

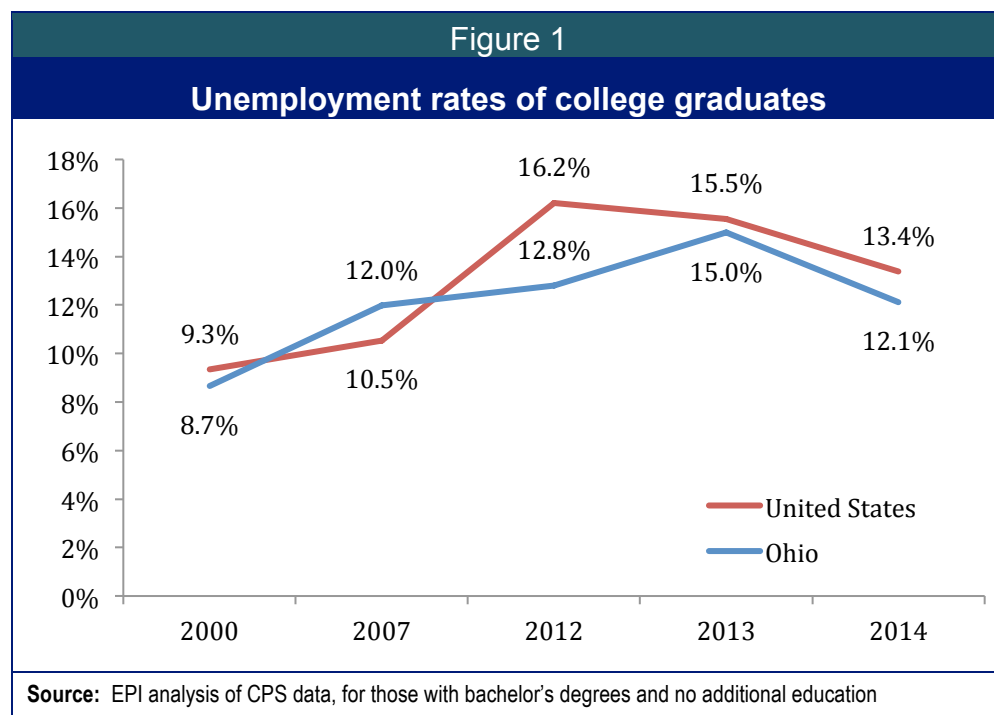
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Young and unemployed:

Young Ohioans continue to face economic difficulties, new report shows

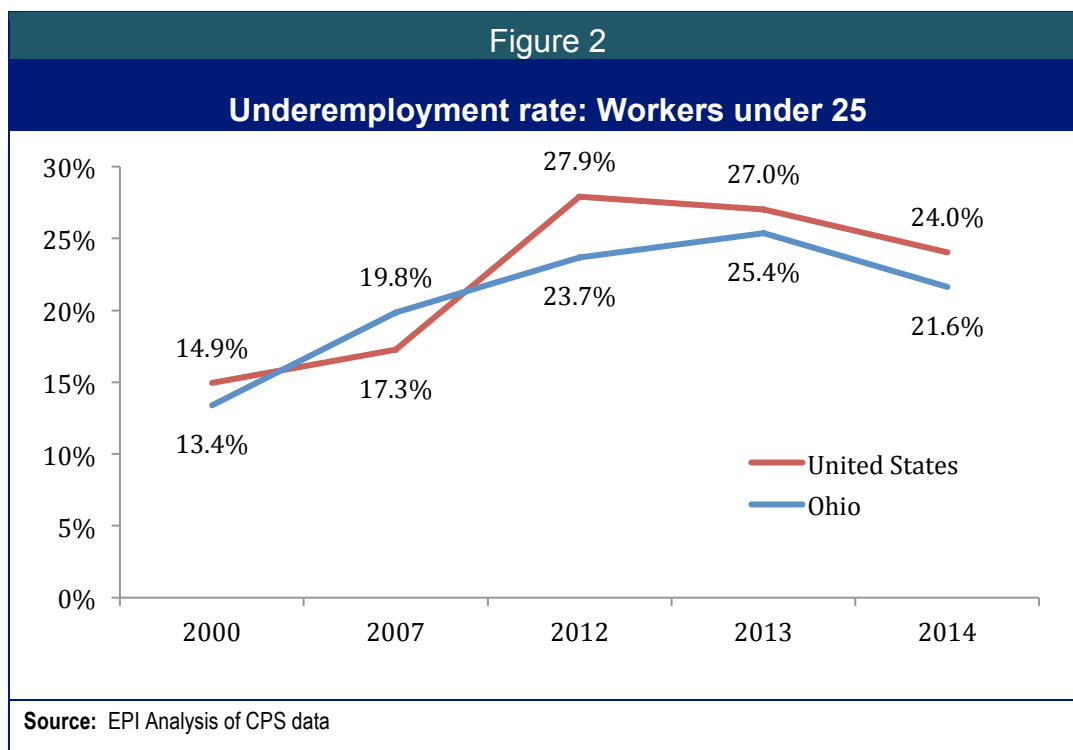
The Great Recession caused unemployment and underemployment to skyrocket, especially for new college graduates, who have historically fared poorly in a shrinking economy. [The Class of 2015](#), a comprehensive new report released today by the Economic Policy Institute, shows modest improvement for young job seekers, but makes it clear that Ohio and the nation need more jobs for strong economic growth.

Figure 1 shows that college graduates – those who've taken on substantial expense to obtain the four years of college training that many observers say is needed – still have unemployment rates exceeding 12 percent in Ohio and exceeding 13 percent nationally. Unemployment figures for young college graduates improved in the past two years but are still far worse than they were before the early 2000s recession.



Fewer Ohioans worked in 2014 than before the economic setback of 2007. Underemployment counts the number of part-time workers looking for full-time hours and those who have given up looking for work, in addition to the unemployment rate. This statistic presents a more complete sense of labor-force participation. Compared to the national average, Ohio boasts lower

unemployment rates for college graduates and lower underemployment rates for all workers under age 25. However more than one in five young Ohio workers was underemployed in 2014.



College enrollment levels are also telling – in Ohio, college enrollment is at its lowest level since 2000. Just 35.5 percent of Ohio high school graduates under age 25 were enrolled in college in 2014, down from a peak of 46.7 percent in 2012. This likely reflects two negatives and one positive: young people may feel that college costs are too high and may fear that a four-year degree won't guarantee a return on their investment of time and money in earning that degree. The positive variable: the dismal labor market of 2012 likely sent some unemployed workers into higher education because they saw no job prospects. Some workers now see that they can get work and don't need to shelter in college before entering the labor market.

Nonetheless, this and other research demonstrates that higher education is increasingly unaffordable and the labor market offers too few opportunities for those with college educations. EPI's research on 2014 unemployment levels corroborates a conclusion in the most recent Policy Matters "[State of Working Ohio](#)" report: Ohioans need more jobs.

Slashing public-sector employment coupled with tax cuts for businesses have toughened the conditions for Ohio workers. State cuts to higher education, [including financial aid](#), have contributed to a decline in college enrollment. While the state economy recovers from the recession at a slow pace, it is essential that the legislature enact policies that create an educated and skilled workforce and more good-paying jobs.

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*Policy Matters Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan state policy research institute
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