

Grim employment report highlights increasing need for bold federal action on jobs

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NEW YORK -- Slow job recovery revealed in today's report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics reinforces the need for legislation that funds direct job creation and training for the chronically unemployed, National Urban League President and CEO Marc H. Morial said.

"The economy remains weak and we're clearly in a jobless recovery," Morial said. "Private job creation is stuck in neutral, with little clue on where and when a surge in job creation might begin.

While the overall unemployment rate of 9.7% remained unchanged in March, black unemployment rose from 15.8% to 16.5%. Most of the increase is due to the rise in black male unemployment -- 19% from 17.8%. Unemployment among black women rose to 12.4% from 12.1%.

"There are people ready & willing to work, but no jobs are available for them," Morial said. "The demand for labor is not rising fast enough to absorb the large number of people looking for work. There are still 15 million unemployed people and the ranks of the long-term unemployed continue to rise as well."

Morial reiterated the need for federal legislation that funds direct job creation, such as the pending "Local Jobs for America Act" introduced by California Rep. George Miller, and training programs for youth and the chronically unemployed, such as Illinois Rep. Bobby Rush's "Employing Youth for the American Dream Act".

In addition to funding direct job creation through public employers and expansion of job training programs, the National Urban League's Plan for Job Creation calls for the creation of Green Empowerment Zones, offering incentives for renewable energy employers to locate in high-unemployment areas, expansion of the Small Business Administration's Community Express Loan Program, and increased funding to hire housing counselors nationwide.

For more information about the National Urban League's Six-Point Plan for Job Creation, visit www.nul.org.