipate higher wages later if they get a college degree now. But that’s not the entire story. Some may be enrolling in school solely because they are unable to find viable work. So how can we help young people who want to find a job? Skills taught in school may differ from the essential skills learned through on-the-job experience. How can we make sure young people have the skills employers are looking for?

This report highlights important trends and compiles relevant research in hopes of furthering discussions about Oregon’s endangered youth labor force. The report also describes the policy implications of the research, as seen through the eyes of the Executive Directors of Oregon’s Local Workforce Investment Boards.

The statistics that appear in this report are from published sources, based on national surveys of households and administrative data, or they are gleaned from published research reports. Some measures are only available at the national level, while others are available for narrow age groups at the county level. The geographic and age group details vary through the report depending on the statistics available, but they all reveal a troubling labor market for youth.

FROM THE LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

“If youth aren’t prepared for the workforce now, it will be that much harder for them later.”

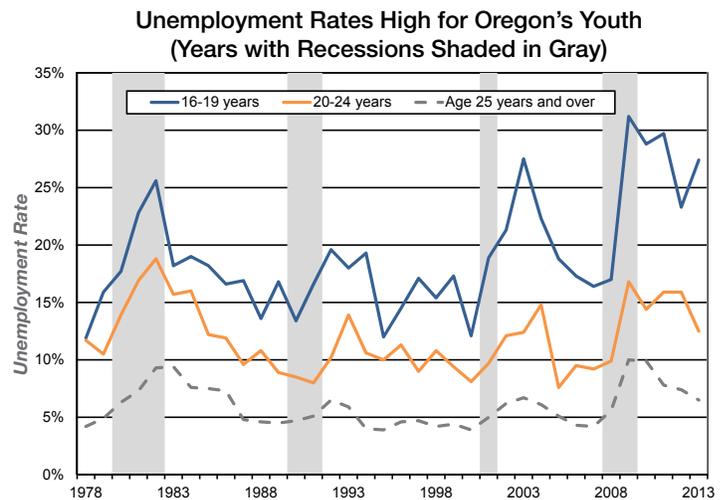
Amy Evans, Workforce Investment Council of Clackamas County

Many of the details covered in this report rely on national and state data through 2013 – the most recent comprehensive figures available on characteristics of the labor force and population. Trends in 2014 have not strayed far from the story shown by data through 2013. As of April 2014, the U.S. unemployment rate was 19.1 percent for teens and 10.6 percent for young adults, still far above the 5.2 percent rate of those 25 years and over.

Youth Face High Unemployment Rates

Unemployment among young workers has historically been higher than among the older population. Regulations restricting hours and limiting the nature of permissible work, and the need to schedule work around school and extracurricular activities can make it more difficult for a teen to find a job. The life changes young adults go through – such as graduating, moving, and searching for a suitable career path – make it more likely young workers will leave or change jobs more often than when they are older. The unemployment rate of Oregon teenagers (16 to 19 years old) averaged close to 19 percent in the 10 years leading up to the Great Recession. The rate averaged more than 10 percent for Oregon’s young adults (20 to 24 years old) during that period. In contrast, the overall unemployment rate averaged about 6 percent.

The recession sent youth unemployment rates to record highs and rates still remain at troubling levels. One out of four teenagers in Oregon who would like a job is not able to find one. The unemployment rate among 20 to 24 year olds is one and one-half times the overall unemployment rate.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

Graph 1

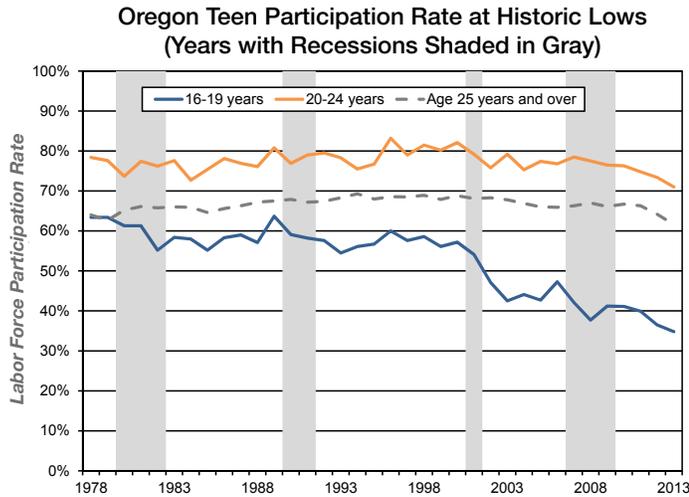
Unemployed: *People who do not have a job, have actively looked for work in the prior four weeks, and are currently available for work.*

Unemployment Rate: *The number of unemployed as a percent of the labor force.*

FROM THE LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

A shrinking supply of resources hampers efforts to serve youth. As Sue Thompson with the Oregon Workforce Alliance mentioned, “Recruiting youth is not the issue, it is having the funds to serve them.”

Not Working Now the Norm for Teens



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey Graph 2

After years of decline, the labor force participation rate among teenagers and young adults – the share employed or without jobs but actively seeking work – reached the lowest point on record in 2013. Youth were identified as a major contributor to Oregon’s falling labor force participation rate in a 2013 report from the Oregon Employment Department. In fact, the decline in youth labor force participation accounts for a quarter of the overall decline in labor force participation since 2000.

Even as youth are less likely to be in the labor force, and less likely to find a job if they do want one, employers tell us previous work

Labor Force Participation Rate:
Percent of the population that is employed or unemployed. Calculated by dividing the labor force by the civilian non-institutional population.

experience is very important to them when they’re filling job openings. Employers also say a lack of work experience among applicants makes it difficult to hire when they have openings. Gaining work experience makes workers more employable, and the lack of work experience is jeopardizing the ability of Oregon youth to compete when they do join the workforce.

Having a part-time or summer job used to be the normal situation for many teenagers. The labor force participation rate of prior generations of teenagers averaged around 59 percent from 1978 to 2000. The rate

Oregon Labor Force and Unemployment Rates for Youth, by Sex

	1983	1993	2003	2013
Labor Force Participation Rates				
Total Ages 16 to 19	58.4	54.5	42.5	34.8
Men	57.9	52.8	45.9	33.3
Women	59.1	56.3	38.9	36.4
Total Ages 20 to 24	77.6	78.3	79.2	71.0
Men	84.6	84.0	80.6	72.4
Women	70.7	71.6	77.5	69.4
Total All Ages	66.3	68.1	67.2	61.4
Unemployment Rates				
Total Ages 16 to 19	18.2	18.0	27.5	27.4
Men	19.5	20.5	30.5	29.5
Women	16.6	15.3	23.8	25.4
Total Ages 20 to 24	15.7	13.9	12.4	12.5
Men	16.7	17.7	15.8	15.2
Women	14.6	8.7	8.3	9.3
Total All Ages	10.8	7.3	8.2	7.9

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

Table 1

started falling dramatically in 2001 – both in Oregon and the nation – but never rebounded as it had after past recessions. In other words, the declining rate is partly structural and reflects a decade-long trend. It was already low when Oregon entered the Great Recession.

It's now far more common for teens to be neither working nor looking for a job. The share of Oregon teens working or looking for work reached a historic low of 35 percent in 2013, well below the 61 percent labor force participation rate of the total population.

The labor force participation rate of young adults also fell steadily during and after the recession. This has been attributed to increased college enrollment as there were fewer job opportunities during the recession and greater competition from older workers for the opportunities that were available.

While the labor force participation rate of teens fell for both sexes in tandem over the past few decades, the labor force participation of Oregon's young adult women has risen as that of young men has fallen. As of 2013, young men and young women had virtually the same labor force participation rate.

Oregon's Situation is Not Unique

The trend of less participation in the labor force among youths and young adults is taking place nationwide, not just in Oregon. So how does Oregon compare with the national picture? Oregon's labor force participation rate for young adults ranks 33rd among the states, while their unemployment rate ranks 12th highest. Maps showing the detailed rankings are available in Appendices I and II.

Unfortunately, not all labor market data are created equally. Due to the much larger sample sizes at the national level, we have a far more

	1983	1993	2003	2013
Labor Force Participation Rates				
Total Ages 16 to 19	53.5	51.5	44.5	34.5
Asian			29.6	21.5
Black or African American	36.4	37.0	32.4	28.0
Hispanic or Latino	45.3	43.9	37.7	31.0
White	56.9	55.1	47.7	36.9
Total Ages 20 to 24	77.2	77.0	75.4	70.7
Asian			61.4	55.6
Black or African American	68.4	67.8	68.2	65.3
Hispanic or Latino			75.6	71.7
White	79.0	79.5	77.7	73.1
Total, All Ages	64.0	66.3	66.2	63.2
Unemployment Rates				
Total Ages 16 to 19	22.4	19.0	17.5	22.9
Asian			17.5	19.7
Black or African American	48.5	38.8	33.0	38.8
Hispanic or Latino	28.4	26.1	20.0	27.5
White	19.3	16.2	15.2	20.3
Total Ages 20 to 24	14.5	10.5	10.0	12.8
Asian			9.0	10.0
Black or African American	31.6	21.9	19.8	22.8
Hispanic or Latino	16.7	13.1	10.2	12.8
White	12.1	8.8	8.4	10.9
Total, All Ages	9.6	6.9	6.0	7.4

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey *Table 2*

extensive and detailed picture of the youth labor market nationally than at the state or local level. While the labor market nationally and in Oregon might not be exactly the same, there are still valuable insights to be drawn from national numbers.

Nationally, there's been a similar downward trend in youth labor force participation since 2001, accompanied by high unemployment rates among youth. Under the surface, national data can tell us more about how race and ethnicity play into the labor market experiences of youth, as well as details regarding the job search methods and characteristics of unemployed youth.

FROM THE LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

The youth served by Oregon's seven local workforce investment boards (LWIBs) are educated in all methods of job search and receive work readiness training to help connect them to a career. These programs provide eligible youth with resumé, cover letter and interview trainings, networking and career exploration opportunities, and education about online resources, among other items. For instance, the Workforce Investment Council of Clackamas County (WICCO) has partnered with the local WorkSource office to offer a youth employment lab providing job search assistance for youth ages 14 to 21.

Experiences Differ by Race and Ethnicity

Labor force participation rates began to decline for young people across major racial and ethnic groups in 2001. By 2013, labor force participation was lowest among Asian and black or African American teens.

Participation rates between white and black teens have converged slightly over time. In 1983, the labor force participation rate of white teens was 21 percentage points above that of black teens (57% vs. 36%). By 2013, the percentage of white teens in the labor force was 9 percentage points higher (37% vs. 28%). This convergence is mainly due to a decline in labor participation among white youth, not an improvement in the labor market situation facing black youth.

Black teens in the labor force have the most difficulty finding jobs and had an unemployment rate of 38.8 percent in 2013. The unemployment rate among white teens was 20.3 percent. Asian teen unemployment rates tend to track fairly closely with the unemployment rate for whites. Hispanic teen job seekers faced an unemployment rate of 27.5 percent in 2013.

Labor force participation for young adults does not vary as widely across racial and ethnic groups. Labor force participation among Asian young adults declined to just 57 percent in 2013 – a drop of 6 percentage points since 2003, by far the largest drop among young adults and the lowest participation rate. Black young adults had the smallest decrease in participation, moving from 68 percent in 2003 to 66 percent in 2013.

Among 20 to 24 year olds, the unemployment rate for blacks was 22.8 percent in 2013 – double the 10.9 percent rate for whites. Asian young adults had the lowest unemployment rate at 10.0 percent.

Teens Use Fewer Job Search Methods

Job search methods of unemployed youth differ from search methods of all workers. For one thing, teens use fewer job search methods than the average job seeker. In 2013, teen job seekers used 1.7 search methods on average. Across all job seekers, the average was 2.0 job search methods. Increasing the number of job search methods used by young workers and encouraging them to use the resources available to them could help Oregon's youth find more employment opportunities.

Job search methods include sending out resumes or filling out applications, contacting employers directly, contacting friends or relatives, placing or answering advertisements, and using a public or private employment agency.

National data from 2013 show that sending out resumes and filling out applications is the most common job search method and is used by 57 percent of all job seekers. Teens rely on resumes and applications more than older job seekers, with 62 percent using them as a search method. Teens are far less likely to search for jobs using personal connections, such as their friends or relatives, to help them find a job.

Teenagers seldom visit public employment agencies. This job search method was cited by just 9 percent of teen job seekers, compared with 19 percent of all workers. Just 4 percent of teens use private employment agencies as one of their job search methods.

