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# Meeting the Needs of Workers Today and Opportunities for the Future:

*Advancing A New Vision for Workforce  
Development*

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The findings and recommendations in this brief are intended to inform and propel philanthropy and stakeholders working across a widely defined “workforce development” ecosystem to move as a collective toward a new and renewed vision for workforce development that centers workers, orients toward economic justice principles, and supports job quality.

As highlighted throughout this report, our findings and recommendations are based on the insights of workers and conversations with a range of stakeholder groups including local workforce development providers and practitioners, intermediaries, activists, worker organizers, policy advocacy organizations and think tanks, researchers, economists, and others. To make progress on our recommendations, other stakeholder groups, including policymakers across government systems, federal agencies, and employers should be engaged.

We are grateful to the hundreds of organizations and individuals who were willing to be interviewed for this project and to the workers across the country who participated in our polling effort. Their insights and labor directly informed the recommendations in this report.

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# Now is the Time for a New Vision for Workforce Development

*By some measures the United States' workforce and economic development outlook is bright and poised for continued expansion.*

Aggregate national unemployment is at historic lows. Workforce participation among working age adults is higher today than it was before the pandemic began. And although wage growth shows signs of slowing down, many workers have seen wage increases over the last year.<sup>1</sup>

Evidence suggests that people who often face challenges to accessing the labor market have made gains too. For example, Black unemployment hit a record low of 5 percent in 2023 and working people with disabilities have seen an increase in employment far surpassing pre-pandemic levels.<sup>2</sup> Youth unemployment is at lows not seen since the 1950s<sup>3</sup> and there is evidence that the tight labor market is leading to more employers recruiting people who have criminal records or have been impacted by the criminal legal system.<sup>4</sup>

The country is also poised to benefit economically thanks to domestic worker and business-friendly industrial policies not seen in decades. With implementation of three pieces of legislation – the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), and the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors and Science Act (CHIPS and Science Act) – the U.S. is poised to create millions of jobs in local communities across manufacturing, transportation, infrastructure, energy, clean water, and technology industries.

Indeed, while these three policies do not reflect direct investments into the workforce system, if implemented equitably and informed by workers and stakeholders, they have the potential expand and redefine our workforce while opening new pathways into apprenticeships and higher-quality jobs for many.

In addition, there is support within federal agencies to better meet the needs of workers and improve job quality. For example, the U.S. Department of Labor is pioneering efforts to address job quality,<sup>5</sup> promoting a framework to improve access to employment and job quality for youth,<sup>6</sup> expanding high-quality apprenticeships and pre-

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<sup>1</sup> The Employment Situation in February, CEA, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/cea/written-materials/2023/03/10/the-employment-situation-in-february-3/>

<sup>2</sup> For Disabled Workers, a Tight Labor Market Opens New Doors, October 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/25/business/economy/labor-disabilities.html>

<sup>3</sup> So much for lazy teenagers. Unemployment remains at 68 year low as tight labor market draws in a younger crowd, May 2022, <https://fortune.com/2022/05/09/teenage-unemployment-near-decades-low-jobs-young-people/>

<sup>4</sup> More Businesses Want to Hire People With Criminal Records Amid Tight Job Market, October 2022, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/more-businesses-want-to-hire-people-with-criminal-records-amid-tight-job-market-11665173965>

<sup>5</sup> The Good Jobs Initiative, U.S. Department of Labor, <https://www.dol.gov/general/good-jobs>

<sup>6</sup> Youth Employment Works Call to Action, U.S. Department of Labor, <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/youth-employment-works-call-to-action>

apprenticeship models, and working to advancing a vision for an “economy that works for all.”<sup>7</sup> Other federal agencies are leveraging their procurement power and grant funds to incentivize and promote job quality, evidence-based workforce programs, and equitable job pipelines in new infrastructure projects. And the efforts of the White House to establish and promote the American Climate Corps has the potential to expand workforce and service opportunities for youth leading to high-quality jobs while restoring lands and waters, bolstering community resilience, deploying clean energy, implementing energy efficient technologies, and advancing environmental justice.<sup>8</sup>

This progress is laudable but also incomplete and fragile.

Too many individuals across the United States are unemployed or underemployed, or work in jobs with poor pay and benefits and no voice in the workplace. Structural racism and sexism means that unemployment, underemployment, occupational segregation, and poor job quality are all too often experienced in marginalized communities and among workers of color and women.

Black workers consistently experience unemployment rates that are nearly double that of the national aggregate unemployment rate.<sup>9</sup> The unemployment rate for white workers with a high school diploma is almost equal to that of Black workers with a bachelor’s degree, demonstrating that educational attainment is not a cure-all for racial differences in unemployment.<sup>10</sup>

Across the public and private sectors and in pockets across the country, there is new and renewed attention to addressing racial and racial-gender disparities in the workforce and promoting more inclusive policies. But recent rulings and state policies have the potential to impede efforts to righting inequity and building inclusive economies.

The moment is now to develop a clear vision and stronger federal policies to address inequities in the labor market, center workers and job quality, and focus systems on economic justice and opportunity. Doing so can ensure that regardless of the political and business cycles, workers who are all too often left out as a result of race, ethnicity, gender, age, immigrant status, disability, or other factors have the opportunity to succeed in high-quality jobs, access to comprehensive and equitable workforce, education, skill-building opportunities, and supports to thrive, a voice in the workplace, and the ability to help shape policy.

We have an opportunity to secure a future where our workforce development policies reflect a deliberate and ongoing commitment to these goals. Our conversations and polling described in this report suggest this is exactly what stakeholders across the ecosystem of workforce development want for workers and from our workforce

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<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Workforce Convening: Vision 2030 – Expanding Access to Quality Jobs and Ensuring Job Equity, <https://www.thegateam.com/dol-vision-2030/index.html>

<sup>8</sup> FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Launches American Climate Corps to Train Young People in Clean Energy, Conservation, and Climate Resilience Skills, Create Good-Paying Jobs and Tackle the Climate Crisis, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/09/20/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-launches-american-climate-corps-to-train-young-people-in-clean-energy-conservation-and-climate-resilience-skills-create-good-paying-jobs-and-tackle-the-climate-crisis/#:~:text=The%20American%20Climate%20Corps%20will%20mobilize%20a%20new%20diverse%20generation,advancing%20environmental%20justice%20all%20while>

<sup>9</sup> Fairlie RW, Sundstrom WA. “The Emergence, Persistence, and Recent Widening of the Racial Unemployment Gap” Industrial and Labor Relations Review. 1999;52:252–70

<sup>10</sup> Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey, United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, <https://www.bls.gov/web/empsit/cpsecat17.htm>

policies and systems. And it aligns with what workers in communities want from public systems and from employers.

