



# WORKTRENDS

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

## **Diminished Lives and Futures: A Portrait of America in the Great-Recession Era**

by

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## 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 workers' 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](http://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 Heldrich Center and Professor of Public Policy and Political Science at Rutgers University.

*Diminished Lives and Futures: A Portrait of America in the Great-Recession Era* 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

This *Work Trends* report, *Diminished Lives and Futures: A Portrait of America in the Great-Recession Era*, explores the views of employed and unemployed Americans about the economy and their experiences during and after the Great Recession, and asks them to assess the nation's political institutions, leaders, and public policies. At the time the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development conducted this survey — January 9 to 16, 2013 — U.S. economic and labor market conditions were mixed, but improving. The January 2013 jobs report (issued in early February 2013) by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that unemployment was at 7.9%, well below the peak unemployment level of 10% during the depth of the recession. Employers created 157,000 new jobs — the 35th straight month of positive private-sector job growth.<sup>1</sup> By the end of 2012, the U.S. job market had created nearly two million jobs in 2012 and recovered more than half of the nine million jobs lost during the Great Recession.<sup>2</sup> Stock market indices had regained or exceeded the values they had prior to the recession's start in 2007 and overall housing prices increased for the first time in several years.

Ongoing weaknesses in the economy and the labor market were also evident as the Heldrich Center's survey was being conducted. More than 12 million Americans remained unemployed and the percentage of workers who had been unemployed for more than six months — nearly 40% — remained at a high level. Economic growth declined slightly in the last quarter of 2012 and the percentage of working Americans who were working or seeking jobs was near a 30-year low.

The last time the Heldrich Center asked Americans to assess the economy, in August 2010, the jobs report brought the chilling news that the economy actually lost over 54,000 jobs due to reductions of 121,000 government employees. Private-sector job growth of 67,000 was not enough to move overall job growth in a positive direction. So while the nation's Gross Domestic Product continued to grow at a slow pace, the unemployment rate in August 2010 was stuck at 9.6%. At the time, many policymakers and economic forecasters were warning that the United States might experience a "double-dip recession" and even higher levels of unemployment for months and years to come.

This study probes the views of a nationally representative sample of 1,090 American workers (see methodology in Appendix A) as the economy seems to be on a slow but steady path to recovery. The Heldrich Center wanted to compare the views held by Americans today with a national representative sample of 818 Americans in August 2010. To what extent has the improving economy and job market over the last two-and-a-half years affected the attitudes and outlooks of Americans? The study also explores the policy preferences of Americans following the 2012 elections, in which President Obama was re-elected along with a divided Congress in which Republicans hold the majority in the House of Representatives and Democrats retain control of the Senate. Specifically, this report investigates American workers' views about the:

- Near- and long-term outlook of the economy and the labor market,
- Impact of the recession on Americans' finances,

- Perceptions of the causes of unemployment,
- The role of government in ameliorating unemployment, and
- Potential policy strategies to help the unemployed.

## AMERICAN WORKERS' EXPERIENCES DURING AND AFTER THE GREAT RECESSION

Nearly one-quarter (23%) of all survey respondents report being laid off from either a full-time or part-time job during and after the recession (over the past four years) (see Table 1). The data reveal several distinctions across demographic groups. Fewer women report layoffs than men by a margin of 19% to 27%. Twenty-two percent of white, non-Hispanic respondents were laid off during and after the recession compared to 31% of blacks and Hispanics. Older workers fared slightly better during the recession than younger workers. Nineteen percent of workers age 55 and older were laid off from a job compared to 23% of workers ages 34 to 54 and 28% of workers ages 18 to 34.

More than one-third (35%) of those who were laid off found a new job within six months of active pursuit and 16% found a new job in two months or less. Yet one-third of the respondents say they spent more than seven months seeking a new job and 1 in 10 were looking for more than two years. Some Americans have yet to find new work after being laid off — 22% say they were unable

**TABLE 1. DURING AND AFTER THE GREAT RECESSION, WERE YOU LAID OFF FROM A FULL- OR PART-TIME JOB?**

Percentage reporting layoffs (full or part time) during and after the recession	
Total	23%
Gender	
Male	27%
Female	19%
Race/Ethnicity	
White, non-Hispanic	22%
Black/Hispanic	31%
Age	
18 to 34	28%
35 to 54	23%
55 and older	19%

to obtain a new job. Older workers were less affected by layoffs compared to young workers; however, they have more trouble finding new jobs compared to others. Nearly two-thirds of workers age 55 and older say they were actively seeking a job for more than one year or have not yet found a new job compared to just one-third of younger workers (younger than 55) who say the same.

The Great Recession left an indelible imprint on the American workforce. **Approximately 8.7 million jobs were lost between the start of the recession in December 2007 through early 2010.**<sup>3</sup> Job growth since 2010 has been steady, but insufficient to lower the unemployment rate much below 8%. Those who were directly affected by unemployment are not alone. While one in four American workers say they were directly affected through a job loss, nearly eight in ten Americans (79%) know at least someone who lost a job in the past four years. Among those who responded:

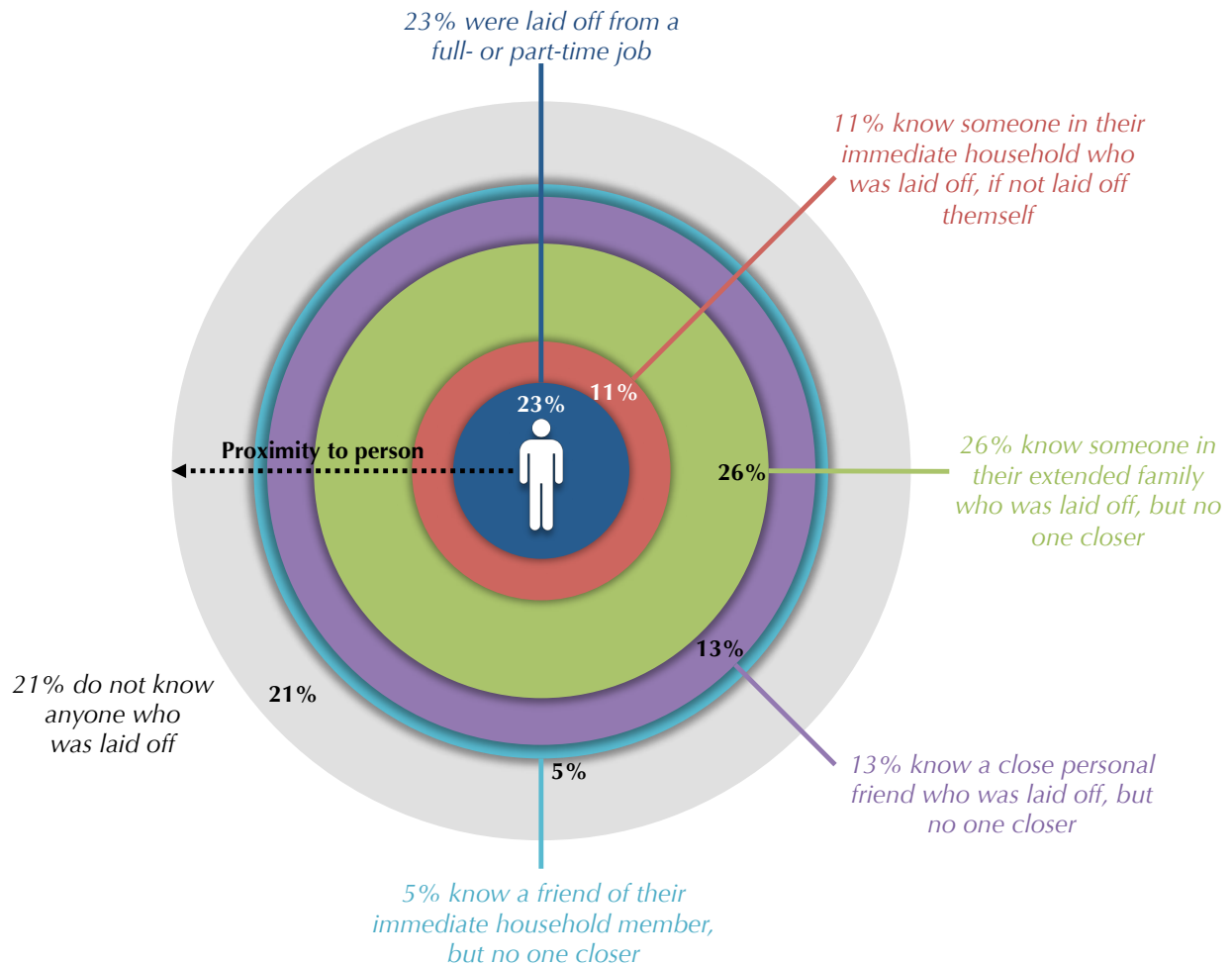
- 26% know a member of their immediate household;
- 58% know a member of their extended family (parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and such);
- 58% know a close personal friend; and
- 34% know a close friend of someone in their immediate household.

from it. Figure 1 illustrates how proximate the recession's layoffs were to the average American. At the center of the circle are 23% who lost a job themselves. Next to this is the ring of 11% who, while they did not lose a job themselves, know someone else in their immediate family who lost a job to layoffs. Together, the data indicate one-third of American households — approximately 39 million — lost work as a result of the recession during the past four years.<sup>4</sup> Another 26% were not affected in their household, but did know a member of their extended family who lost a job (parent, cousin, aunt, or uncle). Another 13% did not have a family member affected, but knew a close personal friend who lost work, and another 5% say they know a friend

## PROXIMITY TO JOB LOSS

Most Americans were directly affected by a job loss, or were just a step or two removed

**FIGURE 1. THE IMPACT OF THE GREAT RECESSION**



**Note:** Respondents counted only once using the innermost social circle for those knowing more than one person. Those counted in outer rings did not report knowing anyone from the inner rings.

of someone in their immediate household who lost a job. All in all, just 21% of Americans do not fall into any of these circles.

## TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE AMERICAN WORKERS RECOVERED?

Survey data from 2010 and early 2013 show little change in respondents' employment status. At the time of the 2013 survey, 58% report being employed. (See Table 2.) Eight percent of respondents say they are unemployed and looking for work while another 34% are currently unemployed and not looking for work. The data resemble those responses from a similar sample of employed and unemployed Americans conducted in August 2010. Then, 6 in 10 Americans reported employment at the time of the survey and 6% were unemployed and looking. Among those who are currently employed in early 2013, nearly three-quarters are employed full time, one-fifth is employed part time, and the remainder report self-employment (full and part time) or military service.

**TABLE 2. EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS, JANUARY 2013 AND AUGUST 2010**

	January 2013	August 2010
Employed	58%	60%
Unemployed and looking for work	8%	6%
Unemployed and not looking for work	34%	33%
Total	100%	99%

Table 3 displays employment status across demographic groups. The survey data suggest unemployment occurs more frequently among younger workers, minority groups, and low-education and low-income brackets compared to their counterparts. Respondents ages 18 to 34 report lower employment than workers ages 35 to 54, but more than workers age 55 and older. Fourteen percent of younger workers are unemployed and looking for work — a figure well above the recent national unemployment estimates — while just 8% of middle-aged workers say the same. Thirty-eight percent of respondents earning less than \$30,000 are employed compared to 51% of those earning \$30,000 to \$60,000 and 71% of respondents earning more than \$60,000. Unemployment among low-income workers nearly doubles the unemployment rate among middle- and upper-income groups.