FROM THE LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

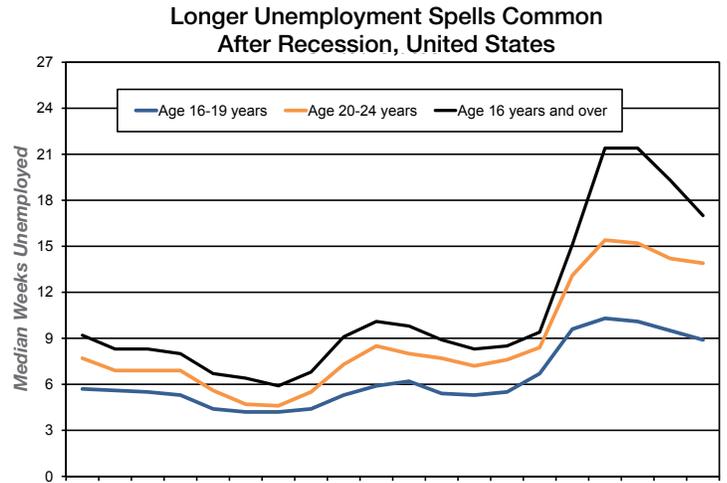
Youth engagement is a larger workforce development issue. If younger generations are not engaged in the workforce, there is a lack of knowledge being transferred from the aging workforce approaching retirement creating a potential future skills gap. Many businesses understand the need to help develop their future workforce, yet are probably unable to spend the time and resources it takes to work with a youth.

For some youth, the sole focus is on finding a "survival" job to pay rent and other bills. Molly Aleshire, a youth service provider in Clackamas County noted that, "We are seeing a lot more youth that are coming up saying 'I need a job today' versus 'I'm wanting to prepare for a job.'" However, the long-term goal is connecting youth to a career.

The general youth population is not likely aware of the WorkSource centers and the resources available, or don't start visiting the centers until they are adults. Youth may also not be aware of all the different methods of searching for a job, and might rely more on online tools, such as Craigslist, or word of mouth through family and friends.

Long-Term Unemployment Doubled Among Young Workers

Long-term unemployment has been a key workforce issue since the Great Recession. It isn't just a young worker problem – in fact, older workers are affected to a greater degree. However, far more youth are long-term unemployed now than in the past. Since 2009, the median unemployment spell of teenagers lasted 9 weeks or longer, up from about 6 weeks prior to the recession. The median job seeker age 20 to 24 spent nearly 14 weeks looking for a job in recent years.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey **Graph 3**

Ten years ago, just 17 percent of unemployed 20 to 24 year olds nationwide were considered long-term unemployed for 27 weeks or longer. That share shot up to one-third during the course of the Great Recession before improving slightly in 2013. It's a dramatic increase for an age group that's usually fairly evenly split between short and moderate term unemployment. Almost as many young adults took five to 26 weeks to find work in 2013 as in decades past, but far fewer experienced just a short stint of unemployment, lasting less than five weeks. That share was down to 25 percent in 2013, from about 40 percent in prior decades.

Share of Long-Term Unemployment Increased in All Age Groups United States

	1983	1993	2003	2013
Age 16 to 19 years				
Less than 5 Weeks	46.6	55.6	44.6	33.8
5-26 Weeks	44.0	38.4	45.2	48.6
27 Weeks & Over	9.4	6.0	10.2	17.5
Age 20 to 24 years				
Less than 5 Weeks	36.8	45.3	36.6	24.7
5-26 Weeks	43.8	43.1	46.8	44.7
27 Weeks & Over	19.4	11.6	16.6	30.6
Age 25 years and over				
Less than 5 Weeks	28.4	30.0	27.8	20.2
5-26 Weeks	42.1	44.6	46.3	37.2
27 Weeks & Over	29.5	25.4	25.9	42.6

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

Table 3

The share of long-term unemployed teens has also doubled over the past decade before improving slightly in 2013, but compared with other age groups, teens are less likely to be long-term unemployed; 18 percent of teens met that definition in 2013, compared with 31 percent of 20 to 24 year olds and a striking 43 percent of the unemployed ages 25 and over.

Higher youth unemployment rates have led to a greater demand for employment services. Heather Ficht with Worksystems, Inc. noted they do very limited outreach for their summer program and they had more than 1,700 kids apply for 500 positions. Other local workforce investment boards mentioned they do limited outreach as well, and often youth are referred to the programs through their school or a nonprofit, or youth hear about a program through a friend or family member who participated in the program.

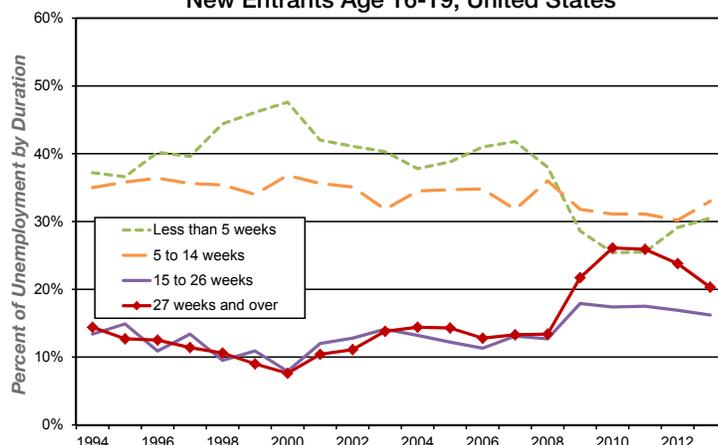
The Previous Work Experience Problem

It's taking teens longer to find their first job. The share of long-term unemployed teen entrants to the labor force shot up during the recession. By 2013, almost one-fifth of teen entrants to the labor force had been looking for their first job for at least 27 weeks.

The share of unemployed teens with no previous work experience is on the rise. As of 2010, there are more unemployed teens searching for their first jobs than unemployed teens with previous work experience. The share looking for their first jobs was about 34 percent as recently as 2003, rising to 54 percent in 2013. The share of unemployed young adults without previous work experience has also risen, from about 8 percent in 2003 to 16 percent in 2013.

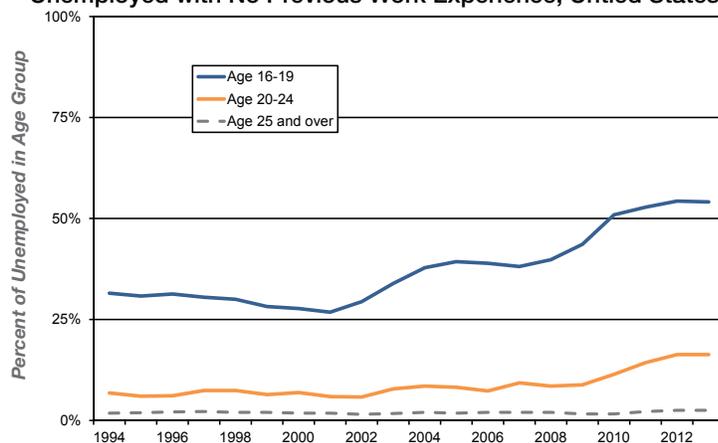
Higher unemployment rates among younger workers mean fewer youth have previous work experience. Employers have reported that finding workers with previous work experience is a priority and that finding workers with the experience they need is a major reason for difficulty filling open positions. If the majority of young people looking for work lack experience, it could be driving up the average number of weeks it takes these workers to find a good job match.

Teens Taking Longer to Find Their First Job
New Entrants Age 16-19, United States



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey **Graph 4**

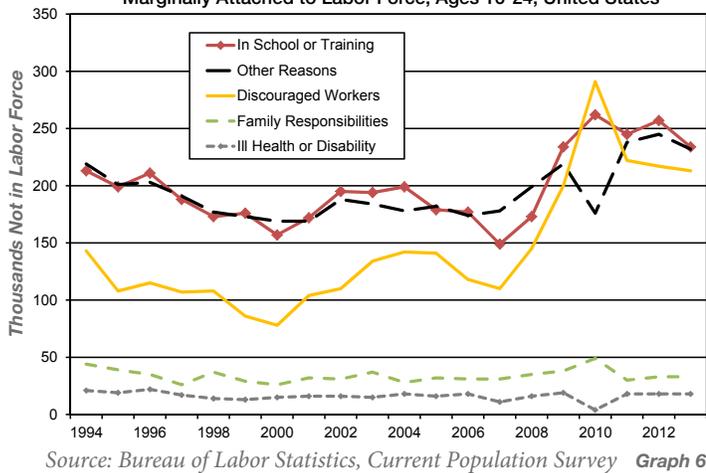
Half of Teen Job Seekers Lack Previous Work Experience
Unemployed with No Previous Work Experience, United States



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey **Graph 5**

Efforts to break what appears to be a vicious cycle for young workers could have a beneficial impact on labor market outcomes and lifetime earnings down the road. Youth need opportunities to gain initial on-the-job experience and be successful in the workplace so they can illustrate those essential skills to later employers.

School Enrollment and Discouragement Common Reasons to Quit Looking for Work
Marginally Attached to Labor Force, Ages 16-24, United States



Youth Leave Labor Force Due to School Enrollment and Discouragement

The increase in unemployment among younger people during the recession was accompanied by an increase in the number of young people who recently left the labor force despite wanting a job. These exiting workers are considered ‘marginally attached’ – they are without jobs but want to work and have looked for work within the past 12 months. They are not counted as unemployed or part of the labor force because they are not **currently** looking for work.

Nationally, younger workers leave the labor force because they are in school or training; they have become discouraged about their job prospects; or for other reasons (such as lack of transportation). These were the most reported reasons prior to recession and their influence grew during the recession.

FROM THE LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

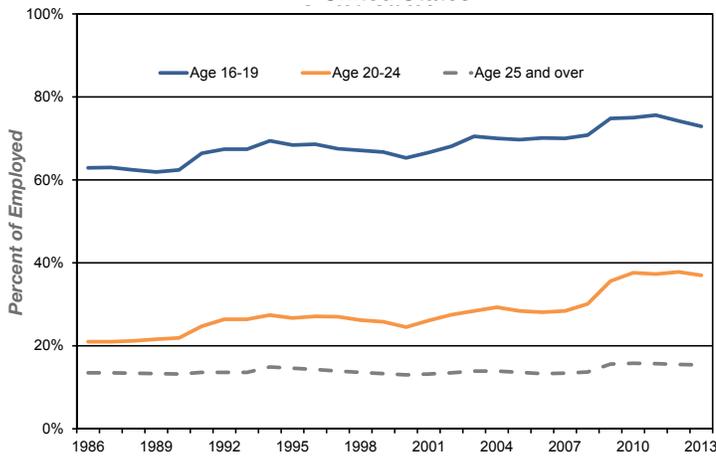
“Employers are putting youth applications at the bottom of the application pile, unless the youth has a recommendation from someone the employer knows.” Some suggest employers need an incentive to prioritize a youth without experience. *Sue Thompson, Oregon Workforce Alliance*

Local workforce investment boards throughout the state help low-income youth acquire work experience through a variety of summer and year-round programs. These programs, which incorporate training and work experience in areas such as healthcare, construction, clerical and customer service. Youth gain demonstrable experience and skills, and in some cases, credit through community colleges. Summer work experiences are opportunities for youth to continue their development, and help to prevent backsliding during idle summer months.

One such program is SummerWorks, which is a public-private partnership coordinated by Worksystems, Inc. The program provides work experiences for low-income youth ages 16 to 21 in Multnomah and Washington counties. As part of the program, Worksystems, Inc. funds the workforce readiness training, screens and matches youth to employers, provides job coaching, and serves as the employer-of-record. According to results from the program since 2009, 93 percent of the youth either returned to high school, post-secondary training, or became employed. “Our summer program gives opportunity to young people who wouldn’t otherwise have the means and connections,” *Heather Ficht, Worksystems Inc.*

The Community Services Consortium (CSC), which provides services in Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties, operates a youth garden program on a year-round basis. Youth grow, harvest, and sell organic produce at local farmers’ markets and help provide fresh produce to local food banks. Youth learn about horticulture and the production of plants, and gain business and entrepreneurship skills. The Community Services Consortium has also recently partnered with a local organization to expand production of the youth garden through the availability of more land.

Young Workers Far More Likely to Work Part Time United States

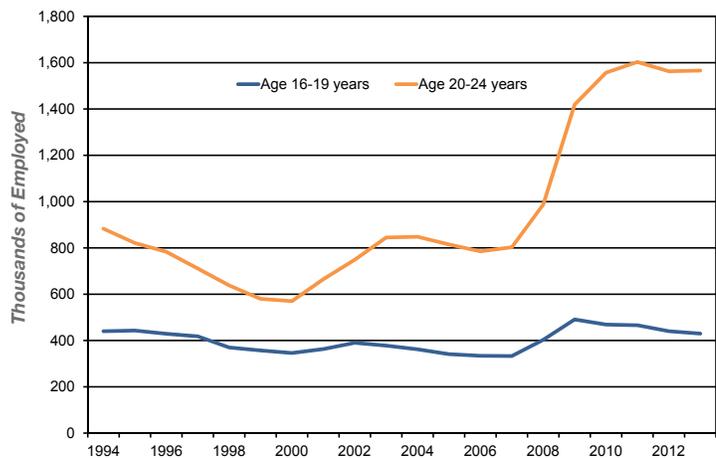


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey **Graph 7**

Young Workers Frequently Work Part Time

Teens and young adults work part time (fewer than 35 hours per week) more often than workers ages 25 and over – and the share of part-time workers in these younger age groups keeps increasing. In contrast, the share of 25 and over workers that usually worked part time barely budged during the Great Recession. It notched up 2 percentage points, while the rate for teens jumped 5 percentage points and the share of young adults working part time shot up 9 percentage points between 2007 and 2012. In 2013, 73 percent of teen workers usually worked part time. About four out of 10 young adult workers worked part time that year (33%), and 15 percent of workers ages 25 and over worked part time.

