

Conversation Guide

Jobs and work

Job creation may be the biggest challenge facing employers and policy makers in the Chicago area as they seek to ensure that the region is a destination for job seekers. Among 20- to 24-year-olds, the Chicago area's employment rate is 47 percent for blacks, the lowest among the big cities, and 73 percent for whites, which is among the highest.

What does the future of work in Chicago look like?

In selecting this topic, your Table will discuss Chicago's current economy and job creation. Keep these points in mind:

- Chicago's key industries
 - Manufacturing
 - Transportation
- Information technology
- Health services
- Standing at nearly 20% today, the black unemployment rate is over four times the city's white unemployment rate.
- The unemployment rate for Chicago's Latinx community is about 10% or about double the white rate.
- Higher levels of education do not eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in joblessness. Even black Chicagoans with advanced degrees are more likely to be unemployed than whites who have only a bachelor's degree.

Here are some *resources* to assist you as you prepare to discuss economic development and job creation in the Chicago area.

- [Bureau of Labor Statistics' latest round-up of Chicago's employment rates](#)
- [This report explores the correlation between unemployment and the role of place, race, and education](#)

Here are some *suggested questions* for your Table discussion:

1. How important has segregation been to Chicago's current employment demographics?
2. What do you think Mayor Lightfoot should prioritize to improve employment rates?
3. How do you think other big-city economies fair in comparison to Chicago's?
4. Which industries should leaders focus on to create economic growth in Chicago?
5. True or false: Chicago is ready to have the high-demand jobs of the future.