



ENGAGE YOUR COMMUNITY

A Local Guide to Addressing the Long-Term
Unemployment Challenge

INTRODUCTION

As of September 2014,¹ more than 3.0 million Americans (of all ages, ethnicities, geographies, industries, and education and experience levels) were long-term unemployed – actively seeking work for more than 27 weeks without success. One of the worst legacies of the Great Recession, the long-term unemployment (LTU) rate remains more than twice the pre-recession average and close to the highest rate on record since 1983.² Despite evidence revealing no difference in capability or quality of work produced between the long-term unemployed and the recently unemployed, the long-term unemployed still face significant barriers when job seeking simply by virtue of their unemployment status – a stigma that only perpetuates this crisis.³

The good news is that every local community has the ability to address the long-term unemployment challenge – and an opportunity to help the local economy and local long-term unemployed job seekers. Getting more people back to work means more people with increased spending power to buy local goods and bolster the economy. More importantly, they can financially support themselves and their families – and alleviate the emotional stress of unemployment. Simply put, by connecting long-term unemployed job seekers with employers who need them in their workforce, you are strengthening your community and improving the lives of the people who live there.

TARGETED RESOURCES TO DECREASE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT

Engage Your Community: A Local Guide to Addressing the Long-Term Unemployment Challenge was created for community leaders – in the public, private or non-profit sectors – to mobilize your community to decrease long-term unemployment. It includes actionable steps to understand your community-specific LTU challenges, identify key stakeholders, and lead efforts to create and implement sustainable solutions.

Who is this guide for?

Engage Your Community: A Local Guide to Addressing the Long-Term Unemployment Challenge is targeted towards community leaders in the public, private or non-profit sectors and outlines how to engage your community to decrease long-term unemployment



This guide also outlines how to maximize the use of two new handbooks (developed by Deloitte in collaboration with The Rockefeller Foundation) to specifically mitigate long-term unemployment. The job seeker handbook, [*New Guide, New Destinations: A Handbook for Job Seekers to Navigate Out of Long-Term Unemployment*](#) provides long-term unemployed job seekers with a robust set of recommendations, resources, and personal stories to help them re-tool their job searching tactics.



The employer handbook, [*A Guide to Recruiting and Hiring the Long-Term Unemployed: A Handbook for Employers*](#) provides employers with a business case for hiring the long-term unemployed, a maturity model to assess the current state of talent acquisition practices as they relate to hiring the long-term unemployed, and recommendations and tools to help organizations tap into this frequently overlooked talent pool.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide's proposed recommendations are the result of conversations, data analysis, research, and survey results from numerous employers, job seekers, government agencies, educational institutions, employment intermediaries, and non-profit organizations that are already working on the front lines to address long-term unemployment across the country.

QUICK START GUIDE

Engage Your Community: A Local Guide to Addressing the Long-Term Unemployment Challenge provides local communities with recommended steps (listed below) to address long-term unemployment (LTU). The remainder of the guide includes detailed action items and resources you can utilize for each step.

STEP 1

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Understand community-specific LTU challenges

- Learn the facts about your community's LTU issues
- Understand the root causes of LTU in your community
- Learn about existing programs and initiatives that target LTU

STEP 2

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Identify your local LTU ecosystem, the community of organizations, individuals, and leaders (in the private, public, and non-profit sectors) who have the ability and interest to address LTU

- Identify major and/or influential individuals and organizations in your local employment ecosystem
- Determine which individuals and/or organizations are committed to LTU

STEP 3

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Engage and mobilize your LTU ecosystem

- Think about how you want to engage with different ecosystem partners
- Hold individual meetings with ecosystem partners
- Lead a kick-off meeting with the ecosystem partners to build a local action plan
- Help partners determine their roles and responsibilities
- Identify a "champion" or public advocate for the LTU effort

STEP 4

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Develop and execute the action plan

- Prioritize action items to mitigate LTU in the short-term
- Track your progress to maintain success in the long-term

STEP 1**Understand community-specific LTU challenges**

There is no “one-size-fits-all” solution to long-term unemployment. How it affects local communities will vary across locales. To address this complex issue, each community needs to understand the local impact of LTU as well as what the long-term unemployed demographics and talent needs look like in your community.

