



Can We Talk about Jobs?

Unemployment, Economic Recovery & Retaining Our Workforce

**A Community Conversation
Wednesday, March 3, 2010**

7:00 PM

**Friendship Missionary Baptist Church
3400 Beatties Ford Road**

Moderated by

**Anthony Foxx, Mayor
City of Charlotte**

**Jennifer Roberts, Commission Chair
Mecklenburg County**

Panelists

**Jay Bryson
Global Economist
Wells Fargo Corporation**

**Patrick Graham
President & CEO
Urban League**

**Natalie English
Senior Vice President
Charlotte Chamber**

According to Charlotte Chamber President Bob Morgan, *"The ability for any of us to be productive citizens – to take care of our families, our homes, and our places of worship and the other things we care about – begins with having a job."* Unfortunately, more and more citizens of Charlotte-Mecklenburg are losing their ability to take care of themselves and their families because they are unemployed or underemployed. This comes as a shock to many because our community's unemployment rate has historically run 2 to 3 percentage points below the national average. However, reports now indicate that unemployment in Charlotte-Mecklenburg is running *above* the national average. Currently, unemployment in Charlotte-Mecklenburg is about 11.2%, compared to a national average of 9.7%.

The lack of jobs is not the same for all in our community. According to the US Census America Community Survey, in 2009 the unemployment rate for Asians in Charlotte was 4.4%; the rate for whites was 4.9%; the rate for Hispanics was 7.9% and the rate for African Americans was 12.2%. The rate for young people, ages 16-19 was 23.3% while the rate for individuals 20-24 was 14.1%. Unemployment rates decrease dramatically with older workers.

As we begin to recover from one of the most severe economic downturns since the Great Depression of 1929, we are noticing something peculiar about this recovery. While many key service indicators are up or trending upwards and national and local unemployment rates have decreased slightly - though the decrease may be a result of the chronically unemployed not being included in the statistical analysis – **job losses continue.**

In previous *Can We Talk? Community Conversations* we have convened groups to discuss critical community issues – issues that challenge us to engage with one another for mutual benefit and often to talk across differences. We now ask, “**Can We Talk About Jobs? *Unemployment, Economic Recovery & Retaining our Workforce.***”

Questions to discuss with one another, our moderators and our panelists include:

- **Who is not working?**
- **When are jobs coming back? What kinds of jobs are coming back?**
- **How do we retain and retrain our workforce?**

Do you share our concern in this time? If so, we invite you to join us for a deliberative community dialogue: “**Can We Talk About Jobs? *Unemployment, Economic Recovery & Retaining Our Workforce***”

To RSVP: E-Mail rthompson@ci.charlotte.nc.us OR call 704.336.2424

If you are interested in receiving an invitation to this dialogue, participating in or partnering with us in this process, please contact Dianne English, Maria Hanlin or Willie Ratchford.

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