

CPS-263(MIS-1)(L) LOS ANGELES  
(10-2013)



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**Economics and Statistics Administration**  
**U.S. Census Bureau**

Washington, DC 20233-0001  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

FROM THE DIRECTOR  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

You may have read in the newspaper -- or heard on the radio or television -- the official government figures on total employment and unemployment issued each month. The U.S. Census Bureau obtains these figures, as well as information about people not in the labor force, from the Current Population Survey (CPS). This information, which we collect for the Bureau of Labor Statistics, provides vital up-to-date estimates of the number of people working, the number who are unemployed, and many other related facts. Occasionally, we ask additional questions on education, health, family income, housing, and other important subjects.

A Census Bureau representative, who will show an official identification card, will call on you within the next week or so. The representative will ask questions concerning the ages, employment status, and occupations of the members of your household, as well as other related information. We are conducting this survey under the authority of Title 13, United States Code, Section 182. Section 9 of this law requires us to keep all information about you and your household strictly confidential. We may use this information only for statistical purposes. Any Census Bureau employee who violates these provisions is subject to a fine up to \$250,000 or a prison sentence up to five years or both.

We have selected your address and about 55,000 others throughout the United States for this survey. Because this is a sample survey, your answers represent not only yourself and your household, but also hundreds of other households like yours. For this reason, your participation in this voluntary survey is extremely important to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the final results. Although there are no penalties for failure to answer any question, each unanswered question lessens the accuracy of the final data. Your cooperation will be a distinct service to our country.

On the other side of this letter are answers to questions which participants ask most frequently about this survey.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

John H. Thompson

Further information  
may be obtained from:

**REGIONAL DIRECTOR**  
**US CENSUS BUREAU**  
**15350 SHERMAN WAY STE 400**  
**VAN NUYS CA 91406-4203**

**Telephone: 1-800-992-3530 #2**

## **Current Population Survey (CPS) – Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Who uses this information? What is this survey all about?**

In a country as big as ours and one that changes so rapidly between decennial censuses, people in government, business, and other groups need up-to-date facts in order to plan efficient and adequate programs. It is important to know how many people are working or out of work (to help direct programs which would contribute to an expanding economy and provide new jobs), how many children will be attending school (to plan for schools and the training of an adequate number of teachers), how many new families are forming (to plan for adequate housing to meet their needs), and so on. Occasionally, we may combine data from the CPS with data from other government agencies to provide a comprehensive set of summary information about employment, income, and participation in various government programs. The CPS is one of the most important and timely sources of information used to make such plans.

### **How was I selected for this survey?**

Actually, we selected your address rather than you personally for this survey. Each month, we scientifically select about 18,000 groups of addresses to represent the United States. Each of the address groups contains about four housing units and altogether result in about 55,000 interviewed households each month. If you should move away while your address is still in the survey, we would interview the family that moves in.

### **How many times will I be contacted and how long will it take?**

Our representatives contact occupants of a selected dwelling eight times—4 months in one year and the same 4 months in the following year. In addition, we contact a small number of households twice during one of the 8 months to ensure the validity of our statistics and verify that our representatives are doing the best job possible. On occasion, selected households may be asked to participate in other surveys after they have completed their CPS interviews. On average, a CPS interview should take about 10 to 15 minutes. Your interview may be somewhat shorter or longer than this depending on such things as the number of adults in your household or the type of questions asked in a given month. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: Paperwork Project 0607-0049, U.S. Census Bureau, 4600 Silver Hill Road, AMSD-3K138, Washington, D.C. 20233. You may e-mail comments to [Paperwork@census.gov](mailto:Paperwork@census.gov); use "Paperwork Project 0607-0049" as the subject.