## THE EXPERIENCES OF THE REEMPLOYED

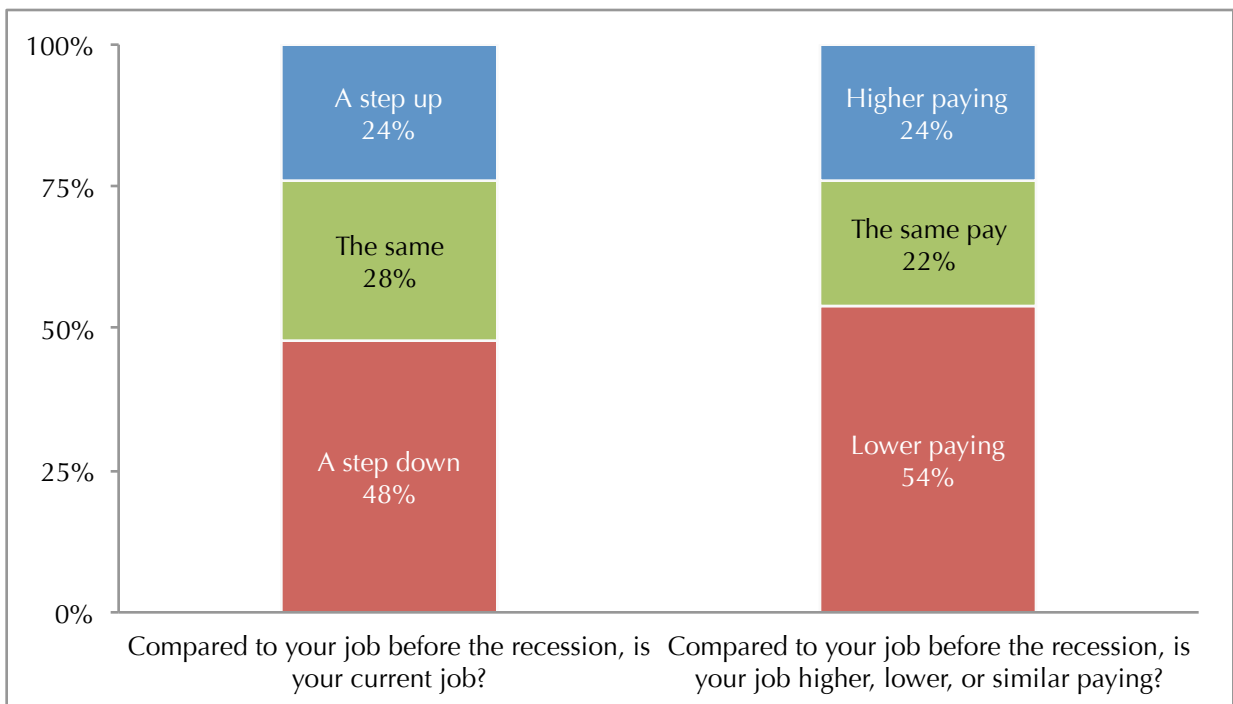
**Those who were laid off during the recession and fortunate enough to find new employment are generally settling for less in their new positions. As shown in Figure 2, nearly half (48%) say their current job is a step down from the one they held before the recession hit. A majority (54%) report lower pay in their new job compared to the job they held before being laid off.** One-quarter say their job is a step up and a higher-paying job than their last position. Among those reporting lower pay in their new job, a full third say their pay has been cut by more than 30% compared to the job they held when the recession hit. Another third say their pay has been reduced by 11% to 30%. The remaining third of employees reporting lower pay report a cutback of less than 10%.



**TABLE 3. EMPLOYMENT STATUS ACROSS DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS**

	Employed	Unemployed and Looking	Unemployed and Not Looking
Total	58%	8%	34%
<b>Age</b>			
18 to 34	64%	14%	22%
35 to 54	78%	8%	14%
55 and older	34%	4%	62%
<b>Income</b>			
Less than \$30,000	38%	14%	49%
\$30,000 to \$60,000	51%	8%	41%
More than \$60,000	71%	6%	23%
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	64%	9%	27%
Female	71%	6%	23%
<b>Education</b>			
High school or less	48%	10%	42%
Some college	60%	8%	32%
College or more	71%	5%	24%
<b>Race</b>			
White, non-Hispanic	59%	6%	35%
Black/Hispanic	60%	14%	27%

**FIGURE 2. RECOVERY AMONG THE REEMPLOYED: JOB STATUS AND CURRENT PAY**



Between layoffs and recent reemployment, one-fifth of those who found a new job say they received unemployment benefits from the government. Yet the financial respite was short-lived for many. Over one-quarter of unemployment insurance recipients who are now reemployed say their benefits ran out before they were able to find a new job.

## STILL UNEMPLOYED AND LOOKING FOR WORK

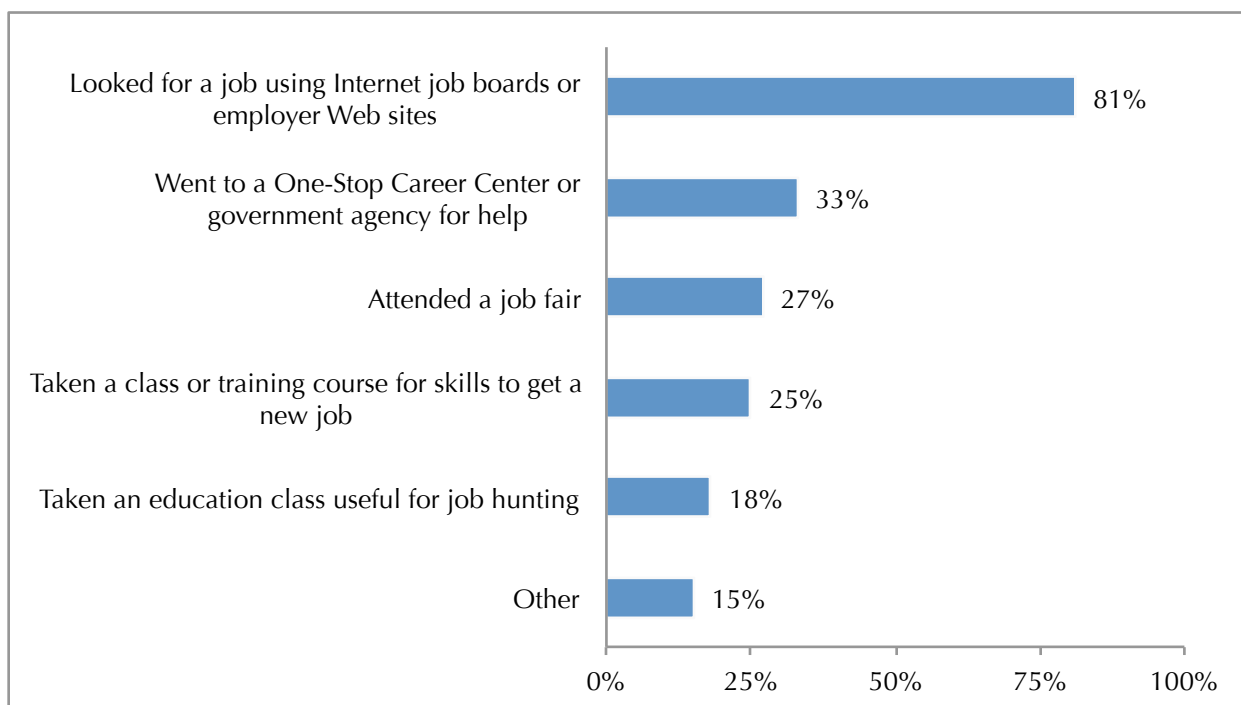
Unemployed Americans utilize a variety of services and resources as they try to get back into the workforce. Figure 3 shows that Internet job boards and employer Web sites are most popular followed by visits to One-Stop Career Centers (now known as American Job Centers) and government agencies, job fairs, and education or training. Twenty-five percent of the unemployed respondents say they participated in a class or training course to acquire skills to get a new job. Another 18%

participated in a class that was useful for job hunting. If they participated in education, it was commonly financed on their own dollar. About half say they paid for it themselves or with the help of a relative. Twenty-three percent say their courses were paid for by a government agency. The remainder cites community and religious organizations, employers, or others as the source of payment for their education and training.

The outlook toward finding a new job is still generally positive for the majority of those still looking. At the moment, 57% of the unemployed who are seeking work feel optimistic about finding a new job and 18% say they are very optimistic. Still, a quarter feels somewhat pessimistic about their prospects and another 18% are very pessimistic. (See Figure 4.)

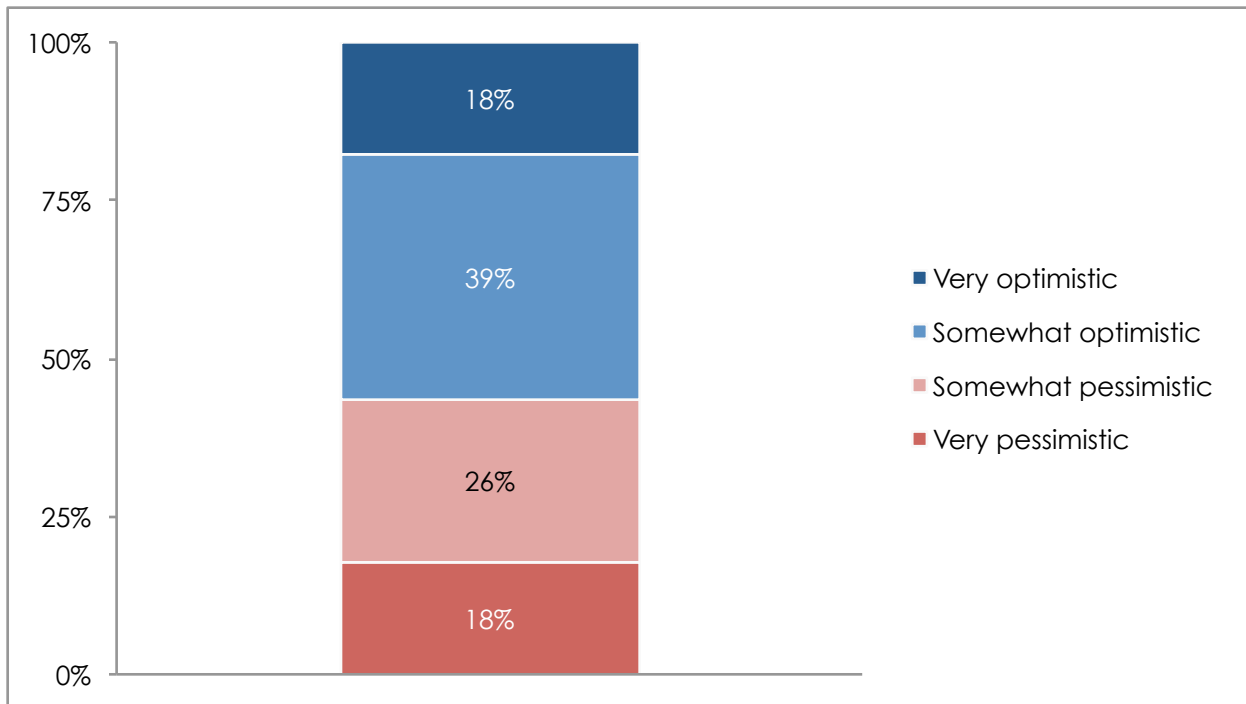
Twenty-nine percent of currently unemployed Americans say they received unemployment benefits from the government within the past

**FIGURE 3. JOB SEARCH ACTIVITIES IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (OF THE UNEMPLOYED AND LOOKING)**





**FIGURE 4. CURRENT OUTLOOK ON FINDING A JOB (OF THE UNEMPLOYED AND LOOKING)**



12 months, but absence from the job market has many worrying that their unemployment benefits will not carry them through to the next job, if it has not run out already. Nearly 6 in 10 of the unemployed are concerned their unemployment benefits will run out before finding new work. Thirty-one percent of the unemployed who are still looking for a job say their benefits have already run out. On average, these respondents say their unemployment insurance ran out within the past five to seven months.

