



**Houston Area
Urban League**

*Empowering Communities
Changing Lives*

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A United Way Agency
Affiliated With The
National Urban League

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United Way of Greater Houston

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Better Education is Key to a Better Job

Among adults age 25 to 34, the U.S. is ninth among industrialized nations in the share of its population that has at least a high school degree. In the same age group, the United States ranks seventh, with Belgium, in the share of people who hold a college degree. This may sound pretty good when one considers the total number of industrialized nations and the sheer number of people that live in the U.S., but the reality is we have slipped considerably in our world rankings. In fact, just 20 years ago we were ranked first in both categories.

Each year the Paris-based Organization for Cooperation and Development analyzes 30 nations and draws conclusions about achievement based on international test scores. The study shows that compared with their peers in Europe, Asia and elsewhere, 15 year olds in the United States are below average in applying math skills to real-life tasks.

Several years ago the Houston Area Urban League, Inc. formed a partnership with Prairie View A&M University to tackle this problem. A weekend program was developed to help young people in the areas of math and science called STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math). Instructors from Prairie View, Urban League staff and community volunteers come together to help students increase their TAKS test scores, gain an appreciation for math, as it relates to their future success, and to understand how it applies in their life. In our push to achieve economic self-reliance, power, parity and civil rights, education is the key, to making that happen. If we can encourage our youth to pursue their education as a means towards a good paying job and as a life-long companion to continue their mental development as well as their income potential then, we can begin to regain the ground we have lost in our communities and on the world stage.

This past February's Labor report showed that the nation added 192,000 jobs, the most in nearly a year. A few days later, major institutions like Houston's Independent School District, the City of Houston, as well as the State of Texas predicted slashing thousands of positions that will once again swell the numbers of persons looking for work. As these people re-enter the unemployment lines they will soon be searching for re-employment and competing with those already struggling to find a job. The Houston Area Urban League has been addressing this problem for years and has helped countless numbers successfully gain re-employment through our Workforce Development Department. The program helps people to learn the techniques of preparing a compelling resume and today's job search trends... They learn presentation skills and are able to peruse our database of available companies looking to hire qualified people. The Urban League is also equipped to assist the Entrepreneur looking for advice and counsel as they start a small business or require technical assistance as they attempt to grow their business. The Houston Area Urban League in partnership with the National Urban League and 90 plus affiliates throughout the country stand ready to assist individuals striving for equality and equal access to opportunity. Learn more about our "12 Point Jobs Plan" and the many other efforts we are involved in serving you at the local and national level by visiting www.nul.org.

Sincerely,

Judson W. Robinson III
President & CEO