Profile of the African American Male Workforce: Milwaukee County

Monthly unemployment statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor do not include estimates for subpopulations by race/ethnicity, age or other demographics. The annual American Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau is the primary federal source of demographics on the unemployed population by age, race, sex, education levels, and disabilities and offers a valuable tool for workforce planning.

Who’s Employed

The ACS reported an estimated 48,420 African American males in the labor force from Milwaukee County in 2008. Of these, 40,482 (or 83.6%) were employed and 7,938 (16.4%) were unemployed and seeking for work. The 16.4% unemployment rate for African American males (ages 16 and above) is more than double the rates for white males (5.8%) and Hispanic males (8.1%), according to the 2008 ACS data.

Among African American males, the employment rate was highest for men of prime working age (i.e., ages 25 thru 54) where 87.6% were employed and 12.4% were unemployed in 2008. Unemployment rates were the worst for male teens and young adults in the labor force (39.5% and 37.1%)

High school and college graduates are far more likely to be in the labor force than GED/HSED holders and high school non-completers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black Males, Milwaukee County</th>
<th>16-19</th>
<th>20-24</th>
<th>25-54</th>
<th>55-64</th>
<th>Ages 16+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>1,394</td>
<td>3,486</td>
<td>31,385</td>
<td>3,402</td>
<td>40,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>2,054</td>
<td>4,445</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>7,938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% unemployed</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The highest average annual wage earnings were seen for African American men with four-year college degrees or more ($61,754). Lowest average annual wages were seen for GED/HSED holders ($14,539) and high school non-completers ($18,210).

Monthly Economic Data for Milwaukee County

Unemployment: The City of Milwaukee unemployment rate of 10.9% for November 2009 continues to reflect a “jobless recovery,” with an estimated decline of 16,583 employed workers and increase of 9,241 unemployed workers since November 2008. The Milwaukee County suburban unemployment rate of 6.6% also reflects a decline in employed workers (-11,008) since last year and an increase in unemployed workers (+4,013).

Workers on UI: By the end of November 2009, 47,023 Milwaukee County workers were receiving weekly unemployment insurance checks, more than double the number receiving UI last November (N=20,919).

Firm closings and layoffs: November marked a second month of no new plant closings or anticipated layoffs reported to the state by firms in Milwaukee County.

Families receiving W-2: The W-2 program reports 6,177 Milwaukee County families receiving cash assistance in November 2009, up by 35% over November 2008.

Wisconsin Shares: The number of Milwaukee County children in subsidized child care in November 2009 totaled 27,687, the second lowest level of the last 12 months.

FoodShare: Enrollments in FoodShare are at an all-time high in Milwaukee County, with 199,575 residents receiving benefits in November.

BadgerCare Plus: Enrollments reached 196,343 Milwaukee County residents in November 2009, up by over 53,000 since January 2008.

Drilldown Data Sources: Wisconsin departments of Children and Families, Health Services, and Workforce Development.
(12/28/2009)
Who’s Unemployed

Most of the 7,938 unemployed have had recent work experience. Two-thirds of the unemployed black males of prime working age (25 thru 54 yrs.) had worked within the past 12 months. The remaining third had not held jobs for over a year – and in some cases for over 5 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Employment Held by Unemployed African American Males (ACS 2008)</th>
<th>16-19</th>
<th>20-24</th>
<th>25-54</th>
<th>55-64</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worked within the last 12 months</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>3082</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>4,054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last worked, 1-5 years ago</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>878</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>2,485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last worked over 5 years ago, or never worked</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>1,399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL Unemployed</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>2,054</td>
<td>4,445</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>7,938</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent of Total

| Worked within the last 12 months                             | 16%   | 35%   | 69%   | 20%   | 51%   |
| Last worked, 1-5 years ago                                   | 68%   | 40%   | 20%   | 31%   | 31%   |
| Last worked over 5 years ago, or never worked                | 17%   | 24%   | 11%   | 49%   | 18%   |
| ALL Unemployed                                               | 100%  | 100%  | 100%  | 100%  | 100%  |

Who’s Not in the Labor Force

Milwaukee County U.S. Census data have been misused locally to create a new category of “jobless” rates for black males by including 23,431 males ages 16-64 not in the labor force, leading many in the job training community, newspaper reporters and others to believe that African American males are unemployed at rates of a headline-producing 50% rather than the actual reported ACS Census Bureau rate of 18.3% in the City of Milwaukee for 2008.

