Since peaking at 10 percent in 2010, the unemployment rate in the United States has shrunk by more than half. While this is positive news, too many working Americans don’t have enough work, which often means they are still struggling to pay their bills and put food on the table despite earning a steady pay-check.\(^1\)

While researchers know that the underemployment rate is disturbingly high, they still have far more questions than answers, especially at the local level. But that is changing in New York City thanks to new data from the Robin Hood Poverty Tracker, a long-term study of poverty and well-being across the five boroughs. Highlights from our unprecedented study of underemployment:

**Approximately 45 percent** of working New Yorkers under the age of 65 are underemployed. That’s over 1.6 million people — more than the entire population of Philadelphia.

63 percent of workers living in poverty are underemployed, while 40 percent of workers living above the poverty line are underemployed.

58 percent of workers in the Bronx are underemployed, compared to 34 percent of workers in Manhattan.

Compared to fully-employed New Yorkers, the underemployed are 14 percentage points more likely (33 percent versus 19 percent) to face a severe material hardship.

It is often said that the best cure for poverty is a job. But this report is further proof that a job alone is not enough. By most measures, the underemployed have more in common with the unemployed than the fully employed in terms of hardships and disadvantage. Clearly, what people really need are good jobs — jobs that provide enough hours and pay a living wage.

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\(^1\) In this report, we use the term “underemployed” to refer to workers who are working fewer hours than they would like to. A similar statistic, Part Time for Economic Reasons (PTER), is estimated using the Current Population Survey (CPS), but is limited to part-time workers and has been found to underestimate underemployment. See Li, G., & McCully, B. (2016). Is Underemployment Underestimated? Evidence from Panel Data. Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (US). In other research, the term “underemployment” is sometimes used to describe workers in positions for which they are overqualified. To see the national unemployment rates by year, visit the Bureau of Labor Statistics Database: [https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNU04000000?periods=Annual+Data&periods_option=specific_periods&years_option=all_years](https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNU04000000?periods=Annual+Data&periods_option=specific_periods&years_option=all_years).