

THE  
**FAMILIES &  
WORKERS**  
FUND

REIMAGINING JOB QUALITY MEASUREMENT









# DIGGING DEEPER

NOVEMBER 2022



# DIGGING DEEPER INTO THE 10 BIG IDEAS

In order to help you navigate these 10 recommendations, we've put together this legend that will enable you to find the recommendations that are most pertinent to you and/or your organization:

ICON	DEFINITION		
	Anchor Institution		Nonprofit
	Business		Philanthropy
	Federal Government		State & Local Governments
	Investor		Workforce Provider

Reimagining Job Quality Measurement was developed by the Job Quality Measurement Initiative, a collaboration between the Families and Workers Fund, Ford Foundation, Irvine Foundation, Lumina Foundation, Omidyar Network, Schmidt Futures, and the U.S. Department of Labor, along with more than 70 experts. We hope you'll collaborate with us to advance better job quality measurement and better jobs for the people who power our economy.



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# 01

## Measure what matters to workers, capturing a full range of job quality indicators.

THESE ACTIONS ARE INTENDED FOR...



Regularly and systematically measuring the set of job quality elements that workers most value in trusted federal datasets will change public narratives about the health of the economy, and enable data-informed decisions that propel equitable economic opportunity.

In 2022, leaders across government, business, the nonprofit sector, and labor—along with workers themselves—made important strides to align on a shared [good jobs definition](#)<sup>1</sup> driven by worker priorities. Now, we must attach indicators and metrics to each element, and embed these in federal statistical surveys, workforce program performance measures, and commercial measurement tools to scale worker-centered job quality measurement.

To put this into practice, **federal agencies**, with support from **businesses**, **nonprofits**, **philanthropy**, **state and local governments**, and **workforce development and training providers** should:

# 1. Broaden job quality indicators beyond wage.

Wage is critically important but insufficient to determine the quality of a job. The quality of other factors—such as schedule stability, benefits, or voice—is [keenly important to workers](#),<sup>2</sup> and directly impacts worker attraction, advancement, and retention, creating ripple effects in employer productivity and economic prosperity. Tracking and analyzing these factors systemically allows both the public and private sectors to support and tap into the full potential of workers. Capturing this information also allows researchers to assess how core aspects of job quality impact worker wellbeing, economic security, and other critical outcomes.

[Businesses](#), [nonprofits](#), [philanthropy](#), [state and local governments](#), and [workforce development and training providers](#) should:

- Adopt a shared definition of a good job which includes non-compensation aspects such as worker safety, career pathways, schedules, and worker voice. The release of shared [Good Jobs Principles](#)<sup>3</sup> by the

U.S. Departments of Labor (DOL) and Commerce (DOC), which closely resembles the [Good Jobs Champions Statement](#)<sup>4</sup> utilized by the JQMI, is a groundbreaking step. Federal agencies should use this definition in procurements and encourage state and local governments to infuse it into their own procurements and workforce system metrics.

- Building on the work of the JQMI to identify specific metrics and indicators to capture each component of job quality (see [Appendix 4](#)), DOL can take the lead in standardizing job quality measurement across federal agencies and can provide guidance about metrics to state and local governments, nonprofits, investors, and employers. Philanthropy can support state and local agencies to develop and pilot scalable measurement systems that capture the full range of job quality indicators.

Using common language, metrics, and benchmarks to track and report on job elements can help to inform a more robust, shared understanding of workers' lived experience of the labor market and facilitate action to close equity and access gaps.

## 2. Refine existing survey modules to collect targeted job quality data.

Existing statistical instruments managed by DOL and other federal agencies capture critical information about market activity, working conditions, price changes, and productivity in the U.S. economy, but fall short of capturing the realities of key job quality elements for workers.

To strengthen job quality measurement, working group members proposed that [federal agencies](#):

- Add a short set of questions measuring key components of job quality to federal surveys such as the National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS) and evaluate options for future inclusion in the Current Population Survey (CPS). One important category of questions would measure work hour stability, predictability, and control to track changing configurations of scheduling practices across occupations and industries. The addition of these questions would support estimation of disparities in the quality of work schedules by worker characteristics
- Explore options to update either the Employment Situation Establishment Survey or the Quick Business Response Survey, which can be deployed on an adhoc basis, module by module, much as was done [during the COVID-19 pandemic](#),<sup>5</sup> to include a data point connecting the aggregate weekly hours and wages specifically for net jobs added or lost in each period to the existing data on average weekly hours and wages reported by subsector. This change is necessary to reflect the substantial shifts in the universe of jobs available to U.S. workers since the survey



methodology was developed as many jobs classified as full time now represent fewer than 40 hours. See [Appendix 3](#) for additional details related to measuring full-time employment.

- Run regular survey modules devoted to gathering more data on workplace climate and worker experiences of discrimination through NLSY or CPS. This will provide a fuller picture of how discrimination and biased treatment on the job contribute to turnover and decreased job satisfaction for women, workers of color, and older workers, as well as present significant health risk through their impacts on stress levels. Anti-discrimination enforcement typically takes place well after an incident has occurred, and there are few mechanisms for identifying industries and occupations that are regularly subject to higher rates of discrimination and bias. These data could help policymakers, regulatory agencies, and business proactively curtail discrimination and bias before it results in a job separation or other major workplace disruption. The Health and Retirement Study’s [“Psychosocial Leave Behind Questionnaire”](#)<sup>6</sup> provides one model for comparison, and James S. Jackson’s work developing psychosocial scales

for [Major and Everyday Experiences of Discrimination](#)<sup>7</sup> could help to guide the question format.

- Revise the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) survey to request that respondents report earnings and tips separately from hourly wage rates in order to better understand employer reliance on gratuities to compensate workers, and provide a more nuanced picture of income. This breakdown would provide insights into the ratio of tips to earnings in different occupations, industries and geographies and information could be displayed in a user-friendly interface via the OEWS website. Insights on the breakdown of earnings could support workers exploring career options, as well as worker advocates seeking to provide stakeholder education on the impacts of subminimum wages for tipped occupations.

- Adjust the Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS) questionnaire to divide the category of “layoffs and discharges” into two or more separate categories to reflect the reason for involuntary discharge including business closure, reductions in operations, temporary workforce adjustments, and performance related termination. These data are currently unavailable from any other federally-administered surveys and private surveys on this topic are limited in their scope. Data were previously collected through the Mass Layoff Statistics (MLS) program on “reason for separation” in extended mass layoff events involving 50 or more workers laid off for more than 30 days but the MLS was discontinued in 2013 due to budget cuts. Revising JOLTS would provide deeper insights into workers’ job security, drivers of unemployment, and discharge variances by industry, geography, and business cycles.



# 02

## Center equity in measurement.

THESE ACTIONS ARE INTENDED FOR...



We measure equity, writes Deputy Secretary of Labor Julie Su in the U.S. Department of Labor’s (DOL) 2022 [Enterprise Data Strategy](#),<sup>8</sup> “not simply because it is the right thing to do but because building an inclusive economy measured by the experiences of these workers is the way to make sure no one is left behind.”

Reimagining our data systems so that racial and gender equity sits at their core is a shared priority for data system leaders inside and outside of government, and the Biden Administration has already made [tremendous progress](#).<sup>9</sup>

Federal, state, and local agencies can build on these efforts by collecting disaggregated data, examining program performance metrics and the narratives shaping them, and conducting equity assessments, leading to more responsive, evidence-based program design. Measurement systems should be purposefully structured to include input from workers who have historically lacked access to good jobs at every step of the process, from design through evaluation.

To put this into practice, [federal agencies](#) should work with [state and local governments](#) and [philanthropy](#) to:



# 1. Implement requirements for data disaggregation in workforce and social service programs, administrative data, and federal surveys.

In order to address equity gaps it is critical to understand how existing programs are serving distinct communities, especially those historically locked out of opportunity such as people of color, women, and immigrants. Unfortunately, existing data systems do not always require demographic data and present many limitations in breaking down information by sub-groups and intersectionalities (such as by both race and gender) or connecting basic demographics to life circumstances such as parenting, immigration status and country of origin, or other barriers to employment. This restricts visibility into disparate impacts that populations may be experiencing.

