2022

Quality Jobs Framework

Columbia-Willamette Workforce Collaborative Quality Jobs Initiative

A guide for advancing quality jobs in the region.

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I.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2021, the Columbia-Willamette Workforce Collaborative (CWWC) engaged Estolano Advisors to assist in the development of the Quality Jobs Framework (Framework). The Framework is a part of the Quality Jobs Initiative (Initiative), a cross sectoral effort that seeks a regional approach to (1) defining quality jobs, (2) provide guidance on standards employers can be encouraged or incentivized to adopt, (3) identify resources to help employers implement in accordance with their workplace needs, and (4) develop a roadmap of actions and implementation steps.

The Framework was informed by the Quality Jobs Council, comprised of 19 cross-sectoral participants representing businesses, workers, labor, service providers, and government agencies located in the Portland-Southwest Washington Metropolitan area to develop and adopt a regional approach to creating quality jobs. The CWWC held six monthly Council meetings between August 2021 and January 2022. The Framework was developed in close collaboration with the Council and informed by: (1) a multipronged research approach which included a review of existing regional case studies; (2) a nationwide scan of best practices; and (3) a series of interviews with relevant organizations and leaders throughout the region to identify core components of a quality job.

Quality Jobs Framework

This Framework defines a set of quality job standards for the region. It provides actionable, detailed strategies that businesses, workforce boards, and other actors who operate in the region can adopt to advance quality jobs. This Framework references practical resources that can help each employer implement the quality job standards according to their unique workplace.

Where possible, the strategies include quantitative or qualitative metrics, or measures used to track the performance or production of a given strategy. Strong metrics are well-defined, measurable and provide a clear picture of performance towards a given strategy. The metrics identified in the report are an initial iteration. They should be refined in collaboration with employers and other community partners and updated based on evolving needs. Lastly, the Framework describes potential implementation steps the CWWC can take to continue the Initiative in its next phase.

Quality Jobs Standards

Quality Jobs Standards bring clarity to the conversations on job quality in the region and serve as a tool for the Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) to further focus their program offerings to job seekers and businesses, as well as their partnerships with employers and community-based organizations.

A. Self-Sufficiency Wages: A quality job provides sufficient income to afford a decent standard of living. For example, jobs that offer pay consistent with published self-sufficiency standards that consider family composition and cost of living.

B. Safe Working Conditions/Worker Engagement: A quality job offers employees dignity and respect and welcomes engagement in workplace operations. For example, quality jobs uphold and enforce anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies and provide reasonable accommodation to employees with disabilities.

C. Predictable Hours: A quality job offers employees predictability on the number of hours they are offered per week to minimize hardship on employees and their families.

D. Comprehensive Benefits: A quality job provides basic benefits that increase economic security, improve health and overall well-being. Quality jobs include healthcare, childcare, transportation, wellness programs, and access to retirement savings programs, among other supports.

E. Accessible Hiring and Onboarding Practices: A quality job offers transparent and accessible hiring and onboarding practices to ensure that employer and employee are set for success.

F. Training and Advancement Opportunities: A quality job provides opportunities to build skills and access new roles and responsibilities in a workplace. For example, quality jobs offer internal pathways to support career progression, professional development, and incumbent worker training opportunities.

QJ Standards		Strategy
A. Self-Sufficiency Wages	1	Calculate the cost of turnover.
	2	Conduct a wage assessment.
	3	Conduct a wage equity analysis.
	4	Implement pay parity and wage protections for contracted workers.
	5	Support implementation and/or enforcement of a self-sufficiency wage standard within the municipality, or across the region or state.
	6	Establish wage boards at the state or local government.
B. Safe Working Conditions/Worker Engagement	1	Uphold and enforce anti-discrimination, anti-violence, anti-hostility, and anti-harassment policies.
	2	Provide reasonable accommodations for all employees.
	3	Support English Language Learner (ELL) employees.
	4	Ensure worker rights to collectively bargain.
	5	Conduct regular employee surveys to gather input about worker's experiences in the workplace and inform the improved delivery of business services.
	6	Add worker voice to company boards or management teams.
	7	Develop an employee share ownership program.
	8	Improve enforcement of labor and employment laws that establish worker protections.
C. Predictable Hours	1	Adjust mandatory overtime and shift work policies when possible and provide clear expectations to applicants.
D. Comprehensive Benefits	1	Extend benefits to all employees, including frontline staff and lowest paid workers.
	2	Provide workers with paid sick leave, parental leave, medical leave, and other vacation or paid time off.
	3	Provide or subsidize transportation for employees.
	4	Offer childcare (and elder care/other family care) and other supports to employees.
	5	Implement or improve flexible hours and paid time off policies that support employees' personal wellbeing and family.
	6	Create or improve existing employee financial wellness programs.
	7	Offer and promote the use of Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs).
	8	Establish or expand portable retirement savings and medical benefits programs.

QJ Standards		Strategy
E. Accessible Hiring and Onboarding Practices	1	Standardize the use of ADA compliant job description text and accessibility of all job application materials.
	2	Post simple, skill-based job descriptions that include core competencies, essential job functions necessary to perform the job, and accurate salary range.
	3	Expand recruitment efforts to reach a larger pool of qualified, diverse applicants.
	4	Implement resume review technology that removes bias.
	5	Implement a standard interview process for all candidates that is still responsive to different job seeker needs.
	6	Provide comprehensive, effective, and consistent onboarding for all new hires.
	7	Assign formal or informal mentors to assist new employees with their transition (“buddy system”).
	8	Incorporate reasonable accommodation practices into onboarding.
	9	Improve enforcement of Ban the Box, discrimination, and reasonable accommodation laws.
	10	Improve existing workforce development sector-based partnerships. Create and/or support new sector-based partnerships in emerging or recovering sectors.
	11	Expand and improve direct-hire job training programs.
	12	Support foreign-born/trained job seekers in new credentialing process.
F. Training and Advancement Opportunities	1	Build clear internal pathways and opportunities to support career progression.
	2	Create and expand on-the-job, professional development, and incumbent worker training opportunities to support advancement and cross training.
	3	Create or update tuition assistance programs.
	4	Create local, regional, and state investment incentives for employers and workers that upskill, or reskill, workers for future jobs and swiftly changing industries.

II.

INTRODUCTION

In June 2021, the Columbia-Willamette Workforce Collaborative (CWWC) embarked on a process to define what a quality job means for the region. The CWWC is a partnership between the Portland-Southwest Washington Metropolitan region's three workforce development boards (workforce boards or WDBs) – Workforce Southwest Washington, Clackamas Workforce Partnership, and Worksystems. CWWC participates in regional workforce and economic development planning to serve industry and direct public workforce dollars to develop a regional talent pool and strong economy.

The CWWC firmly believes in the value of work and the shared benefits afforded to workers, businesses, and the region's communities through good, high-quality jobs. CWWC created the Quality Jobs Initiative (Initiative) to address long-standing inequities including lack of access to good jobs and careers that allow people to support themselves and their families, and which perpetuate economic disparities. Through this work, CWWC seeks to increase the number of quality jobs and improve the regional economy for all. CWWC believes that quality jobs are not an issue for social services alone, but also a business imperative. Good, high-quality jobs – ones with competitive wages and benefits, predictable hours, necessary training, and opportunities for advancement – are good for business.

Importantly, CWWC will center Black people, Indigenous people, and People of Color; individuals with disabilities; immigrants; women; and individuals experiencing poverty who are disproportionately subject to low wage, and poor-quality working conditions.

National Context

CWWC's focus on quality job development in the region is timely. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic, the accompanying Stay at Home orders, and resulting economic downturn created hardships for workers and their families in the region and across the nation. At the same time, mass protests and social unrest renewed calls for policymaking that centers racial justice and equity. These events have laid bare the existing barriers and inequities in our economy and workforce, particularly for frontline workers, and further stressed government services. Low-income workers face disproportionate economic insecurity, loss of income, risk of COVID-19 exposure, and lack of workplace safety, compared to other workers. Alarmingly, "40% of workers have experienced worsening job quality" since early 2020.[1]

1 J. Rothwell and S. Crabtree. How COVID-19 Affected the Quality of Work. Gallup. https://www.gallup.com/education/267590/great-jobs-report.aspx

In 2021, as government at all levels moved from economic relief to recovery efforts, national conversations emerged around the availability of workers. There are reports that record numbers of Americans are quitting their jobs in large numbers, dubbed the "Great Resignation." Employers are struggling to recruit, hire, and retain workers, while unemployment remains low. This "labor mismatch" hinders businesses ability to meet consumer demand.

