

CRS Report for Congress

The Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006 (S. 2611): Potential Labor Market Effects of the Guest Worker Program

December 18, 2006

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Prepared for Members and
Committees of Congress

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Summary

In the 109th Congress, the Senate passed S. 2611, the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006, which would have created a new H-2C guest worker program. The 110th Congress may consider similar legislation.

The guest worker program included in S. 2611 would allow up to 200,000 foreign workers into the United States annually. An employer would have to pay an H-2C worker the greater of the “actual” wage paid by the employer to other workers who do the same kind of work and have similar experience or the “prevailing” wage. Employers would be prevented from hiring H-2C workers if the area unemployment rate for unskilled workers averaged more than 9% for the previous six months. The language in S. 2611 would allow employers to hire skilled, semi-skilled, or unskilled workers, but not agricultural workers or certain types of skilled workers. The kinds of jobs filled under the H-2C program could be similar to the kinds of jobs filled under an existing (H-2B) program, which is used mainly to hire lower-skilled workers.

Initially, an increased supply of lower-skilled foreign workers could be expected to lower the relative wages of lower-skilled U.S. workers. If the H-2C program were enacted, an increased supply of lower-skilled foreign workers may have the greatest impact on young, native-born minority men and on foreign-born minority men in their early working years. In 2005, lower-skilled U.S. workers were mainly white, non-Hispanic males under the age of 45. But a disproportionate number of these workers were young (16 to 24), minority (black or Hispanic) men. The unemployment rate among young, native-born minority men tends to be higher than among similar nonminority men. In 2005, almost a fifth of lower-skilled workers were foreign born, and a disproportionate number of these were minority (nonwhite or Hispanic) men in their early working years (25 to 44). Foreign-born minority men in their early working years tend to earn less than similar native-born workers.

In response to an initial decline in the relative wages of lower-skilled workers employers may hire more lower-skilled workers and fewer skilled workers. Thus, the initial widening of the wage gap may narrow over time. Other factors — such as technological change, trade, saving and investment, education and training, demographic changes — may also affect the wages of U.S. workers.

The H-2C program could be used by employers to meet seasonal demand, to hire foreign workers at full employment, or to fill jobs when there is a mismatch in a geographic area between the skills demanded and the skills available. In each case, U.S. workers may not be available at the wages offered. They may or may not be available at higher wages.

If employers are not able to hire qualified U.S. workers in high unemployment areas (i.e., more than 9%), there may be a mismatch between the skills available and the skills employers need. This report will be updated as warranted.

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The Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006 (S. 2611): Potential Labor Market Effects of the Guest Worker Program

Introduction

In the 109th Congress, the Senate passed S. 2611, the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006.¹ The 110th Congress may consider similar legislation. S. 2611 included provisions to improve border security and the enforcement of immigration law. The bill would have also created legalization programs for unauthorized aliens, increased existing limits on legal immigration, and created a new H-2C guest worker program.

This report examines some potential labor market effects of the guest worker program included in S. 2611. The report begins with a description of the program. Next, the report describes some characteristics of lower-skilled U.S. workers with whom many H-2C guest workers may compete. The report then examines some potential labor market effects of an increased supply of lower-skilled foreign workers on competing U.S. workers (i.e., workers in the United States who have similar skills as H-2C workers). Finally, the report examines some possible effects of a provision in S. 2611 that would prevent employers from hiring H-2C workers if the area unemployment rate for unskilled workers averages more than 9% for the previous six months.

The Proposed H-2C Guest Worker Program

S. 2611 would allow employers to hire up to 200,000 H-2C guest workers a year.² H-2C workers could be hired to fill skilled, semi-skilled, or unskilled jobs, but employers could not use the program to hire agricultural workers or certain skilled

¹ S. 2611 was approved by the Senate on May 25, 2006. On Dec. 16, 2005, the House approved H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005. H.R. 4437 would not create a new guest worker program. For more information on these bills and other immigration legislation in the 109th Congress, see CRS Report RL33125, *Immigration Legislation and Issues in the 109th Congress*, coordinated by Andorra Bruno; and CRS Report RL33181, *Immigration Related Border Security Legislation in the 109th Congress*, by Blas Nuñez-Neto and Janice Cheryl Beaver.

² Under S. 2611, unauthorized workers who have been in the United States since Jan. 7, 2004, and meet certain conditions may be able to obtain H-2C visas. The 200,000 annual cap on H-2C visas would not apply to these workers.

workers.³ The H-2C program would prohibit employers from hiring guest workers in areas with high unemployment (i.e., more than 9%) among unskilled workers. S. 2611 defines the area unemployment rate as the unemployment rate in Micropolitan Statistical Areas or Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). These areas are defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).⁴ S. 2611 defines unskilled workers as persons with no more than a high school education.

Under S. 2611, to get an H-2C visa an individual would have to have a job offer from a U.S. employer who meets the requirements of the act. Before hiring a foreign worker, an employer would first have to try to recruit a U.S. worker.⁵ An employer would have to offer the job to any U.S. worker who applies and is qualified and available. An employer would also have to file a petition with the Secretary of Homeland Security in which the employer states that the employment of a foreign worker will not adversely affect the wages or working conditions of U.S. workers who are “similarly employed.”

Once an H-2C worker is hired, an employer would have to pay the worker either (1) the actual wage paid by the employer to other workers who do the same kind of work and have similar experience or (2) the prevailing wage, whichever is greater.⁶

³ Under an existing (H-2A) program, employers may hire foreign workers to perform temporary agricultural work. The H-2A program does not have an annual cap. For more information on the H-2A program, see CRS Report RL32044, *Immigration: Policy Considerations Related to Guest Worker Programs*, by Andorra Bruno.

The H-2C program in S. 2611 would not apply to certain skilled workers who can enter the United States under existing visas. For example, the H-2C visa would not apply to persons covered by the H-1B program, which is for persons in specialty occupations (generally, occupations that require the application of specialized knowledge and a bachelor’s degree or its equivalent). Nor would the H-2C program apply to persons covered by the L, O, or certain other visas. The L visa applies to intracompany transfers of executives, managers, or workers with specialized knowledge. The O visa applies to persons with “extraordinary ability” in science, business, education, the arts, or athletics or who have a record of “extraordinary achievement” in the motion picture or television industry.

⁴ An MSA is a geographic area that consists of at least one urban area with a population of 50,000 or more and adjacent areas that have a high degree of economic and social integration. A Micropolitan Statistical Area consists of at least one urban area with a population of 10,000 to 50,000 and adjacent areas with a high degree of economic and social integration. U.S. Office of Management and Budget, *Metropolitan Statistical Areas, Metropolitan Divisions, Micropolitan Statistical Areas, Combined Statistical Areas, New England City and Town Areas, and Combined New England City and Town Areas*, OMB Bulletin 06-01, available at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/bulletins/fy2006/b06-01_rev.pdf], Dec. 5, 2005, p. 2.

⁵ S. 2611 defines a “United States worker” as a citizen of the United States; an alien who has been admitted as a permanent resident or refugee; an alien who has been granted asylum; or an alien who has been authorized to work in the United States.

⁶ If a job is covered by a collective bargaining contract, the prevailing wage would be the wage covered by the agreement. If the job is not covered by a collective bargaining contract but is an occupation covered by either the Davis-Bacon Act or the Service Contract Act, the

(continued...)

The H-2C visa would be effective for an initial period of three years and could be extended for another three years. The visa would be portable; that is, an H-2C worker could accept a job offer from another U.S. employer, provided the employer meets the recruitment, wage, and other requirements of the act.

Persons who receive a temporary H-2C visa could adjust to permanent status. After four years in the United States, an H-2C worker could file a petition for an employment-based visa.⁷ At any time, an employer could file a petition on behalf of a worker for an employment-based visa.⁸

Effects of a New Guest Worker Program

The 110th Congress may consider a new guest worker program similar to the H-2C program approved by the Senate in the 109th Congress. If so, questions will likely arise about the potential economic effects of such a program. This section begins with a summary of estimates by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) of the effects of the H-2C program on federal spending and the U.S. population. Next, the section describes some characteristics of lower-skilled U.S. workers with whom many H-2C workers would likely compete. The section then describes an economic framework that is useful in understanding the potential labor market effects of a new guest worker program. Finally, the section considers some possible effects of the provision in S. 2611 that would prevent employers from hiring H-2C workers if the area unemployment rate for unskilled workers averages more than 9% for the previous six months.

CBO Estimates of the Impact of the H-2C Program

According to estimates by CBO, the H-2C program in S. 2611 would raise direct federal spending by \$4.1 billion from 2007 to 2016. Most of this spending (\$3.9 billion) would be for Medicaid benefits. CBO also projects that the H-2C program would increase the U.S. population by 3.3 million persons from 2007 through 2016. The projection includes both workers and their dependents (including children born to new entrants after they arrive in the United States). Of the 3.3 million increase,

⁶ (...continued)

prevailing wage would be the wage that applies under those acts. If a job is not covered by a collective bargaining contract or either the Davis-Bacon or Service Contract Acts, the prevailing wage would be based on wage data for the occupation from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) or, if BLS does not have wage data that applies to the occupation, on data from another survey approved by the Secretary of Labor. For descriptions of the Davis Bacon and Service Contract Acts, see CRS Report RL32086, *Federal Contract Labor Standards Statutes: An Overview*, by William G. Whittaker.

