

# Demographics, the Unemployed, and the Recession:



*Who got hit hardest by unemployment during the recession? Some felt the pain worse than others.*

**T**he recent recession was not an equal opportunity “un-employer.” Certain demographic groups felt the economic pain worse than others. The recent Bureau of Labor Statistics release of its *Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment* provides some insights to the demographics of Utah’s unemployed.

## How low can you go?

Comparing unemployment statistics for 2007 and 2010, contrasts the year with the lowest unemployment rates of the recent business cycle to the year with the highest rates. In 2007, Utah’s unemployment rate measured a

mere 2.6 percent—the lowest joblessness of the post WWII era. In fact, for many employers the rate was too low. Labor seemed scarce and, following those old laws of supply and demand, wages took a decided hike.

Almost every demographic group managed a low unemployment rate in 2007. Women, men, whites, Latinos, and age groups older than 24 all showed jobless shares near (or below) 3 percent. Only young people—those 24 years and younger—displayed significant levels of unemployment. Teenagers were worst off with a jobless rate of 11 percent.

## Quick Change

Fast forward three years. By 2010, Utah's annual unemployment rate had basically tripled to reach 8.2 percent. Following the typical pattern, men (who dominate employment in industries most affected by recession) experienced worse joblessness than did women. In 2007, women showed a higher unemployment rate than men. In 2010, joblessness for Utah men measured 9.5 percent, while women's rate had increased to just 6.6 percent. The Hispanic/Latino labor force also felt the pangs of unemployment to a greater degree than did whites. Latino labor force saw their joblessness more than quadruple from 3.1 percent to 12.6 percent in just three years.

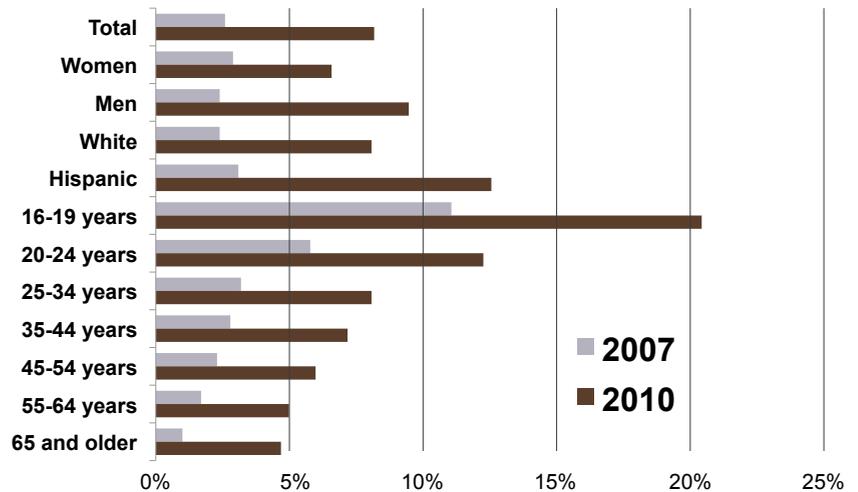
Statistically, the higher the age group, the lower the level of unemployment. That relationship generally holds true in boom and bust. However, during the recession, while teenagers' unemployment rate doubled, the rate for 55-64 year-olds almost tripled. Nevertheless, unemployment for teenagers measured 21 percent compared to 5 percent for the 55-64 year-olds.

## Fair Share

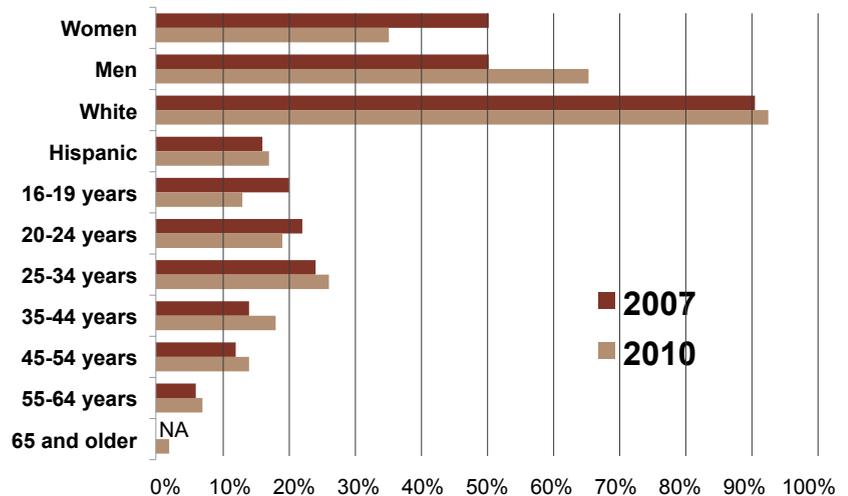
In 2007, women and men maintained equal shares of the number of unemployed persons. However, by 2010, men made up 65 percent of the jobless and women's share dropped to 35 percent. Also, as more older workers felt the sting of "no job" during the downturn, 16-19 year-olds saw their share of the unemployed drop from 20 to 13 percent. Those aged 25-34 accounted for the largest proportion (about one-fourth) during both good times and bad. The recession hit workers 35-44 particularly hard. Their share of unemployed workers increased from 14 percent in 2007 to 18 percent in 2011. 

For more information about the demographics of Utah's unemployed, see <http://www.bls.gov/gps/>

### Utah Unemployment Rates by Demographic Group



### Utah Share of Unemployment by Demographic Group



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.