

A PROFILE OF NONWORKING BLACK MALES  
AGED 16-64 IN WASHINGTON, DC

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## PREFACE

This study was initiated in response to Mayor Marion Barry's concern about the alarming growth in the number of black discouraged workers in the District of Columbia. Consequently, the D.C. Department of Employment Services contracted with the Washington Urban League to develop a comprehensive profile of nonworking blacks between 16-64 years old.

The data for this study are based on a representative sample of 1,230 District of Columbia residents who were interviewed in person during the summer of 1983 by the Survey Research Service of the Washington Urban League. For the purposes of this study, special analyses were conducted on the subgroup of blacks between the ages of 16-64 who were not in the official labor force as well as those who were officially unemployed. Since the circumstances and needs of discouraged workers vary significantly by sex, it seemed more appropriate to present these findings separately for men and women in two volumes.

However, a comparison of some of the key findings of this inquiry concerning discouraged workers are as follows:

- o Male discouraged workers tend to be younger than women. Half (46%) are 30 years or younger, compared to 31 percent of women.
- o About the same proportions of male and female discouraged workers are single. About half of both men (48%) and women (49%) were never married.
- o Women are much more likely to have dependent children than discouraged workers who are men. Over half (54%) of the women have children under age 18, compared to only 17 percent of the men.
- o Male discouraged workers are more highly-educated than females. Only one-fifth (18%) of women have some college education compared to two-fifths (42%) of men.

- o Male discouraged workers are more likely than women to have work disabilities. Two-fifths (38%) of men had some disability that affected their work compared to one-fifth (23%) of women.
- o Male discouraged workers are somewhat more likely than women to have had some job training. About one-third (31%) of men had some job training compared to about one-fifth (28%) of women.
- o The three main barriers to work for female discouraged workers are family responsibilities (38%), job barriers (15%) and health (14%), while the three main barriers to work for male discouraged workers are health (37%), job barriers (26%) and "other reasons" (26%).
- o Female discouraged workers have much lower household income than males. Over half (54%) of women have household income under \$10,000 compared to only one-third (33%) of men.
- o Female discouraged workers are more dependent on welfare than males. Over half (54%) of women receive public assistance compared to only one-tenth (8%) of men.

We are pleased to be associated with this historic endeavor for several reasons. First, it is the most comprehensive research investigation of black discouraged workers at the local level. Second, it was produced through a joint collaboration between the D.C. Department of Employment Services and the Washington Urban League. And, third, because the rich findings of this study will enhance greatly the ability of public and private agencies to target their services more effectively to both men and women in this disadvantaged group.

## KEY FINDINGS

- o During the summer of 1983, 38 percent of black males age 16-64 were either officially unemployed or not in the labor force in the District of Columbia.
- o Two-fifths (42%) of these men are discouraged male workers who even though they are not looking for a job indicate that they want a job now.
- o Almost all (95%) of these discouraged male workers are household heads.
- o Almost half (46%) of these discouraged workers are under age 30.
- o About one third (34%) of officially unemployed black men age 16-64 have been out of work for a period of from 1-2 years.
- o About half (52%) of the unemployed were employed in the private sector on their last job with 13 percent and 23 percent having been last employed in the Federal and District governments respectively.
- o Eighty seven percent of the officially unemployed male workers and 69 percent of the discouraged workers had no additional training since their last employment.
- o Two out of every five (42%) black male discouraged workers have either some college education (21%) or have a college degree (21%).
- o Over one-third (37%) of black male discouraged workers cited health problems as their reason for not looking for work.
- o Almost one half (46%) of black discouraged male workers thought that their race was a barrier to their finding employment.

- o Two-fifths (41%) of black men age 16-64 who are officially unemployed have been looking for a job for 6 months or longer.
- o The most widely used job search methods by black unemployed men were asking friends and relatives about jobs (78%) or answering job advertisements (72%).
- o Two-fifths (42%) of all discouraged workers intend to look for a job within the next 12 months even though they were not now looking.
- o About one quarter of both unemployed (24%) and of discouraged workers (23%) have someone in their household who receives Social Security payments.
- o Only 18 percent of unemployed male workers, and 8 percent of discouraged male workers have anyone in their household on public assistance.
- o Only 16 percent of officially unemployed workers were receiving unemployment benefits.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Magnitude of the Problem

During the last thirty years the number of black men in the civilian labor force in the United States has been falling at a dramatic rate. In fact the 1955 labor force participation rate for black men nationally was 85 percent. Today the rate has plummeted by 15 percentage points and now stands at only 70 percent. It is quite true that the overall labor force participation rate for white men has fallen also. However their labor force participation rate has only fallen from 85 percent to 79 percent.

