

## DESCRIPTION

Unemployment is a key indicator of economic health. The most frequently used definition of unemployment compares the number of individuals over age 16 who were employed in the past week over the number of individuals over age 16 who sought work in the past four weeks.<sup>1</sup> This measure has been criticized for not including discouraged workers who have given up looking for work in the past month or the past year. A broader definition of unemployment includes all individuals who have been seeking work in the past year as well as part time workers seeking full time work. The analysis for this indicator is based on the primary unemployment measure and self-disclosed unemployment.

## HOW WE ARE DOING

Nationally, the unemployment rate has come down to 4.1 percent, and in Minnesota it's even lower at 3.1 percent.<sup>2</sup> Minnesota posted its lowest unemployment rate since July 2000 in November 2017<sup>3</sup> and ranks fifth in the nation for labor force participation.<sup>4</sup> Ramsey County unemployment is similarly low with 2.4 percent reported in November 2017.<sup>5</sup> This rate confirms that Ramsey County has recovered from a peak of nearly 8 percent unemployment during the Great Recession.<sup>6</sup> One caveat to this success is that while most Ramsey County residents are employed, many are commuting outside of the county for work. Ramsey County is home to a large number of jobs, however, only 34 percent of residents both live and work in Ramsey.<sup>7</sup> Most jobs located within Ramsey County are held by individuals who commute from other counties in the metro area. The largest industries in Ramsey County are health care and social assistance (16.8 percent), educational services (11 percent) and management of companies (8.7 percent).<sup>8</sup>

## DISPARITIES

In the United States, veterans have slightly lower unemployment rate (9.2 percent) compared to civilians (10.3 percent), when averaging across the years of 2012-2016. This is also true in Ramsey County with rates of 6.5 percent and 8.5 percent respectively. Across Minnesota, veterans have a higher unemployment rate (7.8 percent) compared to civilians (6.6 percent).<sup>6</sup> Disparities are also evident when looking at unemployment by race and ethnicity. Unemployment is significantly higher among African-Americans (16 percent) and American Indians (17 percent) compared to unemployment rates among Asians (9 percent) and Whites (5 percent) in Ramsey County.<sup>6</sup>

## RISK FACTORS

Education is a strong predictor of employment. Ramsey County residents without a high school education have an unemployment rate that is 12 percentage points higher than residents with a bachelor's degree. Education likely factors into the higher unemployment experienced by adolescents and young adults. There is a 10 percentage point difference between the age groups 16-19 years and 20-24 years, suggesting that work opportunities increase with age, experience and degree attainment.<sup>6</sup> Individuals who have experienced incarceration are limited by some of the same factors as adolescents, a lack of education and work experience.

## Information to note

- In 2016, the unemployment rate was significantly higher among African-Americans (16%) and American Indians (17%) compared to rates among Asians (9%) and Whites (5%) in Ramsey County.
- Most jobs located within Ramsey County are held by individuals who commute from other counties in the metro area.

## Community voice

*"Stress, unemployment, no housing, not enough money to take care of family."*  
- Asian Male, age 65-74

Employment and/or unemployment were mentioned in 357 responses. Respondents expressed the great stress and financial burden unemployment has on their health and their family's health.

<sup>1</sup> Minnesota Employment and Economic Development. Alternative Measures of Unemployment. <https://mn.gov/deed/data/current-econ-highlights/alternative-unemployment.jsp>. Accessed July 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics. Labor Force Statistics. <https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNS14000000>. Accessed July 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Minnesota Employment and Economic Development. Unemployment Rate Drops to 3.1% in November. <https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/press-releases/?id=321388>. Accessed July 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Minnesota Employment and Economic Development. Labor Force Participation Rates. <https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/compare-mn/labor/labor-force.jsp>. Accessed July 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Minnesota Employment and Economic Development. Local Unemployment Statistics. <https://apps.deed.state.mn.us/lmi/laus/CurrentStats.aspx>. Accessed July 2018.

<sup>6</sup> American Community Survey. Employment Status. <https://factfinder.census.gov>. Accessed July 2018.