*The United States' workforce development system is ripe for a new vision that aligns with today's opportunities and challenges.*

Our research – interviews with stakeholders and surveys with workers – has yielded insights and data that make clear that the workforce development system needs a new vision, alignment, and orientation toward workers, job quality, and economic justice.

Our interviews showed consensus among stakeholders about many aspects of the workforce development system:

- The workforce system is making progress in certain areas but not overall, and stakeholders are often frustrated.
- The system faces challenges rooted in its focus, vision, structure, funding, and program strategies.
- The system should be focused on a collaborative systems-change approach that centers workers, is anchored in equity, and focused on economic justice and worker agency.
- Workers and communities should be centered in designing the workforce system, setting priorities, directing funds, and making workplaces better.
- Stakeholders want to see workforce development more aligned with economic justice.
- Stakeholders want to be part of fulfilling a new vision for workforce development. And they have ideas for how to move in this direction.

Our national survey of more than 1,200 workers offered important insights that can inform efforts to strengthen the workforce system:

- Workers are struggling financially, and they are worried that workforce development initiatives won't help them find and get good jobs. This is particularly true for Black workers and workers of color.
- Workers want good jobs and policies to achieve them, but access to job training and placement services, as well as good jobs, is inadequate.
- Workers want workforce development initiatives that will allow them to support their families, and to be respected in the workplace.
- While workers place the primary responsibility for good jobs on employers, they support additional federal policies and investments in workforce development and aligned policies to expand access to those jobs.

# Opportunities for Action

There are opportunities within Congress and across the federal government's agency and regulatory authority to codify and implement a new vision for workforce development that aligns and orients toward workers, job quality, and economic justice.

First, while the public workforce development system governed by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) does not constitute all the federal and state funding flowing for workforce development and employment-related services, it does govern the system under which federal, state, and local workforce development services and many workforce, education, and supports are authorized and often coordinated. Evaluations of the WIOA public system and national data show that it struggles to improve employment outcomes for workers and particularly for workers who face labor market inequities, and the system has seen a notable decline in the number of people being served even during recent economic crisis.

WIOA is currently poised for reauthorization. Other key pieces of federal legislation that support workforce services and supports such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Fund (SNAP E&T) under the Farm Bill are also pending in Congress. Policies that support workers and promote evidence-based employment and education practices are primed for Congressional attention as well, such as the National Apprenticeship Act and the Higher Education Act.

And the huge influx of federal infrastructure investments flowing to states and communities through CHIPS, IRA, and IIJA laws highlight the urgent need for targeted development of, and a focus on, equitable workforce policies and practices to help transform a range of industry sectors, including manufacturing, transportation, infrastructure, energy, clean water, and technology to embody an orientation toward workers and job quality for the future.

Finally, Congress and the federal government currently possess other tools to support a greater number of workers benefiting from higher-quality jobs, having greater voice and agency, and protecting their safety and security. Our research points to shared interests by stakeholders and workers in pursuing rules, funding, and enforcement opportunities to bolster existing laws and regulatory structures toward achieving the vision of a workforce system that aligns and orients toward workers, job quality, and economic justice.

**Through our stakeholder interviews and worker sentiment survey, it is clear now is time to imagine and advance a broadly defined workforce development system oriented and aligned toward workers' voice, economic justice principles as defined by stakeholders, and job quality to meet the opportunities of today and the needs of workers and our economy for tomorrow.**

# Process: Anchoring Insights in Community and Alongside Workers

The findings and recommendations offered in this brief follow a strategic data collection process over the last year that gathered insights from a range of stakeholders and workers themselves.

We leveraged two different, but complementary, data sets. The first consisted of qualitative interviews with more than 150 diverse stakeholders within the workforce development ecosystem. We interviewed a range of workforce providers and practitioners, organizations and individuals who identify as stakeholders within workforce development intermediaries, worker and labor organizers, union shops, activists, and worker centers, policy advocates and think tanks, researchers, and economists, as well as local public workforce development officials.

The second data set summarizes data gathered through a national poll of more than 1,200 workers undertaken in December 2022.

A detailed description of the interviews and polling can be found in Appendix A.

Our data collection efforts were complemented with a review of current workforce data trends and policy. Reports and position papers from policy and advocacy organizations were also collected and reviewed.

## Findings: Stakeholder Interviews

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**We present major findings from our stakeholder interviews in this section. Quotations from interviewees are pulled out to add context. The names and affiliated organizations associated with the quotations were omitted to preserve the anonymity of the person interviewed. We layer data from our worker sentiment polling efforts throughout this section.**

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Many stakeholders thought the workforce system is making progress and advancing toward a more equitable and comprehensive system in isolated parts of the system or locations but not across the system writ large.

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*Worker Sentiment: Almost 90 percent of workers thought the federal government should enact policies “Encouraging businesses to create good, quality jobs by targeting workforce and economic development services to companies who want to invest in their workers.”*

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When we asked stakeholders to share what they thought the workforce system was doing well, responses pointed to strengths in parts of the system but not necessarily the entire system or efforts to support people facing barriers to employment. Stakeholders pointed to strong new guidance and initiatives by the Department of Labor

**“The language that is being used and guidance being put out is a strong step in the right direction.”**

as a sign that the system is moving in the direction of supporting workers in non-standard work settings and through quality jobs among other efforts. Stakeholders elevated that the system “works well for the portion of community members who have some skills when they can be reskilled quickly” and that the system is good at getting people into entry-level jobs. There was awareness by some local stakeholders that local workforce leaders are attempting to knit together stronger and more comprehensive and integrated system.

Stakeholders cited the Unemployment Insurance system for making progress toward better outcomes and inclusive practices. And they supported the idea that when the workforce system, labor stakeholders, and economic development stakeholders are working together the system seems to be responsive to the needs of workers and communities.