When the labor force participation rate is disaggregated by age, a picture emerges which shows that it is two groups of black male workers who nationally have a disproportionate share of this exclusion from the labor force. These groups are younger black male workers age 18-19, and older black male workers age 55-64. The 18-19 year old black males have had a 25 percentage point decline in their labor force participation rate (Table 1). The older black male workers age 55-64 have had a 19 percentage point decline in their labor force participation rates. In further examining the data, certain trends become very clear. Black males age 20-24 have had a decline of 13 percentage points. (an improvement over the 18-19 year old.)

TABLE 1  
United States Civilian  
Labor Force Participation Rates of Black Males  
From 1955-1983  
(Percents)

| Year | Age | 18-19 | 20-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 |
|------|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1955 |     | 76    | 90    | 96    | 96    | 93    | 83    |
| 1983 |     | 50    | 77    | 87    | 91    | 84    | 64    |

Source: Employment and Training Report of the President 1982; 1983 Rates  
From Employment and Earnings Bureau of Labor Statistics 1983.

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This report was designed and prepared by Denys Vaughn-Cooke. Robert B. Hill served as a consultant and provided valuable input into the design and preparation of the study.

This trend continues with black males doing not as bad in the 25-34 and 35-44 age categories, where the decline is only 9 and 5 percentage points respectively. However this decreasing rate of decline abruptly stops with black males from age 45-54. This age group has experienced a 9 percentage point decline in labor force participation rate since 1955.

What the data show is a situation in which black men of all age categories have lost significant ground in their ability to participate in the labor force. The small "recovery" made by black men between age 25-44 years quickly ends, and it is the experience of black males still in their prime working years from 45-54 of age who start to experience an escalation in the rate at which black men are being squeezed out of labor markets. By the time black males are 55 years old this squeezing out becomes even more pronounced. This happens long before these men reach normal retirement age.

#### Consequences Of The Problem

The most significant result of this dismal experience of black males in labor markets is the effect it has had on the black family. Many black men are not able to function adequately as fathers and husbands and help provide a financial base for their family.

The incidence of black children in families under the official poverty level is growing. The social fabric of a community or city becomes strained when disparities in living standards become pronounced. The nonutilization of potentially productive resources of a nation, city or community affects all citizens as revenue is lost or diverted as a result of this exclusion.

#### Methodology

For the purposes of this study, black men who were not working were divided into three groups. (1) those who are looking for work; (2) those who are not in the official labor force and want to work, and (3) those who are not in the official labor force and do not desire a job.



The first group composed of those who are looking for work will be described as the "officially unemployed" in our study. This group meets the three major criteria of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) definition of the unemployed: (1) without a job, (2) actively looking for work and (3) available for work.

The second group of black men in our study who are not in the official labor force, and want to work will be described as "discouraged workers" in our study. This definition of discouraged workers differs from the official definition of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Bureau defines as discouraged workers only individuals who give job barriers as their reason for not looking for work. Thus many individuals who want a regular job now, but say that they are not looking for work for other reasons, are left out of the BLS discouraged workers category. Of all people nationally who are outside the labor force, only one out of every five who want a regular job now qualifies officially as a discouraged worker.\*

The difference in classification in this report rests on a belief that the Bureau of Labor Statistics significantly understates the actual number of persons outside the official labor force who want to work. Additionally we feel that it is important to extend the definition of the discouraged worker since many individuals, who are not looking for, but want a job and who would not qualify as a BLS discouraged worker, resemble the official unemployed in terms of their past work history or attachment to the labor force. In fact the National Urban League developed a Hidden Unemployment Index about 10 years ago to correct deficiencies in the Bureau's classification of discouraged workers.

