

CI Notebook

by Laura Choi, Editor

When people learned that this issue of *Community Investments* would focus on unemployment, many of them said, “how timely.” Indeed, the topic seems to be on everyone’s mind. A recent national poll indicated that worries about unemployment have tripled over the past year, making it the primary economic concern among respondents. As the labor market continues to soften and historic rates of unemployment persist, workers from virtually every industry are affected. Weathering a job loss is challenging enough for the average worker, but for many low-income individuals who are already stretched thin, the slightest loss of income can be devastating. In addition, low levels of educational attainment and weak technical skills can create significant barriers for low-income workers looking for employment, particularly as more and more displaced workers compete for a limited number of available jobs.

In this issue, we address some of the challenges that low-income communities face in times of high unemployment and examine a range of complex issues, such as the particular employment challenges facing immigrant communities and the role of community colleges in meeting the training and education needs of low-income workers. We also explore the workforce development efforts of community development corporations and consider how the lessons learned from the past two decades of workforce development apply in today’s economic climate.

In addition, we’re pleased to introduce some changes to *Community Investments*, beginning with the new “look” you may have already noticed. Inside, you’ll find new features, such as *Dr. CRA*, an advice column in which our resident regulatory experts address today’s most challenging CRA questions, *Research Briefs*, short summaries of recently published community development research, and *Data Snapshot*, which highlights data from the 12th District and the nation as a whole. We will continue to have a special focus for each issue, but we’ve also made room for a broader range of relevant topics in the new *Eye on Community Development* section. This quarter, we provide information on the new National Community Stabilization Trust and consider potential improvements and innovations in the Earned Income Tax Credit, including a closer look at the City of San Francisco’s Working Families Credit.

Times are tough for everyone right now, but low- and moderate-income workers are especially vulnerable. We hope this issue of *Community Investments* informs and encourages your efforts to serve these communities in times of need. As always, we welcome your comments and feedback, and hope that you enjoy the “new” CI!



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