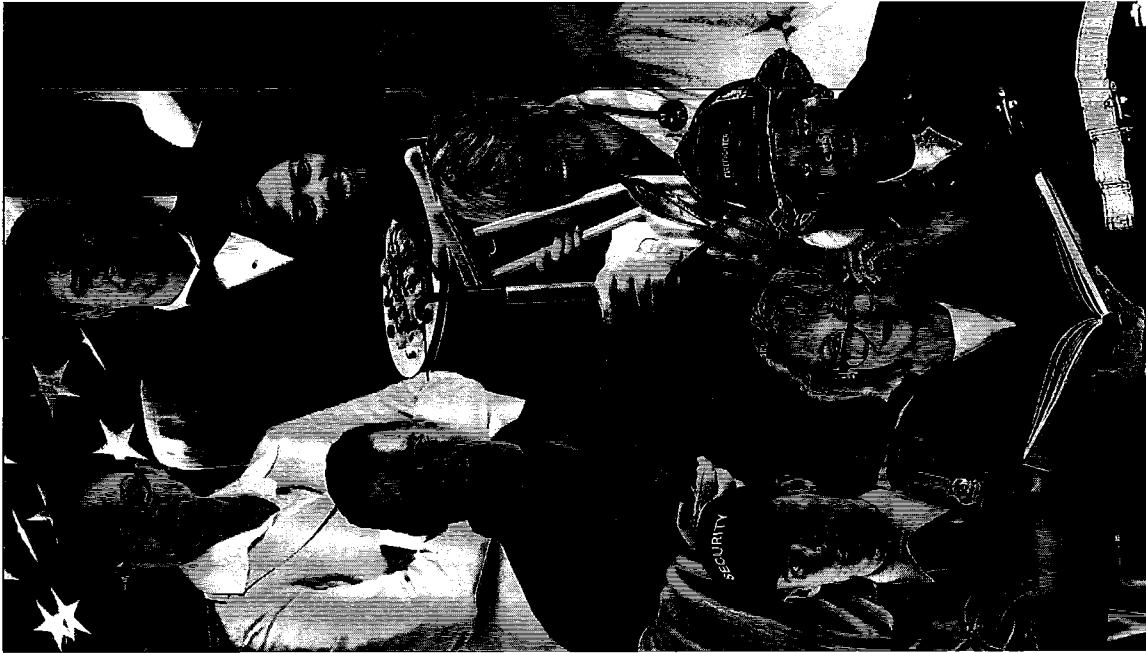
### **What protection do I have? Is this survey authorized by law?**

All information individuals give to the Census Bureau is held in the strictest confidence by law (Title 13, United States Code, Section 9). Title 13, United States Code, Section 182, and Title 29, United States Code, Sections 1 through 9, authorize the collection of most of the information we request in this survey. In some months, the survey may contain questions authorized under laws other than those cited; further information concerning the authority for any particular portion of the survey can be obtained from the representative who contacts your household. The Office of Management and Budget Control number for CPS is 0607-0049. Without this number we would not be able to conduct this survey. To ensure your protection, the laptops used for the data collection are password protected and all survey responses are encrypted.

### **Why do you include me?**

I'm retired. Some retirees may feel that their activities are not important to this type of survey and wonder why we include them. In order to have an accurate picture of the entire population, it is necessary to include people in all age groups. Our experience with interviewing retirees shows that many are participating in the labor force because they work part time or are looking for work. This information, along with data on other subjects such as income, health, and housing, assists in measuring the economic condition of the elderly population as a whole.

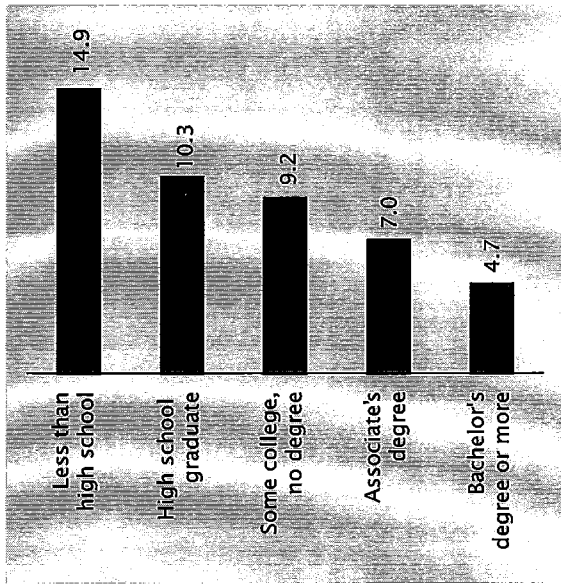
# Fact Sheet for the Current Population Survey



