



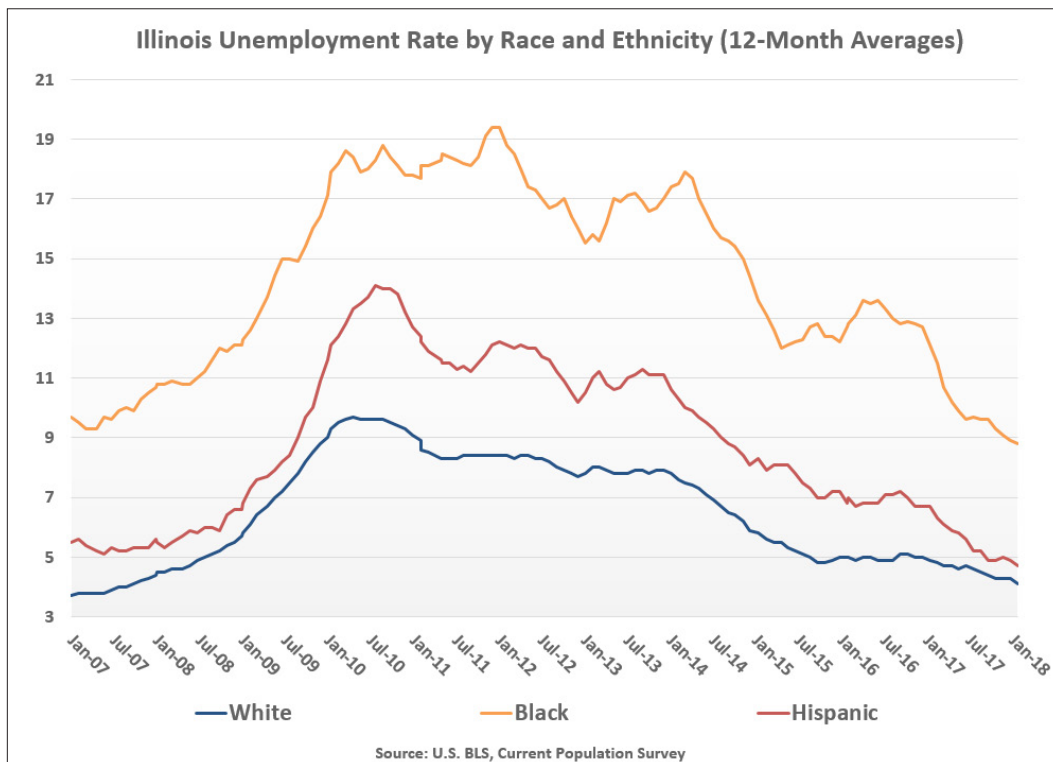
Characteristics of the Employed and Unemployed in Illinois: Tracking Differences Among Demographic Groups

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Each month, the Illinois Department of Employment Security releases the latest unemployment rate for Illinois. But, unlike at the national level, there are no monthly Illinois data reported by demographic characteristics or groups, such as gender, race/ethnicity and age group. The national household survey, known as the Current Population Survey or CPS, is large enough to support the publication of reliable monthly national labor force characteristics but not the publication of monthly characteristics at the state or substate levels. Nonetheless, we can still track the current and historical labor force, employment and unemployment status among men, women, minorities and younger and older workers in Illinois, using 12-month moving average estimates from the CPS, developed by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

The data highlights and charts that follow provide just a few examples of how one can analyze and compare average unemployment rates, labor participation rates and employment participation rates by demographic groups. The data cited cover years 2007-2017. You can find links to data and charts for other demographic groups within each section below. A glossary of terms and concepts used in the CPS can be found [here](#).