Many Young Adults Would Rather be Working Full Time, Employed Part Time for Economic Reasons, United States



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey **Graph 8**

Many young adults with part-time jobs would rather work full time, but for economic reasons have had their hours cut back or are unable to find a full-time job. The number of these workers, considered part time for economic reasons, doubled between 2007 and 2011. Even as the recovery got underway, more young adults were trapped in part-time jobs when they'd rather work full time.

FROM THE LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

“For all youth, it’s important for them to have the work experience so that they can be better prepared for the workplace.” *Clay Martin, Linn, Benton, Lincoln Workforce Investment Board*

Youth can make themselves more competitive through internships or volunteer opportunities. These experiences allow youth to build and demonstrate their skills, and network with industry professionals.

Youth who do not have much work experience can boost their competitiveness by showing enthusiasm and a positive persistence in their job search. They can focus on finishing school and possibly continuing their education or vocational training. Furthermore, they can highlight their transferable skills, such as project-based work at school demonstrating their ability to complete a project and work in a team. Lastly, youth can educate themselves on employers’ expectations, such as showing up on time and acting professionally in the workplace. Some employers might be willing to overlook specific work experience if the youth can demonstrate these behaviors and soft skills.

There are Fewer Job Opportunities for Teens

FROM THE LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

There is a lack of non-paid opportunities (e.g. internships and mentorships) and resources to help youth acquire work readiness skills. Kristina Payne with the Lane Workforce Partnership mentioned, “For youth, there aren’t as many mentorship opportunities and opportunities to learn on the job.”

Research at the national level by Christopher Smith of the Federal Reserve Board released in late 2011 attempts to explain the decline in youth employment. According to Smith, the evidence shows that, “**Both** demand for teen labor and the supply of teen labor play an important role in explaining why fewer teens work than ever before.”

According to Smith’s research, the supply of adults available to work jobs traditionally

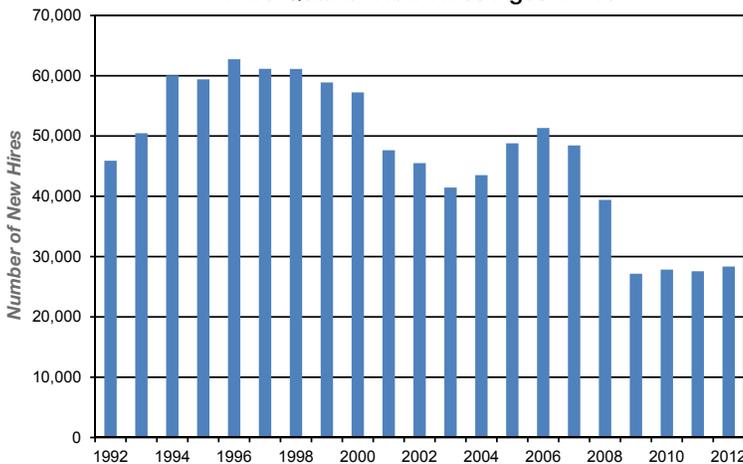
held by teens increased in recent years. These adult workers are coming from many places – including older workers staying in the labor force; immigrant workers; and fewer middle-skill opportunities for adults, leaving many adults to work the low-skilled jobs they used to transition out of more rapidly. Smith refers to this as a “crowd out” of teens by adults. He concludes that the availability of adult workers explains at least half and up to two-thirds of the decline in teen employment that can’t be explained by the recession.

In Oregon, summer teen employment fell during the Great Recession. From 2009 through 2012, new hires in the third quarter (summer) ages 14 to 18 numbered fewer than 30,000 each summer, whereas third quarter teen hires were closer to 50,000 each summer in 2005 through 2007. Even that level of hiring was lower than in the 1990s, so once again the recession accelerated a trend that was already taking place in the teen labor market.

Not only did the number of teen workers hired during the recession fall, the share of teenage new hires also fell, supporting the theory that more jobs were going to adult workers. Fourteen percent of all new hires in Oregon during the summer of 2007 were teens, which is about the historical average. By 2010, just 10 percent of summer new hires were teens, the lowest on record.

In contrast, while hiring of young workers ages 19 to 24 also dropped sharply during the recession, young adults have seen a hiring recovery the past couple of summers.

Oregon Teen Hiring Halved in Recession
Third Quarter New Hires Ages 14-18



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics Graph 9

Youth Comprise Smaller Share of Oregon Workforce

	1992	2002	2012
Workers Ages 14-24	15.4%	14.8%	12.2%
14-18	3.4%	3.2%	1.7%
19-21	5.3%	5.4%	4.5%
22-24	6.7%	6.2%	6.0%
Workers Ages 25+	84.6%	85.2%	87.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics Table 4

FROM THE LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

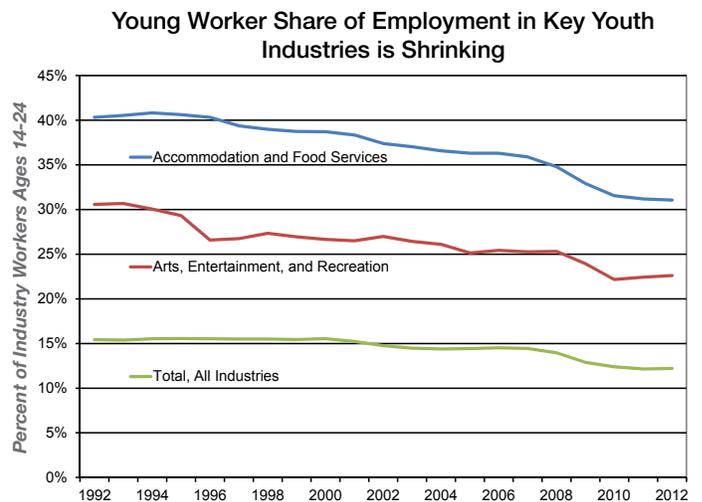
“With the Great Recession and vast reduction in jobs, youth have been one of those key demographic populations that have been squeezed out of the labor market.” *Jim Fong, Rogue Workforce Partnership*

Teenagers’ share of Oregon’s workforce was stable during the 1990s, but has fallen dramatically in the last decade. The share of teen workers fell nearly in half from 3.2 percent in 2002 to 1.7 percent in 2012, representing almost 21,000 fewer working teens. The falling share of workers ages 19 to 21 represents 11,200 fewer jobs for that age group, and the falling share of workers 22 to 24 represents 700 fewer jobs. During this period, the jobs held by workers ages 25 and over increased to 87,800.

Key Industries of Youth Employment

Youth are more likely to work in some industries than others. Accommodation and food services is an example of an industry that traditionally employed a lot of young workers. Yet the share of workers under the age of 25 fell even in industries that traditionally relied heavily on a younger workforce.

Back in the 1990s, about 40 percent of the workers in accommodation and food services were between the ages of 14 and 24. In recent years the share of young workers in accommodation and food services is down to less than one-third. A similar story has taken place in arts, entertainment and recreation, another industry that often employs younger workers. This decline in young workers has been taking place since the 1990s, but it appears the Great Recession accelerated the trend for these key youth industries, and youth have yet to recapture the share of jobs they previously filled.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics Graph 10

FROM THE LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

Some of the traditionally entry-level jobs (e.g. fast food positions, paper routes) are now being filled by adults who have years of work experience. For instance, Heather Ficht at Worksystems, Inc. said, “I don’t know the last time I went to a grocery store and a kid bagged my groceries.”

Regulations for Hiring Young People Haven't Changed in Decades

There is a perception that stricter regulations in recent years made it more difficult for employers to hire minors. While there are special rules restricting the employment of minors while school is in session and prohibiting them from working in certain hazardous occupations, the current state and federal regulations have been in place for decades and predate the start of the downward trend in teen labor force participation. Some employers may prefer to hire adult workers with fewer restrictions, but it's the recent availability of more unemployed adult workers that makes hiring adults possible, not increased regulations making it more difficult to hire teens.

Requirements for Hiring Minors

Employers who hire workers under the age of 18 must comply with all child labor laws, verify the age of each minor hired, maintain a list of all minors hired, and post a current Employment Certificate from the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI). The certificates are free and need to be updated annually. In addition, agricultural employers need written consent from the minor's parent in order to hire workers under the age of 14 to comply with the federal Fair Labor Standards Act.

Plenty of Hours Allowed for Work

Although today's teens spend more time in school and are less likely to work, the regulations concerning working hours have been in place for decades and allow for plenty of hours on the job. It's unlikely these regulations contribute to fewer employment opportunities for minors today than previous generations with higher participation rates.

Teenagers 16 and 17 can work anytime of the year:

- ◆ Any hours – no daily restrictions
- ◆ 44 hours per week maximum

Teenagers 14 and 15 can work:

- ◆ When school is not in session:
 - Eight hours per day
 - 40 hours per week maximum
 - From June 1 through Labor Day: 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

- ◆ When school is in session:
 - Three hours per day on school days
 - Eight hours per day on non-school days
 - 18 hours per week maximum
 - Only between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.
 - Working is not allowed during school hours

Kids Can Still Pick Berries in Oregon

It is easy to find native Oregon baby boomers who got their first job working on a farm. Some will lament that regulations today prevent this opportunity for today's kids. But these regulations have not changed since the 1970s, so it's unlikely these regulations are contributing to fewer employment opportunities than previous generations. In fact, there is still a lot of farm work that could be done by minors if they wanted to and if employers chose to hire them.

Oregon kids ages nine through 11 with written consent from their parents may pick berries and beans outside of school hours on small farms if the produce is sold within the state. Kids ages 10 and 11 may hand harvest certain crops between June 1 and October 15 if their employer has a special waiver from the U.S. Secretary of State. Minors ages 12 and 13 can work any nonhazardous farm job with written permission from their parents, provided the work is done outside of school hours. The same applies for 14 and 15 year olds, but they do not need written permission from their parents. Teens 16 years and over can work any nonhazardous job and are not limited to outside school hours.

The hour limitations for minors under 16 working in agriculture are more flexible than for non-agricultural work, allowing up to 60 hours per week during harvest season providing that school is not in session.

Minors of any age may work in any job on a farm owned or operated by their parents.

Examples of Where 14 to 17 Year Olds Can Work

Not all young people who want to work live near or have access to farm work, but regulations allow for plenty of other opportunities for teens to work. Fewer teens are working non-agricultural jobs too, but not because of increased regulation. BOLI provides some examples of the types of business where younger teens can work. They include office work of all kinds, wholesale and retail stores and services, restaurants and hotels, car washes, service stations, theater and amusement parks, parks and yard maintenance, nursing homes and hospitals, daycare centers, kennels and grooming, and entertainment productions.

Prohibited Hazardous Occupations

Certain jobs have been declared by the U.S. Secretary of State to be too hazardous for youth under the age of 18. Examples of hazardous jobs include the use of some machinery, explosives, radioactive substances, mining, and logging operations. A complete list of prohibited occupations is available from BOLI.

Youth Substitute Education for Labor Market Experience

Despite the availability of video games on every smart phone, this doesn't appear to be what teenagers are doing with all the hours that past generations spent working. In fact, Christopher Smith's research shows that "the fraction idle has *not* been rising despite a decline in employment rates; instead, there is evidently substitution (on an annual average basis) towards schooling." The fraction of teens only in school increased from about 50 percent in 1985 to more than 70 percent in 2010.

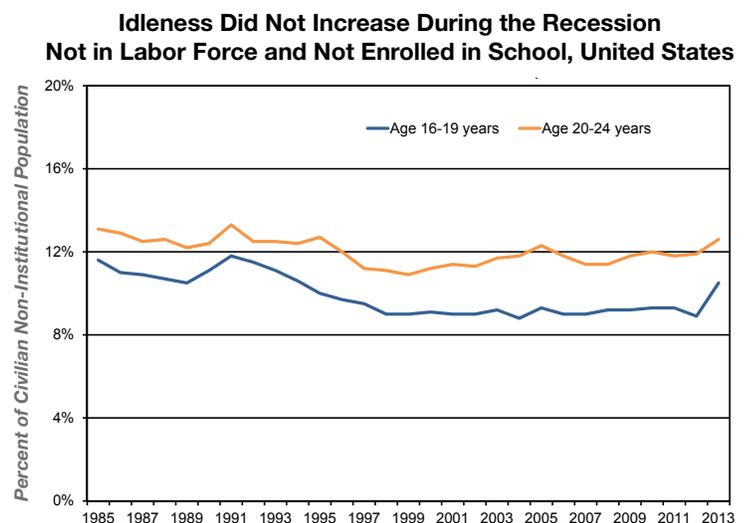
Smith finds ample evidence that teens spend more time on academic activities than in the past, especially during the summer months. This may be due to stricter graduation requirements and increased competition for college acceptance. Another potential explanation is increasing household income per child. With higher median household incomes and fewer children per household, it may be that teens are getting enough "transfers" from parents to avoid the labor market. Just how much transfers affect youth employment is unknown.

The record-low employment among teens could be a blessing in disguise *if* they focus more time on academics which will lead to better employment prospects down the road.

Today's Youth Are Not More Likely to Be Idle

The evidence is in. Youth are no more likely to be "idle" today than over the past few decades. Youth who were neither in the labor force nor in school is the recipe for "idleness." The share in such a situation has actually come down just a bit since the 1980s.