To understand and address inequities, [federal agencies](#) and [state and local governments](#) can:

- Adjust federal statistical sources, including Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the American Community Survey (ACS) data, to allow for deeper disaggregation to better understand the needs of communities. This requires ensuring that surveys have sufficient sample sizes to both protect privacy of individuals and break down data by race, gender, geography, and other characteristics, including going beyond high-level ethnicity categorizations to understand identity by historic nation of origin. These changes would require either collecting larger samples from surveys, changing data collection, or merging existing data sets, which would likely necessitate investments in human or technical resources, rule changes, and information collection reviews. This effort would build on significant progress already underway, such as [the BLS' important move](#)<sup>10</sup> to begin publishing monthly jobs data on Native American and Native Alaskan workers, efforts to disaggregate demographic data for the nation's Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities, and the recommendation from President Biden's [Equitable Data Working Group](#)<sup>11</sup> to generate



“disaggregated statistical estimates to characterize experiences of historically underserved groups using survey data.” The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has also taken steps to support agencies in disaggregation, including [publishing plain language guidance](#)<sup>12</sup> on flexibilities that agencies can use to improve disaggregation, presentation, and analysis of race and ethnicity standards, as well as launching a [formal revision process](#)<sup>13</sup> to revisit race and ethnicity standards.

- Encourage states to collect and report demographic data for all workforce development, training and social services programs as well as in [Unemployment Insurance \(UI\) claims data](#).<sup>14</sup> For example, using OMB and [DOL guidance](#),<sup>15</sup> states could require consistent reporting and incentivize analysis of program-level performance data by race, to [uncover and address disparate outcomes](#).<sup>16</sup> DOL and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) can use funding and reporting processes, including more flexible timelines, access to performance-based funds, and high performing workforce board recognition as practical incentives to reward expanded reporting. DOL and HHS can also provide technical

assistance to state and local areas to increase understanding of how to protect individual privacy and use disaggregated data to surface important learning for ongoing program improvements as well as post-program evaluation. This could include drawing on OMB guidance, existing DOL Training and Employment Guidance Letters, and new analysis to provide guidance and templates for disaggregated reporting, including specific job quality questions and metrics, and recommendations about potential sources of data that state and local agencies can use as part of program evaluation. A technical assistance strategy targeted to states and localities could also leverage the resources that federal agencies have already developed to accelerate cross-agency sharing of federal data through the Federal Data Strategy and the Advisory Committee on Data for Evidence-Building. Federal agencies could also partner with data-focused nonprofits such as Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy, which helps state and local governments, academics, and community-based organizations navigate the confusing array of federal privacy laws and regulations to build integrated data systems.

- Incentivize employers participating in the public workforce system or public procurements to track and share hiring and separation data at a disaggregated level, including enabling multiple data elements to be analyzed simultaneously (such as percent of Black women). Workforce agencies can infuse requirements for disaggregated data in employer wage or loan subsidy programs and procurement and purchasing processes, as well as offer prioritized services to businesses willing to share disaggregated data.

## 2. Uproot harmful assumptions and metrics embedded in workforce and social services systems.

The default performance metrics baked into many publicly-funded social programs are not evidence-based, but instead based on age-old assumptions about what causes poverty—that it is due to individual character flaws versus social, political, or economic systems that have [repeatedly failed](#)<sup>17</sup> people of color, immigrants, and other marginalized

communities. What we choose to measure or not measure can either perpetuate these harmful narratives and disparities, or can help to uproot assumptions and address inequities.

In social services and workforce programs, data collected primarily focuses on participant compliance, through metrics such as employment status or the completion of programmatic requirements, and the measure of success is typically reduction in “dependency” on public benefits rather than evidence that a participant has secured a good job and is on a pathway to economic mobility. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, for instance, gives states the authority [to impose strict work requirements that may perpetuate racial stereotypes](#)<sup>18</sup> and rewards providers who connect participants to any available job, however unstable. As a result, the program [fails to deliver optimal](#)<sup>19</sup> results for participants.

Such deficit-based approaches often mask the poor quality of jobs as data collection centers primarily on “improving” the individual and negates the responsibility of governments and employers to tackle systemic inequities. The Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) program, for example, relies on assumptions of individual

responsibility that can obscure the role that occupational segregation plays in shaping labor markets, and inadvertently reproduce disparities. Workforce agencies are rewarded for job placements, but metrics fail to track, let alone disaggregate, job quality data. As a result, many participants are placed into [high-turnover jobs that lead to program churn](#).<sup>20</sup> Black workers, who are overrepresented in the program, have the [lowest post-placement earnings among all participants](#).<sup>21</sup>

To uproot discrimination from federally-funded programs and instead prioritize evidence and outcomes, JQMI working groups proposed that [federal agencies](#):

- Conduct a [definitional reset](#)<sup>22</sup> of what data are collected and why. For example, shift programs like TANF, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education and Training (SNAP E&T), and WIOA away from a punitive focus on compliance requirements and reducing government expenditures to an evidence-based approach that rewards effective programs that deliver results for all workers, such as by providing participants with equitable opportunities to secure quality jobs.

Overhaul data collection systems to focus on understanding and harnessing worker potential rather than documenting deficiencies, including shifting reporting from emphasizing negative statistics (e.g. barriers, demonstration of eligibility) to documenting assets, and reducing burden to the worker by eliminating duplicative data collection requirements that can re-traumatize participants, in alignment with the Biden Administration's focus on [reduction of administrative burden](#).<sup>23</sup>

- In accordance with the Biden-Harris Administration's [Recommendations for Advancing Use of Equitable Data](#),<sup>24</sup> conduct [equity assessments of federal programs](#)<sup>25</sup> to uncover programs delivering disparate impacts. Federal, state and local agencies adapting programs to advance equity should employ human-centered design approaches to engage those the program intends to serve in envisioning not only how to meet their needs but how to capture and communicate results. Refining and streamlining what, when and how data are collected and communicated—in collaboration with program participants—can help to direct measurement and resources toward the job quality and equity outcomes

prioritized by workers themselves and enable local communities to hold government and employers accountable. This shift will require collaboration between agencies that collect data, particularly DOL and HHS, and with communities to address bias. However, this investment can also serve as an important step forward in rebuilding trust with diverse communities as services become more responsive and inclusive.

### 3. Include worker voice in data collection.

Workers are experts in their own needs and experiences at work, and should be centered in data collection. It is especially important to hear from workers who have been most locked out of opportunity, such as contract workers with limited protections and enforcement recourse. This includes both defining what measures are important and determining how collection is carried out. Existing federal and commercial surveys collect a wealth of data but stop short of asking questions that surface key job quality considerations like whether workers feel

safe, experience discrimination and bias, are free to unionize, or have the benefits needed to care for themselves and their families.

In addition, we must measure whether workers have access to voice mechanisms at work, including whether workers feel that they have the power to change things about their workplaces through individual or collective action. Across JQMI working groups, participants noted that while there is strong consensus that [workers want and need more voice](#)<sup>26</sup> to improve their jobs and support innovation and productivity within their companies, there is no shared, cross-sector definition of “worker voice,” and the ability to exercise voice to improve working conditions and contribute to company operations is rarely measured in public or private data collection.

To elevate worker voice, [federal agencies](#), and [state and local governments](#), with support from [philanthropy](#), can take the following steps:

- DOL and HHS can engage workers in the design of data collection and evaluation processes, in accordance with [HHS’ commitment](#)<sup>27</sup> to incorporating individuals with lived experience into



program design and administration. This includes exploring how workers prefer to be engaged, what topics are most meaningful, and what compensation or incentives are appropriate for time spent sharing their perspectives. Insights gathered should be used to monitor and improve operational standards in programmatic service delivery.

- The U.S. Census Bureau should explore including additional [worker voice](#)<sup>28</sup> questions that capture whether workers have individual or collective power to improve their workplaces, and whether they are free to represent their interests through collective bargaining or other structures. This includes exploring workers' preferred means for taking actions to improve their economic, psychological, and social outcomes and experiences at work. A first step will be to draw on [prior research](#)<sup>29</sup> to document existing, well-validated, and broadly-accepted concepts and measurements, including the kinds of objective measures typically preferred by federal statistical agencies, along with select attitudinal or perception-based items with a proven link to worker economic and behavioral outcomes. Questions should be standardized across government surveys and collected regularly through

tools such as National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS). Responses should be analyzed for trends such as how women and people of color feel regarding their current workplace and their future labor prospects; the correlation between worker voice and other elements of job quality; and what voice channels (e.g., participation in a union, access to employee ownership, or participation in an employer-provided survey) result in workplace changes. This work directly aligns with the [Executive Order](#)<sup>30</sup> signed in April 2021 creating a task force dedicated to mobilizing federal agency policies, programs and practices to empower workers.