The third group of workers who are not in the labor force and do not desire a job are referred to in this report as "uninterested nonworkers".

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\* For further discussion see Robert B. Hill "A Critique" in The Measurement, Behavior and Classification of Discouraged Workers, by T. Aldrich Finegan,

National Commission on Employment and Unemployment Statistics, Washington D.C.,  
June 1978.

### Objectives Of The Study

To our knowledge this is the first study done on the discouraged worker at the local level. Furthermore we disaggregate our data and examine it by race (blacks) and sex. This study is a profile of black males age 16-64 who are non-working residents of the District of Columbia. First, as part of that profile a composite picture of their background characteristics will be developed. Who are these men? Do they have wives or children? The report then goes on to examine their past work experiences to try and identify if these men had specific labor market experience, and how long ago was it since they last worked. Since education and training are important preparatory steps to successfully getting a job, this study will also examine these factors. As these men are not working at present, a section of the analysis will be devoted to looking at the various barriers that stand between them and readmission into the labor force. As an adjunct to identifying these barriers, the section immediately following will look at their future employment prospects. Among the various factors to be examined are their job search methods, reentry intentions and availability for work. Finally, analysis will be made of their various sources of income.

To facilitate a study of this nature the Washington Urban League carried out a door to door survey during the summer of 1983. The survey asked a variety of questions of a representative sample of 1230 District of Columbia residents. Of that number 345 were black males, with 214 (62%) employed, 30 (9%) unemployed and 101 (29%) not in the labor force. Of those black males not in the labor force 57 were between the ages of 16 and 64. Of this number 24 (42%) were discouraged workers, while 33 (58%) were uninterested nonworkers (Table 2).

Our survey was not a census count but a representative sampling of the District of Columbia's households. Thus there are inevitable sampling errors that the data are subject to. However when our figures are compared to data from the 1980 Census there are close similarities for key variables. (See Appendix)

Table 2  
 Work Desire of Black Males 16-64 Years  
 Not Looking for Work  
 (Percent Distribution)

| <u>Want a Job Now</u>        | <u>Total Not Looking</u> |               |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
|                              | <u>Percent</u>           | <u>Number</u> |
| Yes (Discouraged Workers)    | 42                       | 24            |
| No (Uninterested Nonworkers) | 58                       | 33            |
| Total Percent and Number     | 100                      | 57            |

Table 3  
 Household Headship By Type of Nonworker  
 Among Black Men, Aged 16-64  
 (Percent Distribution)

| <u>If Household Head</u> | <u>Official<br/>Unemployed</u> | <u>Discouraged<br/>Workers</u> | <u>Uninterested<br/>Nonworkers</u> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Yes                      | 74                             | 95                             | 100                                |
| No                       | 26                             | 5                              | --                                 |
| Total Percent            | 100                            | 100                            | 100                                |

## II. BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

Of the officially unemployed black males age 16-64, 74 percent of them were household heads, while for the discouraged workers 95 percent were household heads (Table 3). All of the black male uninterested nonworkers were household heads.

The majority (59%) of the officially unemployed black males were between 16-30 years old, while another 28 percent were 31-49 years of age. Only 14 percent of these men were age 50-64 (Table 4).

In the discouraged workers category almost half (46%) of the men were under 30 years of age. Another 25 percent were between the ages of 31-49, and 29 percent were 50-64 years old. With 87 percent of the unemployed and 71 percent of the discouraged workers below 50 years of age, even though there is some similar age approximation, the discouraged workers are somewhat older. For the uninterested nonworker the picture changes dramatically. Only 30 percent of them are below 50 years of age with the overwhelming majority (70%) of age 50 or older (Table 4).

When the marital status of nonworking black men is examined the officially unemployed are somewhat more prone to have never been married than the discouraged worker. In fact 63 percent of the former had never been married as compared to 48 percent of the latter (see Table 5). Only 15 percent of the official unemployed and 22 percent of the discouraged worker were married. None of the official black male unemployed were widowed while 13 percent of the discouraged workers were. This is in line with the discouraged worker being somewhat older than the official unemployed. The uninterested nonworkers display marital characteristics of even older individuals with 52 percent of them being married and only 21 percent of them having never been married (Table 5).

