



Northeast Ohio African American Friends Service Committee  
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## NEWS RELEASE

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### For immediate release

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#### **ANALYSIS SHOWS AFRICAN AMERICAN WAGE AND JOB DISCRIMINATION IN AKRON**

**(Akron)** African Americans are paid less than non-African Americans employed by the City of Akron and construction companies who receive city tax dollars hire a small percentage of African Americans, accord, according to an analysis of city employment and contract records completed by the Northeast Ohio African American Friends Service Committee (AFSC).

The analysis showed that as of July, 2005 average hourly wage of all African American employees of the City of Akron was \$17.46 (Table 1, attached), compared to \$20.10 for non-African American employees (Table 2, attached). The wage disparity was far greater in some of the city's 64 departments than others. The greatest wage disparity (Table 3 attached) was in AMATS department where non-African Americans earned \$16.13 per hour more than African American employees. The Economic Development department was next at \$13.03, followed by the Capital Planning department at \$8.59, Health Administration department at \$8.41, the Treasurer's department at \$7.40, and City Council staff at \$7.23. Some of the wage disparity may be due to tenure, experience and job responsibilities within each department.

The analysis also showed a disparity in number of African-Americans employed within City of Akron departments compared to the number of non African-Americans. The greatest disparity (Table 4, attached) was in the Engineering Bureau where 19.2 non-African Americans were employed for every 1 African American. The Water Supply department came next (18.5 non-African Americans employed for every 1 African American), followed by the Heath Environment department (18 to 1), Motor Equipment department (17.5 to 1), and Audit and Budget department (17 to 1). No African Americans were employed at all in 12 city departments.

"Akron officials are snoozing on the job and it's time for the African American community to wake them up." says Shenita Johnson of the Economic Justice & Empowerment Committee of the AFSC. "Call a spade a spade and an ace an ace. Discrimination by any other name is still discrimination. In reference to Black History month, it's important for those who purport to care about issues of equity to step up to the plate and fight for economic justice in the interest of fairness because the African American community is being stripped of all that its predecessors sacrificed and died for," said Johnson.

The AFSC also analyzed hundreds of pages of construction contract pay sheets from three large construction corporations receiving city tax dollars in 2004: Kenmore Construction, Ruhlin Construction, and Cioffi Construction. The analysis showed that the 3 construction corporations paid a total of 1577 non-African Americans and 228 African Americans. This translates to only 14% of workers hired by these 3 construction companies were African Americans. The African American population is 28% in Akron.

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Africa Initiative Program ~ Debra Calhoun, Director  
Economic Justice & Empowerment Program ~ Greg Coleridge, Director

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The American Friends Service Committee is a Quaker social action organization seeking non-violent solutions to human problems through promoting understanding and peace, and helping those ill and oppressed. AFSC is a 501 (c) (3) organization.

Some of this hiring disparity may be due to lack of skilled African Americans workers in the trades eligible for employment.

“If we are to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s philosophy of economic justice, we must ensure that meaningful job and business opportunity are made available at all levels of government, including city government, for African Americans,” said John Fuller of the Economic Justice Program of the AFSC.

AFSC recommends several actions be taken by the City of Akron:

1. City officials should hold a public hearing on city hiring practices.
2. City job openings should be more widely distributed with the African-American community
3. The city should produce an annual report documenting the racial breakdown of job applicants and of those hired.
4. The city should publicly inform the African-American community of employment opportunities within companies receiving city construction contracts (through cable access, Reporter, community centers, etc.)
5. The city needs to work with the African American minority contractors to develop a specific program to expand the number of African American contractors and in ensuring that companies receiving city contracts employ a representative percentage of African Americans for jobs.