⁷ For an explanation of employment-based visas, see CRS Report RL32235, *U.S. Immigration Policy on Permanent Admissions*, by Ruth Ellen Wasem.

⁸ The spouses and children of H-2C workers would be able to enter the United States under a different visa (H-4).

CBO estimates that a half million persons would have entered the United States illegally under current law.⁹

Characteristics of Competing Lower-Skilled U.S. Workers

The H-2C program in S. 2611 would allow up to 200,000 guest workers into the United States each year. These workers would compete with U.S. workers and, eventually, with previously admitted H-2C workers. The language in S. 2611 would allow employers to hire skilled, semi-skilled, or unskilled workers. However, the kinds of jobs filled under the program may be similar to the kinds of jobs filled under an existing (H-2B) program, which is used mainly to hire lower-skilled workers.¹⁰ Also, S. 2611 includes a provision that would prevent employers from hiring H-2C workers in areas with high unemployment among unskilled workers. Thus, the rest of this report focuses on the potential labor market effects of the proposed H-2C program on competing lower-skilled workers. This section of the report follows S. 2611 and defines lower-skilled workers as persons with a high school education or less. The definition of unskilled workers does not include agricultural workers (i.e., because the H-2C program in S. 2611 would not apply to agricultural workers).

This section compares three groups of U.S. workers:

- the total civilian labor force;¹¹
- all lower-skilled workers; and
- lower-skilled, foreign-born workers (a subset of all lower-skilled workers).

The description of U.S. workers is based on data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a monthly survey of about 55,500 households conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for BLS.¹² In the CPS, persons with a high school education include persons with either a diploma or GED (i.e., persons who have passed General Educational Development tests). See **Appendix A** for more information on the CPS.

⁹ Congressional Budget Office, *S. 2611: Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006*, Aug. 18, 2006, pp. 4-7, 22.

¹⁰ Under the H-2B program, employers may hire temporary nonagricultural workers. Currently, the H-2B program is capped at 66,000 visas annually. The requirements for the proposed H-2C visa would not be same as the requirements for the H-2B visa. For more information on the H-2B program, see CRS Report RL32044, *Immigration: Policy Considerations Related to Guest Worker Programs*.

¹¹ Persons who are in the labor force are either working or actively looking for work.

¹² In this report, foreign-born persons include both citizens and noncitizens of the United States. The CPS does not ask noncitizens if they are legal permanent residents, nonimmigrants who are in the United States temporarily (e.g., guest workers), or whether they are in the country without authorization. Therefore, in this report, the definition of foreign-born persons includes legal immigrants, legal nonimmigrants, and unauthorized aliens.

Table 1 shows that an increased supply of foreign-born, lower-skilled workers may have the greatest impact on young, native-born minority men and on foreign-born minority men in their early working years. The unemployment rate among young, native-born minority men tends to be higher than among similar nonminority men.¹³ Foreign-born minority men in their early working years tend to earn less than similar native-born workers.¹⁴

All Lower-Skilled Workers Compared to the Total Civilian Labor Force. In 2005, lower-skilled U.S. workers were mainly white (81.1%), non-Hispanic (79.7%) males (56.9%) under the age of 45 (62.7%). However, compared to the total civilian labor force, a disproportionate number of lower-skilled workers were black or Hispanic (13.5% and 20.3%, respectively), between the ages of 16 and 24 (19.7%), and male (56.9%).¹⁵

Foreign-Born, Lower-Skilled Workers Compared to All Lower-Skilled Workers. Some research suggests that new immigrants may compete mainly with prior immigrants.¹⁶ Therefore, this section compares foreign-born, lower-skilled workers to all lower-skilled workers. A disproportionate number of lower-skilled workers are foreign-born. In 2005, foreign-born, lower-skilled workers accounted for 18.6% of all lower-skilled workers. By comparison, foreign-born workers with more than a high school education accounted for 11.6% of all workers with more than a high school education.¹⁷ Compared to all lower-skilled workers, foreign-born, lower-skilled workers were disproportionately nonwhite (23.0%), Hispanic (68.0%), between the ages of 25 and 44 (55.2%), and male (63.8%).

¹³ In 2005, the unemployment rate among native-born, lower-skilled minority men (either black or Hispanic) between the ages of 16 and 24 was 8.5%. Among similar nonminority men, the unemployment rate was 3.9%. Calculated by CRS from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

¹⁴ In 2005, foreign-born, lower-skilled minority men (either black or Hispanic) between the ages of 25 and 44 had median weekly earnings of \$440. Similar native-born men had median weekly earnings of \$508. Calculated by CRS from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

¹⁵ When answering the question about race in the CPS survey, respondents are allowed to choose more than one race. This report follows BLS practice and only counts blacks and whites who selected one race category. Hispanic persons may be of any race. The comparisons discussed in the text of this report are significant at the 95% confidence level. See **Appendix A** for a discussion of confidence levels.

¹⁶ One reason why new immigrants may have a greater effect on the wages and employment of earlier immigrants is that many new immigrants move to areas where there are large concentrations of immigrants. James P. Smith and Barry Edmonston, eds., *The New Americans: Economic, Demographic, and Fiscal Effects of Immigration*, Washington: National Academy Press, 1997, pp. 223-224.

¹⁷ In 2005, 11.7 million of 62.6 million lower-skilled nonagricultural workers were foreign born; 10.0 million of 85.7 million nonagricultural workers with more than a high school education were foreign-born.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the U.S. Labor Force in 2005, by Type

Characteristic	Number (in 1,000s)	Percent
Gender		
Total civilian labor force		
Male	80,033	53.6%
Female	69,288	46.4%
Total	149,320	100.0%
All lower-skilled, nonagricultural workers		
Male	35,619	56.9%
Female	26,944	43.1%
Total	62,563	100.0%
Foreign-born, lower-skilled nonagricultural workers		
Male	7,441	63.8%
Female	4,225	36.2%
Total	11,666	100.0%
Race		
Total civilian labor force		
White Only	122,291	81.9%
Black Only	17,013	11.4%
Other	10,017	6.7%
Total	149,320	100.0%
All lower-skilled nonagricultural workers		
White Only	50,745	81.1%
Black Only	8,428	13.5%
Other	3,390	5.4%
Total	62,563	100.0%
Foreign-born, lower-skilled nonagricultural workers		
White Only	8,984	77.0%
Black Only	976	8.4%
Other	1,706	14.6%
Total	11,666	100.0%
Hispanic Origin		
Total civilian labor force		
Hispanic	19,824	13.3%
Non-Hispanic	129,497	86.7%
Total	149,320	100.0%
All lower-skilled nonagricultural workers		
Hispanic	12,725	20.3%
Non-Hispanic	49,839	79.7%
Total	62,563	100.0%
Foreign-born, lower-skilled nonagricultural workers		
Hispanic	7,937	68.0%
Non-Hispanic	3,728	32.0%
Total	11,666	100.0%

Characteristic	Number (in 1,000s)	Percent
Age		
Total civilian labor force		
16-24	22,290	14.9%
25-34	32,341	21.7%
35-44	36,030	24.1%
45-54	34,402	23.0%
55-64	18,980	12.7%
65 and over	5,278	3.5%
Total	149,320	100.0%
All lower-skilled nonagricultural workers		
16-24	12,331	19.7%
25-34	12,466	19.9%
35-44	14,465	23.1%
45-54	13,483	21.6%
55-64	7,293	11.7%
65 and over	2,525	4.0%
Total	62,563	100.0%
Foreign-born, lower-skilled nonagricultural workers		
16-24	1,635	14.0%
25-34	3,252	27.9%
35-44	3,180	27.3%
45-54	2,222	19.1%
55-64	1,101	9.4%
65 and over	275	2.4%
Total	11,666	100.0%

Source: Calculated by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

Notes: Estimates are for persons age 16 and older and in the civilian labor force. Lower-skilled workers are persons with no more than a high school education. Employment estimates of lower-skilled workers are for nonagricultural persons. Estimates are monthly averages for calendar year 2005. Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

High School Dropouts Compared to All Persons With No More than A High School Education. Analysts often compare workers who have not completed high school (i.e., who do not have a diploma or GED) with workers who have no more than a high school education. **Table B1** in **Appendix B** is similar to **Table 1**, except it compares the civilian labor force to nonagricultural workers without a high school education.

Compared to all lower-skilled workers (from **Table 1**), more persons without a high school education (from **Table B1**) were male (60.7% vs. 56.9%), Hispanic (37.9% vs. 20.3%), and under the age of 25 (31.7% vs. 19.7%). Over half of foreign-born nonagricultural workers with no more than a high school education had not finished high school.

