



WORKTRENDS

AMERICANS' ATTITUDES ABOUT **WORK, EMPLOYERS, AND GOVERNMENT**

American Workers Assess an Economic Disaster

by

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September 2010

BACKGROUND

The John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey was founded as a research and policy organization devoted to strengthening New Jersey's and the nation's workforce during a time of global economic change. The Heldrich Center researches and puts to work strategies that increase worker skills and employability, strengthen the ability of companies to compete, create jobs where they are needed, and improve the quality and performance of the workforce development system.

Since 1997, the Heldrich Center has experienced rapid growth, working with federal and state government partners, Fortune 100 companies, and major foundations. The Center embodies its slogan "Solutions at Work" by teaming with partners and clients to translate cutting-edge research and analysis into practices and programs that companies, unions, schools, community-based organizations, and government officials can leverage to strengthen the nation's workforce.

The Center's projects are grounded in a core set of research priorities:

- Disability Employment
- Evaluation, Management, and Employment
- Industry, Education, and Employment
- Reemployment
- Work Trends and Economic Analysis

Since its inception, the Heldrich Center has sought to inform employers, union leaders, policymakers, community members, the media, and academic communities about critical workforce and education issues that relate to the emerging global economy.

To better understand the public's attitudes about work, employers, and the government, and improve workplace practices and policy, the Heldrich Center produces the *Work Trends* surveys on a regular basis. (The complete set of reports is available at www.heldrich.rutgers.edu.) The surveys poll the general public on critical workforce issues facing Americans and American businesses. The survey findings are promoted widely to the media and national constituencies.

The series is co-directed by Carl E. Van Horn, Ph.D., Director of the Heldrich Center, and Cliff Zukin, Ph.D., Senior Faculty Fellow at the Center and Professor of Public Policy and Political Science at Rutgers University. *American Workers Assess an Economic Disaster* continues to advance the goals of the *Work Trends* series to give American workers a voice in the national economic policy debates, and thereby provides policymakers and employers with reliable insights into how workers across the nation are judging and acting upon the realities of work and the workplace.

INTRODUCTION

The jobs report released at the beginning of August 2010 brought the chilling news that the economy actually lost over 130,000 jobs and that the estimates for the previous month had also overestimated job growth in the private sector.

So while the nation's Gross Domestic Product continues to grow — albeit at an anemic pace — the unemployment rate is stuck at a high level and job creation is not growing sufficiently to absorb unemployed workers or new entrants to the labor market. This news was greeted with renewed concern about a double-dip recession and predictions of sustained high levels of unemployment for months and years to come.

Leaving aside the predictions, we already know that the Great Recession gave us the:

- Longest recession in history,
- Highest levels of unemployment in over 25 years,
- Greatest number of people out of work for more than one year, and
- Longest average duration of unemployment.

The recession brought negative consequences in all regions and across all demographic groups and industrial sectors. For some groups, such as minorities, men, and older workers, the recession has been especially damaging, but the effects have been felt by a majority of Americans.

With the 2010 election approaching, the policy landscape is already marked by deep partisanship and widely different proposals about what, if anything, should be done to fix the ailing economy.

Also, fundamentally different characterizations of the unemployed are emerging. Some political leaders have claimed that the unemployed are either not looking hard enough for work or are addicted to government entitlement programs, such as Unemployment Insurance; others have complained that the government has not done enough to create jobs and provide assistance so people can weather the battering of the Great Recession.

The only consensus among policymakers is that the Great Recession will not be fixed until unemployment declines and private-sector job growth is strong and sustained.

This study probes the views of a nationally representative sample of 818 American workers (interviewed between July 19 and August 6, 2010; see methodology on page 17) at this important juncture in the recession and examines the differences and similarities in the views of those who have jobs and those who are out of work. Specifically, we investigate how American workers assess the:

- Near- and long-term future of the economy and the labor market,
- Impact of the recession on Americans' finances,
- Causes of unemployment, and
- Policies and political leaders.

ASSESSMENT AND OUTLOOK ON THE ECONOMY AND THE LABOR MARKET

American workers share a grim outlook on the future of the U.S. economy, regardless of their employment status, age, or income level. Just 7% of American workers believe that now is a good time to find a job. More than half (56%) think the U.S. economy has undergone a fundamental and lasting change as opposed to a temporary downturn (43%). Survey respondents are also very pessimistic about the near-term future: fully 41% anticipate that the United States will be experiencing similar economic conditions a year from now while another quarter (27%) actually believes the economy will get worse before it gets better. Overall, nearly two-thirds of Americans

(64%) expect that the nation will still be in a recession next year while another 18% fear a depression is coming. Just 16% believe the recession will be over a year from now. (See Figures 1 and 2.)

Those who are unemployed express grave concern about the labor market. Eight in ten job seekers are **very concerned** about the condition of the job market. Roughly 74% of those unemployed and looking for work are very concerned about the unemployment rate, a view shared by 50% of those employed. In fact, nearly 9 in 10 Americans (86%) who are still working express at least some concern about their job security; half of them report being **very concerned**, suggesting widespread fears about the labor market and the U.S. economy.

Figure 1. A Year from Now, Do You Expect Economic Conditions in the Nation as a Whole Will Be:

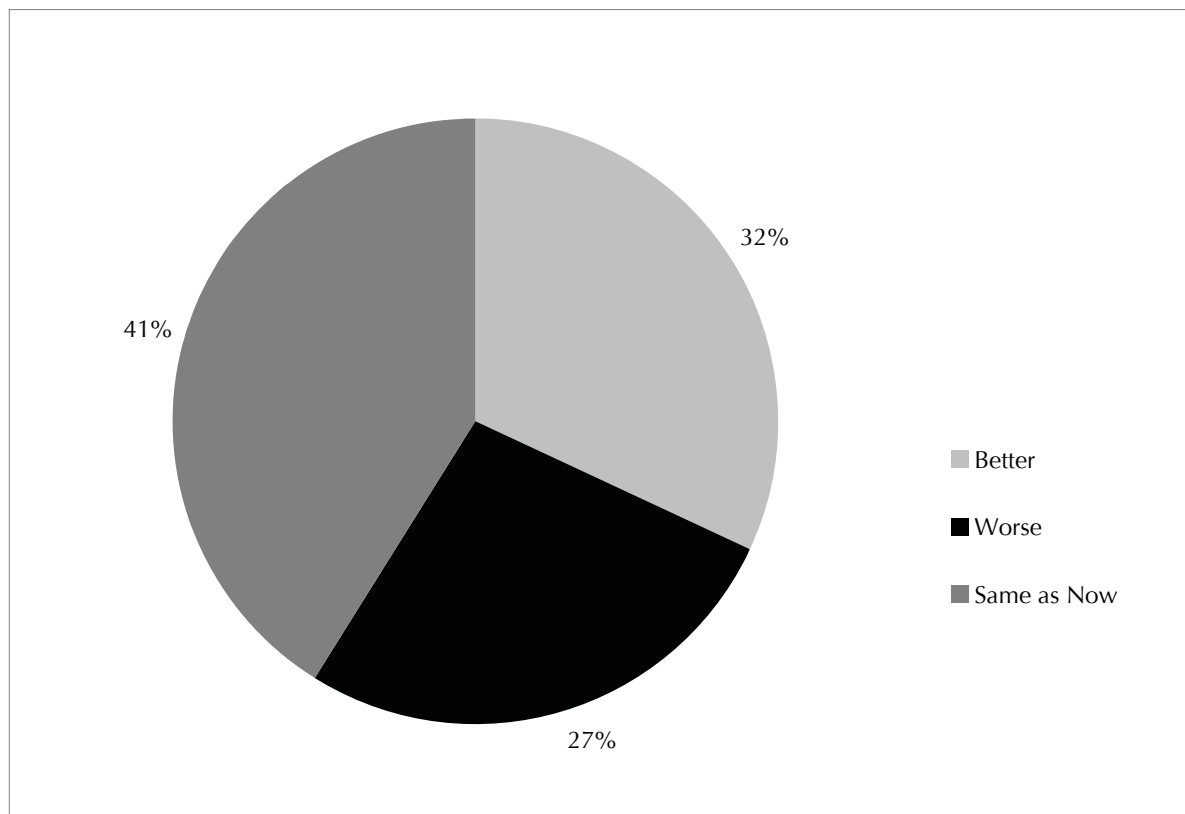
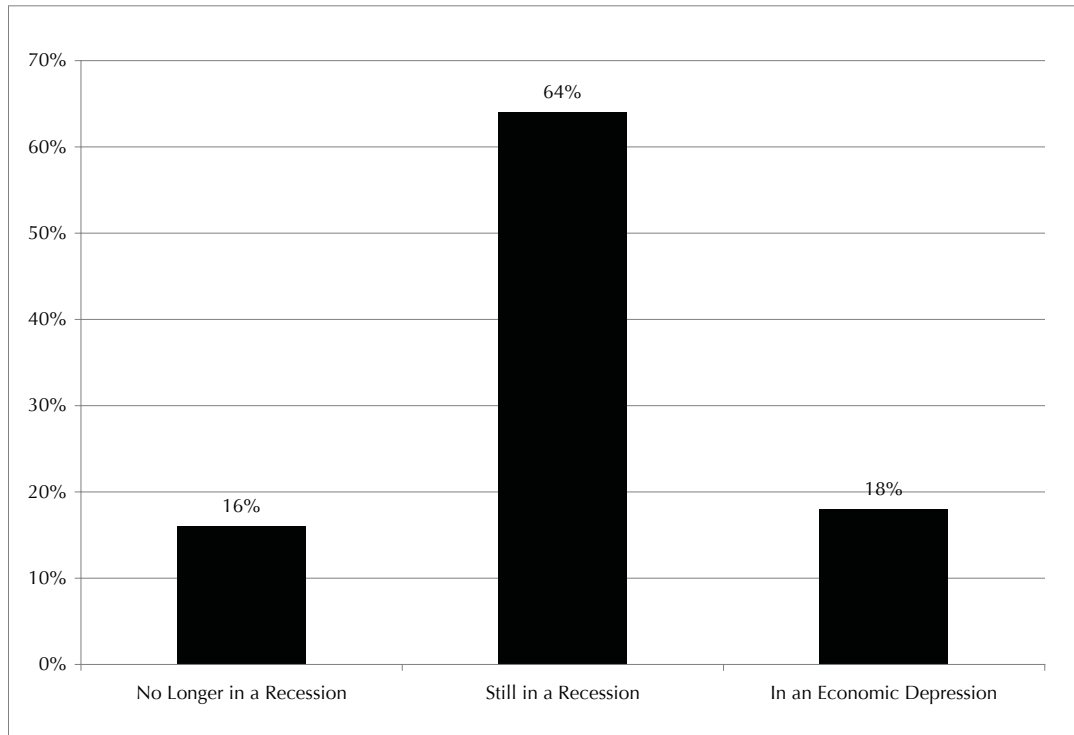