A fourth of the so-called “jobless” African American males identified as NOT in the labor force are students. (81% of teenage students are “jobless.”) According to ACS, 2/3 of African American males NOT in the labor force are students; adults receiving social security, SSI or retirement income; and self-reported disabled persons not seeking employment.

Census Bureau Unemployment Rates, Compared to Local “Jobless” Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black Males (16-64) Unemployed (ACS 2008)</th>
<th>“Jobless”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Milwaukee</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milwaukee County</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milwaukee MSA</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the unemployed, locally produced “jobless” statistics include students not looking for work; persons on SSI and social security; other disabled, retired, institutionalized; and persons with no labor market history, resulting in a five-fold increase in the population.

There are several serious drawbacks for workforce planners in including non-labor force participants in the “jobless” statistic. First, it promotes a stereotype of African American males in Milwaukee as neither working nor even willing to look for employment. Second, the statistic diverts attention of workforce investment planning away from the needs of active job seekers and underemployed workers to persons not in the workforce. And finally, it creates an unachievable (and undesirable) target for employment initiatives: seeking full employment of teenage students, disabled workers now receiving SSI and other income support, and retired workers on social security.

Characteristics of 23,431 African American Males Ages 16-64 NOT in the Labor Force (unduplicated count, ACS 2008)

- **Of particular concern are the 5,105 African American males who were not looking for work, were not students or institutionalized, did not report disabilities, and did not report income sources of social security, SSI or retirement payments. The labor market history of this population was examined to determine when (or if) they had last been employed.
  - 734 of the 5,105 held employment within the last 12 months.
  - 1,274 had not been employed in the last 12 months but had shown employment some time in the last one to five years.
  - The remaining 3,097 had not been employed in over five years, or had never been employed.

As the Employment & Training Institute has consistently cautioned, institutional data sources from the unemployment insurance files, state corrections system, drivers’ licensing, Department of Regulation & Licensing, DWD ASSET system, and income maintenance and Wisconsin Shares files should be used to identify actual populations of African American males in need of workforce services.

For more info, see the Drilldown on African American Male Unemployment and Workforce Needs (UWM Employment & Training Institute, December 2009) at www.eti.uwm.edu.
Unemployment rates dropped in the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County suburbs, based on lower estimates of active job seekers rather than increases in employed workers.

45,464 workers from Milwaukee County received weekly unemployment insurance in October 2009, up by 26,194 over October 2008.

As of October, 75,130 adults and 118,068 children in Milwaukee County were on BadgerCare Plus.

14,162 Milwaukee County families and 18,312 families in the Balance of State received Wisconsin Shares child care subsidies in October 2009.

No new firm closings or layoffs announced in October 2009.

Drilldown Data Sources: Wisconsin departments of Children and Families, Health Services, and Workforce Development. (11/19/09)
Unemployment: The improvement in the unemployment rate for the City of Milwaukee (from 12.4% in June to 11.9% in August) resulted from a lower state estimate of out-of-work residents seeking jobs rather than an increase in employed workers. The suburban unemployment rate decline (from 7.8% in June to 7.2% in August) similarly resulted from a lower estimated unemployed job-seeking pool.

Workers on UI: By the end of September, 45,240 Milwaukee County workers were receiving weekly unemployment insurance checks, down from 47,770 at the end of August, as some workers likely exhausted their benefits.

Firm closings and layoffs: In August 2009, 4 firms in Milwaukee County reported 413 anticipated layoffs to the state: Midwest Airlines (175), Unilever (118), Lowe’s Home Centers (73), and J.P. Morgan Chase & Co (43).

Families receiving W-2: The W-2 program continues to show little movement toward enrolling unemployed single parents. In August 5,640 Milwaukee County families received W-2 cash support, up by only 127 over July. The August total included 4,958 cases in some type of work program (88%) and 682 parents of newborns (12%).

Wisconsin Shares: The number of Milwaukee County children in subsidized child care increased from 29,097 in June to an all-time high of 30,271 in August. Enrollments are typically higher near the end of the summer.