## ASSESSMENT OF THE LABOR MARKET AND THE ECONOMY

### UNINSPIRING CURRENT OUTLOOK

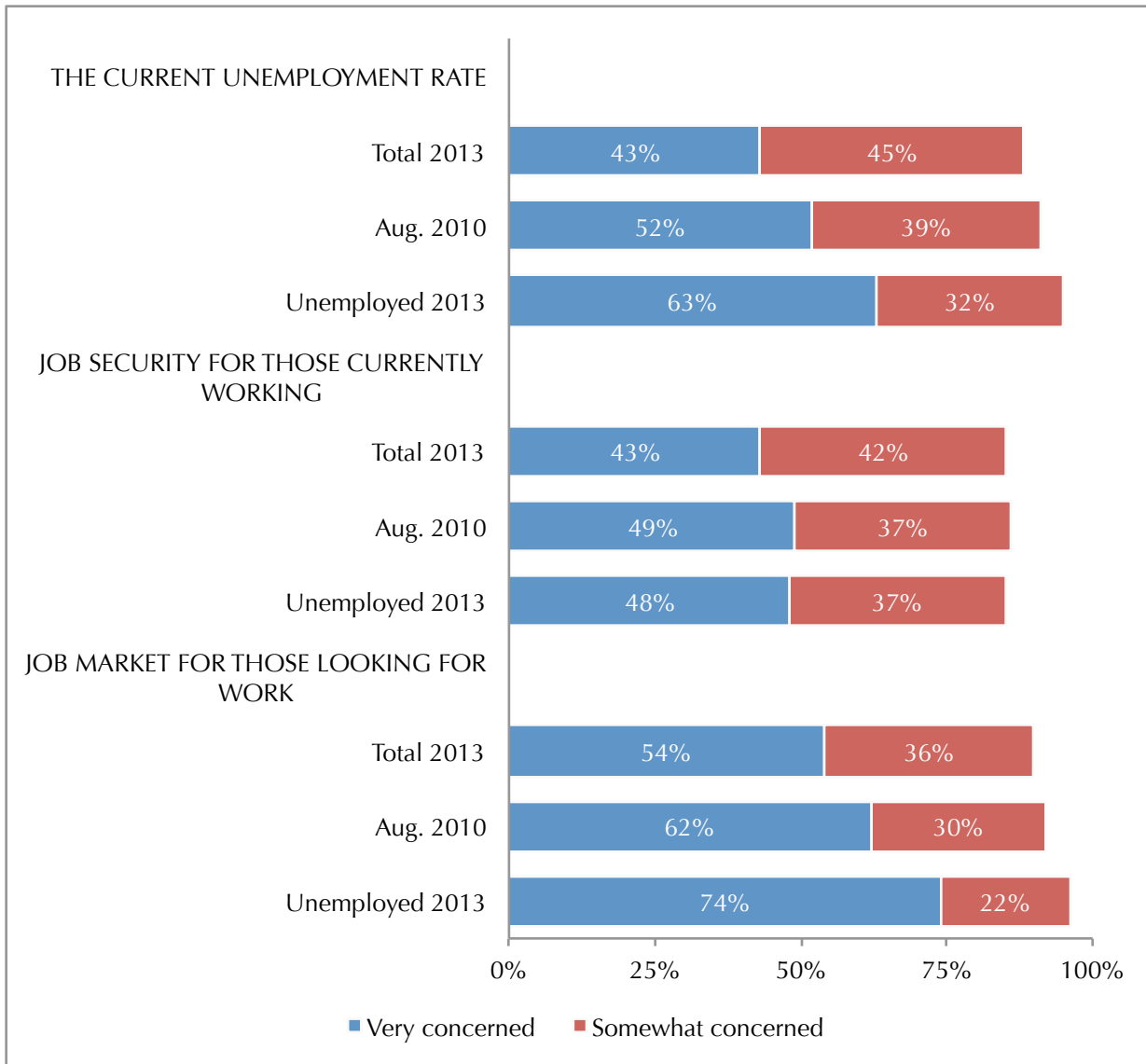
Americans' concerns about the job market, unemployment, and job security are all slightly reduced from 2010, but remain

substantial nonetheless. The percentage very concerned about the nation's overall unemployment rate declined to 43% in the current survey from 52% in 2010. Still, some 90% are at least somewhat concerned with unemployment in the nation, and 63% of those looking for a job are very concerned. The number very concerned about job security dropped from 49% to 43%. Two-fifths of those currently employed report being very concerned about worker job security. Similarly, the percentage saying they are very concerned about the job market for those looking for work decreased a bit between 2010 (62%) and 2013 (54%). The current figure includes three-quarters of those who are unemployed and looking for work. (See Figure 5.)

### DISMAL FUTURE OUTLOOK

**Not only does the public not see signs of economic recovery now, they don't see it in the near future either. Just 32% believe**

FIGURE 5. HOW CONCERNED ARE YOU ABOUT:



**that economic conditions will be better next year.** An equal number believes they will actually get worse. This is little different from three years ago when 32% thought things were getting better, 27% said worse, and the remaining 41% envisioned little change in the year ahead. When asked how long they thought it will take before the economy is fully recovered, just 12% say they expect this to happen in the near future (one or two years). One-third think full recovery is three to five years away. The majority (54%) either think it will take between 6 and 10 years (25%), or say that America will never (29%)

fully recover from the Great Recession, or that they don't see this happening within a decade.

In many corroborating ways, the data speak to the sense the public holds that the corrosive effects of the recession will be enduring and transformative. In 2010, more of the general public believed the effects of the recession would be a permanent rather than temporary condition affecting the economy by a margin of 56% to 43%. Nothing the public has experienced since that time has changed that view. Today three in five believes there

**TABLE 4. DO YOU THINK THE GREAT RECESSION OF THE PAST FOUR YEARS HAS LEFT US WITH:**

	January 2013	August 2010
A <b>permanent</b> change in what are normal economic conditions in the nation	60%	56%
A <b>temporary</b> change that the economy will recover from	41%	43%
Total	101%	99%

is a new normal for economic conditions in the United States, and that it is a major step down. (See Table 4.)

Tables 5 and 6 show responses of the three groups — the general public, employed, and unemployed — to six different conditions, most of them foundational benchmarks of economic and employment health. For each of these six conditions, respondents were asked for their judgments about whether each would soon return to normal, return to normal but not for a long time, or never return to its prior state. A way to quickly summarize these data is to look at the ratio between those who say each will soon return to those

who say each will never return. **Six times as many people feel the ability of young people to afford a college education is a thing of the past. Three times as many people believe the days when workers feel secure in their jobs is a thing of the past than believe job security is possible in present day America.** Three times as many say that workers not having to take jobs below their skill level will never come back as believe it will come back soon. And, also by a margin of about three to one, more Americans feel that the elderly will have to find part-time jobs after retiring than think they can have a retirement without working. By a margin of two to one, more Americans bemoan the loss of “good jobs at good pay” and “a low unemployment rate” as elements of a bygone era.

An indicator of the depth of pessimism Americans hold of the future, and how deeply the recession has marked the American experience, is found in perceptions of what the future of employment holds. **Just 19% agree that “overall, job, career, and employment opportunities will be better for the next generation than for my generation.”** In stark contrast, 44% disagree with that vision of the future, including 19% who disagree strongly. The remaining 38% venture no opinion. The most cynical about the job market are those between the ages of 35 and 44. In this group,

**TABLE 5. RESPONDENTS’ VIEWS OF WHEN SIX ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS WILL RETURN**

Ratio of Bad to Good		Will Come Back Soon	Will Never Come Back
6.4 to 1	The ability of young people to afford college	9%	58%
3.3 to 1	Workers feeling secure in their jobs	13%	43%
3.2 to 1	Workers having to take jobs below their skill level	13%	42%
2.8 to 1	The elderly having to find part-time work after retiring	17%	47%
2.1 to 1	The availability of good jobs at good pay for those who want to work	14%	34%
1.9 to 1	A lower unemployment rate	15%	29%

**TABLE 6. PLEASE INDICATE WHAT YOU THINK WILL HAPPEN IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:**

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking
<b>The ability of young people to afford college</b>			
<i>It will soon return to the way it was before</i>	9%	10%	10%
<i>It will return to the way it was before, but not for many years</i>	33%	34%	23%
<i>It will not return to the way it was before</i>	58%	57%	48%
<i>Total</i>	100%	101%	101%
<b>Workers feeling secure in their jobs</b>			
<i>It will soon return to the way it was before</i>	13%	14%	14%
<i>It will return to the way it was before, but not for many years</i>	44%	48%	50%
<i>It will not return to the way it was before</i>	43%	38%	37%
<i>Total</i>	100%	100%	101%
<b>Workers having to take jobs below their skill level</b>			
<i>It will soon return to the way it was before</i>	13%	13%	15%
<i>It will return to the way it was before, but not for many years</i>	45%	51%	48%
<i>It will not return to the way it was before</i>	42%	37%	37%
<i>Total</i>	100%	101%	100%
<b>The elderly having to find part-time work after retiring</b>			
<i>It will soon return to the way it was before</i>	17%	15%	15%
<i>It will return to the way it was before, but not for many years</i>	36%	38%	41%
<i>It will not return to the way it was before</i>	47%	47%	44%
<i>Total</i>	100%	100%	100%
<b>The availability of good jobs at good pay for those who want to work</b>			
<i>It will soon return to the way it was before</i>	14%	14%	16%
<i>It will return to the way it was before, but not for many years</i>	52%	56%	55%
<i>It will not return to the way it was before</i>	34%	30%	30%
<i>Total</i>	100%	100%	101%
<b>A lower unemployment rate</b>			
<i>It will soon return to the way it was before</i>	15%	13%	20%
<i>It will return to the way it was before, but not for many years</i>	57%	62%	51%
<i>It will not return to the way it was before</i>	29%	26%	29%
<i>Total</i>	100%	101%	100%

just 16% say they expect jobs to be better for the next generation while fully half (51%) disagree with the statement, and the remaining third offers no opinion.

Quite consistent with this, a paltry 18% of those currently employed feel extremely or very confident they could find another job. Less than half (48%) feel not very or not at all confident they could find as good or better a job if they were looking. The remaining third have some confidence they could do so. These numbers are basically unchanged from responses given by a nationwide sample in 2010.