The use of the word "idle" here is not intended to be judgmental. Some young people face life situations more complex than simply choosing between work, education, or "nothing". Stay at home parents and others with family care responsibilities, and young people with disabilities come to mind. They may not be in the labor force or enrolled in school, but they are not necessarily purposely avoiding either.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey **Graph 11**

Share of Oregon Youth Not Enrolled in School or in the Labor Force

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Oregon teenagers ages 16-19	180,746	196,959	198,057	198,520	205,933	201,726	201,199	198,801
Share "Idle"	5%	5%	5%	6%	5%	5%	5%	6%
Oregon young adults ages 20-24	246,923	238,695	245,645	244,069	263,883	255,823	263,291	263,393
Share "Idle"	9%	10%	10%	11%	10%	10%	11%	10%

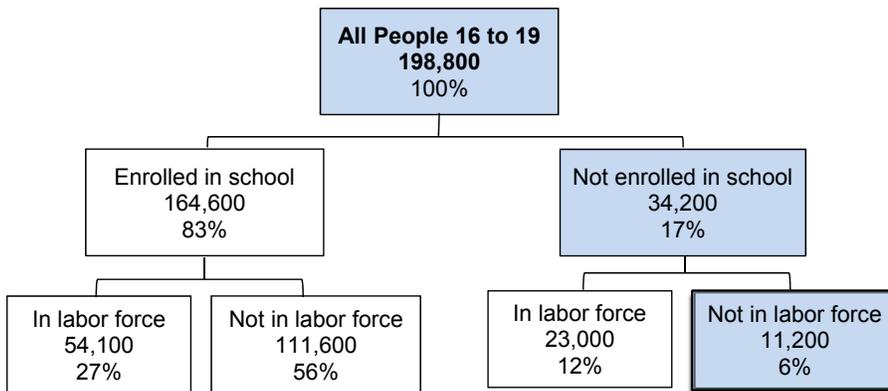
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, data for young adults accessed through IPUMS

Table 5

Similar data are available for Oregon from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, and it looks much the same. The recession didn’t have much of an impact on the share of youth that are not in the labor force or enrolled in school.

Of Oregon’s 198,800 teens ages 16 to 19, more than four out of five were enrolled in school in 2012. Most of those enrolled in school were not in the labor force. Of the nearly 34,200 teens not enrolled in school in 2012, most were in the labor force – leaving 11,200 (6%) teens that were neither enrolled in school, nor in the labor force.

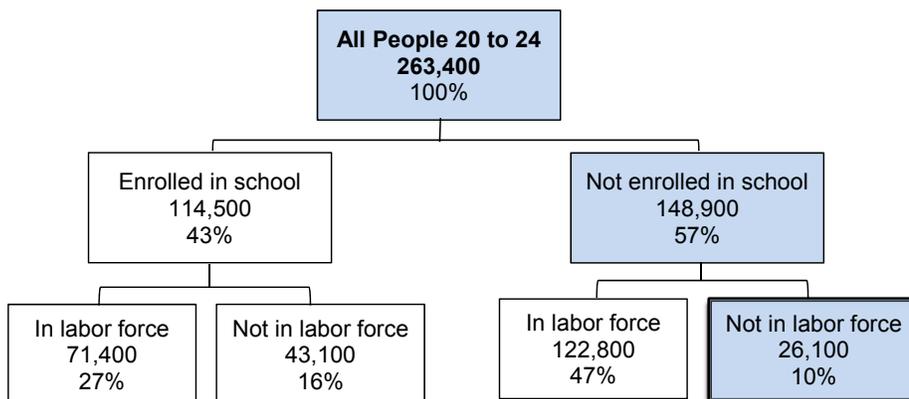
Identifying the Idle Youth: Oregon



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey, accessed through IPUMS Figure 1

Among Oregon young adults, a much smaller share was enrolled in school, at 43 percent in 2012. More of the young adults enrolled in school were also in the labor force. Of those not enrolled in school, 26,100 were also not in the labor force – equating to 10 percent of Oregon’s young adults who could be considered idle by this definition.

Identifying the Idle Youth: Oregon



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey

Figure 2

The share of youth nationally who are idle – not in the labor force or enrolled in school – changed very little in the past three decades. The available figures for Oregon show the Great Recession had little impact on the long-standing share of idle youth. Since idleness has not increased, it does not explain the decreasing share of youth working or in the labor force.

Money Earned by Teens Benefits Families and the Local Economy

Young people with jobs earn money that helps both their families and the local economy. Labor force conditions are particularly tough for low-income teens. They have higher unemployment rates than teens from higher income families, according to data from the 2011 American Community Survey. Increasing employment among low-income youth directly boosts the income earned by low-income families.

A report covering the expanded summer youth employment program overseen by The Oregon Consortium and the Oregon Workforce Alliance (TOC/OWA) and funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provides a rare look at how employment directly affects youth, their families, and the local economy. The program reached 1,233 low income youth in Oregon during the summer of 2009. It provided the first paycheck for about half of the participating youth, and 125 participants found permanent positions through the program. High school or college credits were also granted through the program.

The report, prepared by Mallory Rahe at Oregon State University under contract for TOC/OWA, included a survey of the program

participants. Responding participants "... found that learning a new occupational skill and information to be the most valuable part of the program, followed by following a work schedule or showing up on time and working as a part of a team or group." Most participants who were surveyed felt the experience better prepared them for working full-time jobs.

Participants were also asked how they allocated their earnings from the jobs they found through the expanded summer youth employment program. The youth dedicated the largest share (26%) of their paychecks to family members or guardians. An additional 20 percent of the youth said they saved their earnings for cars or trucks, housing, college, or future bills. The remaining spending categories were groceries, gas, clothing, electronics, eating out, and sports. The survey also found that most low-income youth participating in the ARRA program spent their earnings locally or within Oregon.

The economic impact analysis of the program found the benefits went beyond the youth workers and their families; it also helped strengthen local economies. According to the report "Across the 24 county region, the program generated an additional 47 cents in economic impact for every dollar the program spent."

Oregon High School Graduation Requirements Increased for 9th Graders in 2008

Required credits* to graduate	Pre-2008	2008 9th graders and beyond
Total	22 (back to 1970s)	24
English/Language Arts	3	4
Math	2	3 (Algebra I and above)
Social Science	3	3
Science	2	3
Physical Education	1	1
Health	1	1
Arts/Career/Tech Ed./Second Language	1	3
Electives	9	6

* One credit equals 130 hours seat time; excludes homework

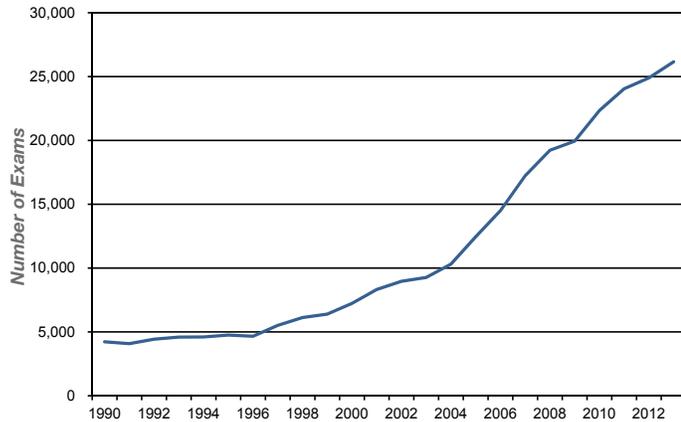
Source: Oregon Department of Education

Table 6

High School Requirements Absorb Teens' Additional Hours

In 2007, the state of Oregon made changes to the credit requirements for high school graduation. Not only did the number of required credits go up to 24 from 22, the composition of credits was also changed. The new credit structure includes more stringent math requirements of three credits (starting with Algebra I as the base), as well as additional Science and English/Language Arts. All of these changes combine to mean students are spending more time to graduate from high school – both in school “seat time,” which went up by 260 hours with the 2007 credit requirement changes, and increased homework obligations.

Oregon's High School Students Take More Advanced Placement Exams



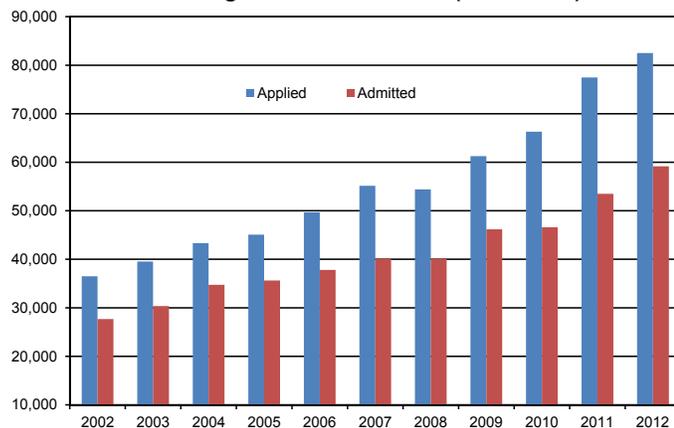
Source: The College Board, 2013

Graph 12

While increased time spent on high school credit requirements is almost certainly part of the recent reduction in youth labor force participation, the decline in youth participation was already taking place prior to these changes – beginning around the turn of the century.

Along with changes to graduation requirements, there's also been a trend toward more advanced placement classes and testing. It's a wise move – college bound students and their families can save on tuition costs by completing some college classes before they show up on their chosen college campus. In 2013, Oregon high school students took a record 26,000 advanced placement exams – a staggering increase compared with the fewer than 10,000 such exams a decade earlier.

Applications & Admissions at Oregon's Four-Year Colleges and Universities (2002-2012)



Source: U.S. Dept. of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Graph 13

Acceptance rates at four-year colleges and universities declined over the past decade. As recently as 2005, 79 percent of students applying to Oregon four-year schools were admitted. By 2011 that share was 69 percent, and in 2012 it rebounded slightly to 72 percent. Increased competition for college slots is one reason students and their families are more focused on academics now than in the past.

FROM THE LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

For low-income youth, early work experiences can help them become self-sufficient, helping break the cycle of poverty. “If they [youth] don’t have a chance to be engaged in the workforce it can put them on a path of reliance that is hard to break.” *Katie Stubblefield, Job Growers Incorporated*

Post-Secondary Enrollment at Record Levels

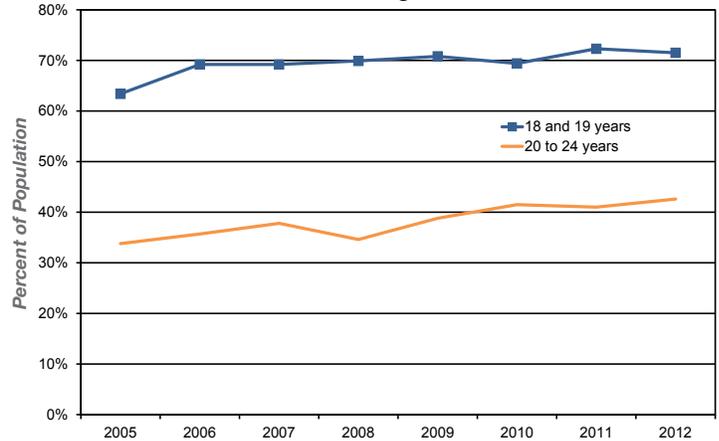
More of Oregon's youth are students today than in the past. Among 18 and 19 year olds, the share enrolled in school increased from about 63 percent in 2005 to 72 percent in 2011 and 2012. Young adults were also more likely to be enrolled in school; from 34 percent in 2005 to 43 percent in 2012.

Enrollment at Oregon's community colleges and trade schools shows clear links with the state of the economy. At times of economic weakness or recession, Oregonians go to school in greater numbers. That was certainly true during the Great Recession, when enrollment at Oregon's community colleges reached record levels.

Enrollment is also at record levels at four-year institutions. The Oregon county with the lowest unemployment rate through most of the economic recovery has been Benton County – and surging enrollment at Oregon State University is a big reason for that. Although the economy has improved since 2010, the most recent enrollment figures continue to show gains.

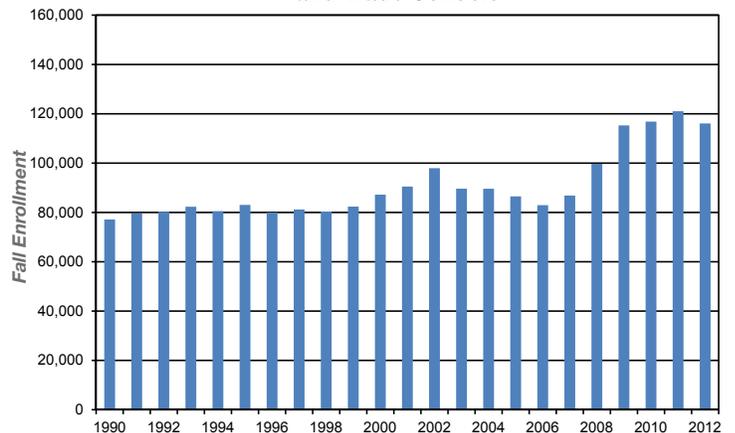
At the state's four-year public universities, enrollment of 18 to 24 year olds reached a record 63,200 in the fall of 2012 – an increase of 21 percent over five years before.