FoodShare: Enrollments in FoodShare are at an all-time high in Milwaukee County, with 194,584 children and adults receiving benefits in August, up by over 41,000 from a year ago.

BadgerCare Plus: Nearly as many Milwaukee County residents are now enrolled in BadgerCare Plus as in FoodShare. In August 186,019 residents were enrolled in BadgerCare Plus, up by 4,500 in the last month alone.

Drilldown Data Sources: Wisconsin departments of Children and Families, Health Services, and Workforce Development. (10/09/2009)
51% of the May 2009 full-time job openings of the 7-county region were located in Milwaukee County.
(Full-time openings by zip code area)

Unemployment: The estimated unemployment rate for the City of Milwaukee declined from 12.4% in June to 12.2% in July and down to 11.9% in August. (DWD revised estimates) Unemployment in the Milwaukee County suburbs also declined from 7.8% in June to 7.4% in July and down to 7.2% in August. An estimated 32,861 City workers and 13,505 suburban workers in Milwaukee County were unemployed in August.

Workers on UI: The state reported 47,770 Milwaukee County workers receiving weekly unemployment insurance checks at the end of August, up by 120 from the end of July. About 3,700 workers are applying for new UI benefits each week.

Firm closings and layoffs: In August 2009, 3 firms in Milwaukee County reported anticipated layoffs to the state: Midwest Airlines (225 anticipated layoffs), Milwaukee Ductile Iron (215 anticipated layoffs), and Milasco Manufacturing Company (12 anticipated layoffs).

Families receiving W-2: 5,640 Milwaukee County families received W-2 cash support in August. Of these, 2,827 (50%) had placements in community service jobs, 2,115 (37%) in transition jobs, 16 in “Real Work Real Pay” and trial jobs, and 682 (12%) were parents of newborns receiving aid. The W-2 agencies provided another 1,969 families with case management services but no income support.

Wisconsin Shares: 14,480 Milwaukee County families received Shares child care subsidies for 29,160 children in July 2009.

FoodShare: In July 2009, 191,496 children and adults in the Milwaukee County received food stamps, up by 3,482 from the previous month.

BadgerCare Plus: 181,487 county residents were enrolled in BadgerCare Plus as in July.
The City unemployment rate is still rising – up to 12.3% in June.

Employment levels remain down in both goods-producing and services-providing private companies compared to last year, according to DWD estimates.

Unemployment: In June 2009 the estimated unemployment rate for the City of Milwaukee was 12.3%, approaching double the 6.7% rate a year ago. Unemployment in the suburbs rose to 7.8%. An estimated 34,242 City workers and 14,735 suburban workers in Milwaukee County were unemployed in June. [Note: Unemployment rates shown here are the latest revisions from DWD/BLS. Rates are unadjusted.]

Workers on UI: The state reported 47,650 Milwaukee County workers receiving weekly unemployment insurance checks at the end of July, up from 45,130 at the end of June. On average over 4,800 workers applied for new UI benefits each week in July.

Private sector job losses: Jobs in private companies providing services were down by 27,500 in July 2009, compared to May 2008 for the four-county metro area. In the goods producing sectors, jobs were down by 18,100.

Firm closings and layoffs: In July 2009, 3 firms in Milwaukee County reported anticipated layoffs to the state: Harley-Davidson Motor Company (433 anticipated layoffs), US Airways (34 anticipated layoffs), and Stroh Die Casting (19 anticipated layoffs).

Families receiving W-2: 5,513 Milwaukee County families received W-2 cash support in July. Of these, 2,707 (49%) had placements in community service jobs, 2,094 (38%) in transition jobs, 23 in “Real Work Real Pay” and trial jobs, and 689 (13%) were parents of newborns receiving aid. The W-2 agencies provided another 1,949 families with case management services but no income support.

Wisconsin Shares: 14,603 Milwaukee County families received Shares child care subsidies for 29,097 children in June 2009

FoodShares: In June 2009, 188,014 children and adults in the Milwaukee County received food stamps, up by 4,600 from the previous month.

BadgerCare Plus: 167,141 county residents were enrolled in BadgerCare Plus as in June. In July 2009 those numbers had reached 181,487.

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Drilldown Data Sources: Wisconsin departments of Children and Families, Health Services, and Workforce Development. (8/17/09)
The City unemployment rate continues to climb.

