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WBFO News

Buffalo's unemployed discouraged with job market

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Eileen Buckley & Ashley Hassett (2011-10-14)

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BUFFALO, NY (WBFO) - Some of Buffalo's unemployed residents are getting discouraged with the local job market. A few hundred stood in line Thursday at the Father Belle Community Center for a West Side job fair.



Job fair at Father Belle Community Center, Buffalo, NY WBFO News photo by Ashley Hassett

For Buffalo's unemployed the pressure is mounting to find a job. Erik Martinez has been out of work since the start of this summer. Martinez has two children. He's willing to take even a part-time job to avoid applying for welfare.

"Anything within 20 to 30 hours a week is way better than being on social services. Buffalo is one of those town where even on minimum wage you can make a living, so survival is key," said Martinez.

But Virginia Hughes of Buffalo disagrees. She has three children. Hughes said a minimum wage job in Buffalo is like receiving social services.

"So your almost stuck with you want to better yourself to be self-sufficient, but how can you when people are only offering you not even decent wages to take care of a family," said Hughes.

The Seneca Niagara Casino, Time Warner Cable and Wegmans were among the businesses appearing at the job fair.

Leslie Ponzio is a mother of five who was also looking for work. She's been jobless for the last six months.

"There's really no jobs in Buffalo. And if you get a job your working for \$7.25 an hour, and you have to fight to get the hours. So your really only working for 15 hours a week and that's not paying the bills. It's not putting food on the table, and clothes on my back," said Ponzio.

But Ponzio children keep her motivated. She told WBFO News she's not giving up until she finds a job.