Only 21 percent of uninterested nonworkers had dependent children under 18 (Table 6). The discouraged worker group had 17 percent of their number with dependent children, while only 14 percent of the official unemployed had children under 18.

Table 4  
 Age By Type Of Nonworker  
 Among Black Men, Aged 16-64  
 (Percent Distribution)

| <u>Age</u>    | <u>Official<br/>Unemployed</u> | <u>Discouraged<br/>Workers</u> | <u>Uninterested<br/>Nonworkers</u> |
|---------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 16-30 years   | 59                             | 46                             | 9                                  |
| 31-49 years   | 28                             | 25                             | 21                                 |
| 50-64 years   | 14                             | 29                             | 70                                 |
| Total Percent | 100                            | 100                            | 100                                |

Table 5  
 Marital Status By Type Of Nonworker  
 Among Black Men, Aged 16-64  
 (Percent Distribution)

| <u>Marital Status</u> | <u>Official<br/>Unemployed</u> | <u>Discouraged<br/>Workers</u> | <u>Uninterested<br/>Nonworkers</u> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Married               | 15                             | 22                             | 52                                 |
| Spouse Absent         | 22                             | 17                             | 15                                 |
| Widowed               | 0                              | 13                             | 12                                 |
| Never Married         | 63                             | 48                             | 21                                 |
| Total Percent         | 100                            | 100                            | 100                                |

Table 6  
 Presence of Dependent Children By Type of Nonworker  
 Among Black Men Aged 16-64  
 (Percent Distribution)

| <u>Dependent Children</u> | <u>Official<br/>Unemployed</u> | <u>Discouraged<br/>Worker</u> | <u>Uninterested<br/>Nonworkers</u> |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| None under 18             | 86                             | 83                            | 79                                 |
| Some under 18             | 14                             | 17                            | 21                                 |
| Total Percent             | 100                            | 100                           | 100                                |

### III. EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

#### If Ever Worked

Nationally, black teenagers and young adults are experiencing severe unemployment problems with many of them not getting the opportunity to work and acquire the necessary skills to make themselves continuously attractive to employers. It becomes important, therefore, to see if those individuals who are not working have had any work experience.

In this survey, all of the District of Columbia's black male residents between the ages of 16 and 64 years of age who are not working and currently actively engaged in a job search (i.e. the officially unemployed), have worked for pay previously (Table 7). For those men not currently engaged in a job search, 93 percent of the discouraged workers and 90 percent of the uninterested nonworkers have previously worked for pay. The statistics show that almost all of Washington, D.C.'s non-working black male population in this survey, whether out of the labor force or officially described as unemployed, have had some job experience.

Table 7  
If Ever Worked by Type of Nonworker  
Among Black Men Aged 16-64  
(Percent Distribution)

| <u>If Ever Worked</u> | <u>Official<br/>Unemployed</u> | <u>Discouraged<br/>Worker</u> | <u>Uninterested<br/>Nonworkers</u> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Yes                   | 100                            | 93                            | 90                                 |
| No                    | --                             | 7                             | 10                                 |
| Total Percent         | 100                            | 100                           | 100                                |

Table 8  
 Time Since Last Worked by Type of Nonworker  
 Among Black Men Aged 16-64  
 (Percent Distribution)

| <u>Time Lost Since<br/>Worked for Pay</u> | <u>Official<br/>Unemployed</u> | <u>Discouraged<br/>Worker</u> | <u>Uninterested<br/>Nonworkers</u> |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Less Than 7 Months                        | 44                             | 55                            | 18                                 |
| 7 - 11 Months                             | 16                             | 0                             | 7                                  |
| 1 - 2 Years                               | 34                             | 36                            | 18                                 |
| 3 - 4 Years                               | 3                              | 0                             | 21                                 |
| 5 Years or More                           | 3                              | 9                             | 36                                 |
| Total Percent                             | 100                            | 100                           | 100                                |

Length of Time Since Last Job

The length of time since individuals last worked for pay is one of the characteristics which differentiate individuals not working, but actively engaged in a job search, from others who like themselves are not working but who are not actively engaged in a job search. The statistics show that black men who are officially unemployed have had much more recent labor market experience than those who are not currently engaged in a job search.