See [Appendix 4](#) for sample worker voice questions.

- Philanthropy and investors should support expanded and standardized collection of crowdsourced worker data through platforms such as Glassdoor, PayScale, Coworker.org and The Shift Project to capture worker-provided, firm-level data on job quality.

- While many firms currently crowdsource data, the data are not standardized nor are there enough observations at the individual company level to provide statistically reliable results. Philanthropy and investors can use market-based incentives to scale and systematize data collection. Data collected can be made publicly available in a clear, easy to consume manner such as an aggregated job quality index to inform individual employment decision-making and investments. The index should provide transparent information on data sourcing, collection, and aggregation methodologies to address questions about bias and support clear interpretation. Such standardized scoring mechanisms—including the questions, metrics, and benchmarks that guide the analysis of the crowdsourced data—would also serve as a guide for workers navigating employment opportunities and employers looking to better understand how to attract and retain workers. Making this information publicly available can help to highlight high-road employers, spotlight and spread promising practices, encourage dialogue with businesses, and shed light on the industries and occupations experiencing poor job quality, including higher rates of discrimination. See [Appendix 2](#) for a landscape analysis of data platforms and [Appendix 4](#) for a proposed aggregation approach.



# 03

## Increase mandatory human capital data disclosure.

THESE ACTIONS ARE INTENDED FOR...



As human-capital-intensive service sector jobs play an increasingly important role in the U.S. economy, investors are seeking more information from companies about their workforces and job quality practices. This reflects a growing but incomplete body of evidence, as well as investor perspectives, that job quality is a critical and material indicator of business performance and resilience. Now is the time to leverage this [mounting interest](#)<sup>31</sup> in human capital disclosure and the “S” of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investing to strengthen U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) reporting requirements for public companies. Philanthropy can help to align government, investors, and business behind a common set of human capital disclosure metrics and a simple reporting framework to recommend to the SEC. Federal agencies can reduce the reporting burden on businesses by facilitating access to and linkage of the significant human capital data that firms already report to government entities.

Researchers, in partnership with investors, can accelerate efforts to gather human capital data from firms, by building the evidence base that providing good jobs strengthens business performance, including by reducing hiring and turnover costs and improving worker engagement and productivity.

To put this into practice, [federal agencies](#) seeking to build this field can work in collaboration with [businesses](#), [investors](#), [nonprofits](#), and [philanthropy](#) to:

# 1. Align on a shared set of foundational human capital metrics and a reporting framework that could help to shape the evolution of human capital disclosure.

The most promising channel to scale firm-level disclosure on job quality metrics is through a SEC reporting requirement for public companies, similar in nature to a Form 10-K or Def14A Proxy Statement. In 2020, the SEC began requiring publicly traded companies to [report on human capital](#),<sup>32</sup> including “measures or objectives that address the development, attraction and retention of personnel.” However, these “principles-based” disclosure expectations give firms broad discretion to pick and choose what they report.

To help shape the continued evolution of human capital disclosure, philanthropy could convene key federal agencies, along with representatives from business, labor, and the nonprofit sector, to identify a core set of standardized job quality metrics and organize them into

a new human capital measurement framework. The Human Capital Management Coalition has taken an important step in proposing [four core metrics for investors to align around](#)<sup>33</sup>— (1) number of employees, including full time, part-time and contingent labor; (2) total cost of the workforce; (3) turnover; and (4) employee diversity and inclusion. Though data disclosure on even this [limited subset of metrics is low](#),<sup>34</sup> it offers an important starting point, and work is needed to continue building on these metrics to eventually paint a more complete picture of human capital practices and job quality. Investors, advocates, and regulatory agencies hold varied perspectives about which human capital metrics are material and measurable. Coordinating stakeholders behind a shared human capital framework to guide mandatory disclosure and establishing a simple reporting form like the EEO-1 could dramatically increase availability of job quality data.



To develop and align around a common set of metrics, [businesses](#), [investors](#), [federal agencies](#), and [philanthropy](#) could:

- Invest in convening key partners to hold a public dialogue about the importance of human capital transparency, and recommend key metrics for inclusion in SEC disclosure requirements. Government agencies including the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), and the White House National Economic Council (NEC) can play important roles in these conversations, alongside business, investors, and labor (including pension fund managers who invest workers' capital). These efforts should identify a core set of standardized job quality metrics, vetted by key stakeholders, and organize them into a new human capital measurement framework. DOL and DOC could take the lead in developing a human capital disclosure template similar to the EEO-1, drawing on data that firms already disclose to government agencies when they employ at least 100 workers.
- Support the development and testing of the proposed human capital framework, including creating norms for disaggregation of metrics (by demographic, occupational, or other worker characteristics), identifying a calculation methodology for each metric so that outputs are comparable across companies, creating a user-friendly corporate reporting structure for mandatory disclosure (similar in nature to the [U.K. Gender Pay Gap Report](#)<sup>35</sup>), and piloting the framework and reporting structure with a subset of companies.
- To drive adoption of the proposed human capital metrics framework, DOL, DOC, and partners engaged in the framework development process could jointly compose a report or advisory note to the SEC outlining proposed standardized job quality metrics and the tested reporting structure framework.

## 2. To leverage existing business data to simplify human capital reporting, implement and maintain a single firm identifier across federal and state systems.

Businesses currently provide the same data to multiple federal agencies. Administrative data on employers is routinely collected through a variety of different sources—business licensing processes, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) reviews, small business loans, rapid response, layoff aversion, workforce training programs and even [BLS data](#)<sup>36</sup>—but it is challenging, and often cost prohibitive, to link information without a standardized identifier. For example, a [report](#)<sup>37</sup> by the Data Foundation found that “36 U.S. federal agencies are using up to 50 distinct, incompatible entity identification systems. Of these systems, many are proprietary, distinct, and incompatible with one another, raising costs and burden for federal agencies tracking non-federal entities in order to perform a regulatory, statistical,

procurement, or assistance function.” To simplify human capital disclosure—including easing reporting burden for businesses—it will be critical to identify and utilize the human capital data that government agencies are already collecting (such as through Internal Revenue Service reporting), and to take steps to standardize collection to enable data linkage.

To expand the availability of business-level data to federal agencies and investors, working group members proposed that [federal agencies](#):

- Adopt a standard identifier, such as the [Legal Entity Identifier \(LEI\)](#),<sup>38</sup> a 20-digit code based on a standard developed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). This should be accompanied by development of a standardized employer taxonomy with metadata including firm locations and subsidiary relationships to further standardize the content in business records. Such an effort can begin with the DOL standardizing the collection across Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and non-WIOA programs, and eventually serve as an example of a harmonized standard for the broader federal community.

- Establish a Memorandum of Understanding between government agencies which collect business-level data to facilitate data sharing among agencies and allow for data linking. Then, develop a standardized process, similar to that used for [access to existing BLS data](#),<sup>39</sup> for government agencies such as the SEC, along with investors, researchers, and businesses themselves, to access linked business-level data and utilize it in the public disclosure process.

### 3. Collect data to build the evidence base that good jobs are good investments.

While investors increasingly understand the relationship between job quality and firm performance, the body of evidence documenting the financial materiality of human capital metrics remains underdeveloped. Additional research clearly demonstrating that improved job quality is correlated with enhanced firm resilience, talent attraction and retention, and financial performance is important to helping investors, companies, and regulators understand why expanded human capital disclosure is critical.

**Philanthropy** can collaborate with **investors** and **nonprofits** to:

- Support data partnerships between investors and researchers—including academics from business schools—to help build the evidence base that job quality is financially **material**<sup>40</sup> to business performance and economic valuation, encouraging more investment firms to collect and utilize job quality data to compare investment targets. Private equity firms and investment platforms that are or would like to start collecting more human capital data from their portfolio companies or borrowers can test and demonstrate the correlation between job quality and long-term value, including the portfolio company’s ability to attract and retain talent, deliver innovation, and maintain operational resilience in the face of shocks.

- Philanthropy and investors can partner to develop and share actionable tools, training, and frameworks to socialize and spread promising practices for human capital data collection and utilization. Firms like HCAP, Lafayette Square, and Two Sigma Impact have been pioneering new, good jobs investing strategies, including sophisticated ways to collect human capital and job quality data from portfolio companies, and a group of CDFIs like Pacific Community Ventures, Coastal Enterprises, and Northern Initiatives have long been innovating in new ways to collect and utilize such data. Learning from these leaders and developing more open source, actionable tools will help the market differentiate legitimate, data-driven investing strategies that demonstrably support and create good jobs.