Stakeholders reflected that they believe that the workforce system is making strides in advancing the narrative on race and gender equity but there is more to do. Some stakeholders cited progress underway to make the system more diverse and equitable.

Stakeholders also identified employer connections as a valuable piece of the workforce system. While stakeholders cited progress within certain aspects of the system, they see the system lacking vision or goals in a rapidly changing economy.

**“It’s hard to understand what workforce development even means and what is working well – it means different things to different people in different contexts and there’s no shared vision for what the system is or should be.”**

**“We sit on a local subcommittee of the workforce board focused on system effectiveness (support service providers, employers), and we’re working on a workforce and job quality measurement system – focused on getting insights into job quality and workers’ experience with employers.”**

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***Worker Sentiment: Over 90 percent of workers polled point to family-sustaining pay, job security, and safe working conditions as the most important aspects of a quality job – but most are lacking access to these and other essential job qualities like the ability to have a say in the workplace or accessible training and educational opportunities.***

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**Still, stakeholders raised consistent challenges with the current workforce system rooted in its focus, vision, structure, funding, and program strategies.**

When asked about challenges facing the workforce system, stakeholders raised its lack of vision and inadequate attention toward people with the most barriers to employment and a lack of tools to address those barriers. They also cited the lack of a racial and racial-gender equity orientation and vision, which they believed is exacerbated by what the workforce system measures. Stakeholders strongly believed that the system is underfunded and operates from a scarcity mindset, with funding that is siloed and rigid with documentation and eligibility requirements.

Stakeholders would like the system to allow providers to be more innovative while developing a vision for the future of the workforce, planning for different economic trends and conditions and national sectoral employment needs.

From a programmatic standpoint, respondents do not believe that the system does enough to support proven strategies geared toward workers who face barriers to employment such as paid training, apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships that are tied to emerging or new job sectors, transitional jobs, social enterprise, contextualized learning and education, labor/management training partnerships, and other strategies.

Stakeholders consistently agreed that the workforce system needs to support worker-centered policies and systems that promote workers' voice and engagement in the workplace. One stakeholder in the South noted "in a lot of places in the South workforce development is in one place and then you have lots of policies that are holding workers back. It's hard to think about workforce development without looking at other policies that are working in opposition to supporting and empowering workers." Stakeholders in the South also pointed out that there is a different relationship with the business community that needs to be recognized and identify a more prominent role for smaller employers and their unique needs.

**"The workforce development system mostly excludes people with criminal records which are a huge source of untapped talent. The system has decided that these people are not worth investing in at scale.**

**There is a direct connection here to racism and the leverage of the criminal justice system as a tool of oppression. Unchecked, the workforce system is complicit in reinforcing this tool."**

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***Worker Sentiment: Just over half of those polled in the workforce say accessing job assistance has been easy, but only 15% say it is very easy. Startlingly, unemployed workers found it more difficult than those employed to access job training and job search workforce development services.***

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**When defining the workforce development system, stakeholders did not have a unified definition. When describing the system, frustrations with the current system were evident as was recognition that leaders and stakeholders working in the system now are making progress where they can.**

The most common way people defined the workforce development system was as a resource to connect jobseekers to entry-level jobs or serve as a "bridge between workers and employers." Stakeholders often noted that this question depended on how you define problems of unemployment, underemployment, lack of job quality, or economic inequity.

We found that there was **not a single, unified definition for workforce development** across stakeholder groups.

When asked to describe the system, stakeholders pointed out both frustrations and areas of progress across these themes:

- **Overly complicated, antiquated, and fragmented.** Stakeholders reflected that the “system is complicated and doesn’t need to be” and that the system lacks a clear purpose and goals when it comes to prioritizing workers facing barriers to employment or addressing economic inequity. Stakeholders agreed that the system is “fragmented to a fault” and that it is not a true system but rather isolated programs that do not communicate with each other or allow for innovation and lack a comprehensive vision. This frustration was felt by both providers and advocates. Part of this frustration may be, in part, that there are several funding streams to support people facing barriers to employment scattered across the federal government. These funding streams are not necessarily aligned in terms of goals, performance outcomes, and program structures, which makes it difficult for cross-system and program collaboration.
- **The decentralized nature of the system and rigidity often exacerbates inequity in communities.** In keeping with the theme of fragmentation, and in the words of one stakeholder, many stakeholders think the workforce system is “decentralized and disjointed to a fault.” They feel like the local control of the workforce system, in some cases, makes it vulnerable to the whims of leadership and to whether local workforce boards care about addressing the needs of people facing barriers to employment or righting economic inequity. Some stakeholders (particularly providers) believe they are contorting themselves and their program models to fit into local workforce board priorities or policies. Many providers have decided to not use WIOA workforce funds. These providers have created parallel systems to address the needs of workers that are not being met by the current system. The result is often under-resourced shadow workforce systems.
- **Lack of economic justice orientation.** Stakeholders recognize that the system is not funded or structured to address occupational segregation or economic injustice, but many indicate that this is what the system ought to be focused on. Stakeholders often agreed with the assessment that the system is, in the words of one, “set up to fail on achieving racial equity and economic justice right now.” And some reflected that in terms of structure, function, funding, and accountability. In the words of one person “the workforce system is not able to serve people the labor market has left behind.”

**“The workforce development system has aspirations to support particularly the most marginalized folks but it doesn’t.**

**Right now, it is designed around individual strategies and not systemic strategies.”**

**“Every city is different - leadership matters a lot in workforce development. Standardization is a problem in communities - not all communities care about people who are facing economic marginalization. No real platform or playbook that everyone agrees on to address this consistently. The decentralization of the system means that each board is working only its one issue.”**

**Power imbalances, lack of worker voice, and deficit-based framing hold the system back from supporting workers.** Stakeholders consistently cited the power imbalance between workers and employers within the current workforce development system. Stakeholders elevated that workforce development is often based on a deficit orientation in which workers need “fixing” to meet the needs of employers. This orientation is embedded in the system’s foundation. This includes who holds power within state and local decision-making bodies, including workforce development boards, how the system is funded, and how program strategies within the system are designed and implemented.