- a. **Learn the facts about your community’s LTU issues** – To gain a comprehensive view of who the long-term unemployed are in your community, research the characteristics of the long-term unemployed and current talent needs:
 - i. **Key characteristics of the long-term unemployed** – Reach out to your local workforce development/labor office, state unemployment office/employment commission, or local chamber of commerce to answer the following questions:
 - a. Size and Scope – What is the size of the long-term unemployed population in your community? What portion of the overall unemployment rate do the long-term unemployed make up? How does this compare to other cities?
 - b. Geography – In which neighborhoods or areas are the long-term unemployed mostly concentrated?
 - c. Demographics – How are the long-term unemployed distributed across age groups, ethnicities, gender, education levels, industry experiences, and/or occupations?
 - ii. **Current talent needs** – Reach out to your local workforce investment board, American Job Center, staffing agencies, business associations, and employers to answer the following questions:
 - a. Target occupations – What are the current and projected number of jobs in key occupations, as well as wages, job duties, educational and skills requirements, job titles, and largest employers?
 - b. Skills needed – What skills are employers or staffing agencies seeking in potential candidates?
 - c. Industry growth – What industries are growing in your community that may need to source talent?

- b. **Understand the root causes of LTU in your community** – Research the economic trends that may be driving unemployment in your community. Think through how these dynamics may be impacting long-term unemployment. Consider the following questions as they relate to your community:
- i. Is there a slack labor market due to the Great Recession?
 - ii. Did a major industry or company leave your community?
 - iii. Were there mass layoffs in general or as a result of the Great Recession?
 - iv. Is there a skills mismatch between your population and available jobs?
 - v. Have major technology changes impacted labor demand?
- c. **Learn about existing programs and initiatives that target LTU** – Research what (if any) steps your local government and other institutions have taken to address long-term unemployment:
- i. Check with your state unemployment office and local Workforce Investment Board to learn more about what resources already exist in your community.
 - ii. Read any available articles or features from local press about long-term unemployment in your community.

STEP 2**Identify your local LTU ecosystem**

Once you understand your local LTU challenges, you can start identifying the individuals and organizations that have the authority and ability to address them. You can do this by finding and building your local long-term unemployment ecosystem, which is the community of private, public sector, and non-profit organizations and individuals who have the ability and interest to address LTU.

General Employment Ecosystem

- a. **Identify the major and/or influential individuals and organizations in your local employment ecosystem** – Using the general employment ecosystem model, identify the individuals and organizations in your local community that fit into the following categories:
- i. **Employers** – Who are the major employers in your community? What skills do they need in their employees?
 - ii. **Job Seekers** – What are the characteristics of your local talent pool?
 - iii. **Ecosystem partners:**
 - a. Skill Building Organizations – What organizations offer skill building opportunities, including community colleges, non-profit training/skills programs, certification programs or continuing education centers?
 - b. Individual Support – What programs or organizations provide specialized support to job seekers, including career coaches, personal networks, financial counseling, or mental health services?
 - c. Networking Resources – What resources offer professional networking opportunities, such as Job Clubs or Job Fairs?
 - d. Government Unemployment Resources – What organizations or intermediaries are specifically focused on unemployment, including your local American Job Center(s) and Workforce Investment Board?
 - e. Connection Organizations – What organizations help connect job seekers to employers, including staffing agencies, non-profits, and community based organizations focused on sourcing and job placement?
 - f. Local Government – What government agencies and resources are committed to the success of the local workforce, including the mayor's office, city council, and local economic development office?
 - g. Business Associations – What organizations promote and support economic success in your region, including chambers of commerce and trade associations?
 - h. Networking Organizations – What organizations provide opportunities for personal networking, including community groups and religious organizations?
- b. **Determine which individuals and/or organizations are committed to LTU** – Within the employment ecosystem, identify the individuals and organizations that may have the ability and influence to impact LTU. This will become your local LTU ecosystem. Consider focusing on three to five individuals and/or organizations from each category to help ensure a balanced set of priorities and perspectives.