In fact, of all black men looking for work, over half (60%) of them have had some employment in the last year (Table 8). Almost one half of these men (44%) have been in the labor force within the last seven months. Of black men who are discouraged workers, 55 percent have had employment experience over the last year. Only 25 percent of black men who are uninterested nonworkers had employment experience in the last year.



What is worthy of note is that about one third (34%) of unemployed black men have been out of work for a period of one to two years. Only 6 percent of unemployed black men have been out of work for three years or more.

The picture looks similar for these men who would still work if a job was available, with 9 percent out of a job for three years or more (Table 8). For those uninterested nonworkers over half (57%) of these men had been out of work for three years or more.

Indeed it seems as if the more recent the employment experience has been for black males the more likely they are to be actively engaged in looking for work. For those who are not actively engaged in looking for employment, the longer the rupture from the labor market the more likely they are to have lost their desire for immediate employment. In fact the conclusion can be drawn that individuals still maintain a strong desire to work even with up to two years absence from employment. After three years this desire seems to start to wane at an increasing rate and black males become resigned to not having employment.

#### Sector Worked In On Last Job

The District of Columbia is unusual in that it not only has the city government employment of most cities, but it also has a large federal government work force enlarging the public sector's contribution to employment. In keeping with these sector's contribution to employment 52 percent of black men who are unemployed are former private sector employees on their last job. Some 36 percent of these job seekers were previously employed in the public sector, with 13 percent and 23 percent employed respectively in the Federal and District of Columbia governments (Table 9).

#### Education and Non-Employment

This section looks at the educational achievement of nonworking black men in the District of Columbia. It attempts to present a composite educational picture of

these individuals who comprise both the officially unemployed black males and those who are not looking for work.

Of all black men officially unemployed in the District of Columbia, only 31 percent of them had not completed high school (Table 10). In looking at the high school graduates category 45 percent of all black men looking for work were high school graduates. Of those black men who were unemployed 24 percent of them had some college education.

The data reveal an unexpectedly higher educational attainment among black men aged 16-64 who are discouraged workers, then among those who are officially unemployed. Indeed a similar percent (21%) of black men with less than a high school education, with some college and with a college degree comprise the group of black men who are discouraged workers who still want a job in the District of Columbia. The black men who are uninterested nonworkers show a fairly similar picture.

In sum, 42 percent of the black men who are discouraged workers have at least some college education. These statistics show a critical employment situation for black men across educational levels. The expectation that increased educational attainment increasingly exempts individuals from labor force exclusion is not fully realized by black men in the District of Columbia.

#### Additional Training

The previous section casts serious doubt on whether lack of education is the reason for the dismal unemployment picture for even highly qualified black men. However for those black men who are officially unemployed 87 percent of them have not had any additional training since they were last employed (see Table 11). Of those black men who are discouraged workers, 69 percent of those who still wanted a job had not had any additional training, while 89 percent of those who did not want a job also had no additional training since last employed.

Table 9

Sector Worked In On Last Job By Official Unemployed  
Among Black Men Aged 16-64  
(Percent Distribution)

| <u>Class of Worker</u> | <u>Official<br/>Unemployed</u> |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Federal Govt           | 13                             |
| District Govt          | 23                             |
| Private Sector         | 52                             |
| Armed Forces           | 13                             |
| Total Percent          | 100                            |

Table 10

Highest Grade Completed By Type Of Nonworker  
Among Black Men Aged 16-64  
(Percent Distribution)

| <u>Education Level</u> | <u>Official<br/>Unemployed</u> | <u>Discouraged<br/>Worker</u> | <u>Uninterested<br/>Nonworkers</u> |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Less Than H.S.         | 31                             | 21                            | 32                                 |
| H.S. Graduate          | 45                             | 38                            | 23                                 |
| Some College           | 24                             | 21                            | 21                                 |
| College Graduate       | --                             | 21                            | 24                                 |
| Total Percent          | 100                            | 100                           | 100                                |

