Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Students

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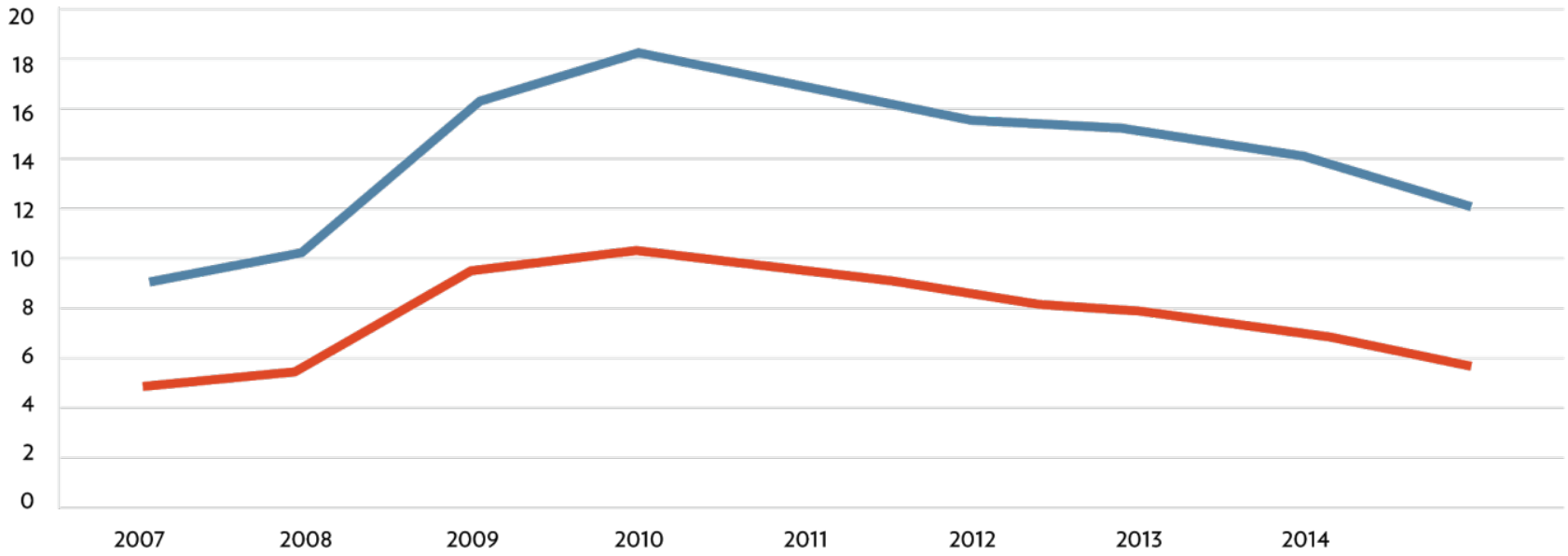
Background:
Working Students

- About **11 million college students work.**
  - About 8 million (three-quarters) of those students work 20 or more hours per week, and about
  - About 4.4 million students work 35 hours per week or more.
- About half of college students are independent; more than half of college students are first generation.
- About 18 percent of high school students ages 16–17 work, and about 9 percent work more than fifteen hours per week.