STEP 3**Engage and mobilize your LTU ecosystem**

Once you have identified your local LTU ecosystem, begin engaging these ecosystem partners to address long-term unemployment.

- a. **Think about how you want to engage with different ecosystem partners** – Within the ecosystem, there will be different priorities and focus areas for each partner. With that in mind, consider the different ways that you will engage with each ecosystem partner. Pay attention to who is interested and engaged in the dialogue:
 - i. **Connecting with the business community** – The active engagement of employers who understand the dynamics of long-term unemployment and who are committed to hiring the long-term unemployed is critical to mobilizing support around LTU.
 - ii. **Engaging the local government** – It is critical to engage with local government leaders, such as the mayor’s office, who have the ability to connect community members to government resources and help them better serve the community at large. They may already be addressing LTU issues through their own channels. The local government leaders can also help to provide support of the LTU effort, encourage others to participate, and provide recognized leadership.
 - iii. **Using existing forums to engage with employers and business associations** – Leverage existing resources and forums (like chamber of commerce meetings) to raise awareness about LTU issues and challenges.
 - iv. **Working with local employment organizations and community stakeholders** – Work with existing American Job Centers, the Workforce Investment Board, career coaches, etc. who are already serving the job seekers in your community and understand the challenges that job seekers face while searching for a job. Use this valuable perspective to think about how to better serve the job seekers or reach a wider job seeker audience.
- b. **Hold individual meetings with the ecosystem partners** – Based on your research, meet one-on-one with the ecosystem partners who have demonstrated interest and capacity for decreasing long-term unemployment. When you meet with them:
 - i. Learn about the role they want to play, what resources they have available, and their priorities
 - ii. Determine how you can work collaboratively to address the issue.
 - iii. Share resources with them, including key facts about LTU (refer to the following page for “Frequently Asked Questions about Long-Term Unemployment”).

Frequently Asked Questions about Long-Term Unemployment

In your conversations with LTU ecosystem partners, you may wonder what to say when advocating for the long-term unemployed and how to encourage ecosystem partners to engage in addressing LTU in the local community. There is a lot of information that you can draw on from [New Guide, New Destinations: A Handbook for Job Seekers to Navigate Out of Long-Term Unemployment](#) and [A Guide to Recruiting and Hiring the Long-Term Unemployed: A Handbook for Employers](#). In addition, here are some key talking points:

Who are the long-term unemployed?

As of September 2014,⁴ 3.0 million long-term unemployed Americans – a staggering 32.8% of the unemployed – have been job searching unsuccessfully for 27 weeks or more. Long-term unemployment affects a diverse group of workers – spanning all industries, education levels, ethnicities, age groups, and skill levels.

What is unique about the long-term unemployed?

Long-term unemployment is a serious issue for the United States because the longer a person is unemployed, the harder it is for them to find employment. Despite the economic and job recovery from the Great Recession, long-term unemployment remains at historically high levels – more than double the pre-recession average and close to the highest rate on record prior to 2008.⁵

Why is long-term unemployment a problem?

Unfortunately, long-term job seekers face significant stigmatization that is not grounded in their skills or experiences. Long-term unemployed job applicants are frequently overlooked and sometimes excluded from job opportunities—even if they have identical resumes and skills to recently unemployed job seekers.

Why should we help?

Long-term unemployment can be difficult for individuals and their families – but you can help relieve this financial and emotional stress by working to address this challenge. By connecting the long-term unemployed to jobs around the country, you are investing in local economies and supporting the U.S. economic growth because Americans will have more money to spend and overall labor productivity is increased.

