

# BY THE NUMBERS:

Summary of True Rate of Unemployment  
For the Month of **December 2023**  
True Weekly Earnings **Fourth Quarter 2023**

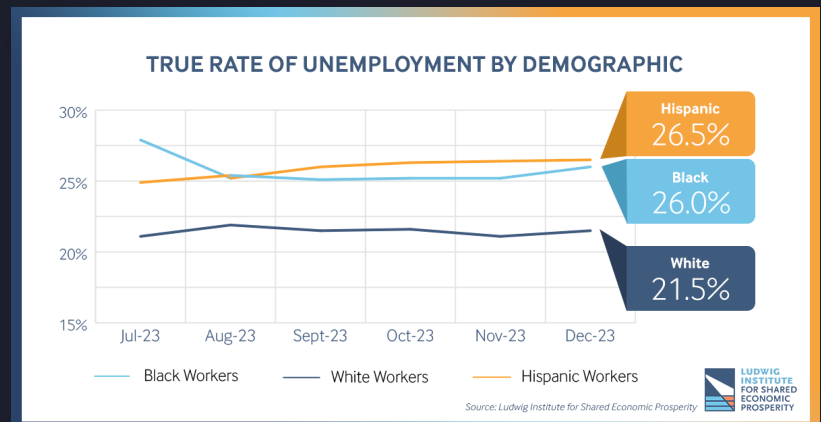


Ludwig Institute for Shared Economic Prosperity

January 18, 2024

## OVERVIEW:

The Ludwig Institute for Shared Economic Prosperity (LISEP) has issued its monthly True Rate of Unemployment (TRU) for December 2023, in conjunction with the quarterly True Weekly Earnings (TWE) report for Q4 2023. The TRU, which measures the percentage of “functionally unemployed” Americans – defined as those unable to find a full-time job that pays above the poverty level – stands at 22.9% for the month of December, a 0.5 percentage point decrease over the November rate. TWE, a measure of real median weekly earnings after adjusting for inflation that includes all participants in the workforce (including part-time and unemployed job seekers), increased by \$5 a week, from \$960 to \$965.



## KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- **The overall TWE increased \$5 a week, from \$960 to \$965.** This is the third consecutive quarter of increases in median earnings, with the TWE up 1.8% since Q1 2023. According to LISEP, the Q4 increase in TWE is likely due to a strong October and November.
- **Among racial and ethnic demographics, Black workers saw a 3% TWE increase** (from \$797 to \$821 a week), with White workers posting a 1.2% increase (\$1,061 to \$1,074). The TWE for Hispanic workers decreased 0.8%, from \$773 to \$766. By income group, low-income earners (25th percentile) saw a decrease from \$605 to \$598 a week; the 75th percentile decreased from \$1,574 to \$1,568.
- **The percentage of living-wage jobs was down for December,** with LISEP's TRU rising half a percentage point, from 22.4% to 22.9%. All racial and ethnic demographic groups saw increases in functional unemployment, with the TRU for Hispanic workers rising slower than other groups, increasing from 26.4% to 26.5%. The TRU for Black workers increased from 25.2% to 26%, while the TRU for White workers rose 0.4 percentage points, from 21.1% to 21.5%.
- **The TRU for women in the workforce climbed from 26.8% to 28%,** while men saw a notable improvement, dropping from 18.4% to 17.7%. This is the third consecutive month of growth in the TRU gender gap, and at 10.3 percentage points, is the widest since February (11.4 percentage points).

[WWW.LISEP.ORG](http://WWW.LISEP.ORG)