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# An Unemployment Line, From Coast to Coast

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**Justin Wolfers**

Here's an unusual but extraordinarily graphic description of the current state of the labor market: If you lined up all of the unemployed shoulder-to-shoulder, the queue of people looking for work would stretch all the way from New York out past San Francisco.

Now, the details. According to the July employment report, there are 9.7 million people who are unemployed. (This doesn't count the millions more who are so discouraged that they've stopped looking.) If the average person is, say, 18 inches from shoulder to shoulder, then the line of unemployed people extends 175 million inches, which is 14.6 million feet, or over 2,755 miles. The distance between New York and San Francisco is 2,569 miles, as the crow flies.

The point is, unemployment remains far too widespread. And when the line is this long, it's hard to take seriously those employers complaining that they can't find willing workers.

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