Figure 2. A Year from Now, Do You Think the Economy Will Be:



THE IMPACT OF THE RECESSION ON AMERICANS' FINANCES

The Great Recession has taken a heavy toll on unemployed Americans. About three in four of the unemployed (72%) report the economic downturn has had a **major** impact on them and their families. When asked to rate their financial circumstances as excellent, good, fair, or poor, more than half (56%) describe their family finances as flat out poor, with 90% of the unemployed in only fair or poor shape. Employed Americans have not been spared the recession's impact: more than one-third of those working (37%) say the recession has had a **major** impact on them; more than half (51%) also describe their personal financial situation as only fair or poor. (See Figures 3, 4, and 5.)

Facing mounting financial problems, millions of Americans have been forced to take on increasing debt and make lifestyle changes to cope with the economic downturn. More than half of all Americans (56%) report having some kind of financial debt other than their mortgage or rent. Those working for large employers, between 35 and 54 in age, those paid hourly, women, blacks, and Hispanics all report having more debt than their respective counterparts, as can be seen in Figure 6.

The survey asked about a dozen strategies that Americans might have used to cope with the recession. The percentages of those respondents using each strategy are presented in Figure 7, with separate lines for the American public and for the unemployed.

Figure 3. Has the Economic Downturn had a Major Impact, a Minor Impact, or No Impact at All on You and Your Family?

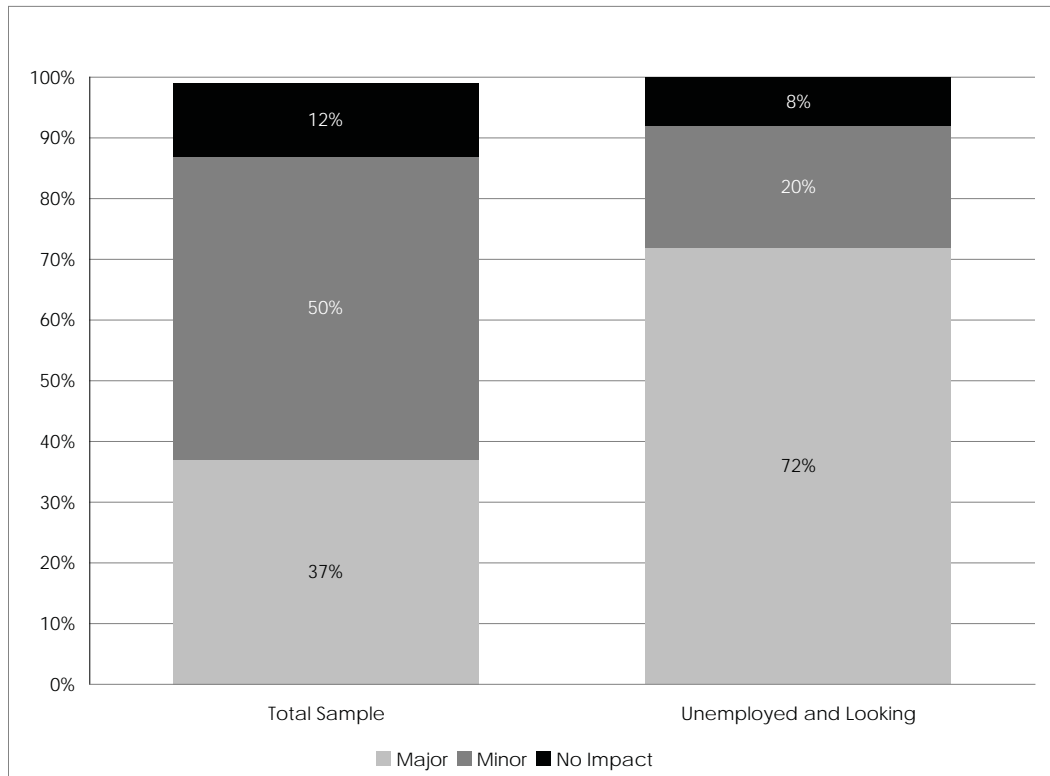


Figure 4. How Would You Rate Your Own Personal Financial Situation?

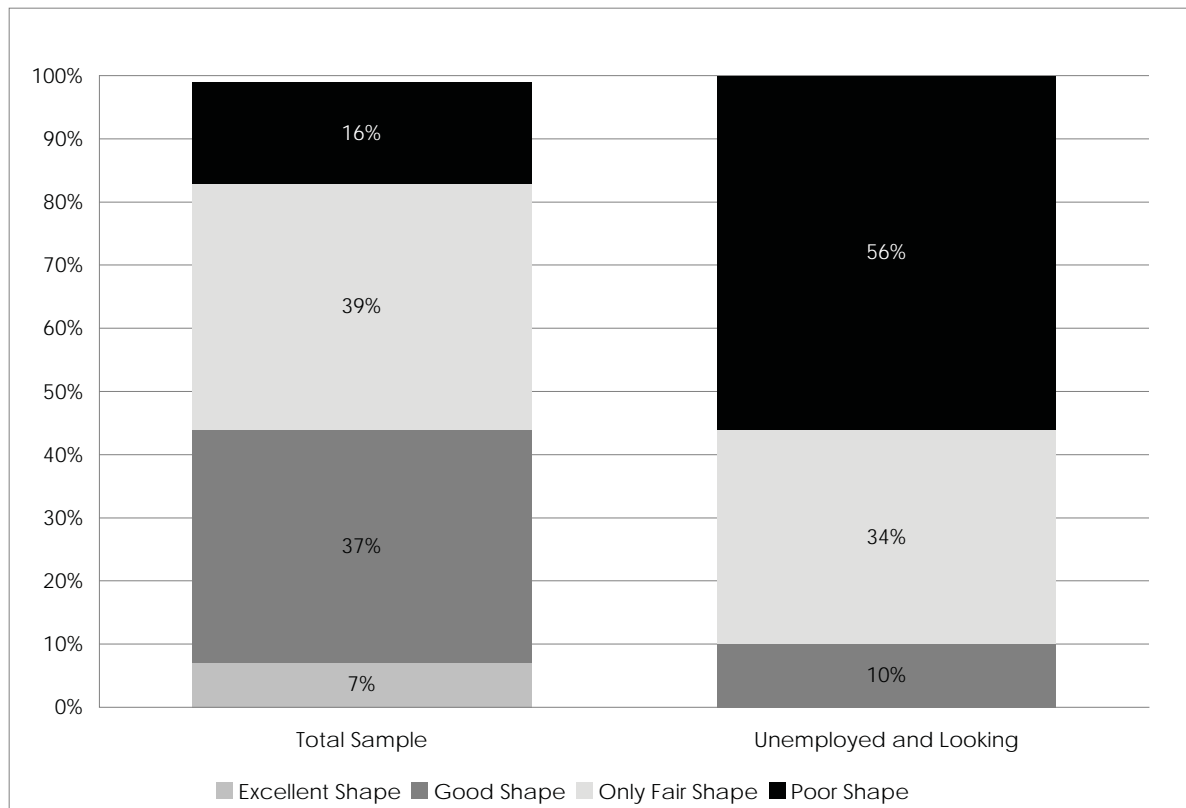


Figure 5. Has the Economic Downturn had a Major Impact, Minor Impact, or No Impact at All on You and Your Family? (Employed Americans)