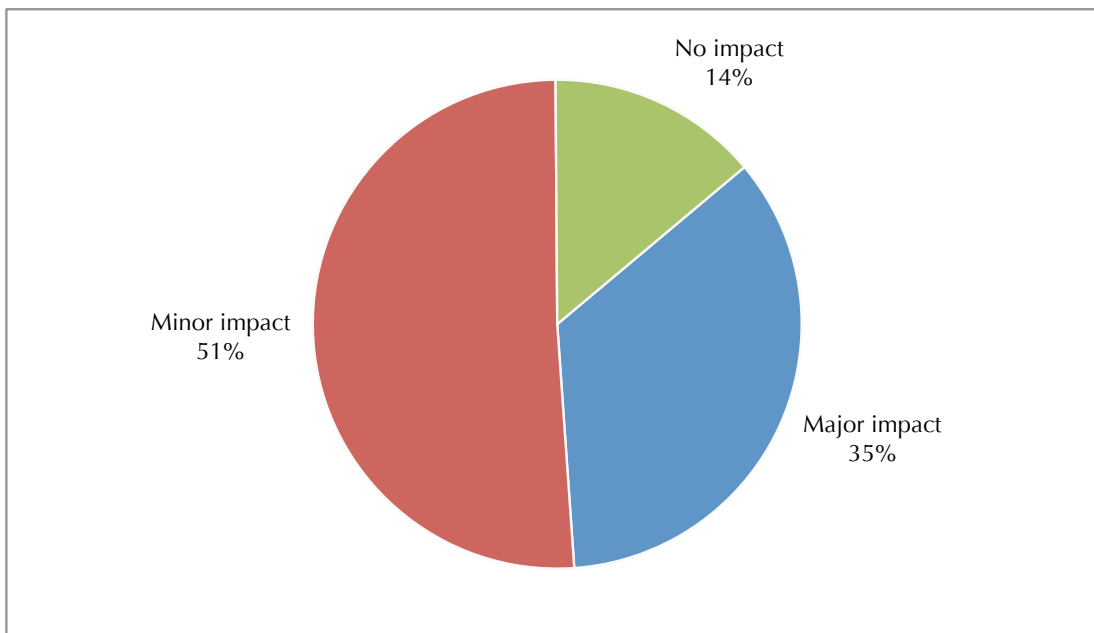
## THE IMPACT OF THE RECESSION ON AMERICANS' FINANCES

The impact of the recession on Americans' finances and lives has been brutal both for how many people were affected and how

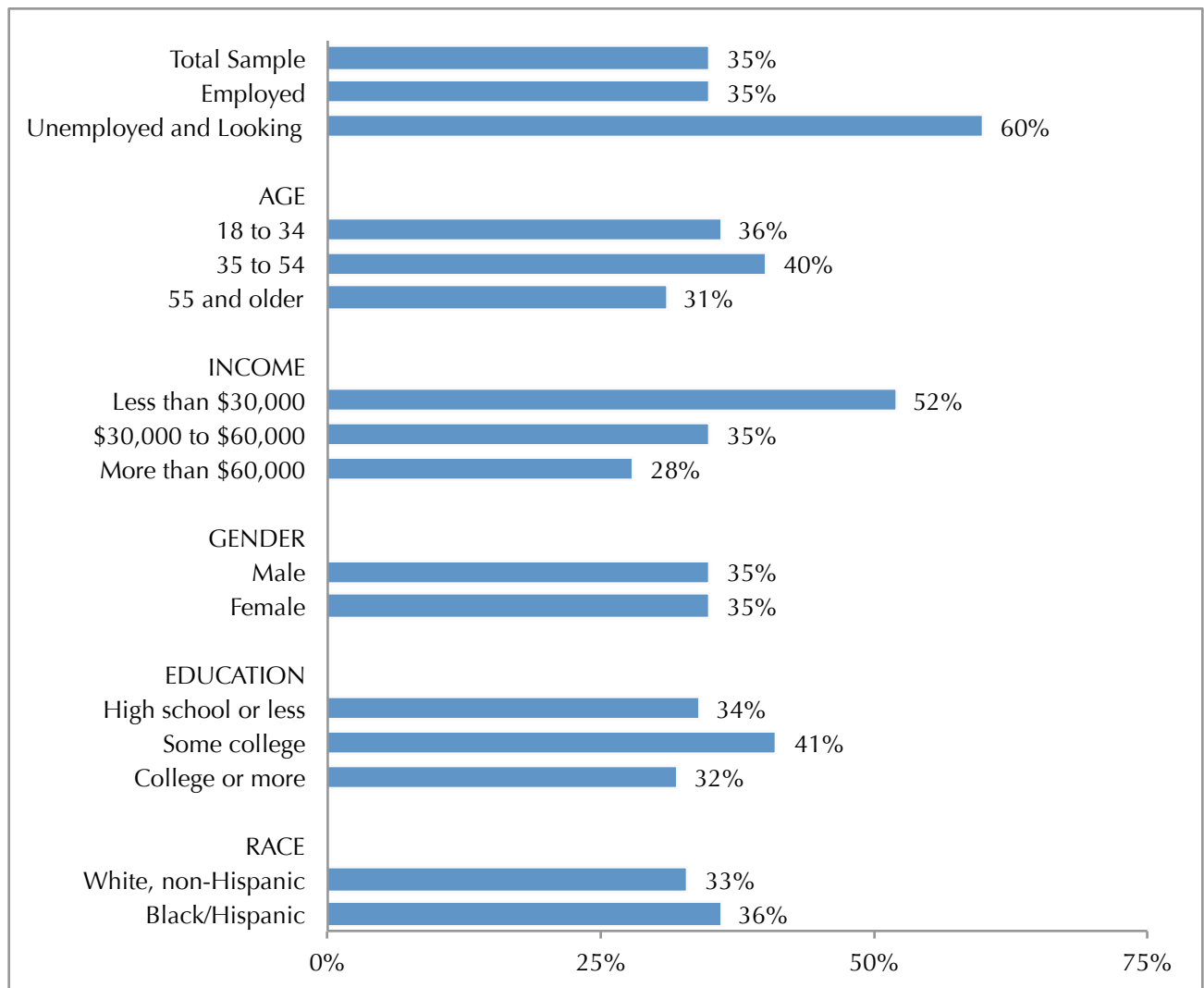
deeply they were affected. Fully one-third of all respondents say the recession had a major impact on them and their families (see Figure 6). Additionally, more than half say they have less money in savings now, and three-fifths expect the changes the recession wrought to be permanent.

One reason the Great Recession earned its name is for how widespread its impact has been. **Just 14% of all U.S. residents say they felt no impact at all of the recession, while 35% say the recession was of major consequence to their lives.** Moreover, it is worth noting that the impact of the recession has not ebbed with time. In 2010, 37% reported the economic downturn had a major impact on them, not significantly different than the figure of 35% in 2013. And while most were touched by the recession, the deepest impact was not evenly felt across society. In general, it was the less affluent and, of course, the unemployed who reported the most damage, and those in the middle of the age and educational distributions were slightly more affected than those at the tails (see Figure 7).

**FIGURE 6. HAS THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN HAD A MAJOR, MINOR, OR NO IMPACT AT ALL ON YOU AND YOUR FAMILY?**



**FIGURE 7. HAS THE RECESSION HAD A MAJOR IMPACT ON YOU AND YOUR FAMILY? (BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS)**



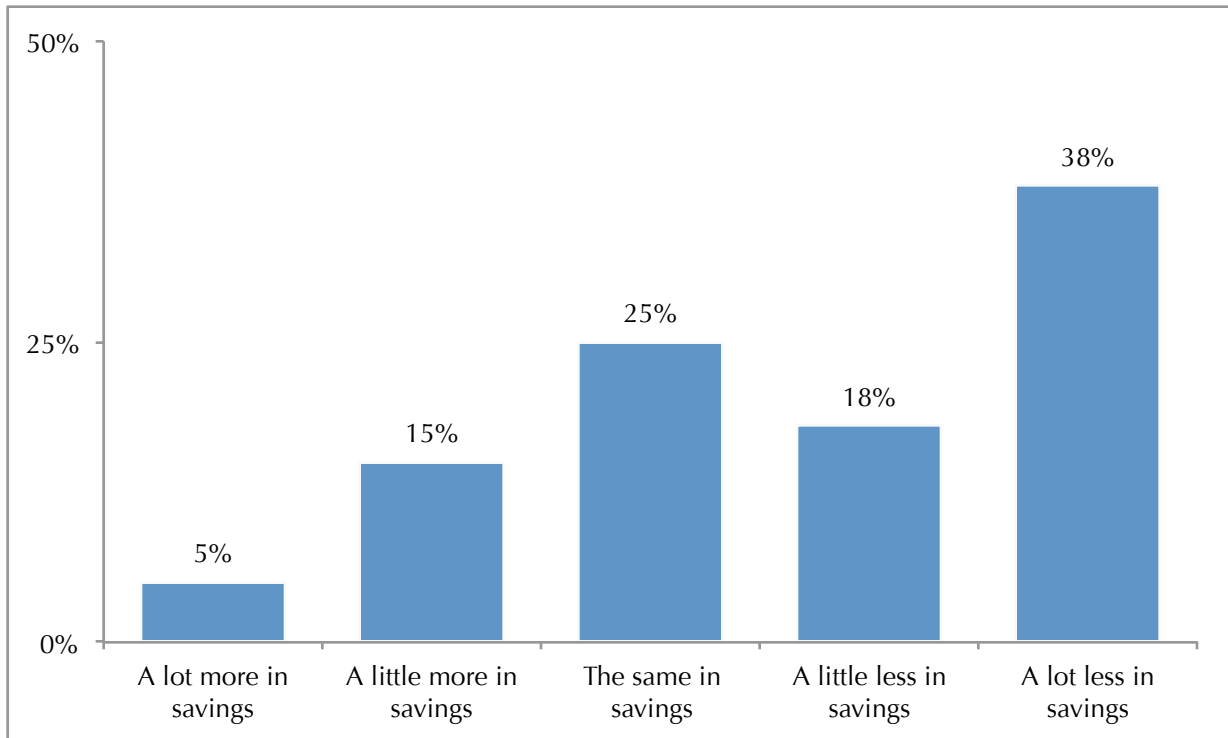
A large number of Americans tapped into whatever savings they had to help them cope with the recession. **But a majority of all Americans (56%) report having less money in savings than they did when the recession began.** Moreover, this number comprises 38% who say they have **a lot** less and just 18% who say they have **a little** less. (See Figure 8.) Clearly, compared to what they had in the bank, the recession had more than minimal consequences. While it is no surprise that 57% of those unemployed and looking at the time of the survey report having lost a lot of their savings, it is noteworthy that fully one-third of employed Americans report the

same. Just one in five report having added to their savings since the recession began, and this tilts toward the upper-status groups of college graduates (28%) and those earning over \$100,000 (37%).

Americans made a number of financial sacrifices to get through the recession. Almost half report using money they had set aside from savings to help them get by. **Almost 4 in 10 say they loaned money to family or friends during this period and about 3 in 10 report borrowing money.** Similarly, 30% increased the amount of credit card debt they were carrying. Two in ten received food stamps or



**FIGURE 8. COMPARED TO WHAT YOU MAKE AND WHAT YOU HAD WHEN THE RECESSION BEGAN, DO YOU NOW HAVE?**



food from a nonprofit or religious organization. The number seeking professional help for stress or depression increased from 9% to 14% between 2010 and 2013. Overall, more than one-third of all Americans say they cut back on doctor visits or medical treatments at some point during the recession. (See Figure 9.)

