One in Two New College Graduates Is Jobless or Underemployed

By LILY ALTAVENA

One in two new college graduates is jobless or underemployed, The Associated Press reported this week.

According to the article, job prospects were at their lowest for bachelor's degree-holders last year. This is especially worrisome for those students with only a six-month grace period to begin repaying student loans, many of whom are turning to mom and dad for financial help.

The article was based on an analysis of government data, which found that graduates were likely to struggle to find work applicable to their major, especially if they had studied the humanities or the arts. According the data, graduates with science, education and health degrees may have an easier time finding a position.

Some graduates are also finding a tough time to find work based on their region: graduates from rural states, in particular, suffer the most.

The Associated Press reports:

About 1.5 million, or 53.6 percent, of bachelor’s degree-holders under the age of 25 last year were jobless or underemployed, the highest share in at least 11 years. In 2000, the share was at a low of 41 percent, before the dot-com bust erased job gains for college graduates in the telecommunications and IT fields.

Broken down by occupation, young college graduates were heavily represented in jobs that require a high school diploma or less.

In the last year, they were more likely to be employed as waiters, waitresses, bartenders and food-service helpers than as engineers, physicists, chemists and mathematicians combined (100,000 versus 90,000). There were more working in office-related jobs such as receptionist or payroll clerk than in all computer professional jobs (163,000 versus 100,000). More also were employed as cashiers, retail clerks and customer representatives than engineers (125,000 versus 80,000).

According to government projections released last month, only three of the 30 occupations with the largest projected number of job openings by 2020 will
require a bachelor's degree or higher to fill the position — teachers, college professors and accountants. Most job openings are in professions such as retail sales, fast food and truck driving, jobs which aren’t easily replaced by computers.

*Are readers of The Choice concerned about diminishing job prospects for college graduates? Let us know in the comment box below.*