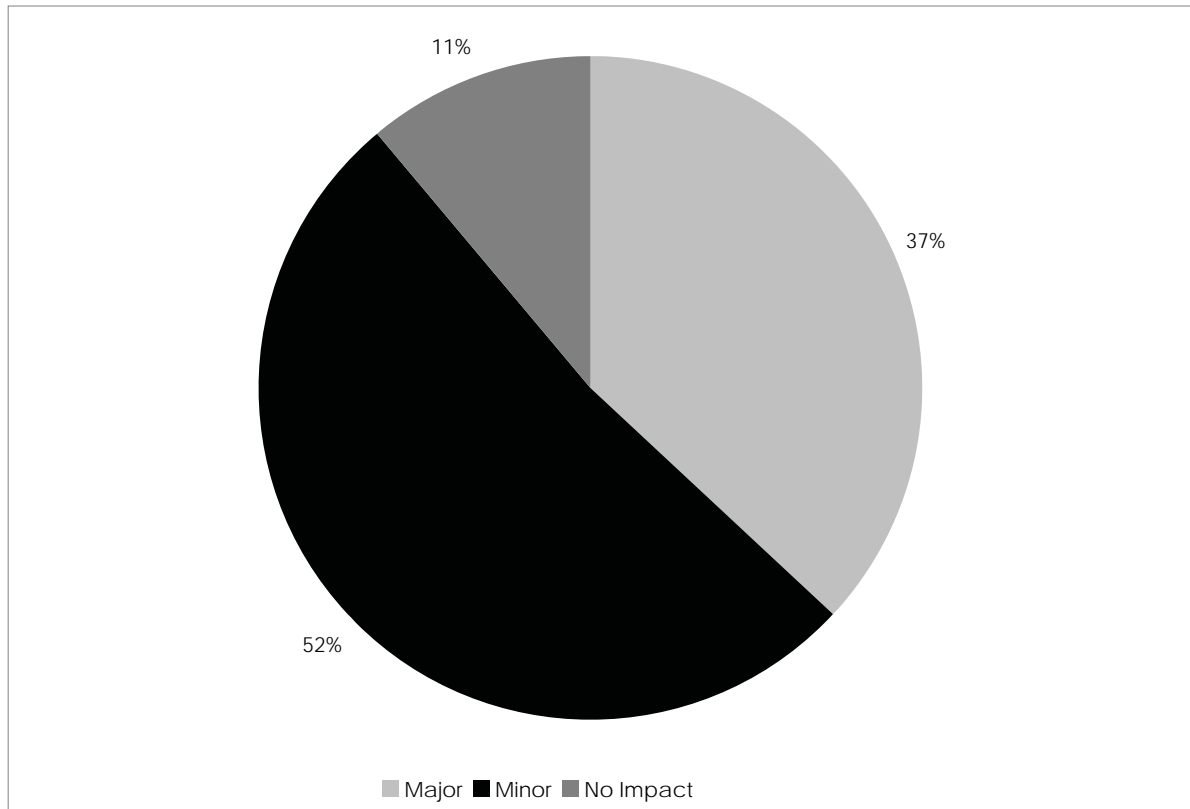
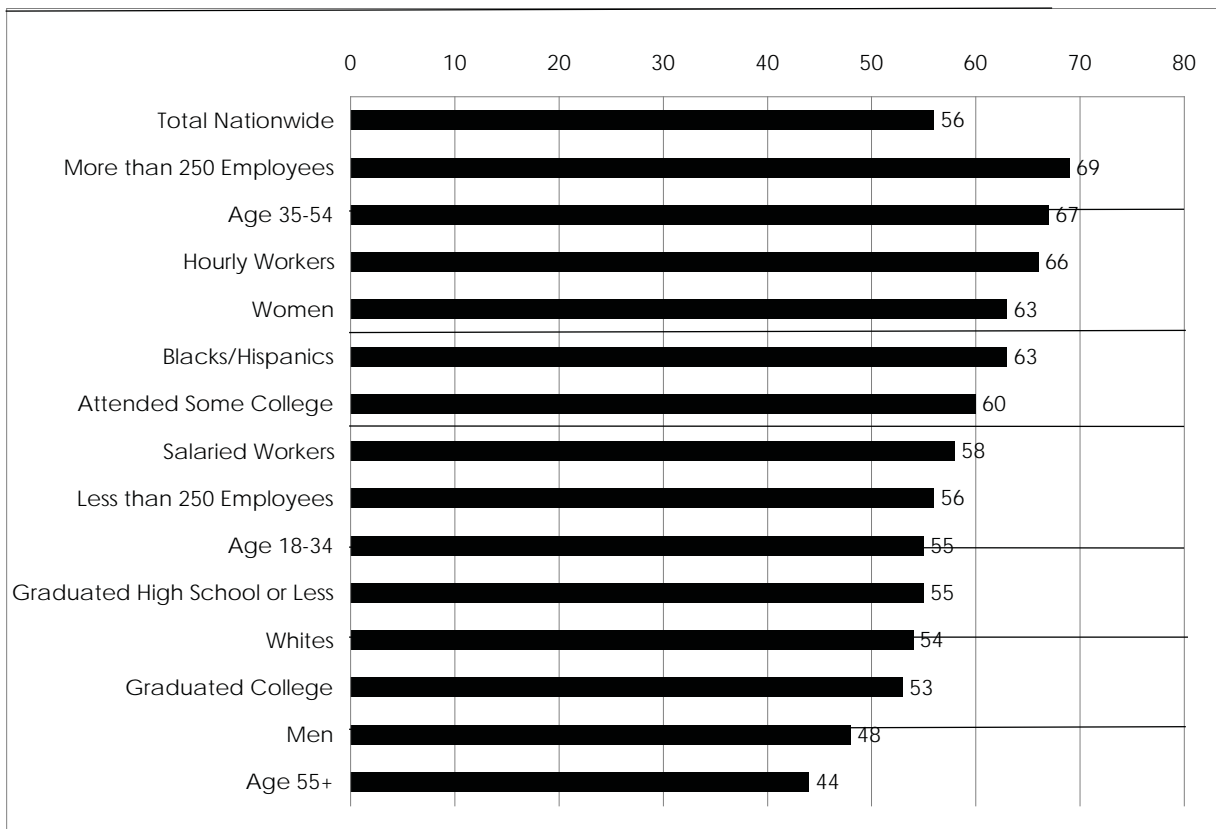


Figure 6. Percentage of Americans Reporting (non-housing) Debt



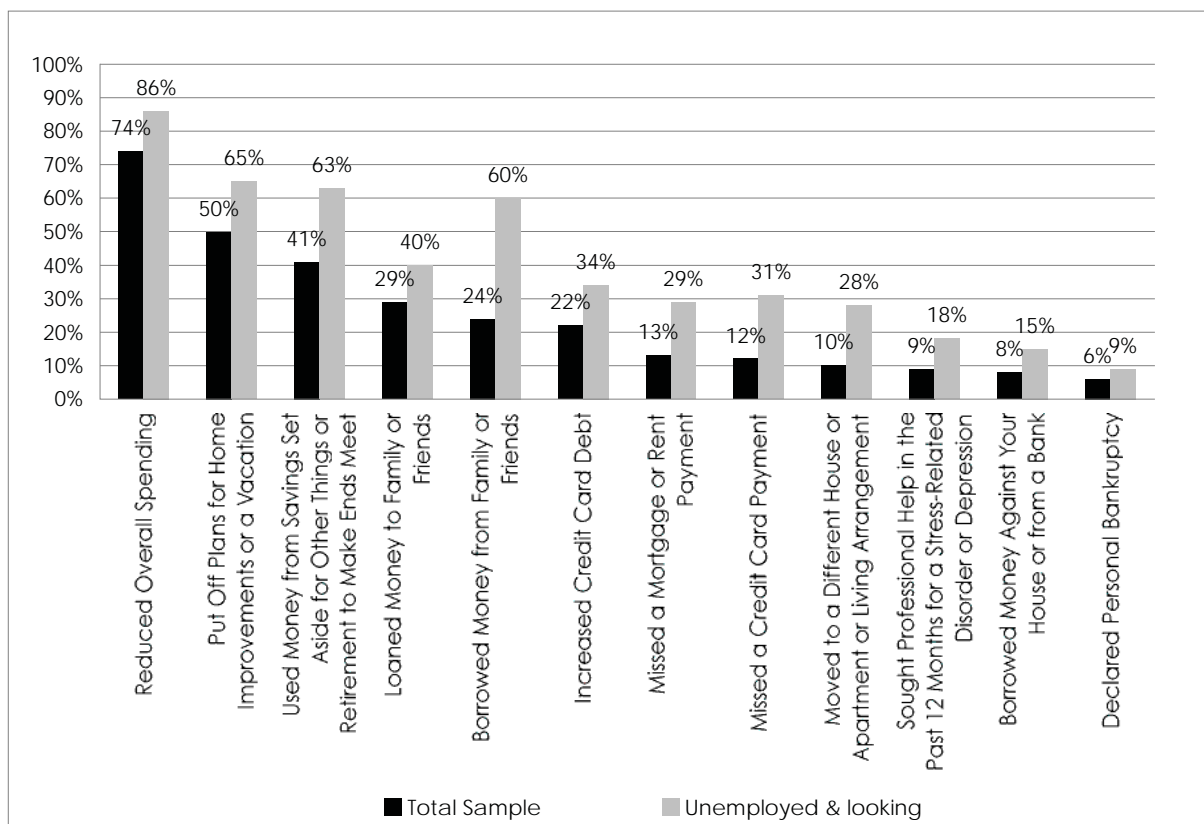
While all Americans have made adjustments, including cutting back on spending (74%) and delaying plans for home improvements or a vacation (50%), unemployed workers have been forced to make huge and painful sacrifices. An enormous number of the unemployed (60%) report having borrowed money from family or friends. In addition, one-third have run up credit card debt, while roughly the same number report missed mortgage and credit card payments. Over one in four (28%) have been forced to change their living arrangements.

