



From the National Employment Law Project

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Long-Term Unemployment Surges Even as Job Loss Slows

NELP: September Employment Report Underscores Need for Congress to Act Quickly to Extend Unemployment Benefits in All States

Washington, D.C. – Today the Department of Labor announced that employers shed another 263,000 jobs in September, putting the jobless rate at 9.8 percent for a total of 15.1 million workers unemployed as of today. While the rate of job loss is slowing, [recent analysis](#) by the National Employment Law Project shows that long-term unemployment continues to rise – at three times the rate of growth in overall unemployment. As a result, the pool of workers out of a job for six months or more is growing, and nearly 400,000 jobless workers exhausted their unemployment benefits by the end of September, with 1.3 million expected to do so by the end of the year.

“Today’s employment report is a cold reminder that a genuine recovery is still far away. Although the rate of job loss has slowed from earlier this year, it is abundantly clear that hiring is not where it needs to be to dig the economy out of this recession. Today’s report is evidence that we have a truly massive crisis of long-term unemployment on our hands, especially now that jobless workers are using up the last of their unemployment benefits. Today’s employment report is a marching order for Congress to pass unemployment benefit extensions to all states, quickly,” said Christine Owens, Executive Director of the National Employment Law Project.

NELP’s analysis of long-term unemployment, [available here](#), shows that since December 2008, there has been a 110% increase in long-term joblessness, compared to a 36% increase in the total unemployed – meaning that the numbers of jobless workers who find themselves long-term unemployed has increased three times as fast as joblessness overall. There are now 5.4 million Americans who have been out of a job for six months or more, representing a startling 35.6% of all jobless workers.

On Wednesday, Senator Max Baucus, Chairman of the Finance Committee, introduced the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Act of 2009, which would give workers in all states an additional four weeks of federally-funded jobless benefits, and provide workers in high unemployment states – those states with unemployment rates at or over 8.5% (currently 27 states) – an additional 13 weeks of benefits, totaling 17 weeks of additional federal assistance. The Senate legislation builds on the House extension measure passed last week (H.R. 3548), which provided 13 weeks of additional assistance to states with unemployment rates at or over 8.5%, but with no added weeks of benefits for workers in other states experiencing rising levels of unemployment.

“It is premature to say that the recession is over and that the job market and unemployment levels will now take care of themselves. With six unemployed workers seeking jobs for every available opening out there, the path to recovery remains steep,” continued Owens.

“Much as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provided crucial support to jobless workers over the past 6 months, and significantly blunted the effects of the downturn, an expansion of benefits now will help ensure that the process of recovery continues uninterrupted. We urge Congress to provide extensions to all states, soon, because jobless workers and their communities desperately need the support,” said Owens.

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Long Term Unemployment Climbing Faster than Overall Joblessness