Occupations. Column 4 of **Table 2** shows that, in 2005, more than half (57.3%) of foreign-born, lower-skilled nonagricultural workers were employed in four major occupations: construction, production, building and grounds cleaning, and food services. In construction, the largest number of workers were employed as laborers, carpenters, painters, roofers, drywall installers, and carpet installers. In production occupations, the largest number of workers were employed as assemblers; metal and plastic workers; sewing machine operators; packaging machine operators; and meat, poultry, and fish processing workers.

Table 2. Employment of Lower-Skilled, Foreign-Born Workers in 2005, by Occupation

Occupation	Number (1,000s)		Percent	
	All Lower-Skilled Workers (1)	Foreign-Born, Lower-Skilled Workers (2)	Foreign-Born Workers as a Percent of All Lower-Skilled Workers (3)	Foreign-Born Workers by Occupation (4)
Construction and extraction	7,117	2,071	29.1%	17.8%
Production	6,963	1,750	25.1%	15.1%
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	4,315	1,522	35.3%	13.1%
Food preparation and serving related	5,304	1,315	24.8%	11.3%
Transportation and material moving	6,448	1,170	18.1%	10.1%
Sales and related	7,247	925	12.8%	8.0%
Office and administrative support	8,796	822	9.3%	7.1%
Personal care and service	2,511	484	19.3%	4.2%
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3,090	455	14.7%	3.9%
Management occupations	3,510	349	9.9%	3.0%
Healthcare support occupations	1,667	297	17.8%	2.6%
Education, training, and library	817	77	9.5%	0.7%
Protective service	1,087	75	6.9%	0.6%
Healthcare practitioners and technical	614	67	10.9%	0.6%
Business and financial operations	895	63	7.1%	0.5%
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	537	62	11.5%	0.5%
Community and social services	248	37	15.1%	0.3%
Architecture and engineering	318	24	7.7%	0.2%
Computer and mathematical	268	23	8.7%	0.2%
Life, physical, and social science	116	11	9.8%	0.1%
Legal	115	6	5.2%	0.1%
Total	61,985	11,605	18.7%	100.0%

Source: Calculated by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

Notes: Estimates are for persons age 16 and older and in the civilian labor force. Lower-skilled workers are persons with no more than a high school education. Employment estimates of lower-skilled workers are for nonagricultural persons. Total employment in **Table 2** is less than total employment in **Table 1** because some persons did not report an occupation (e.g., they may have been in the labor force but unemployed). Estimates are monthly averages for calendar year 2005. Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

Column 3 of **Table 2** shows that, in the four occupations where over half of foreign-born, lower-skilled workers were employed, one-fourth or more of the lower-skilled workers were foreign-born. In building and grounds cleaning occupations, 35.3% of lower-skilled workers were foreign born. In construction, 29.1% of lower-skilled workers were foreign born; in production, 25.1% of lower-skilled workers were foreign born; and in food preparation and serving occupations, 24.8% of lower-skilled workers were foreign born. If employers used the proposed H-2C program to hire workers for these occupations, the impact on foreign-born workers may be greater than if the program were used to hire workers for other occupations. If S. 2611 were enacted, some of the workers with whom newer H-2C workers may compete could be H-2C workers admitted in previous years.

Table 3 shows that, according to BLS employment projections, from 2004 to 2014 employment will increase by 18.9 million jobs (from 145.6 million to 164.5 million, or 13.0%).¹⁸ In those occupations that employed foreign-born, lower-skilled workers in 2005, employment is projected to increase by 17.7 million jobs (from 135.6 million to 153.4 million, or 13.1%). Employment is projected to increase in all occupations, except production (reflecting a projected decline in manufacturing employment). But the 17.7 million increase in new jobs is for all jobs, regardless of the educational attainment of the person holding the job. BLS estimates that, from 2004 to 2014, 6.9 million jobs will be filled by persons with a high school education or less (an increase from 68.5 million to 75.4 million, or 10.1%).¹⁹ The persons who fill these jobs may be either native-born or foreign-born.

Projections of job growth do not take into account vacancies that may occur in existing jobs. Employers may replace workers who change occupations or who leave the labor force (e.g., to return to school, raise children, or retire). Therefore, the number of *job openings* by occupation consists of the sum of the number of jobs created or lost and the number of vacancies caused by workers who change occupations or leave the labor force.²⁰ According to BLS projections, from 2004 to

¹⁸ Every two years BLS publishes employment projections for the next 10 years. The projections are made in a series of steps, beginning with estimates of the future size of the labor force. Projections of the size of the labor force take into account population projections by Census Bureau. The population projections include estimates of net international migration. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Projections," *BLS Handbook of Methods*, at [<http://stats.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch13.pdf>], pp. 123-126; Norman C. Saunders, "A Summary of BLS Projections to 2014," *Monthly Labor Review*, v. 128, Nov. 2005, available at [<http://stats.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2005/11/art1full.pdf>], pp. 6-7. Mitra Toossi, "Labor Force Projections to 2014: Retiring Boomers," *Monthly Labor Review*, v. 128, Nov. 2005, available at [<http://stats.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2005/11/art3full.pdf>], p. 27.

¹⁹ Daniel E. Hecker, "Occupational Employment Projections to 2014," *Monthly Labor Review*, vol. 128, Nov. 2005, at [<http://stats.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2005/11/art5full.pdf>], pp. 71, 79-80.

²⁰ For information on "replacement needs," see chapter 5 in Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Projections and Training Data*, available at [<http://www.bls.gov/emp/optd/home.htm>].

2014, there will be 24.5 million job openings in occupations filled by persons with no more than a high school education.²¹ The proposed H-2C program could allow as many as 200,000 foreign workers into the United States annually. The H-2C visa would be effective for an initial period of three years, with one three-year extension.

Table 3. BLS Employment Projections, 2004-2014, by Occupation

Occupation	Projected Employment (in 1,000s)			
	2004	2014	Change, 2004-2014	Job Openings ^a
	All jobs			
Construction and extraction	7,666	8,597	931	2,439
Production	10,260	10,169	-91	2,811
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	5,582	6,530	948	2,062
Food preparation and serving related	10,739	12,453	1,714	5,981
Transportation and material moving	10,249	11,365	1,116	3,509
Sales and related occupations	13,803	15,082	1,279	5,890
Office and administrative support	21,149	22,454	1,304	6,803
Personal care and service	4,721	5,713	991	2,121
Installation, maintenance, and repair	5,683	6,335	652	1,963
Management	8,666	9,639	974	2,618
Healthcare support	3,092	4,149	1,057	1,540
Education, training, and library	7,992	9,589	1,596	3,242
Protective service	2,999	3,419	420	1,258
Healthcare practitioners and technical	6,015	7,562	1,548	2,706
Business and financial operations	5,736	6,831	1,095	2,105
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	2,112	2,425	313	699
Community and social services	2,317	2,800	483	928
Architecture and engineering	2,360	2,649	289	809
Computer and mathematical	2,410	3,186	775	1,097
Life, physical, and social science	902	1,046	144	354
Legal	1,173	1,363	190	326
Total	135,627	153,355	17,714	51,544
Jobs filled by lower-skilled workers	68,506	75,424	6,919	24,518
Total Civilian Labor Force	145,612	164,540	18,928	54,680

Sources: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment by Occupation, 2004 and Projected 2014*, at [<http://stats.bls.gov/emp/emptabapp.htm>].

a. The number of job openings consists of the sum of the number of jobs created or lost and the number of vacancies caused by workers who change occupations or leave the labor force.

²¹ The 24.5 million projection accounts for 44.8% of all job openings during the 10-year period. One reason for the large number of job openings in occupations filled by persons with a high school education or less is that employee turnover in lower-skilled jobs tends to be greater than in jobs requiring more education.

Within six years, there could be as many as 1.2 million H-2C guest workers in the United States. Persons who receive an H-2C visa could adjust to permanent status and become U.S. citizens.²² If most of the annual 200,000 H-2C visas were issued to lower-skilled workers, they could fill up to 8% of the projected job openings in occupations requiring a high school education or less.

Earnings. Lower-skilled workers generally earn less than more skilled workers. In 2005, foreign-born, lower-skilled workers had median weekly earnings of \$400, before taxes and other deductions. This amount compares to median weekly earnings of \$576 for all workers and \$438 a week for all lower-skilled workers. These estimates include both full-time and part-time workers.²³

Research on the Effect of Immigration on Earnings. Researchers do not agree on the effect of immigration on earnings.²⁴ According to George Borjas, between 1979 and 1995, immigration of unskilled workers (defined as high school dropouts) reduced the wages of all high school dropouts by five percentage points relative to the wages of all other workers.²⁵ David Card, on the other hand, has concluded that an increased supply of less skilled immigrants (also defined as high school dropouts) has had little impact on the wages of dropouts relative to the wages of high school graduates. According to Card, the main reason for this finding is that industries change their methods of production to employ the increased supply of less skilled foreign workers.²⁶

²² Because S. 2611 included provisions intended to improve border security and increase enforcement of immigration law, some H-2C guest workers may be substitutes for unauthorized workers.