**“As it is currently structured, workforce development is a deficiency-based system.**

**It is a technical solution to a political problem.**

**You can’t paper it over. Attending to the issue of power is a must.”**

**Progress is being made in many areas and there’s a recognition that local leaders can only do so much absent changes in overall vision, funding, and structures.** Stakeholders pointed out progress being made in a number of areas like localities new use of language around equity and shifting priorities, more collaboration with industry sectors and bringing partners together, exploring more integrated local systems, and a new focus on effectiveness of the system and using the resources they have. Many stakeholders saw their local systems recognizing problems and the need for reforms such as the development of pathways from education to training to careers, rethinking the value of labor and the employer relationship, recognition the system could be used better for career pathways instead of simply entry-level placements. There was a recognition that workforce boards and the system is asked to do a lot with not much money. Stakeholders also pointed out progress at the state level such as lessening degree requirements for state jobs, taking steps toward college and apprenticeship affordability, and salary transparency for hiring.

Some reoccurring words and phrases stakeholders used to describe the workforce system included:

- **POSITIVE:** “Strong steps in the right direction, need for the system, recognition of equity and opportunity, identifying the need for solutions, ingrained in the community, helping people get into jobs, becoming more collaborative.”
- **NEGATIVE:** “Antiquated, slow, siloed, ineffective, employer driven, too difficult to navigate for workers, not trauma informed or human centered, broken, not accessible for all workers, bound by constraints, lacking innovation and functioning to preserve the status quo, fiscally challenged and operating within in a scarcity mindset.”

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*Worker Sentiment: In polling, younger workers and people of color are less satisfied with their current job than workers overall. Both groups also place a higher importance on good job qualities, particularly promotions, development opportunities, the ability to have a say, and diversity policies. But these workers are less likely to have a job with these qualities.*

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Stakeholders shared that the primary goals of the workforce system should be focused on a collaborative systems-change approach that centers workers, is anchored in equity, and focused on economic justice and worker agency.

*Worker Sentiment: Through our polling, workers put top priority on federal workforce development initiatives geared toward ensuring “All workers deserve a chance to have a good quality job to support their families.”*

Stakeholders asked to describe the primary goal of the workforce system offered a range of responses, largely focused on how the system should be constructed across three primary and intersecting domains:

- **The workforce system should be targeted to economically marginalized communities and people.** Most stakeholders said the system should be focused on resources and program strategies that benefit “economically marginalized communities” and that the primary goal of the workforce system should be to reduce economic inequity starting with people and communities most disadvantaged by economic marginalization. Stakeholders (mostly providers and practitioners) also elevated that the system needs to “meet people where they are” with evidence-based program strategies to support these workers.

“The entire orientation [of the workforce system] should be that we see ourselves as an arm of ensuring that workers have flexibility, access to good jobs, voice, power.”
- **The workforce system should be aligned with economic development and include workers and employers at the table.** Most stakeholders reflected that the workforce development system needs to be closely connected to job creation and economic development goals with a perspective and framework that is focused on “creating pipelines of workers into good jobs.” Stakeholders wanted to see a vision for the system that considers economic trends and workforce needs of the future while defining the workforce system comprehensively.

“Economic justice means access to quality jobs - a wage that covers your basic needs, benefits that help you keep healthy, professional development, and having a voice in the workplace.”  
“Economic justice means that people can enjoy life and live with dignity.”  
“Economic justice means shifting power and resources to historically marginalized communities - especially black and brown communities.”
- **The workforce system should embrace a holistic economic justice orientation.** Most stakeholders agreed that the workforce system should create the conditions in which people can, in the words of one, “live full lives or live their best life.” Stakeholders talked about how the workforce system should create “agency, autonomy and wellness,” with the system’s primary goal of ending poverty. Most stakeholders elevated that the system should ensure that people have access to workforce resources, education, skill-building opportunities, and pathways to support “upward mobility, living wages, job ladders, prosperity, the guarantee of a good job, and greater opportunity in the labor market.”

“We need to take into account a whole person’s needs - family sustaining wages and benefits, worker protections, and workers have power and voice.  
When this happens, workers are more invested, and they bring forth ideas that make work better. One idea we’ve established through our local hiring contracts is affinity groups where workers come together to develop plans for how they can make the workplace more friendly to women, people with records, other minority, or other economically marginalized workers. These workers generate recommendations that make the workplace better. This happens where workers have space and feel protected to add their voices.”

- **The workforce system can and should be a driver toward job quality while promoting worker voice, agency, and power.** Most stakeholders said the workforce system should be geared toward workers. The system should uphold and promote job quality principles – including “guaranteeing quality jobs for people in communities.” Stakeholders elevated that the system should “support workers to maximize agency in their working conditions” and focus on building and supporting “worker voice and power.” Similarly, stakeholders noted that the system must prioritize training people for jobs that exist in the community, with a focus on training for high-quality jobs and building pathways into those jobs or further education and training.

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*Worker Sentiment: 86 percent of workers polled ranked “Encouraging businesses to create good, quality jobs by targeting workforce and economic development services to companies who want to invest in their workers” as the top policy the federal government should enact.*

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When we asked **stakeholders to name the principles** the workforce system should uphold, their responses included:

- community-informed and driven;
- focused on worker agency and self-determination;
- trauma-informed and human-centered;
- an esteem and opportunity building system with a belief in people;
- inclusive, accessible, and equity focused;
- economic justice orientation;
- focused on job quality; and
- innovative.

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*Worker Sentiment: 80 percent of workers thought the following statement was convincing on why they should support new workforce development initiatives: “The training and skills provided through workforce development initiatives should be geared towards helping all people find and obtain good, quality jobs. The focus is not on getting people into any job, but into good jobs that will sustain them and their families.”*

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**Stakeholders want to see workers and communities centered in designing the workforce system, setting priorities, directing funds, and making workplaces better.**

We asked stakeholders to name what their primary goal would be if we were to put workers at the center of the workforce development system. In response, people shared that that would require an intentional focus on building the system (policies and practices) alongside workers and “listening, listening, listening.”

Stakeholders reflected that this means giving workers a say in decisions regarding workforce priorities and use of funding in forums that include “participatory visioning and planning with accountability to workers and communities.”

