



# City of Spokane—Media Release

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### MAYOR VERNER, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ANNOUNCE ‘HIRE A YOUTH’ MONTH

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Spokane Mayor Mary Verner and the Spokane Area Workforce Development Council are announcing that June is “Hire a Youth” Month in Spokane. Businesses that have the ability to hire are encouraged to employ youth.

The local announcement follows a similar national initiative by the U.S. Department of Labor and U.S. Conference of Mayors called “Summer Jobs USA: Make the Commitment.”

The economy has taken a toll on all workers, and youth are no different. While the national unemployment figure is **9.1 percent**, the unemployment rate for teenagers 16 to 19 years old is a staggering **24.2 percent**. Even more shocking is the **40.7 percent** unemployment rate for African-Americans youth ages 16 to 19, compared to **20.7 percent** for whites 16 to 19 years old and **26.1 percent** for Hispanics 16 to 19 years old.

#### **Benefits to Youth:**

Summer jobs can teach young people about the meaning of work and the skills needed to be successful in the workplace. Summer jobs also can provide a roadmap to career pathways and can inspire young people to seek the education necessary to achieve their long-term career goals, all while earning a paycheck.

#### **Benefits to Employers:**

Employers who offer summer jobs have the opportunity to shape and tailor the future workforce. Businesses who have participated in summer job programs in the past have found a critical pipeline for highly qualified, loyal employees. Summer jobs also help strengthen the economy as young people and their families spend their earnings locally.

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For 2011, Mayor Verner is placing significant emphasis on helping the Spokane business community pursue economic recovery and create jobs. Hiring youth now will improve the base of talented workers for the future.

Earlier this year, the Mayor launched the “Seven in Eleven” program, which includes seven practical actions the City will complete in 2011 to help improve the immediate business climate without additional cost for the City. The program has included an initiative to help businesses survive construction, improving permitting processes, and improving on-line access for business licenses and other permits, among other things.

The “Seven in Eleven” work is in addition to other plans to help the private sector grow and create jobs, including accelerating public infrastructure projects into 2011 and 2012, continuing to support development in defined Target Areas, and encouraging the growth of green businesses. The Mayor also assisted with efforts to bring a four-year medical school to Spokane, which has now been funded with \$35 million from the Washington Legislature.

Young people can explore careers that fit their skills at [www.MySkillsMyFuture.org](http://www.MySkillsMyFuture.org), a U.S. Department of Labor web site. Young people also are encouraged to use the Next Generation Zone and WorkSource Spokane to attend professional workshops geared specifically to job-seekers.

For additional information about Hire a Youth Month, please visit the Next Generation Zone website at [www.nextgenzone.org](http://www.nextgenzone.org). The Hire a Youth Month proclamation will be read at the City Council meeting at 6 p.m., Monday, June 6.