Table 11

If Had Job Training Since Last Worked By Type Of Nonworker  
 Among Black Men Aged 16-64  
 (Percent Distribution)

| <u>If Had Job<br/>Training</u> | <u>Official<br/>Unemployed</u> | <u>Discouraged<br/>Worker</u> | <u>Uninterested<br/>Nonworkers</u> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Yes                            | 13                             | 31                            | 11                                 |
| No                             | 87                             | 69                            | 89                                 |
| Total Percent                  | 100                            | 100                           | 100                                |

#### IV. BARRIERS TO WORK

##### Work Disabilities

When asked whether they had experienced any loss of days when working from a work disability, only 11 percent of the unemployed had a work disability while 38 percent of discouraged workers had a work disability (Table 12). Of the uninterested nonworkers 21 percent had a work disability. It is likely that most of these individuals would have difficulty reentering the labor market since many of them would be working at low wage employment which would be physically demanding.

##### Reason For Not Looking

About one quarter (26%) of all discouraged black male workers give job barriers as the reason for not looking for work (Table 13). Health reasons are cited by about one third (37%) of the black male discouraged workers as the reason for not looking for work, while only 12 percent of the uninterested nonworkers cited health. Of all black male discouraged workers 11 percent gave retirement as the reason for not looking for work. This number, coupled with the fact that 64 percent of uninterested nonworkers give retirement as the reason for not looking

for work, suggests that many black men are forced out of the labor markets into early retirement before normal retirement age.

##### Perceived Barriers to Employment

When black men who were unemployed were asked if they perceived any barriers to employment, none of them thought that being too young was a factor (Table 14). When respondents were asked if being too old was a barrier to employment, all of the men who were discouraged workers felt that age was not a barrier to employment. However 15 percent of those who were uninterested nonworkers felt that old age was a barrier to their employment. Again, many older black men seem to have been propelled unwillingly into early retirement, with no hope of ever working again.

Table 12

If Had Work Disabilities When Working By Type Of NonWorker  
Among Black Men Aged 16-64  
(Percent Distribution)

| <u>Work Disability</u> | <u>Official<br/>Unemployed</u> | <u>Discouraged<br/>Workers</u> | <u>Uninterested<br/>Nonworkers</u> |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Yes                    | 11                             | 38                             | 21                                 |
| No                     | 89                             | 63                             | 79                                 |
| Total Percent          | 100                            | 100                            | 100                                |

TABLE 13

Reason Not Looking for Work By Type Of NonWorker  
Among Black Men Aged 16-64  
(Percent Distribution)

| <u>Reason Not Looking</u> | <u>Discouraged<br/>Workers</u> | <u>Uninterested<br/>Nonworkers</u> |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Job Barriers              | 26                             | 0                                  |
| Family Responsibility     | 0                              | 3                                  |
| Health                    | 37                             | 12                                 |
| Other Reasons             | 26                             | 21                                 |
| Retired                   | 11                             | 64                                 |
| Total Percent             | 100                            | 100                                |

Health reasons were cited far more often as a barrier to employment by those men who were uninterested nonworkers as compared to those who were discouraged workers. In fact 27 percent of the former as compared to 17 percent of the latter cited health as a barrier to employment.

Almost half (46%) of the black men who were discouraged workers saw race as a barrier to employment. When asked if they perceived their sex as a barrier to employment one-fourth (23%) of these black men said yes. Only 15 percent cited both their being foreign or overqualified as a job barrier.

Table 14

Perceived Barriers To Employment By Type Of NonWorker  
Among Black Men Aged 16-64 (Percent Answering "Yes")

| <u>Perceived Barriers</u> | <u>Discouraged<br/>Workers</u> | <u>Uninterested<br/>Nonworkers</u> |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. Too Young              | --                             | --                                 |
| b. Too Old                | --                             | 15                                 |
| c. Ex-Offender            | 8                              | --                                 |
| d. Poor Health            | 17                             | 27                                 |
| e. Handicapped            | 8                              | 4                                  |
| f. Drug Addiction         | --                             | --                                 |
| g. Alcohol Addiction      | 8                              | --                                 |
| h. Sex Discrimination     | 23                             | --                                 |
| i. Race                   | 46                             | 12                                 |
| j. Foreigner              | 15                             | --                                 |
| k. Overqualified          | 15                             | --                                 |