![Graph showing unemployment rate trends from January 2008 to May 2009.](image)

Private companies in 4-county Milwaukee area have 46,600 fewer jobs than a year ago, according to state CES data.

### Wisconsin Shares:

14,603 Milwaukee County families received Shares child care subsidies for 29,097 children in June 2009. The number of families served is 485 more than last year in spite of countywide drops in employment.

### FoodShares:

In May 2009, 183,419 children and adults in the Milwaukee County received food stamps, up by 35,629 since last year.

### BadgerCare Plus:

167,141 county residents were enrolled in BadgerCare Plus as of June 2009. Enrollments have increased by 24,556 over the last year.

### Unemployment:

In May 2009 the estimated unemployment rate for the City of Milwaukee was 11.4%, up from 6% last May. An estimated 31,052 City workers and 13,256 suburban workers in Milwaukee County were unemployed.

### Workers on UI:

The state reported 45,130 Milwaukee County workers receiving weekly unemployment compensation checks in June, up 2,200 above the levels in May.

### Families receiving W-2:

5,169 Milwaukee County families received W-2 cash support in May 2009. Of these, 2,515 had placements in community service jobs, 2,010 in transition jobs, 26 in “Real Work Real Pay” and trial jobs, and 618 were parents of newborns receiving aid. Another 1,994 families received case management services but no income support.

### Private sector job losses:

Jobs in private companies providing services were estimated down by 27,500 in May 2009, compared to May 2008 for the four-county metro area, according to the Current Employment Statistics (CES) survey of the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. In the goods producing sectors, jobs were down by 19,100. On the good news side, job totals in services providing sectors showed modest improvements since March.

Compared to May 2008, significant job declines have been seen in durable goods manufacturing (down by 12,700 jobs, or 14%), construction company jobs (down by 5,200 jobs, or 15%), and employment service firms (down by 4,000, or 16%). Health and education were among the few private sectors with modest employment increases from May 2008 to May 2009.

### Firm closings and layoffs:

In June 2009, 4 firms in Milwaukee County (Milwaukee Ductile Iron, Sendik’s Wyndham Village, LeHigh Phoenix, and American General Life Companies) reported anticipated closings and layoffs to the state for a loss of 371 jobs.

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Prepared by the Employment & Training Institute, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board

Milwaukee Drill photo courtesy of Milwaukee Electric Tool Corporation
Nursing Drilldown: RN licenses up in last 3 years

Wisconsin Department of Regulation & Licensing records show an increasing number of nurses being registered in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties. The Milwaukee County annual registrants more than doubled to 620 RNs registered in 2008. These include newly trained nurses, LPNs upgrading to RN licensing, and in-migrants seeking a Wisconsin license.

Increases in registered nurses make up in part for the large number of RNs of baby-boomer age approaching retirement and declining numbers of employed RNs living in the county. (See graph for the 2002 DRL file, when age data was made available.)

- Nurses employed at jobsites within Milwaukee County totaled 11,520 in 1990, 11,265 in 2000 and surged to 12,310 in 2005-2007, according to census estimates.

- Meanwhile the number of employed RNs living in Milwaukee County (regardless of their place of employment) declined from 8,816 in 1990 to 7,835 in 2000, and up to 8,891 in 2005-2007.

- The ETI job openings surveys showed 1,316 openings for RNs (766 full-time and 550 part-time) in May 2006. Similarly high demand was seen in earlier surveys (2002-2005). The 2009 job opening survey is currently in progress.

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Source: Analysis of Wisconsin Department of Regulation & Licensing records and other data sources for the upcoming UWM Employment and Training Institute labor force drilldowns for the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board.
TAKING STOCK: The Milwaukee County labor force included 415,212 employed and 43,789 unemployed workers in April 2009.

42,928 workers in county receive weekly unemployment insurance, 3,953 more apply.

178,259 children and adults use FoodShares.

163,189 county residents on BadgerCare Plus.

Only 5,083 families receive W-2 cash support.

14,722 Milwaukee County families receive Shares child care subsidies for 29,418 children.

