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



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A potential roadmap to improve labor market attachment

1. Improve the **quality** of *all* jobs to advance equity

3. Reduce **economic shocks** from job loss

2. Expand **access** to good jobs for all to strengthen mobility

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



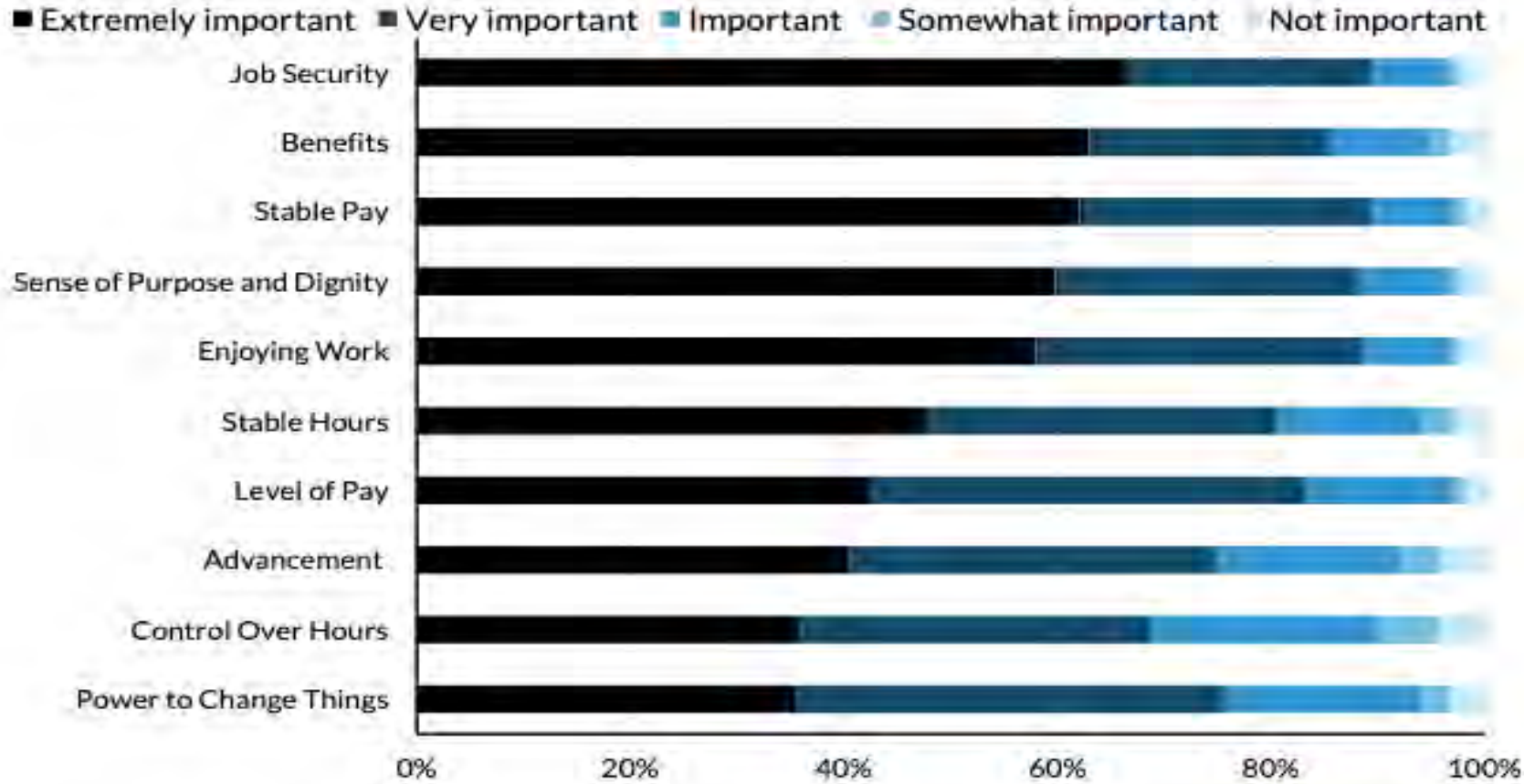
Health,
Safety +
Labor
Protections



Worker
Voice

Improving Job Quality: What Workers Say...