Unemployment Rate, 2007–2015

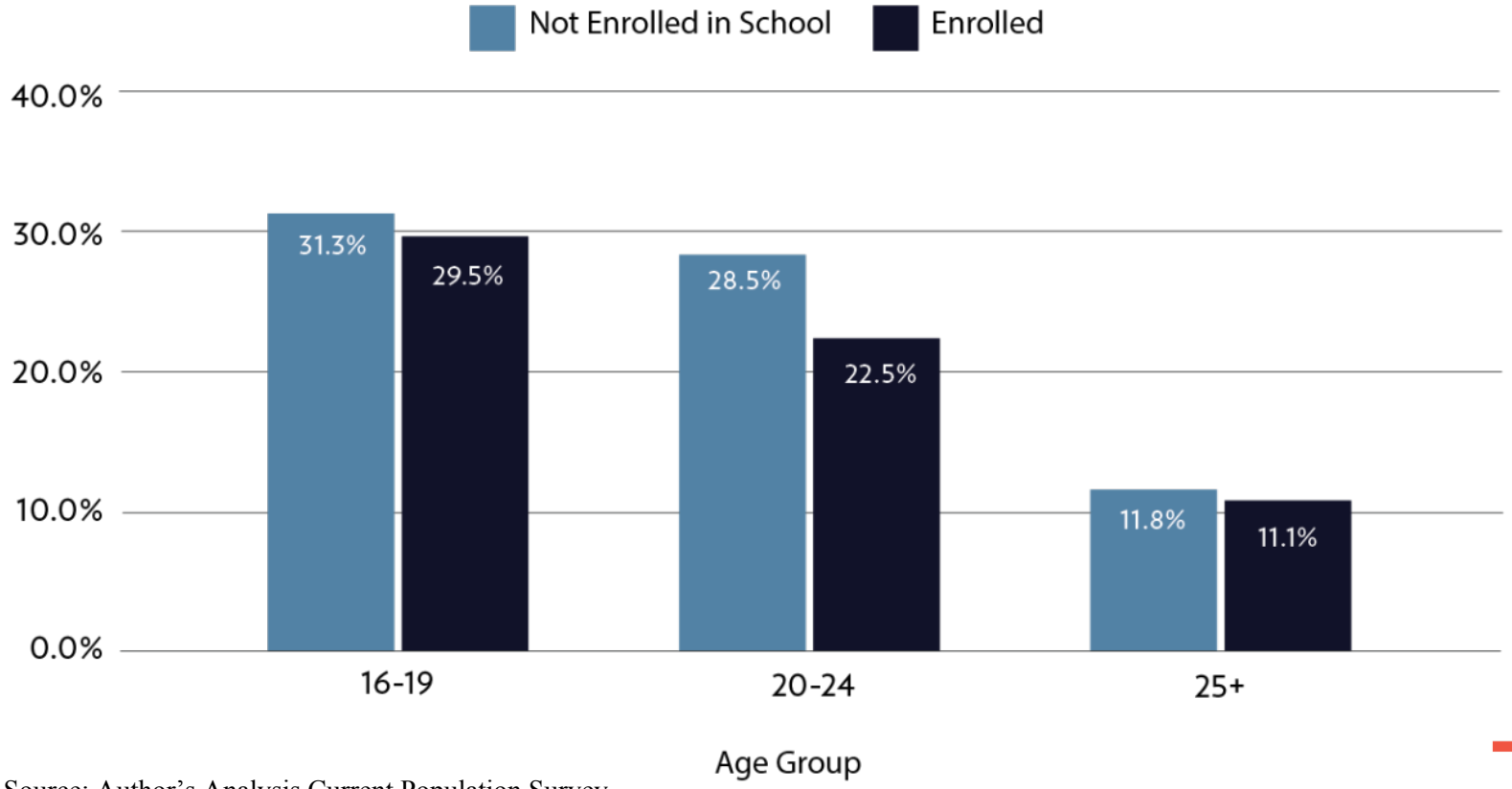


Unemployment rate (18-24 years olds)

Unemployment rate (Overall)

Source: Author's Analysis Current Population Survey

May 2020 Unemployment Rate



Source: Author's Analysis Current Population Survey

Background:
Students and Unemployment Insurance

- Many students **do not** qualify for typical unemployment insurance.
  - They work part-time.
  - They do not earn enough to be considered for part-time benefits, if available in their state.
  - They are often presumed "unable and unavailable" for work if they are enrolled full-time.
  - Even under DUA rules, their work is not a "principle source" of income.
- Nebraska regular state UI benefits can disqualify many students
  - "If you are regularly attending school as a full-time student you may be disqualified from benefits unless you were a student at the time you earned the majority of your wages in your base period."

Background:
PUA

Self-employed workers, those seeking part-time work, and others who do not have work history for UI **qualify for PUA if the worker is unemployed because of COVID19.**

- has been diagnosed or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (or household members are);
- is providing care for a family or household member who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, or for a child whose school or child care center closed due to COVID-19;
- is unable to get to work or commence employment due to COVID-19-related travel restrictions, a business shutdown due to emergency declarations, self-quarantine, or a job offer reversal, or is an independent contractor forced to suspend operations;
- has become the head of household due to a COVID-19 death; or
- is unable to work due to health ramifications of previous COVID-19 experience.

PUA Benefits and Students

- The **PUA program is meant for those who do not qualify for traditional UI**: independent contractors, part-time workers, and those without sufficient work history.
- Many (potentially millions) of students will fall into those buckets.
- Existing requirements for sufficient work history/wages, or requirements to be looking for full-time work, should not apply.
- Reminder: Nebraska also includes some restrictions specific to students for traditional UI benefits, particularly related to whether they had earned base qualifying wages while in school.

DOL Speaks Directly on Students (April FAQ)

Question:

A full-time student who works part-time may be excluded from DUA because he or she has not lost their "principal source of income" as described under 20 C.F.R. §625.2(s). Is he or she eligible for PUA?

Answer:

Yes. Provided a full-time student who worked part-time is unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable or unavailable to work because of one of the COVID-19 related reasons in section 2102(a)(3)(A)(ii)(I) of the CARES Act, then he or she may be eligible for PUA.

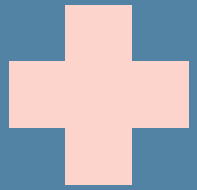
The requirement that the employment be the "principal source of income" under DUA does not apply to eligibility for PUA.

Benefits

- Like other part-time and full-time workers students should receive:
  - A minimum benefit either based on state calculations looking at last year's tax returns OR a minimum benefit of 50 percent of the median weekly benefit.
  - **PLUS** an additional $600 week through the end of July
  - Up to 39 weeks of benefits from January 27th to December 31, 2020
- When compared to other available benefits for students in this time - this one may be the most significant!
- While the extra $600 runs out at the end of July, it is possible that Congress will extend it in some form.

Biggest Challenge: Communications

Schools



State aid and youth-serving agencies

College access organizations

Resources

- **TCF Report:**
  - https://tcf.org/content/commentary/unemployment-insurance-young-people-wake-covid-19/
- **DOL guidance**
  - https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/UIPL/UIPL_16-20_Attachment_1.pdf
- **DOL FAQs**
  - https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/UIPL/UIPL_16-20_Change_1.pdf
- **State Unemployment websites:**
  - https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/UnemploymentBenefits/Find-Unemployment-Benefits.aspx

Thank you! Questions?

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