

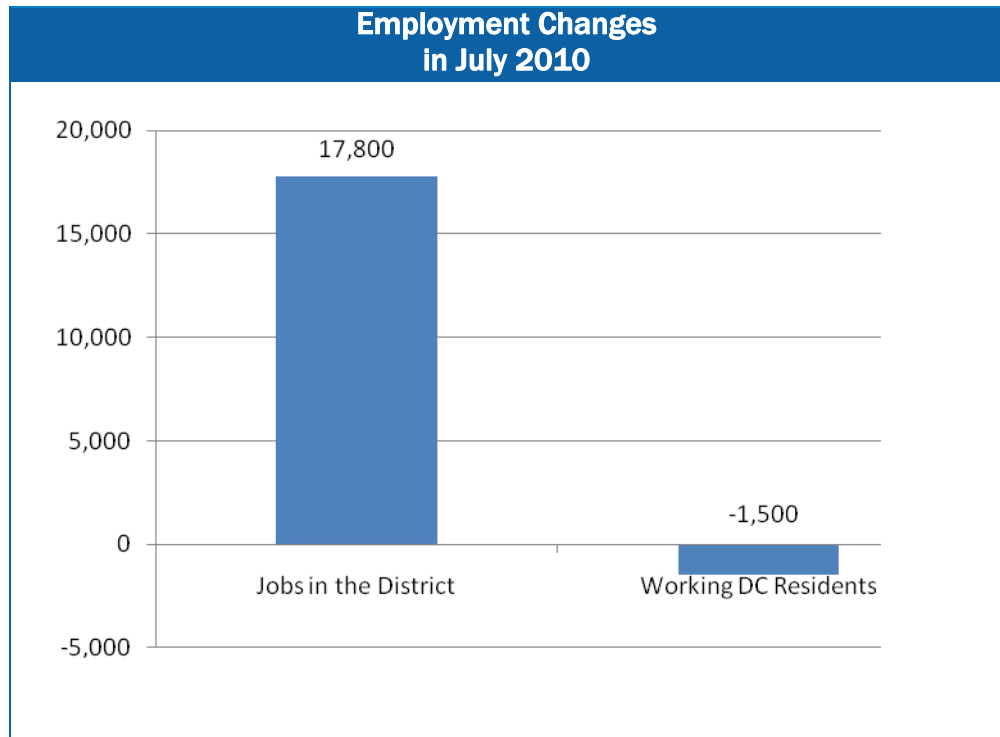
Putting the Heat On Candidates to Make Work Possible in DC

July was a cruel month in DC, delivering day after day of sweltering heat and stifling humidity. Now we find out it was brutal in another way: The number of employed District residents fell in July, according to newly released economic statistics, even though the number of jobs in the city increased.

Huh?

It is a confusing and troublesome point. Jobs are being created in the District. That's good. But, according to the data, DC residents are not getting hired for many of these new jobs. That's not good. Over the past year, the data shows that even though the District's overall economy may be rebounding from this devastating recession, those who live in the city have not fully benefitted from the job growth. It is a clear sign that a rising tide is not enough to lift all boats, and our elected leaders need to take conscious steps to make work possible for DC residents who want to get hired but may lack the skills needed for the jobs being created.

Here are the stats: The number of jobs in the District grew from 711,500 in June to 729,300 in July, according to preliminary data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This jump — the biggest one-month jump in the number of jobs in at least 20 years — has more than offset job losses that the city suffered in 2009 as a result of the recession.



Meanwhile, employment among DC residents (whether they work in the city or outside) fell in July, from 303,500 to 302,000. DC's unemployment rate dipped slightly in July, from 10 percent to 9.8 percent, but that is because the number of people looking for work dropped. (The unemployment rate assesses the number of jobless residents looking for work as a share of the "labor market," which only includes those with a job and those actively looking for a job.)

This mismatch in job growth is not merely a one-month phenomenon. Since last September, when employment in the city bottomed out at 699,000, about 30,000 jobs have been created in the

District. During the same period, the number of DC residents with a job has increased by just 7,000.

It is true that in a large metropolitan area, we shouldn't expect every job created in the city to go to a DC resident. It's also true that many who live in DC work in the suburbs. Yet it is noteworthy – and disturbing — that employment among DC residents is not keeping up with overall job growth in the economy.

Defeat Poverty DC is an effort of more than 3,000 concerned DC residents and over 100 organizations, businesses, and faith groups that want our elected leaders to make a commitment to reducing DC's high poverty rate. One of Defeat Poverty DC's key goals is to urge elected leaders to take steps to "Make Work Possible" for DC residents who want to work. The new employment figures suggest that this need is more urgent than ever.

Eliminating barriers to work should be one of the top priorities for candidates running for office this fall. To learn more about the Defeat Poverty DC and to see what the candidates are saying about their plans to reduce, poverty, check out www.defeatpovertydc.org.