

# 2009 Diversity in the Workplace

## Weathering the Recession Storm

### Job access for black men targeted

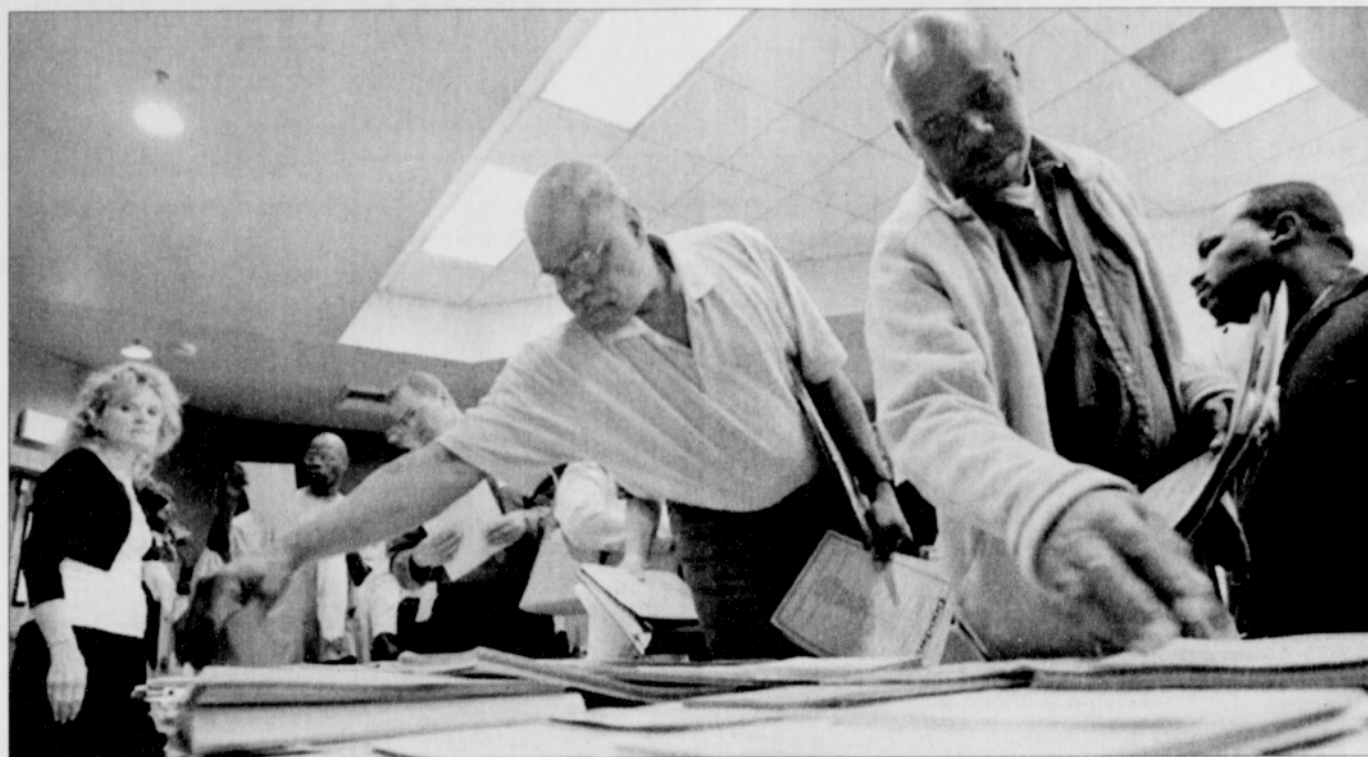
BY ALEXANDRA CAWTHORNE

The recession is taking a toll on most Americans and has resulted in job losses not seen in almost 25 years, but black men have felt its effects particularly hard.

Black men have long faced limited employment prospects and disproportionately high rates of unemployment. Even as the economy thrived and the participation of low-skilled women in the labor force increased over the last two decades, many black men remained largely disconnected from the labor market.