²³ Calculated by CRS from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

²⁴ For a review of research on the labor market effects of immigration on U.S. workers, see CRS Report 95-408, *Immigration: The Effects on Native-Born Workers*, by Linda Levine; and Congressional Budget Office, *The Role of Immigrants in the U.S. Labor Market*, Nov. 2005, pp. 19-24.

²⁵ George J. Borjas, *Heaven's Door: Immigration Policy and the American Economy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001, pp. 82-83.

²⁶ According to Card, between 1979 and 2001, the wage gap between high school graduates and dropouts remained relatively steady, but the gap between college and high school graduates increased. David Card, "Is the New Immigration Really So Bad?" *The Economic Journal*, v. 115, Nov. 2005, pp. F307-F315, F321. Also see Ethan Lewis, *Local Open Economies Within the U.S.: How Do Industries Respond to Immigration?* Working Paper No. 04-1, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, available at [<http://www.phil.frb.org>], pp. 21-23.

If an increased supply of lower-skilled workers does not affect the relative wages of workers in different skill groups, it could nevertheless change the distribution of earnings if the relative number of workers in different skill groups changes. For example, an increase in the relative number of lower paid (or higher paid) workers could increase earnings inequality.

Economic Framework For Understanding the Potential Labor Market Effects of a New Guest Worker Program

The potential labor market effects of a new guest worker program can be examined from different perspectives: (a) the *initial effect* of an increased supply of foreign workers on the wages and employment of competing U.S. workers; (b) the *long-run effect* of an increased supply of foreign workers, as U.S. workers and employers adjust to the initial change in wages and employment; and (c) the effects that take place over time as *other changes* (social, economic, and demographic) occur.

Initially, an increased supply of lower-skilled foreign workers can be expected to lower the relative wages of lower-skilled U.S. workers. In response to the initial change in wages, employers may hire more lower-skilled workers (because they are relatively cheaper) and fewer skilled workers (because they are relatively more expensive). Some employers and workers may move to areas where there are better investment and employment opportunities. Other factors may also affect employment and wages; for example, changes in technology, foreign trade, saving and investment, education and training, and demographic changes.

The effects of a guest worker program may also depend on why U.S. workers are not available to meet employer demand. Thus, the effects of a guest worker program would likely differ if employer demand is for seasonal workers, for workers at full employment, or for workers with skills that are not available in local labor markets. Employers may be able to fill jobs by offering higher wages. But, at full employment, higher wages may cause inflation without increasing employment. If there is a mismatch between the skills demanded by employers and the skills available, vacancies could be filled by training workers. But worker training can take time. Qualified workers may not be available soon enough to meet employer demand.

Economic Analysis. The different perspectives for analyzing the labor market effects of a guest worker program can be described using standard economic concepts.

Short-Term and Longer-Term Effects. Economists distinguish between the short-term and the long-term effects of an increased supply of workers. For an employer, the common definition of the short-term is a period during which the quantity of at least one input is fixed and cannot be changed. It is generally assumed that the fixed input is the stock of capital goods (i.e., buildings and equipment and associated technology). If the stock of capital is fixed, in the short-term a firm can

only change the quantity of variable factors, principally labor.²⁷ In the long-term, a firm can change the quantity of both fixed and variable inputs.

Scale Effect. For employers, the stock of capital goods is generally fixed in the short run. If there is a change in the price of labor relative to the price of capital or a change in the relative wages of workers with different skills, the *scale* of production may change. In the short run, an increased supply of workers can be expected to lower the wages of competing workers.²⁸ Therefore, if employers used the H-2C program to hire lower-skilled workers, in the short run, the wages of competing U.S. workers could be expected to fall relative to the wages of other workers.²⁹ At the same time, relative wages may rise for workers whose skills are complements (e.g., supervisors) to the skills of lower-skilled workers.

Substitution Effect. In the long run, employers can change the quantities of both fixed and variable inputs. In response to a change in the relative prices of inputs, employers may use relatively more of the factor that has fallen in price. Holding output constant, employers may *substitute* the lower-priced factor for other inputs. Therefore, if the H-2C program increased the supply of lower-skilled workers, employers may substitute less-skilled labor for both skilled labor and capital. Employers may hire more lower-skilled workers and fewer skilled workers. Therefore, in the short run, the wages of unskilled workers may fall relative to the wages of skilled workers (the scale effect). But, in the long run, employers may adopt more labor-intensive production methods (the substitution effect). If so, in the long run, the initial (i.e., short-run) widening of the wage gap between skilled and unskilled workers may narrow.

In the long run, both labor and capital are mobile. An increased supply of foreign workers in one geographic area may affect investment decisions and the behavior of other workers. For instance, employers may move their businesses to where there is a greater supply of labor. Workers may move to where there is a greater demand for labor. Thus, an increased supply of workers in one area of the country may affect employment and wages throughout the economy.

Social, Economic, and Demographic Changes. The scale and substitution effects of employer demand for labor are useful in explaining how an increased supply of lower-skilled workers may affect employment and relative wages in the short run and long run. But the scale effect holds the stock of capital goods constant

²⁷ Because labor consists of both variable and fixed costs, it is sometimes called a quasi-fixed factor of production. Fixed labor costs vary with the number of workers employed, and include hiring and training costs, certain payroll taxes, and fringe benefits. Variable costs vary with the number of hours worked, and consist mainly of wages. Walter Y. Oi, "Labor as a Quasi-Fixed Factor," *Journal of Political Economy*, v. 70, Dec. 1962, pp. 538-539; Daniel S. Hamermesh, *Labor Demand*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993, pp. 44-48; and Reynolds et al., *Labor Economics and Labor Relations*, pp. 94-95.

²⁸ The wages of competing workers may not fall in absolute terms, but they can be expected to fall relative to the wages of other workers.

²⁹ For an explanation of how an increase in labor supply may affect wages and employment, see CRS Report 95-408, *Immigration: The Effects on Native-Born Workers*.

and the substitution effect holds output constant. Over time, other changes may make it difficult to identify the effects of an increased supply of lower-skilled workers. For example, the size and composition of the domestic labor force may change. The work force may become younger or older. More U.S. workers may finish high school or go to college. Savings and investment may cause the stock of capital, employment, and output to grow. Changes in technology, consumer preferences, or trade may affect the demand for workers with different skills.³⁰ Some changes may be due, in part, to an increased supply of foreign workers. For example, because of an increased supply of lower-skilled foreign workers, some U.S. workers may get more education and training; others may leave the labor force. An increased supply of lower-skilled foreign workers may also affect the amount, kind, and location of investment as well as the kinds of technology adopted.

The Availability of U.S. Workers. The labor market effects of a new guest worker program may also depend on why U.S. workers are not available to meet employer demand.

Seasonal Demand. Employers may need workers to meet seasonal demand. An adequate supply of qualified U.S. workers may be available among unemployed workers or among persons willing to enter the labor force in response to a demand for temporary workers. Under the proposed H-2C program, an employer would have to pay a foreign worker the actual wage paid to other workers for the same kind of work and similar experience or the prevailing wage, whichever is greater. But, in local labor markets, an adequate supply of workers may not be available at these wages. Workers may be available from outside the area, but they may not be willing to travel or relocate for a temporary job. Workers with permanent jobs may not be willing to leave those jobs for a temporary job. Thus, a guest worker program may help employers meet seasonal demand by providing a temporary supply of workers. On the other hand, the availability of guest workers may discourage employers from raising wages to recruit U.S. workers. A guest worker program may also discourage employers from adopting different production methods or introducing new technologies that could reduce the demand for seasonal workers.

A Geographic Mismatch Between the Skills Demanded and Skills Supplied. In some labor markets, employers may not be able to fill openings if the skills that are available locally do not match the skills that employers need.³¹ Foreign workers may help meet employer demand if qualified U.S. workers are not available at the wages paid to other workers for the same kind of work or at the prevailing wage. At higher wages, employers may be able to recruit qualified workers from outside the local labor market. Alternatively, local workers could be trained to perform the available work. But training can take time, depending on the kinds of skills needed. Training may, however, be a longer-term solution to local labor shortages. Qualified U.S. workers could also be attracted to an area by higher wages.

³⁰ Technological change consists of improved equipment, the introduction of new products, and improved methods of production, transportation, and communication.

³¹ When there is unemployment because of a mismatch in a labor market between the skills available and the skills demanded, unemployment is called structural unemployment.

Employers could also relocate to an area where there is an adequate supply of qualified workers.

Demand at Full Employment. At full employment (whether for seasonal or year-round work), employers may only be able to hire qualified U.S. workers by raising wages and hiring workers away from other employers.³² But higher wages may cause inflation. Therefore, at full employment, foreign workers may help meet employer demand for labor and help curb inflation. Because H-2C visas would be effective for three years (and renewable for another three years), the economy may not be at full employment when the visas expire. But without the H-2C program, some employers could potentially relocate or outsource work to a country where there is an adequate supply of labor.