However, additional evidence offers a more nuanced explanation. While workers have made modest gains in wages due to increased worker demand, it may not be enough to offset inflation and increasing costs of living.[2, 3] Frontline workers are facing high burnout rates and increased risk of contracting COVID-19.[4] Toxic work environments, job insecurity, lack of recognition and promotion, and poor response to the pandemic are other reasons why workers are leaving their jobs.[I] Altogether, these conditions are increasingly driving workers to reevaluate their job needs. As a result, they are leaving to find better working conditions and pay. If the increase in hiring incentives is any indication, the issue is not a labor shortage, but rather a lack of quality jobs.[5]

Against the backdrop of this national debate, it is time to define what quality jobs are – self-sufficient wages, improved benefits, and advancement opportunities, to increase worker retention and support regional businesses' bottom lines. This effort requires not just the involvement of employers – but also WDBs, nonprofits, labor, community-based organizations, and educational institutions, among others. A regional approach to defining quality jobs can help bring about innovative approaches to recruitment, hiring, training, retention, and advancement. Further, a regional approach can help identify resources, align efforts, and potentially draw down additional state, federal, and philanthropic dollars to help support local efforts. The Council was convened to meet this challenge.

2 O. Rokeman and M. Smith. "Normalizing But Not Back to Normal: The U.S. Job Market in 2022." Bloomberg. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-06/normalizing-but-not-back-to-normal-the-u-s-job-market-in-2022

3 J. Jones. "Washington and Oregon lead the nation in cost of living increase, report finds." KOIN 6 News. https://www.koin.com/news/washington-and-oregon-lead-the-nation-in-cost-of-living-increase-report-finds/

4 A. Adamczyk. "Full-time minimum wage workers can't afford rent anywhere in the US, according to a new report." CNBC. https://www.cnbc.com/2021/07/14/full-time-minimum-wage-workers-cant-afford-rent-anywhere-in-the-us.html

5 D. Howard. "The Labor Shortage Is A Quality Jobs Shortage." Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesnonprofitcouncil/2021/11/30/the-labor-shortage-is-a-quality-jobs-shortage/?sh=1ab2733829b2

Local Efforts

The Initiative includes two components, the Quality Jobs Council (Council) and the creation of this document: the Quality Jobs Framework (Framework). The Council convened 19 cross-sectoral participants representing businesses, workers, labor, service providers, and government agencies located in the Portland-Southwest Washington Metropolitan area to develop and adopt a regional approach to creating quality jobs. The CWWC held six monthly Council meetings between August 2021 and January 2022. The purpose of the Council was to (1) define a quality job for the region, (2) provide guidance on standards employers can be encouraged or incentivized to adopt, (3) identify resources to help employers implement in accordance with their workplace needs, and (4) develop a roadmap of actions and implementation steps. These Council efforts have informed this document.

In advance of convening the Council, CWWC staff conducted forty-five interviews (in individual and group settings) with employers, community-based organizations, service providers, and labor to gather feedback to inform the goals and objectives of the Council. Staff also shared a list of draft Quality Jobs Standards. Interview participants provided input on (a) the draft list, (b) who should be involved or considered when shaping the standards, and (c) how the Quality Job Standards should be implemented.

III.

USING THIS FRAMEWORK

The Framework offers strategies for organizations seeking practical guidance on how to create quality jobs in the region. While most of these strategies are employer-led, others can be accomplished through collaboration, support, and/or advocacy from partners committed to advancing a quality workforce: including WDBs, community-based institutions, and labor, among others. Though some employers may have the resources in place to implement the recommendations in this Framework, others may need additional technical assistance, or targeted support to build the capacity of an organization to implement. The Workforce Boards stand ready to support businesses in need of additional guidance. Other partners should continuously refer to this document for examples of how to increase quality jobs in the region.

As next steps, organizations should do the following:

1. **Share the Quality Jobs Framework with organizational leadership.** Organizational leaders are highly encouraged to carefully review the Framework and the resources referenced throughout. If desired, organizational leadership should invite a representative from the Quality Jobs Council and/or local Workforce Development Board to provide a briefing on the details of the Framework and broader Initiative.

2. **Review the recommendations and develop a plan for incorporating the relevant recommendations of the Framework within their organizations.**

    a. For employers, that means utilizing the cited off-the-shelf tools to begin and/or continue improving the quality of jobs.

    b. For workforce development boards, that includes strategizing on tangible ways to incorporate the recommendations into current program offerings, funding pursuits, and existing partnerships.

        - **Tying WDB services, funding, and procurement to Quality Jobs Standards**: Workforce boards can use their service delivery and purchasing power to encourage employers to adopt Quality Jobs standards in their workplace. Specifically, WDBs can tie business engagement services to Quality Jobs standards by prioritizing businesses who (1) meet a minimum of Quality Jobs standards or (2) are actively working to meet those standards. While many employers in the region likely meet several or most Quality Job standards, WDBs can deploy technical assistance to employers who need additional support or resources. WDBs should set aside time to educate employers on the significance and benefits to implementing different quality jobs standards and promote the technical services available for businesses.

- **Improving data collection and sharing within the region**: As WDBs in the region align more of their services with Quality Jobs Standards, they should also identify a shared set of metrics that can be gathered across the region to track the progress of the Quality Jobs Initiative. These metrics can be published on a regular basis in an accessible format on the WDBs websites. WDBs can use the results to modify program offerings and services, as needed. This can also lead to additional advocacy to align employment, training, and education data collection between Oregon and Washington. It is important that the metrics identified are closely aligned, if not identical, to ensure accurate data collection and analysis, and in turn, effectiveness of job quality-related programming.

c. For other interested partners (community-based organizations, labor, local government, service providers, etc.), that may include determining how their mission aligns with that of the Council and how they may support the initiative through the support and/or direct implementation of corresponding strategies.

3. **Keep the Workforce Development Boards and Quality Jobs Council apprised of progress.**
   Real time feedback is useful for the Boards to calibrate the level and types of service.

IV.
QUALITY JOBS STANDARDS

To provide guidance on how to improve jobs in our region, we must begin with a shared definition of a quality job. The CWWC conducted a series of interviews with relevant organizations and leaders throughout the region to identify core components of a quality job. Their feedback was then shared with the Council for review and refinement. Specific elements of a quality job may vary by industry. The standards listed below are broad enough to apply to all sectors in the region, but specific enough to offer guidance to employers and other interested partners. The standards listed below define a quality job to bring clarity to the conversations on job quality in the region and serve as tool for the workforce boards to further focus their program offerings to job seekers and businesses, as well as their partnerships with employers and other community-based organizations.

Self-Sufficiency Wages	A quality job provides sufficient income to afford a decent standard of living. For example, jobs that offer pay consistent with established published self-sufficiency standards that consider family composition and cost of living.
Safe Working Conditions/Worker Engagement	A quality job offers employees dignity and respect and welcomes engagement in workplace operations. For example, jobs that are subject to anti-discrimination and anti-discrimination policies and provide reasonable accommodation to employees with disabilities.
Predictable Hours	A quality job offers employees predictability on the number of hours they are offered per week to minimize hardship on employees and their families.
Comprehensive Benefits	A quality job provides basic benefits that increase economic security, improve health and overall well-being. Quality jobs include healthcare, childcare, transportation, wellness programs, and access to retirement savings programs, among other supports.
Accessible Hiring and Onboarding Practices	A quality job offers transparent and accessible hiring and onboarding practices to ensure that employer and employee are set for success.
Training and Advancement Opportunities	A quality job provides opportunities to build skills and access new roles and responsibilities in a workplace. For example, quality jobs offer internal pathways to support career progression, professional development, and incumbent worker training opportunities.

Employment Lifecycle

The employment lifecycle is a human resources term used to define the different stages of an employee's relationship with an employer. Depending on the size and type of company, the steps in the employment lifecycle might vary. It serves as a helpful framework for employers looking to identify key points where the quality of a job can be improved.