## V. FUTURE EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

### Length of Time Looking for Work

When the length of time unemployed black men of age 16-64 who have been looking for work is examined the data show that 27 percent of them have been looking for less than 5 weeks (Table 15). Another 23 percent of unemployed black men have spent a period of 5-14 weeks looking for a job. These percentages show that 50 percent of all black men looking for work have been looking unsuccessfully for less than 14 weeks. Only 9 percent of unemployed black men have been conducting a job search between 15-26 weeks. This probably represents a discouragement factor after the first job search period has been unsuccessful. The data show that 41 percent of all black men looking for work have been conducting a job search for 27 weeks or approximately 6 months or longer. This high percentage of unsuccessful job seekers after 6 months of job search is primarily a result of the apparent difficulty in executing a successful job search. Additionally, many individuals continue to look for work after 27 weeks because unemployment benefits have been exhausted. The District of Columbia unemployment insurance covers qualified applicants for up to 26 weeks.

Table 15

Length of Time Looking for Work By Official Unemployed  
Among Black Men Aged 16-64  
(Percent Distribution)

| <u>Length of Time<br/>Looking for Work</u> | <u>Official<br/>Unemployed</u> |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Less Than 5 Weeks                          | 27                             |
| 5 - 14 Weeks                               | 23                             |
| 15 - 26 Weeks                              | 9                              |
| 27 Weeks or More                           | 41                             |
| Total Percent                              | 100                            |



weeks. This study found that 29 percent of these black men had exhausted their unemployment benefits.

### Job Search Methods

The job search methods used by black men looking for jobs were varied. The most widely used were making direct contact with employers and asking friends and relatives about potential job openings. In fact 78 percent of all black men looking for work used these methods (see Table 16). Answering job advertisements was another well used medium in the job search effort since 72 percent of all black male job seekers did so. Over half (56%) of these job seekers registered with the Department of Employment Services of the District of Columbia. Placing job advertisements and registering with a private employment agency were less frequently used job search methods with only 45 and 47 percent respectively of all black men looking for work using those methods. Only 6 percent of unemployed black men in Washington, D.C. registered with employment services in Maryland or Virginia. Of all unemployed black men 22 percent contacted community organizations for jobs.

### Work Availability

When black men 16-64 years old who are discouraged workers were asked if they were available for work almost half of them (46%) said that they were available (Table 17). In fact our assumption earlier of a squeezing out of older black men from the labor market into retirement is supported by the fact that of all discouraged black males only 4 percent said that they were definitely not available for a job if one presented itself.

### Work Intentions in 12 Months

When looking at the job search plans of black men, age 16-64, who are discouraged workers, this study found that 42 percent of them intend to look for a job in the next 12 months (Table 18). Only 8 percent said that they

Table 16

Job Search Methods Used By Official Unemployed  
Among Black Men Aged 16-64  
(Percent Distribution)

| <u>Job Search Methods Used</u>                          | <u>Official Unemployed</u> |           | <u>Total<br/>Percent</u> |
|---|----------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
|   | <u>Yes</u>                 | <u>No</u> |                          |
| a. Contacted Employers Directly                         | 78                         | 22        | 100                      |
| b. Asked Friends or Relatives                           | 78                         | 22        | 100                      |
| c. Placed Job Ads                                       | 45                         | 55        | 100                      |
| d. Answered Job Ads                                     | 72                         | 28        | 100                      |
| e. Registered with Private<br>Employment Agency         | 47                         | 53        | 100                      |
| f. Registered with D.C.<br>Dept. Of Employment Services | 56                         | 44        | 100                      |
| g. Registered with Employment<br>Services in Md. Or Va. | 6                          | 94        | 100                      |
| h. Contacted Community<br>Job Organization              | 22                         | 78        | 100                      |

definitely had no plans to look for a job in that time period. Of those black men who are uninterested nonworkers, 12 percent of them said that they intend to look for work in the next 12 months. These job search plans would support this study's conclusion in the previous section that a significant number of the discouraged would reenter the labor force if they felt they could obtain employment.

