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STUBBORN DISPARITIES IN NYC UNEMPLOYMENT PERSIST, WITH YOUNG PEOPLE TWICE AS LIKELY TO BE OUT OF WORK

NEW YORK, NY – Unemployment rates for African Americans, young people, and workers without college degrees remain stubbornly high in New York City even as the overall rate ticks downward year-on-year – highlighting entrenched disparities, according to a data analysis released today by New York City Comptroller John C. Liu. What’s more, the unemployment rate in the Bronx was nearly three times as high as in Manhattan.

“Jobs are vital to everyone regardless of race, age, or zip code. Persistent inequities in unemployment threaten the economic health of the City as a whole,” Comptroller Liu said. “It’s important that the City economy works for everyone, so the crisis like the one we’ve seen doesn’t happen again. Growth that is unequal, jobs that don’t pay, and gaps in educational achievement and infrastructure investment will only create an unequal playing field and, worse, conditions for another downturn.”

With the release of New York City unemployment data Thursday, the Comptroller’s Bureau of Fiscal and Budget Studies analyzed raw data in the Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the Census Bureau and highlighted several trends among unemployed New Yorkers for the third quarter of this year.

The breakdown was designed to help provide policymakers with a snapshot of areas of persistent unemployment. Even as the City’s overall unemployment rate declined year-on-year – to 8.7 percent in the third quarter of 2011 from 9.5 percent in the same quarter of 2010, and 10.7 percent in 2009 – stubborn disparities are evident.

Age

As the Occupy Wall Street protests highlighted joblessness among young people in particular, data showed unemployment for those under 25 years old stood at 16.9 percent, more than double that of 25 to 54 year olds (8.3 percent).

	3Q09	3Q10	3Q11
16-24 years old	29.6%	17.7%	16.9%
25-54 years old	9.1%	8.7%	8.3%
55 years and older	5.5%	6.7%	5.7%

Source: NYC Comptroller’s Office from CPS microdata

Race

The unemployment rate for African Americans remained in the double-digits, at 14.2 percent, compared with 6.6 percent for whites, 7.8 percent for Hispanics, and 7.2 percent for Asians and others.

	3Q09	3Q10	3Q11
African American	16.4%	15.3%	14.2%
White	7.7%	5.2%	6.6%
Hispanic	12.5%	13.3%	7.8%
Asian and other	6.5%	4.4%	7.2%

Source: NYC Comptroller's Office from CPS microdata

Borough

By borough, the unemployment rate in Manhattan has fallen to 4.7 percent, while in the Bronx it is nearly three times as high at 13.6 percent.

	3Q09	3Q10	3Q11
Bronx	17.8%	17.4%	13.6%
Brooklyn	8.9%	9.1%	11.2%
Manhattan	8.5%	7.1%	4.7%
Queens	11.8%	8.3%	7.2%
Staten Island	4.6%	8.6%	7.1%

Source: NYC Comptroller's Office from CPS microdata

Education

Disparities by education level were striking as well – 13.0 percent unemployment for those without a high school diploma and 10.5 percent for high school graduates, compared with 5.4 percent for college graduates.

	3Q09	3Q10	3Q11
No HS diploma	15.0%	16.1%	13.0%
HS, some college	12.4%	11.3%	10.5%
BA or more	7.0%	5.1%	5.4%

Source: NYC Comptroller's Office from CPS microdata

Due to the sample sizes of the CPS data, this information is broken down on a quarterly basis to establish the most accurate depiction of the unemployment trends facing New Yorkers.

The Current Population Survey is a monthly survey of about 50,000 households conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The survey has been conducted for more than 50 years. CPS data are used by government policymakers and legislators as important indicators of our nation's economic situation and for planning and evaluating many government programs. They are also used by the press, students, academics, and the general public.