

## TEEN UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN MONTANA



In the United States, the Great Recession is something that is still being dealt with in all of the different states of the country. In the state of Montana, the unemployment rate is still a huge concern for everyone, as it is still a huge concern for the entire nation as well. The job situation in the state of Montana has actually improved over the past few months and it is better than the actual national average. However, while there have been some improvements in the state and its unemployment rate, the employment picture for teenagers between the ages of 16 and 19 are not so good. In fact, the unemployment rate for these teenagers is actually higher than ever before. Because of the current situation with the labor force, fewer teens have been able to find employment and are simply being pushed out of the labor market, especially as older and more experienced individuals are taking the positions that teenagers would normally have. In the span of five year, from 2006 until 2011, the unemployment rate for teenagers increased from 10.2 percent all the way up to 19.4 percent, which is almost double the amount from before. The amount of hours that teenagers worked each week also ended up falling instead of increasing. The number of teenagers in the area who actually held down a job even dropped between those five years. It is believed that the increase in minimum wage has prevented several teenagers from being able to find employment. Minimum wage used to be around \$5.15 back in 2006 but by 2011, it was at \$7.35. As the economy continues to struggle and as minimum wage continues to increase, it could be harder for teenager to find jobs in the future. This is not just a problem for teenagers who are looking for work and looking to make money. When a teenager finds employment at an early age, they begin to gain the skills that are necessary for holding higher positions in the future. If teenagers are unable to find employment, they will only continue to get older yet will still lack the skills that are needed to hold down certain positions, especially later on in life. Currently, the legislature is working on taking the steps to figuring out different options that could help these teenagers and their employment prospects. Lowering the state minimum wage law that has been set could possibly help, enabling more teenagers to find the employment they have been seeking. At this point in time, it will be up to Congress.