# 04

## Link public and private data to gain new insights into the quality of jobs.

THESE ACTIONS ARE INTENDED FOR...



Pairing data from diverse government and commercial sources, standardizing collection processes, and creating shared data goals that prioritize [privacy, consent, and equity](#)<sup>41</sup> will not only improve government effectiveness but also provide fresh insights into who workers are, their experiences in the labor market, and the support they need to advance.

Elements of job quality data sit in a diverse set of administrative, programmatic, statistical and business databases but the current lack of critical linkages between and among these public and private datasets limits stakeholders' ability to understand the full dimensions of jobs in the United States and how these impact worker stability and mobility outcomes.

This recommendation advances several federal priorities. The [Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018](#)<sup>42</sup> requires federal agencies to build capacity to share data for research purposes to answer important policy questions, and authorized the Advisory Committee on Data for Evidence Building that includes experts from federal and state governments, academia, and private research organizations.

This Committee is charged with issuing [National Secure Data Service \(NSDS\)](#),<sup>43</sup> which was authorized as a new National Science Foundation program in the CHIPS-Plus Act. NSDS will be a secure, privacy-protecting data-linkage platform that enables data from federal, state, and local governments and the private sector to be merged to produce research findings. The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) [Enterprise Data Strategy](#),<sup>44</sup> which calls for making data findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable, also supports these efforts.

To put this into practice, [federal agencies](#) and [state and local governments](#), in collaboration with [businesses](#), can:

# 1. Centralize, standardize, and expand wage records across all states.

Unemployment wage records are a central source of administrative data on worker and firm-level wages and hours, which provide crucial inputs into the success of programs like the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). However, each state manages the data collected from employers separately and according to its own standards, creating significant variation in the level of detail available within the records.

To standardize and expand records, [federal](#) and [state and local governments](#) can take the following steps:

- DOL could collaborate with a coalition of willing states to develop a standardized, enhanced wage record to include a richer set of fields capturing job quality elements beyond quarterly wage to support statistical, programmatic and research purposes. Fields could include [hours, occupation codes or job titles, employment status, start dates and location](#),<sup>45</sup> building on some of the work already in place in

states like Washington, Indiana and Nebraska. Occupational coding could be done at the state or federal level, based on job titles provided by employers, to minimize burden to businesses. DOL and state partners could also explore pathways and pilots to expand wage records to include information on non-W2 workers including schedules, location and occupation. This work will build on multiple Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) efforts, including pilots related to wage and claims records and the efforts of the Labor Market Information network, as well as the [Workforce Information Advisory Council's](#)<sup>46</sup> work to ensure that individual students and workers have the information they need to make good decisions regarding their education and employment.

- Government agencies could consider requiring or incentivizing states to use a small portion of the funding they receive from DOL for Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage record program administration and modernization to implement the new wage reporting standard. This would enable federal agencies to build consensus across states for creating a centralized database of UI wage records, such as through a



public-private partnership under the Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC) model, or a federally held database at DOL—much like the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This consolidated database would lower the costs and administrative burden on states, mitigate the challenges faced by programs and researchers in obtaining direct agreements with individual states, and provide access to valuable microdata from UI wage and claim records to better understand job quality. Because UI wage record data elements are determined largely by state statutes, aligning data elements could require state legislative action in some cases.

## 2. Expand access to existing federal job quality data.

NDNH is an under-utilized federal repository of data housed at HHS that includes unemployment insurance quarterly wage records, unemployment compensation records, and wage data for federal workers and the military as well as individuals working in a state that differs from their residence. This set of comprehensive data goes beyond what is currently available on job quality from any single source at DOL, and increased access would directly support both the implementation and evaluation of a variety of workforce programs including WIOA Title I. Unencumbered access to NDNH would also avoid lengthy individual negotiations with states and avoid burdening state UI agencies who are already overtasked with UI administration. This proposed change has appeared in prior administrations' budgets to Congress including under the Obama Administration in the 2016 budget request but to date has not been implemented.

Federal agencies can expand access to the NDNH in the following ways:

- DOL should explore the viability, in collaboration with HHS, of using the existing provision (Subsection (j)(5) of 42 U.S.C. 658) that authorizes the HHS Secretary to provide access to NDNH data for “research purposes found by the Secretary to be likely to contribute to achieving the purposes of” the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. A statutory purpose of TANF is “promoting job preparation” and “work,” which is highly aligned with ETA’s mission of supporting effective workforce preparation for low-income individuals who are parents or may become parents who may need TANF assistance in the future. Utilizing HHS’ existing statutory authority to broaden NDNH access for research will require addressing specific privacy and confidentiality components including requirements for data minimization, narrow and specific scoping of data use, security processes and penalties for unauthorized access, use, or re-disclosure. Currently data is available to DOL’s Chief Evaluation Office on a limited basis but requires manual transmission of lists of individuals involved in current studies through

WIOA programs and project-specific MOUs; establishing a mechanism for unencumbered access would reduce overhead for both agencies and improve collaboration to advance job quality.

### 3. Link administrative and statistical data to better understand the labor market.

While statistical, administrative and programmatic datasets each provide important insights into the labor market, the data are currently federated, inhibiting the ability of program administrators or researchers to fully understand non-wage components of job quality or equity. Lack of access to comprehensive datasets prevents agencies and their grantees from accurately measuring the results of federal programs intended to improve economic mobility. It also impairs researchers’ capacity to build a deeper understanding of population needs and effective interventions. And it prevents adoption of outcomes-based payment models that can incentivize innovation and improvement in workforce and social service programs. To address

these issues and to systematically uproot inequity, creating mechanisms to connect demographic data with accurate information on workers' earnings, benefits, schedules, and employment arrangements is vital. Efforts to link data would also advance the goals of the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking launched by the Obama Administration, as well as the [Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act](#)<sup>47</sup> and inter-agency Advisory Committee on Data for Evidence Building.

To address this, [federal agencies](#), in partnership with [state and local governments](#), can:

- Provide coordinated messaging to states and localities on permissible methods to link and analyze their data in order to maximize data use with considerations for individual privacy protections, consent, ethics and transparency. This includes incentivizing intra-state collaboration in areas such as UI records, WIOA programs, or education data so that states can structure collaborative programming to meet the needs of businesses operating across state lines or workers living in one area and working in another.

- Explore possibilities for linking administrative data on non-compensation aspects of job quality to existing population-level research datasets at the Census Bureau, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and HHS. This could include injury rates, visa access, and union coverage available in sources such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), workers compensation systems, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and the National Vital Statistics System (NVSS). This would require exploring pathways to consistently identify business establishments, as described in greater detail in the discussion of a single firm identifier in [Idea #5](#). Research should specifically address understanding legal restrictions, privacy and equity considerations, as well as data availability and storage format.

## 4. Aggregate job quality to family level measures so that earnings, benefits, schedules and working conditions of multiple workers are considered.

There is currently no formal federal monitoring of the total earnings and benefits that households receive from employers, the public benefits that may be needed to fill in gaps, or the job conditions across families. While the BLS does produce “[A Profile of the Working Poor](#)”<sup>48</sup> and the [Employment Characteristics of Families](#),<sup>49</sup> neither include a household earnings measure. The Census Bureau also issues an [Income and Poverty publication](#)<sup>50</sup> but family earnings are not compared to family poverty thresholds and it does not include data on employer-provided health insurance for working families. While the existing resources provide important insights, lack of family-level earnings data limits data-driven policy discussions.

There are three federally-sponsored household-based economic and program benefit surveys: the Current Population

Survey (CPS)/Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC), American Community Survey (ACS), and Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). These surveys have household unit-based weights to create family-level measures, but have incomplete measures of job quality.

To better understand the realities and impacts of job quality for families and not just individual workers, [federal agencies](#), such as DOL and HHS, should:

- Explore using existing data sources to estimate family-sustaining earnings (CPS, ACS, SIPP), access to health insurance (CPS, ACS, SIPP), pensions (CPS), and nonstandard work schedules (SIPP) at the family level. For example, using CPS data, earnings can be calculated for working families and included in existing publications. Household surveys such as the CPS use proxy respondents such that one person answers all employment questions on behalf of all other household members. However, it may be that the designated respondent does not know the details of all other family members’ jobs.