United States™  
**Census** Bureau

## Unemployment Rate for Persons 25 Years and Older, by Education

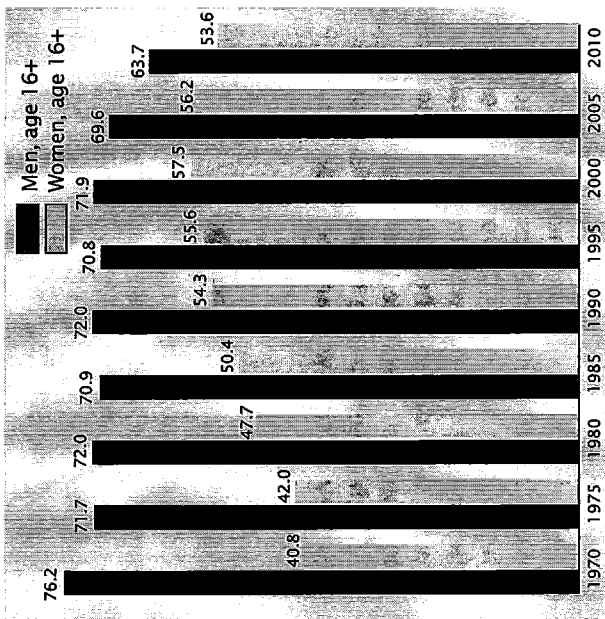
(Annual averages for 2010)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

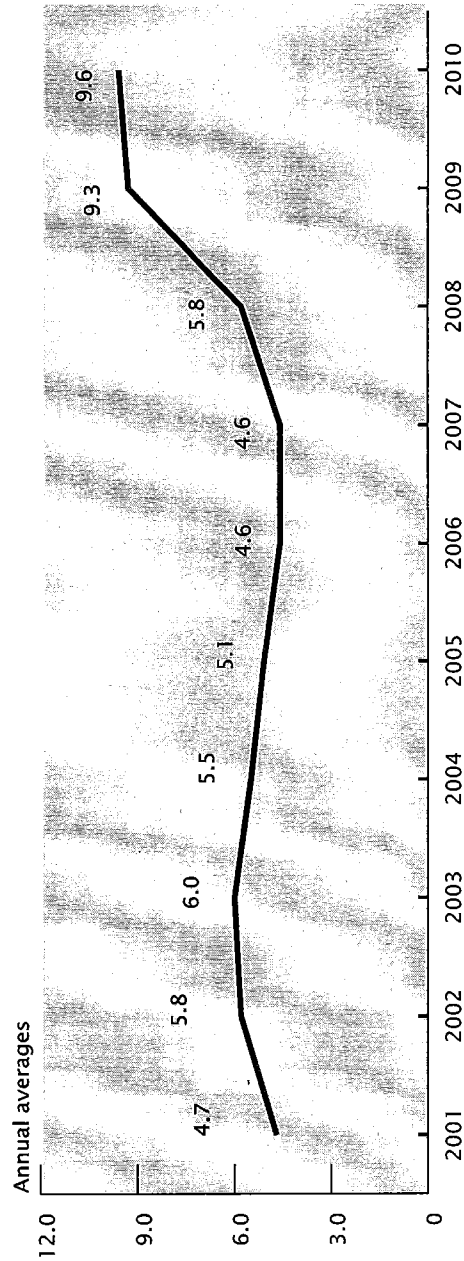
## Percentage of Persons Employed

(Annual averages)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## Unemployment Rate for 2001 to 2010



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economics and Statistics Administration  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

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## people who have jobs.....those who want jobs.....and those not in the job market.

### What this survey is about

This survey is the Current Population Survey. Its main purpose is to collect up-to-date figures on people who have jobs, those who want jobs, and those who are not in the market for jobs. The U.S. Census Bureau collects the information and the U.S. Department of Labor publishes the results. The survey results include a number of high-profile economic statistics, including the Nation's unemployment rate that you read or hear about monthly in the news.

