
Hispanic Unemployed Workers

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

In times of economic downturn, Hispanics often are among the hardest hit. Hispanic unemployed workers make up 18% of the sample. Compared with the full sample, they are younger, more likely to live in an urban area and have minor children living with them, and are much more likely to have a high school degree or less education.

- ◆ Unemployed Hispanics have been unemployed less time than others in the sample—on average, they have been unemployed six months of the past year, compared with an average of 6.7 months among all unemployed workers.
- ◆ Meeting basic food and grocery needs is especially challenging for Hispanic unemployed workers.
 - Two-thirds (66%) have cut back spending on food and groceries.
 - 36% have had trouble paying for their basic groceries.
 - 36% received free food or groceries from family or friends.
 - 27% have skipped meals because they could not afford food.
 - 25% have relied on food stamps.
- ◆ 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, Hispanics report greater than average levels of hardship.
 - More than three in four (77%) unemployed Hispanics report an increase in family stress.
 - Four out of five (79%) cut back on driving due to the price of gas and more than half cut back spending on clothing and school supplies for children.
 - 64% spent more of their savings than they had hoped to, 54% borrowed money to keep up with expenses, 33% increased credit card debt to get by, 41% sold personal possessions and 39% sold a vehicle for extra money.

Challenges Faced By Hispanic Unemployed Workers

% saying this has happened to them while unemployed

Interrupted education/training for self/family member



Had home/cell phone turned off



Had to move/move in with friends or family



- ◆ Hispanic unemployed workers are significantly less likely to have health insurance than their white and African American counterparts, with only 26% having health insurance compared with 54% of white and 38% of African-American unemployed workers. Nearly half (45%) of Hispanic unemployed workers lost their health insurance since becoming unemployed. They also are more likely to have postponed medical or dental treatment, with 56% reporting that they have done this.
- ◆ Approximately one in five (21%) unemployed Hispanics in the sample is currently receiving UI benefits and another 9% received them in the past two years.
- ◆ An overwhelming 95% of Hispanics who have received UI benefits characterize them as very (90%) or fairly (5%) 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.
- ◆ Three in four (74%) Hispanic unemployed workers express that more government employment services are needed and 86% 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.