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- While rigorous testing and validation of proxy measures should be undertaken for the CPS, in the meantime a comprehensive set of job benefit and working conditions questions could be added to the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), which already interviews all working household members. For more details on this recommendation, see [Appendix 3](#).





# 05

## Leverage business data to demonstrate the return on investment from good jobs.

THESE ACTIONS ARE INTENDED FOR...



Monitoring and improving job quality requires data and buy-in from employers, who ultimately design jobs and hire workers. Historically, few businesses have released job quality data, hampering decision-making by workers, policymakers, and training and workforce development providers. Government data on job quality are generally aggregated by industry, employer size or other group characteristics rather than provided at the firm level, and while publicly-traded companies provide limited data for various U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filings, there are no standardized templates and many smaller or privately held companies are excluded.

Today, as we emerge from the heart of the COVID-19 pandemic and enter into a tight labor market coupled with high inflation, employers are increasingly looking for new strategies to attract and retain talent. By sharing their data with trusted nonprofit partners, businesses can learn how they stack up with peer firms and how to strengthen their workforce policies and practices to improve profitability and operational resiliency.

To put this into practice, **federal agencies**, **investors**, **nonprofits**, and **workforce development and training providers**, can partner with **businesses** to:

# 1. Encourage submission of job quality measures through voluntary disclosure tools and incentives.

The “great reshuffle”—in which more than [47 million people](#)<sup>51</sup> quit their jobs in 2021, and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data showed a record [five million more job openings than unemployed people](#)<sup>52</sup> in March 2022—prompted many companies to question their talent management practices and consider new approaches. These companies can leverage the growing [availability of voluntary job quality self-assessment tools](#),<sup>53</sup> which enable businesses to learn about how their workforce practices stack up to peers, and access technical assistance to proactively course correct where needed. Through tools like Working Metrics and JVS Boston’s [Job Quality Index](#),<sup>54</sup> companies can submit workforce data in exchange for benchmarking information that allows them to compare their performance to competitors, and learn about opportunities to improve job design in ways that reduce the cost of turnover and drive profitability. Nonprofit and

government partners can direct employers to these tools to scale use, encourage the public release of data wherever possible, and help connect businesses to resources and technical assistance where needed, such as through consultants like the Good Jobs Institute and WorkLife Partnership.

# 2. Use data-driven employer scorecards to spark disclosure and a race to the top.

Organizations like JUST Capital and the Drucker Institute—along with the multi-partner American Opportunity Index—have developed widely-utilized company rankings that aggregate data to, in part, compare human capital practices across large, publicly-traded firms. JQMI members proposed building on these tools by developing a public scorecard for measuring firm-level job quality performance. This would require developing a standard set of employer-level job quality indicators and identifying a methodology by which to gather data from firms and aggregate data into a composite score to easily measure and compare company performance. Such a scorecard could be developed in partnership with a cohort

of “high road” companies committed to providing quality jobs, to ensure that the ultimate product is user-friendly and useful to firms seeking to analyze and improve their practices.

One proposed path forward would be to partner with widely-used payroll processing companies (e.g., ADP, UKG, etc.) to create a standardized template for reporting job quality data that these companies commonly hold. The payroll processing companies would be positioned to collect, dynamically calculate, and report on data in a consistent format across all clients, thus reducing the reporting and disclosure burden on any individual company and increasing the reliability of the information. To incentivize completion, participating companies could receive aggregated data on their peers as well as detailed matches by industry, geography, or size, providing useful insights into the competitive landscape.

Federal, state, and local government entities could also motivate participation through provision of incentives to small and mid-sized businesses who adopt the standardized reporting template for job quality data, such as favorable business loan terms, subsidized marketing, and public recognition. Such data could be utilized and rewarded in workforce programs such as sector strategies and [high road training partnerships](#).<sup>55</sup>

See [Appendix 4](#) for more information on proposed scorecard methodologies and implementation pathways.



# 06

## Revise data systems to include and support the non-W2 workforce.

THESE ACTIONS ARE INTENDED FOR...



As a growing number of workers earn their income outside of traditional employment relationships,<sup>56</sup> we must revamp our measurement systems to understand and support job quality for this undercounted workforce. Routinely capturing and analyzing data on the non-W2 workforce will enable the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), as well as workforce and social service systems, to better understand the benefits and drawbacks of contingent and alternative work, and to unearth trends in worker misclassification and support implementation of more responsive policies and programs, drawing on lessons from Pandemic Unemployment Assistance. If data are available to the general public in an accessible format, it can also inform decision-making as workers consider possible engagement in gig work.

To put this into practice, **federal agencies**, in partnership with **state and local governments**, and **nonprofits** should:

# 1. Standardize and expand collection of data on non-W2 workers.

A 2020 Federal Reserve Survey asked about “income-earning activity” as opposed to jobs, and [found that 27% of adults earned money through gigs](#).<sup>57</sup> [Women, young people, and people of color](#)<sup>58</sup> are over-represented in these non-W2 jobs. Yet the non-W2 workforce is [not consistently tracked](#)<sup>59</sup> in state unemployment data or many federal data sources, leading to varied estimates of its size and demographic makeup. Contract workers are also excluded from Unemployment Insurance (UI), workers compensation, many basic labor protections, and employer-provided benefits, leaving them particularly vulnerable to the impacts of poor quality jobs, and undercounted in program data collection. A recent [survey showed that 30% of gig workers are enrolled in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#),<sup>60</sup> twice the rate of W2 service sector workers. The pandemic exposed the need for all workers, regardless of job classification or status, to have access to critical safety net services; however, without changes

to existing public sector data systems and collection methodologies it will remain difficult to understand who these workers are, what their working conditions are like, and what services they may need to achieve financial stability.

Surveys of workers typically do not distinguish types of self-employment income or account for use of gig jobs as secondary employment and supplemental income. For example, while the Contingent Worker Supplement to the Current Population Survey (CWS) provides critically important data, it reflects only the type of work individuals do as their main source of income; it does not currently capture supplemental work. Most administrative datasets, including state-held unemployment data, do not separately track those who receive non-W2 income.

To better understand and support self-employed workers, JQMI working group members proposed that [federal agencies, state and local governments](#) work with [nonprofits](#) to:

- Through DOL and U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury) collaboration, undertake a preliminary feasibility study to define and track independent



contractors, gig workers and other self-employed individuals using tax data in existing forms such as 1099 and Schedule C forms. This research effort should seek to uncover the promise and limits of tax data for understanding and improving the measurement of job quality for non-W2 workers. This would include assessing whether available tax data can effectively be used to identify workers and earnings in a stable and consistent way, and establishing which parameters and specific ways of identifying the population of workers and earnings most closely correspond to the non-W2 workforce. Conducting this work would require access to these data, which could be achieved in collaboration with researchers at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Joint Statistical Research Program (JSRP) or researchers at the Treasury's Office of Tax Analysis (OTA). [Previous research](#)<sup>61</sup> conducted through the JSRP of the IRS has yielded important insights about the prevalence and activities of independent contractors. If new research established that these data could be valuable for statistical or programmatic purposes, DOL and its research partners could then pursue more widespread, systematic access.

- In accordance with [Idea #4](#) to link public and private data to gain new

insights into the quality of jobs, create a standardized process for linking household survey data such as the Current Population Survey (CPS) and its supplements with administrative data to combine detailed demographic information with data on employment including earnings, hours and the nature of the employment arrangement. Linking would provide insight into trends of understated self-employment which have emerged through household surveys, highlight data quality problems in existing surveys such as inaccuracies in self-reported earnings, and provide a more comprehensive view into job quality.

- DOL could work with states to explore and pilot approaches to update state unemployment reporting requirements to standardize the collection of data on non-W2 workers, including data on industry, occupation, hours and earnings. Such efforts could investigate appropriate reporting requirements—such as requiring firms that engage 1099 workers to report quarterly earnings to the state—and would require collaboration between DOL, state administrators, and policymakers to create and approve a standard collection approach that can be leveraged across datasets.

# 07

## Strengthen workforce system metrics to deliver results for workers and businesses.

THESE ACTIONS ARE INTENDED FOR...



By measuring and rewarding the right outcomes, the public workforce system can support the hundreds of thousands of people who rely on publicly-funded employment and training programs each year to connect to family-sustaining jobs.