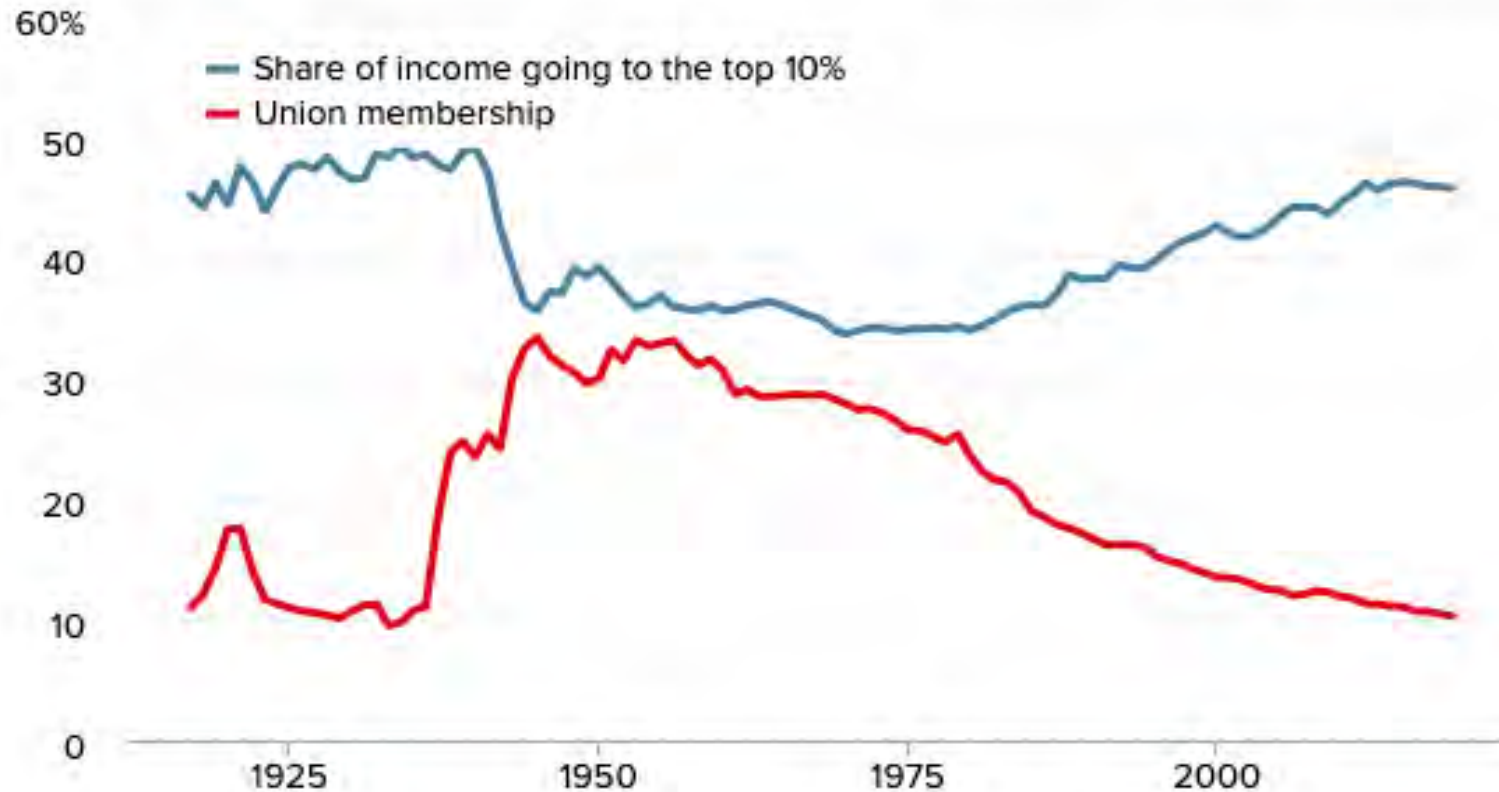
Job Security and Benefits Were Most Frequently Cited as "Extremely Important"