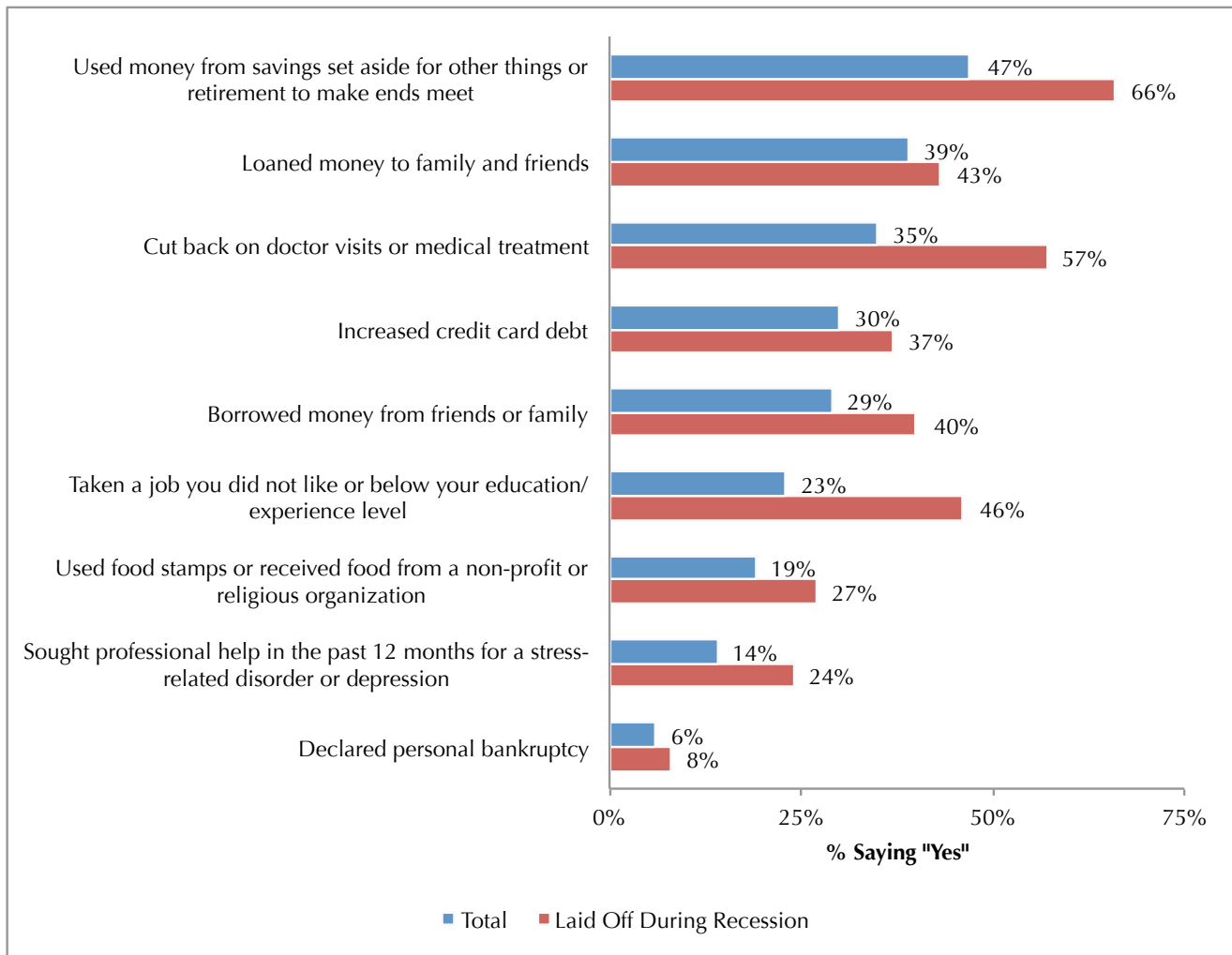
Those laid off during the recession had it worse on a number of scores. Two-thirds took money from savings to make ends meet, and 40% borrowed money from family or friends during this time. **More than half (57%) cut back on health care, and just less than half (46%) reported taking a job that was below their skill/education level. Almost one-quarter say they sought professional help for stress or depression.**

Americans are pessimistic about recovering what was lost in the recession with the passage of time. In fact, by a margin of three to two, more think their family finances will

stay at the new level than will recover to pre-recession levels. In the United States as a whole, 23% believe they will get back to where they were before the recession and 16% say they are already back. **But most (61%) believe they will not fully recover from the recession.** The most affluent and best educated, who lost less in the first place, report having made the most progress back so far, with one-quarter of each group reporting they are now financially whole. (See Table 7.)

Adding those who think they and their family will recover from the recession in the next year to those who have already recovered comprises less than a quarter of the American public. Further adding those who think they will recover in the next one to two years encompasses almost 40% of the public. One-third of the citizenry think it will take three to five years to recover, and the final quarter or so believes it will take 6 to 10 years (16%) or more than 10 years or never (12%).

**FIGURE 9. HAVE YOU DONE THE FOLLOWING BECAUSE OF THE GREAT RECESSION?**



**TABLE 7. VIEWS ON RECOVERING FROM THE GREAT RECESSION**

	Will get back to pre-recession level	Will stay at level they are now at	Already back or no loss in the first place
Total	23%	61%	16%
Income			
Less than \$30,000	27%	65%	9%
\$30,000 to \$60,000	21%	69%	10%
More than \$60,000	22%	55%	23%
Education			
High school or less	26%	58%	16%
Some college	25%	58%	16%
College or more	24%	52%	24%

Older people and the less well educated are more pessimistic on this core idea than their respective counterparts. Almost half (43%) of those not already retired say they expect to retire later than they originally thought because of the recession.

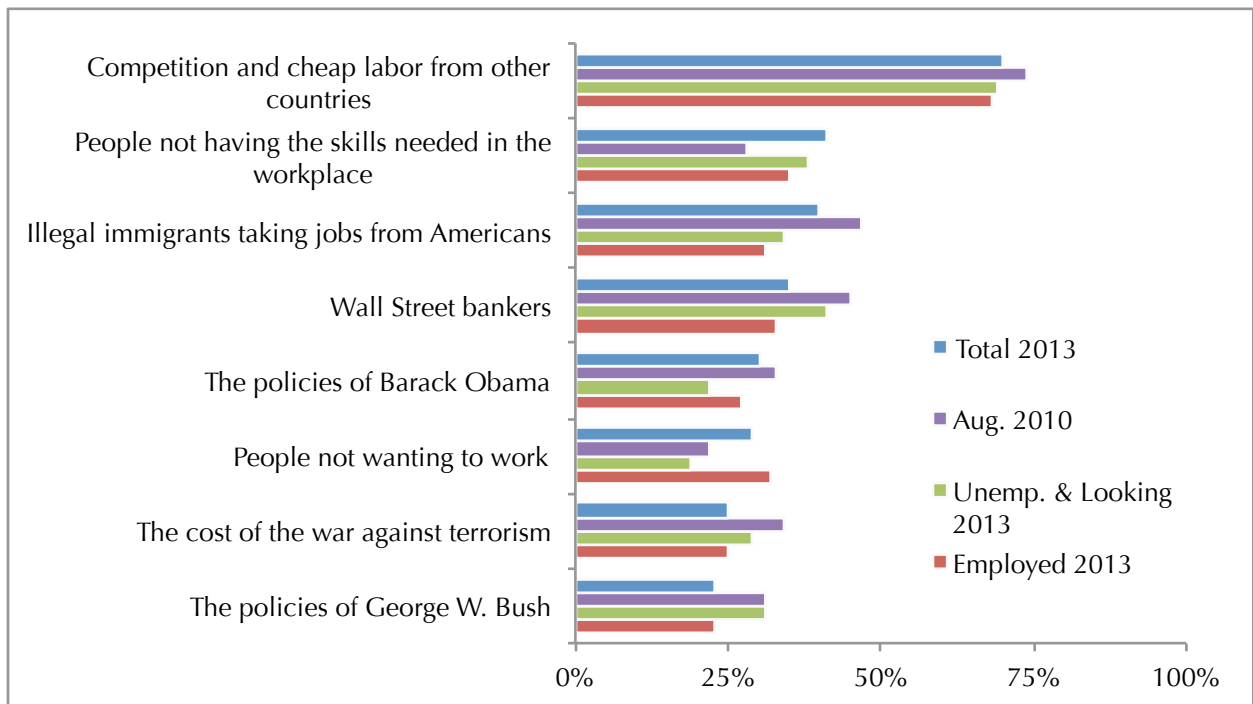
## THE CAUSES OF HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT

American workers experienced high levels of unemployment during and after the Great Recession. Although the Great Recession officially began in late 2007 and ended in June 2009, unemployment reached 10% and remained above 8% for four years; nearly nine million jobs were eliminated. In this survey, the Heldrich Center asked American workers to offer their views on the major causes of high unemployment, as it did in

August 2010. The results are presented in Figure 10. By a very large margin, Americans — both employed and unemployed — assign the blame to competition and cheap labor from other countries. In 2013, 7 in 10 workers hold this view — nearly identical to the 74% selecting this option in 2010. Four in ten also believe that high unemployment levels are caused by illegal immigrants taking jobs away from Americans. These strong and enduring concerns about globalization and fears that illegal immigrants hurt job prospects for American citizens are likely to make it more difficult for policymakers in Washington, D.C. to negotiate free-trade agreements and reform immigration laws.

In 2013, a significantly higher percentage of respondents say that high unemployment is caused by the lack of skills needed for jobs in the workplace compared to results from the 2010 survey. Just over 4 in 10 workers (41%) now say lack of skills contributes to high

**FIGURE 10. WHICH OF THESE ARE THE MAJOR CAUSES OF UNEMPLOYMENT?**



unemployment levels whereas two-and-a-half years ago, 28% agreed with that statement. This perception may help explain why so many American workers support government policies and programs that would provide skills training for the unemployed, a topic covered in more detail below.

Just over one in three respondents (35%) attribute high unemployment levels to the actions of Wall Street bankers — down from 45% in 2010. Those who are unemployed, however, are somewhat more likely to blame Wall Street for their plight. Fewer Americans, though significant numbers, believe that the policies of former President George W. Bush (23%, down from 31% in 2010) and President Barack Obama (30%, essentially unchanged since 2010) contributed to the weak labor market. Employed and unemployed Americans rate the presidents differently: the unemployed are harsher on President Bush (31% vs. 23% for employed Americans). 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: 27% vs. 22% of the unemployed respondents.

**Most Americans do not blame unemployed workers for a lack of interest or willingness to work.** Less than one-third of those working (32%) and one in five of the unemployed (19%) say that high jobless rates are caused by people not wanting to work. The vast majority of employed and unemployed Americans agree that unemployed workers are not in that predicament due to their own behavior — it's simply not their fault. One reason that Americans are unlikely to blame the unemployed is that either they or someone in their household, extended family, or social circle lost a job in the past four years, as noted above (see Figure 1). Attitudes about the unemployed are somewhat less

generous than they were in 2010 when only 22% blamed high levels of unemployment on people not wanting to work: by January 2013, 29% agreed with that statement.

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HELPING THE UNEMPLOYED?

