

LOWEST EMPLOYMENT RATE FOR TEENS IN ILLINOIS



One high school student, Grant Winning, who attends Rochester High School, said it took him nine months to find a job, part-time at that, in which he works as a cashier for the County Market. Winning said that when he first started his job search, he may not have been as active as he should have been. However, he says that by the springtime, he was actively pursuing work and was not having luck at all. Winning applied to a number of different positions, including positions on golf courses, at movie theaters, and an assortment of stores. Winning says he went to a lot of interviews but was not hired until his interview with County Market, which was the first employer to offer him a position. Unfortunately, he is not alone, as many other teenagers in Illinois are having a hard time finding employment, especially as the labor market continues to struggle after the Great Recession, which left millions of people without work, competing for jobs in a stiff market. In fact, a study was released just last week, by the Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies, which reported that only about 27.5 percent of the teenagers in Illinois had some sort of employment. The number of teenagers with jobs in Illinois is a bit better than the actual nationwide figure, which is at 26.4 percent; however, it is still the lowest amount of teenagers with employment within the past 42 years. And, throughout 1999-2000, practically half of the teenagers in Illinois had jobs, which shows just how much the recession has had negatively affected a number of people. The statistics were also there, showing that African American teens in low-income families were not nearly as employed as white families that come from higher income. Only about 10 percent of low-income African American teenagers had jobs while 37.7 white teenagers with higher income had jobs. In the meantime, there are people who are trying to help the city's youth. Angela Harris is working for the Springfield Urban League's YouthBuild program, a program designed to help people ages 18 through 25 by teaching them what to do during an interview, helping them obtain job skills, and working on their resume with them. Harris says that the low employment rates for youth are quite frightening. She said that there was some work available for the holidays, but it was only seasonal and temporary. She said that employment gave a few people a change to have a job but it has basically dried up now. The director of workforce and media development at the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Mikal Sutton, believes that the labor market is tough for everyone right now, not just teenagers, and that at this moment, it is a challenge finding work for just about anyone.

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