Source: Urban Institute / Gallup

Improving Job Quality: Impact of Worker Voice

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



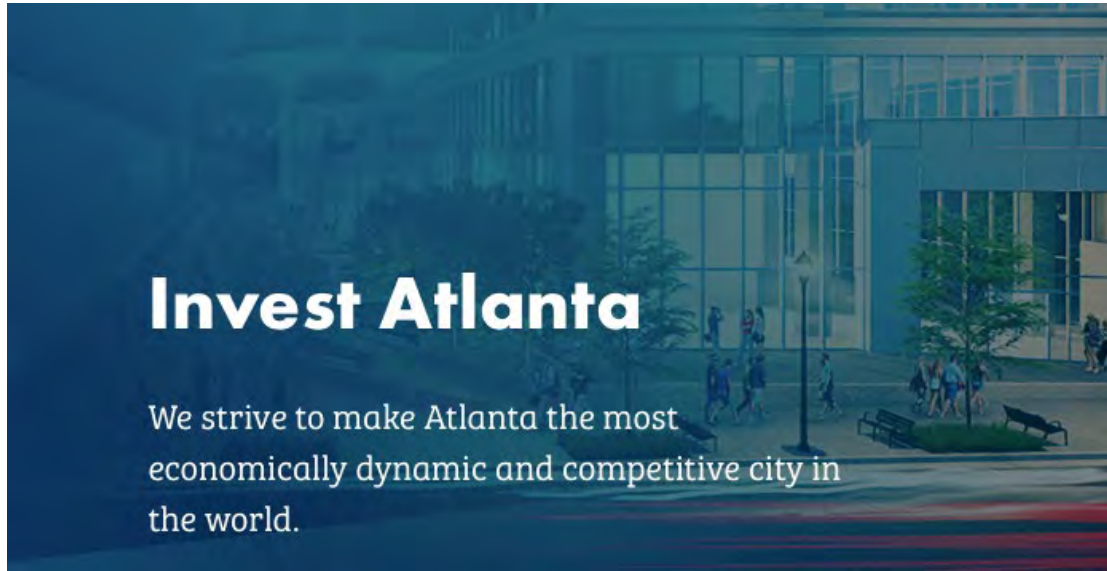
Source: Economic Policy Institute

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

Skill-based hiring +
promotion
approaches

Apprenticeships +
high-quality training
programs

On-ramps to middle-
skills jobs

Enforcement of
antidiscrimination
laws

Remedies for
occupational
segregation

Universal, high-speed
internet access

Entrepreneurship

Policies addressing
workplace fissuring
and misclassification

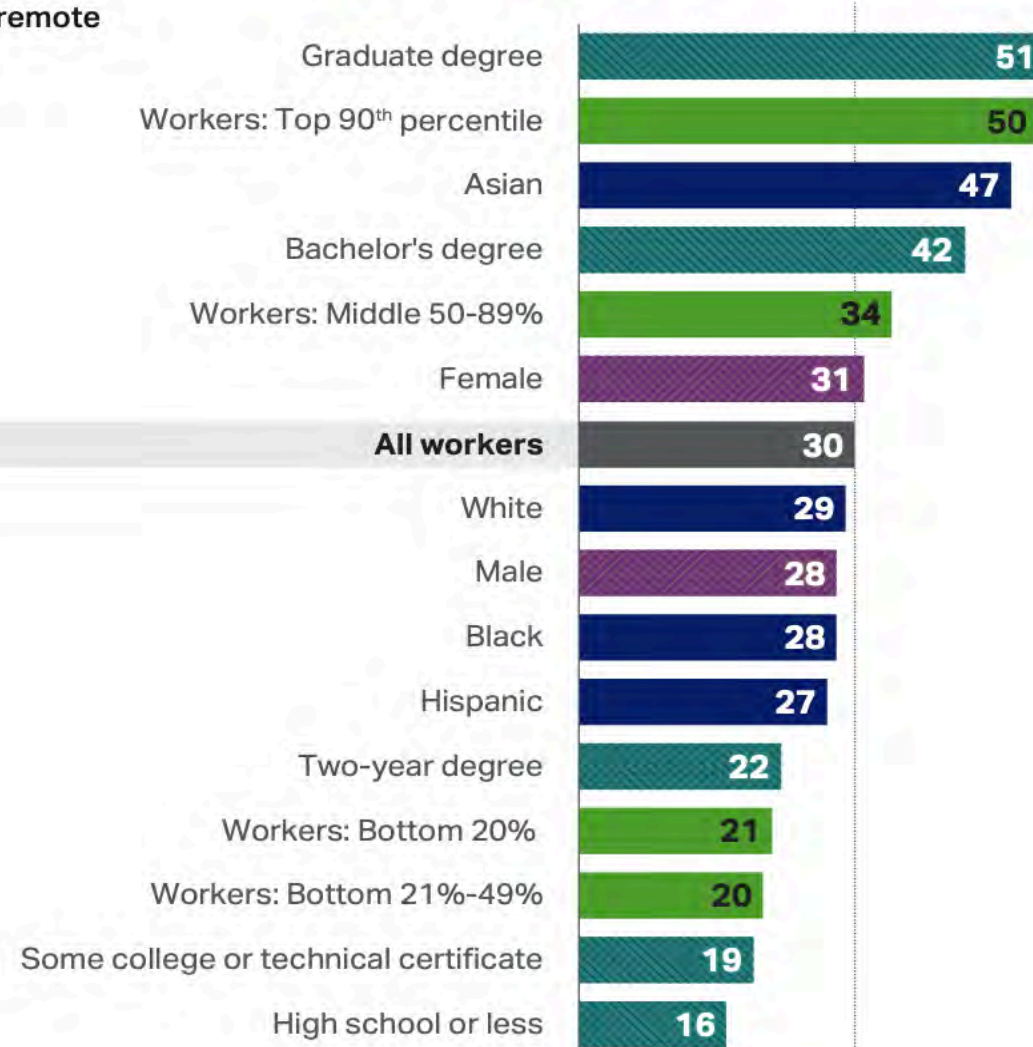
Affordable/accessible
childcare, housing,
transportation