Effects of the 9% Area Unemployment Trigger

S. 2611 included a provision that would not allow employers to hire H-2C workers if the area unemployment rate for unskilled workers averages more than 9% for the previous six months. The trigger would not affect the overall limit of 200,000 H-2C visas, which would be available to the rest of the country.

Before hiring an H-2C worker, employers would first have to try to recruit and hire U.S. workers. In high unemployment areas, the 9% trigger would restrict the supply of H-2C workers. Thus, in these areas, the potential labor market effects of the H-2C program may depend on whether U.S. workers are available to meet employer demand.

In high unemployment areas, employers may be able to hire unemployed workers, whether at the same wage paid to other workers for the same kind of work or at a higher wage. However, if employers are not able to hire qualified U.S. workers, it may be because there is a mismatch in the area between the skills some employers demand and the skills available. If there is a mismatch, employers would not be allowed to hire H-2C workers. U.S. workers could be trained to fill the demand or they could be recruited from outside the local area. Employers could also alter their method of production to reduce their need for skills that are not available or they could move to where the skills are available and the unemployment rate is 9% or lower.

Table C1 in Appendix C shows those areas of the country that may have been affected by the 9% unemployment trigger if it had been in effect in 2005. The unemployment rates shown in the table are based on the monthly CPS. If S. 2611

³² At full employment, there are typically persons who are between jobs (e.g., because they have quit or been laid off) or persons who have entered the labor force and are looking for work. Economists call this frictional unemployment.

Full employment is commonly defined as the lowest rate of unemployment that is consistent with stable prices. This rate may vary over time. CRS Report RL33734, *Economic Growth, Inflation, and Unemployment: Limits to Economic Policy*, by Brian Cashell; and CRS Report RL32274, *A Changing Natural Rate of Unemployment: Policy Issues*, by Marc Labonte.

were enacted, BLS estimates of the unskilled unemployment rate may be more precise than those shown. Column 5 shows the confidence intervals for the unemployment rates for lower-skilled workers (in column 4). The confidence intervals show the lower and upper bounds of the estimated unemployment rates. (See **Appendix A** for a discussion of confidence levels.) **Table C1** follows the language in S. 2611, and includes agricultural workers in the estimates of the unskilled unemployment rate.

Table C1 indicates that if the 9% trigger had been in effect in 2005, visas for H-2C guest workers would not have been issued in approximately 65 Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSAs). The labor force in these 65 MSAs accounted for an estimated 11.8% of the total labor force of 63.4 million lower-skilled workers. More than half of the MSAs were in the Midwest and West. In the Midwest, 7 of the MSAs were in Michigan, 4 in Ohio, and 3 in Illinois.³³ In the West, 11 of the MSAs were in California and 4 were in Washington. Texas had 4 MSAs where the unemployment rate among unskilled workers was more than 9%.

As the national unemployment rate rises or falls, the number of MSAs that could be affected by the 9% trigger may also rise or fall. In 2005, the national unemployment rate was 5.1%. In 2004, unemployment was 5.5%.³⁴ In 2004, BLS adopted new MSA definitions issued by OMB. Therefore, the unemployment estimates for 2005 in **Table C1** can be compared with estimates for 2004. If the 9% trigger had been in effect in 2004, employers would not have been able to hire H-2C workers in approximately 63 MSAs. Compared with 2005, however, these MSAs accounted for a larger share of the lower-skilled labor force: 13.2% of an estimated labor force of 63.2 million. Eight of the MSAs were in California, 7 were in Michigan, 5 in Texas, and 4 each were in Alabama, Colorado, Illinois, and Ohio.³⁵

Conclusions

If the 110th Congress were to enact a guest worker program like the H-2C program that was approved by the Senate in the 109th Congress, the initial labor market effects may be different from the long-term effects. Initially, an increased supply of foreign workers could be expected to lower the relative wages of competing U.S. workers. If the program were used mainly to hire lower-skilled foreign workers, the greatest impact may be on young, native-born minority men and on foreign-born minority men in their early working years. In response to the initial change in wages, employers may hire more lower-skilled workers and fewer skilled workers. Some employers and workers may also move to where there are better investment and employment opportunities.

³³ Some MSAs cross state lines. One of the three MSAs in Illinois (the Davenport-Moline-Rock Island MSA) includes parts of Iowa.

³⁴ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey*, available at [<http://stats.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat1.pdf>].

³⁵ BLS adopted the new MSA definitions effective with the May 2004 CPS. Therefore, the unemployment estimates by MSA for 2004 are averages for the eight months from May to December 2004.

An increased supply of foreign workers would likely increase total U.S. employment and output. But economists do not agree on the effect of immigration on wages. Other factors — such as technological change, trade, saving and investment, education and training, and demographic changes — may also affect wages and make it difficult to identify the effects of an increased supply of foreign workers.

The effects of a guest worker program may also depend on why U.S. workers are not available to meet employer demand. The effects would likely differ if employer demand is for seasonal workers, for more workers at full employment, or for workers with skills that are not available in the local labor market. Employers may be able to fill jobs by offering higher wages. But, at full employment, higher wages may cause inflation without increasing employment. If there is a mismatch between the skills demanded and the skills available, higher wages may not attract an adequate supply of qualified workers.

The 9% trigger in S. 2611 may encourage employers to hire U.S. workers. But, workers may not be available in local labor markets because there is a mismatch between the skills demanded and the skills available.

Appendix A. Data and Methodology

Current Population Survey

The CPS is a household survey conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor. The monthly CPS is the main source of labor force data for the nation, including estimates of the monthly unemployment rate. The CPS collects a wide range of demographic, social, and labor market information. Approximately 55,500 households are interviewed each month, either in person or by phone.³⁶

The CPS sample is representative of the civilian noninstitutional population; it does not include persons on active duty in the Armed Forces or persons in institutions such as nursing homes or correctional facilities. The survey includes civilian noninstitutional persons living in group quarters. (Group quarters are living quarters where residents share common facilities; examples include group homes, fraternities, or sororities.)³⁷

The labor force includes both employed and unemployed persons. Unemployed persons are individuals who are not working but who are available and actively looking for work. Employed persons are individuals who are working for a private or public employer, are self-employed, or who work 15 hours or more per week as unpaid workers on a family farm or business. Also counted as employed are persons who are temporarily absent from work because of illness, bad weather, vacation, job training, labor-management dispute, childcare problems, maternity or paternity leave, or other family or personal reasons.³⁸

Each month one-fourth of the CPS sample is asked questions about current earnings. Weekly earnings are reported for wage and salary workers. Weekly earnings consist of usual earnings before taxes and other deductions, and include tips, overtime pay, and commissions usually received (at a person's main job). The monthly CPS does not collect information on the weekly earnings of persons who are self-employed.

In this report, the data from the basic monthly CPS are annual monthly averages. The data for each month for 2005 were combined to calculate annual monthly averages.

Confidence Levels

Estimates based on survey responses from a sample of households have two kinds of error: nonsampling and sampling. Examples of nonsampling error include information that is misreported and errors made in processing collected information.

³⁶ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Current Population Survey: Design and Methodology*, Technical Paper 63RV, Mar. 2002, p. J-8.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-1, 3-7 to 3-9, 5-4.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-3, 5-5.

Sampling error occurs because a sample, and not the entire population, of households is surveyed. The difference between an estimate based on a sample of households and the actual population value is known as sampling error. When using sample data, researchers typically construct confidence intervals around population estimates. Confidence intervals provide information about the accuracy of estimated values. With a 95% confidence interval and repeated samples from a population, 95% of intervals will include the average estimate of a population characteristic. In **Table C1**, the estimated unemployment rate for persons with no more than a high school education is 7.4%. The confidence interval is between 7.2% and 7.6%. Because the estimate of 7.4% is based on a sample (and not the entire population) of persons with no more than a high school education, the actual unemployment rate may be higher or lower than 7.4%. With a 95% confidence interval, it can be concluded that the average unemployment rate estimated from repeated samples is between 7.2% and 7.6%.

Appendix B. Demographic Characteristics of Persons With Less than a High School Education

Immigration analysts often distinguish between persons with a high school diploma or GED and persons who have not completed high school. **Table B1** is similar to **Table 1** in the text but compares the total labor force with persons who have not finished high school.