Unemployed Americans report significant emotional stress: nearly 1 in 5 (18%) of the unemployed have sought professional help in the past year for a stress-related disorder or depression, and nearly 1 in 10 have

declared personal bankruptcy. The comparative numbers for those working are 8% struggling with mental health issues and 3% who have declared bankruptcy.

Unemployed Americans who have been forced to deal with the shock of being laid off are not alone — nearly three in four American workers (72%) either lost a job or know a family member or close friend who has lost a job in the past three years. **More than half of Americans have an immediate or extended family member who has lost a job during the recession.** More than 40% have a close, personal friend or extended family member outside of their household, such as a parent, child, or cousin who has suffered a layoff since 2007. (See Table 1.) The survey finds that during the recession:

Figure 7. Have you done any of the following because of the economic downturn?



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- 14% report having lost a full- or part-time job;
- 26% report that either they or a member of their immediate family lost a job;
- 56% report that either they, an immediate member of their family, or an extended family member lost a job;
- 73% report that they, an immediate member of their family, or a close friend lost a job;
- 78% report that they, an immediate member of their family, a close friend, or a close friend of someone in the immediate household lost a job; and
- Just 22% of Americans had no one in their family and no close friend of their family lose a job in the past three years

Table 1. Percent who Report Knowing Someone who had Lost a Job in the Past Three Years

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Another Member of Your Immediate Household	15%	14%	32%
A Member of Your Extended Family (parents, children, aunts, uncles, cousins, and such)	41%	35%	48%
A Close Personal Friend of Yours	44%	47%	54%
A Close Personal Friend of Someone Else in Your Immediate Household	25%	22%	41%

THE CAUSES OF HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT

Americans spread the blame around for high levels of unemployment and personal economic strife during the Great Recession. They do not, however, blame the victims (unemployed workers). Only one-quarter of those working (26%) and one in six of the unemployed (17%) say that the high jobless rate is due to the fact that some people do not want to work. Employed and unemployed Americans also agree that the vast majority of unemployed workers are not in that predicament due to their own behavior — it's simply not their fault. One of the principal reasons that employed workers sympathize with the plight of the unemployed may be that either they or someone in their household, extended family, or social circle has lost a job in the past three years.

The unemployed and employed believe that the underlying cause of high unemployment is that there are not enough jobs to go around — 8 in 10 Americans think the longstanding jobless rate is due to a limited supply of available jobs not meeting the demand for work by job seekers in today's economy. (See Figure 8.)

Nearly three of every four Americans believe that the cause of high unemployment is due to global competition and cheap labor from other countries (74%). Nearly half (47%) say that high unemployment levels are caused by illegal immigrants taking jobs away from Americans. Well over half of Americans (61%) also think that most or some of the unemployed are illegal immigrants (see Table 2). More than 4 in 10 Americans also attribute high unemployment to the actions of Wall Street bankers (45%).

Fewer Americans, though significant numbers, also believe that the policies of former President George W. Bush (31%) and President Barack Obama (33%) contributed to record high unemployment. The employed and unemployed rate the Presidents differently: the unemployed are harsher on President Bush (36% vs. 29%), while employed Americans are slightly more likely to say that the policies of President Obama are a major cause of high unemployment compared to jobless Americans (32% vs. 24%). (See Figure 9.)

Americans have great sympathy and empathy for the plight of the unemployed. Almost 90% of the public believes those out of work really want to work. Just 16% believe those out of work are happy to not have to work; a similar small number (15%) believes those who are unemployed are there by their own choice. Unemployed workers are more likely than the public as a whole to say that the unemployed cannot get a job even if they try harder, and that most of the unemployed really want to work. The one significant difference on this dimension is that half of the public (49%) believes the unemployed are too selective about accepting job offers, whereas only one in three out of work (34%) share this attitude. (See Table 2 and Figure 10.)

When asked what sacrifices they thought those unemployed should make in order to get another job, three quarters of the public believe the jobless should accept a temporary job, be willing to work in a position of a lower status than previous work, find a job in a different area than they have experience in, and accept less favorable working hours. Americans do mostly agree, however, that unemployed workers should not be expected to move long distance to find

Figure 8. What Do You Think is the Main Cause of Unemployment?