### Why we need the Current Population Survey

In a Nation as large as ours and one that is changing so rapidly, we need up-to-date facts in order to plan effective programs for the future. In addition to a complete census, taken every 10 years, and the American Community Survey, taken annually, it is essential that we obtain some items of information much more frequently. We collect information on the number of persons working, the kind of work they do, and the number of persons looking for work (the unemployed) on a monthly basis in the Current Population Survey so that we can keep abreast of changes.

### Legal authorization

Congress authorized the collection of most of the information requested in this survey under Title 13, United States Code, Section 182; and Title 29, United States Code, Sections 1 through 9. In some months, the survey may contain questions authorized

under laws other than those cited. You can obtain further information concerning the authority for any particular portion of the survey from the Field Representative who visits your household.

### Why your answers are important

People in government and private organizations need the statistics that we obtain from this survey to develop and evaluate economic policies that are consistent with the current needs of the nation. For this reason, it is extremely important that these statistics be as reliable as possible. The only way we can achieve this needed reliability is through the cooperation of sample households such as yours in providing complete and accurate information. Your answers represent your household and approximately 2,000 other households similar to yours. In all, we interview about 55,000 households each month.

### Additional questions

In addition to questions about jobs, from time to time we ask questions about other

important areas concerning the economic and social health of our nation. We may ask how much schooling people in your household have had, how many of them are attending school now, what kinds of work different members have done, whether or not you have moved in the past year, and other questions of a similar nature.

### Number of times we will visit you

We will visit this address each month for 4 months this year and again for 4 months a year from now.

### How you are chosen

We chose this address, not you as a person or a family. If you should move during the period, we will interview the new family that moves to this address.

### The Census Bureau never reveals information about you

All information given by you to the Census Bureau for this survey is confidential by law (Title 13, United States Code, Section 9). Every Census Bureau employee takes an oath to this effect and is subject to a jail penalty and a fine if he/she discloses any census information given to him/her. We use computers to collect the survey data, but the information is encrypted to ensure its confidentiality. We present published information only in the form of statistical summaries, and we never release any information that could identify individuals. The Census Bureau has established rigid procedures and guidelines to ensure data confidentiality and is proud of the excellent reputation it has earned in this regard.



Thank you for your participation in the Current Population Survey!

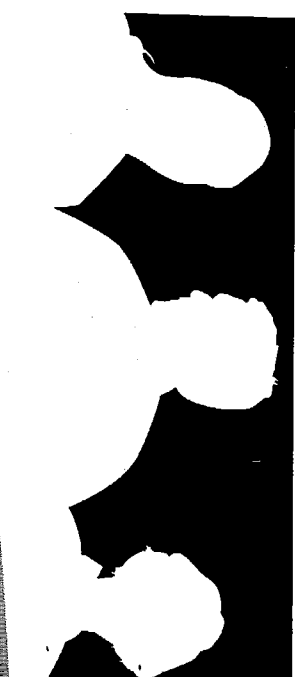
## A Message from the Census Bureau Director

We pledge to keep your answers confidential. This commitment means you can provide honest answers to our questions knowing that they will only be merged into thousands of others to paint a portrait of the country. The Census Bureau knows that our pledge of confidentiality is key in obtaining accurate data.

Without you, the country doesn't have timely statistical information about how we are doing economically, educationally, or socially. This is a fundamental way that the American public can make sure that our democracy is well informed.

For statistical surveys to work, those chosen at random to be surveyed must respond. We want you to feel safe doing this. The Census Bureau has successfully protected respondents' answers for more than 100 years.

Our highest priority at the Census Bureau is using your answers only for determining how the country is doing. By law, we cannot share your answers with anyone—including other federal agencies and state and local law enforcement agencies. In 2010, the Justice Department determined that no provision of the U.S. Patriot Act overrides the provisions of Title 13 that protects the confidentiality of Census Bureau data.