Federal, state, and local agencies can revamp measurement systems to track job quality through new data collection approaches and data linkages, including collecting additional data from employers. These programs use federal funds to subsidize employer training and hiring, and can leverage these resources to incentivize and support the businesses that benefit from this talent pool to share data and provide economy-boosting jobs that attract and retain high-performing workers.

To put this into practice, **federal agencies** such as the U.S. Departments of Labor (DOL) and Health and Human Services (HHS), in partnership with **state and local governments**, and **workforce development and training providers**, should:

# 1. Integrate job quality into workforce program reporting.

Shifting the focus of existing performance metrics to job quality and equity and expanding metrics to include employer data will provide better information about whether the public workforce system is living up to its promise to advance equitable economic mobility. In 2022, the DOL Employment and Training Administration (ETA) budgeted more than [\\$2.8 billion](#)<sup>62</sup> in taxpayer dollars to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) systems. These systems serve almost 400,000 individuals annually with [career or training services](#)<sup>63</sup> designed to build in-demand skills and connect people to careers and economic mobility pathways. Yet WIOA metrics do not provide meaningful insights into the quality of jobs participants are referred to. While programs capture median earnings data, there is no emphasis on living wages and it is difficult to track the trajectory of an individual's career. Data are rarely reported in a disaggregated manner, obscuring visibility into job quality across populations or barriers such as reading,

writing, or math proficiency. Moreover, metrics focus on collecting data from participants rather than collecting data from employers about jobs.

To understand the quality of jobs available to program participants, [federal agencies](#) such as DOL ETA can work in partnership with [state and local agencies](#), [workforce development and training providers](#), and benefiting businesses to:

- Use the current [WIOA performance measures](#)<sup>64</sup> data and infrastructure to understand the quality of jobs that participants enter. This could include using median wage data to track the number of enrolled participants at [living wage thresholds](#),<sup>65</sup> capturing wage changes when participants complete on-the-job training and transition into full time employment, and linking credential attainment data to administrative wage datasets to better understand the upward mobility that credentials foster.
- Revise the [WIOA Effectiveness in Serving Employer](#)<sup>66</sup> metric, which currently focuses on the services delivered to the business, to capture data on the characteristics of jobs created by the business including

- information on benefits such as paid leave, as well as schedule predictability and opportunities to advance within either the organization or the field. Data could be collected through an employer survey and incentivized through wage subsidies, prioritized support from the workforce system, and public recognition of high road businesses. As this change is implemented, track costs associated with systematically collecting richer job quality data from employers as part of a federally-funded skills training program.
- Leverage deployment of WIOA [rapid response/layoff aversion funds](#),<sup>67</sup> which are intended to help companies prevent layoffs, to gather additional employer data on job quality and equity. ETA could incorporate guidance encouraging companies to look at workforce equity data as a standard part of the layoff aversion process, including helping companies see potential disparate impact and proactively consider equity as they look at whether they could retrain or cross-train incumbent workers to avoid layoffs.
  - Develop and test data dashboards and employment scorecards to track the “efficacy of workforce development programs across the country,” in accordance with DOL’s [Enterprise Data Strategy](#).<sup>68</sup> DOL should work with state and local WIOA programs to pilot linkages of individual-level data held by DOL, states, localities and training providers with annual income data held by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and quarterly earnings data held by HHS, to produce aggregated statistics for employment scorecards. The scorecard should include statistics on earnings and wage data disaggregated by race, gender, and geography; a current pilot of this type using IRS data is underway with two state community college systems as well as Georgetown University. If successful, the same approach could be expanded in the future, including to pilot measurement of non W2 employment. It could also serve as a model for future federal-state data-linkage activities of the National Secure Data Service.

- DOL could develop and release a standard set of key performance indicators and metrics for assessing and reporting firm-level job quality, for use by state and local workforce agencies, and state and local partners could pilot data collection in a select set of local workforce regions. For example, require businesses receiving America’s Job Center (AJC) wage subsidies or other financial support to provide disclosures on their jobs at the time of placement, as well as the retention and advancement of individuals, disaggregated by race and gender. Consider the use of a tool like Working Metrics or collaboration with payroll companies, to leverage data that most companies are already required to report to public agencies (unemployment insurance earnings data and EEO-1 data) to reduce burden. As part of this pilot, provide targeted funding to cover both the staff time and the revisions to data collection systems required to accommodate expanded employer reporting. Develop technical assistance, informed by the pilot, to support other programs like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education and Training (SNAP E&T), and refugee employment services in capturing job quality data in tandem with DOL.
- Support workforce boards to track and report local labor market information on job quality and equity, including [occupational segregation](#)<sup>69</sup> by local area, at least quarterly to assist boards in partnering with local businesses to close gaps. For example, DOL could house standard [equity labor market reporting](#)<sup>70</sup> templates, offer guidance and training, and encourage or require states and local boards to build capacity to analyze data and engage partners in dialogue as part of their required [WIOA State Plans](#).<sup>71</sup> This would also enable DOL to compare labor market areas based on the quality of job opportunities, not just the quantity. Providing local areas with support to cover staff time would help to ensure that they invest in the skills and technologies needed to incorporate new job quality and equity analysis into their processes.



## 2. Standardize job quality performance reporting across social service programs.

Many people—and disproportionately people of color, immigrants, and adults in very low income jobs—receive public job training and employment services from systems outside of the WIOA-funded public workforce system. These include adults accessing services under HHS programs such as Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) employment services, Welfare-to-Work participants enrolled in TANF and SNAP, and Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) funded programs.

While the numbers served are significant, these individuals are left out of conversations that are increasingly common in the public workforce system about quality jobs and the pathways into them. A total of [1 million families](#),<sup>72</sup> composed of 2.6 million recipients, received TANF- or Maintenance-of-Effort (MOE)-funded assistance in November 2020. Additionally, SNAP recipients sharply increased in 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, [to nearly 40 million](#).<sup>73</sup> Seventy percent of the 21 million SNAP

or Medicaid recipients [work full time](#).<sup>74</sup> [Census data](#)<sup>75</sup> showed that 79% of SNAP family recipients had at least one working adult, and about 33% had two or more working adults.

While many individuals may receive services from multiple programs either simultaneously, or throughout their lifetime, the lack of a core set of aligned job quality metrics not only inhibits an understanding of the individual's job experience but can contribute to existing disincentives for sharing information or braiding funds in creative ways to better serve participants. For example, legacy data systems and differences in where programs are housed and their eligibility requirements exacerbate silos.

To address these issues, [federal agencies](#) can take the following actions:

- DOL, HHS, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) should partner to adopt a core set of job quality metrics across WIOA and non-WIOA programs, potentially drawing on the common [good jobs principles](#)<sup>76</sup> put forward by DOL and the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC). A first step could be an interagency working group that examines existing guidance and recommends pilots, and

this could in turn inform eventual changes in statute. A shared set of metrics would provide more data and insights on the quality of jobs that participants across human services programs enter and could help to incentivize co-enrollment to ensure that eligible individuals are accessing the full range of services to help them achieve economic stability; encourage data sharing and system integrations to reduce friction around data; and facilitate the braiding of funding by advancing a set of shared outcomes. For example, WIOA participants are often co-enrolled in SNAP to address food insecurity. Aligning a core set of SNAP and WIOA job quality metrics could encourage providers to more actively share participant data to ensure that employment needs are being met.

- HHS' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) should pilot a revised ORR-6 performance report for refugee support services in a select number of states, and HHS should explore a pilot of supplemental reporting on TANF or SNAP to include metrics beyond work participation rate. HHS will benefit from understanding more about the quality of these vulnerable workers' jobs, enabling development of a more responsive set of service offerings.

Provision of supplemental funding to support the staff time required for collection of job quality data as well as necessary revisions to data systems will be a critical part of this pilot. This would support providers and strengthen program effectiveness by providing greater insights into participant job quality needs through more comprehensive records, while reducing the burden and trauma associated with asking participants to engage separately with multiple agencies and retell their stories.

# 08

## Use public and private spending to measure and strengthen equity and good jobs.

THESE ACTIONS ARE INTENDED FOR...



Government agencies and anchor institutions—including place-based community entities such as philanthropies, hospitals, and universities—spend billions of dollars each year purchasing goods and services. Building workforce equity and job quality standards and data collection into their procurement could improve millions of jobs.

