

**Press Release**

Contact:

Cassandra Welchlin, Director of Southern Programs

[cwelchlin@thecsi.org](mailto:cwelchlin@thecsi.org)

601-750-8388

**REPORT ADDRESSING CENSUS FINDINGS SHOWS  
MISSISSIPPI IS BEING HIT HARD BY RECESSION**

December 22, 2009, New York, NY-- A new report by the [Center for Social Inclusion](http://www.centerforsocialinclusion.org) (CSI) analyzes data from the U.S. Census, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Department of Housing and Urban Development. The report, *Tough Times in Mississippi: Housing and poverty, a census snapshot*, shows that Mississippi is one of the states hardest-hit by the recession and that Black Mississippians are at the greatest risk of being left out of the economic recovery.

*Tough Times in Mississippi* details that rising poverty, discriminatory mortgage lending, widespread unemployment and decreasing access to healthcare are undermining recovery in communities of color and the economy as a whole. This report shows that Mississippi ranks 14 on CSI's index of the recession's impact.

- From '07 to '08, homeownership rates dropped further for Black Mississippians (2.8%) than for Whites (0.5%).
- Unemployment among Black Mississippians has skyrocketed to an estimated 16.2%.
- Almost half of Black children (47.6%) live in poverty.
- Over one in four Black Mississippians do not have health insurance.

The gap between White and Black unemployment rates is much higher in Mississippi than it is for the country as a whole. Black poverty (35.2%) is almost three times higher than White poverty (12.2%). During the height of the subprime boom (2004-2006), **banks and other lenders made 72,866 subprime mortgages** in Mississippi.

"The Recovery Act has done some good in Mississippi, but more must be done to help those most in need," said Cassandra Welchlin, Director of Southern Programs at the Center for Social Inclusion. "The only way we can come out of this recession stronger than before is by redirecting Recovery Act funds to the hardest hit communities and making sure the second round of stimulus does the same."

"This report by the CSI moves beyond 'one size fits all' policy recommendations," says Marianne Hill, PhD, Senior Economist, Institute for Higher Learning. "People of color are suffering from higher unemployment rates and higher foreclosure rates than other groups. CSI suggests several steps that can be taken to improve the outlook for those most impacted by the recession, including increasing access to business loans, transportation, and to the renegotiation of mortgage loans. Such targeted policies can bring cost-effective relief."

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act must do a better job recording and reporting who are getting jobs funded by the Stimulus. Projects funded in this or any future round of economic stimulus must be targeted in hardest-hit areas, and local, state, and federal agencies must take race into account when deciding which projects to fund.

For more information please visit the Center for Social Inclusion at [www.centerforsocialinclusion.org](http://www.centerforsocialinclusion.org)