1. **Prepare**: Addresses the stage where a job seeker readies themself to seek employment. This is a stage where the workforce boards target most of their program offerings.
2. **Recruit**: This stage includes all the actions an employer takes to reach as many qualified candidates as possible, including developing and disseminating job descriptions widely.
3. **Hire**: During this stage, employers get a feel for whether the position and the job seeker match. Simultaneously, it is important for the job seeker to receive all relevant information to determine if the job is the right fit.
4. **Onboard**: The first days of employment can set the tone for one's tenure in a job. This stage includes the tools an employee needs to be successful – from orientation to essential on-the-job training, to communication on employer benefits, etc.
5. **Retain**: This stage covers the oft asked question, "what keeps people at a job?" The Framework offers a few strategies ranging from emotional and physical wellbeing to worker voice and a consistent feedback loop to better understand employee needs.
6. **Advance**: This stage encompasses strategies to connect employees with the additional skills and responsibilities that will allow them to access higher paid, higher skilled jobs.

V.
FRAMEWORK STRATEGIES

This section is organized by quality jobs standards:

A. Self-sufficiency wages

B. Safe working conditions/worker engagement

C. Predictable hours

D. Comprehensive benefits

E. Training and advancement opportunities

F. Accessible hiring and onboarding practices

Strategies (in bold text) draw from extensive engagement with the Council, existing case studies, and a nationwide scan of best practices. Strategies are primarily directed to employers (as indicated), but other strategies (indicated as “Others”) should be pursued by community-based organizations, labor, local government, service providers, etc. Strategies are further described in the body of the document and where possible, each strategy references practical resources that can help each organization: (1) implement the quality jobs standards according to their unique workplace or (2) advocate for policy that advances quality jobs.

The strategies also include quantitative or qualitative metrics, or measures used to track the performance or production of a given strategy. Strong metrics are well-defined, measurable and provide a clear picture of performance towards a given strategy. The metrics identified in the report are an initial iteration. They should be refined in collaboration with employers and other community partners and updated based on evolving needs.

A. Self-Sufficiency Wages

Employers

STRATEGIES

1 Calculate the cost of employee turnover.

Employee turnover refers to the net loss of talent over time. Turnover results in direct costs to the company – either through costs incurred by recruiting and training new employees, and indirectly through lowered employee morale and a decrease in the quality of customer service. There are several off-the-shelf tools available for employers to calculate the direct financial impacts of turnover. The Aspen Institute's Cost of Turnover Tool[II] is a simple calculator designed to help estimate the business cost of replacing staff. Indirect costs of turnover (e.g. staff morale) are much harder to quantify but could be better understood through regular employee surveys (see Strategy B5).

Sample Metric

- Completion of a cost of turnover analysis once a year.

A. Self-Sufficiency Wages

2 Conduct a wage assessment.

Employers should conduct regular wage assessments to understand their wages in relation to: (1) wages in the region as described in market data; and (2) wages in relation to the true cost of living in a region. Employers can access market data through resources such as Payscale[III] to compile salary data and plan for adjustments. Similarly, several tools exist for employers to determine self-sufficient wages based on the cost of living for their metro area, such as the Economic Policy Institute Family Budget Calculator[IV] and the MIT Living Wage Calculator.[V] These analyses may be conducted in-house or through the guidance of a consultant or workforce board.

To support employers in wage transition, WDBs can compile and share free resources on self-sufficiency wage transition with industry/employer associations, such as One Fair Wage's How-To Guide for Restauranteurs.[VI] Additionally, WDBs provide grants to employers seeking wage transition technical assistance. Finally, WDBs can provide funding and/or employer referrals to existing High Road[6] technical assistance programs such as High Road Kitchens[VII] or build out their own technical assistance program.

Kachka, a restaurant in Portland, recently released its Wage Equity Plan. This plan includes a 22% service fee in lieu of an option tip in order to provide a minimum of $25 an hour to employees, in addition to free health insurance. Kachka has also committed to profit sharing and opening their books twice a year to help educate and mentor employees in the restaurant industry.

Sample Metrics

- Percentage (%) of firm's lowest paid workers left at the one-year mark, and two-year mark.
- Percentage (%) of workers earn a self-sufficient wage, as defined by their geographical location and/or number of dependents.
- Percentage (%) of workers that started in the lowest paid quintile (determined by state/region wage data) moved to above region's self-sufficiency wage each year.

6 "High Road" definition: In a workforce context, an approach at creating high-quality employment, "good jobs" characterized by family-sustaining, living wages, comprehensive benefits, and opportunity for career advancement. Inclusive Economies – High-Road Workforce Guide for City Climate Action

A. Self-Sufficiency Wages

3 Conduct a wage equity analysis.

A wage equity analysis compares the pay of employees doing similar work in an organization, accounting for reasonable differences such as credentials, work experience, etc., and identifying any pay differentials that cannot be justified. Workforce boards, consultants, and online resources can assist employers in carrying out these analyses. Free HR resources such as Society for Human Resource Management's Managing Pay Equity Toolkit[VIII] or paid software such as Syndio[IX] can also provide support for this process.

Sample Metric

- Completion of wage equity analysis once a year.

A. Self-Sufficiency Wages

4 Implement pay parity and wage protections for contracted workers.

The U.S. workforce is experiencing a growth in contract positions. Independent contractors are self-employed individuals who provide services or perform work for another business.[7] Independent contractors are often exempt from most federal and state employment laws, including those that mandate fair wages and workplace protections. This exclusion can drive down all workers' wages and job quality, regardless of classification.[8] Contract workers may have more flexibility than employees, but also have less stability, and receive less pay and benefits due to their classification.

Self-sufficient wages should be offered to contract workers as well as permanent employees, as they are a significant portion of workers across many industries, such as high tech and janitorial services. When employers conduct wage analyses, they should ensure the inclusion of independent contractors and update wages accordingly.

Sample Metrics

- Percentage (%) of contracted workers or independent contractors versus employees who produce your organization's or firm's main service or product.
- Presence of labor/employment laws (state/local) which protect independent contractors and contract workers.

7 Internal Revenue Service. "Independent Contractor Defined." https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/independent-contractor-defined

8 Project Include & TechEquity. Separate and Unequal: How Tech's Reliance on Disproportionately Diverse, Segregated and Underpaid Contract Workers Exacerbates Inequality. https://techequitycollaborative.org/2021/10/14/separate-and-unequal-contract-workers-in-tech/

A. Self-Sufficiency Wages

Others

STRATEGIES

5 Support implementation and/or enforcement of a self-sufficiency wage standard within the municipality, or across the region or state.

As the economy changes and the costs of goods rise, households consistently require higher incomes to ensure basic needs are met. The Self-Sufficiency Standard[X] gives a realistic view of income adequacy without public or private assistance. Local or state government bodies can implement self-sufficiency wage policies – both Oregon and Washington have recently passed increased minimum wages that have been implemented (although do not meet the requirements for a self-sufficiency wage).

Labor and civil rights nonprofits can advocate for these policies via campaigns such as One Fair Wage.[XI] Government agencies can also increase enforcement of existing State, County, or City wage standard laws to fight against wage theft, often through an office of labor standards or consumer affairs. Employers can also independently consider the self-sufficiency standard to build higher wages into their business models. The Economic Policy Institute[XII] suggests there are generally three ways to increase wages: increasing prices, accepting reduced profits, or offsetting higher-wage costs with increased ability by adopting high-road policies, with the priority being a focus on high-road policies.

Sample Metric

- Percentage (%) of workers within a region earning a self-sufficient wage, as defined by their geographical location and number (#) of dependents.

6 Establish wage boards at the state or local government.

Local and state government bodies can create wage boards that are comprised of an equal number of representatives from labor, management, and the public to set minimum standards for specific industries. The Center for American Progress offers a How-To Guide[XIII] on establishing wage boards.

Sample Metric

- Presence of wage boards in the state in key industries.

B. Safe Working Conditions/Worker Engagement

Employers

STRATEGIES

1 Uphold and enforce anti-discrimination, anti-violence, anti-hostility, and anti-harassment policies.

Beyond complying with anti-harassment, discrimination and other labor and employment laws, all employers and their workers must put effort towards making their workplace culture genuinely inclusive. In a job satisfaction survey by the Society for Human Resource Management, employee respondents ranked "respectful treatment of all employees" as their top contributor to job satisfaction.[9] To do so, employers must develop clear report processes and procedures that employees can follow if they are subject to harassment or see harassment occur in the workplace.