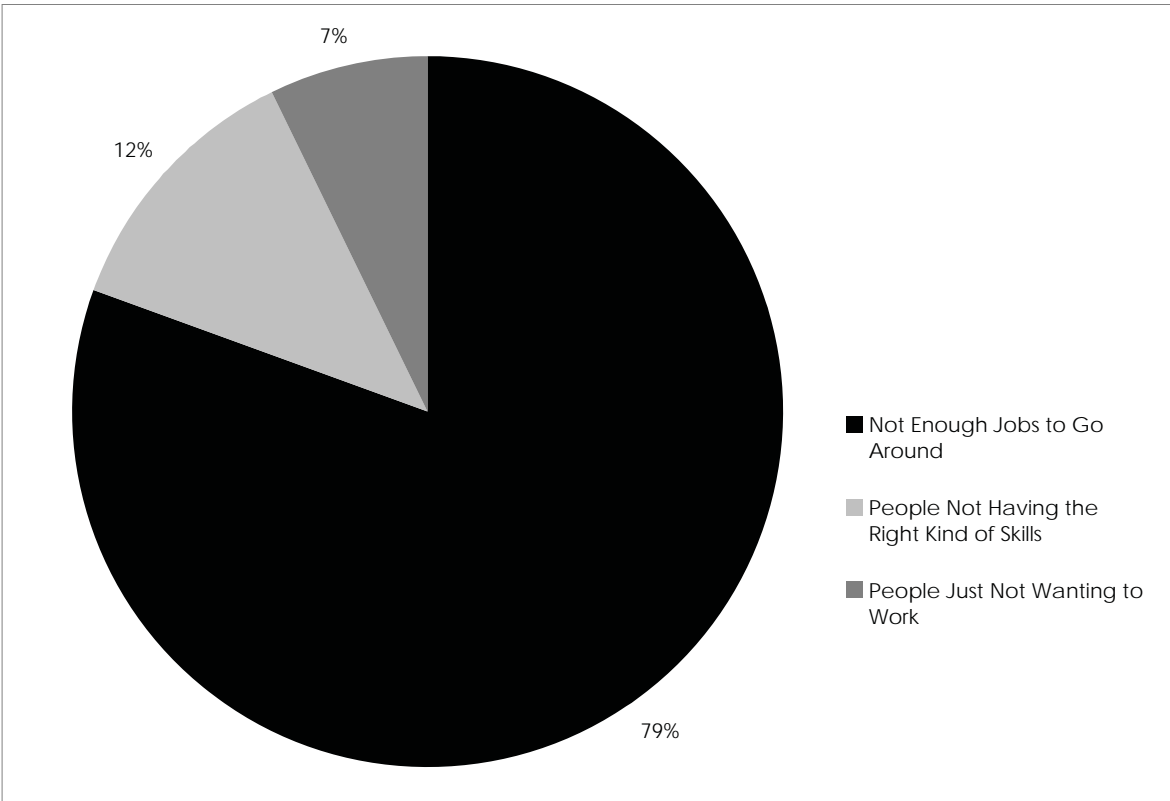


Figure 9. Major Causes of High Unemployment

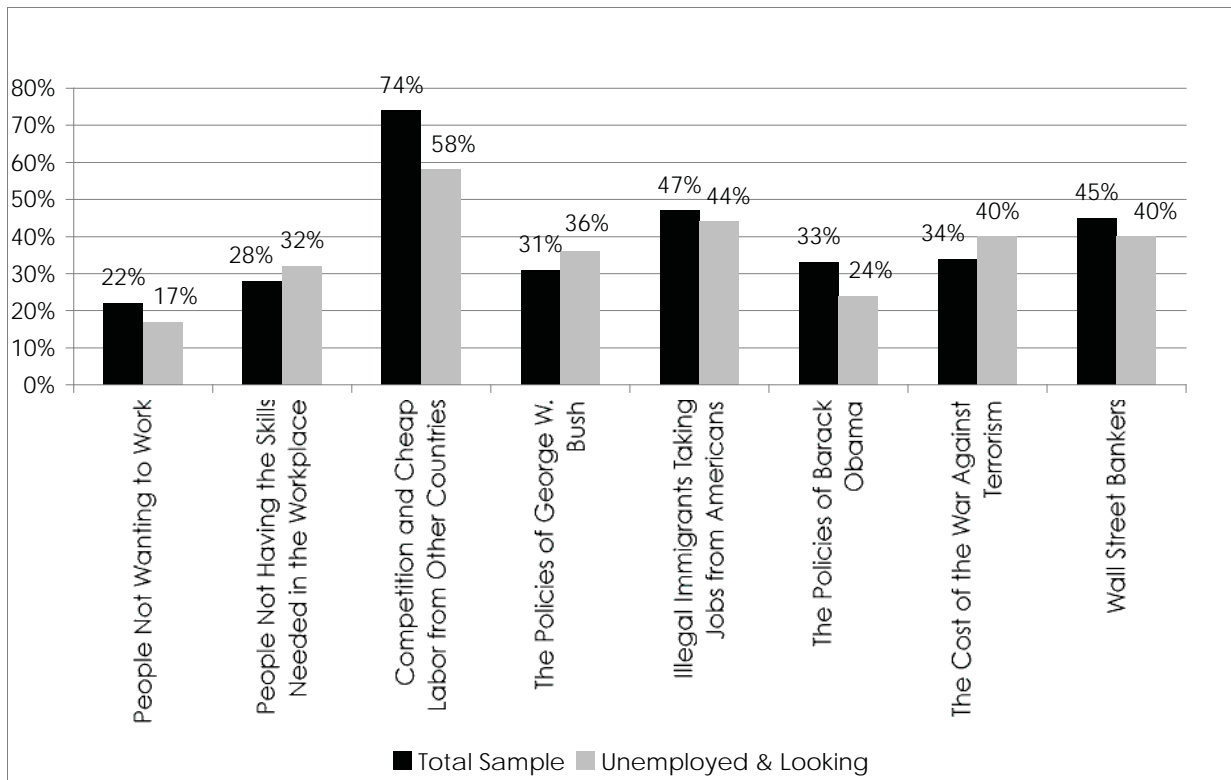


Figure 10. Views of the Unemployed

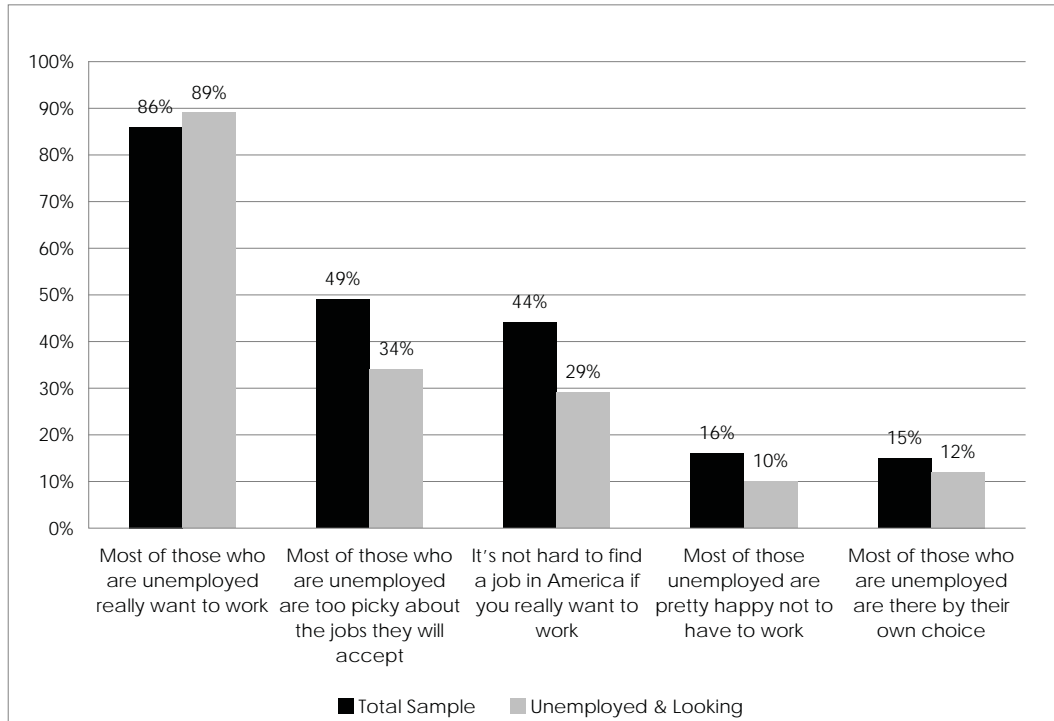


Table 2. Views of the Unemployed

	Most	Some	Few	None	Total*
How many of the unemployed are there through their own fault?					
Total Nationwide	5%	44%	47%	3%	99%
Unemployed and Looking	5%	37%	47%	10%	99%
How many of the unemployed could get a new job, if they tried?					
Total Nationwide	15%	49%	34%	1%	99%
Unemployed and Looking	12%	44%	37%	6%	99%
How many of those currently without a job want to work?					
Total Nationwide	58%	30%	11%	1%	100%
Unemployed and Looking	69%	21%	8%	1%	100%
How many of the unemployed are illegal immigrants?					
Total Nationwide	7%	54%	31%	7%	99%
Unemployed and Looking	13%	45%	28%	12%	98%

* Total nationwide (n=818)

Total unemployed and looking (n=262)

"Refused" answers not shown in totals

another job — just over one-third of both groups (36%) think that the unemployed should commute farther and longer.

By and large, there are few differences between these general impressions held by working Americans and those unemployed. As illustrated in Figure 11, the vast majority of those out of work say they would be willing to make these sacrifices in order to regain employment:

- 70% are willing to take a temporary job
- 65% are willing to earn a little less
- 64% are willing to work in a new area
- 59% are willing to work less favorable hours
- 59% are willing to accept a lower-status job than they previously held
- 54% are willing to work below their level of skill or training.

Americans fortunate enough to have a job during a time of economic downturn are generally satisfied with their jobs. Nearly two-thirds of workers (65%) are at least somewhat satisfied with their current job, although only one-quarter (25%) report being **very satisfied**. About one-fifth (19%) express some degree of dissatisfaction and the remaining 14% express neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction. When asked how their job situation may have changed over the past 12 months, more than half say they are about as satisfied now, 19% say they are more satisfied, and 26% say they are less satisfied. This pattern also holds for job security: 18% more satisfied, 28% less satisfied, and 52% about as satisfied as they were one year ago. Half of American workers, however, are doubtful they have the ability to find a new job if need be; less than one-fifth of the employed (19%) are

very or extremely confident that they could find a position as good or better if they lost or wanted to leave their current job.

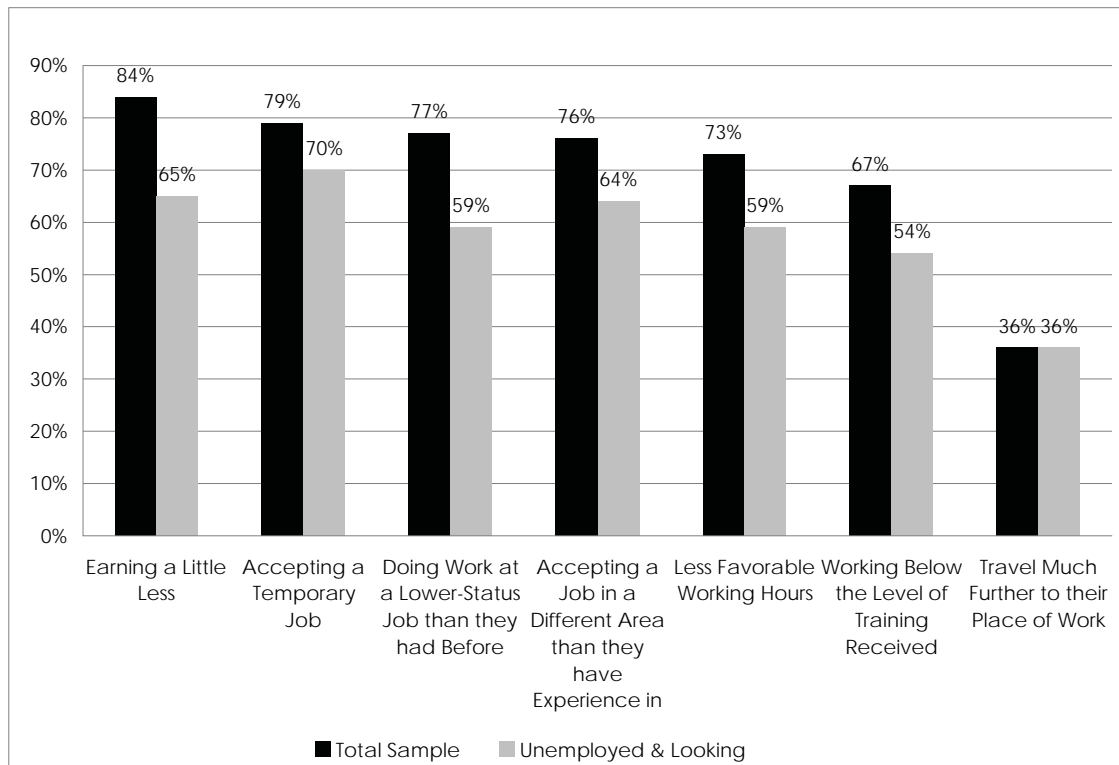
Even though they have jobs, more than three-quarters of Americans report that the economic downturn has had either a major or minor impact on their workplace. In fact, 38% of those with jobs describe the impact of the recession as **major** where they work. Fully half of working America (51%) reports there have been layoffs at their place of business in the past three years. More men than women report job losses by a margin of 56% to 46%. More of those in the mid-age range of 35 to 55 report layoffs as do those with higher levels of education. (See Table 3.)

