



## Class of 2016: Labor market still weak for young grads

The Great Recession had lasting effects on employment for today's young adults, according to a [report](#) released today by the Economic Policy Institute. Authors Teresa Kroeger, Tanyell Cooke and Elise Gould find that the recession and slow recovery have sent eight classes of students into a weak labor market with limited job openings upon graduation. Ohio's situation is especially bad.

"The labor market has clearly improved for the class of 2016," said Kroeger. "But when you look under the hood, there's continued weakness for women, people of color, and workers without a college degree." Key findings for Americans for 2015 include:

- For young college graduates, unemployment (5.6 percent) and underemployment (12.6 percent) are higher than before the recession. For young high school graduates, unemployment is 17.9 percent and underemployment is a staggering 33.7 percent.
- The vast majority (65.8 percent) of people age 24-29 lack a college degree.
- Many are "idled" – neither working nor in school, including 9.7 percent of those who've finished college and 15.5 percent of those who've finished just high school.
- Unemployment and underemployment are much higher for black and Hispanic workers, including those who have finished college.
- Wages are low and not growing. Among young high school graduates, average wages are just \$10.66 an hour and among young college graduates they are just \$18.53. These indicators are worse for women. Pension coverage has declined.
- The cost of higher education has skyrocketed. Adjusted for inflation, costs jumped 119.5 percent (private higher education) and 124.7 percent (public) between 1984-85 and 2014-15.

Young people have it tougher in Ohio than in the nation. In Ohio in 2015:

- Those under age 25 had a 12.3 percent unemployment rate, worse than the national rate (11.6 percent), than the 2000 rate (8.7 percent) and than the rate for all ages combined (4.9 percent).
- Underemployment was about the same for workers under 25 in Ohio (21.1 percent), as in the nation (21 percent) but was worse than for Ohio workers of all ages (10.1 percent) and worse than in the year 2000 (13.4 percent).
- A smaller share of Ohio workers was in college (39.2 percent) than in the nation (42.2 percent). The share in both Ohio and the U.S. has risen slightly since 2000.

"Ohio's next generation of workers is still struggling, years into the recovery," said Amy Hanauer, executive director of Policy Matters Ohio, which released the report locally. "We need to push for more and better jobs by investing in infrastructure, raising the minimum wage, strengthening unions, ending discriminatory practices, and preventing the Federal Reserve from raising interest rates."