Table 17

Availability for Work By Discouraged Workers  
Among Black Men Aged 16-64  
(Percent Distribution)

| <u>Available<br/>For Work</u> | <u>Discouraged<br/>Worker</u> |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Yes                           | 46                            |
| No                            | 4                             |
| Don't Know                    | 50                            |
| Total Percent                 | 100                           |

Table 18

Work Intention in 12 Months by Type of Nonworker  
Among Black Men Aged 16-64  
(Percent Distribution)

| <u>Intend to Look<br/>For Work in 12 Months</u> | <u>Discouraged<br/>Workers</u> | <u>Uninterested<br/>Nonworkers</u> |
|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Yes   | 42                             | 12                                 |
| No  | 8                              | 77                                 |
| Don't Know                                      | 50                             | 12                                 |
| Total Percent                                   | 100                            | 100                                |

## VI. INCOME PROFILE

This section looks at the household income profile of the various categories of black men not working in the District of Columbia. This profile will give us an idea as to some of the sources from which these non-working black men obtain income.

Of all unemployed black men, 19 percent were in households which had an income of \$26,000 or more in the preceeding 12 months (see Table 19). Black men who were discouraged workers had 42 percent of their number living in households where the total income of the household was \$26,000 or above. Indeed with 25 percent of these households with total income levels between \$10,000-25,999, 67 percent of all discouraged black male workers were in households that had an income level of over \$10,000.

This relatively high percentage of income in these households reflects the fact that of these black men, 22 percent of them, receive a retirement pension (see Table 19). In fact, 55 percent of the men who are uninterested nonworkers have a retirement pension. Thus the latter have on average the highest household income level over \$10,000.

Table 19

Household Income by Type of Worker  
Among Black Men Aged 16-64  
(Percent Distribution)

| <u>Household Income</u> | <u>Official<br/>Unemployed</u> | <u>Discouraged<br/>Workers</u> | <u>Uninterested<br/>Nonworkers</u> |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Less than \$4,000       | 31                             | 8                              | 12                                 |
| 4,000 - 9,999           | 19                             | 25                             | 18                                 |
| 10,000 - 25,999         | 31                             | 25                             | 47                                 |
| 26,000 + Over           | 19                             | 42                             | 23                                 |
| Total Percent           | 100                            | 100                            | 100                                |

Table 20

Source of Household Income over the last 12 months by Type of Worker  
Among Black Men Aged 16-64 (Percent Receiving Income From That  
Source)

| <u>Source of Income</u>               | <u>Official<br/>Unemployed</u> | <u>Discouraged<br/>Workers</u> | <u>Uninterested<br/>Nonworkers</u> |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Wages                                 | 39                             | 42                             | 29                                 |
| Social Security                       | 24                             | 23                             | 27                                 |
| Retirement Pensions                   | 7                              | 22                             | 55                                 |
| Public Assistance                     | 18                             | 8                              | 6                                  |
| Supplemental<br>Security Income (SSI) | 4                              | 9                              | 12                                 |

Of black men who are unemployed 24 percent of them are in households that receive Social Security, while 23 percent of discouraged black male workers households had Social Security income (Table 20). A similar percent (27%) of uninterested nonworkers households receive Social Security payments.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments are respectively received by 9 and 12 percent of the households of discouraged black male workers and uninterested nonworkers. Only 4 percent of the officially unemployed workers' households received SSI.

In the preceeding 12 months, wages were one source of income for 39% of the households of officially unemployed black men, while 42% of discouraged workers households also had this source of income. The percentage of households of uninterested nonworkers was less with only 29 percent having wages. While 18 percent of the households of officially unemployed black males are on public assistance only 8 and 6 percent respectively of the discouraged and uninterested nonworkers households had this source of income. Jobless benefits currently provide income to only 16 percent of the official unemployed (Table 21).

The overall picture is one in which those uninterested nonworking black men households had relatively higher unearned income than those of men who are either unemployed or discouraged workers.

TABLE 21

If Receiving Unemployment Benefits by Official Unemployed  
Among Black Men Aged 16-64  
(Percent Distribution)

| <u>Receiving<br/>Jobless Benefits</u> | <u>Official<br/>Unemployed</u> |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Yes                                   | 16                             |
| No                                    | 84                             |
| Total Percent                         | 100                            |