



Committing to Employment Equity So that Everyone Who Wants a Job Has One

North Carolina needs to remove barriers to boost the economy through full employment and to build the connections for workers who want a job to find one.

Background

North Carolina stands to gain \$11.3 billion in economic activity by simply ensuring that everyone who wants to work has a good job that pays family-supporting wages and by not allowing one's gender or race to predict whether that will be the reality for them. By maintaining historic barriers to opportunity and erecting new ones, we only hold our state back from the competitive leadership role we have long sought to secure nationally and across the globe.

Full employment in the state would generate an economic boost for the broader economy and all North Carolinians. By increasing the income of people across the state — in rural and in urban communities — employment equity will ensure more dollars are circulating locally and that North Carolina is realizing the full potential of its current workforce.

Historic legacies and current barriers to opportunity mean that struggling rural areas across the state often face greater challenges in achieving employment equity. People of color also face higher levels of unemployment than whites across all education levels — further evidence of how pervasive the barriers to opportunity are in many communities.

Current Context

- North Carolina's state unemployment rate was 4.6 percent last year, but in 20 communities the unemployment rate remains above 5 percent, and in 87 counties there are still more jobless workers than there are jobs.
- African Americans constitute around 20 percent of North Carolina's population but represent 45 percent of residents in rural areas that are economically distressed. As a result, unemployment disparities also fall along racial lines. In 2016, the unemployment rate for Black workers was 11.4 percent, almost two times higher than the unemployment rate for white workers (5.9 percent).
- If North Carolina reached full employment across race and gender, the state economy would be boosted by \$11.3 billion.¹

Questions for Candidates

- Will you work toward ensuring North Carolina pursues full employment for all of its citizens? What are the tools that you will use?
- How will you ensure that rural North Carolina achieves employment equity by 2020?

¹ https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/employment_Equity_North-Carolina_06_19_18_0.pdf