Stakeholders also elevated that people should be compensated for helping to inform and drive the workforce system. In terms of processes, stakeholders highlighted that this will require relationship building with communities and workers to build trust, rebalance power in favor of workers, and create the conditions by which the system demonstrates accountability to workers and communities.

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*Worker Sentiment: 85 percent of workers polled thought “The ability to have a say in and improve the workplace” was an important aspect of what would make a “good job.” Nearly 70 percent of workers lack “the ability to have a say in and improve the workplace,” “accessible, paid training and development opportunities,” or “transparency and accountability in the organization.”*

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### **Stakeholders defined economic justice across themes that describe conditions allowing people to thrive.**

We asked stakeholders to define and describe economic justice. There was no single definition, however, stakeholders from across groups articulated similar themes or principles which were anchored in worker rights and race and race-gender equity within three themes:

- Economic justice means workers have agency, voice, and a say in their workplaces like the ability to form unions and have safe working conditions. Economic justice means people live with dignity.
- Economic justice means all people have well-being defined in their own terms, access to quality jobs, and an opportunity to thrive, enjoy life, and build assets and wealth.
- Economic justice requires groups and stakeholders to recognize and repair current and historic injustices and harms, expand economic opportunity, rebalance power toward workers and communities that have been currently and historically harmed, and right public systems. Stakeholders also discussed changing labor-management dynamics in order to create net positive benefits to communities.

To many stakeholders, an economic justice orientation means regardless of skin color, ethnicity, age, gender, immigration status, disability, other demographic factors, and zip code, that people should have access to conditions and opportunities that allow them to thrive including economic, education, and wealth building opportunities.

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*Worker Sentiment: Nearly 70 percent of workers polled thought that the following statement was convincing on supporting new workforce development policies: “More than a third of the workforce – 53 million people and disproportionately women, people of color, and immigrants – struggle with low wages. For strong economic growth, we must address the discriminatory impact of poor jobs on marginalized communities.”*

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**Stakeholders want to see workforce development more aligned with economic justice.**

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***Worker Sentiment: 80 percent of workers support federal policies “Giving workers more say in the workplace management or stake in a company’s success through shared ownership or profit-sharing structures.”***

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We asked stakeholders about connecting the workforce development and economic justice fields. All stakeholders suggested that these two fields should be more aligned and connected, however, few believed the current workforce development field and systems are serving economic justice goals.

There was a basic understanding across stakeholder groups that a focus on economic justice would require the workforce development system to re-align and focus on people and communities that have been economically marginalized, help to right injustices, redistribute power, and increase access to economic opportunity, assets, and wealth.

**Working definition of economic justice based on stakeholder conversations:**

**Economic justice refers to a set of principles, strategies, and actions that build the conditions where each person has agency and choice to define what a dignified, productive, and creative life means and has the full and free opportunity to lead that life which allows for material comfort, sustainability, and growth as they choose.**

Some themes included:

- A workforce development system that is “training people for bad jobs, not supporting job quality, or training for jobs that are not there” is not aligned with economic justice goals or orientations.
- For workforce development systems to be aligned with economic justice orientations they must “take a longer look at the inherent biases and structurally racist foundations in the field, how those narratives drive the system, and how these orientations manifest in policies, programs, metrics, and funding and right the ship.”
- To the extent that workforce development is part of addressing structural issues in the labor market or creating the conditions by which workers have more agency and workplace protections because of the workforce system, it will be better aligned with economic justice.

**“Workforce development is not in service of economic justice - yet. We need to fundamentally re-think the system.”**

**“We need to build an economy that is restorative and regenerative.”**

- When workforce development can systemically build bridges with labor and economic development in ways that do not extract from local communities’ assets, it can reinforce and reflect a greater sense of economic justice for people and communities.
- To the extent that workforce development sees itself as connected and supporting people alongside other human services and support systems (that also need to be anchored in economic justice orientations) – such as cash and income supports, unemployment benefits, housing and homelessness services, childcare, and other systems – it can be part of a holistic system in service to achieving economic justice.
- To connect the two ideas more fully, we need to move away from the frame of individual deficiencies and toward systemic responses that prioritize worker aspirations, choice and dignity, and career mobility.

**“Entrepreneurship is a pathway to economic justice – ownership models and access to capital are critical but so are safety nets.”**



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*Worker Sentiment: 85 percent of workers support federal workforce policies “Increasing availability of and reducing barriers to accessing job search, job training, and placement services.”*

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**Stakeholders want to be part of fulfilling a new vision for workforce development. And they have ideas for how to move in this direction.**

We asked stakeholders what it will take to achieve a new vision for workforce development and if they were interested in being connected to this work. Stakeholders unanimously said they want to be part of building a new vision for workforce development. They also recognized that the biggest challenge to ongoing participation is a lack of time and resources to participate. Stakeholders also wanted to see an overarching vision for the system that was informed by workers and organizations working on the ground.

Stakeholders identified key steps for moving toward a new vision for workforce development:

- **Take stock.** Stakeholders suggested that we need to “interrogate policies, funding streams at all levels of government, programs, metrics, narratives, and other elements” of the current workforce development system and sets of policies. We need to assess who they serve and how can they be changed to support where we want to go? Stakeholders want to engage in these kinds of exercises within the context of understanding policy history. Stakeholders suggested that this exercise also needed to include taking stock of what is working in communities as well as exploring existing research and identifying what other research is needed. Stakeholders want honest and courageous reflection about the “success and failure [of the system].” Within this context, they elevated that they “want to stop trying to convince people that something works when it doesn’t.” Stakeholders also wanted to see more innovation and experimentation, recognizing that sometimes it’s ok to fail if you can learn from your mistakes.
- **Convene, organize, and build networks toward collaboration.** Stakeholders recognize that moving toward a new vision of workforce development will require developing relationships with other organizations and workers so they can advance a vision together. Stakeholders believe workers need to be a deeper part of this network building. And they also identified that government partners, employers, and others across disparate networks need to be engaged. Stakeholders identified that these efforts cannot be an “inside play;” they need to include efforts that organize workers and worker-focused or worker-serving organizations over time to affect political will.