These powerful institutions can use their contracting and grantmaking processes to collect employer data, and in turn direct dollars toward diverse companies providing good jobs. Philanthropies and other anchors can pilot and model best practices for government partners working to build new procurement capacity, including testing new tools and technical assistance approaches that government can scale.

To put this into practice, **federal agencies**, **state and local governments**, and **anchor institutions** can:

# 1. Leverage public spending to measure and advance job quality and equity.

Public sector spending represents a significant portion of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), [averaging 37% from 1970 to 2020](#),<sup>77</sup> making government procurement and purchasing a crucial lever in fostering good jobs. While several jurisdictions are experimenting with improving equity and representation in publicly-funded jobs, including [Boston](#)<sup>78</sup> and [Los Angeles](#),<sup>79</sup> there are no standard job quality requirements built into federal procurement. This is a missed opportunity to ensure that public spending supports the public priority to advance equitable economic opportunity for U.S. workers. Unprecedented investments including the American Rescue Plan and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and the additional flexibilities provided to state and local governments deploying these federal dollars, offer a promising opportunity to embed good jobs standards and metrics into the creation of new jobs and the improvement of many existing jobs across the United States.

This foundational effort can also set the standard for future procurement processes.

To build job quality into public procurement, [federal agencies](#) such as the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), and [state and local governments](#) and procurement offices could consider adopting the following practices:

- OMB can proactively update the [Uniform Guidance](#),<sup>80</sup> the key federal rules that govern how state, local and tribal governments spend down federal grants, to unleash the power of federal investments to measure job quality and create good jobs. This aligns with the recommendation by the [White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment](#)<sup>81</sup> to “explore and identify opportunities to update the Uniform Guidance to empower workers,” in order “to ensure that federal financial assistance programs... allow consideration of job, wage, and worker empowerment impacts as part of the application evaluation process; and ensure that grantees have the freedom to apply worker-empowering, high road conditions, including local-hire and Project Labor

Agreement (PLA) obligations, on their subgrantees.” While the IIJA explicitly allows for local hire on the U.S. Department of Transportation-funded highway and transit construction projects, jurisdictions are prohibited from building good jobs and equity standards into many federally-funded procurements, especially when contracting with private companies. The Uniform Guidance can be updated using executive authority through a formal rule-making process without the need for Congressional action. This will likely require that the OMB hire or assign key staff members to oversee the year-long process of gathering input from state and local officials, business, labor, and community partners, and updating language.

- During the [Good Jobs Summit](#),<sup>82</sup> DOL announced that it has entered into formal collaboration with multiple agencies including the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to ensure that recovery investments support good jobs. To advance this work, DOL can develop a standard set of job quality data disclosures as a prerequisite for participation in public sector

procurements, in order to help agencies evaluate and monitor bidders for discretionary funds. This can be piloted across agencies through IIJA spending. Agencies could also consider setting specific goals around the number or percentage of vendors in their funded portfolio that will meet job quality and equity requirements within a specific timeframe.

- DOL, DOC, DOE, and DOT could explore pairing changes in the procurement process with technical assistance supporting subrecipients to implement standards on the ground, including through subsidized access to data management tools such as LCP Tracker. This could also include specific technical assistance to community-based organizations and small businesses, especially those led by people of color, to ensure they are equipped to participate in the procurement process. This may also require thinking differently about the size of procurements, response timelines, pre-bid engagement opportunities, the way experience is demonstrated, and even payment terms. This technical assistance effort can lift up areas where complementary investments can be made by philanthropy or private



investors to [build the capacity](#)<sup>83</sup> of community organizations and small businesses to provide job quality data and win procurements (e.g., through financing and mentorship).

- DOL can work with state and local agencies who receive Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds to cascade equity and job quality standards to subrecipients and service providers who deliver support across the workforce system, without the need for statutory or regulatory changes. This can include both setting good jobs standards for the staff of the subrecipient agencies that deliver services (who are often community-based workforce development nonprofits), and providing incentives for these agencies to refer people into jobs that offer stability and pathways to mobility, as described in [Idea #7](#). For example, DOL could provide guidance about how states encourage living wages for subrecipient staff (such as by collecting data through procurement on proposed frontline staff wages), and could provide examples of ways that a state or local board can better understand compensation of frontline workers and partner to improve them (e.g. encouraging a respondent to include

wage increase in budgets for multi-year awards, or adding separate line items into sample budget templates for staff training). Inclusion of good jobs standards in subrecipient funding will serve as a mechanism to encourage job quality for workforce agency frontline staff, which is particularly important as frontline staff often represent the communities participating in programs and hold challenging jobs.

- DOL can explore additional pathways to motivate data disclosure and job quality improvements by private employers. For example, a national nonprofit organization could work with DOL to develop a good jobs marketing designation such as the National Labor Exchange's (NLx) HIRE Vets Medallion Award that businesses can receive after providing a required set of job quality disclosures. DOL could then build this designation into the National Labor Exchange (NLx) or USAJobs to signal to workers that these organizations meet a standard for quality jobs. DOL could also establish guidelines on the award of priority points, much like those given for small or minority or women-owned businesses, with particular focus on industries that have historically had low-quality jobs

and/or higher representation of workers of color and can leverage public investment to build capacity and strengthen workforce practices.

## 2. Use anchor institution spending to accelerate the creation of good jobs.

Anchor institutions, including foundations, healthcare and higher education organizations, [spend trillions](#)<sup>84</sup> of dollars each year purchasing goods and services, creating and supporting millions of jobs, [disproportionately held by individuals of color](#).<sup>85</sup> Yet too often, large contracts in catering, security, janitorial services, and other core functions rely on workers who earn low wages in precarious jobs, and can work at odds with the anchor institutions' mission and community impact goals. Through the lever of procurement, philanthropy and other anchor institutions have the opportunity to address this head on by using their full arsenal of resources to propel good jobs and equity.

To leverage this opportunity, **anchor institutions** should:

- Pilot the incorporation of good jobs and equity standards and metrics in the Request for Proposal (RFP) and vendor selection process. To encourage a focus on job quality in addition to price, consider requiring large vendors, such as those with more than 100 employees, to report wages disaggregated using workforce demographic data, similar to that already required in unemployment insurance earnings data and EEO-1 data, as part of the bidding process. Over time, explore incentivizing vendor reporting of additional data such as benefits or stable scheduling through preference points in award scoring or contract flexibilities.



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- Provide flexible financing and technical assistance for small businesses, particularly those owned by people of color, to ensure they are equipped and encouraged to participate in the bidding and data reporting process and can leverage the process to build capacity and expand. Consider options to incentivize diverse participation, from holding community conversations in advance of the formal procurement process, to awarding priority points for businesses with diverse representation in ownership and across the workforce, or facilitating mentoring connections that help to support expansion of entrepreneurs' capacity over the long-term. In addition, test a continuum of supports that can help business owners leverage the procurement process to improve jobs and build capacity to participate in large-scale government bids. These might include innovative approaches to vendor payment terms and timelines, provision of zero-interest loans or other low-cost financing, and access to business coaching focused on strengthening workforce practices to improve business performance and enable stable growth.

# 09

## Strengthen state and local capacity for data-driven decision making to advance good jobs.

THESE ACTIONS ARE INTENDED FOR...



A collaborative, intergovernmental approach can build job quality measurement capacity at the state and local level, positioning state and local governments to design more effective, equitable workforce policies and programs.

State and local leaders care deeply about increasing equitable economic mobility but need better data infrastructure to get there. Fragmented federal program structures, aging technology, compliance-focused processes, and poorly aligned incentives have hindered states and localities from investing in the robust data capacity needed to drive innovation in workforce development and other social service programs. With support from federal agencies and philanthropy, state and local governments can accelerate job quality measurement and improve service delivery and outcomes.

To put this into practice and support **state and local governments** to strengthen job quality measurement, **federal agencies** and **philanthropy** can:



# 1. Build state and local capacity to measure job quality and equity.

Federal government incentives and supports provide important tools as state and local agencies grapple with growing needs amidst staffing shortages and lingering pandemic impacts. Coupling clear federal guidance with funding, flexibility, and technical assistance will accelerate local efforts to strengthen job quality measurement.