Percent of Young Adults Enrolled in School is Rising Oregon



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey **Graph 14**

Enrollment Rising at Oregon's Community Colleges and Trade Schools



Source: U.S. Dept. of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Graph 15

FROM THE LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

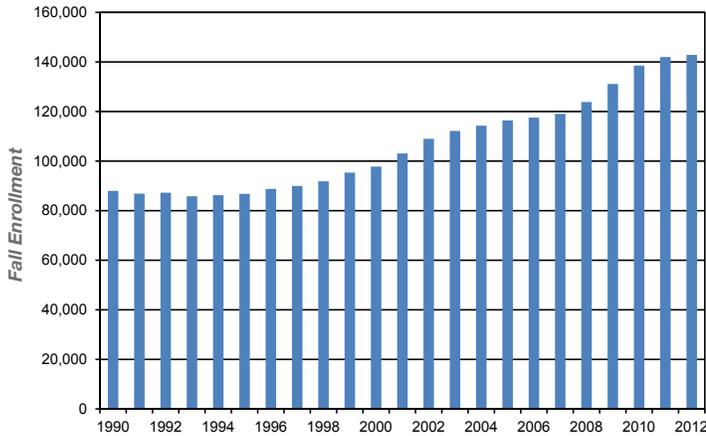
National Career Readiness Certificate

The National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), which is a nationally recognized skills exam testing reading, applied math, and locating information, can allow youth to document their job-related skills. Jim Fong with Rogue Workforce Partnership stated that the NCRC can help job seekers stand out because it shows they have done something to enhance their skill set, and it shows they are motivated and willing to take the steps to find employment. Some employers also prefer candidates with the NCRC. The National Career Readiness Certificate is used by thousands of employers, employees and job applicants nationwide. *For more information, visit www.oregonworkready.com.*

More students are enrolling in higher education, and more are completing training that results in some sort of credential. Nearly double the number of certificates were awarded in 2012 as in 2002. Some certificates take less than one year to complete, others take between one and

two years, and a few take up to four years. The shortest-term training has seen the fastest growth, more than tripling over the 10-year period. But increases have not been limited to certificates. Associates degree awards also nearly doubled between 2002 and 2012. Forty-eight percent more bachelor's degrees were awarded in 2012 than in 2002, as well as 43 percent more graduate degrees.

Enrollment Rising at Oregon's Four-Year Public and Private Institutions

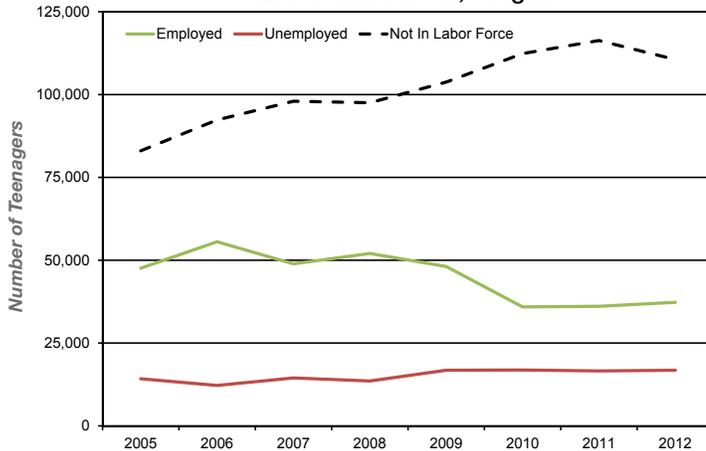


Source: U.S. Dept. of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).
Graph 16

Enrollment in School Influences Labor Market Behavior

Enrollment in school makes a big difference in teens' labor market participation – enrolled teens are less likely to participate in the labor force. With more than two-thirds of teens now enrolled in school, the differences in labor market choices between those enrolled and those not enrolled in school is having an impact on the overall trend in teen labor force participation.

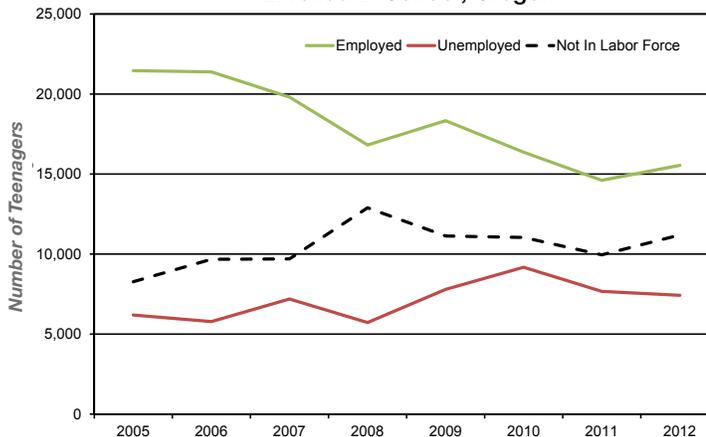
Employment Status of 16-19 Year Olds Enrolled in School, Oregon



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey
Graph 17

For teenagers enrolled in school, the number unemployed has stayed fairly constant, below the 20,000 mark throughout the recession and recovery. However, the number not in the labor force has grown to 110,000, while the number of employed teens enrolled in school shrank during the recession and has not recovered.

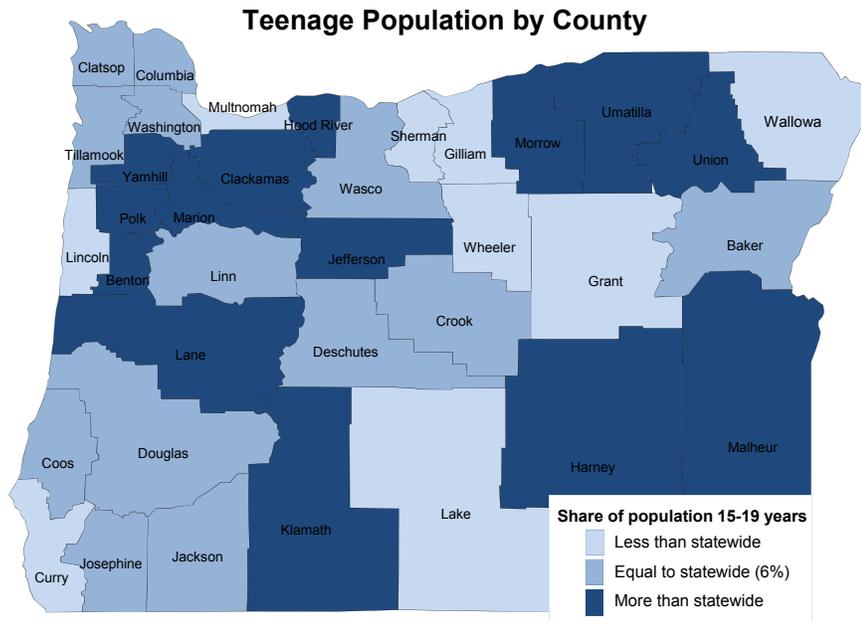
Employment Status of 16-19 Year Olds Not Enrolled in School, Oregon



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey
Graph 18

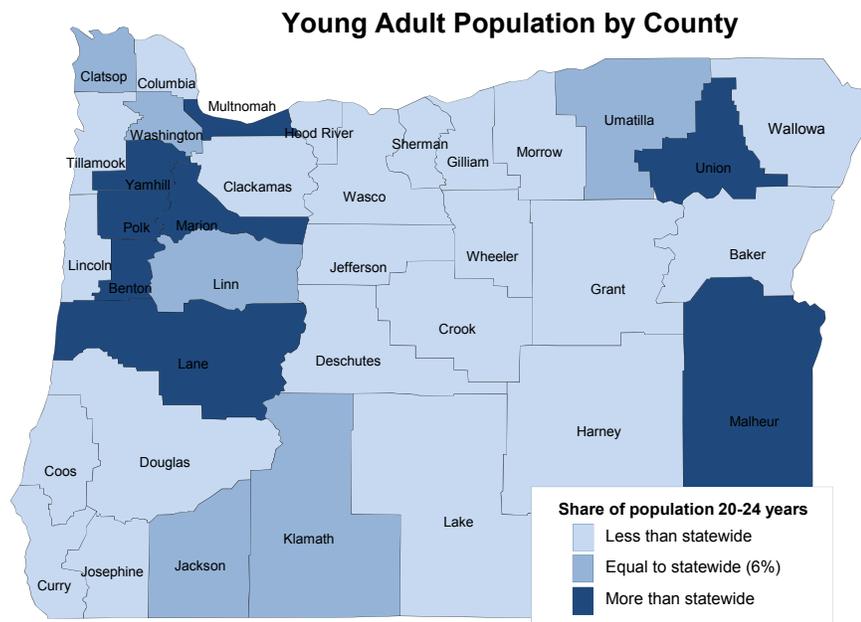
For teenagers not in school, the job situation went from bad to worse during and after the recession. The number of not enrolled Oregon teenagers remained relatively stable, but the share of those with jobs has fallen. The unemployed share grew during the recession but is improving. Among teenagers not enrolled in school, the share not in the labor force is growing. Although “idle” youth have not grown as a share of the teenage population, they are growing as a share of teenagers who are not enrolled in school.

Oregon's Rural Areas Face Specific Challenges



Source: Portland State University, Population Research Center, 2013 Population Estimates

Figure 3



Source: Portland State University, Population Research Center, 2013 Population Estimates

Figure 4

Rural areas face additional and heightened challenges when it comes to youth employment. Wages in rural areas tend to be lower, and Oregon's rural unemployment rates averaged 2.2 percentage points higher than metro rates from 1990 to 2013. Educational opportunities are not as readily available in rural Oregon as travel time to universities, trade schools, and community colleges adds increased costs to a system many rural families already struggle to pay for. Additionally, many rural areas still don't have a high enough Internet connection rate or fast enough speeds to enable distance learning via the Internet. These issues result in rural areas having lower educational attainment levels than urban areas and also play a role in the decision by many rural youth to leave seeking educational opportunities.

Anecdotally, there is often encouragement within the community for high-achieving students to leave the area to pursue educational and professional opportunities elsewhere, rather than accept the limited opportunities available in their local communities. A small portion of these youth will return, while most choose to live in metro areas.

FROM THE LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

"Smaller cities in the rural areas are just not recovering at the same rates of the larger cities."

Sue Thompson, Oregon Workforce Alliance

Rural Out-Migration of Youth

Youth from rural counties often migrate out of their home county for college or to seek employment opportunities in the state's metro areas. Rural Oregon counties contain 21 percent of the state's population under age 15. Young people in the age range typically exploring college – 15 to 24 – are less likely to reside in rural Oregon (19%). Some counties gain young adults as rural youth leave their hometowns to pursue college; Benton, Lane, and Union counties have far higher shares of people ages 15 to 24 than their pre-college (under age 15) population would suggest, and all three are locations of state universities.

Between 2000 and 2010, the number of young Oregonians between the ages of 15 and 24 grew 8 percent statewide. At the same time, the number of people in that age group actually declined in 14 Oregon counties, all of which were rural. Six counties had double-digit declines in youth population over the decade, with the most extreme declines in Grant (-22%) and Wallowa (-21%). Fewer job opportunities in rural Oregon explain part of this shift,

but the aging population of rural areas also leaves fewer families with children in this age group.

Additional reasons for the out-migration of rural youth center around the attractiveness of living in an urban area with more cultural activities, night life, and a larger population of people in their same age range. A Michigan survey of college students and recent college graduates found that the top seven reasons why people want to live in a small town or rural area are completely different than the reasons they would live in an urban area. Respondents who preferred downtown and suburban areas selected “many jobs” and “shops/businesses” among the top reasons that were not also selected by those who preferred a rural area. Unlike those who preferred downtown or suburbs, respondents who preferred a small town or rural area selected “scenic beauty” and “sense of community” among their top reasons for selecting a place to live. Another survey, cited in Rebecca Ryan's book *Live First, Work Second*, found that “three out of four Americans under the age of 28 said a cool city is more important than a good job.”

FROM THE LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

Transportation is a common barrier for youth, and more problematic in rural areas where regular public transportation is not as accessible and distance is more of an issue. Clay Martin with the Linn, Benton, Lincoln Workforce Investment Board said, “We have a problem with youth getting from rural areas into town where the jobs are.”

Public transportation routes and schedules may not be accommodating to youth's work schedules, such as evening and weekend shifts. Furthermore, the costs of owning and operating a vehicle are often out of reach for youth, especially if they don't have a paying job. “Transportation is a huge issue for the rural areas, but also for Salem because it [public transportation] doesn't operate on the weekends or late enough in the evenings.” *Katie Stubblefield, Job Growers Incorporated*

Retaining or Re-attracting Rural Youth

The common question heard in community meetings in rural communities statewide is “how do we retain the youth in our community?” There isn’t one simple answer to this and many strategies are being employed to solve this problem.