**“We need to be in the room with each other. We don’t need any more theory. Where are the workers? We need to be engaged with workers to tell us where to go.**

**We need more spaces where workers at the center and we build together.”**

**“There has to be a cross-system and cross-sector and cross organizational vision and strategy for moving this forward.**

**We often don’t do this work.**

**We need to bring in multiple stakeholder groups and build a vision together.**

**Political will be necessary.”**

- **Build a vision and multi-pronged strategy for the future.** Stakeholders want to build a strategy for the future of workforce development. They recognized that examining current policy is critical to that effort, as well as looking at successful efforts that could offer insight into a renewed vision for workforce development. Stakeholders agreed that strategies focused on politics, policy, organizing, communications, and other areas will be needed to realize the vision. And there needs to be a coordinating group of funders that are helping propel a vision forward.

**“We need to have a whole new language for this work - move beyond deficit-based language and classist language. We need to move beyond blaming people for their deficits and focus on systems and structures.”**

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*Worker Sentiment: Over 80 percent of workers supported the federal government investing in workforce training, education, and job search assistance. 50 percent of workers thought it should be a top or high priority – even after hearing a battery of negative messages.*

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# Findings: Worker Sentiment & Workforce Survey

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In December 2022 we designed and implemented a worker sentiment poll through Strategies 360 with the goal of gathering worker perspectives across a range of job quality measures and workforce development issue areas. Our intention for doing this alongside our interview process was to engage workers across the country directly to gather their perspectives.

We conducted a mixed-mode survey among 1,200 adults nationwide, including an oversample of 594 people of color. Of those, 24% of respondents were in the “Service” sector, 23% were in “White Collar” careers, 21% identified as “Blue Collar,” 12% were in Social-Cultural jobs and 11% in healthcare, with 9% unemployed and looking for work. The margin of error for the survey is  $\pm 2.8\%$ .

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## WORKER LANDSCAPE AND JOB CHARACTERISTICS

1. Workers are feeling the pinch economically. The economy tops the list of priorities, inflation is having a large impact on nearly half of adults, and nearly two-thirds report struggling to make ends meet.
2. Over 90 percent of workers point to family-sustaining pay, job security, and safe working conditions as important aspects of a quality job – but most are lacking access to these and other essential qualities.
3. Nearly 70 percent of workers say they don’t have a say in the workplace, lack policies and practices that advance diversity, equity, inclusion, transparency, and accountability in their workplace, and have no accessible paid training and development opportunities – all important job qualities for over 80 percent of workers.
4. Two demographic groups – those who are 18 to 34 and people of color – are feeling economic concerns more acutely than workers overall. Inflation is having a larger impact on them, and they are less financially secure.
  - Younger workers and people of color are less satisfied with their current job than workers overall. Both groups also place a higher importance on good job qualities, particularly the opportunity for promotions, development opportunities, the ability to have a say, and diversity policies, but are less likely to have a job with these qualities.
  - The most relatable messages for younger workers and people of color emphasize that all workers deserve a high-quality job; workforce development investments/policies help workers and businesses; and the discriminatory impact of bad jobs.
5. Just over half of those in the workforce say accessing job assistance has been easy, but only 15% say it is very easy – suggesting that awareness of these services or access to them needs to be improved.
6. Startlingly, unemployed workers found it more difficult than those employed to access job training and job search workforce development services.

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## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT POLICY SUPPORT

1. When asked directly, workers are largely supportive of investing in workforce development. Eight in 10 of those in the workforce support federal investment in workforce development. And half consider workforce development to be a top or high priority for the federal government.
  2. Workers support a range of workforce development policies, with each policy receiving support from over three-quarters of workers. The top policies focus on reducing costs of education and training for workers and incentivizing businesses to create better jobs.
  3. Workforce development policies that emphasize the need for good jobs for all workers and getting workers into high-quality jobs, not just any job, are essential for workers.
  4. Even with the use of negatively framed messages about workforce development policies – the majority of workers across all subgroups remain supportive of workforce development, especially younger workers, workers of color, and those in the service industry.
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## WORKFORCE VISION KEY GROUPS

Workers in the two key demographic groups – young people ages 18 to 34 and workers of color -- are less secure financially, less likely to have elements in their current jobs that make them high-quality, and support workforce development initiatives, although they have some doubts about workforce development's potential:

Responses from Young Workers age 18 to 34 demonstrated the following:

1. They see a role for both the federal government and employers to play in workforce development.
  2. They strongly support programs that:
    - a. reduce the costs of education
    - b. encourage businesses to create high-quality jobs
    - c. expand benefits to all types of work
  3. They want programs that:
    - a. give all workers a high-quality job to support their families
    - b. are geared towards high-quality jobs, not any job
    - c. help workers and businesses
  4. They are concerned that workforce development initiatives will:
    - a. allow the government to overstep their bounds
    - b. hurt small businesses
    - c. be ineffective in training workers to fill open positions
-

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Responses from Workers of Color demonstrated the following:

1. They see employers in the primary role in workforce development, but see a larger role for the government than workers overall
  2. They strongly support programs that:
    - a. reduce the costs of education
    - b. encourage businesses to create high-quality jobs
    - c. expand benefits to all types of work
  3. They want programs that:
    - a. give all workers a high-quality job to support their families
    - b. are geared towards high-quality jobs, not any job
    - c. recognize the discriminatory impact of low-quality jobs
  4. They are concerned that workforce development initiatives will:
    - a. compete with other government priorities
    - b. hurt small businesses
    - c. be ineffective in training workers to fill open positions
- 

## WORKER SENTIMENT POLLING TAKEAWAYS

1. **Concerns about the economy and inflation are top of mind:** Workers are struggling financially, and they are worried that workforce development initiatives won't help them find and get good jobs. Understanding this concern and ensuring initiatives are focused on providing vulnerable workers with high-quality jobs will best serve workers.
  2. **Workers want good jobs and policies to achieve them:** Access to job training and placement services along with the jobs that offer what workers define as "quality job" characteristics is not widespread, and there is a gap to fill, especially for the most vulnerable workers.
  3. **Keep it simple:** Workers want workforce development initiatives and associated policies that will allow them to support their families and be respected in the workplace. Focusing on these types of initiatives is crucial.
  4. **Establish employers and the federal government as key players in workforce development:** While workers place the primary responsibility for good jobs on employers, they support additional federal policies and investments in workforce development. Workers need to know what workforce development programs are out there, how to access them, and how they help create and protect high-quality jobs.
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# Next Steps: Where Do We Go from Here?