Employers can use existing tools to determine interventions that advance equity across operations and business practices. One resource is Portland Means Progress – a citywide initiative that helps Portland-based businesses create better work experiences for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and underrepresented youth, shift to intentional purchasing, and create cultural change. Portland Means Progress' Culture Change Roadmap[XIV] details tools, actions, and an overall framework in which employers can begin to build a more equitable workplace culture.

Employers can also collaborate in adopting common curricula and practices to increase workplace safety. Employers in Portland's construction sector have adopted the Safe from Hate Pledge containing four key commitments to improve jobsite culture.[10] One of the commitments includes the adoption of

The City of Portland's Diverse and Empowered Employees of Portland (DEEP) has 11 employee-led affinity groups organized around particular identities and experiences. There are traditional affinity groups around protected classes such as race, disability, and gender, but also affinity groups for parents and veterans.

Partners in Diversity (PiD), a nonprofit serving Oregon and Southwest Washington, offers affinity spaces for Asian and Pacific Islander, Black, and Latinx, and, soon, Native American communities through its Community Resource Groups – similar to employee resource groups, but at a larger scale.

9 Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement: The Doors of Opportunity Are Open. https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/Pages/2017-Job-Satisfaction-and-Engagement-Doors-of-Opportunity-Are-Open.aspx

10 Worksystems. Safe from Hate Pledge. https://www.worksystems.org/sites/default/files/Safe%20from%20Hate%20-%20Pledge%20and%20Signatories%20-%20Updated%2001-07-21.pdf

B. Safe Working Conditions/Worker Engagement

1 common anti-harassment education on jobsites. Best practice training programs include RiseUp and Green Dot for the Trades which can engage employees in a "train the trainer" model where construction workers deliver training to their peers.[XV] These programs are tailored to meet the specific needs of the construction industry, and pilot evaluation efforts demonstrate that the program has been successful in decreasing incidences of harassment.[XVI]

Sample Metrics

- Number (#) of high quality, and regularly scheduled anti-discrimination, anti-violence, anti-hostility, and anti-harassment trainings.
- Presence of clear report processes and policies around anti-discrimination, anti-violence, anti-hostility, and anti-harassment trainings.

B. Safe Working Conditions/Worker Engagement

2 Provide reasonable accommodations for all employees.

By law, employers must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).[XVII] Rather than creating accommodations piecemeal as employees request them, employers should invest time and resources to embed reasonable accommodation practices across all operations and business practices to work towards a genuinely inclusive work environment. Employees with disabilities should be active participants in making the workplace more accessible and should be consulted in any process.

There are several low-cost actions that can be implemented to carry out this strategy. First, employers can connect to free government services (Washington DSHS, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation[XVIII] and Oregon DHS Employment, Vocational Rehabilitation[XIX]) to access tailored trainings and technical assistance, recruitment consultant services, hiring incentives, on the job training, job site modifications and assistive technology support, and internship and sponsorship opportunities. WDBs can direct employers to these services and make a warm hand off connection.

Furthermore, employers can connect to free online resources/consulting services. Job Accommodation Network (JAN)[XX] provides free technical assistance, articles, and other tools on worker accommodations by role. They have an comprehensive index of articles[XXI] that breaks down information by disability and topic. Finally, employers can engage a specialist to conduct a workplace accessibility audit.

Sample Metric

- Implementation of accessibility audit and systemwide reasonable accommodation policies and procedures.

B. Safe Working Conditions/Worker Engagement

3 Support English Language Learner (ELL) employees.

The need for English skills may differ by industry, but most workers are required to speak English at some point at their job. Employers can support non-English speaking employees by offering language development classes or connecting workers to low-cost or free English classes, many which are provided through local community colleges or community-based organizations. English classes can help retain workers and increase their overall engagement, productivity, and career outcomes.[11] Visual aids are also often helpful for ELL employees or employees with other speech or language impairments. Some manufacturers have also established production lines by language and/or hired managers that oversee ELL employees which can open more opportunities for non-native English speakers.

Sample Metric

- Demonstrated improved English skills that lead to promotions, higher wages, or increased morale.

11 Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). "English Classes Help Retain Immigrant Workers: Investing in employees reduces turnover and builds respect." https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/all-things-work/pages/english-classes-help-retain-immigrant-workers.aspx

B. Safe Working Conditions/Worker Engagement

4 Ensure worker right to collectively bargain.

The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA)[XXII] guarantees private-sector employees the legal right to organize and collectively bargain with their employers. Collective bargaining and worker voice agreement processes matter when it comes to job quality. Employers can be leaders by supporting employees to independently navigate this process by agreeing to neutrality and/or labor harmony during any organizing efforts.[XXIII] Workers can negotiate for increased wages, but also negotiate around benefits, training and education opportunities and funding, safe working conditions, and worker feedback or grievance processes – all without fear of retaliation. Employers can also benefit from collective bargaining and unionization, finding improved productivity, profitability, and stability. This could come from actions like (1) standardizing wages rather than constantly negotiating, (2) formalizing employer-employee communications that improve retention, and (3) improving safety and compliance.

Sample Metrics

- Percentage (%) of workers covered by collective bargaining agreements.[12]
- Number (#) of labor harmony policies or neutrality agreement policies.

12 "Covered" is defined as workers whose pay and/or conditions of employment is determined by one or more collective agreement(s). International Labour Organization. "Quick Guide on Sources and Uses of Collective Bargaining Statistics." https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/publication/wcms_648799.pdf

B. Safe Working Conditions/Worker Engagement

5 Conduct regular employee engagement surveys to gather input about workers' experiences and inform the improved delivery of services.

Engagement surveys are a crucial way to gather insight into the experiences of employees and what is important to them. It is also a great time to measure leadership effectiveness. Employers can utilize online, free resources such as the Qualtrics Employee Satisfaction Survey template[XXIV] which provides a starting point for employers to create their own employee survey, or SHRM's Managing Employee Surveys Toolkit which reviews the details of how to prepare for, conduct, and follow-up on surveys.[XXV] It is just as important to have a plan for using the data as it is to gather the data itself. As an opportunity for employee feedback and input, it is important for employers to be transparent about results and their influence on tangible objectives or strategies for implementation. Surveys can also be benchmarked to compare results with industry-specific data or benchmarked internally to see the change in satisfaction over time.

Sample Metric

- Presence of regular employee survey schedule (once or twice a year).

B. Safe Working Conditions/Worker Engagement

6 Add worker voice to company boards or management teams.

Adding worker voice to boards or management teams can help better inform the direction of the business, while also increasing worker satisfaction and engagement. Worker voice in boardrooms and management brings direct feedback and insights to company leadership that can improve operations. Workers are deeply involved and knowledgeable on day-to-day procedures and can shed light on potential challenges that company leadership might not otherwise be aware of.

Workers will feel more invested in their work if they know their feedback is being considered by leadership regularly or they are directly involved in decision-making. Aspen Institute published a series of essays[XXVI] which offer strategies that employers can adopt to add worker voice to their workplace in a meaningful way. These strategies can be customized to engage workers at varying degrees of decision-making. Strategies include the following: (1) Appoint employees(s) as board members or members of existing management teams; (2) Appoint director(s) to meet regularly with employees and provide worker perspective at board meetings; (3) Create special committees of employees to provide input on important decisions, such as relocations or expansions, among others.

Sample Metric

- Presence of one or more methods mentioned above, that add worker voice to company board or management team.

B. Safe Working Conditions/Worker Engagement

7 Develop an employee share ownership program.

Employee share ownership programs increase opportunity for BIPOC and women to build wealth and decrease wealth disparity. Moreover, they support higher job quality, business resilience and worker retention. An employee's share of ownership may vary depending on the type and size of a business. For example, Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs) are plans that allow companies, through tax incentives, to finance a purchase of company shares for its employees. These plans allow employees to invest in their company without using their savings. Employee Equity Grants or Employee Stock Purchase Plans allow employees to receive restricted stock at no cost to them or can purchase stock at a discounted rate. Worker Cooperatives are companies that are worker-owned and led - and profits earned by the company are paid out to the workers based on share of labor.

In 2010, Bob Moore of Bob's Red Mill, the Oregon-based food manufacturer, unveiled an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) that gave employees ownership of one-third of his company. Fast-forward to 2020 and Bob's Red Mill became 100% employee owned. The ESOP gives employees with at least three years tenure shares in the company. The company contributes its stock to the ESOP which is held in trust for its employees. When employees quit or retire, they receive payment for whatever amount they are due.

