

Study: Do layoffs increase transitions to postsecondary education among adults?, 2001 to 2011

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Some Canadian adults are turning job loss into a chance to pursue postsecondary education.

Using administrative data, a new study tracked workers who were aged 35 to 44 in 2001 and recorded their transitions into postsecondary education institutions during the 2001-to-2011 period. The study found that adult male and female workers who were laid off during the 2008-2009 recession were two to four percentage points more likely than other adult male and female workers to enrol in postsecondary education in the year of the layoff or in the following year.

For example, 3.1% of adult male workers who lost their job in 2008 enrolled in a postsecondary education institution on a full-time basis that year. That was more than five times the rate of 0.6% observed for their counterparts who were not laid off during the 2001-to-2011 period. Among adult female workers who were laid off, 3.1% enrolled in a postsecondary institution on a full-time basis, compared with 1.0% of those who did not lose their job.

For both sexes, the study found statistically significant correlations between layoffs and full-time attendance in postsecondary education institutions during the period from two years prior to job loss to two years following job loss. This finding suggests that some laid-off workers start enrolling in postsecondary institutions as soon as they receive information about impending layoffs and that, in some cases, their periods of enrolment last more than one year.

While there has been much research on the factors influencing the education decisions of youth, relatively little is known about the determinants of adult education. The results from this study suggest that job loss is one of those determinants.

The research paper, "[Do Layoffs Increase Transitions to Postsecondary Education Among Adults?](#)," part of the *Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series (11F0019M)*, is now available from the *Browse by key resource* module of our website, under *Publications*.

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