August 3, 2021

Improving Labor Market Experiences of Low-Income Workers: A Research-to-Action Roadmap

WorkRise

Todd Greene, Executive Director and Urban Institute Fellow
A potential roadmap to improve labor market attachment

1. Improve the **quality** of *all* jobs to advance equity
2. Expand **access** to good jobs for all to strengthen mobility
3. Reduce **economic shocks** from job loss
4. Activate **local practitioners and policymakers**
1. Improving **Job Quality**: More Than Family Sustaining Wages + Benefits:

- Stable + Predictable Schedules
- Upskilling + Career Pathways
- Dignity, Equity + Inclusion
- Health, Safety + Labor Protections
- Worker Voice

Source: Aspen Institute & Urban Institute
Improving Job Quality: What Workers Say...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Security and Benefits Were Most Frequently Cited as “Extremely Important”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable Pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Purpose and Dignity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoying Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Over Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power to Change Things</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Urban Institute / Gallup
Improving Job Quality: Impact of Worker Voice

Union membership and share of income going to the top 10%, 1917–2019

Source: Economic Policy Institute
Improving Job Quality: Enhancing Worker Voice + Power

Sources: National Domestic Workers Alliance, NY Times
Improving Job Quality: Economic Development as Catalyst

Economic Empowerment and Equity (E3) Program
- Hiring Practices
- Employer Benefits
- Diversity + Inclusion Practices
- Educational Partnerships
- Philanthropy, Entrepreneurship support + more

Middle Wage Job Fund

Integration + Alignment of Workforce Agency with Economic Development
2. Expanding **access to good jobs**: Potential Pathways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill-based hiring + promotion approaches</th>
<th>Apprenticeships + high-quality training programs</th>
<th>On-ramps to middle-skills jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enforcement of antidiscrimination laws</td>
<td>Remedies for occupational segregation</td>
<td>Universal, high-speed internet access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Policies addressing workplace fissuring and misclassification</td>
<td>Affordable/accessible childcare, housing, transportation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Expanding access to good jobs: Universal high-speed internet access

Source: Gallup
Expanding Access to Good Jobs: Sectoral Training Partnerships

Source: Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership
3. Reducing economic shocks from job loss: Potential Policy + Practice Responses

- UI eligibility reforms
- Short-Time Compensation/Work Sharing
- Safety net + workforce development
- Equalize access to paid leave, health insurance, and retirement
- Explicit racial equity approaches
# Purpose
- Alternative to layoffs through a reduction in hours
- Preserves jobs and employers’ skilled workforce
- Employees collect a percentage of UI benefits plus wages
- Workers resume full-time employment when business demand increases.

## Eligibility
- Process is initiated by employer(s)
- Employers must have an approved STC plan with the state
- Employees are not required to meet availability or work search requirements, but they are required to be available for their normal workweek

## Benefits
- Amount of UI benefits paid to workers is a pro-rated portion of what they would receive if they were totally unemployed

Source: US Department of Labor
Reducing economic shocks from job loss: Aligning safety net and workforce development programs

- Agencies rather than individuals figure out maze of program eligibility
- Career pathways instead of work requirements/time limits
- Workforce agencies can leverage human services expertise/relationship with supportive services
- TANF, SNAP E&T, and WIOA offer childcare subsidies and other supports, but funds are limited & multiple funding streams need to be accessed

Photo: PolicyEd; Text: Elizabeth Lower-Basch, CLASP and Urban Institute
“All labor has dignity.”
Martin Luther King, Jr.
in a speech to striking sanitation workers, 1968
Stay in touch

Website:
workrisenetwork.org

Social media
Twitter: @WorkRiseNetwork
LinkedIn: linkedin.com/showcase/workrise-network

Email
tgreene@urban.org or
apyati@urban.org