Table 3. Percent Reporting Layoffs at Work in the Past Three Years

	Total Sample
All Currently Employed	51%
By Gender	
Men	56%
Women	46%
By Age	
18-34*	46%
35-55	55%
55+*	51%
By Education	
High School or Less*	45%
Some College*	55%
College Graduate*	54%
By Pay	
Paid Hourly	52%
Paid Salary	60%
Company Size	
Less than 250 Employees	50%
More than 250 Employees	58%

*= N < 100

Figure 11. What Changes Should Unemployed People be Willing to Make to Get a Job?



ASSESSING POLICIES AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

With a midterm election only two months away, it is not likely that Congress and the White House will be able to advance any major policy initiatives. After the elections, it may also be difficult for the leaders in either party to reach consensus across the partisan divide let alone within their own party caucuses. Employed and unemployed workers have sharply different views about who is responsible for helping the unemployed:

- When employed Americans were asked who bore the primary responsibility for helping those without work, 43% say it is workers themselves, while 30% say the government and 26% say employers.

- Among the unemployed, however, 51% say government should have primary responsibility to create jobs rather than expect government to help, compared to just 22% who say they themselves should help. (See Figure 12.)

Both the public as a whole and the unemployed are skeptical of government's ability to make a fundamental difference in reducing unemployment. About twice as many (65%) feel that the unemployed are just going to have to wait for the private sector to improve than feel government can reduce unemployment to any significant extent. The figures for the unemployed are a narrower 53% to 46% view that the private sector needs to improve.

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While rejecting the need for a new stimulus package, the American public is fundamentally split on policy remedies for the unemployed and the economy. By a margin of 70% to 30%, more disagree than agree that the United States needs a new stimulus package at the cost of increasing federal debt. Half believe the government should cut taxes for businesses in order to help create jobs even if it causes the debt to increase, while half do not. (See Figure 13.)

Survey respondents are a bit more willing to see the debt rise in order to fund programs to directly create jobs — 54% are willing to see the debt rise, while 46% are not willing. Compared to working Americans, the majority of unemployed workers are also more supportive of implementing federal policies to aid in recovery, including government-funded job creation programs (77% vs. 51%), developing a new economic stimulus

package (53% vs. 28%), and cutting taxes for businesses in order to create jobs (57% vs. 49%), even if these actions increase the national debt.

In addition to these mixed opinions about what political leadership should do to improve the U.S. economy, there is little faith in Washington's ability to manage the economy. When asked who they trusted to handle the economy, just 23% choose President Obama and 19% say the Republicans in Congress. Forty-five percent say they trust neither. President Obama gets low marks for dealing with the issue. Just 19% of Americans believe Obama's policies have reduced the length of the recession. Twice as many (39%) believe his policies have actually lengthened the recession, with the remaining 41% saying that the administration's policies have neither helped nor hurt. (See Figure 14.)

Figure 12. The Primary Responsibility for Helping Jobless Americans

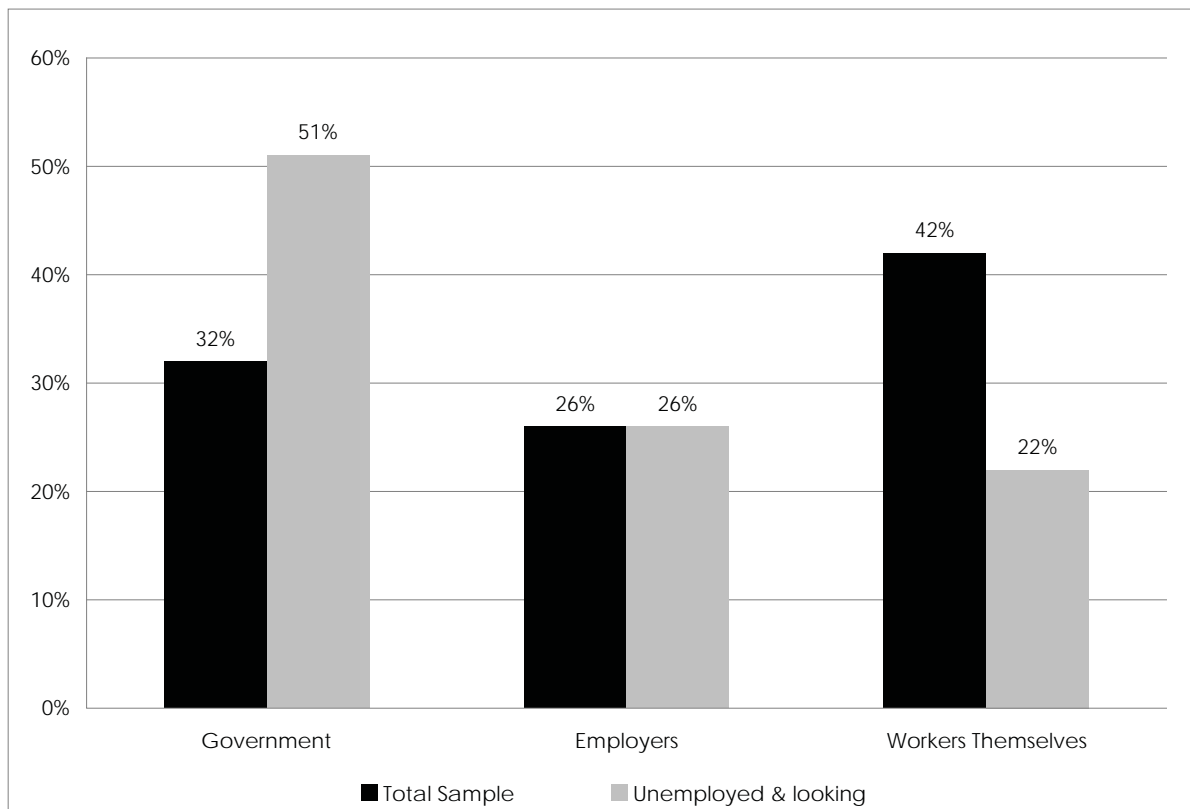


Figure 13. Federal Priorities

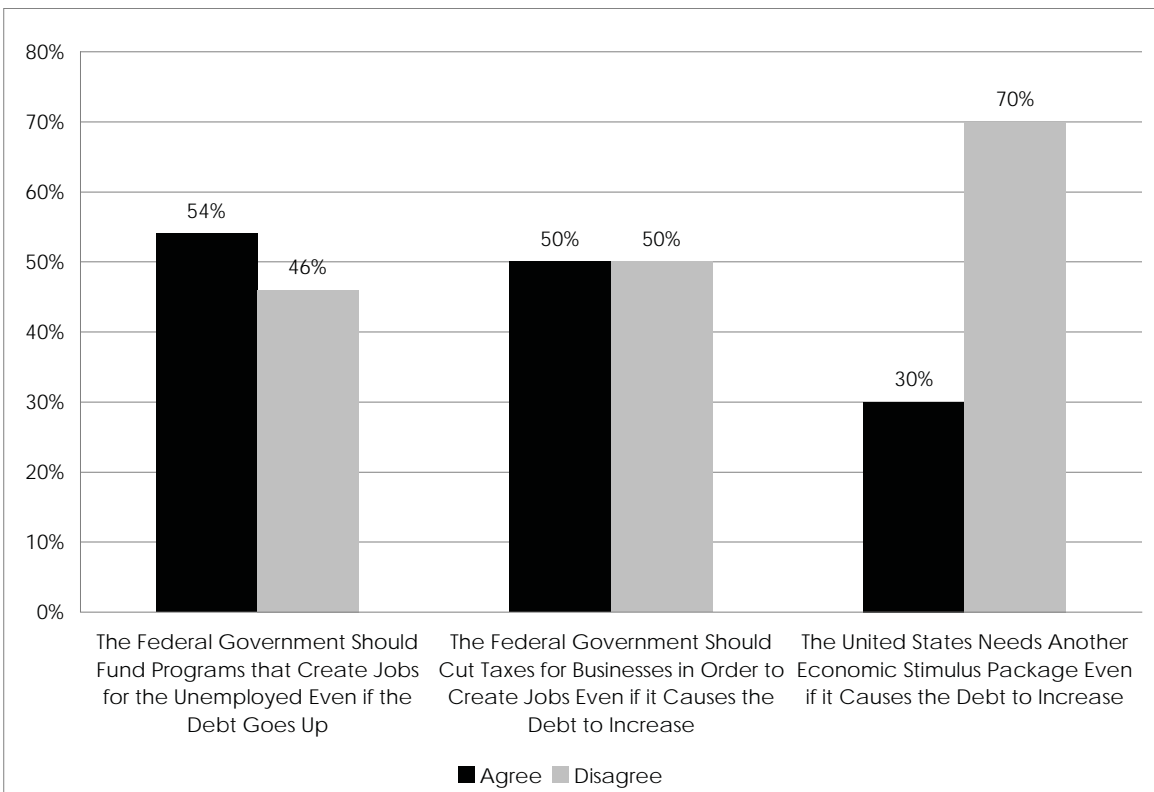
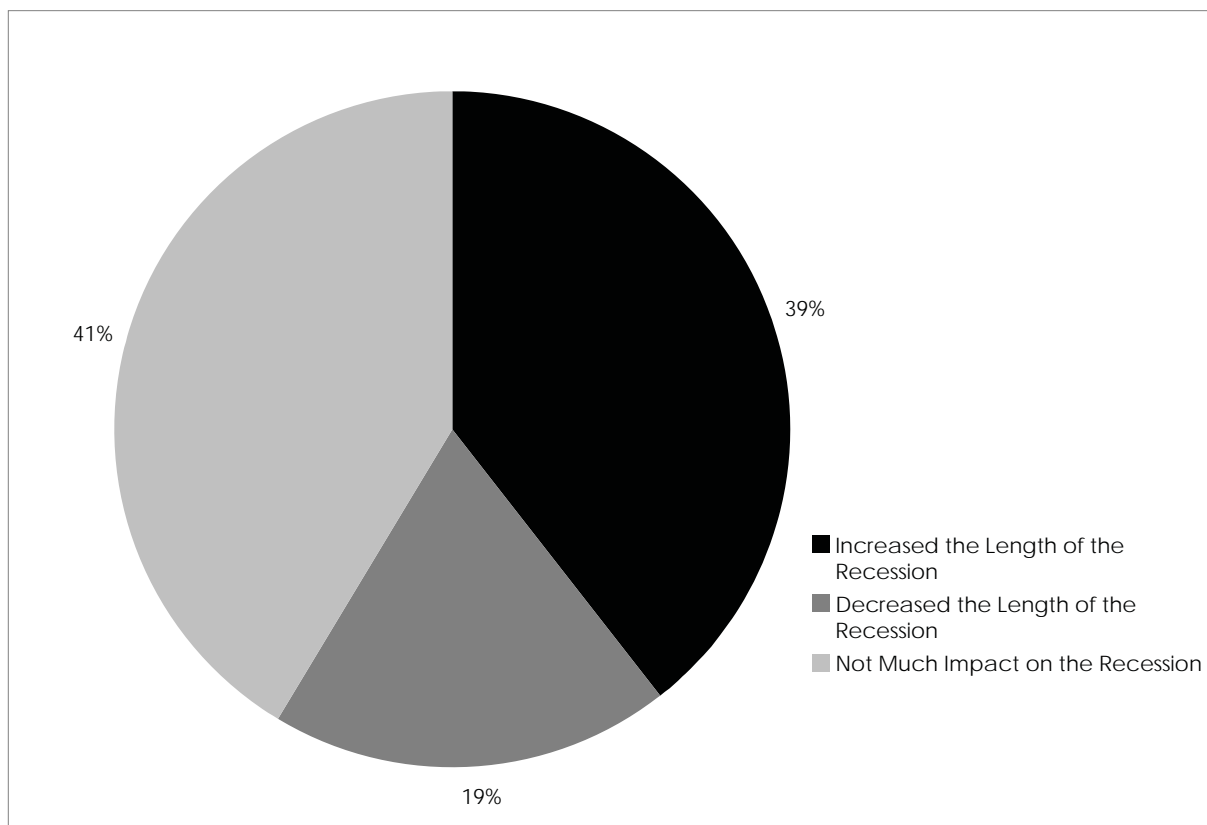