There are various resources available to those interested in growing worker ownership programs. Next Community Partners supports building engagement, power, and wealth for communities of color. Their Worker Ownership Initiative[XXVII] program provides education, training, and free consultation to employers interested in implementing worker ownership programs. Project Equity,[XXVIII] another national nonprofit focused on expanding worker cooperatives, provides similar consulting and resources to businesses and communities. The National Center for Employee Ownership[XXIX] is a nonprofit that publishes additional resources, webinars, and tools. Finally, Democracy at Worker Institute (DAWI), a "think-and-do tank" focused on worker cooperatives, published this visual guide to employee ownership models.[XXX]

B. Safe Working Conditions/Worker Engagement

7 Many of the above organizations also provide resources for local government bodies, philanthropy, and community-based organizations. Project Equity publish this resource called The Case for Employee Ownership[XXXI] geared to philanthropy and local government bodies. DAWI, in partnership with National League of Cities, created a report called Economic Recovery and Employee Ownership[XXXII] that offers guidance on integrating employee ownership models into pandemic economic recovery work.

Sample Metric

- Presence of one or more programs mentioned above, that implement employee share or ownership.

Others

8 **Improve enforcement of labor and employment laws that establish worker protections.**

Labor and employment laws protect workers and guarantee certain standards. It is critical that local government bodies invest time and resources into enforcement. The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) and the Center for Innovation in Worker Organization (CIWO) created The Labor Standards Enforcement Series[XXXIII] which provides best practices for investigating and applying labor standards, and carrying out enforcement. The free webinars and briefs cover topics such as compliance and investigations.

Sample Metric

- Number (#) of enforcement procedures or actions taken by the state or municipality.

C. Predictable Hours

Employers

STRATEGIES

1 **Adjust mandatory overtime and shift work polices and provide clear expectations to applicants.**

Many industries, like healthcare and manufacturing, require mandatory overtime during peak seasons. However, mandatory overtime, as well as unpredictable or late-night shift work can cause undue stress and hardship for some workers, especially those who may be primary caretakers or rely on public transportation. To minimize burden on employees, employers can make a policy to offer overtime to those who want it first. If employers still need workers to cover night shifts or work overtime, they can provide advance notice (e.g. a few weeks' notice) for employees to make arrangements. Given that shift coverage needs may be unpredictable, especially during busy times of year, employers should be clear and upfront to applicants about mandatory overtime and shift scheduling policies.

Sample Metrics

- Percentage (%) of workers who are working overtime or double shifts.
- Average number (#) of hours worked by company employee, by classification.

D. Comprehensive Benefits

Employers

STRATEGIES

1 Extend benefits to all employees, including frontline staff and lowest paid workers.

Employers can cover the full medical insurance premiums, provide increased paid time off (PTO), bonuses (annual and sign-on), paid parking, profit-sharing, or other benefits usually only provided to higher ranking employees to all employees. Benefits should also expand to support mental health in addition to physical, women's and LGBTQ+ health, and disability-inclusive benefits. Extending these benefits to all types of employees can help recruitment, retention, and overall stability of an employer's workforce.

Sample Metric

- Percentage (%) of frontline employees who have full benefit packages.

2 Provide workers with paid sick leave, parental leave, medical leave, and other vacation or paid time off.

Employers are expected to comply with leave programs required under local, state, or federal regulations. In the State of Washington, nearly every worker qualifies for the state's Paid Family and Medical Leave[XXXIV] if they worked a minimum of 820 hours in a qualifying period, and employers with 150 or more employees are required to contribute to employee's premiums or operate a voluntary plan that meets or exceeds the State's benefits. Oregon's Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance[XXXV] program will go into effect in 2023, with employees who earned at least $1,000 in the previous year and others being eligible to receive benefits, and employers sharing the cost with workers (or receiving financial assistance if fewer than 25 employees). These existing, baseline paid leave laws can be enforced by the appropriate government body.

Sample Metric

- Presence of leave policy that offers more PTO than minimum legal requirements and allow for carry over days.

D. Comprehensive Benefits

3 Provide or subsidize transportation for employees.

Many workers lack reliable day-to-day transportation. They lack a private vehicle or access to public transportation due to their shift schedule, home location, etc. To ensure workers can safely and reliably travel to a physical work location, TriMet[XXXVI] and C-TRAN[XXXVII] offer free consultations to employers who want to create company transit plans. Transit options might include providing free public transit passes to employees or organizing subsidized or fully covered van/bus pools for employees. Employers can also ensure employees who rely on public transportation are scheduled for shifts that align with bus schedules. Additionally, for workers who drive, employers can offer mileage reimbursement, especially for jobs where employees must use their personal vehicles to complete work-related tasks. Some employers even provide emergency rideshare gift cards or emergency loans for car repairs that can be paid back through payroll.

Sample Metrics

- Percentage (%) of employees offered a free or low-cost transportation option.
- Percentage (%) of employees who utilize employer's free or low-cost transportation option.

D. Comprehensive Benefits

4 Offer childcare (and elder care/other family care) and other supports to employees.

Employers can implement a variety of strategies to support employers who are parents and caregivers. These can include flexible spending accounts (pre-tax dollars) to cover or supplement child, elder, or other family care costs. Large employers can facilitate childcare services onsite or nearby through a partnership with an outside childcare provider. Employers can avail their employees of free childcare referral services & resources, such as ChildCare Aware of Washington[XXXVIII] and Find Child Care Oregon.[XXXIX] These organizations can help employees navigate federal subsidy programs such as TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program); as well as state subsidy programs such as Working Connections Child Care[XL] (Washington) and Employment Related Day Care[XLI] (Oregon).

Sample Metric

- Percentage (%) of caregiving employees connected to free or low-cost family resources.

D. Comprehensive Benefits

5 Implement or improve flexible hours and paid time off policies that support employees' personal wellbeing and family.

Employers should consider how work scheduling and PTO can meet the needs of both employees and employers. PTO is critical for worker mental and physical well-being and productivity and is good for business. Employers should offer a generous PTO policy, above the minimum state or local requirements. Surveys report on the positive effects of taking time off, including increased positivity, energy, and productivity.[XLII] Beyond offering generous PTO, employers should create a workplace culture that encourages workers to use the PTO offered to them.

a. Employers can start workers out with a balance of PTO and allow workers to take time off after they accrue PTO or borrow against future PTO from their first day of employment in case of emergency. Allowing flexible leave for new hires provides a critical additional layer of stability for employees, particularly for parents and caregivers.
b. Consider flexibility and partial day PTO. Partial day PTO allows workers to take PTO for a couple of hours at a time (e.g., 2-4 hours) to attend scheduled appointments or pick up a sick child from school. Flexible PTO policies help accommodate unplanned emergencies or pre-planned events that inevitably arise during work hours that are critical for managing work-life balance.
c. Establish or continue flexible work arrangements, as allowable, including remote work or flexible hours.
d. Create a floating holiday policy. For example, if your business is closed on Christmas Day, allow workers who do not observe Christmas the flexibility to work on that day. Accordingly, workers can apply the Christmas holiday to a religious holiday they plan to observe instead.
e. Provide training and guidance to supervisors on how they can plan workloads when an employee takes time off is a good way to minimize undue stress and maintain productivity leading up to, during, and after an employee takes time off. Encouraging advance scheduling and coordination in advance of vacations is also a strategy to minimize overburdening team members.

D. Comprehensive Benefits

5

Sample Metrics

- Implementation of flexible hours or progressive PTO policies.
- Percentage (%) of employees who lose unused PTO days.

6 **Create or improve existing employee financial wellness programs.**

Employers can offer financial literacy resources (e.g., budgeting, tax preparation, debt management, student loan repayment, etc.) to help reduce financial stress. These services can be provided through community-based organizations or public agencies that provide these services. The National Fund for Workforce Solutions' Guide to Employee Financial Wellness[XLIII] offers detailed instructions on how to get started. Employers can set aside paid time for their employees to participate in these classes or consultations to allow for full utilization.

Sample Metric

- Percentage (%) of employees enrolled/participated in financial wellness program offerings.