Drilldown Data Sources:
Wisconsin departments of Children and Families, Health Services, and Workforce Development. (6/09/09)

April 2009 unemployment rates: City of Milwaukee – 11.3%; Milwaukee County suburbs – 6.9%

Firm closings and layoffs: In May 2009, 4 firms in Milwaukee County (GB Mortgage, Grede Foundries, Tramont Corporation, and Wisconsin Physicians Service Insurance Corporation) reported to the state anticipated closings and layoffs affecting 209 workers.

Prepared by the Employment & Training Institute, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board

Milwaukee drill photo courtesy of Milwaukee Electric Tool Corporation
42,000 Milwaukee County workers receive unemployment compensation; 5,600 more apply

415,455 Milwaukee County residents were reported employed in March 2009 and 43,175 unemployed.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CLAIMS
42,158 Milwaukee County workers received unemployment insurance payments for the week ending May 2, 2009 (up by 25,539 since January 2007). Another 5,602 workers filed initial claims for UI. Over half (58%) of new claimants are men, and of these 58% are white, 38% African American, and 3% Latino. For women, 51% of new claimants are African American, 45% white, and 3% Latina.

FIRM CLOSINGS AND LAYOFFS
In April 2009, 2 firms in Milwaukee County (GE Healthcare Monitoring Solutions and T-Shirt International) reported anticipated layoffs to the state for a loss of 273 jobs.

SAFETY NETS FOR MILWAUKEE COUNTY FAMILIES
The number of Milwaukee County residents receiving FoodShares reached 172,671 in March 2009, up by 31,970 from January 2007.

As of March, 161,816 residents were enrolled in BadgerCare Plus with numbers continuing to increase.

“W-2” cash assistance cases in March 2009 totaled 4,905, including 4,288 cases with CSJ and transition jobs. The number of families receiving W-2 income support is up by only 365 over January 2007.

14,722 families received Shares child care subsidies in April 2009, up by 1,599 from January 2007. A total of 29,418 children are in care.

2,315 construction trade apprentices

Apprenticeships are down in the construction trades, with a total of 2,315 apprentices in 17 committees with workers in the Milwaukee area. Sharp drops were seen for the carpenters, iron workers, and construction craft laborers.

In Spring 2009, 171 (7%) of the apprentices were African American, and 138 (6%) were Hispanic. Females held 3% of the training jobs.

Drilldown Data Sources: Wisconsin departments of Children and Families, Health Services, and Workforce Development. (5/11/09)
City of Milwaukee unemployment reaches 10.3% in Feb. 2009

SAFETY NETS FOR MILWAUKEE COUNTY FAMILIES

“W-2” payment cases in February 2009 totaled 4,845, including 4,259 cases with CSJ and transition jobs. The number of families receiving W-2 income support is up by 52 over January 2009.

14,571 families received Shares child care subsidies in February 2009, down from 14,727 in January. A total of 29,290 children are in care.

The number of Milwaukee County residents receiving FoodShares reached 169,251 in February 2009, and 159,191 residents were enrolled in BadgerCare Plus. Enrollments are rising in both programs.

Weekly unemployment insurance claims for Milwaukee County workers continue to climb

- 41,443 Milwaukee County workers received unemployment insurance payments for the week ending March 28, 2009 (up from 16,619 in January 2007 and 39,098 last month). Another 3,553 workers filed initial claims for UI.

- Statewide, UI benefits were paid to 191,996 laid-off workers as of March 28, up by over 77,000 from January 2007. In sharp contrast, “W-2” income support was given to 6,949 low-income Wisconsin families in February 2009, up by only 617 families from the levels in January 2007. (Milwaukee County has 22% of Wisconsin’s UI claimants and 70% of the W-2 payment cases.)

Firm closings and layoffs: In March 2009, 6 firms in Milwaukee County (Central States Mortgage, Universal Brixius/MIC Group-Milwaukee, La Causa, Tramont Corporation, Liberty Mutual, and U.S. Bank) reported anticipated closings and layoffs to the state for a loss of 419 jobs.

Employment shifts in private industry

In the 4-county Milwaukee area, private sector jobs for professionals in larger companies increased by 15,739 in the last decade, while employment of semi-skilled operatives declined by 10,467, according to annual EEO-1 reports filed by companies with 100+ workers. “White collar” work, particularly for persons with college education and experience, is increasing while manual labor jobs are in decline. Employment totaled 339,370 in these companies in 2006.

