

Young workers



Entry-level workers are a barometer of the labor market's strength. From 1995–2000, when wage growth was strong overall, young workers experienced the fastest wage growth of any group. An analysis of labor market outcomes for young workers with up to seven years' experience after completing high school or college reveals these key findings:

A 'lost decade'

↓ 9%

At the end of 2011, both male and female entry-level workers with high school degrees as their highest credential earned hourly wages around 9 percent lower than they did in 2000.

↓ 7.6%

In the same period, male entry-level college graduates earned wages that were 7.6 percent lower, while female entry-level college graduates' wages were 6.0 percent lower.

61.2%

In 2010, 61.2 percent of entry-level college graduates had employer-provided health insurance, a 13 percent decline from 2000.

45.9%

In 2010, 45.9 percent of entry-level college graduates had employer-provided pension coverage, a 16 percent decline from 2000.

22.8%

In 2010, 22.8 percent of entry-level high school graduates had employer-provided health insurance, a 40 percent decline from 2000.

16.3%

In 2010, 16.3 percent of entry-level high school graduates had employer-provided pension coverage, a 26 percent decline from 2000.

And a lost generation

↓ 9%

Entry-level wages for males with college degrees in 2011 were only 5 percent greater than in 1979. While the gains have been more substantial (15 percent) for women, a woman with a college degree in 2011 still earned an entry-level wage 9 percent lower than a college-educated man in 1979.

↓ 25%

2011 entry-level wages for males with high school degrees were slightly above the poverty threshold and 25 percent lower than wages of comparable males in 1979. For women, their

2011 wages were 10 percent lower than the poverty threshold and 14 percent lower than wages of comparable women in 1979.

61.2%

Nearly 78 percent of entry-level college graduates had employer-provided health insurance in 1979, compared to 61.2 percent in 2010.

45.9%

51.2 percent of entry-level college graduates had employer-provided pension coverage in 1979, compared to 45.9 percent in 2010.

↓ 64%

More than 63 percent of entry-level high school graduates had employer-provided health insurance in 1979, compared to 22.8 percent in 2010—a 64 percent decline.

↓ 55%

36.0 percent of entry-level high school graduates had employer-provided pension coverage in 1979, compared to 16.3 percent in 2010—a 55 percent decline.

Spotlight
**SCARRING FROM
THE GREAT
RECESSION**

Entering the labor market in a severe recession can lead to reduced earnings for as many as 10 to 15 years. Young workers at all levels of educational attainment who enter the labor market during a downturn face higher rates of unemployment. In addition, because of the scarcity of available jobs, these young workers are less likely to land a stable entry-level position that will lead to advancement, and are more likely to experience a lengthy period of instability in employment and earnings.