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Media Relations

Carsey Institute: Single Parents, Men Hit Hard By Unemployment During Recession

Aug. 31, 2011

DURHAM, N.H. – Single parents and men were among the groups of Americans hit hard by unemployment during the recent recession, with growing gaps between married and unmarried Americans, according to new research from the Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire.

“Nationwide, the unemployed have been jobless for an average of 22.9 weeks. However, some Americans have been hit harder than others, particularly men, single parents, young adults, and people with less education,” the researchers said.

Single fathers in rural areas registered the single largest increase in unemployment throughout the recession, rising almost 11 percentage points to 23 percent in 2010. “Although single fathers have high rates of unemployment, so do single childless men, and both groups experienced significant increases in unemployment during the recession,” the researchers said.

The key findings of this research show:

- Unemployment was highest among men and among unmarried adults, regardless of place or parenting status. Although this also was true before the recession, gaps between men and women, and the unmarried and married, widened considerably during the recession.
- During the Great Recession, unemployment rose more in central cities and suburban places than in rural places, perhaps because rural unemployment was already high prior to the start of the recession.
- Rural areas continued to have the highest unemployment rates for unmarried people; by 2010 their unemployment rates had risen to 16.2 percent in rural America.

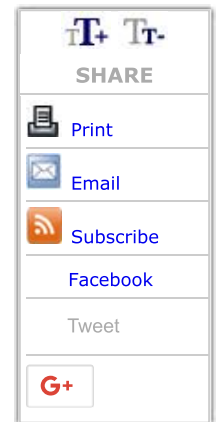
To address these persistent unemployment trends, the researchers suggest the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), an important resource for job seekers that offers employment counseling, job readiness and skills training, identification of job opportunities, job referrals, and job search/placement activities.

“WIA better positions participants to find work, and helps them to do those jobs when they are hired. WIA was originally scheduled to be renewed in 2003, but while Congress has continued to fund WIA, it is still considering what program changes to include in a full reauthorization. This reauthorization could happen as early as the end of 2011, but perhaps more likely will not happen until at least 2012,” they said.

The research was conducted by Beth Mattingly, director of research on vulnerable families at the Carsey Institute and research assistant professor of sociology at UNH; Kristin Smith, a family demographer at the Carsey Institute and a research assistant professor of sociology at UNH; and Jessica Bean, vulnerable families research associate at the Carsey Institute. The researchers relied on data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey’s Annual Social and Economic Supplement, conducted in March 2007 and March 2010.

The complete report about this research, “Unemployment in the Great Recession: Single Parents and Men Hit Hard,” is available at <http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/CarseySearch/search.php?id=170>.

The Carsey Institute conducts policy research on vulnerable children, youth, and families and on sustainable community development. The institute gives policy makers and practitioners the timely, independent resources they need to effect change in their communities. For more information about the Carsey Institute, go to www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu.



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