While the unemployment rate among black men has declined dramatically over the last few decades, the level of workforce participation among African-American men has not increased and remains stagnant. The current degree of job loss among black men is particularly alarming.

To address this crisis, policymakers must address the root causes of black men's difficulties in the labor market, including high rates of incarceration, limited education, child support arrearages, and discrimination.



Johnnie Daniels (center) and Kerwin Barber, sort through job listings, as Carlene Gepner, a business service coordinator, stands prepared to answer questions at a job fair in Los Angeles. The unemployment rate for black men has risen to 15.4 percent in this recession.

Policymakers can take several steps to ensure that all communities have fair access to jobs, and that particular communities do not suffer more than others as a result of mounting and widespread job losses. The policies should reduce inequities and promote equal opportunity in the labor market and promote access to meaningful employment opportunities for black men.

Racial equity and equal opportunity must be at the forefront of

policies that will promote economic recovery and create jobs. Policymakers should not only assess the actual and anticipated effects of policies and budgets on disadvantaged communities like low-skilled black men, but also identify ways to maximize equity and inclusion—especially in the context of the economic recovery.

In good times and in bad, the African-American unemployment rate tends to be about double that of whites, and in

tough economic times, it rises higher and faster.

The recession overall has hit men much harder than women—so far, four out of every five jobs lost has been held by a male worker. Black men lead the unemployment surge, with an unemployment rate of 15.4 percent. This comes as a result of a range of barriers to employment, including disproportionate employment in vulnerable industries and labor market discrimination.

Over a third of young black men ages 16 to 19 in the labor market are unemployed. A broad set of community-based youth development and mentoring efforts targeting teens and young adults, in addition to high school-based programs that lead more young people to college or directly into the labor market would improve the work outcomes for young black men.

More importantly, programs like the Harlem Children's Zone that begin early in the lives of

black children could help counter the achievement gaps that develop early and follow young men through life.

It is imperative that black men have access to meaningful employment opportunities in thriving and sustainable industries. Many jobs in the renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and green building fields are middle-skill jobs that require more than a high-school education but less than a four-year degree.

And these jobs are well within reach for lower-skill and low-income workers as long as they have access to effective workforce training and support programs. Green jobs also pay decent wages and can provide opportunities for advancement and high-level skill development.

Recessions hurt us all, but they hurt poor and marginalized populations the most. A conscious and careful analysis of the actual and anticipated effects of economic and spending policies on communities of color and low-income families is critical to ensuring an economic recovery that will "lift all boats" and provide sustained income growth and employment opportunities for all communities.

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## American TV Newsrooms Fall Behind on Diversity

### Survey finds managers of color decline

TV broadcast companies fall short when it comes to diversity in the top ranks of news management.

According to a study released Thursday by the National Association of Black Journalists, only 11.7 percent of news managers in the nation's newsrooms are people of color. That's down significantly from last year's Television Management Diversity Census, which found that people of color comprised 16.6 percent of the news managers.

The study was based on a count of executive producers,



Barbara Ciara

managing editors, assistant news directors, news directors and general managers at 111 stations owned by ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC, Hearst Television, Media General and Tribune. Of the 548 managers employed, only 65 were found to be people

of color.

"These results should be a wake-up call to media owners who say they are serious about diversity in management," said Barbara Ciara, president of the NABJ, which is held its annual convention last week in Tampa, Fla. "At the end of the day, we find the number of African Americans who actually have the ability to hire or influence content falls woefully short of the desired goals."

While the economy was a major reason cited for cutbacks to newsroom positions, diversity was adversely affected, the study found.

"This is not about the economy costing black journalists their jobs. When you have 111 stations, and in those stations, you have 65 managers of

color, that's not because of the economy. That tells you that there weren't many there to be-

gin with," said Bob Butler, NABJ region VI director and author of the report. "I think to

a certain extent the old boys network still exists in television."

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