Organizations like OregonUnlimited.org aim to facilitate discussion about the issues facing rural communities and their youth. One piece of the organization’s plan is to use Google Hangouts to bring together a panel to discuss issues and programs that have had success in the participants’ rural communities. One such successful program is a volunteer and internship program through Area Health Education Center of Southwest Oregon, specifically in Douglas, Coos, and Lane counties. In the last couple of years this program paired teenagers interested in professions in the health care industry with an opportunity to volunteer or intern at medical facilities for an extended period of time. Efforts like this attempt to engage youth in their community in hopes

that they will return after completing their postsecondary education.

On the other side of the state, communities in Malheur County are working with the national organization HomeTown Competitiveness, which utilizes four pillars in their community development strategy: develop local leadership, increase community philanthropy, energize entrepreneurs, and engage youth. One innovative program in Vale utilizes micro-loans to help youth-run businesses and attract young entrepreneurs to the town.

Another group involved in engaging rural youth is Rural Development Initiatives, who partner with the Ford Family Foundation to hold community leadership classes. More than 4,000 Oregonians have gone through this leadership program, which has been held in 61 communities across Oregon. They aim for youth to comprise 10 to 20 percent of their class. Some of the youth from early classes are now returning to their communities after completing their post-secondary education.

Pros and Cons of Lower Participation Rates Among Teens

The beginning of individuals’ work life has shifted – youth today face different demands on their time than teenagers faced 20 or 30 years ago. Fewer young people are getting jobs as teenagers, and more of them are pursuing higher learning. But what does all of this mean for their work-readiness and their eventual careers? Since it’s a new situation, we don’t have firm answers, but here are some results of postponing work that come to mind.

Does it matter that fewer young people are working now than in the past?

There are certainly some pros to not working as a teenager:

- ◆ There’s more time to study.
- ◆ There’s more time for physical fitness activities like soccer, roller derby, or skateboarding.
- ◆ There’s more time for volunteering and contributing to the local community.
- ◆ There’s more time for other activities that enrich us as humans, such as arts, music, religion, politics, or family.

On the other hand, not working is a missed opportunity for experience. Some of the cons of fewer working teens are:

- ◆ Working helps prepare teenagers for self-sufficiency later in life.
- ◆ Working provides early development of work ethics.
- ◆ Working provides the opportunity to try out different jobs and work situations.
- ◆ Working provides teens with income that can be saved for future needs (college, buying a car, etc.).

Much has been said by older workers about the importance of “soft” skills, the essential workplace skills they learned while working that first job as a teenager: team work, customer service, being at work where and when you are supposed to be. Soft skills will no doubt remain essential in tomorrow’s workforce and young people need to learn these skills today, either on the job or through other activities.

Since the decline in youth employment is partially caused by less need for teen workers and not just by voluntary decisions of today’s youth, Christopher Smith from the Federal Reserve Board notes that “it is probably appropriate to be at least somewhat concerned about the current levels of youth non-employment, especially for the non-college going segments of the population.”

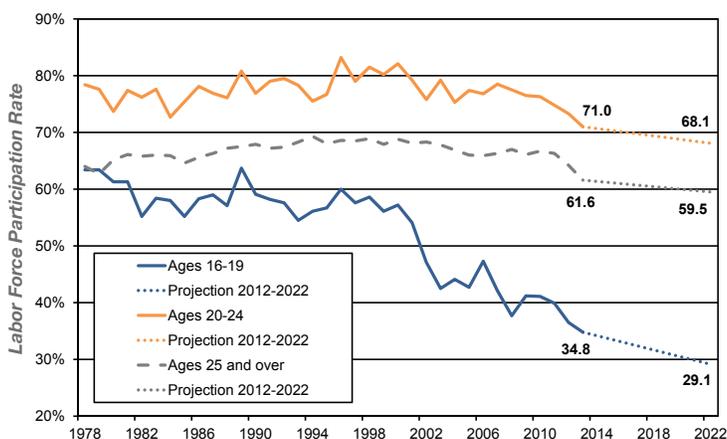
At the same time, the importance of educational attainment has increased over time. Competition to get into colleges, emphasizing well-rounded students, may encourage young people to pursue extracurricular activities that don’t pay, but that will help them get into college.

So whether the choice not to work is detrimental probably depends on what teens are doing with the time past generations spent working. If they’re studying more or doing other things that will help their chances of going to college, it benefits them in the future as formal education is an increasingly important step towards higher earnings throughout their working lives.

What Do Projections for the Future Show?

While Oregon’s total population is expected to grow in coming years, the population between the ages of 15 and 24 will remain flat. In total, population should grow about 10 percent between 2013 and 2020. The youth population is expected to add just 1 percent over that time frame, landing at about 515,000 Oregonians ages 15 to 24 in 2020, up from 512,000 in 2013.

Expect Continued Decline in Youth Participation Rates, Oregon



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey. Oregon Employment Department
Graph 19

Labor force participation among youth is expected to fall faster than that of the older population through 2022. The participation rate for those 25 years and over is expected to fall 2.1 percentage points from 2013 to 2022, while the participation rate of young adults is expected to drop 2.9 percentage points. For teenagers, the decline is expected to be much more drastic, with

their labor force participation shrinking 5.7 percentage points to 29.1 percent by 2022. Fewer than three out of 10 Oregon teens are projected to be working or looking for work by 2022. It was only in 2002 that the labor force participation of teenagers dropped below a fifty-fifty share. Declines in teen participation have been sharp, and show no sign of letting up.

Conclusion

Young people in the labor force are an endangered species. The jobs recovery following the Great Recession has clearly passed them by. Unemployed Oregonians are disproportionately under the age of 24, and unemployment spells among young adults tend to be long-term. Long spells of unemployment mean younger people are not getting the on-the-job experience and essential skills that employers are looking for. That makes it even tougher for young people to compete for available jobs, leading to a detrimental cycle of poor labor market outcomes.

Today's youth are not just sitting around. The share of "idle" youth not in the labor force nor enrolled in school did not increase during the Great Recession. The silver lining is that many of today's youth are forgoing early work experience to gain formal education attainment, which could pay off given the college wage premium. For those without the college option, the youth labor market situation is even more threatening. Efforts to help every interested youth find success early on their career path will improve Oregon's workforce of tomorrow.

Fortunately, there are ways to help the youth labor force. At least two stand out as findings from this report:

- 1) Lack of experience makes young people less competitive for available jobs, leading to longer unemployment spells, and fewer chances to gain experience. Programs that help young people get early on-the-job experience can break the detrimental cycle where lack of experience makes it tougher to compete in the job market.
- 2) Youth are less likely to use public employment agencies. Encouraging youth to use these resources could improve their chances of finding employment opportunities available to them.

Although these two points present themselves readily in the data, there are undoubtedly many other ideas for improving the job market for young people. We hope this report serves to further such discussions and future efforts towards saving Oregon's endangered youth labor force.

Youth in the Labor Force: Next Steps

Closing Comments From the Local Workforce Investment Boards

As the data in this report clearly demonstrate, young people in Oregon have many challenges as they prepare for work and careers, and as they transition to adulthood. To help combat these trends, a continued investment in youth workforce development is critical for Oregon to have a long-term, thriving workforce.

Examples of ways Local Workforce Investment Boards have worked to address youth workforce development issues include:

- ◆ Integrating out-of-school youth programs into WorkSource Oregon centers
- ◆ Holding job fairs
- ◆ Partnering with school districts and community colleges to engage youth and offer them opportunities to gain work skills.
- ◆ Encouraging career exploration through Oregon's Career Information System and BizConnect
- ◆ Promoting National Career Readiness Certificates. These certificates fulfill some high school graduation requirements and indicate to employers that the young person is motivated and determined to find a job.
- ◆ Offering Youth Academy
- ◆ Incorporating youth workforce development into local targeted sector work (health care, manufacturing, etc.) using a cohort model
- ◆ Summer employment programs

The following are potential next steps to help translate this report's findings into actionable items that workforce development stakeholders can undertake to address youth unemployment. They are focused on both system improvement and program implementation.

- ◆ **Invest funding in summer jobs programs for youth.** The Oregon Youth Employment Program, created in 2011 through Senate Bill 175, is a mechanism to support summer youth jobs programs. However, this program remains unfunded. Modeled after youth programs that were funded in 2009 through federal stimulus investment, this program enabled youth the opportunity to experience the value of work, develop work readiness skills, improve their financial literacy skills, and learn about career opportunities. Many young people received their first paycheck through this program, a paycheck that was often spent to support their families, to pay for clothing for school, and for fun, all of which contribute to our economy. Oregon's 2009 Summer Youth Employment Program produced a \$1.46 return on investment for every dollar the young person earned. Investment in the Oregon Youth Employment Program leverages public sector investments locally, and encourages private sector investments in the workforce.

- ◆ **Support career readiness and career exploration, targeted to the youth population, throughout the education and workforce system.** Providing opportunities for youth to acquire work experience and skills through job shadowing, mock interviews, and career exploration is the key to building the workforce pipeline. Getting the opportunity to work as a young person leads to becoming a more successful adult in the workplace. Ensuring these opportunities are both connected to the labor market and incorporated within the educational system provides system alignment and connects programs in ways youth need it most.
- ◆ **Provide flexible, evening, and weekend classes within postsecondary institutions to accommodate youth acquiring work-related skills while still focusing on education.** Experiential education and on-the-job experiences should not wait until a student graduates; it is critical that youth have access to both. There is a need to connect students with employers throughout the educational process and find ways to create bridges between high school and employment. Furthermore, students benefit from learning career-related skills, including critical thinking, creativity, and entrepreneurship skills, and understanding the relevancy of what they are learning in relation to the workforce or a career. Establishing connections with employers throughout the educational process, including piloting new programs, will help meet the unmet demand for career-related learning skills in school.

The best way to learn work skills is through a job – it improves the lives of young people and their families, reduces juvenile crime, and supports a stronger economy. An investment in youth employment now means long-term benefits and a successful future for the state of Oregon.

If you are interested in working with your Local Workforce Investment Board to help address youth unemployment issues in your region, contact information can be found at the front of the report.

Jordana Barclay, Executive Director

Oregon Workforce Partnership



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This report is based entirely on secondary research. We didn't actually go talk to teenagers about their labor market experiences. We've reviewed the literature, delved into the numbers, and compiled the relevant statistics here in one place to aid Oregon decision makers as they address improving the labor market conditions of young workers. Data from many different federal and state sources are pointing to the same trends and challenges young workers face in today's economy.

Most labor force and demographic data in this report are from these three sources:

Current Population Survey (CPS)

The CPS is a survey of households conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau each month for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). CPS household selection is designed to represent the civilian non-institutional population, which includes all people who are age 16 and over, excluding those on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces and the institutional population. Nationally, there are 60,000 eligible households in the sample. In Oregon, the sample size is around 1,000 assigned households. The CPS is used to produce official labor force estimates for the United States and it indirectly provides estimates for individual states. The CPS data used in this report go back as far as 1978, depending on availability. More information about the CPS can be found in the BLS *Handbook of Methods*: http://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/homch1_itc.htm.

American Community Survey (ACS)

The American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing U.S. Census Bureau survey that produces population characteristics for small areas and small population groups. In Oregon, the survey interviews roughly 24,000 households per year and 1,400 people living in group quarters. The ACS provides more detail about Oregon's youth population than the estimates available from the CPS, but data only go back to 2005. For more information on the Census Bureau's American Community Survey, visit <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>.

Local Employment Dynamics (LED)

The Local Employment Dynamics (LED) partnership is a U.S. Census and state partnership that creates statistics on employment and job flow data at detailed levels of geography and industry for different age groups. The statistics are derived from Unemployment Insurance earnings data and the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). These administrative data are combined with additional administrative data and data from censuses and surveys. LED data provide job flow and industry detail by age group that is not available from the CPS or ACS. Data are available back to 1991. For more information on Local Employment Dynamics, visit <http://lehd.ces.census.gov/>.

