An Evaluation Study of a City-Managed Workforce Development Program in Jackson, Miss., and its impact on Joblessness

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What is Community Development?

Community development is

1. a process of creating or increasing solidarity and agency
   - Solidarity is about building a deeply shared identity and a code for conduct.
   - Agency means a capacity of a people to order their world (Hestedde & Ganowicz, 2002)

2. asset creation that improves the quality of life of residents of low and moderate-income neighborhoods (Vidal and Keating, 2004)
The objectives of community economic development include:

1. developing underutilized human and natural resource potential,
2. Realizing opportunities for indigenous economic growth by utilizing locally produced products and services,
3. improving employment levels and long-term career options,
4. Increasing the participation of disadvantaged and minority groups,
5. Improving physical environments, and enhancing quality of life of residents.

(Leigh and Blakely, 2013)
Jackson, Mississippi

- Founded in 1821
- Jackson is the capital and since 1944, and the largest city in the State.
- Located at the southern border of the Mississippi Delta
- The city, the anchor for its metro area, is named after Andrew Jackson
- One of two county seats of Hinds County, with the city of Raymond being the other.

(Courtesy of V. Blackmon, B. Johnson, & H. Seymour)
• In 1970s downtown construction came to complete stop
• Sub-urbanization
• Urban population decrease
• Rapid growth for Jackson in the 1920s and 30s

(Courtesy of V. Blackmon, B. Johnson, & H. Seymour)
Number of establishments in downtown Jackson (zip code:39201), 1998-2011

(Courtesy of V. Blackmon, B. Johnson, & H. Seymour)
Number of paid employees in downtown Jackson (zip code: 39201), 1998-2011

(Courtesy of V. Blackmon, B. Johnson, & H. Seymour)
Annual payroll in downtown Jackson (zip code: 39201), 1998-2011

(Courtesy of V. Blackmon, B. Johnson, & H. Seymour)
At a national scale
Individual downtown population growth patterns by region, 1970-2000 (Birch, 2005; table 1)

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jackson, MS¹</td>
<td>-22.9%</td>
<td>-14.4%</td>
<td>-3.1%</td>
<td>-36.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast²</td>
<td>-0.9%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South³</td>
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<td>-3.9%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>-22.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest⁴</td>
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<td>-12.1%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>-19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West⁵</td>
<td>-10.4%</td>
<td>-0.1%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>-1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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¹10,569 for 1970; 8,152 for 1980; 6,980 for 1990; 6,762 for 2000
²Includes Baltimore, Boston, Lower Manhattan, Midtown Manhattan, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Washington, DC.
³Includes Atlanta, Austin, Charlotte, Columbus, GA, Dallas, Jackson, Lafayette, Lexington, Memphis, Miami, New Orleans, Norfolk, Orlando, San Antonio, Shreveport.
⁴Includes Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, OH, Des Moines, Detroit, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, St. Louis.
⁵Includes Albuquerque, Boise, Colorado Springs, Denver, Los Angeles, Mesa, Phoenix, Portland, Salt Lake City, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle.
Jobs for Jacksonians

An Introduction
What Is Jobs for Jacksonians?

- The City launched a workforce training and job placement program (called, “The Jobs for Jacksonians Program”) in 2011.
- Offers job readiness workshops, job search and placement assistance and an annual job fair.
- Additional services include assistance with leadership and professional development and resume writing.
- Since 2012, more than 350 have secured jobs through weekly training sessions and 1,800 have received job offers by participating in the annual job fair.
Participant Profile

- 95 percent are African-American.
- 95 percent have a GED/High School Diploma.
- Each receives a career assessment.
Participant Feedback
Company Partners

• Companies schedule weekly recruiting sessions to interview prospective job candidates.
• More than 400 companies statewide participate.
• Other partners include Miss. Governor’s Job Fair Network, Miss. Association of Colleges & Employers, Greater Jackson Chamber Partnership, Capital Area Human Resource Management and Miss. Economic Council.
Examples of Company Partners

DOLLAR GENERAL

Ingalls Shipbuilding
We are Hiring!

AutoZone

Newk's EATERY

KLLM TRANSPORT SERVICES
Examples of Jobs Offered in the Program

- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Customer Service
- Hospitality
- Retail
- Trucking
- Public Works
Average Salary

- The majority of program participants are hired for hourly wage positions.
- The majority of positions with a salary of $30,000 or higher require a degree.

Salary Range for Jobs for Jacksonians Participants

- 75% Annual Salary of $30K or Higher
- 25% Hourly Wage of $7.25 to $14
Job Fair Data

• The annual job fair yields the majority of program hires each year.
• Since 2012, more than 1,800 people have secured job offers through the job fair.
• On average, about 100 companies participate.
Educational Partners

- Educational institutions engage participants through mock interviews, resume writing and leadership modules.
- The institutions also expose participants to opportunities to pursue a higher degree.
Results: Unemployment Trends

• The City of Jackson’s unemployment rate prior to the Great Recession of 2008 was 6.9 percent.
• The rate rose to 11.3 percent in 2010.
• The Jobs for Jacksonians program was created in 2011 as a tool to help unemployed citizens find work.
• The city and the state experienced decline in unemployment rates from 2011 to third quarter of 2015.
Unemployment Rate Trends over the Span of Jobs for Jacksonians

Source: November 2015 Chmura Report using data from the Mississippi Department of Employment Security

Unemployment Rates in Jackson and Mississippi, 2011-2015

- City of Jackson
- State of Mississippi
Fastest Growing Industry Sectors in Jackson Over Next 10 Years

Fast Growing Jobs sectors in Jackson, MS (*1000)

- Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation
- Construction
- Health Care and Social Assistance
The Jobs for Jacksonians and its Role in the Current Economy

In what direction should the program go?
Jobs for Jacksonians Program

Summary

• Based on the economic forecast of industry sector growth, the program could assist in building a workforce for the growing health care, administrative and construction industries.

• The city-managed program has assisted about 2,200 people in obtaining job offers since 2012.

• The majority of the participants are low-skilled, undereducated workers.

• The city cost for the program is $36,000, the salary of the program coordinator and $10,000 for the job fair.
Jobs for Jacksonians Program Summary, Con’t.

• The program establishes and builds partnerships with public, private and educational sectors to benefit participants and generate a workforce for employers.

• Though colleges and universities are partners, few participants appear to take advantage of degree opportunities. This is based on anecdotal information as there is no tracking mechanism.
Recommendations

- needs more staffs
- greater emphasis on career building through advancement and training.
- develop a tracking mechanism for people hired through the program
- build more partnerships with businesses in health care, social assistance, construction, administrative and waste management fields.