Expanding access to good jobs: Universal high-speed internet access

Chart 7: Access to Remote Work During the Pandemic, by 2019 Income, Race, Ethnicity and Education Level

● 2019 Labor income distribution ● Race/Ethnicity ● Education level ● Gender

% Always remote



Source: Gallup

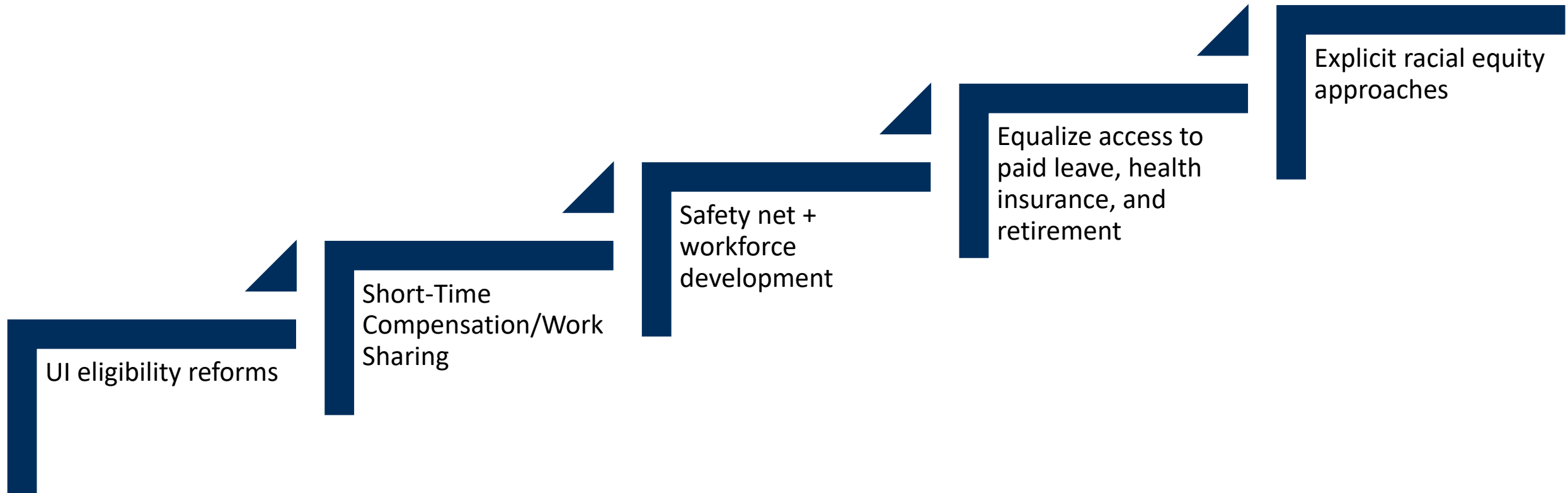
Expanding Access to Good Jobs: Sectoral Training Partnerships



Source: Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership



3. Reducing economic shocks from job loss: Potential Policy + Practice Responses



STC SHORT-TIME COMPENSATION

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

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