Unemployment rates by race, ethnicity

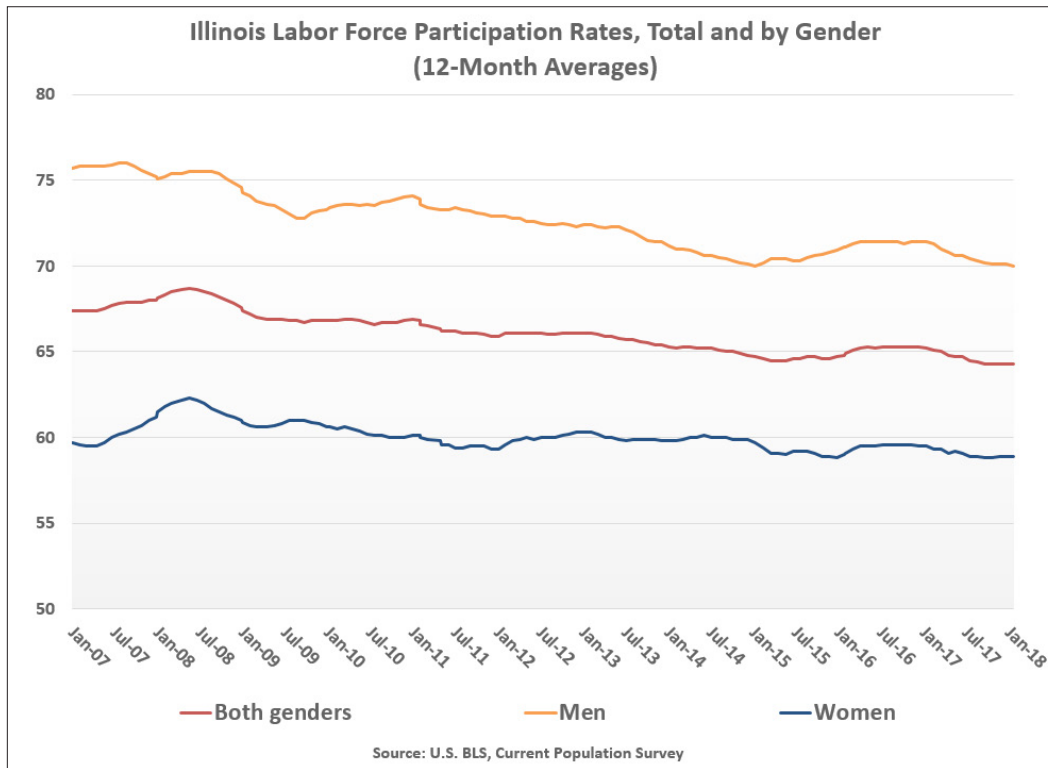


The chart below shows 12-month moving average **unemployment rates** by race and ethnicity or Hispanic Origin. Unemployment rates for Asians were excluded from the chart as they are only reported annually at the state-level by the BLS. A report including average unemployment rates, and accompanying charts, for all available demographic groups will be updated each month and found [here](#).

- Throughout the past ten years, blacks or African-Americans in Illinois have had the highest unemployment rate among all races and ethnicities, followed by Hispanics and then whites.
- The unemployment rate for African-Americans was already near or above 10.0 percent in 2007, just prior to the 2007-2009 recession, and nearly doubled to more than 19.0 percent by 2012. By 2017, the African-American unemployment rate had fallen back to pre-recession levels.
- The white unemployment rate rose from just above 4.0 percent in 2007 to as high as 9.7 percent in 2010. By 2017, the unemployment rate for whites had fallen to pre-recession levels.
- The Hispanic unemployment rate increased just above 5.0 percent in 2007 to as high as 14.1 percent in 2010. By 2017, the Hispanic unemployment rate had fallen below pre-recession levels reported in 2007.