D. Comprehensive Benefits

7 Offer and promote the use of Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs).

Employee Assistance Programs offer employees confidential assistance with life concerns like stress, mental health, substance abuse, relationships and more. Often EAPs may be built into payroll or benefits services, and employers should promote the free benefit to employees. Separate from health insurance, EAPs can help employees with internal work issues as well as provide support for personal difficulties outside of work. Employers can take extra steps to publicize these resources to their employees to ensure wide utilization such as setting aside paid time for their employees to participate in consultations.

Sample Metric

- Percentage (%) of employees enrolled in EAP.

8 Establish or expand portable retirement savings and medical benefits programs.

"Portable benefits" are connected to an individual, rather than their place of employment. There are many types of portable benefits programs that cover PTO, medical benefits, and retirement savings benefits. These kinds of systems are meant to expand basic benefits to workers who are not covered by existing labor laws, such as contract workers.

Existing examples include NDWA Labs, the innovation arm of the National Domestic Workers Alliance. Alia,[XLIV] their portable benefits program, allows individuals who hire domestic workers to contribute regularly to their workers' PTO and group insurance benefits. Similarly, OregonSaves[XLV] is a retirement program offered through the State of Oregon for workers who lack a workplace retirement plan. WDBs should ensure job seekers are aware and avail themselves of portable benefits programs.

Sample Metric

- Percentage (%) of workers utilizing portable benefits.

E. Accessible Hiring and Onboarding Practices

Employers

STRATEGIES

1 Standardize the use of ADA compliant job description text and accessibility of all job application materials.

While online job postings offer more reach and accessibility than ever, employers should ensure their recruitment platform and job postings are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). WDBs can address this at a regional level by working with regional, internet-based job board partners like Mac's List to ensure that the back-end infrastructure of job websites encourages or requires employers to update their job descriptions for accessibility. Employers should also include contact information in the job description or recruitment platform should candidates require assistance.

WDBs and advocates can provide accessibility resources or step-by-step checklists for employers. Employers can engage outside support to conduct an accessibility audit of their applicant process, or can connect to free government services (Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation[XLVI] and Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS): Vocational Rehabilitation[XLVII]) to access technical assistance for submitting applications. WDBs can also direct employers to available Vocational Rehabilitation services or make a warm hand off, if desired.

Sample Metric

- Percentage (%) of revised job descriptions and materials.

E. Accessible Hiring and Onboarding Practices

2 Post simple, skill-based job descriptions that include core competencies, essential job functions necessary to perform the job, and accurate salary range.

Job description helps define a role that meets the needs of the organization. If crafted effectively, they will recruit the appropriate talent. As the demand for workers continues, employers can stay ahead of the curve by ensuring their job descriptions effectively communicate essential responsibilities and qualifications needed for a role. Employers should consider the following best practices for improving job descriptions:

a. Employers should reevaluate educational attainment or years of direct experience requirements. These requirements may deter applicants who may have non-traditional transferrable skills that qualify them for the role. Employers can adopt practices such as Skills-Based Hiring[XLVIII] to update their job descriptions and requirements.
b. Employers should evaluate if often archaic physical requirements such as heavy lifting or holding a driver's license are necessary to perform the job. If it is not an essential job function, they should be removed.
c. Job postings may often include gender coded language that may keep applicants from applying. If in doubt, employers can utilize free tools such as Gender Decoder[XLIX] or paid software such as Textio[L] to analyze and remove language. WDBs can partner with these companies to provide free or low-cost tools to their employers.

Sample Metric

- Percentage (%) of revised job descriptions and materials.

E. Accessible Hiring and Onboarding Practices

3 Expand recruitment efforts to reach a larger pool of qualified, diverse applicants.

Employers can look beyond the usual hiring websites to identify job boards or networks for candidates of color, women, and more, as well as specific outreach and engagement strategies in the field that can reach different demographics. Employers can recruit from the public workforce system where they can access a wide variety of qualified and diverse candidates. Another opportunity is to share job descriptions with community-based organizations who are trusted within their respective communities.

Sample Metrics

- Number (#) of affinity-based job boards/ communities engaged in recruitment processes.
- Increased diversity of applicants and increased diversity of hires.

The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization's (IRCO) Employment Services Department in Oregon offers to connect hiring managers with immigrant and refugee job seekers while offering ongoing support to the new employee. IRCO's employment services can offer to pre-screen candidates, coordinate interviews, assist with onboarding processes, interpret on-the-job training, provide ESL instruction, and more, to ensure a successful match.

4 Implement resume review technology that removes bias.

Employers can invest in resume software or use websites that will anonymize resumes for review. Software can hide names, demographic information, the application source, and other language used in the application that may create bias. Affinda[LI] offers resume redaction software, while Applied[LII] is an all-in-one debiased hiring platform. Both offer free or low-cost trials or demos of their products. The WDBs can encourage employers to anonymize resumes or provide resources for unbiased hiring technology.

Sample Metric

- Increased diversity in submitted applications and increased diversity in hires.

E. Accessible Hiring and Onboarding Practices

5 Implement a standard interview process for all candidates that is still responsive to different job seeker needs.

Unstructured interviews are often preferred by hiring managers, but studies have found them to be a poor predictor of on-the-job performance.[13] Lacking some sort of baseline for interviews, employers might look for candidates who look like them and continue to uphold racial, gender, age, or other biases, even subconsciously. Any organization hiring should consider the following anti-bias and standardization strategies: (1) Ensure diverse interview panels or hiring committees; (2) Ensure available interpreter services for the interview, if needed; (3) Develop objective criteria for interview questions and share with the interview panel well in advance of an interview; and (4) Send sample questions in advance to candidates. This would particularly support ELL (English Language Learners) and applicants with disabilities by ensuring they bring their best selves to the interview.

Sample Metrics

- Implementation of a standard interview process that includes most or all the above strategies.
- Increased diversity in hires.

13 I. Bohnet. "How to Take the Bias Out of Interviews." Harvard Business Review. https://hbr.org/2016/04/how-to-take-the-bias-out-of-interviews

E. Accessible Hiring and Onboarding Practices

6 Provide comprehensive, effective, and consistent onboarding for all new hires.

Onboarding refers to the process of helping new hires adjust to the performance and social aspects of a job. Free online tools such as the Six C's of Onboarding[LIII] can serve as blueprints for employers looking to implement a standardized onboarding process. The tool breaks down the onboarding process into six steps: Compliance, Clarification, Confidence, Connection, Culture, and Check-Back. Effective onboarding has shown to lead to faster adjustment, better job enjoyment, better performance, and increased retention.

Sample Metric

- Percentage (%) of new hire satisfaction with onboarding process.

7 Assign formal or informal mentors to assist new employees with their transition ("buddy system").

Employers should pair a seasoned employee with each new hire for a set period at the beginning of employment who can help them navigate the workplace and answer questions they may have. Regular check-ins, however brief, can help surface any concerns that can help make the onboarding process smoother for future hires. It could also help build leadership skills amongst longer tenured employees.

Sample Metric

- Percentage (%) of new hire confidence and comfort based on mentorship.

E. Accessible Hiring and Onboarding Practices

8 Incorporate reasonable accommodation practices into onboarding.

Employers can ensure workplaces are ADA compliant and address the needs of workers with disabilities. Forms, building access, use of service animals, and physical workplace modifications are just a few examples of items that may require reasonable accommodation. Employees with disabilities should be active participants in making their workplace more accessible and should be consulted in any process. There are also various free trainings, technical assistance, and other resources available through the State of Oregon and Washington's Department of Health Services.[LIV, LV] Additionally, the U.S. Department of Labor offers accommodation resources.[LVI] WDBs should include these resources as part of their regular offerings and make warm hand offs to interested employers as needed.

Sample Metric

- Number (#) of accessibility requests or modifications addressed.

E. Accessible Hiring and Onboarding Practices

Others

9 **Improve enforcement of Ban the Box, discrimination, and reasonable accommodation laws.**

For existing policies, state and local government bodies can improve the enforcement of anti-discrimination laws by increasing capacity or potentially implementing community-based engagement to educate workers and employers. This is especially important for lower-paying industries and during economic downturns – strategic enforcement is key for high-violation sectors. Labor and civil rights nonprofits can advocate for better enforcement mechanisms and assist government enforcement arms by supporting workers in identifying cases of discrimination or lack of accommodation.

Sample Metric

- Number (#) of discrimination enforcement procedures or actions taken by the state or municipality.