White workers make up 78% of the private sector workforce (in companies with 100+ workers), down from 82% 10 years ago. Hispanics showed the largest net gain in private sector jobs (an increase of 8,897), followed by Asian Americans (a 3,474 increase), and then African Americans (a 2,910 increase).

Drilldown Data Sources: Wisconsin departments of Children and Families, Health Services, and Workforce Development; U.S. Equal Employment Opportunities Commission. (4/03/09)

Prepared by the Employment & Training Institute, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board

Milwaukee Drill photo courtesy of Milwaukee Electric Tool Corporation
In December 2008 the U.S. employment rate passed 7% for the first time in more than a decade. The City of Milwaukee has had rates exceeding that level since 2002.

Unemployment in the City of Milwaukee reached 9.1% in January 2009, the highest it has been since 2003. The City had an est. 249,504 employed and 24,832 unemployed workers.

The Milwaukee County suburbs had an unemployment rate of 5.5% (177,667 employed and 10,429 unemployed workers).

Weekly unemployment insurance claims for Milwaukee County workers:

39,098 Milwaukee County workers received unemployment insurance payments for the week ending February 28, 2009, and another 3,875 workers filed initial claims for UI. The number of weekly UI recipients has doubled over the last two years.

- Women made up 40% of new claimants (in the first 2 months of 2009). 48% of these female workers were African American, 47% white, and 3% Hispanic.
- For men, 61% of new claimants were white, 34% were African American, and 3% Hispanic


SAFETY NETS FOR FAMILIES IN MILWAUKEE COUNTY:

A total of 62,025 employed families in Milwaukee County received state and federal earned income tax credits in 2008 (based on tax filings for 2007). 2/3 of single filers with dependents claimed the EIC. These families will gain under the Obama stimulus package.

“W-2” payment cases in January 2009 totaled 4,793, including 4,224 cases with CSJ and transition jobs. The number of families receiving W-2 income support has declined in spite of the recession.

14,727 families received Shares child care subsidies in January 2009, for care of 29,771 children.

The number of Milwaukee County residents receiving FoodShares reached 165,668 in January 2009, and 158,360 residents were enrolled in BadgerCare Plus.

Data sources: Wisconsin departments of Children and Families, Health Services, Revenue, and Workforce Development.
In December 2009 the U.S. employment rate passed 7% for the first time in more than a decade. The City of Milwaukee has had rates exceeding that level since 2002.

Unemployment in the City of Milwaukee reached 7.9% in December 2008, the highest it has been since 2005. The City had an est. 244,248 employed and 20,845 unemployed workers.

The Milwaukee County suburbs had an unemployment rate of 4.5% (178,821 employed and 8,368 unemployed workers).

Weekly unemployment insurance claims for Milwaukee County workers:

35,583 Milwaukee County workers received unemployment insurance payments for the week ending February 14, 2009, and another 3,470 workers filed initial claims for UI. The number of weekly UI recipients has doubled over the last two years.

- Women made up 40% of new claimants (in the first 7 weeks of 2009), and nearly half of these female workers were minorities (mostly African Americans).
- For men, 61% of new claimants were white, 34% were African American, and 2% Hispanic

Firm closings and layoffs: In January 2009, 7 companies (Viasystems Milwaukee, Yellow Transportation – Milwaukee, Circuit City Stores, Evergreen International Aviation, Dickens [Schwartz] Books, Unilever, and Roadway Express-Milwaukee) reported anticipated closings and layoffs to the state for a loss of 594 jobs.

In 2008, 24 companies reported planned closings and layoffs for 2,419 workers.

SAFETY NETS FOR FAMILIES IN MILWAUKEE COUNTY:

A total of 62,025 employed families in Milwaukee County received state and federal earned income tax credits in 2008 (based on tax filings for 2007). 2/3 of single filers with dependents claimed the EIC. These families will gain under the Obama stimulus package.

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The number of Milwaukee County residents receiving FoodShares reached 162,310 in December 2008, and 158,360 residents were enrolled in BadgerCare Plus as of January 2009.

Data sources: Wisconsin departments of Children and Families, Health Services, Revenue, and Workforce Development.

Prepared by the Employment & Training Institute, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board

Milwaukee Drill photo courtesy of Milwaukee Electric Tool Corporation