Figure 14. The Impact of the Obama Administration's Policies on the Recession



CONCLUSION

The pessimistic outlook of both employed and unemployed American workers — and the lack of consensus about what should be done about the economy — should worry national policymakers. The unemployed and their families are experiencing increasingly severe financial and emotional crises, and a majority of those with jobs fear that their employment security may remain threatened in the coming year.

The argument that high unemployment persists because job seekers are spoiled by overgenerous entitlement payments will not find much support among American workers. Instead, 8 in 10 adults blame a lack of new private-sector jobs and more than 80% believe that those out of work sincerely want a job.

Job creation emerges as an urgent concern for a large number of Americans in and out of the labor market. More than half of all adults are taking on additional debt, and know an immediate or extended family member who has recently lost a job. They believe that the U.S. economy is experiencing a permanent change, not a temporary slowdown, and expect the effects of the Great Recession to still be felt one year from now. In short, American workers' faith in the future will not easily be restored until they see credible evidence that robust private-sector job growth has returned.

APPENDIX A. METHODOLOGY

The latest Heldrich Center *Work Trends* survey was fielded July 19 to August 6, 2010 online with a national probability sample of 818 U.S. residents age 18 or older through Knowledge Networks. The sample includes 326 respondents who are currently employed and 262 respondents who are unemployed and looking for work.

All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. The sampling error for 800 respondents is +/- 4%, at a 95% confidence interval. Thus, if 50% of respondents say they have financial debt other than mortgage or rent, one would be 95% sure that the true figure would be between 46% and 54% had all U.S. residents been interviewed, rather than just a sample. The sampling error for the 326 employed respondents is 6% and 7% for the respondents who are unemployed and looking for work, at a 95% confidence interval.

Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported for women or men or hourly or salaried workers, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording, or context effects.

The survey was conducted using the web-enabled KnowledgePanel®, a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. population. Initially, participants are chosen scientifically by a random selection of telephone numbers and residential addresses. Persons in selected households are then invited by telephone or by mail to participate in the web-enabled KnowledgePanel®. For those who agree to participate, but do not already have Internet access, Knowledge Networks provides at no cost a laptop and ISP connection. People who already have computers and Internet service are permitted to participate using their own equipment. Panelists then receive unique log-in information for accessing surveys online, and then are sent emails throughout each month inviting them to participate in research.

When we talk about the **unemployed**, we are referring only to those who are unemployed and looking for a job.

APPENDIX B. TOPLINE SURVEY RESULTS

Knowledge Networks/online

Field dates: July 19, 2010 to August 6, 2010

N = 818 (all respondents) — TOTAL SAMPLE

N = 326 (employed respondents) — EMPLOYED

N = 262 (unemployed and looking respondents) — UNEMPLOYED AND LOOKING

Percentage totals may not equal 100% due to rounding

* = less than 1% reporting

RI5. Which of the following three conditions best describes you:

	Total Sample
Employed	61%
Unemployed and looking for work	6%
Unemployed but not looking for work	33%
Refused	1%

R1. Thinking about the job situation in America today, would you say that now is a good time or bad time to find a quality job?

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Good	7%	8%	8%
Bad	78%	79%	84%
Don't know	14%	12%	9%
Refused	1%	1%	-

R2. Just your best guess, do you think the recent problems in the economy indicate the U.S. economy is experiencing a temporary downturn, OR is it experiencing fundamental and lasting changes?

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Temporary economic downturn	43%	44%	46%
Lasting economic change	56%	55%	54%
Refused	1%	1%	-

R3. Please indicate how concerned you are about these 3 issues:

a. The current unemployment rate

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Very concerned	52%	50%	74%
Somewhat concerned	39%	44%	22%
Not too concerned	6%	4%	3%
Not at all concerned	2%	1%	1%

b. Job security for those currently working

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Very concerned	49%	50%	58%
Somewhat concerned	37%	36%	32%
Not too concerned	11%	11%	7%
Not at all concerned	2%	1%	1%
Refused	2%	1%	2%

c. The job market for those looking for work

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Very concerned	61%	62%	81%
Somewhat concerned	30%	30%	16%
Not too concerned	7%	6%	3%
Not at all concerned	2%	1%	*
Refused	1%	1%	*

G1. When people are laid off from work, who should be mainly responsible for helping them? Please choose one.

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Government	32%	30%	51%
Employer	26%	26%	26%
Workers themselves	42%	43%	22%
Refused	1%	1%	2%

G3. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

(THOSE WHO “AGREE”)

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
a. It is the responsibility of government to take care of people who cannot take care of themselves	51%	51%	64%
b. The federal government should cut taxes for businesses in order to create jobs even if it causes the debt to increase	50%	49%	57%
c. The United States needs another economic stimulus package even if it causes the debt to increase	30%	28%	53%
d. The federal government should fund programs that create jobs for the unemployed, even if the debt goes up	54%	51%	77%

R4. Who do you trust to do a better job handling the economy?

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
President Obama	23%	23%	35%
The Republicans in Congress	19%	21%	13%
Neither	45%	44%	39%
Both	12%	11%	12%
Refused	1%	1%	-

R5. A year from now, do you expect economic conditions in the country as a whole will be:

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Better	32%	27%	37%
Worse	27%	28%	27%
Same as now	41%	44%	36%
Refused	1%	1%	-

R6. Just your best guess, one year from now, do you think the economy will no longer be in a recession, will still be in a recession, or will be in an economic depression?

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
No longer in a recession	16%	15%	22%
Still in a recession	64%	64%	50%
In an economic depression	18%	19%	28%
Refused	2%	2%	*

R8. Do you think the policies of the Obama administration have:

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Increased the length of the recession	39%	37%	28%
Decreased the length of the recession	19%	18%	33%
Not had much impact on the length of the recession	41%	44%	39%
Refused	1%	1%	*

R7. There have recently been a number of signs that the recession may be largely over. How many of the jobs that were lost during the recession have come back so far:

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Almost all of them	1%	*	1%
About three-quarters of them	3%	2%	4%
About half of them	11%	10%	16%
About one-quarter of them	38%	41%	31%
Almost none of them	46%	45%	46%
Refused	2%	2%	3%

R9. What portion of Americans who have lost jobs receive some type of financial support from the government?

