

# KERA UPDATE

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## UNEMPLOYMENT OF 16 TO 19 YEAR OLDS UP — WORST TREND IN REGION

Unemployment of Kentucky youths age 16 to 19 has been on the rise since KIRIS testing began in 1992. During 1993 to 1994, the most recent two years of data available, Kentucky led her seven neighboring states with the largest single year increase in youth unemployment. Only one neighboring state, Missouri, had an unemployment increase during this one year period, and the “Show Me” state’s rise was not nearly as great as in Kentucky.

The rise in youth unemployment here is puzzling, as overall employment in Kentucky increased during this same period. While a definite link to KERA has not been established, the timing of these two conditions certainly should raise some eyebrows in the Legislature.

One sub-area area of youth employment has been studied in some detail — that is the success rate of our young people in entering military service. In this area, there is a clear indication that Kentucky’s youth are not faring as well compared to our neighboring states’ young people. Kentucky recruitment rates used to fall about midway in the region’s rates. Today, Kentucky’s recruitment rate is near the bottom of the area’s range of recruitment rates.