What benefits are there to hiring the long-term unemployed?

Actively recruiting and hiring the long-term unemployed makes business sense. Hiring the long-term unemployed can increase access to motivated and qualified candidates, reduce recruiting costs, diversify your workforce, and build your brand.⁶

What can be done to fix the problem?

To help decrease long-term unemployment, everyone will need to do their part. Job seekers can share their personal stories and lessons learned as well as tap into available resources to boost their job search. Employers can assess their recruiting and hiring practices of the long-term unemployed. Other LTU ecosystem partners can commit to helping the long-term unemployed. For more details on specific action items and roles for each LTU ecosystem stakeholder, please refer to the table on page 13.

Is anything being done at a national level?

Solving long-term unemployment is a national priority. Under the leadership of President Obama, more than 300 leading businesses have signed the [Best Practices for Recruiting and Hiring the Long-Term Unemployed Workers](#). In addition, the Department of Labor awarded approximately \$150 million in grants to help the long-term unemployed get back to work. The [Long-Term Unemployed H-1B Ready To Work Partnerships \(Ready to Work\) grant program](#) supports innovative partnerships between employers, non-profit organizations, and America's public workforce system to help provide long-term unemployed individuals with the range of services, training, and access that they need to fill middle and high-skill jobs. Additionally the White House, with the help of national and local partners, has been driving initiatives (like these handbooks and guides) to support efforts to address LTU.

- c. **Lead a kick-off meeting with ecosystem partners to build a local action plan** – Coordinate a meeting with the other interested leaders to develop a strategy to address long-term unemployment. Suggested agenda items include:
- i. Define and confirm local LTU challenges and priorities.
 - ii. Develop an aligned strategy and confirm ownership roles.
 1. Distribute and discuss the best practices for employers and job seekers from *New Guide, New Destinations: A Handbook for Job Seekers to Navigate Out of Long-Term Unemployment* and *A Guide to Recruiting and Hiring the Long-Term Unemployed: A Handbook for Employers*.
 2. Develop a plan for addressing local LTU challenges. This may include tapping into the experience of local ecosystem partners who are already serving the long-term unemployed and building up organizational capabilities to fill gaps in your current LTU ecosystem.
 3. Discuss and set action items.
 4. Confirm initiative ownership and roles.
 - iii. Align on success metrics and secure commitment from ecosystem partners.
- d. **Help ecosystem partners determine their roles and responsibilities** – With their individual resources and expertise, every member of your LTU ecosystem can make a difference on long-term unemployment. Pages 13 and 14 contain a table of sample actions each ecosystem partner can take to address long-term unemployment. In addition, [*New Guide, New Destinations: A Handbook for Job Seekers to Navigate Out of Long-Term Unemployment*](#) and [*A Guide to Recruiting and Hiring the Long-Term Unemployed: A Handbook for Employers*](#) contain many action items, tools, and resources.
- e. **Identify a “champion” or public advocate for the LTU effort** – Within your local LTU ecosystem, designate a champion who will serve as the public advocate of the LTU effort. It is important that this champion is committed to driving change to help the long-term unemployed in your community. As the public “face” of the LTU effort, this champion will provide the necessary clout to the cause as well as bring attention to the effort and encourage involvement from the rest of the community.