### For More Information

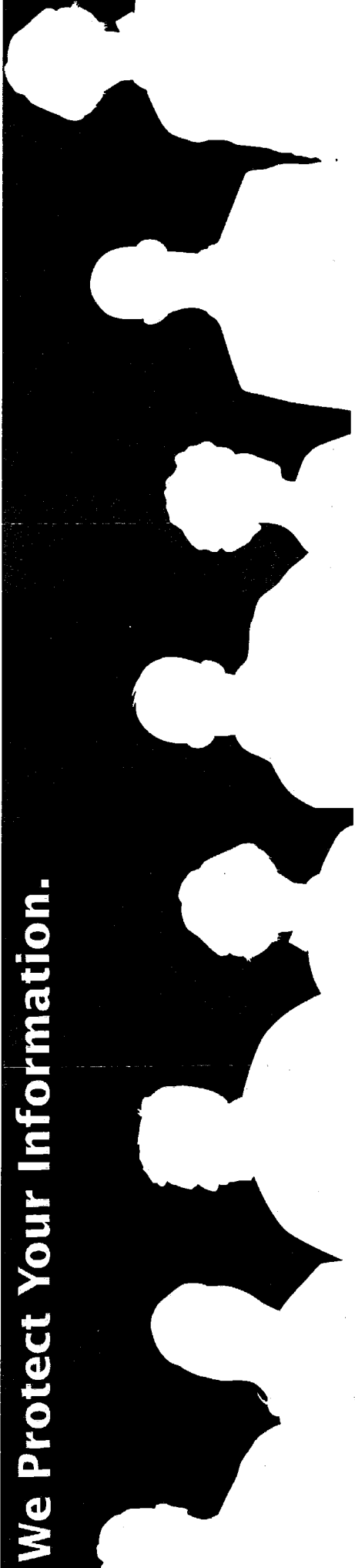
- About our data protection and privacy policy, go to [census.gov/privacy](http://census.gov/privacy).
- About how your information is used to help measure the nation's people, places and economy, go to [census.gov](http://census.gov).
- About Census Bureau products and services, call our national Customer Services Center at 1-800-923-8282 or visit [ask.census.gov](http://ask.census.gov).
- About statistics in your community, visit [quickfacts.census.gov](http://quickfacts.census.gov).
- About Census Bureau activities in your region, visit [census.gov/regions](http://census.gov/regions) for contact information and a complete listing of the states or counties governed by each Regional Office.

The U.S. Census Bureau  
Respects Your Privacy and  
Protects Your Personal Information



Issued July 2012  
BC-1428RV

# We Protect Your Information.



## It's Safe

Participating in Census Bureau censuses and surveys is safe. Your answers are protected by law and are not shared with anyone.

### The Laws

Title 13 of the U.S. Code ensures that all information collected by the Census Bureau is used for statistical purposes only.

The Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (CIPSEA) also provides strong confidentiality protections for statistical information collections.

### The Oath

All Census Bureau employees take an oath of nondisclosure and are sworn for life to protect the confidentiality of all data collected by the agency.

### The Penalties

The penalty for unlawful disclosure of information protected by Title 13 of the U.S. Code and CIPSEA is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment of up to 5 years, or both.

### Safety in the Digital Age

The Census Bureau protects your information through passwords, firewalls, encryption and other technological safeguards.

## It's Confidential

The Census Bureau is bound by strict laws and solemn commitment to protect the confidential information we collect.

- We protect the identity of individuals and businesses, starting from the point at which the data are collected and continuing decades after statistics are published.
- Only authorized Census Bureau employees who have a business need to know can see your personal identifiable information.
- No authority can obtain your personal information from the Census Bureau—not even the White House.
- Copies of census questionnaires cannot be subpoenaed for use in a court of law nor released to anyone until after 72 years.
- Data collected on individuals or establishments may not be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act.
- Statistical totals are even withheld if they represent a geographic area so small that someone might be identified.

## It's Important

The Census Bureau measures the nation's people, places, and economy. By participating in a census or survey, you help shape the future for yourself, your community, and the country.

### Your Community

The Census Bureau is often the only source of statistics at the local level every year, giving even the smallest communities accurate, timely information that is essential for decision-making.

### The Data that you provide tells us vital

information about emerging trends, such as the condition of education, hospital care, retail sales, and crime.

### Our Economy

The Census Bureau provides critical, timely information on the health of the U.S. and local economy.

Economic data collected by the Census Bureau form the basis for the national unemployment rate, official income and poverty statistics, Consumer Price Index, monthly housing statistics, and other economic indicators.