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
About one-quarter	22%	22%	35%
About one-half	31%	31%	29%
About three-quarters	26%	27%	17%
Almost all	19%	19%	16%
Refused	2%	1%	2%

R10. Do you think the government can reduce unemployment to any real extent, or do we just have to wait until the private-sector economy improves?

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Government can act	33%	33%	46%
Wait for economic improvement	65%	66%	53%
Refused	2%	2%	2%

U2. Which of these do you think are major causes of high unemployment? Check all that apply.

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
People not wanting to work	22%	26%	17%
People not having the skills needed in the workplace	28%	28%	32%
Competition and cheap labor from other countries	74%	75%	58%
The policies of George W. Bush	31%	29%	36%
Illegal immigrants taking jobs from Americans	47%	42%	44%
The policies of Barack Obama	33%	32%	24%
The cost of the war against terrorism	34%	33%	40%
Wall Street bankers	45%	42%	40%

U1. What do you think is the main cause of unemployment?

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Not enough jobs to go around	79%	80%	82%
People not having the right kind of skills	12%	11%	15%
People just not wanting to work	7%	8%	3%
Refused	2%	2%	*

U3.

a. How many of the unemployed are there through their own fault?

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Most	5%	4%	5%
Some	44%	48%	37%
Few	47%	45%	47%
None	3%	2%	10%
Refused	1%	1%	1%

b. How many of the unemployed could get a new job, if they tried?

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Most	15%	15%	12%
Some	49%	54%	44%
Few	34%	30%	37%
None	1%	*	6%
Refused	1%	1%	1%

c. How many of those currently without a job want to work?

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Most	58%	55%	69%
Some	30%	34%	21%
Few	11%	11%	8%
None	1%	*	1%
Refused	1%	1%	*

d. How many of the unemployed are illegal immigrants?

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Most	7%	5%	13%
Some	54%	55%	45%
Few	31%	34%	28%
None	7%	5%	12%
Refused	2%	1%	2%

U4. Out of every 10 of the unemployed, how many do you think could find a job if they really wanted to?

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
0	2%	*	6%
1	7%	8%	8%
2	12%	10%	15%
3	15%	14%	8%
4	15%	16%	15%
5	18%	20%	20%
6	8%	7%	8%
7	8%	11%	6%
8	8%	8%	5%
9	3%	3%	4%
10	3%	3%	3%
Refused	1%	1%	2%

Summary

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
0 - 2	21%	18%	29%
3 - 5	48%	50%	43%
6 - 8	24%	26%	19%
9 - 10	6%	6%	7%

U5. Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements.

(THOSE WHO “AGREE”)

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
a. Most of those who are unemployed really want to work.	86%	86%	89%
b. Most of the unemployed get some benefits from government like unemployment insurance.	81%	83%	60%
c. It's not hard to find a job in American if you really want to work.	44%	44%	29%
d. Most people who are unemployed can rely on others in their family to get by financially.	20%	21%	22%
e. Most of those unemployed are pretty happy not to have to work.	16%	17%	10%
f. Most of those who are unemployed are there by their own choice.	15%	13%	12%
g. Most of those who are unemployed are too picky about the jobs they will accept.	49%	55%	34%

U6. Which changes do you feel unemployed people should be willing to make to get a job? Check all that apply.

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Earning a little less	84%	86%	65%
Less favorable working hours	73%	74%	59%
Working below the level of training received	67%	70%	54%
Travel much further to their place of work	36%	36%	36%
Doing work at a lower status job than they had before	77%	80%	59%
Accepting a temporary job	79%	82%	70%
Accepting a job in a different area than they have experience in	76%	77%	64%

R11. How would you rate your own personal financial situation?

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Excellent shape	7%	9%	*
Good shape	37%	40%	10%
Only fair shape	39%	40%	34%
Poor shape	16%	11%	56%
Refused	1%	1%	*

RI1A. If you were asked to choose one of these commonly used names for social classes, which would you say you belong in?

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Upper class	1%	1%	3%
Upper-middle class	10%	9%	3%
Middle class	44%	49%	31%
Lower-middle class	33%	32%	36%
Lower class	11%	7%	26%
Refused	2%	2%	3%

RI2. Do you think the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico will have a major impact, a minor impact, or no impact at all on you and your family?

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Major	25%	24%	29%
Minor	55%	57%	42%
No impact	20%	19%	28%
Refused	1%	1%	1%

RI3. Has the economic downturn had a major impact, a minor impact, or no impact at all on you and your family?

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Major	37%	37%	72%
Minor	50%	52%	20%
No impact	12%	11%	8%
Refused	1%	1%	1%

RI3A. Excluding your mortgage or rent, do you currently have any financial debt?

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Yes	56%	62%	58%
No	43%	36%	41%
Refused	2%	3%	1%

RI4. Have you done any of the following because of the economic downturn?

(THOSE WHO ANSWERED “YES”)

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
a. Borrowed money from family or friends	24%	25%	60%
b. Loaned money to family or friends	29%	26%	40%
c. Missed a mortgage or rent payment	13%	12%	29%
d. Declared personal bankruptcy	6%	3%	9%
e. Put off plans for home improvements or a vacation	50%	53%	65%
f. Used money from savings set aside for other things or retirement to make ends meet	41%	45%	63%
g. Reduced overall spending	74%	78%	86%
h. Borrowed money against your house or from a bank	8%	9%	15%
i. Missed a credit card payment	12%	9%	31%
j. Moved to a different house or apartment or living arrangement	10%	7%	28%
k. Increased credit card debt	22%	24%	34%
l. Sought professional help in the past twelve months for a stress-related disorder or depression	9%	8%	18%

FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IF RESPONDENT IS EMPLOYED (RI5=1)

RI6. How many people does the organization or company where you work employ?

	Employed
Less than 25 people	22%
25-99 people	21%
100-249 people	9%
250 or more people	43%
Self-employed	4%
Refused	2%

RI7. Here are two different ways of looking at your job. Some people get a sense of identity from their job. For other people, their job is just what they do for a living. Which of these best describes the way you usually feel about your job?

	Employed
Identity	35%
For a living	63%
Refused	2%

RI8. Do you think of your work more as a career, or more as just a job to get you by?

	Employed
A career	55%
Just a job to get you by	43%
Refused	2%

RI9. Are you paid:

	Employed
A salary	39%
By the hour	53%
Self-employed/commission	7%
Refused	1%

CE1. Thinking about your current job, are you...

	Employed
Very satisfied	25%
Somewhat satisfied	40%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	14%
Somewhat dissatisfied	12%
Very dissatisfied	7%
Don't know	2%
Refused	1%

RI10. Compared to one year ago, would you say you are more satisfied in your job situation, about as satisfied as you were, or less satisfied now than a year ago?

	Employed
More satisfied now	19%
About as satisfied as you were	53%
Less satisfied now	26%
Refused	2%

RI11. Compared to one year ago, would you say you are more satisfied with your job security, about as satisfied as you were, or less satisfied now than a year ago?

	Employed
More satisfied now	18%
About as satisfied as you were	52%
Less satisfied now	28%
Refused	2%

RI12. How confident are you that if you lost or wanted to leave your current job, you could find another job as good or better?

	Employed
Extremely confident	7%
Very confident	12%
Somewhat confident	30%
Not very confident	30%
Not at all confident	20%
Refused	1%

RI13. Has the economic downturn had a major impact at the place where you work, a minor impact, or no impact at all?

	Employed
Major	38%
Minor	46%
No impact	14%
Refused	2%

RI16. Did others in your firm or workplace get laid off in the past 3 years – from 2007 to the present, or not?

	Employed
Yes	51%
No	48%
Refused	1%

ALL RESPONDENTS

RI14. During the past 3 years – that is, 2007 up to the present – were you laid off from a full- or part-time job?

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Yes, full-time job	11%	8%	46%
Yes, part-time job	3%	2%	15%
No	86%	89%	39%
Refused	1%	1%	*

RI15. Please check the box if you know someone in each category who has lost a job in the last three years. Check all that apply.

	Total Sample	Employed	Unemployed & Looking
Another member of your immediate household	15%	14%	32%
A member of your extended family – parents, children, aunts, uncles, cousins and such	41%	35%	48%
A close personal friend of yours	44%	47%	54%
A close personal friend of someone else in your immediate household	25%	22%	41%

DEMOGRAPHICS

Age

	Total Sample
18-34	29%
35-44	19%
45-54	17%
55-64	20%
65+	16%

Education

	Total Sample
Less than high school	14%
High school	31%
Some college	28%
Bachelor's degree or higher	27%

Race

	Total Sample
White, non-Hispanic	68%
Black/Other, non-Hispanic	17%
Hispanic	14%
2+ Races, non-Hispanic	1%

Gender

	Total Sample
Male	48%
Female	52%

Household Income

	Total Sample
Under \$30K	26%
\$30K - \$60K	29%
\$60K - \$100K	28%
Over \$100K	17%

Employment Status

	Total Sample
Working — as a paid employee	54%
Working — self-employed	5%
Not working — on temporary layoff from a job	1%
Not working — looking for work	7%
Not working — retired	15%
Not working — disabled	10%
Not working — other	9%



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