LTU ECOSYSTEM ACTION ITEMS

ECOSYSTEM PARTNER CATEGORIES	SAMPLE ACTION ITEMS
<p>EMPLOYERS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute <i>A Guide to Recruiting and Hiring the Long-Term Unemployed: A Handbook for Employers</i> throughout your organization, specifically to your leadership and talent team • Review your recruiting practices and eliminate any inappropriate advertising or filtering • Work with community colleges to custom-design courses to build in-demand skills in your local community • Establish guidelines for reviewing applications and conducting interviews, including using behavioral questions to determine transferable skills for long-term unemployed candidates • Share your successes with hiring the long-term unemployed with your employer peers
<p>JOB SEEKERS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>New Guide, New Destinations: A Handbook for Job Seekers to Navigate Out of Long-Term Unemployment</i>, using the many included resources to boost your job search • Participate in forums to educate organizations on the effects of LTU on the family, finances, and emotional and mental health
<p>SKILL BUILDING ORGANIZATIONS <i>(i.e. community colleges, non-profit training/skills programs, certification programs, continuing education centers)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with employers to design courses that train for in-demand skills • Offer free or low-cost courses that are designed to build in-demand job skills and prepare students for certification exams, where applicable • Include internships or experiential learning to provide students with additional credibility in the job market • Hold courses at convenient times and limit the duration of courses to enable students to become employed as quickly as possible • Market course offerings broadly to attract the long-term unemployed
<p>INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT PARTNERS <i>(i.e. career coaches, personal networks, financial counseling services, mental health services)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of the specific challenges facing many long-term unemployed, such as financial hardship and lack of confidence • Market your programs to the long-term unemployed to provide them with the support they need, including mental health resources, financial assistance services, and career coaching • Share lessons learned from working with the long-term unemployed with other ecosystem partners • Promote services at job fairs targeting LTU

ECOSYSTEM PARTNER CATEGORIES	SAMPLE ACTION ITEMS
<p>NETWORKING RESOURCES <i>(i.e. job clubs and fairs, social media)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upload or link the handbooks to your website and promote to your members • Write a blog on why hiring the long-term unemployed makes business sense
<p>GOVERNMENT UNEMPLOYMENT RESOURCES <i>(i.e. American Job Centers, Workforce Investment Boards)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate employers on why hiring the long-term unemployed makes business sense, using the “Business Case” in <i>A Guide to Recruiting and Hiring the Long-Term Unemployed: A Handbook for Employers</i> • Share resources, like the <i>New Guide, New Destinations: A Handbook for Job Seekers to Navigate Out of Long-Term Unemployment</i>, to former Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants • Assist LTU job seekers on unemployment-specific issues, referencing the Department of Labor’s Training and Employment Notices (TEN)
<p>CONNECTION ORGANIZATIONS <i>(i.e., non-profit sourcing agencies, head hunters, staffing agencies)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate employers on why hiring the long-term unemployed makes business sense • Assist long-term unemployed job seekers on LTU-specific issues, referencing the “Set Your Direction” section to assess skills and “Tell Your Most Effective Story” section to help address the employment gap in <i>New Guide, New Destinations: A Handbook for Job Seekers to Navigate Out of Long-Term Unemployment</i>
<p>LOCAL GOVERNMENT <i>(i.e. mayor’s office, education resources)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host working groups and meetings for committed partners • Raise awareness of the LTU issue • Commit to increase hiring of long-term unemployed in local government • Offer subsidies and tax incentives for companies who hire the long-term unemployed • Share the link to where employers and job seekers can download the handbooks or upload the handbooks onto your websites
<p>NETWORKING ORGANIZATIONS <i>(i.e. community groups, religious organizations)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate members on the benefits of hiring the long-term unemployed • Print hard copies of the handbooks and make them available in your locations
<p>BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS <i>(i.e. Chamber of Commerce, professional affiliation groups, trade associations)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share hard copies of <i>A Guide to Recruiting and Hiring the Long-Term Unemployed: A Handbook for Employers</i> at your member meetings • Educate employers on why hiring the long-term unemployed makes business sense

STEP 4**Develop and execute the action plan**

With a committed group of leaders and a clear strategy in place, take the necessary steps to carry out your action plan to achieve both short-term and long-term success.