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## RECOMMENDATIONS TO GUIDE PHILANTHROPY AND STAKEHOLDERS

Engaging with over 1,300 stakeholders and workers has yielded a significant amount of data and insight to help inform a new vision for workforce development. Workers and stakeholders are extremely supportive of funding and workforce development policies that advance high-quality jobs, elevate workers voice, and embrace economic justice principles.

We offer a set of recommendations and considerations for philanthropy and stakeholders to advance dialogue and action. We recognize that there is much more to do move a collective vision of a workforce development system that reflects and embodies the ideas elevated in this report.

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**Center worker voice and worker power.** There is a desire to center worker voice not only in developing a new vision for workforce development but also in decision making in the workplace, and to increase worker power and buy-in through improved labor-management relationships. Philanthropy can help center workers' voices through their own organizing and convening power and through the organizations they fund.

**Orient toward economic justice principles.** Stakeholders want the workforce development field to embrace economic justice as a key orientation. Stakeholders see workforce development as a necessary tool for realizing economic justice goals. But the system is not currently structured or being implemented in this way consistently.

To move in this direction, philanthropic organizations should find ways to incorporate economic justice tenets in their grant making, convening, and interactions with the communities they work alongside.

**Create a shared goal of systems change to promote job quality, worker power, and economic justice.** Components for advancing a shared vision for systems change may include many intersecting elements – research, public policy, organizing, movement development, narrative change, and more.

Philanthropic partners who want to help build a new vision for workforce development should come together to advance toward this goal within a shared perspective and develop long-term plans to achieve a new vision. Additionally, philanthropy and stakeholders should identify areas for additional engagement and inquiry and develop a plan for addressing them.

**Convene with the intent to listen and act.** Based on our stakeholder interviews there is a hunger to build toward a transformative vision for the workforce development system anchored in the ideas elevated in this report. While stakeholder groups identified some steps needed to move in this direction, it is clear that there is work to be done to support organizations in convening, visioning, building strategy, and identifying gaps or needs in the field.

Philanthropic institutions should consider supporting organizations and groups in coming together to build the vision and strategy for the future and to create the space for the field to assess what they need to advance the vision over time, including a new organization or intermediary that could serve as a coordinating body.

# **Appendix | Worker Sentiment & Workforce Development Survey Toplines**

## APPENDIX A | WORKER SENTIMENT & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEW METHODS AND QUESTIONS

In total, over **150, 30-minute interviews** were conducted. Interviews were mostly conducted over the phone or virtually and followed a set of interview questions that can be found in the appendix. Interviewees had the option of entering their responses into an online survey instead of engaging in an interview if they wished.

We began our interviews with workforce development providers and practitioners serving workers who face barriers to employment as defined by WIOA law. We focused on these providers because WIOA has a goal of serving these populations, a departure from the prior law, the Workforce Investment Act, in that it included people facing barriers to employment as a priority population for training services. For these reasons we were interested in understanding how stakeholders today perceived and understood the system's orientation and focus. These providers leveraged a range of funding including WIOA; Dislocated Worker Grants; SNAP E&T; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); apprenticeships; AmeriCorps; and other local, state, and private sources. Some also used "social enterprise" project-based models to support their programs.

We intentionally interviewed providers in rural and urban communities and in every major geographic region, including Puerto Rico. The providers interviewed serve a range of jobseekers in their communities including adults and youth, people with involvement in the criminal legal system, people experiencing housing instability, people living in poverty and with low-incomes, people with disabilities, survivors of domestic violence and gender-based violence, and others.

The providers we interviewed implement a range of intensive and evidence-based workforce development programs and practices in partnership with employers and industries. While their perspectives are not exhaustive, they capture insights from people and organizations who are leveraging workforce system funds, interacting with, and balancing worker and employer interests, and often engaging with a range of other public systems.

Our interviews also included organizations and individuals who identify as stakeholders within workforce development intermediaries, worker and labor organizers, union shops, activists, and worker centers, policy advocates and think tanks, researchers, and economists. Interviews were also conducted with local public workforce development officials. A handful of our interviews were conducted with artists working at the intersection of economic justice and art. Our interviews did not include conversations with employers although this will be a critical piece in the next phase of work.

In December 2022 we designed and implemented a worker sentiment poll with the goal of directly gathering worker perspectives on the current state of the economy and their workplace. We also gathered opinions about job-quality measures and workforce development issues and policy.

Collecting workers' perspectives directly is critical as those voices are all too often omitted from the program and policy development process. We conducted the worker sentiment poll in December 2022 to capture the sentiments of workers immediately after the 2022 election cycle.

For our worker sentiment polling, Strategies 360 conducted a mixed-mode survey among 1,200 adults nationwide, including an oversample of 594 people of color. Of those surveyed, 24% were in in the "Service" sector, 23% were in "White Collar" careers, 21% identified as "Blue Collar," 12% were in "Social-Cultural" jobs, 11% were in healthcare, with 9% unemployed and looking for work. The margin of error for the survey is  $\pm 2.8\%$ .



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# Interview Questions

1. How would you describe the current workforce development system?
2. How would you define the current workforce development system? What does the system encompass or what should it encompass?
3. What should be the primary goal of the workforce development system?
4. What ideas or principles should the workforce development system uphold?
5. How would you define economic justice?
6. How is the workforce development field and the economic justice field connected? How are they not? Should they be more connected?
7. What are the primary challenges of the current workforce development system?
8. What do you think the current workforce development system is doing well?
9. What is your number one priority if we were to put workers at the center of the workforce development and education system?
10. What is needed to move to a new vision of workforce development? What will it take to execute?
11. Philanthropy and foundations are often critical in funding policy, advocacy, and communications efforts – where do you think we should be focusing resources in order to move forward?
12. What are some barriers to being consistently engaged on an effort like this moving forward?
13. What would you be most excited about and would be able to be steadily engaged on?

# Workforce Development Poll

## Workforce Development Poll

National Opinion Surveys is conducting a scientific research study of people like you. All responses are confidential and for research purposes only. We are NOT selling anything, and we will NOT ask you for money.

First, please answer a few questions for statistical purposes.

