

Economic Snapshots

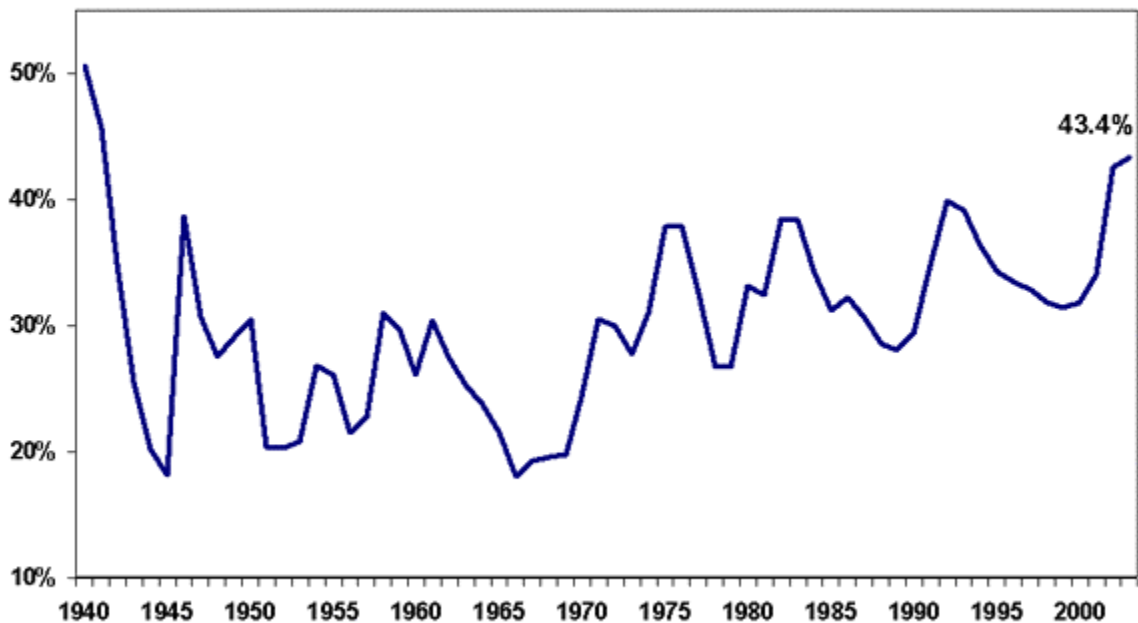
A weekly presentation of downloadable charts and short analyses designed to graphically illustrate important economic issues. *Updated every Wednesday.* [See [Snapshots Archive.](#)]

Snapshot for September 22, 2004.

Annual unemployment insurance exhaustion rate at highest level in 60 years

Last year, 43.4% of people who began receiving state unemployment benefits ended up exhausting all the benefits to which they were entitled without finding a job.¹ This exhaustion rate is the highest since 1941, and it exceeds the 38.5% rate for 1982 when the unemployment rate was over 10%.

United States UI exhaustion rate



Source: EPI analysis of DOL Office of Workforce Security data.

A major reason for the high UI exhaustion rate in 2003 is the lack of job creation that characterized the economic recovery in 2003. In 2003, the share of the unemployed who had been seeking work for six months or more was 22.1%, the second highest share on record. These data clearly indicate that the UI program failed to provide an adequate safety net for millions of jobless workers in 2003.

1. The "exhaustion rate" is the average monthly exhaustions divided by the average monthly first payments of UI benefits.

This Snapshot was written by EPI Research Director [Lee Price](#) and research assistant Sujan Vasavada.

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