- a. **Prioritize action items to mitigate LTU in the short-term** – To achieve short-term success, complete the following objectives:
 - i. Provide resources to both employers and job seekers.
 1. Distribute the *New Guide, New Destinations: A Handbook for Job Seekers to Navigate Out of Long-Term Unemployment* to the long-term unemployed through American Job Centers and other distribution methods. Work with your ecosystem partners who work directly with job seekers to brainstorm creative ways to spread awareness and increase wide usage of the handbook.
 2. Distribute *A Guide to Recruiting and Hiring the Long-Term Unemployed: A Handbook for Employers* to local employers, either directly to company leaders or through chambers of commerce and other business associations. Leverage your business partners and work together to spread awareness of why hiring the long-term unemployed makes business sense.
 - ii. Build commitment around helping the long-term unemployed in your community.
 1. Use your influence and network to encourage business and community partners to join the LTU efforts.
 2. Work with local media to publicize LTU efforts.

- b. **Track your progress to maintain success in the long-term** – To achieve long-term success, complete the following objectives:
- **Measure your success** by tracking local unemployment data and collecting feedback from local long-term unemployed job seekers regarding their challenges and successes.
 - **Maintain efforts to educate your community** on LTU issues and challenges. Continue leveraging your networks to sustain LTU awareness through regular forums and campaigns. Continue distributing the handbooks to job seekers and employers through established distribution networks. Contact local media to highlight ongoing LTU challenges and/or successes.
 - **Improve upon and revise your action plan** based on success metrics and evolving community needs. Hold regular meetings to share ideas and leading practices. As you continue LTU efforts, track success based on the previously outlined metrics and alter action plan accordingly if metrics were not met.
 - **Update the tools and programs that target LTU** by regularly evaluating the efficacy of tools and programs created as part of the action plan to help ensure sustainable impact. Update educational materials created for employers and job seekers.
 - **Cultivate and expand your ecosystem relationships.** Regularly follow up and meet one-on-one with ecosystem partners to discuss ideas and sustain progress mitigating LTU. Continue to encourage new employers, organizations, and individuals to join LTU efforts.

CONCLUSION

Each community has the power to be a part of the solution for long-term unemployment. Addressing this national issue requires the collaboration of employers, intermediaries, government agencies, and other employment ecosystem partners at the local level. By making this key investment in your community, you will not only support the local economies, but also help the families and children recover from the financial and emotional effects of LTU. Working together, you can strengthen your local community and make a real change for the millions of people experiencing long-term unemployment.

APPENDIX A:

REFERENCES

¹ “The Employment Situation -- September 2014.” Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor. 1 October 2014.
<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm>

² Council of Economic Advisors calculations based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

³ Kory Kroft, Fabian Lange, Matthew J. Notowidigdo, and Lawrence F. Katz, “Duration Dependence and Labor Market Conditions: Evidence from a Field Experiment,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, September 2013.

⁴ “The Employment Situation -- September 2014.” Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor. 1 October 2014.
<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm>

⁵ Council of Economic Advisors calculations based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

⁶ *A Guide to Recruiting and Hiring the Long-Term Unemployed: A Handbook for Employers.*

APPENDIX B:

HYPERLINKS

Page 3 *New Guide, New Destinations: A Handbook for Job Seekers to Navigate Out of Long-Term Unemployment:*
https://www.deloitte.com/view/en_US/us/About/social-impact/540aa1db85f58410VgnVCM3000003456f70aRCRD.htm

A Guide to Recruiting and Hiring the Long-Term Unemployed: A Handbook for Employers:
https://www.deloitte.com/view/en_US/us/About/social-impact/540aa1db85f58410VgnVCM3000003456f70aRCRD.htm

Page 10 Best Practices for Recruiting and Hiring the Long-Term Unemployed Works:
http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/best_practices_recruiting_longterm_unemployed.pdf

Long-Term Unemployed H-1B Ready To Work Partnerships (Ready to Work) grant program:
<http://doleta.gov/readytowork/>

Page 13 Department of Labor’s Training and Employment Notices (TEN):
<http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/>

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