
African-American Unemployed Workers

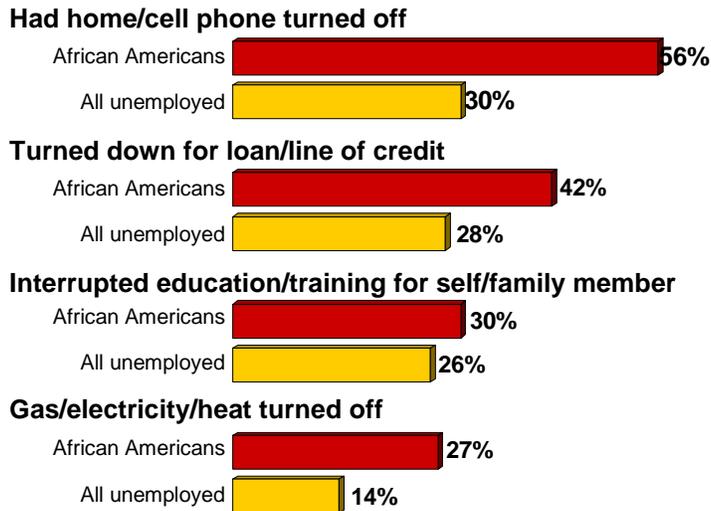
*Findings from a national survey of unemployed workers, conducted by
Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc.*

In times of economic downturn, African Americans often are among the hardest hit. African-American unemployed workers make up 20% of the sample. Compared with the full sample, they are more likely to live in an urban area, be single, have a high school degree or less education, have an annual household income less than \$50,000, and have minor children living with them.

- ◆ Unemployed African Americans have been unemployed longer than others—on average, they have been unemployed 7.6 months of the past year, compared with an average of 6.7 months among all unemployed workers.
- ◆ The hardships unemployed African Americans face involve the challenges of meeting basic needs, paying day-to-day expenses, and providing food.
 - Three in five (62%) have cut back spending on food and groceries.
 - 44% have had trouble paying for their basic groceries.
 - 43% have relied on food stamps.
 - 31% received free food or groceries from family or friends.
 - One in five (21%) received free food from a food pantry or charity.
- ◆ The strain of unemployment on families does not discriminate and is severe across all racial and ethnic groups. It affects nearly every aspect of life including family relationships and finding a way to meet the expenses of day-to-day life. On many measures, African Americans report greater than average levels of hardship. Two-thirds (65%) of unemployed African Americans report an increase in family stress.
 - Seven in 10 (69%) spent more of their savings than they had hoped to and 55% borrowed money to keep up with expenses.
 - 66% cut back spending on clothing and school supplies for children.
 - 46% fell behind on rent and 28% had to move to other housing or move in with friends.
 - 34% had another family member start a job or increase their work hours to help provide for family.

Challenges Faced By African American Unemployed Workers

% saying this has happened to them while unemployed



- ♦ African-American unemployed workers are significantly less likely to have health insurance than their white counterparts, with only 38% having health insurance compared with 54% of white unemployed workers. Approximately two in five (39%) African-American unemployed workers lost their health insurance since becoming unemployed. They also are more likely to have postponed medical or dental treatment, with more than half (51%) reporting that they have done this.
- ♦ Unemployed African Americans are more likely to have received UI benefits in recent years than both white and Hispanic unemployed workers, with more than 40% either currently receiving them (22%) or having done so within the past two years (21%).
- ♦ An overwhelming 91% of African Americans who have received UI benefits characterize them as very (81%) or fairly (10%) important in helping them to meet their family's needs, with food and groceries and rent or mortgage payments being the most frequently cited things they helped pay for.
- ♦ Nearly nine in 10 (87%) African-American unemployed workers express that more government employment services are needed and a slightly greater proportion (90%) characterize extending UI benefits beyond 13 weeks as very or fairly helpful.



From November 14 to 18, 2008, Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., conducted a nationwide telephone survey among 400 unemployed adults, defined as currently unemployed and looking for work, not on layoff, generally available to start work, and having looked for work within the past 12 months. These criteria used for selecting respondents means that the survey includes more long-term unemployed adults than those included in definitions used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In order to include unemployed workers who are a part of the growing number of cell-phone only households, approximately 10% of the interviews were conducted among cell-phone only households. The margin of error for the survey is ± 4.9 percentage points and higher for specific subgroups.