



## ***Youth & the Workforce – Policy Brief***

Just 54 percent of Americans ages 18 to 24 currently have jobs, according to a study released Thursday, February 9, 2012, by the Pew Research Center. This is the lowest employment rate for this age group since the government began keeping track in 1948. And it's a sharp drop from the 62 percent who had jobs in 2007 -- suggesting the recession is crippling career prospects for a broad swath of young people. (Pew Research Center)

***In 2010, Minnesota's youth unemployment rate was 21.1% for all youth, and double that for youth from communities of color.*** (DEED LMI Office)

Earlier this year, state demographer Tom Gillaspay and his colleagues wrote of a **disturbing and growing mismatch** between the skills of those looking for work and the skills employers seek to hire" and a **"lost generation"** of Minnesota workers, "where those with the necessary skills do very well while those without the desired skills will struggle economically for the remainder of their lives." (Generations of 'lost' Minnesota workers, MPR, October 5, 2011)

World-wide dilemma: In some countries of the Arab world, up to 90% of 16-24 year olds are unemployed. In the United States the youth unemployment rate is 23%. In Spain nearly 50%. In the UK 22%. ... Worldwide, some 200 million people are unemployed. 75 million are between 16 and 24 and every year about 40 million young people are entering the workforce. (BBC News, January 28, 2012)

### Implications

1. Lifetime earning potential – is reduced
2. Uninsured with no health insurance – risking physical health and future
3. Credit debt increase and poor credit rating
4. Need to “skill-up” and have better and more affordable education access

### Solutions

1. Employment/Training Programs targeted at skill building for youth
2. Focus trainings and education on “new” jobs & growth sector areas
3. Economy & Infrastructure needs to change and fit future trends – i.e., less training in mining, more in health sector and technology
4. College education – needed now more than ever before, but cost needs to be affordable
5. Health care coverage
6. Entrepreneurial loans and programs designed for youth

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***Youth & the Workforce***

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