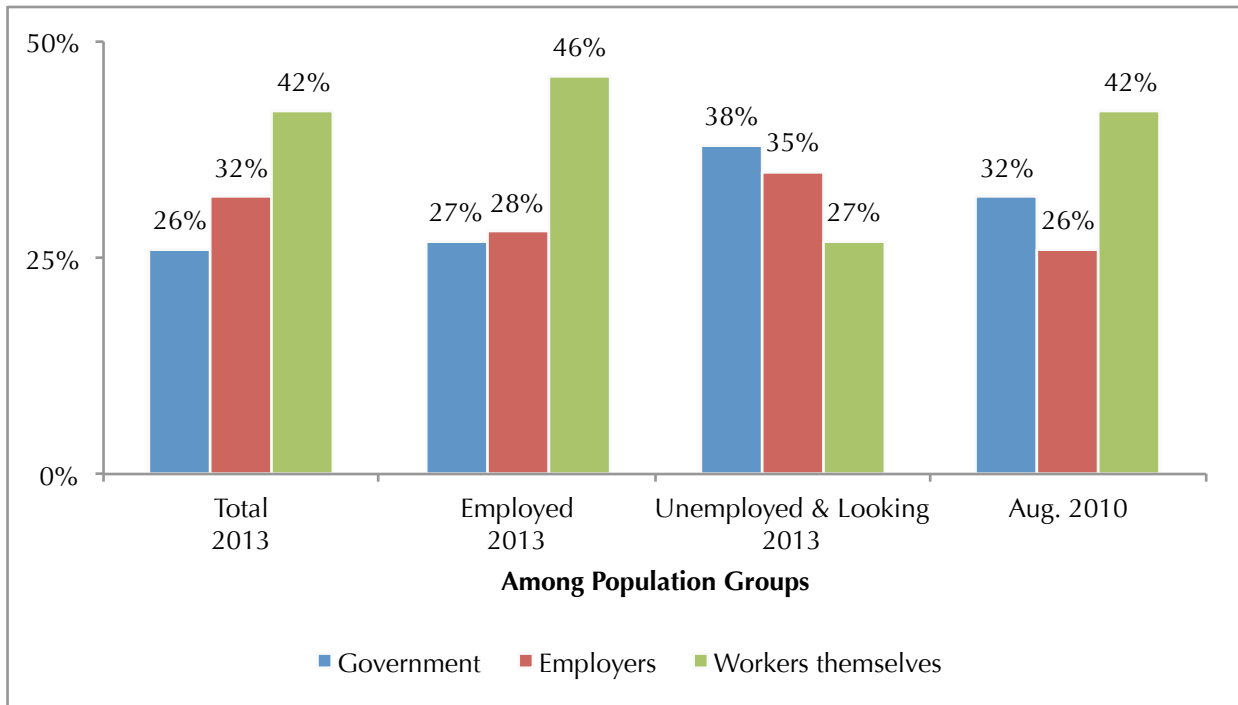
Whatever the causes of unemployment may be, American workers are more likely to say that workers themselves are mainly responsible for dealing with the consequences (see Figure 11). Over 4 in 10 respondents say workers are responsible, whereas 32% say employers and 26% say government are mainly responsible for providing help. While attitudes about self-help remained stable from 2010 to 2013, respondents in 2013 are more likely to say employers should be responsible than they were in 2010.

Not surprisingly, employed and unemployed Americans hold different views about the responsibility to assist the unemployed. When employed Americans were asked who bore the primary responsibility for helping those without work, 46% say it is workers themselves, whereas 27% say the government and 28% say employers. Among the unemployed, however, 38% say government should have primary responsibility to help jobless Americans compared to just 27% who say they themselves should be mainly responsible for getting back to work.

## ASSESSING POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND LEADERS

Both the public as a whole and the unemployed are doubtful that the U.S. government is able to make a fundamental difference in reducing unemployment. About twice as

**FIGURE 11. WHEN PEOPLE ARE LAID OFF FROM WORK, WHO SHOULD BE MAINLY RESPONSIBLE FOR HELPING THEM?**



many respondents (64%) feel that the nation will just have to wait for the private sector to create more jobs than believe government can reduce unemployment to any significant extent (36%). However, 43% of the currently unemployed assert that government policies can make a difference in reducing joblessness. Americans’ attitudes on this issue have barely budged since 2010.

These views are likely due to the overall dissatisfaction that Americans currently express about the nation’s political institutions. When asked how much confidence they have that the federal government will make progress in addressing the nation’s most important problems, only 5% express a lot of confidence, and 37% say they have some confidence. The majority (59%) either have no confidence (21%) or not much confidence (38%) in the federal government.

**Americans not only have little faith in the federal government in general, they are also skeptical of the abilities of President Obama**

**and the Republicans to effectively manage the economy.** When asked who they trust to do a better job handling the economy, 34% choose President Obama (up 11% since 2010), and 20% say they trust Republicans in Congress to do a good job — identical to the level reported in 2010. Almost 40% say they trust neither the President nor the Republicans in Congress. Unemployed workers were somewhat more likely than employed workers to trust President Obama’s stewardship of the economy by a margin of 44% to 34%.

## ASSESSING POLICY OPTIONS TO BRING DOWN UNEMPLOYMENT

Although Americans are skeptical about the willingness and ability of the Congress and the President to help bring down unemployment and even though the job situation is improving, **they still support a wide range of potential policy remedies to lower unemployment**, just as they did in 2010 (see

**FIGURE 12. SUPPORT FOR IDEAS BEING CONSIDERED BY GOVERNMENT TO BRING DOWN HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT**

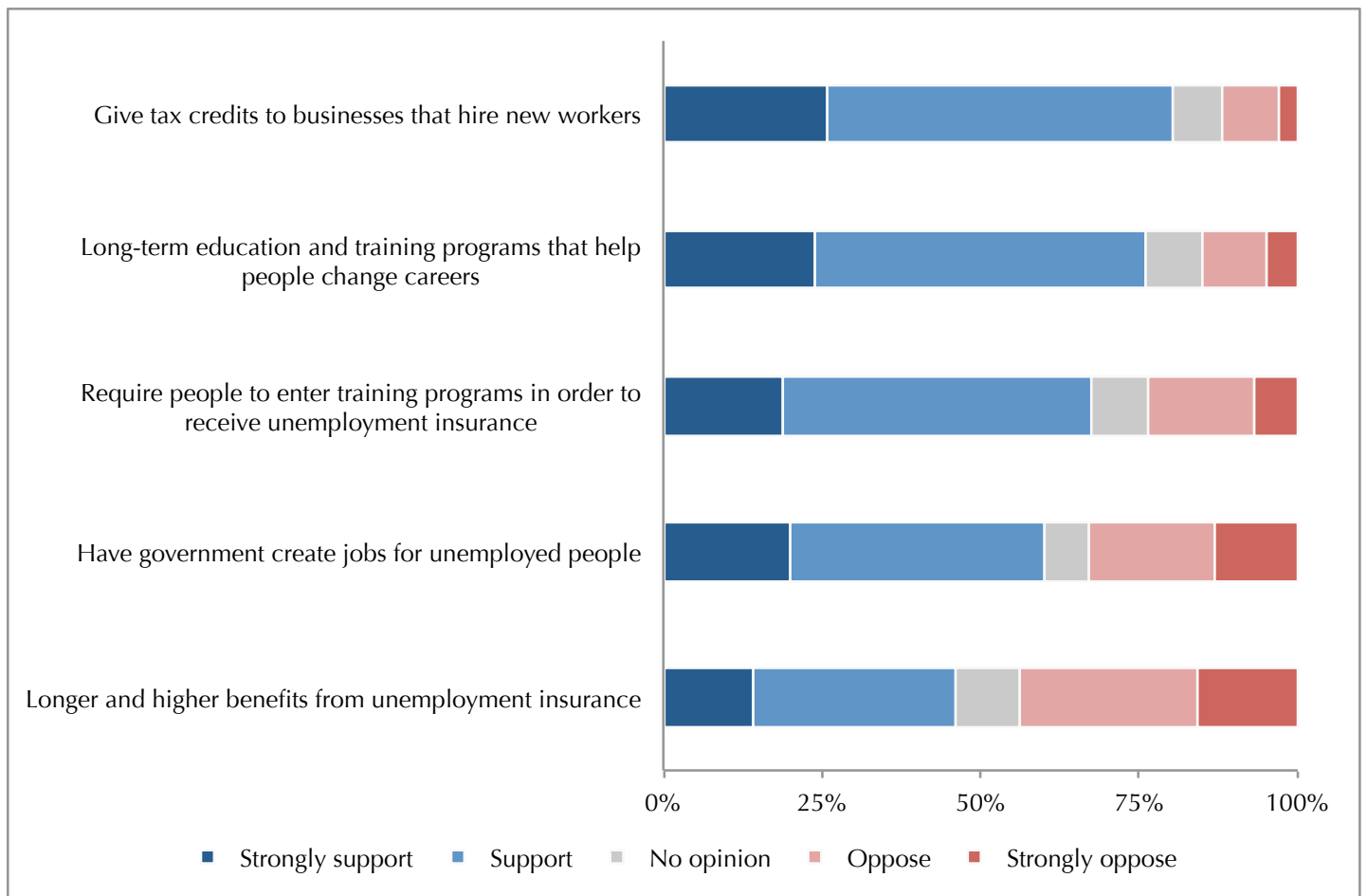


Figure 12). By wide margins, the two most popular strategies are providing tax credits to businesses that hire new workers (81%) and funding long-term education and training programs that help workers change careers (76%). Employed (78%) and unemployed (79%) respondents alike agree that the government should support more robust training programs. In fact, nearly 7 in 10 Americans (and 63% of those who are currently unemployed) also say that people receiving unemployment insurance should be required to enroll in retraining programs, a strategy that is common in European countries.

Somewhat less popular, but still garnering the support of 6 in 10 respondents, are proposals that would have the government create

jobs for the unemployed. These strategies were utilized in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (commonly known as the stimulus package) in 2009 and during other major recessions and the Great Depression. Compared to working Americans, unemployed workers are much more supportive of implementing federal policies to reduce unemployment, including government-funded job creation programs (72% vs. 61%) and extending and improving unemployment insurance benefits (61% vs. 41%). Employed workers are also more likely than unemployed Americans to favor tax credits for businesses that hire new workers (80% vs. 70%).



## CONCLUSION

The economic retrenchment, made worse by a slow recovery, has transformed American workers' financial and job security and altered their expectations about the American economy. Nearly one-quarter of Americans say they were laid off, and a vast majority — 8 in 10 — know someone in their circle of family or friends who lost a job during the past four years. The slow recovery is made evident by the stagnant employment status of the Heldrich Center's surveys conducted in August 2010 and again in January 2013. The number of Americans saying they are employed decreased from 60% in 2010 to 58% in 2013. Eight percent are unemployed and looking for work in 2013 — just 2% more than in August 2010.

The road to recovery remains a difficult one for many Americans. While a majority of reemployed workers found new jobs within a few months, nearly half were searching for seven months or more. Some have yet to find new jobs. Worse yet, half of the reemployed workers have settled for less pay and lower status in their new positions. While many unemployed Americans remain hopeful about their job prospects, they are much less optimistic about the safety net — 6 in 10 are concerned that their unemployment insurance will run out before they find another job. In fact, over one-quarter of those who were reemployed after being laid off say their unemployment insurance benefits ran out before they found new work.

Fully one-third of all respondents say the recession has had a major impact on them and their families and most Americans believe that these changes are permanent. More than half report they have less in savings than before the recession began. Despite significant improvements in the nation's labor market,

American workers' concerns about unemployment, the job market, job security, and the future of the economy have not changed much since the August 2010 survey. Just under one-third feel the economy will improve next year with an equal portion saying it will actually get worse. When asked about the future of employment, college affordability, job security, retirement, and other tenets of American prosperity, more than twice as many respondents have a negative vision of the future compared to those with a positive one. Just 19% agree that overall job, career, and employment opportunities will be better for the next generation. Six in ten Americans believe they will not recover from the effects of the recession, a sobering assessment of the American recovery.

The majority of Americans assign blame to cheap labor and competition from abroad as the main reasons for unemployment along with immigrant labor. Compared to the August 2010 survey, more respondents now believe the high unemployment in 2013 is due to a lack of skills needed for jobs in the workplace. Other sources of blame include Wall Street bankers and the policies of Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, although they receive less blame than in previous Heldrich Center surveys. A substantial majority of Americans — both employed and unemployed — do not blame the workers themselves for the predicament they are in today.

More American workers feel they are responsible for dealing with the consequences of the Great Recession compared to employers and government, but this opinion varies among the employed and unemployed populations. The general public has little faith in the U.S. government's ability to reduce the unemployment rate and twice as many Americans say the nation will have to depend on

private-sector job growth. Despite a general lack of faith in government policy, Americans support several government strategies that may lower the unemployment rate. Tax credits to businesses that hire new workers and long-term education programs are most popular followed by government-created jobs and retraining programs for the unemployed.