JQMI members recommended that [federal agencies](#) partner with [state and local governments](#) and [philanthropy](#), including:

- The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) can partner with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and other federal agencies to outline mechanisms to braid funding from multiple federal funding streams to support shared data infrastructure, analysis, research and associated staff development to advance job quality goals. For example, Indiana and Ohio have created modern, integrated

data hubs and analytics capacity that integrate and analyze data from labor, education, and health and human services programs using pooled funds from federal grant programs. OMB and federal agencies should provide joint guidance on permissible investments in hardware, software, and staff training which will enable an agency both to carry out its own research and to make their data more useful for external parties. Ultimately, state and local agencies must be positioned to tap into data analytics, computer science and machine learning expertise to tackle some of their most challenging needs.

- DOL and OMB should partner to provide additional flexibility and relief from certain compliance reporting for jurisdictions that can accurately report key job quality outcome metrics, disaggregated by subpopulations (e.g. using the exception authority in 2 CFR 100.102(d), OMB's government-wide grant regulations) as a powerful way to ensure local jurisdictions are allocating resources to building data analytics capacity. Such flexibility should also be paired with technical assistance from peer networks on leading practices to expand local area knowledge and networks.



- DOL can model using their funding processes to drive both local data capacity development and coordination by requiring that new federal investments in state or local information technology systems (e.g. Unemployment Insurance Modernization) only be awarded for interoperable systems that will make data accessible for research purposes, consistent with principles established by the [Evidence Act](#).<sup>86</sup> Preference could also be given in grant competitions for jurisdictions that will use a portion of their funds for data analysis and evaluation, including investment in re-usable infrastructure.
- DOL should give recognition, such as awards to high performing workforce boards or unrestricted funding grants, to jurisdictions that make significant progress in using data and evidence to improve workforce programs and/or make significant advancements in establishing interagency data sharing, especially for successful state and local efforts that expand the reach of workforce initiatives to include social services, justice involvement, immigration and other relevant areas.
- Philanthropy can support this state and local perspective reset from “whether to share” to “how to share” by funding innovative data analytics pilots, investing in technology infrastructure, and using grant processes to incentivize the expansion of staff data analytics, visualization, and processing skills. This can include a mix of place-based investments to build capabilities in a particular region, indirect rate flexibilities to support infrastructure development and incentives for programs with a demonstrated ability to leverage cross agency data collaborations. Across investments, philanthropy can support government partners to prioritize participant privacy and consent to build trust and advance equity.

## 2. Launch an Intergovernmental Research and Analytics Consortium dedicated to advancing good jobs.

DOL has made important strides in increasing the capacity of state Labor Market Information staff through multiple efforts, including the Bureau of Labor Statistics Federal-State Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) program. In addition, existing regional research collaboratives supported by philanthropy have helped to build government capacity. Building on these efforts, DOL should create an Intergovernmental Research and Analytics Consortium with a select group of state and local jurisdictions that partner with researchers and data scientists to produce rigorous studies using linked administrative data.

To build capacity of [state and local governments](#), DOL can partner with other [federal agencies](#) to:

- Select a group of high-capacity state and local jurisdictions, and support them to collaborate on shared research priorities and implementation strategies, including learning agendas, research designs, privacy-protecting data-linkage methods and, when appropriate, multi-site trials, in collaboration with researchers. Explore ways to leverage infrastructure and recovery funding to resource and begin testing this work. Prioritize these high-capacity jurisdictions for participation in federal pilots centered on equity and job quality measurement, to develop efficient, privacy-protecting mechanisms for merging state and local data with federal data—including earnings and other data held by federal agencies that support or track training and job quality, including HHS, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), U.S. the Department of Education (DOE), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (DOA), the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the U.S. Census Bureau.



- Support states in the Consortium that collect hours and occupational data in their Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records systems to conduct pilots to develop better measures of job quality, which would inform future changes in other state UI systems or to federal data requirements in accordance with [Idea #4](#). Local jurisdictions could generate valuable insights on regional job quality issues, such as work by New York City's Office of Labor Policy and Standards which focuses on key workplace laws such as paid sick leave and fair workweek. The office currently uses administrative data coupled with worker complaint filings to protect the rights of care workers, support business compliance, and advance new policy initiatives that strengthen protections for workers facing high risk of violations, who are disproportionately people of color, women, and immigrants.



# 10

## Invest in strengthening job quality measurement.

THESE ACTIONS ARE INTENDED FOR...



Philanthropic, corporate, and government funders can seize this window of opportunity to reimagine our national economic measures to reflect the needs and aspirations of working people. Funders should come together to advance a common vision to strengthen job quality measurement, and to coordinate investments to complement major public and private capital flows. These investments can seed scalable demonstration projects that build new data capacity and test bold approaches to the collection, linkage, and use of job quality data.

To put this into practice, **philanthropy**, along with **businesses** and **federal agencies**, can:



# 1. Invest in the development of job quality data infrastructure.

Developing job quality data infrastructure requires large-scale, cross-sector collaboration, and funders can make catalytic investments to drive the development of this ecosystem. This starts with diverse segments of philanthropy aligning behind a common goal, and jointly engaging government, business, and nonprofit partners to implement a shared vision and common metrics. It will also require ongoing programmatic investments, both to implement initial changes to program design and evaluation to strengthen measurement systems, and to update practices based on learning from new data collection.

To accelerate job quality measurement, funders can:

- Support the research and implementation approaches discussed throughout this report to seed innovation and accelerate progress. This could include, for example, investing in the development of job quality scorecards and other data disclosure tools, or in partnerships between investors and researchers to understand the good jobs return on investment.
- Fund government pilots at the local or state level to test new job quality measurement approaches and create additional buy-in from local stakeholders. Such investments will support the development of case studies and replicable models, and ultimately support scale. Funders should explore opportunities to provide seed funding for data collection and linkages at the state and local level, with a focus on undercounted populations such as gig workers, and undercounted aspects of job quality such as worker voice and benefits utilization.
- Invest directly in the job quality data analytics capacity of community-based nonprofits, along with local, state, and federal agencies. This might include investment in skill building to strengthen technical expertise on data use and/or investment in organizational and technology infrastructure. To enhance federal capacity, for example, philanthropic funding can support the deployment of outside experts, such as through the Intergovernmental Personnel Act



(IPA) Mobility Program, which provides for the temporary assignment of external personnel from universities, research and development centers, nonprofits and other eligible organizations for up to four years. Embedded experts can work alongside agency personnel to design and implement creative measurement approaches, provide technical assistance to other agencies or localities on complex measurement issues, or assess the impact of changes that an agency has made on equity and job quality.

## 2. Model promising practices for data collection and job quality in philanthropic grantmaking.

Funders committed to advancing good jobs should explore ways to measure and invest in their grantees' job quality. While the need for local, nonprofit organizations with intimate knowledge of their communities has never been more acute, the increasing downward pressure on operating costs and upward pressure on numbers served has left many nonprofit employees with

high-stress jobs that fail to provide family-sustaining wages. Women and people of color are over-represented among nonprofit frontline workers, yet [87% of nonprofit CEOs are white](#);<sup>87</sup> occupational segregation is directly impacting the earning power, health and wellbeing of the workforce we have tasked with supporting economic mobility for others.

To close these gaps, **philanthropy** can:

- Support grantees to collect job quality data to help build the emerging evidence base that investing in good jobs for program staff improves program outcomes. Shift messaging to grantees from a focus on what can be done at the lowest possible cost to serve the highest number of people to what will make the largest impact, including consideration of job quality for both program participants and program staff. Keep applications simple to avoid burdening grantees, but consider light-lift ways to gather data about their job quality approach and outcomes, including for their own staff. Encourage grantees to include the full cost of services in their proposals including staff development, market-aligned pay, benefits and other aspects of job

quality. Provide specific examples, or guidelines, on what you will accept and ask questions when proposed salaries don't reflect living wage for the area where the work will be carried out or don't include cost of living raises in multi-year grants.

- Provide maximum flexibility in grant dollars—from indirect rates to payment terms or unrestricted funds to manageable and trust-based reporting and compliance requirements that don't impose undue burden—to encourage grantees to build capacity for job quality measurement and improve jobs for their own staff. Capping indirect rates or implementing a lengthy payment period during which an organization must wait for reimbursement can cripple a small organization's financial viability and ability to innovate on measurement and provide family-sustaining jobs.
- Test and document practices that can offer a model for government grantmaking. This might include, for example, using the grantmaking process to collect and use job quality data, conducting an equity assessment of the philanthropy's grantmaking priorities to ensure that target outcomes and evaluation metrics are

designed to address disparities, and engaging and compensating directly impacted communities in designing evaluation methodology and data collection practices.



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