E. Accessible Hiring and Onboarding Practices

10 **Improve existing workforce development sector-based partnerships. Create and/or support new sector-based partnerships in emerging or recovering sectors.**

Business-led regional partnerships can convene a critical mass of employers in key sectors to identify regional needs and solutions with high rates of buy-in. The national nonprofit Institute for Networked Communities has created a model and community of practice called Next Generation Sector Partnerships[LVII] with comprehensive training offerings and an extensive toolkit[LVIII] to help WDBs, in collaboration with others, establish successful industry-driven partnerships in their region. The Next Generation Sector Partnership Program is a business-led model of sector-based collaboration consisting of companies, education, workforce development, economic development, and community-based organizations. Each partnership focuses on problem-solving within a regional industry, such as job training, education, and/or industry competitiveness.

Sample Metric

- Increased number (#) of joint ventures and partnerships; # of new or enhanced sector training programs.

E. Accessible Hiring and Onboarding Practices

11 Expand and improve direct-hire job training programs.

Direct-hire training programs support a demand-driven workforce where job seekers are trained based on the number of quality jobs available. WDBs can collaborate with employers to develop a job training curriculum tailored to the employer's workforce needs, including required certifications and skills. Employers can then offer priority in their application and interview process for participants who have completed the training program. Job seekers have incentive to complete a job training program if they know they will be connected to quality, stable employment opportunities, and employers have incentive to participate based on their access to a pool of candidates trained based on their specific needs.

Sample Metric

- Number (#) of direct hire training programs; retention of program participants hired by employer.

A successful direct-hire training program is Portland-based Worksystems' partnership with the Portland Haulers Association where participants are trained for entry-level garbage and recycling industry jobs with Portland Haulers Association member companies. This program, in line with best practices, includes support for participants, preparation for Oregon's Commercial Driver License test, and interviews with local employers upon graduation of the program.

E. Accessible Hiring and Onboarding Practices

12 Support foreign-born/trained job seekers in new credentialing process.

Foreign-born workers, whether trained in the U.S. or abroad, are filling critical roles in the regional labor market, addressing shortages in impacted sectors. In 2019, Oregon passed SB (Senate Bill) 855[LIX] requiring licensure boards to find faster pathways for immigrants and refugees with advanced degrees. Changes like this can substantially increase the number of trained or certified workers in healthcare or other large industries. WDBs can work with licensure boards to ensure these pathways are accessible, and case managers can support jobseekers in navigating and understanding updated processes.

Sample Metric

- Number (#) of immigrant or refugee job seekers hired in their previously credentialed field.

F. Training and Advancement Opportunities

Employers

STRATEGIES

1 Build clear internal pathways and opportunities to support career progression.

Career development and advancement remains a top determinant for employee retention. Clear career pathways can also encourage workers to develop their skills and seek additional training or education. It is especially important to consider how to build pathways for entry-level workers who have been invested in, oriented, and trained within a company.

Employers should consider what progress looks like within their organization – the needs of the company, types of positions, and specific job duties for those positions. This includes providing wage transparency so that workers can identify not just what they need to accomplish to meet certain position requirements, but how to reach certain wage thresholds. With that information, companies can develop career roadmaps, or lattices, that offer a visualization of where employees can either grow or reskill with adjacent competencies into a different role. Employees should also be aware of what skills, competencies, and achievements it takes to reach each new role. Employers can use resources such as the Transparent Career Pathways Tool[LX] from the Institute for Employment Studies. WDBs can provide technical assistance to support.

Sample Metric

- Percentage (%) of employees that progress within the organization over time.

F. Training and Advancement Opportunities

2 Create and expand on-the-job, professional development, and incumbent worker training opportunities to support advancement and cross training.

Employers should invest in training opportunities to support their employees' professional growth. Employers will benefit from their employees' new skills, improve employee engagement and retention, and grow talent pipelines from within their company.

Employers can provide annual stipends for employees to participate in trainings to stay up to date with best practices, innovations, or skills in their industry. Supporting culturally relevant training opportunities is another way to ensure that women, people of color, and LGBTQ+ staff can gain leadership skills and advance internally – mainstream training programs are not always one-size-fits all.

Depending on the industry, employers can also seek out public funding and other support to build their training programs. For example, Grads of Life[LXI] is an organization that works with companies to help skill up their talent while advancing equity and economic justice in the workplace. They provide consulting services that will help employers or networks of employers build tailored regional talent pipelines, hiring programs, and advancement strategies.

Koelsch Communities, an independent living, assisted living, and memory care provider, had a drastic need for specialized training for its workers who cared for residents with dementia. With the help of a Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW) grant, Koelsch was able to fund a pilot training program for its memory healthcare staff. This resulted in both improved care for residents, measured by increased health outcomes and reduced incidents, as well as improved employee satisfaction and retention from title changes and salary increases for staff who completed the training.

Sample Metrics

- Percentage (%) of employees who are promoted within a year of completing training.
- Percentage (%) of workers who participate in rotational or cross-training programs.

F. Training and Advancement Opportunities

3 Create or update tuition assistance programs.

Tuition assistance is an employee benefit that covers costs associated with an employee's continuing education. These include stipends for tuition, fees, and books. Tuition assistance invests in workers to help them build general and specialized skills that will help them improve their performance and contribute to their professional growth. Upskill America, an employer-led workforce development initiative within Aspen Institute, published a guide for employers to create tuition assistance programs.[LXII] Tuition assistance programs should be disbursement based, rather than reimbursement based. Disbursement-based program models remove barriers such as up-front costs and lengthy wait-times to be reimbursed, which are key to equitable access. Upskill America[LXIII] also has a step-by-step guide on tuition reimbursement models.

Sample Metrics

- Dollars allocated to tuition assistance.
- Number (#) of employees who complete education programs with tuition assistance.

F. Training and Advancement Opportunities

Others

4 Create local, regional, and state investment incentives for employers and workers that upskill, or reskill, workers for future jobs and swiftly changing industries.

Skills required for major job industries are rapidly evolving. While employees can personally seek out training or learning opportunities in the field, upskilling can also be a beneficial investment for employers to improve retention, save costs, recruit job seekers, and foster a culture of learning.

Policymakers have a key role in closing talent gaps and giving workers skills they need to access quality jobs. WDBs and workforce training programs focus on industry needs and match training opportunities to jobs that will need to be filled. Apprenticeship opportunities could be expanded to include more middle-skill jobs like computer programming. Targeted incentives are also crucial for addressing historic skills gaps for people of color and women rather than relying on private investment which often perpetuates the status quo.

Sample Metrics

- Amount of public and private funding for upskilling/ reskilling programs.
- Number (#) of workers who completed upskill programs.

VI.
NEXT STEPS

Developing the Framework was a collaborative effort led by the CWWC in partnership with employers, public sector, labor, community-based organizations, etc. focused on increasing the number of quality jobs in the region. The quality jobs standards and strategies presented in the Framework reflect local priorities and if thoughtfully implemented can help address the challenges employers are facing in attracting and retaining employees. This section contains demonstration projects that the workforce boards may wish to consider as they move forward with the Initiative.

Quality Jobs "Checklist"

The list below is a set of practical metrics that employers can use to measure and track strategy outputs. Similarly, workforce boards can use this list as a tool to support employers in need of additional assistance in tracking this data. There are a number of sample metrics proposed, organized by job quality standard, stemming from the strategies outlined in Section V. These metric recommendations are a non-exhaustive list and additional iterative work should be done to vet and test these metrics with employers and other partners. **See Page 64** for a full list of strategies and metrics.

As a next step, the CWWC and the Council may wish to develop benchmarks to measure attainment of Quality Job Standards (i.e., if you do X number of strategies related to each standard). Benchmarking should include measuring individual workplace and regional outcomes over time, via indicators such as worker economic mobility, job satisfaction, job equity, improved retention, and workforce composition.

Quality Jobs Branding and Certification Program

The workforce boards can consider developing a Quality Jobs Designation program for Employers that successfully meet a set number of items on the Quality Jobs checklist. Like popular "Shop Local" campaigns, the goal of the initiative is to educate consumers and job seekers about the economic and social advantages to doing business and/or seeking employment with a quality jobs employer. If well organized and paired with an effective marketing campaign, such a program can help boost an employer's profile, drive business and job seeker interest.

Verification into such a program should be as straightforward as possible to minimize burden on employers and incentivize participation in the program. As part of pursuing the feasibility of such a program, the workforce boards should look to complementary initiatives such as Portland Means Progress to identify areas of overlap or collaboration.