## ENDNOTES

1. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *January 2013 Employment Situation*, retrieved from: [http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empisit\\_02012013.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empisit_02012013.pdf).
2. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *August 2010 Employment Situation*, retrieved from: [http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empisit\\_09032010.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/empisit_09032010.pdf).
3. See the analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics data in Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, *Chart Book: The Legacy of the Great Recession* (January 2013), retrieved from: <http://www.cbpp.org/>.
4. U.S. Census Bureau, *State and County QuickFacts* (January 10, 2013). Data derived from population estimates, American Community Survey, Census of Population and Housing. Retrieved from: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html>.

## APPENDIX A. METHODOLOGY

The latest Heldrich Center *Work Trends* survey was fielded January 9 to 16, 2013 online with a national probability sample of 1,090 U.S. residents age 18 or older through GfK (formerly Knowledge Networks). The sample includes 684 respondents who are currently employed, 319 respondents who are unemployed and looking for work, and 87 respondents who are unemployed and not 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 1,000 respondents is +/- 3%, at a 95% confidence interval. Thus, if 60% of respondents say the recession has caused permanent changes to the economy, the true figure would be between 57% and 63% had all U.S. residents been interviewed, rather than just a sample. The sampling error for the 684 employed respondents is 4% and 5% for the 319 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 contextual 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, GfK 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 login information for accessing surveys online, and then are sent e-mails throughout each month inviting them to participate in research.

When the report talks about the unemployed, it is referring only to those who are unemployed and looking for a job.

## APPENDIX B. TOPLINE SURVEY RESULTS

Knowledge Networks/GfK/online

Field dates: January 9 to 16, 2013

N =1,090

*Percentage totals may not equal 100% due to rounding*

*\* = less than 1% reporting*

*Employed = January 2013 sample of employed respondents*

*Unemployed and Looking = January 2013 sample of unemployed and looking respondents*

*August 2010 = Total August 2010 sample*

### GENERAL POPULATION SEQUENCE (GENPOP)

**QEMPSTATSUM. Which of the following best describes you?**

**N = 1,090**

	January 2013	August 2010
Employed	58%	60%
Unemployed and looking for work	8%	6%
Unemployed and not looking for work	34%	33%
Total	100%	99%

**[IF EMPSTATSUM=1] (Employed)**

**EMPLOYED. Please mark the following that applies to you:**

**N = 680**

	Total
Full time	73%
Part time	19%
Self-employed full time	5%
Self-employed part time	2%
Military	1%
Total	100%

**[IF EMPSTATSUM=2] (Unemployed and Looking)**

**UNEMPLOYED\_LOOKING. Please mark the following that applies to you:**

**N = 319**

	<b>Total</b>
Looking for full-time work	43%
Looking for part-time work (15-20 hours)	23%
Looking for either part time or full time	34%
Total	100%

**[IF EMPSTATSUM=3] (Unemployed and Not Looking)**

**RETIRED. Please mark the following that applies to you: Are you retired?**

**N = 87**

	<b>Total</b>
Yes	60%
No	40%
Total	100%

**[ASK ALL] (GENPOP)**

**IN\_SCHOOL. Please mark which of the following applies to you: I am...**

**N = 1,085**

	<b>Total</b>
In school part time	4%
In school full time	6%
Not in school	90%
Total	100%

[ASK IF IN\_SCHOOL=1,2] (SCHOOL)

SCHOOL\_TYPE. Please mark which of the following applies to you: I am enrolled in...

N = 185

	Total
An undergraduate degree program	67%
A graduate degree or professional program	22%
Other type of educational program	12%
Total	101%

[ASK ALL] (GENPOP)

QNE1A. How much confidence do you have that the government in Washington, DC will make progress over the next year on the most important problems facing the country?

N = 1,082

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking
A lot of confidence	5%	5%	5%
Some confidence	37%	35%	40%
Not much confidence	38%	43%	29%
No confidence at all	21%	18%	27%
Total	101%	101%	101%

QNEW1. Compared to a year ago, do you think the economy has:

N = 1,083

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking
Gotten better	29%	27%	31%
Gotten worse	37%	33%	39%
Stayed the same	34%	40%	30%
Total	100%	100%	100%



**QR5. A year from now, do you expect economic conditions in the country as a whole will be:**

**N = 1,078**

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking	August 2010
Better	32%	32%	41%	32%
Worse	32%	29%	29%	27%
Stay as now	36%	39%	30%	41%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

**QR10. 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?**

**N = 1,073**

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking	August 2010
Government can act	36%	37%	43%	33%
Wait for economic improvement	64%	63%	57%	65%
Total	100%	100%	100%	98%

**QR4. Who do you trust to do a better job handling the economy?**

**N = 1,078**

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking	August 2010
President Obama	34%	34%	44%	23%
The Republicans in Congress	20%	17%	11%	19%
Neither	39%	41%	35%	45%
Both	8%	9%	11%	12%
Total	101%	101%	101%	99%

**QR1. Thinking about the job situation in America today, would you say that now is a good time or a bad time to find a quality job?**

N = 1,082

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking	August 2010
Good	27%	26%	27%	7%
Bad	73%	75%	74%	78%
Don't know	Not asked	Not Asked	Not Asked	14%
Total	100%	101%	101%	99%

**QR3. Please indicate how concerned you are about these three issues:**

N = 1,077

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking	August 2010
<b>The current unemployment rate</b>				
<i>Very concerned</i>	43%	38%	63%	52%
<i>Somewhat concerned</i>	45%	48%	32%	39%
<i>Not too concerned</i>	10%	12%	3%	6%
<i>Not concerned at all</i>	1%	2%	3%	2%
<i>Total</i>	99%	100%	101%	99%
<b>Job security for those currently working</b>				
<i>Very concerned</i>	43%	41%	48%	49%
<i>Somewhat concerned</i>	42%	43%	37%	37%
<i>Not too concerned</i>	12%	14%	13%	11%
<i>Not concerned at all</i>	2%	2%	3%	2%
<i>Total</i>	99%	100%	101%	99%
<b>The job market for those looking for work</b>				
<i>Very concerned</i>	54%	49%	74%	62%
<i>Somewhat concerned</i>	36%	42%	22%	30%
<i>Not too concerned</i>	8%	8%	3%	7%
<i>Not concerned at all</i>	1%	2%	2%	2%
<i>Total</i>	99%	101%	101%	101%

**QU0. What is the one thing you would urge the President and Congress to do to help the unemployed?**

[OPEN-ENDED ANSWERS DISPLAYED AT END]

**QU2. Which of these do you think are the major causes of high unemployment?**

N = 1,066

**\*Only “Yes” answers displayed here**

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking	August 2010
People not wanting to work	29%	32%	19%	22%
People not having the skills needed in the workplace	41%	35%	38%	28%
Competition and cheap labor from other countries	70%	68%	69%	74%
The policies of George W. Bush	23%	23%	31%	31%
Illegal immigrants taking jobs from Americans	40%	31%	34%	47%
The policies of Barack Obama	30%	27%	22%	33%
The cost of the war against terrorism	25%	25%	29%	34%
Wall Street bankers	35%	33%	41%	45%

**QR2. Just your best guess, do you think the Great Recession of the past four years has left us with:**

N = 1,070

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking	August 2010
A <b>permanent</b> change in what are normal economic conditions in the country	60%	60%	54%	56%
A <b>temporary</b> change that the economy will recover from	41%	40%	47%	43%
Total	101%	100%	101%	99%

**QNE5. How long will it take in your opinion for the economy to fully recover from the Great Recession from right now?**

N = 1,073

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking
Less than one year	1%	1%	6%
1-2 years	11%	10%	11%
3-5 years	34%	38%	32%
6-10 years	25%	27%	25%
The economy will not fully recover	29%	25%	26%
Total	100%	101%	100%

**QNE6. Please indicate what you think will happen in each of the following areas:**

N = 1,064

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking
<b>A lower unemployment rate</b>			
<i>It will soon return to the way it was before</i>	15%	13%	20%
<i>It will return to the way it was before, but not for many years</i>	57%	62%	51%
<i>It will not return to the way it was before</i>	29%	26%	29%
<i>Total</i>	101%	101%	100%
<b>Workers feeling secure in their jobs</b>			
<i>It will soon return to the way it was before</i>	13%	14%	14%
<i>It will return to the way it was before, but not for many years</i>	44%	48%	50%
<i>It will not return to the way it was before</i>	43%	38%	37%
<i>Total</i>	100%	100%	101%
<b>The availability of good jobs at good pay for those who want to work</b>			
<i>It will soon return to the way it was before</i>	14%	14%	16%
<i>It will return to the way it was before, but not for many years</i>	52%	56%	55%
<i>It will not return to the way it was before</i>	34%	30%	30%
<i>Total</i>	100%	100%	101%

**QNE6. Please indicate what you think will happen in each of the following areas: (continued)**

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking
<b>The ability of young people to afford college</b>			
<i>It will soon return to the way it was before</i>	9%	10%	10%
<i>It will return to the way it was before, but not for many years</i>	33%	34%	43%
<i>It will not return to the way it was before</i>	58%	57%	48%
<i>Total</i>	100%	101%	101%
<b>The elderly having to find part-time work after retiring</b>			
<i>It will soon return to the way it was before</i>	17%	15%	15%
<i>It will return to the way it was before, but not for many years</i>	36%	38%	41%
<i>It will not return to the way it was before</i>	47%	47%	44%
<i>Total</i>	100%	100%	100%
<b>Older workers being able to retire when they want to</b>			
<i>It will soon return to the way it was before</i>	7%	6%	7%
<i>It will return to the way it was before, but not for many years</i>	30%	32%	42%
<i>It will not return to the way it was before</i>	63%	62%	51%
<i>Total</i>	100%	100%	100%
<b>Workers having to take jobs below their skill level</b>			
<i>It will soon return to the way it was before</i>	13%	13%	15%
<i>It will return to the way it was before, but not for many years</i>	45%	51%	48%
<i>It will not return to the way it was before</i>	42%	37%	37%
<i>Total</i>	100%	101%	100%

**QRI15. Please check the box if you know someone in each category who has lost her job in the past four years of the recession.**

**N = 1,090**

**\*Only “Yes” answers displayed here.**

	Total
Another member of your immediate household	20%
A member of your extended family — parents, children, aunts, uncles, cousins, and such	43%
A close personal friend of yours	44%
A close personal friend of someone else in your immediate household	25%

**QG1. When people are laid off from work, who should be mainly responsible for helping them?**

N = 1,062

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking	August 2010
Government	26%	27%	38%	32%
Employers	32%	28%	35%	26%
Workers themselves	42%	46%	27%	42%
Total	100%	101%	100%	99%

**QGP2. Here are some ideas that are being considered by government officials to help bring down high unemployment...Would you support or oppose those ideas?**

N = 1,060

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking
<b>Long-term education and training programs that help people change careers</b>			
<i>Strongly support</i>	24%	23%	36%
<i>Support</i>	52%	55%	43%
<i>Oppose</i>	10%	11%	10%
<i>Strongly oppose</i>	5%	4%	2%
<i>No opinion</i>	9%	7%	10%
<i>Total</i>	100%	100%	101%
<b>Longer and higher benefits from unemployment insurance</b>			
<i>Strongly support</i>	14%	9%	28%
<i>Support</i>	32%	32%	33%
<i>Oppose</i>	28%	29%	19%
<i>Strongly oppose</i>	16%	18%	8%
<i>No opinion</i>	10%	11%	13%
<i>Total</i>	100%	99%	101%
<b>Have government create jobs for unemployed people</b>			
<i>Strongly support</i>	20%	15%	39%
<i>Support</i>	40%	46%	33%
<i>Oppose</i>	20%	18%	13%
<i>Strongly oppose</i>	13%	14%	6%
<i>No opinion</i>	7%	8%	9%
<i>Total</i>	100%	101%	100%