Labor force participation rates by gender

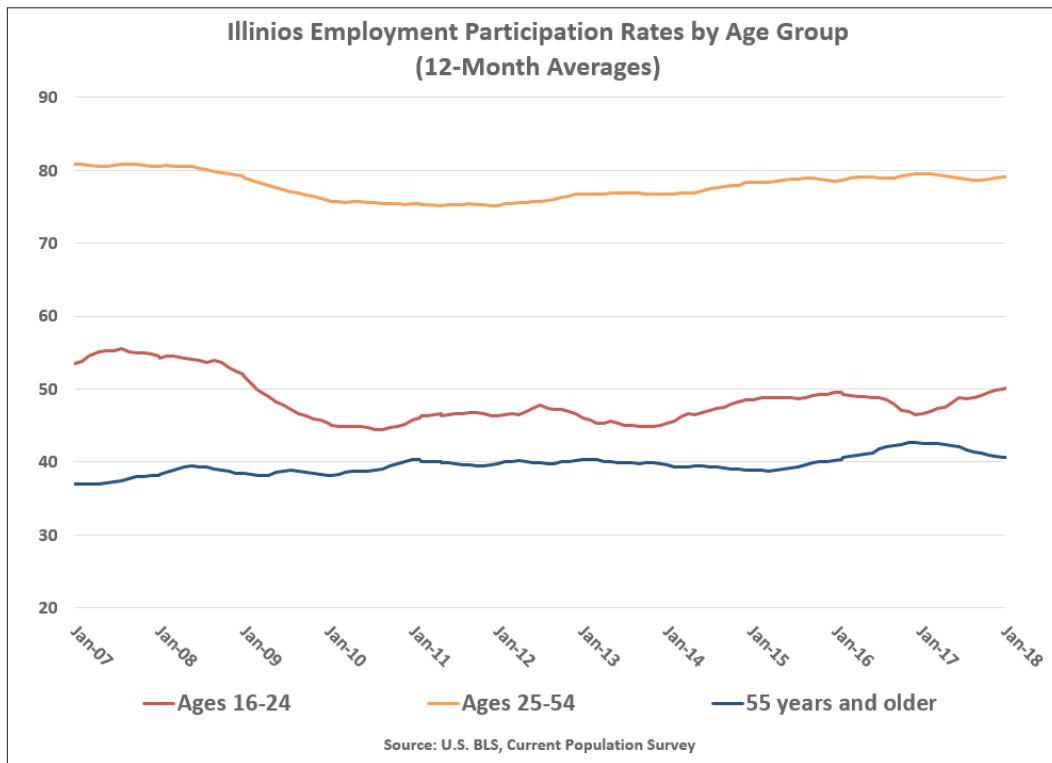
The chart below shows 12-month moving average **labor force participation** rates for all Illinois residents in the labor force and by gender. A report including average labor force participation rates and accompanying charts for all available demographic groups will be updated each month and found [here](#).



- During the past decade, the average labor force participation rate for all Illinois residents in the labor force reached a high of 68.7 percent in May 2008, just before the full impact of the 2007-2009 recession was felt. The average labor force participation rate then began a gradual decline, falling by more than four points (64.5 percent) as of September 2014. After increasing slightly in 2015 and 2016, the average labor force participation once again dropped below 65 percent in 2017.
- While it is well known that men have reported higher labor force participation rates than women, the gender gap has narrowed following the 2007-2009 recession. In 2007, the average male labor force participation rate in Illinois was between 75 and 76 percent and 14 to 16 points higher than average female labor force participation rate. However, by January 2015, the labor force participation rate for men had decreased to 70.0 percent and the gender gap fell to 10 points. The average male labor force participation rate experienced a small increase in 2015 and 2016 but then decreased back to about 70 percent in 2017.
- As was the case with men, the average labor force participation rate for women decreased after the 2007-2009 recession. However, as compared to men, the net decline from the highest participation rate to the lowest participation rate during the past decade was much smaller and over a shorter period. The average female labor force participation rate fell from a high of 62.3 percent in May 2008 to 59.3 percent in December 2011, a decline of 3.0 points. By comparison, men reported a net labor force participation rate decrease of 6.0 points or from a peak level of 76.0 percent in July, August 2007 to 70.0 percent in January 2015. As of 2017, the average labor force participation rate for women had not returned to pre-recession levels and remained below 60 percent.

Employment participation rates by age group

The chart below shows 12-month moving average **employment participation rates** by age group. A report including average employment participation rates and accompanying charts for all available demographic groups will be updated each month and found [here](#).



- The average percentage of Illinois youth (ages 16-24) employed decreased from a high of 62.3 percent in August 2008 to 55.0 percent in October 2010. Following several temporary increases and declines during 2011 through 2016, the average youth employment participation rate remained well below pre-recession levels in 2017, hovering between 54 and 55 percent in 2017.
- The percentage of prime-working age Illinois residents who were employed remained high throughout the past decade, even during the 2007-2009 recession. The average employment participation rate was more than 84 percent before the recession and never fell below 82 percent during or after the recession. Also, after nearly reaching pre-recession levels in 2016, the average employment participation rate dropped below 83 percent in 2017.
- As might be expected, the oldest age group (55 years of age and older) had the lowest average employment participation rate, with fewer than half employed. However, this was the only age group to see their employment-participation rate increase over the past decade. Prior to the last recession, less than 40 percent of older workers were employed, but, by 2017, their average employment-participation rate had risen to more than 44 percent.