Quality Jobs Business Pilot

Given the variety of employers in the Portland-Southwest Washington Metropolitan area, it is reasonable to assume that not all are ready and/or technically able to adopt the recommendations described in the Framework immediately. In response, the workforce boards may wish to consider developing a Quality Jobs Business pilot. The pilot would offer a time bound program comprised of several employers of different sizes and sectors in the Portland-Southwest Washington Metropolitan area.

As part of the pilot, employers would directly work with Business Services representatives to receive tailored technical assistance to meet the quality jobs standards. The goals of the program are twofold. One, employers would receive direct low cost/free assistance and potentially increase their ability to attract and retain workers. Two, the workforce boards could "test" the recommendations described in this Framework and offer refinements to their program offerings based on program results.

Quality Jobs Council Meetings

As part of the implementation of the Framework, the CWWC may wish to continue convening the Council quarterly or at some other appropriate frequency. The Council can continue advising the CWWC in the following ways:

1. Council members can share updates on the implementation of the Framework within their own organization.
2. Council members can provide guidance on the deployment of demonstration projects – such as the Quality Jobs Checklist, Branding and Certification Program, Business Pilot, etc.
3. Council members should work together to identify and pursue state, federal, and philanthropic funding sources to further support and augment the Initiative's efforts.
4. Council members can help identify key outlets, such as national conferences, panels, op-ed, and marketing opportunities to help position the Quality Jobs Initiative as a unique and innovative approach to regional workforce equity.

QJ Standards		Strategy
A. Self-Sufficiency Wages	1	Calculate the cost of turnover.
	2	Conduct a wage assessment.
	3	Conduct a wage equity analysis.
	4	Implement pay parity and wage protections for contracted workers.
	5	Support implementation and/or enforcement of a self-sufficiency wage standard within the municipality, or across the region or state.
	6	Establish wage boards at the state or local government.
B. Safe Working Conditions/Worker Engagement	1	Uphold and enforce anti-discrimination, anti-violence, anti-hostility, and anti-harassment policies.
	2	Provide reasonable accommodations for all employees.
	3	Support English Language Learner (ELL) employees.
	4	Ensure worker rights to collectively bargain.
	5	Conduct regular employee surveys to gather input about worker's experiences in the workplace and inform the improved delivery of business services.
	6	Add worker voice to company boards or management teams.
	7	Develop an employee share ownership program.
	8	Improve enforcement of labor and employment laws that establish worker protections.
C. Predictable Hours	1	Adjust mandatory overtime and shift work policies when possible and provide clear expectations to applicants.

Potential Metrics	Status
Completion of a cost of turnover analysis once a year.	
Percentage (%) of firm's lowest paid workers left at the one-year mark, and two-year mark.	
Percentage (%) of workers earn a self-sufficient wage, as defined by their geographical location and/or number of dependents.	
Percentage (%) of workers that started in the lowest paid quintile (determined by state/region wage data) moved to above region's self-sufficiency wage each year.	
Completion of wage equity analysis once a year.	
Presence of labor/employment laws (state/local) which protect independent contractors and contract workers.	
Percentage (%) of contracted workers or independent contractors versus employees who produce your organization's or firm's main service or product.	
Percentage (%) of workers within a region earning a self-sufficient wage, as defined by their geographical location and # of dependents.	
Presence of wage boards in the state in key industries.	
Number (#) of high quality, and regularly scheduled anti-discrimination, anti-violence, anti-hostility, and anti-harassment trainings.	
Presence of clear report processes and policies around anti-discrimination, anti-violence, anti-hostility, and anti-harassment trainings.	
Implementation of accessibility audit and systemwide reasonable accommodation policies and procedures.	
Demonstrated improved English skills that lead to promotions, higher wages, or increased morale.	
Percentage (%) of workers covered by collective bargaining agreements.	
Number (#) of labor harmony policies or neutrality agreement policies.	
Presence of regular employee survey schedule (once or twice a year.	
Presence of one or more methods mentioned above, that add worker voice to company board or management team.	
Presence of one or more programs detailed in the strategy, that implement employee share or ownership.	
Number (#) of enforcement procedures or actions taken by the state or Municipality.	
Percentage (%) of workers who are working overtime or double shifts.	
Average number (#) of hours worked by company employee, by classification.	

QJ Standards		Strategy
D. Comprehensive Benefits	1	Extend benefits to all employees, including frontline staff and lowest paid workers.
	2	Provide workers with paid sick leave, parental leave, medical leave, and other vacation or paid time off.
	3	Provide or subsidize transportation for employees.
	4	Offer childcare (and elder care/other family care) and other supports to employees.
	5	Implement or improve flexible hours and paid time off policies that support employees' personal wellbeing and family.
	6	Create or improve existing employee financial wellness programs.
	7	Offer and promote the use of Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs).
	8	Establish or expand portable retirement savings and medical benefits programs.
E. Accessible Hiring and Onboarding Practices	1	Standardize the use of ADA compliant job description text and accessibility of all job application materials.
	2	Post simple, skill-based job descriptions that include core competencies, essential job functions necessary to perform the job, and accurate salary range.
	3	Expand recruitment efforts to reach a larger pool of qualified, diverse applicants.
	4	Implement resume review technology that removes bias.
	5	Implement a standard interview process for all candidates that is still responsive to different job seeker needs.
	6	Provide comprehensive, effective, and consistent onboarding for all new hires.
	7	Assign formal or informal mentors to assist new employees with their transition ("buddy system").
	8	Incorporate reasonable accommodation practices into onboarding.
	9	Improve enforcement of Ban the Box, discrimination, and reasonable accommodation laws.
	10	Improve existing workforce development sector-based partnerships. Create and/or support new sector-based partnerships in emerging or recovering sectors.
	11	Expand and improve direct-hire job training programs.
	12	Support foreign-born/trained job seekers in new credentialing process.

Potential Metrics	Status
Percentage (%) of frontline employees who have full benefit packages.	
Presence of leave policy that offers more PTO than minimum legal requirements and allow for carry over days.	
Percentage (%) of employees who utilize employer's free or low-cost transportation option.	
Percentage (%) of employees offered a free or low-cost transportation option.	
Percentage (%) of caregiving employees connected to free or low-cost family care resources.	
Implementation of flexible hours or progressive PTO policies.	
Percentage (%) of employees who lose unused PTO days.	
Percentage (%) of employees enrolled/participated in financial wellness program offerings.	
Percentage (%) of employees enrolled in EAP.	
Percentage (%) of workers utilizing portable benefits.	
Percentage (%) of revised job descriptions and materials.	
Percentage (%) of revised job descriptions and materials.	
Number (#) of affinity-based job boards/communities engaged in recruitment processes.	
Increased diversity of applicants and increased diversity of hires.	
Increased diversity in submitted applications and increased diversity in hires.	
Implementation of a standard interview process that includes most or all the above strategies.	
Increased diversity in hires.	
Percentage (%) of new hire satisfaction with onboarding process.	
Percentage (%) of new hire confidence and comfort based on mentorship.	
Number (#) of accessibility requests or modifications addressed.	
Number (#) of discrimination enforcement procedures or actions taken by the state or municipality.	
Increased number (#) of joint ventures and partnerships; # of new or enhanced sector training programs.	
Number (#) of direct hire training programs; retention of program participants hired by employer.	
Number (#) of immigrant or refugee job seekers hired in their previously credentialed field.	

QJ Standards		Strategy
F. Training and Advancement Opportunities	1	Build clear internal pathways and opportunities to support career progression.
	2	Create and expand on-the-job, professional development, and incumbent worker training opportunities to support advancement and cross training.
	3	Create or update tuition assistance programs.
	4	Create local, regional, and state investment incentives for employers and workers that upskill, or reskill, workers for future jobs and swiftly changing industries.

Potential Metrics	Status
Percentage (%) of employees that progress within the organization over time.	
Percentage (%) of employees who are promoted within a year of completing training.	
Percentage (%) of workers who participate in rotational or cross-training programs.	
Dollars allocated to tuition assistance.	
Number (#) of employees who complete education programs with tuition assistance.	
Amount of public and private funding for upskilling/reskilling programs.	
Number (#) of workers who completed upskill programs.	

VII.
ENDNOTES

Endnotes

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