**QGP2. Here are some ideas that are being considered by government officials to help bring down high unemployment...Would you support or oppose those ideas? (continued)**

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking
Require people to enter training programs in order to receive unemployment insurance			
<i>Strongly support</i>	19%	21%	29%
<i>Support</i>	49%	49%	34%
<i>Oppose</i>	17%	14%	18%
<i>Strongly oppose</i>	7%	7%	6%
<i>No opinion</i>	9%	9%	14%
<i>Total</i>	101%	100%	101%
Give tax credits to businesses that hire new workers			
<i>Strongly support</i>	26%	24%	33%
<i>Support</i>	55%	56%	37%
<i>Oppose</i>	9%	9%	13%
<i>Strongly oppose</i>	3%	3%	3%
<i>No opinion</i>	8%	8%	15%
<i>Total</i>	101%	100%	101%

**QRI3. Has the economic downturn had a major impact, a minor impact, or no impact at all on you and your family?**

N = 1,073

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking	August 2010
Major	35%	35%	60%	37%
Minor	51%	50%	37%	50%
No impact	14%	16%	3%	12%
Total	100%	101%	100%	99%

**QRI4. Have you and your family done any of the following because of the Great Recession that started four years ago?**

N = 1,069

\*Only “Yes” answers displayed here

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking	August 2010
Borrowed money from friends or family	29%	26%	46%	24%
Loaned money to family and friends	39%	37%	43%	29%
Declared personal bankruptcy	6%	5%	10%	6%
Used money from savings set aside for other things or retirement to make ends meet	47%	48%	63%	41%
Increased credit card debt	30%	36%	34%	22%
Sought professional help in the past 12 months for a stress-related disorder or depression	14%	14%	18%	9%
Taken a job you did not like or below your education/experience level	23%	29%	36%	Not asked
Used Food Stamps or received Food Stamps from a nonprofit or religious organization	19%	15%	35%	Not asked
Cut back on doctor visits or medical treatment	35%	38%	48%	Not asked

**QFS7. Comparing how much you make and what you have in savings now to when the recession started a couple of years ago, do you now have:**

N = 1,071

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking
A lot more in savings	5%	7%	1%
A little more in savings	15%	16%	9%
The same in savings	25%	25%	16%
A little less in savings	18%	19%	17%
A lot less in savings	38%	34%	57%
Total	101%	101%	100%

**QFS8. Thinking about your finances over the next few years, which do you think is more likely?**

N = 1,062

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking
You will get back to where you were before the recession began	23%	27%	41%
You will stay at the level you are now	61%	55%	51%
You are already back/no loss in the first place	16%	18%	8%
Total	100%	100%	100%

**QFS14. Considering everything, how long do you think it will take YOU AND YOUR FAMILY to recover financially from the effects of the recession?**

N = 1,065

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking
Less than one year	7%	8%	6%
1-2 years	17%	16%	32%
3-5 years	34%	34%	30%
6-10 years	16%	18%	17%
Longer than 10 years	12%	7%	12%
Already recovered	15%	17%	2%
Total	101%	100%	99%

**CURRENTLY EMPLOYED SEQUENCE**  
**[IF QEMPSTATSUM=1] (EMPLOYED)**

**QCE1. Thinking about your current job, are you:**

**N = 673**

	<b>Total</b>
Very satisfied	29%
Somewhat satisfied	37%
Neither satisfied not dissatisfied	15%
Somewhat dissatisfied	11%
Very dissatisfied	7%
Don't know	1%
Total	100%

**QRI12. How confident are you that if you lost or wanted to leave your current job, you could find another job as good or better?**

**N = 673**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>August 2010</b>
Extremely confident	8%	7%
Very confident	10%	12%
Somewhat confident	34%	30%
Not very confident	30%	30%
Not at all confident	18%	20%
Total	100%	99%

**QTIMESERIES.** Now, I'd like to find out how satisfied you are with different aspects of your job. Please tell me whether you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, or very dissatisfied with it.

**N = 669**

	<b>Total</b>
<b>Your job overall</b>	
<i>Very satisfied</i>	33%
<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	35%
<i>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</i>	18%
<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	10%
<i>Very dissatisfied</i>	4%
<i>Total</i>	100%
<b>Your total annual income</b>	
<i>Very satisfied</i>	15%
<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	35%
<i>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</i>	16%
<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	19%
<i>Very dissatisfied</i>	16%
<i>Total</i>	101%
<b>The health and medical coverage provided by your employer</b>	
<i>Very satisfied</i>	21%
<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	25%
<i>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</i>	22%
<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	17%
<i>Very dissatisfied</i>	15%
<i>Total</i>	100%
<b>Opportunities for advancement at your job</b>	
<i>Very satisfied</i>	11%
<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	24%
<i>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</i>	32%
<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	20%
<i>Very dissatisfied</i>	13%
<i>Total</i>	100%

**QTIMESERIES.** Now, I'd like to find out how satisfied you are with different aspects of your job. Please tell me whether you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, or very dissatisfied with it. (continued)

	Total
The age at which you will probably retire	
<i>Very satisfied</i>	12%
<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	19%
<i>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</i>	28%
<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	23%
<i>Very dissatisfied</i>	18%
<i>Total</i>	100%
The security of your job	
<i>Very satisfied</i>	20%
<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	31%
<i>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</i>	18%
<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	20%
<i>Very dissatisfied</i>	11%
<i>Total</i>	100%
The ability to balance work and family	
<i>Very satisfied</i>	25%
<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	32%
<i>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</i>	22%
<i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i>	15%
<i>Very dissatisfied</i>	7%
<i>Total</i>	101%

**QTIMESERIES2.** How are you paid?

N = 623

	Total
A salary	35%
By the hour	56%
Self-employed/commission/stipend	9%
Total	100%

**[ASK ALL] (GENPOP)**

**QRI14. During and after the Great Recession of the past four years, were you laid off from a full- or part-time job?**

**N = 1,070**

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking	August 2010
Yes, full-time job	19%	20%	33%	11%
Yes, part-time job	4%	5%	19%	3%
No	77%	75%	49%	86%
Total	100%	100%	101%	100%

**[IF RI14=1,2] (LAID OFF)**

**QCE2. How long were you actively seeking employment before you found a job after being laid off?**

**N = 343**

	Total
2 months or less	23%
3-4 months	9%
5-6 months	20%
7 months to 1 year	10%
1-2 years	12%
More than 2 years	11%
No new job	9%
Not sure	7%
Total	101%

[IF QEMPSTATSUM=1; RI14=3] (LAID OFF, NOW REEMPLOYED)

**QCE4B. Comparing to what you are doing now to what you were doing when the recession hit in late 2008, is your current job:**

N = 154

	Total
A step up for you	24%
A step down for you	48%
Not that different	28%
Total	100%

**QCE5. Is your current pay now lower than the job you were doing when the recession hit, is it higher, or the same amount?**

N = 155

	Total
Current job is lower paying	54%
Current job is higher paying	24%
Current job is the same pay	22%
Total	100%

[IF QCE5=1] (IF CURRENT JOB IS LOWER PAYING)

**QCE5A. How much lower?**

N = 90

	Total
0%-5% lower	9%
6%-10% lower	25%
11%-20% lower	16%
21%-30% lower	18%
31%-50% lower	26%
More than 50% lower	7%
Total	101%



**[IF QEMPSTATSUM=1] (EMPLOYED)**

**QFS10A. Do you think the impact on your standard of living will be:**

**N = 613**

	<b>Total</b>
Permanent	26%
Temporary	44%
No impact	30%
Total	100%

**QCE10. Did you receive unemployment benefits from the government at any time after you became unemployed?**

**N = 661**

	<b>Total</b>
Yes	21%
No	79%
Total	100%

**[IF QCE10=1] (RECEIVED UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS)**

**QCE10A. Did your unemployment benefits run out before you were able to find a new job?**

**N = 155**

	<b>Total</b>
Yes	27%
No	73%
Total	106%

**CURRENTLY UNEMPLOYED SEQUENCE****[IF QEMPSTATSUM=2,3] (UNEMPLOYED AND LOOKING/NOT LOOKING)****QCU5. Please check any of the following you have done in the past 12 months.****N = 325****\*Only "Yes" answers displayed here.**

	<b>Total</b>
Taken an education class useful for job hunting	18%
Taken a class or training course for skills to get a new job	25%
Went to a One-Stop Career Center or government agency for help	33%
Looked for a job using Internet job boards or employer Web sites	81%
Attended a job fair	27%
Other	15%

**[IF CU5=1,2] (TOOK EDUCATION OR TRAINING COURSE)****QCU5B. Who paid for the education and training?****N = 96**

	<b>Total</b>
Yourself or a family member	49%
An employer	3%
Government agency	23%
Community organization	7%
Religious organization	2%
Other	16%
Total	100%

[IF QEMPSTATSUM=2,3] (UNEMPLOYED AND LOOKING/NOT LOOKING)

**QCU11. At the moment, what is your current outlook on finding a job?**

N = 375

	Total	Unemployed and Looking
Very optimistic	10%	18%
Somewhat optimistic	33%	39%
Somewhat pessimistic	21%	26%
Very pessimistic	36%	18%
Total	100%	101%

**QCU10. Have you received unemployment benefits from the government at any time in the past 12 months?**

N = 402

	Total	Unemployed and Looking
Yes	7%	29%
No	93%	71%
Total	100%	100%

[IF CU10=1] (RECEIVED UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS)

**QCU10A. How concerned are you that your unemployment benefits will run out before you find a new job?**

N = 89

	Total	Unemployed and Looking
Not at all concerned	5%	6%
Somewhat unconcerned	4%	5%
Somewhat concerned	29%	27%
Very concerned	26%	31%
Benefits have already run out	37%	31%
Total	101%	100%

[IF CU10A=5] (UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS RAN OUT)

QCU10A1. How many months ago did your benefits run out?

N = 30

Mean = 7 months

Median = 7 months

	Total
1 month ago or less	26%
2-4 months ago	26%
5-7 months ago	24%
More than 7 months ago	24%
Total	100%

[IF RETIRED=2] (NOT RETIRED)

QFS5. Because of the recession, do you think about retiring later or earlier than you had originally planned?

N = 946

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking
Yes, earlier than planned	3%	2%	10%
Yes, later than planned	43%	46%	41%
No change in retirement plans	54%	53%	50%
Total	100%	101%	101%

GENERAL POPULATION (CONTINUED)

QOT4. Other than yourself, are there any adults living in your household that are 18 years or older?

N = 1,075

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking
Yes	74%	73%	77%
No	26%	27%	23%
Total	100%	100%	100%

**[IF QOT4=1] (OTHER ADULTS LIVING IN HOUSEHOLD)**

**QOT4A. Do any of the other adult(s) living with you contribute a significant amount of money to the household finances to make ends meet?**

**N = 800**

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking
Yes	80%	73%	91%
No	21%	27%	9%
Total	101%	100%	100%

**[IF MARRIED OR LIVING WITH PARTNER]**

**QOT4A1. As a result of you being unemployed, has your spouse or partner worked additional hours or an additional job?**

**N = 665**

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking
Yes	16%	17%	29%
No	79%	80%	67%
No spouse or partner	5%	3%	3%
Total	100%	100%	99%

**QTIMESERIES3. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement. Overall, job, career, and employment opportunities will be better for the next generation than for my generation.**

**N = 1,074**

	Total	Employed	Unemployed and Looking
Strongly agree	4%	1%	7%
Somewhat agree	15%	19%	22%
Neither agree nor disagree	38%	41%	39%
Somewhat disagree	25%	25%	18%
Strongly disagree	19%	13%	14%
Total	101%	99%	100%



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