



Executive Director, Jobs For Youth/Chicago

robert w. barnett

empowering the unemployed

According to Robert Barnett, the Jobs For Youth program is an economic boon to unemployed individuals and Chicago businesses alike. The Jobs For Youth program helps low-income young people join the economic mainstream, and provides businesses with motivated, job-ready workers.

The Milwaukee native moved to Chicago in 1990 and got involved with Jobs For Youth in 1991. Starting out as a part-time job readiness instructor, Barnett eventually took the helm as executive director in 2002.

Since opening its doors in 1979, Jobs For Youth has made over 24,000 job placements. Jobs For Youth works with some 500 Chicago area employers, many who use the program as their sole method for finding entry-level workers. Through its various ser-



ices, Jobs For Youth sets the tone for many young people's futures. "We help our young people understand that you must earn everything by giving them the tools to move toward self-sufficiency," says Barnett. "What separates us from a lot of training programs is our relationship with Chicago businesses. We are essentially a free staffing agency that allows them to meet their human resource needs."

Jobs For Youth/Chicago is vital to the city of Chicago. This important nonprofit is helping turn the tide of joblessness in the African American community. It is essential that their doors remain open because the black community can ill afford to bear the repercussions that extensive budget cuts inflict on agencies like JFY. —*Tony Harris* 