Table B1. Demographic Characteristics of the U.S. Labor Force in 2005, by Type

Characteristic	Number (1000s)	Percent
Gender		
Total civilian labor force		
Male	80,033	53.6%
Female	69,288	46.4%
Total	149,320	100.0%
All nonagricultural persons with less than a high school education		
Male	10,933	60.7%
Female	7,064	39.3%
Total	17,997	100.0%
Foreign-born nonagricultural persons with less than a high school education		
Male	4,131	67.0%
Female	2,038	33.0%
Total	6,169	100.0%
Race		
Total civilian labor force		
White Only	122,291	81.9%
Black Only	17,013	11.4%
Other	10,017	6.7%
Total	149,320	100.0%
All nonagricultural persons with less than a high school education		
White Only	14,566	80.9%
Black Only	2,293	12.7%
Other	1,138	6.3%
Total	17,997	100.0%
Foreign-born nonagricultural persons with less than a high school education		
White Only	5,192	84.2%
Black Only	341	5.5%
Other	636	10.3%
Total	6,169	100.0%
Hispanic Origin		
Total civilian labor force		
Hispanic	19,824	13.3%
Non-Hispanic	129,497	86.7%
Total	149,320	100.0%
All nonagricultural persons with less than a high school education		
Hispanic	6,824	37.9%
Non-Hispanic	11,173	62.1%
Total	17,997	100.0%
Foreign-born nonagricultural persons with less than a high school education		
Hispanic	5,050	81.9%
Non-Hispanic	1,119	18.1%
Total	6,169	100.0%

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Characteristic	Number (1000s)	Percent
Age		
Total civilian labor force		
16-24	22,290	14.9%
25-34	32,341	21.7%
35-44	36,030	24.1%
45-54	34,402	23.0%
55-64	18,980	12.7%
65 and over	5,278	3.5%
Total	149,320	100.0%
All nonagricultural persons with less than a high school education		
16-24	5,696	31.7%
25-34	3,514	19.5%
35-44	3,494	19.4%
45-54	2,803	15.6%
55-64	1,716	9.5%
65 and over	773	4.3%
Total	17,997	100.0%
Foreign-born nonagricultural persons with less than a high school education		
16-24	890	14.4%
25-34	1,788	29.0%
35-44	1,679	27.2%
45-54	1,133	18.4%
55-64	543	8.8%
65 and over	135	2.2%
Total	6,169	100.0%

Source: Calculated by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

Notes: Data are for persons age 16 and over. Persons with less than a high school education are nonagricultural persons who do not have a high school diploma or GED. Estimates are averages of the monthly labor force for calendar year 2005. Details may not add to totals because of rounding.

Appendix C. Areas Potentially Affected by the 9% Unemployment Trigger in S. 2611

**Table C1. Labor Force Size and Unemployment Rates in 2005, by
Metropolitan Statistical Area and Level of Education**

Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs)	Total Civilian Labor Force		Civilian Labor Force With a High School Education or Less		Confidence Intervals for Column 4 (5)
	Number (1,000s) (1)	Unemploy- ment Rate (2)	Number (1,000s) (3)	Unemploy- ment Rate (4)	
United States	149,320	5.1%	48,428	7.4%	(7.2%-7.6%)
	Estimated Unemployment Rate Over 9.0%				
Lawton, OK	78	13.1%	40	22.6%	(13.3%- 32.0%)
Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH	250	11.4%	138	17.1%	(12.6%- 21.6%)
Yakima, WA	139	11.7%	76	16.2%	(10.3%- 22.2%)
Visalia-Porterville, CA	180	8.9%	84	16.1%	(10.5%- 21.8%)
Muskegon-Norton Shores, MI	118	11.3%	53	15.6%	(8.6%-22.7%)
Lansing-East Lansing, MI	239	8.9%	83	15.4%	(9.8%-21.0%)
Toledo, OH (Ottawa County not in sample)	325	6.9%	106	14.7%	(9.9%-19.6%)
Durham, NC	211	7.5%	78	14.0%	(8.5%-19.6%)
Waterbury, CT	105	10.2%	54	13.5%	(6.9%-20.1%)
Kalamazoo-Portage, MI	151	8.0%	56	13.4%	(7.0%-19.7%)
South Bend-Mishawaka, IN-MI (Michigan portion not identified)	167	8.4%	74	13.0%	(7.5%-18.5%)
Waco, TX	165	7.9%	76	12.9%	(7.5%-18.3%)
Albany, GA (Baker, Terrell, and Worth Counties not in sample)	81	10.8%	46	12.9%	(5.9%-19.9%)
Bakersfield, CA	357	9.1%	191	12.7%	(9.3%-16.1%)
Cedar Rapids, IA (Benton and Jones Counties not in sample)	97	7.4%	35	12.7%	(4.8%-20.6%)
Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC	248	9.5%	117	12.6%	(8.3%-17.0%)
Tuscaloosa, AL (Greene and Hale Counties not in sample)	111	7.1%	48	12.4%	(5.7%-19.1%)
Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-Goleta, CA	182	10.1%	101	12.2%	(7.6%-16.8%)
Racine, WI	133	7.9%	66	12.1%	(6.4%-17.7%)
Bremerton-Silverdale, WA	115	7.8%	35	12.1%	(4.4%-19.9%)
Fresno, CA	404	8.5%	173	12.0%	(8.5%-15.4%)
Bellingham, WA	118	5.4%	44	11.8%	(4.9%-18.7%)
Salinas, CA	186	7.6%	85	11.7%	(6.8%-16.6%)
Jackson, MS	267	5.5%	95	11.7%	(7.0%-16.3%)
Salem, OR	184	7.8%	83	11.7%	(6.7%-16.7%)
Dayton, OH	414	7.8%	210	11.6%	(8.5%-14.7%)
Pueblo, CO	108	8.6%	42	11.6%	(4.7%-18.5%)
Leominster-Fitchburg-Gardner, MA	111	6.5%	44	11.5%	(4.8%-18.3%)
Monroe, LA	226	7.9%	122	11.5%	(7.4%-15.5%)
Memphis, TN-MS-AR (Arkansas portion not identified and Tunica County, MS not	611	7.6%	287	10.9%	(8.3%-13.5%)

Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs)	Total Civilian Labor Force		Civilian Labor Force With a High School Education or Less		Confidence Intervals for Column 4 (5)
	Number (1,000s) (1)	Unemployment Rate (2)	Number (1,000s) (3)	Unemployment Rate (4)	
in sample)					
Trenton-Ewing, NJ	160	6.2%	83	10.7%	(5.9%-15.5%)
Rochester, NY	566	6.9%	232	10.7%	(7.9%-13.6%)
Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	2,312	7.1%	926	10.7%	(9.2%-12.1%)
Corpus Christi, TX	200	6.8%	100	10.7%	(6.3%-15.0%)
Evansville, IN-KY (Gibson County, IN and Kentucky portion not in sample)	133	8.9%	63	10.5%	(5.0%-16.0%)
Winston-Salem, NC	152	7.4%	69	10.5%	(5.4%-15.7%)
Laredo, TX	105	7.4%	69	10.5%	(5.3%-15.8%)
Beaumont-Port Author, TX	164	6.7%	68	10.5%	(5.3%-15.7%)
Anniston-Oxford, AL	106	7.7%	58	10.5%	(4.9%-16.2%)
Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	415	6.4%	157	10.4%	(7.0%-13.9%)
Stockton, CA	266	6.9%	120	10.3%	(6.4%-14.2%)
Baton Rouge, LA	379	6.8%	184	10.3%	(7.2%-13.5%)
Vallejo-Fairfield, CA	225	5.4%	76	10.2%	(5.3%-15.1%)
Rockford, IL	197	5.9%	97	10.1%	(5.8%-14.4%)
Saginaw-Saginaw Township North, MI	97	7.4%	48	10.1%	(3.9%-16.2%)
Las Cruces, NM	104	6.3%	41	10.0%	(3.4%-16.5%)
Akron, OH	375	6.3%	180	9.9%	(6.8%-13.1%)
Lexington-Fayette, KY	246	5.1%	87	9.8%	(5.3%-14.3%)
Kansas City, MO-KS (Franklin, KS; Leavenworth, KS; Linn, KS; Bates, MO; and Caldwell, MO Counties not in sample)	1,048	6.3%	391	9.7%	(7.6%-11.8%)
Spokane, WA	239	5.6%	75	9.7%	(4.9%-14.5%)
Merced, CA	108	6.9%	49	9.6%	(3.6%-15.5%)
San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	2,370	5.6%	705	9.6%	(8.1%-11.2%)
Monroe, MI	89	6.8%	38	9.5%	(2.8%-16.2%)
Eugene-Springfield, OR	174	7.1%	66	9.5%	(4.4%-14.6%)
Davenport-Moline-Rock Island, IA-IL	183	5.2%	72	9.5%	(4.6%-14.4%)
Holland-Grand Haven, MI	120	5.1%	47	9.4%	(3.4%-15.4%)
Johnstown, PA	90	5.9%	47	9.4%	(3.4%-15.4%)
Kankakee-Bradley, IL	142	6.6%	67	9.2%	(4.2%-14.2%)
Madera, CA	95	7.3%	65	9.2%	(4.1%-14.3%)
Altoona, PA	66	6.7%	41	9.2%	(2.8%-15.6%)
Jacksonville, NC	62	7.5%	36	9.2%	(2.4%-16.0%)
Louisville, KY-IN (Washington, IN; Henry, KY; Nelson, KY; Shelby, KY; and Trimble, KY Counties not in sample)	545	6.8%	233	9.2%	(6.6%-11.9%)
Topeka, KS (Jackson and Jefferson Counties not in sample)	130	5.0%	57	9.2%	(3.8%-14.6%)
Appleton, WI	104	6.6%	54	9.2%	(3.6%-14.7%)
Lake Charles, LA (Cameron Parish not in sample)	124	6.1%	60	9.1%	(3.9%-14.4%)
	Estimated Unemployment Rate 9.0% or Less				
Wichita, KS	296	6.7%	129	9.0%	(5.4%-12.5%)
Huntsville, AL	185	4.1%	64	9.0%	(3.9%-14.0%)
Michigan City-La Porte, IN	91	6.9%	60	8.9%	(3.7%-14.1%)
Victoria, TX	181	6.7%	102	8.9%	(4.9%-12.9%)
Provo-Orem, UT (Juab County not in	189	5.0%	55	8.9%	(3.5%-14.3%)

Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs)	Total Civilian Labor Force		Civilian Labor Force With a High School Education or Less		Confidence Intervals for Column 4 (5)
	Number (1,000s) (1)	Unemployment Rate (2)	Number (1,000s) (3)	Unemployment Rate (4)	
sample)					
Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson, SC	88	5.4%	44	8.9%	(2.9%-15.0%)
Lynchburg, VA (Appomattox and Bedford Counties and Bedford City not In sample)	104	7.6%	54	8.8%	(3.4%-14.3%)
Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IN-IN-WI (DeKalb, IL; Jasper, IN; and Kenosha, WI Counties not in sample)	4,512	5.9%	1,631	8.8%	(7.8%-9.8%)
Greenville, SC (Laurens and Pickens Counties not in sample)	198	4.9%	75	8.8%	(4.2%-13.4%)
Springfield, MA-CT (Connecticut portion not identified)	329	6.0%	134	8.8%	(5.3%-12.2%)
New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA	530	5.7%	214	8.8%	(6.0%-11.5%)
Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	577	6.4%	224	8.7%	(6.1%-11.4%)
Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	1,054	5.6%	439	8.7%	(6.8%-10.6%)
Baltimore-Towson, MD	1,340	4.9%	522	8.7%	(6.9%-10.4%)
Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ	538	5.7%	251	8.6%	(6.1%-11.1%)
Kingston, NY	112	4.7%	48	8.6%	(2.9%-14.4%)
Spartanburg, SC	131	4.9%	57	8.5%	(3.3%-13.7%)
Anderson, IN	90	7.8%	57	8.5%	(3.3%-13.7%)
Santa Rosa-Petaluma, CA	243	5.6%	66	8.5%	(3.7%-13.4%)
Shreveport-Bossier City, LA (De Soto Parish not in sample)	203	5.7%	87	8.4%	(4.2%-12.5%)
St. Louis, MO-IL (Calhoun County, IL not in sample)	1,512	5.2%	597	8.4%	(6.8%-10.0%)
Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA	437	4.7%	148	8.3%	(5.1%-11.5%)
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX (Delta and Hunt Counties not in sample)	3,223	5.8%	1,335	8.3%	(7.2%-9.3%)
Knoxville, TN (Anderson County not in sample)	287	5.0%	111	8.2%	(4.5%-11.8%)
Mobile, AL	201	5.0%	81	8.2%	(3.9%-12.4%)
Waterloo-Cedar Falls, IA (Grundy County not in sample)	99	5.2%	37	8.2%	(1.8%-14.6%)
San Antonio, TX	881	5.3%	408	8.0%	(6.1%-9.9%)
Tucson, AZ	400	7.4%	159	8.0%	(4.9%-11.0%)
Indianapolis, IN	881	5.3%	347	8.0%	(5.9%-10.0%)
Ann Arbor, MI	225	4.5%	52	8.0%	(2.7%-13.3%)
Scranton-Wilkes Barre, PA	288	5.5%	145	7.9%	(4.7%-11.0%)
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA (Haralson, Heard, Jasper, Meriwether and Spalding Counties not in sample)	2,631	5.2%	979	7.9%	(6.7%-9.1%)
San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	1,038	5.2%	310	7.9%	(5.7%-10.0%)
Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	622	4.8%	236	7.8%	(5.3%-10.2%)
Providence-Fall River-Warwick, MA-RI	690	5.2%	319	7.8%	(5.7%-10.0%)
Brownsville-Harlingen, TX	143	8.1%	95	7.8%	(3.9%-11.7%)
Johnson City, TN	104	5.0%	54	7.8%	(2.7%-12.9%)
Roanoke, VA (Craig and Franklin Counties not in sample)	121	5.2%	57	7.7%	(2.7%-12.7%)
Riverside-San Bernardino, CA	1,636	6.0%	818	7.7%	(6.4%-9.0%)
Pittsburgh, PA	1,199	5.2%	500	7.7%	(6.0%-9.4%)
Colorado Springs, CO	287	6.5%	96	7.7%	(3.9%-11.5%)

Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs)	Total Civilian Labor Force		Civilian Labor Force With a High School Education or Less		Confidence Intervals for Column 4 (5)
	Number (1,000s) (1)	Unemployment Rate (2)	Number (1,000s) (3)	Unemployment Rate (4)	
Worcester, MA-CT (Connecticut portion not identified)	242	6.2%	107	7.6%	(4.0%-11.2%)
Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC (Anson County, NC not in sample)	891	5.5%	380	7.6%	(5.7%-9.5%)
Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY	348	5.3%	131	7.6%	(4.4%-10.9%)
Boulder, CO	188	5.1%	57	7.6%	(2.6%-12.5%)
Salt Lake City, UT (Toole County not in sample)	583	4.6%	225	7.6%	(5.1%-10.1%)
Olympia, WA	132	3.9%	38	7.6%	(1.6%-13.6%)
Myrtle Beach-Conway-North Myrtle Beach, SC	110	6.7%	48	7.6%	(2.2%-13.0%)
Houston-Baytown-Sugar Land, TX	2,463	5.7%	1,155	7.5%	(6.4%-8.5%)
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	1,771	5.0%	540	7.5%	(5.9%-9.1%)
Dover, DE	80	5.0%	43	7.5%	(1.8%-13.2%)
Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA (Yamhill County, OR not in sample)	1,139	5.2%	354	7.5%	(5.5%-9.4%)
Denver-Aurora, CO	1,320	4.8%	440	7.5%	(5.7%-9.3%)
Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT	435	4.8%	143	7.5%	(4.4%-10.6%)
Fayetteville, NC	145	5.0%	63	7.4%	(2.8%-12.1%)
Jackson, MI	152	4.9%	65	7.4%	(2.8%-12.0%)
Bloomington, IN (Owen County not in sample)	141	5.1%	59	7.4%	(2.6%-12.2%)
Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	820	4.6%	357	7.4%	(5.4%-9.4%)
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE	2,801	4.8%	1,162	7.4%	(6.3%-8.4%)
Green Bay, WI (Oconto County not in sample)	184	4.8%	85	7.3%	(3.3%-11.2%)
Flint, MI	173	4.8%	76	7.3%	(3.1%-11.5%)
Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro, TN (Cannon, Hickman and Macon Counties not in sample)	800	4.9%	342	7.3%	(5.3%-9.3%)
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	2,411	4.6%	784	7.3%	(6.0%-8.6%)
Austin-Round Rock, TX	879	4.9%	290	7.2%	(5.0%-9.3%)
Norwich-New London, CT-RI (RI portion recoded to Providence NECTA)	124	6.1%	59	7.1%	(2.4%-11.9%)
Wausau, WI	89	5.0%	48	7.0%	(1.8%-12.2%)
Sacramento — Arden-Arcade Roseville, CA	1,027	5.0%	392	7.0%	(5.2%-8.9%)
New Haven, CT	308	4.6%	102	7.0%	(3.5%-10.6%)
Fort Collins-Loveland, CO	176	4.6%	54	7.0%	(2.1%-11.9%)
Canton-Massillon, OH	219	6.5%	122	6.9%	(3.7%-10.2%)
Longview, TX (Rusk and Upshur Counties not in sample)	107	6.3%	43	6.9%	(1.4%-12.4%)
Grand Rapids-Muskegon-Holland, MI	144	4.7%	64	6.8%	(2.4%-11.2%)
Modesto, CA	261	4.1%	128	6.8%	(3.7%-10.0%)
Albuquerque, NM	424	5.2%	145	6.7%	(3.8%-9.7%)
Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood, TX	162	5.0%	88	6.6%	(2.9%-10.4%)
Des Moines, IA	311	3.9%	119	6.6%	(3.4%-9.8%)
Charleston-North Charleston, SC	292	4.3%	99	6.6%	(3.1%-10.2%)
Greensboro-High Point, NC	496	5.2%	221	6.6%	(4.3%-9.0%)

Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs)	Total Civilian Labor Force		Civilian Labor Force With a High School Education or Less		Confidence Intervals for Column 4 (5)
	Number (1,000s) (1)	Unemployment Rate (2)	Number (1,000s) (3)	Unemployment Rate (4)	
Raleigh-Cary, NC	626	3.6%	217	6.6%	(4.2%-9.0%)
Niles-Benton Harbor, MI	64	6.5%	35	6.6%	(0.7%-12.5%)
Columbus, OH (Morrow County not in sample)	932	4.9%	361	6.5%	(4.7%-8.3%)
Madison, WI	346	3.3%	107	6.5%	(3.1%-9.8%)
Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach, FL	211	4.5%	87	6.5%	(2.8%-10.2%)
Pensacola-Ferry Pass-Brent, FL	201	4.7%	88	6.5%	(2.8%-10.2%)
Tulsa, OK (Okmulgee County not in sample)	440	3.8%	170	6.5%	(3.8%-9.1%)
New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA (Pennsylvania portion not in sample. White Plains central city recoded to balance of metropolitan.)	9,171	4.7%	3,581	6.4%	(5.8%-7.0%)
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	6,533	4.9%	2,671	6.4%	(5.7%-7.0%)
San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA	1,449	3.5%	444	6.4%	(4.8%-8.1%)
Gulfport-Biloxi, MS	69	7.5%	37	6.4%	(0.7%-12.1%)
Minneapolis-St Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI (Wisconsin portion not identified)	1,765	3.9%	554	6.4%	(4.9%-7.8%)
Oklahoma City, OK	676	3.7%	259	6.3%	(4.2%-8.4%)
Syracuse, NY	299	5.3%	125	6.3%	(3.2%-9.3%)
Savannah, GA	288	4.4%	141	6.3%	(3.5%-9.2%)
Richmond, VA (Cumberland County not in sample)	656	4.8%	309	6.3%	(4.3%-8.2%)
Montgomery, AL	165	4.9%	77	6.2%	(2.3%-10.1%)
Orlando, FL	1,081	4.0%	457	6.2%	(4.6%-7.8%)
Champaign-Urbana, IL (Ford County not in sample)	136	2.8%	47	6.2%	(1.2%-11.2%)
El Centro, CA	74	3.5%	37	6.2%	(0.6%-11.7%)
Fort Smith, AR-OK (Oklahoma portion not in sample)	107	4.4%	54	6.2%	(1.6%-10.8%)
Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI	415	4.8%	157	6.2%	(3.5%-8.9%)
La Crosse, WI (Houston County not in sample)	121	2.7%	44	6.2%	(1.1%-11.3%)
El Paso, TX	324	5.2%	157	6.1%	(3.4%-8.8%)
Portland-South Portland, ME	202	3.5%	68	6.0%	(1.9%-10.0%)
Fayetteville- Springdale-Rogers, AR-MO (Madison County, AR and Missouri portion not in sample)	233	3.7%	99	6.0%	(2.7%-9.4%)
Birmingham-Hoover, AL	620	4.2%	249	5.9%	(3.8%-8.0%)
Ocala, FL	125	4.7%	66	5.8%	(1.7%-9.9%)
Boise City-Nampa, ID (Owyhee County not in sample)	284	3.9%	114	5.8%	(2.7%-8.9%)
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	1,323	4.2%	536	5.7%	(4.3%-7.1%)
Fort Wayne, IN	200	5.5%	77	5.7%	(2.0%-9.5%)
Sioux Falls, SD	131	2.7%	51	5.6%	(1.1%-10.1%)
Panama City-Lynn Haven, FL	95	3.4%	46	5.6%	(0.8%-10.4%)
Chattanooga, TN-GA	254	3.5%	126	5.6%	(2.7%-8.5%)
Bend, OR	94	5.0%	45	5.5%	(0.7%-10.3%)
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	1,985	3.9%	812	5.5%	(4.4%-6.7%)

Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs)	Total Civilian Labor Force		Civilian Labor Force With a High School Education or Less		Confidence Intervals for Column 4 (5)
	Number (1,000s) (1)	Unemployment Rate (2)	Number (1,000s) (3)	Unemployment Rate (4)	
Fort Walton Beach-Crestview-Destin, FL	126	3.3%	54	5.5%	(1.1%-9.9%)
Reno-Sparks, NV	233	3.9%	96	5.4%	(2.2%-8.7%)
Hickory-Morgantown-Lenoir, NC (Caldwell County not in sample)	139	4.8%	76	5.3%	(1.7%-8.9%)
Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN (Franklin County, IN not in sample; Dearborn and Ohio Counties, IN not identified)	1,071	4.2%	485	5.3%	(3.8%-6.7%)
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Miami Beach, FL	2,612	3.9%	1,116	5.3%	(4.4%-6.3%)
Las Vegas-Paradise, NM	857	4.5%	444	5.3%	(3.8%-6.8%)
Binghamton, NY	111	5.8%	50	5.3%	(0.8%-9.8%)
Vineland-Millville-Bridgeton, NJ	98	4.0%	54	5.2%	(1.0%-9.5%)
Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA	299	4.0%	147	5.2%	(2.6%-7.8%)
Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC (North Carolina portion not identified)	738	3.8%	295	5.0%	(3.2%-6.8%)
Jacksonville, FL	659	3.5%	269	5.0%	(3.1%-6.9%)
Columbus, GA-AL (Harris County, GA not in sample)	123	3.9%	69	4.9%	(1.2%-8.5%)
Little Rock-North Little Rock, AR (Perry County not in sample)	341	3.2%	153	4.8%	(2.4%-7.3%)
Honolulu, HI	455	3.0%	164	4.8%	(2.5%-7.2%)
York-Hanover, PA	224	3.0%	125	4.7%	(2.0%-7.3%)
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV (West Virginia portion not identified. Reston central city recoded to balance of metropolitan)	3,012	2.8%	944	4.7%	(3.8%-5.7%)
Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL	262	2.7%	122	4.7%	(2.0%-7.4%)
Charleston, WV (Clay County not in sample)	158	3.9%	74	4.7%	(1.2%-8.1%)
Joplin, MO	129	3.2%	62	4.5%	(0.8%-8.2%)
Peoria, IL	175	4.5%	64	4.5%	(0.9%-8.2%)
Springfield, IL	106	2.7%	43	4.4%	(0.0%-8.8%)
Erie, PA	112	4.1%	65	4.2%	(0.7%-7.7%)
Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	476	2.6%	185	4.2%	(2.2%-6.3%)
Amarillo, TX (Armstrong and Carson Counties not in sample)	123	2.6%	52	4.2%	(0.3%-8.1%)
Lafayette, LA	284	4.5%	159	4.2%	(1.9%-6.4%)
Janesville, WI	93	2.8%	51	4.2%	(0.3%-8.2%)
Port St. Lucie-Fort Pierce, FL	171	2.6%	90	4.1%	(1.1%-7.0%)
Harrisonburg, VA	112	2.4%	52	4.1%	(0.2%-8.0%)
Greeley, CO	123	3.0%	53	3.8%	(0.1%-7.4%)
Asheville, NC (Haywood and Henderson Counties not in sample)	204	3.8%	80	3.7%	(0.7%-6.6%)
Midland, TX	116	2.4%	56	3.6%	(0.1%-7.1%)
Florence, AL	103	2.3%	55	3.6%	(0.0%-7.1%)
Ogden-Clearfield, UT	168	2.5%	78	3.6%	(0.6%-6.6%)
Springfield, MO (Dallas and Polk Counties not in sample)	184	2.4%	76	3.5%	(0.5%-6.5%)
Atlantic City, NJ	151	3.7%	72	3.5%	(0.5%-6.5%)

Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs)	Total Civilian Labor Force		Civilian Labor Force With a High School Education or Less		Confidence Intervals for Column 4 (5)
	Number (1,000s) (1)	Unemployment Rate (2)	Number (1,000s) (3)	Unemployment Rate (4)	
Reading, PA	222	2.4%	130	3.5%	(1.2%-5.7%)
McAllen-Edinburg-Pharr, TX	263	2.9%	172	3.4%	(1.4%-5.3%)
Lancaster, PA	228	2.8%	129	3.4%	(1.2%-5.7%)
Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL	217	3.0%	125	3.4%	(1.1%-5.7%)
Columbia, SC	330	2.9%	136	3.4%	(1.2%-5.6%)
Utica-Rome, NY	150	4.7%	65	3.0%	(0.0%-6.0%)
Naples-Marco Island, FL	156	2.1%	80	2.9%	(0.3%-5.5%)
Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville, FL	322	1.6%	109	2.9%	(0.6%-5.1%)
Sarasota-Bradenton-Venice, FL	317	2.2%	150	2.7%	(0.8%-4.6%)

Source: Calculated by CRS from the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS).

Notes: Data are for persons age 16 and older and in the labor force. Confidence intervals were calculated at a 90% level. See **Appendix A** for a description of confidence intervals. Following BLS practice, **Table C1** does not show estimates of the size of the labor force or the unemployment rate if the estimated size of the labor force is 35,000 persons or less. Estimates of unemployment for persons with a high school education or less are not shown if the estimate is not statistically significant (i.e., if the lower bound of the confidence interval is less than zero). Estimates are monthly averages for calendar year 2005. Details may not add to totals because of rounding.