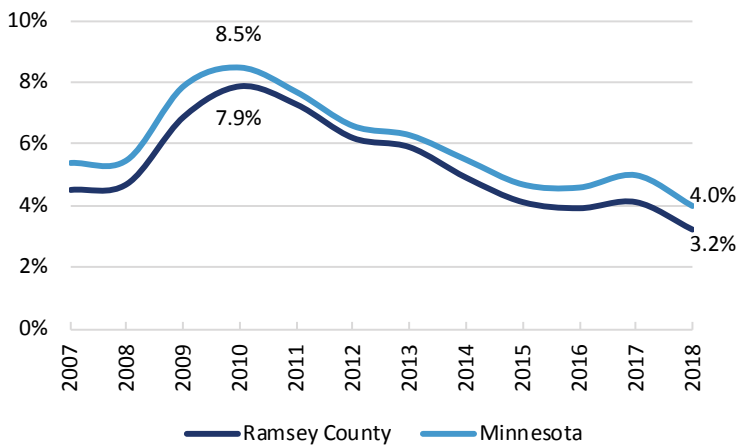
<sup>7</sup> Minnesota Employment and Economic Development. Where is everyone going? Commuting patterns in the Twin Cities. <https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/publications/review/june-2016/commuting-patterns.jsp>. Accessed July 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Minnesota Employment and Economic Development. Economic Development Region 11: Twin Cities Metro. [https://mn.gov/deed/assets/rp\\_edr11\\_2017\\_tcm1045-133249.pdf](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/rp_edr11_2017_tcm1045-133249.pdf). Accessed July 2018.

## WHAT RAMSEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS DOING

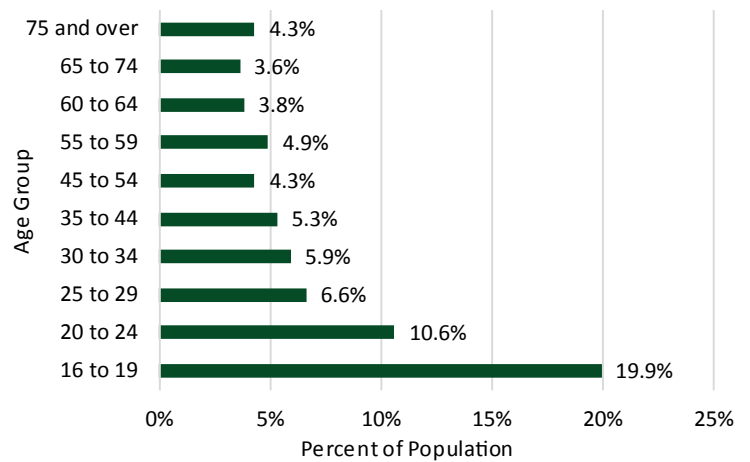
Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health provides data monitoring and reporting for this topic in order to better understand the overall health and current conditions in the community. The information may help inform community partners, policy makers or county program leadership.

Unemployment Rate in January of Each Year



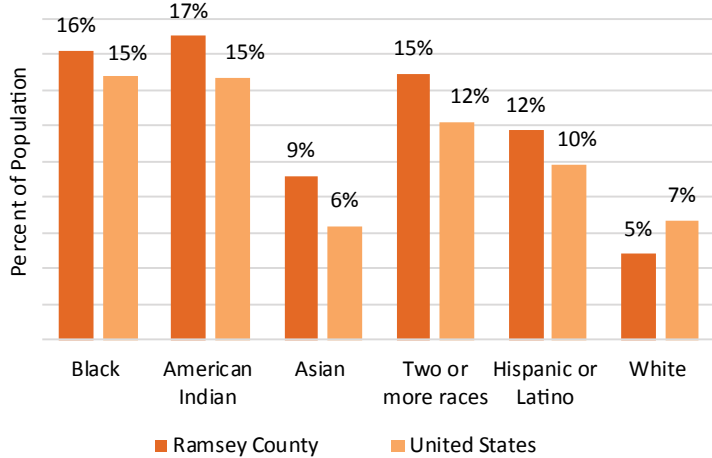
Source: Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.<sup>9</sup>

Unemployment Rate by Age, Ramsey County  
2012 - 2016



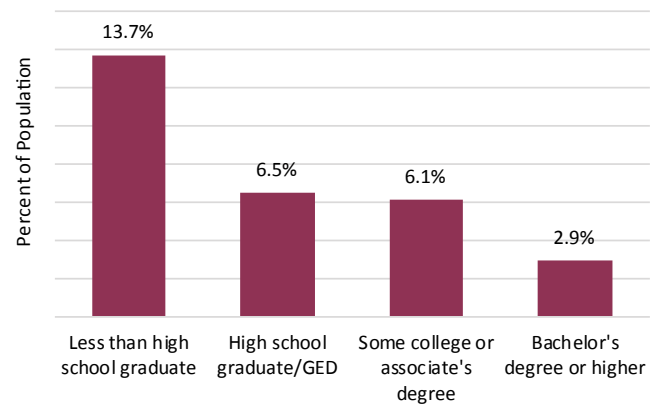
Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year.<sup>10</sup>

Unemployment Rate by Race and Ethnicity,  
2016



Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year.<sup>10</sup>

Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment,  
Ramsey County, 2016



Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. <https://mn.gov/deed/data/>. Accessed July 12, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year. Estimates. U.S. Census Bureau. <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t>. Accessed January 29, 2018.