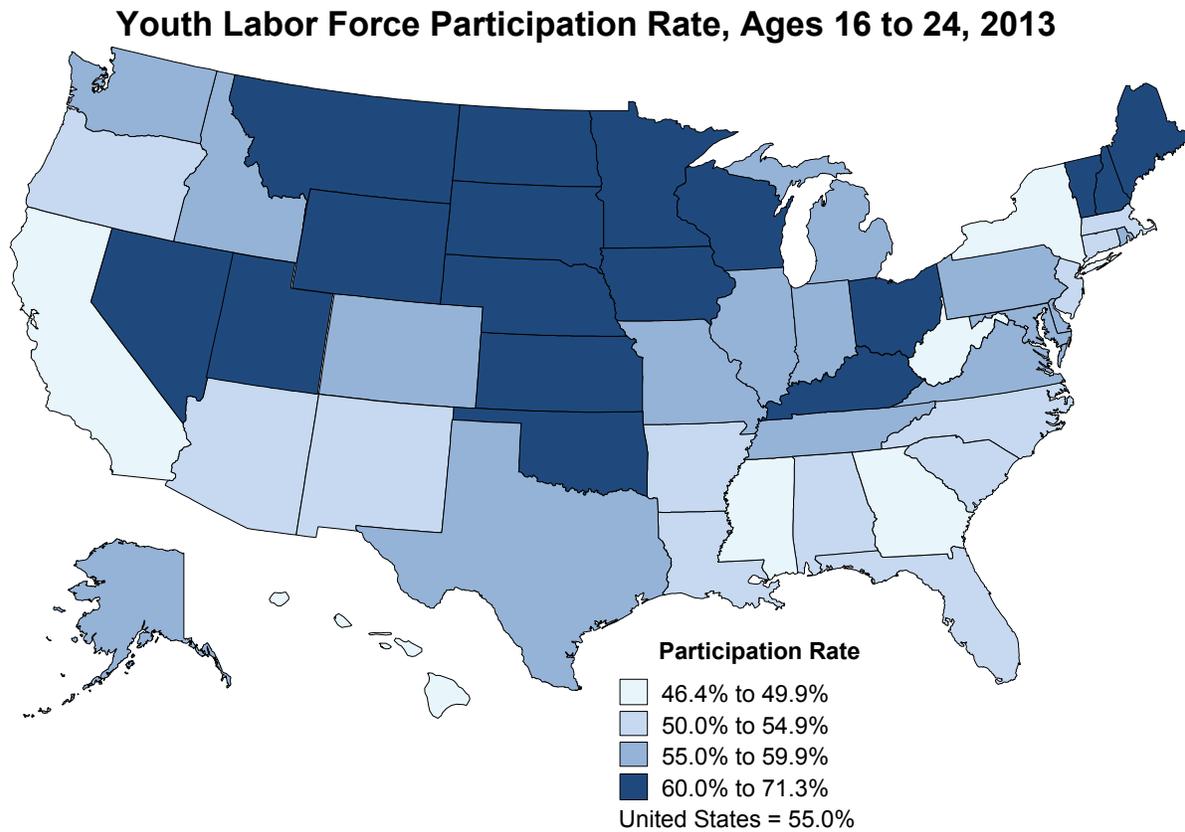
Appendices

Appendix I: U.S. Maps of Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rate Rankings

Appendix II: U.S. Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rates by Race and Ethnicity

Appendix III: Oregon Jobs by Worker Age and Industry

Appendix IV: Oregon Jobs by Worker Age and Area



Oregon had the 33rd highest labor force participation rate for youth between 16 and 24 years old at 54.9 percent. North Dakota had the highest rate at 71.3 percent and Mississippi had the lowest at 46.4 percent. Nationally, the labor force participation rate of those 16 to 24 was 55.0 percent in 2013.

State	Rate (%)	State	Rate (%)	State	Rate (%)
North Dakota	71.3	Idaho	59.6	Arkansas	54.4
Nebraska	70.1	Rhode Island	59.1	Alabama	53.5
South Dakota	69.2	Colorado	59.0	Connecticut	53.4
Iowa	67.9	Alaska	58.8	Massachusetts	53.3
Wisconsin	67.9	Tennessee	58.7	South Carolina	52.8
Utah	67.7	Pennsylvania	58.1	Arizona	52.6
Maine	66.2	Missouri	57.9	North Carolina	52.5
Minnesota	66.1	Washington	57.0	Florida	52.0
Wyoming	65.2	Michigan	56.8	Louisiana	51.7
New Hampshire	64.9	Delaware	56.0	New Mexico	51.7
Kansas	63.9	Illinois	55.8	New Jersey	50.7
Ohio	62.3	Maryland	55.7	California	49.7
Montana	61.2	Texas	55.6	Georgia	49.6
Oklahoma	61.0	Indiana	55.4	Hawaii	48.8
Vermont	60.6	Virginia	55.0	New York	48.6
Nevada	60.3	United States	55.0	West Virginia	47.4
Kentucky	60.1	Oregon	54.9	Mississippi	46.4

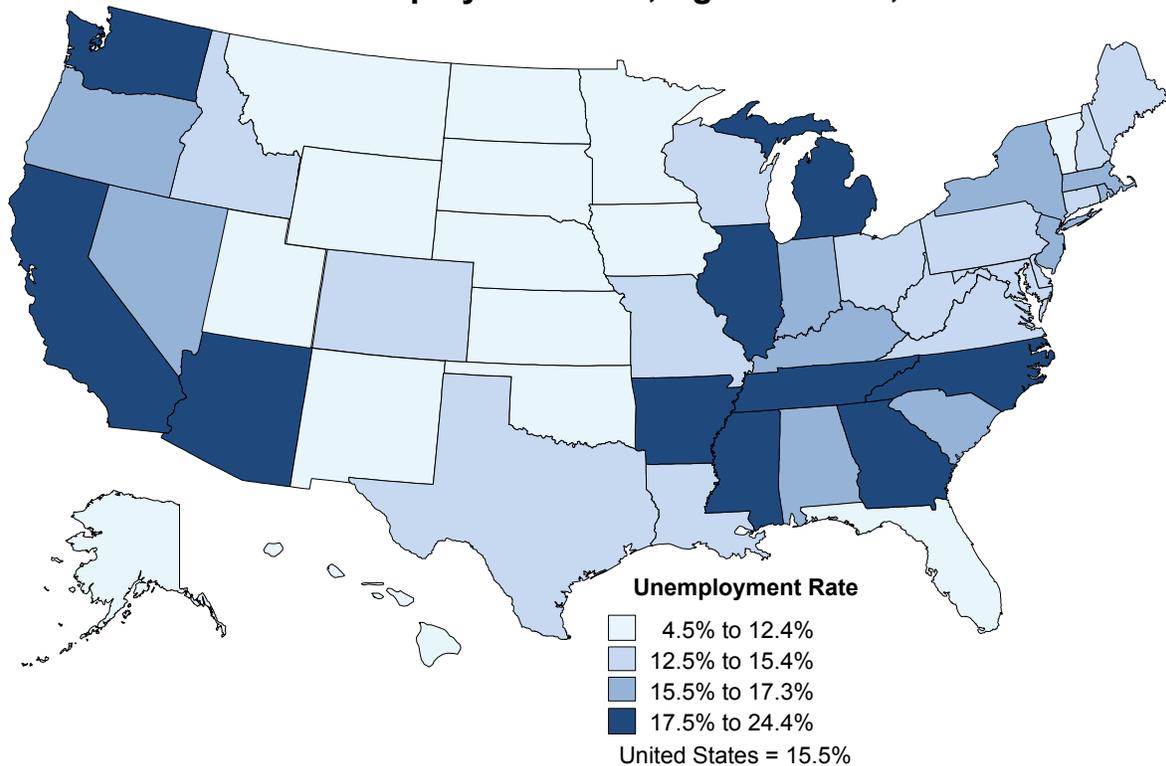
Labor Force Participation Rate = (Employed + Unemployed) / Civilian Labor Force

Differences between states may not be statistically significant.

Source: Oregon Employment Department based on Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, 2013

Appendix Figure 1

Youth Unemployment Rate, Ages 16 to 24, 2013



Oregon had the 12th highest unemployment rate for youth between 16 and 24 years old at 17.1 percent. Mississippi had the highest unemployment rate at 24.4 percent and North Dakota had the lowest at 4.5 percent. Nationally, the unemployment rate of those 16 to 24 was 15.5 percent in 2013.

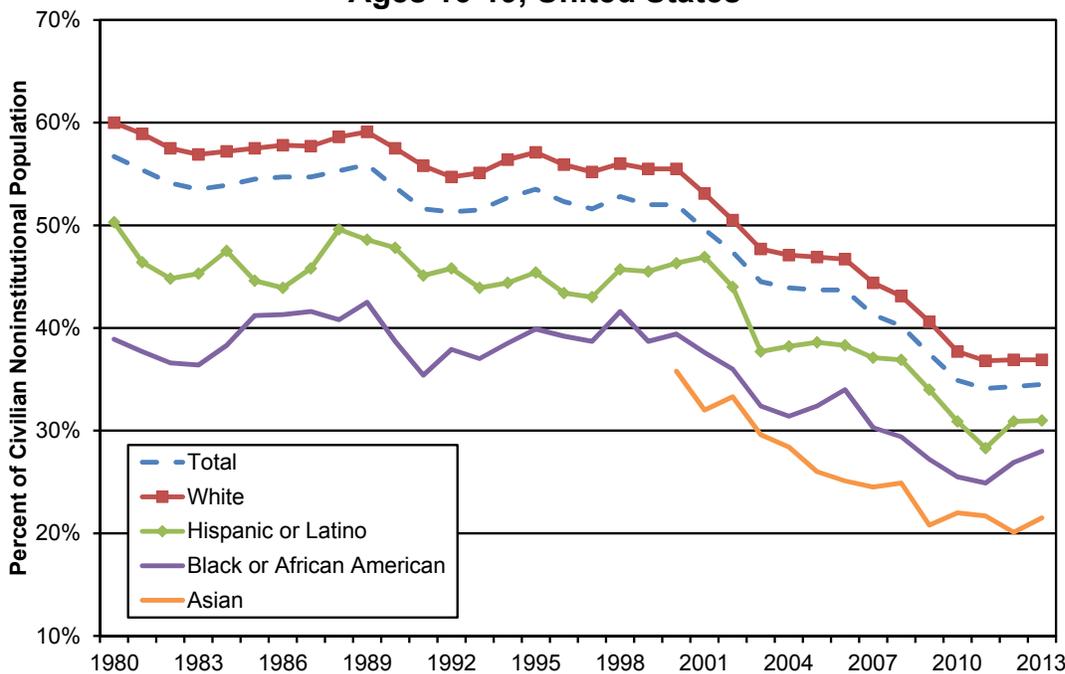
State	Rate (%)	State	Rate (%)	State	Rate (%)
Mississippi	24.4	Massachusetts	15.8	Wisconsin	13.0
Arkansas	19.9	New York	15.7	New Hampshire	12.5
Arizona	19.7	Indiana	15.6	Alaska	12.3
Illinois	19.4	United States	15.5	Florida	12.1
North Carolina	19.3	Pennsylvania	15.3	Kansas	12.0
Tennessee	19.3	Ohio	15.0	New Mexico	11.9
Georgia	18.7	Colorado	14.8	Vermont	11.6
California	18.3	Virginia	14.7	Hawaii	11.1
Michigan	17.7	Maryland	14.6	Montana	11.1
Washington	17.5	Louisiana	14.4	Oklahoma	11.1
Nevada	17.3	Connecticut	13.9	Minnesota	9.7
Oregon	17.1	Delaware	13.8	Iowa	9.6
New Jersey	16.7	Missouri	13.6	Wyoming	8.9
Rhode Island	16.7	Texas	13.6	Utah	8.8
South Carolina	16.7	Idaho	13.0	Nebraska	8.3
Alabama	16.3	Maine	13.0	South Dakota	8.1
Kentucky	16.1	West Virginia	-	North Dakota	4.5

Unemployment Rate = Number of Unemployed / Civilian Labor Force

Differences between states may not be statistically significant.

Source: Oregon Employment Department based on Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, 2013 **Appendix Figure 2**

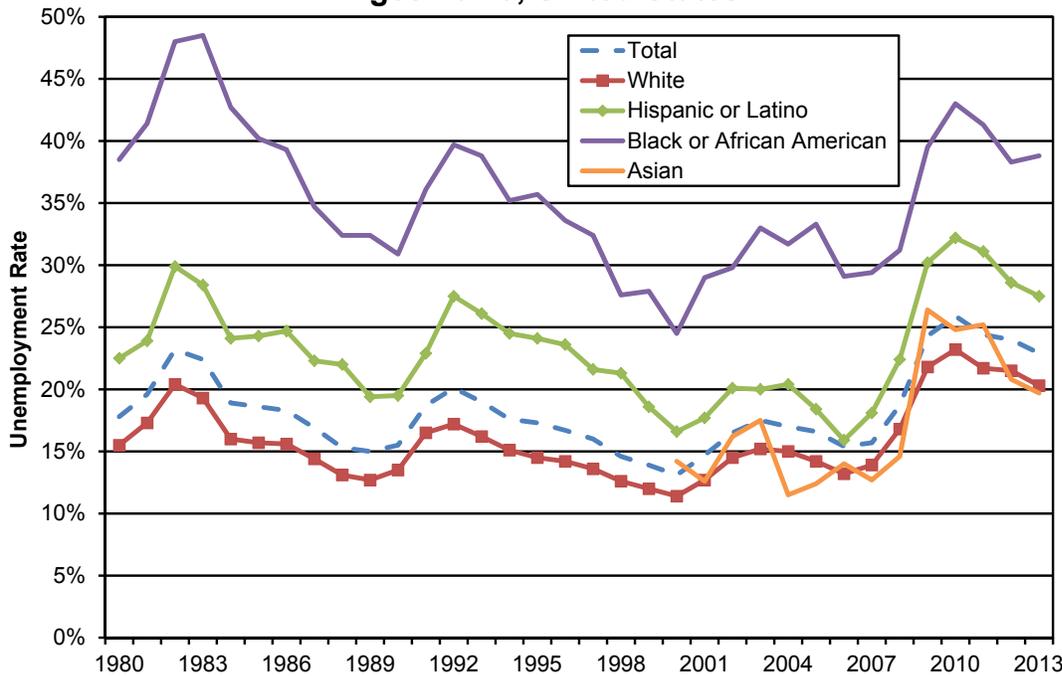
Labor Force Participation Rate by Race and Ethnicity, Ages 16-19, United States



