



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **America's Youth Need a Jobs Forum, Too**

#### ***Nearly Four Million of the Unemployed Are Under Age 25***

President Obama and his economic team met yesterday with chief executives, small business owners and financial experts at his Forum on Jobs and Economic Growth. The Campaign for Youth, a coalition of national, state, and local youth serving organizations, is calling on the Obama Administration and Congress to ensure that they address the needs of the 3.9 million people under the age of 25 who are considered "officially" unemployed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This number does not include the hundreds of thousands of youth who have simply given up looking since the youth employment rate is at the lowest level in 60 years. Youth in high poverty communities, those with disabilities and black teens - whose "official" unemployment rate rose nearly eight points this month to 49.4 percent - have been particularly hard hit. Unless their needs are addressed through recovery or other jobs legislation, youth and young adults - especially those with limited education and job skills - will be left behind when the economy recovers and jobs become available.

The Campaign for Youth is calling for a national youth initiative to create jobs and provide paid work experiences in the public, nonprofit and private sectors, so that youth can earn income and benefit from occupational and workplace skills, experiences, and training that would improve their ability to compete in the labor market. With the proper funding and support, existing programs could quickly ramp up to put youth to work, while providing them with the wrap-around education, work skills, and supports that they need.

"We appreciate President Obama's efforts to provide jobs for Americans affected by the recession, but we want to ensure that America's youth participate in the recovery," said Linda Harris, Co-Chair of the Campaign for Youth and Youth Policy Director at CLASP. "Too often young people, especially males of color, are left behind in economic recoveries. Putting young people to work, now, and investing in upgrading their skills and education credentials is the best way to prepare them to compete for good jobs with good wages that allow them to support their families when the economy rebounds. This pool of young talent will be needed to fuel our future economy and we can't afford to let them remain idle or slip through the cracks."

The Campaign for Youth proposes that these jobs be directed to communities with the highest economic distress and to low-income youth with limited education and jobs skills, and be linked to economic development and community revitalization efforts, infrastructure repair, conservation and stewardship of public lands, and the provision of much needed human services. In this way, we will build the skills of youth, contribute to their civic engagement, and enhance the quality of community life.

The members of the Campaign for Youth coalition support some 400 programs across the United States that have been successful in assisting disadvantaged and disconnected youth on their path to employment.

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*The [Campaign for Youth](#) is an alliance of organizations who are concerned about the persistence, yet seeming invisibility, of the challenges confronting more than 5 million young people in this nation who are disconnected from education, employment and opportunity. Established in 2002 by the leadership of national youth serving organizations, the Campaign for Youth's mission is to build a united voice for disadvantaged and disconnected youth in this nation, and to build a constituency for action.*