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

Appendix Graph 1

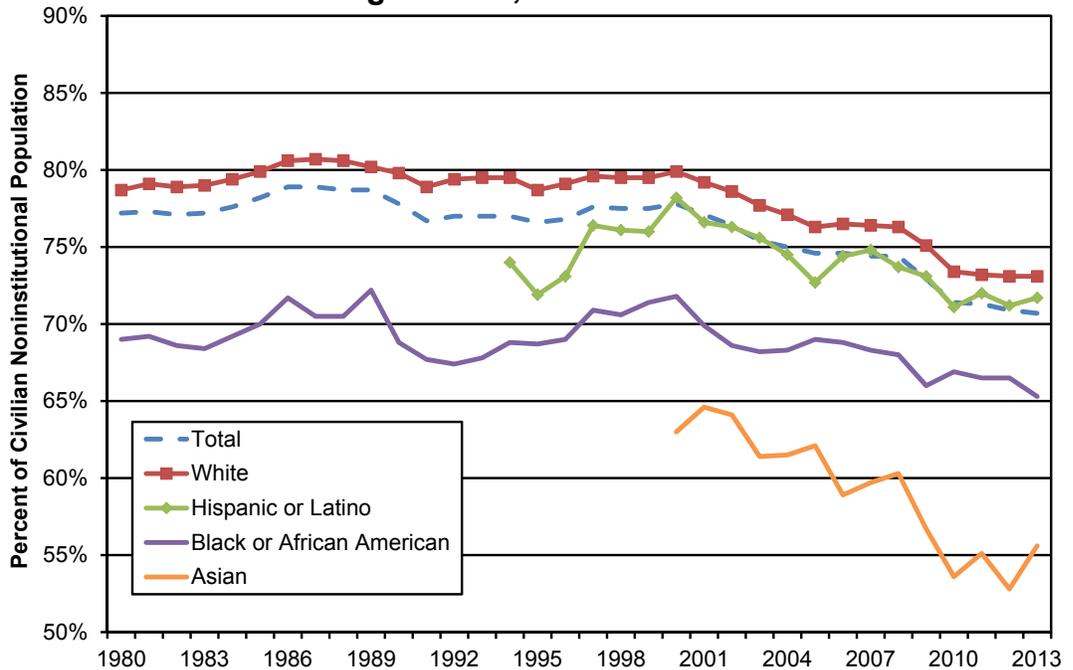
Unemployment Rate by Race and Ethnicity, Ages 16-19, United States



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

Appendix Graph 2

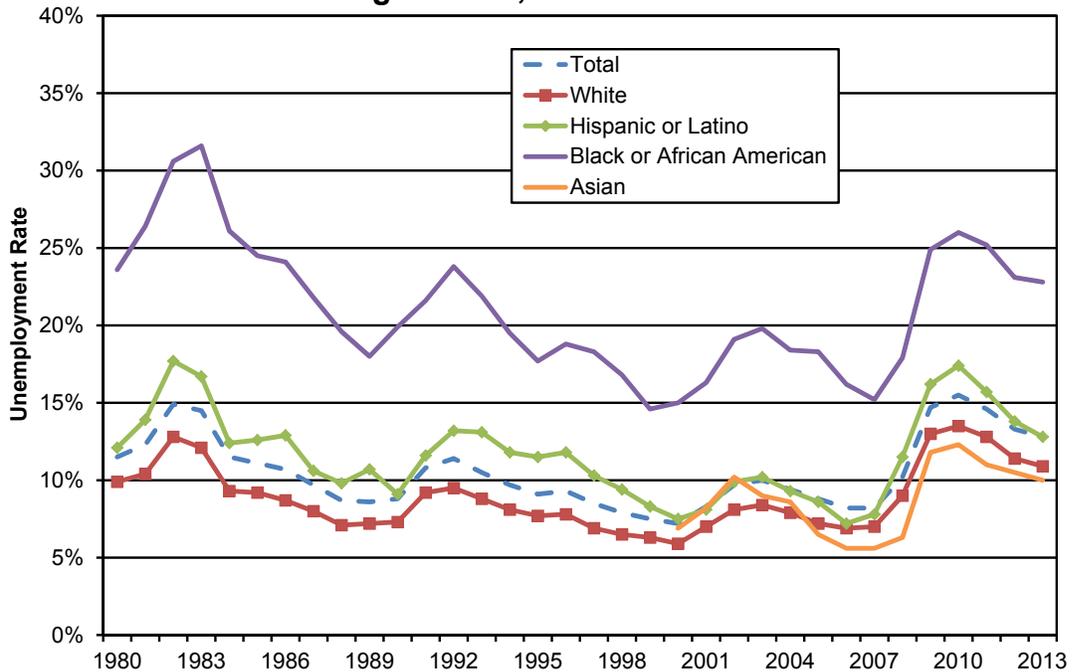
Labor Force Participation Rate by Race and Ethnicity, Ages 20-24, United States



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

Appendix Graph 3

Unemployment Rate by Race and Ethnicity, Ages 20-24, United States



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

Appendix Graph 4

Appendix III: Oregon Jobs by Worker Age and Industry

Oregon Workforce by Age and Industry

Industry	Average of Four Quarters in 1992					Average of Four Quarters in 2002					Average of Four Quarters in 2012				
	Total	Age Group				Total	Age Group				Total	Age Group			
		14-18	19-21	22-24	25-99		14-18	19-21	22-24	25-99		14-18	19-21	22-24	25-99
Accommodation and Food Services	99,864	15.2%	13.6%	11.5%	59.7%	128,862	12.9%	13.3%	11.2%	62.6%	148,671	6.3%	12.3%	12.4%	68.9%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	17,203	6.3%	10.3%	9.8%	69.4%	23,607	8.5%	9.2%	9.3%	73.0%	25,761	5.5%	8.1%	9.0%	77.4%
Retail Trade	154,990	6.3%	10.3%	9.8%	73.7%	186,873	5.9%	10.9%	9.2%	74.1%	184,713	2.9%	9.9%	10.4%	76.8%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	35,859	4.5%	5.5%	7.7%	82.3%	39,127	5.0%	5.2%	5.2%	84.6%	42,174	3.9%	4.9%	5.7%	85.5%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	22,967	3.7%	6.1%	7.5%	82.7%	28,471	3.6%	6.4%	7.0%	83.0%	24,803	1.1%	3.1%	4.9%	90.9%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	44,097	3.5%	5.6%	6.6%	84.2%	57,673	3.3%	5.4%	6.3%	85.0%	62,371	2.1%	4.1%	6.3%	87.5%
All Industry Sectors	1,224,769	3.4%	5.3%	6.7%	84.6%	1,550,874	3.2%	5.4%	6.2%	85.2%	1,605,823	1.7%	4.5%	6.0%	87.8%
Information	27,909	2.4%	3.7%	5.8%	88.1%	36,797	2.2%	3.7%	6.0%	88.1%	33,696	1.0%	2.2%	4.0%	92.8%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation	45,618	2.2%	7.6%	10.1%	80.1%	83,260	2.4%	7.6%	9.0%	81.1%	89,147	1.3%	5.7%	8.2%	84.8%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	18,944	2.0%	4.3%	6.1%	87.6%	28,967	1.8%	4.6%	5.9%	87.8%	31,817	0.6%	2.4%	4.5%	92.5%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	48,599	1.8%	3.5%	6.4%	88.4%	62,307	1.6%	2.9%	5.6%	89.9%	77,999	0.7%	1.7%	4.1%	93.5%
Health Care and Social Assistance	128,613	1.6%	3.3%	5.2%	89.9%	170,864	1.7%	3.8%	5.7%	88.8%	229,484	0.8%	3.1%	5.5%	90.6%
Construction	54,660	1.5%	4.6%	6.7%	87.2%	81,450	1.4%	4.0%	6.0%	88.6%	72,830	0.9%	2.6%	4.3%	92.2%
Wholesale Trade	62,834	1.4%	3.6%	6.0%	89.0%	74,797	1.1%	2.8%	4.7%	91.4%	73,620	0.7%	2.2%	3.9%	93.2%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1,575	1.2%	2.0%	4.3%	92.5%	1,780	0.6%	2.8%	3.3%	93.2%	1,614	0.7%	1.6%	4.1%	93.9%
Manufacturing	197,373	1.0%	3.6%	6.0%	89.4%	202,044	1.0%	2.9%	4.6%	91.5%	170,624	0.7%	2.4%	4.0%	93.0%
Transportation and Warehousing	42,510	0.9%	2.9%	5.3%	90.8%	51,274	1.1%	3.9%	4.7%	90.4%	51,845	0.5%	2.8%	4.2%	92.6%
Finance and Insurance	42,899	0.9%	3.3%	6.8%	89.0%	58,859	0.9%	3.9%	6.7%	88.5%	56,918	0.3%	1.7%	4.3%	93.7%
Public Administration	64,693	0.8%	1.5%	2.9%	94.8%	91,721	1.0%	1.6%	2.7%	94.7%	76,044	0.7%	1.2%	1.9%	96.2%
Educational Services	105,575	0.6%	1.2%	2.6%	95.5%	134,607	0.8%	1.8%	3.1%	94.4%	144,374	0.7%	1.5%	2.5%	95.3%
Utilities	7,978	0.4%	1.2%	1.8%	96.6%	7,526	0.3%	0.6%	1.7%	97.4%	7,311	0.2%	0.8%	1.4%	97.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics

Appendix Table 1

Appendix IV: Oregon Jobs by Worker Age and Area

Oregon Workforce by Age and Area

Area	Average of Four Quarters in 1992					Average of Four Quarters in 2002					Average of Four Quarters in 2012				
	Age Group					Age Group					Age Group				
	14-18	19-21	22-24	25-99	Total	14-18	19-21	22-24	25-99	Total	14-18	19-21	22-24	25-99	Total
Statewide	3.4%	5.3%	6.7%	84.6%	1,224,769	3.2%	5.4%	6.2%	85.2%	1,550,874	1.7%	4.5%	6.0%	87.8%	1,605,823
Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook	4.7%	4.6%	5.4%	85.2%	27,727	5.0%	5.6%	5.0%	84.4%	31,694	3.1%	5.1%	5.6%	86.2%	31,694
Multnomah, Washington	2.8%	5.0%	7.1%	85.1%	512,998	2.4%	4.7%	6.4%	86.5%	654,455	1.2%	3.7%	5.8%	89.3%	694,206
Marion, Polk, Yamhill	3.9%	5.4%	6.5%	84.1%	136,688	3.8%	5.8%	6.1%	84.4%	170,548	2.1%	4.8%	6.0%	87.1%	175,402
Benton, Lincoln, Linn	3.6%	5.4%	6.4%	84.6%	72,819	3.3%	5.6%	5.9%	85.3%	88,525	2.0%	4.8%	6.1%	87.1%	87,791
Lane	3.1%	6.0%	7.1%	83.8%	110,675	3.0%	6.3%	7.2%	83.5%	138,085	1.5%	4.7%	6.6%	87.2%	136,125
Douglas	3.5%	5.1%	5.5%	86.0%	29,820	3.7%	5.8%	5.7%	84.8%	36,018	1.7%	4.5%	5.7%	88.1%	31,765
Coos, Curry	3.6%	4.9%	5.1%	86.4%	23,651	3.7%	5.2%	4.9%	86.2%	26,655	1.7%	4.4%	5.5%	88.4%	25,876
Jackson, Josephine	3.9%	5.8%	6.3%	84.0%	70,779	3.8%	6.0%	6.1%	84.1%	95,805	1.8%	4.9%	6.5%	86.8%	97,562
Gilliam, Hood River, Sherman, Wasco, Wheeler	4.7%	5.0%	5.7%	84.6%	16,495	5.2%	5.2%	5.2%	84.4%	19,926	3.3%	5.4%	5.8%	85.5%	23,042
Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson	4.4%	5.8%	6.4%	83.4%	42,496	4.3%	5.7%	6.2%	83.8%	62,017	2.6%	5.2%	5.9%	86.4%	68,776
Klamath, Lake	3.8%	6.1%	6.4%	83.8%	21,943	3.5%	5.3%	5.6%	85.6%	23,596	2.0%	4.7%	6.2%	87.1%	22,356
Morrow, Umatilla	4.2%	5.6%	6.4%	83.8%	23,389	3.6%	5.8%	6.1%	84.5%	31,172	2.9%	7.5%	6.3%	83.3%	34,423
Baker, Union, Wallowa	3.7%	5.1%	5.5%	85.7%	14,888	3.9%	5.6%	5.7%	84.8%	16,434	3.4%	9.0%	6.3%	81.3%	18,260
Grant, Harney, Malheur	4.7%	5.5%	5.8%	84.0%	16,585	4.0%	5.2%	5.0%	85.8%	17,332	3.1%	7.7%	5.8%	83.5%	18,298
Clackamas	4.0%	5.9%	7.0%	83.2%	103,810	3.9%	5.9%	6.4%	83.8%	138,797	2.2%	4.8%	6.1%	86.9%	140,241
The Oregon Consortium and Oregon Workforce Alliance	4.1%	5.3%	5.8%	84.7%	216,994	4.1%	5.5%	5.6%	84.7%	264,653	2.6%	5.7%	5.9%	85.8%	274,490

Appendix Table 2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics

State of Oregon
Employment Department
www.Employment.Oregon.gov
RSPUB 290 (0514)