1. What is your age?

18-34.....	29%
35-49.....	25
50-64.....	25
65+.....	21
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Under 18.....	TERMINATE
Prefer not to answer.....	TERMINATE

2. Which of the following best describes your race?

White or Caucasian.....	60%
Hispanic or Latino.....	17
Black or African American.....	12
Asian or Pacific Islander.....	6
Mixed race or multi-racial.....	4
Something else.....	1
--	
Prefer not to answer.....	*

3. Which of the following best describes your employment situation?

Employed full time.....	64%
Employed part time.....	20
Unemployed and looking for work.....	9
Unemployed and not looking for work.....	3
Student and not currently employed.....	3
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Retired.....	TERMINATE
Homemaker.....	TERMINATE
Prefer not to answer.....	TERMINATE

4. How would you describe your gender?

Male.....	49%
Female.....	50
Non-binary or third gender.....	1
Something else.....	*
--	
Prefer not to answer.....	-

5. What is your five-digit zip code?

6. Are you currently registered to vote?

Yes.....	87%
No.....	13

7. Did you vote in the recent general election in November for Congress, ballot propositions, and other offices, did you not vote this year, or are you not eligible to vote?

I voted.....	70%
I am eligible but I did not vote.....	24
I am not eligible to vote.....	4
—	
Prefer not to answer.....	3

8. Please rank the following on a scale of one to eight, where one is the TOP priority for the federal government to focus on and eight is the LEAST important priority.  
 (RANK) (RANDOMIZE)

- Homelessness
- Crime and public safety
- The economy
- Cost of living and housing costs
- Climate and the environment
- Education
- Job training and job search assistance
- Social Security and Medicare
- 
- Not sure

	TOP (1-2)	NOT (7-8)	Top Priority -1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Least Impt -8
The economy	51%	8%	33%	18%	11%	8%	6%	5%	5%	3%
<u>People of Color</u>	42%	11%	24	18	12	10	7	8	7	4
<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	40%	13%	24	16	11	9	7	10	7	7
<u>Part-time</u>	47%	8%	31	16	13	8	6	7	6	2
<u>Full-time</u>	55%	8%	35	20	10	8	5	5	5	3
Cost of living and housing costs	39%	7%	18	21	17	10	8	7	4	3
<u>People of Color</u>	45%	8%	23	21	13	11	7	7	4	3
<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	38%	10%	17	21	15	12	8	7	6	4
<u>Part-time</u>	36%	6%	17	19	20	12	8	6	3	3
<u>Full-time</u>	42%	7%	19	22	17	10	8	7	4	3
Crime and public safety	23%	14%	9	14	18	15	11	8	8	6
<u>People of Color</u>	24%	14%	11	13	18	14	10	10	8	6
<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	22%	18%	11	11	17	12	11	9	11	7
<u>Part-time</u>	26%	11%	8	18	14	16	14	8	4	6
<u>Full-time</u>	22%	14%	10	12	18	16	11	9	8	6
Social Security and Medicare	20%	16%	7	13	12	15	14	12	11	5
<u>People of Color</u>	15%	23%	5	10	11	11	16	14	16	7
<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	16%	23%	5	10	9	9	15	16	16	8
<u>Part-time</u>	24%	15%	9	15	9	15	16	10	13	2

Climate and the environment	<u>Full-time</u>	19%	17%	7	13	13	16	14	12	11	6
		16%	40%	9	7	7	8	9	11	11	29
	<u>People of Color</u>	15%	39%	8	7	7	8	11	10	13	26
	<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	16%	30%	10	6	9	9	11	14	11	20
	<u>Part-time</u>	19%	37%	11	8	7	6	10	8	10	27
	<u>Full-time</u>	14%	40%	8	6	7	10	9	11	12	28
Education		13%	23%	6	7	11	11	15	18	14	9
	<u>People of Color</u>	15%	19%	8	7	14	10	16	15	12	7
	<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	21%	15%	10	12	14	14	13	12	11	5
	<u>Part-time</u>	9%	28%	6	3	10	9	13	19	19	9
	<u>Full-time</u>	13%	21%	6	7	11	12	17	16	12	9
Homelessness		11%	32%	6	5	9	11	13	13	17	15
	<u>People of Color</u>	15%	33%	8	7	10	12	10	11	15	18
	<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	16%	33%	10	5	9	12	10	9	12	21
	<u>Part-time</u>	11%	29%	5	5	10	11	11	16	15	14
	<u>Full-time</u>	10%	34%	5	5	9	10	14	14	18	16
Job training and job search assistance		6%	40%	1	5	5	11	12	16	20	20
	<u>People of Color</u>	9%	34%	2	7	5	15	13	15	16	18
	<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	10%	34%	2	8	6	13	14	12	16	18
	<u>Part-time</u>	5%	42%	*	4	4	13	9	15	18	24
	<u>Full-time</u>	6%	40%	1	5	5	10	13	16	20	20

	<u>POC</u>	<u>18-34</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>	<u>Full-Time</u>	
Not sure.....	10	10	11	12	9

9. Which of the following best describes your current personal financial situation? Is it... (PINWHEEL ROTATE)

	<u>POC</u>	<u>18-34</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>	<u>Full-Time</u>	
I can live comfortably while also saving an adequate amount for the future .....	32%	21%	21%	34%	36%
I can get by every month but I struggle to save money or pay for unexpected expenses.....	41	48	46	44	40
I find it difficult to make ends meet every month.....	24	27	28	20	22
Prefer not to say.....	3	4	6	2	2

10. How big of an impact would you say rising prices are having on your personal financial situation?

		<u>POC</u>	<u>18-34</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>	<u>Full-Time</u>
LARGE / MEDIUM IMPACT.....	78%	83%	84%	77%	77%
SOME / NO IMPACT.....	21%	16%	14%	21%	23%
A large impact.....	49%	56%	55%	43%	48%
A medium impact.....	30	27	29	34	28
Some impact but not much.....	18	13	13	18	19
No impact at all.....	3	2	2	4	3
--					
Prefer not to say.....	1	1	1	1	*

11. Which of the following best describes <[IF EMPLOYED] your position at your current job> <[IF UNEMPLOYED] your position at your previous job>?

		<u>POC</u>	<u>18-34</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>	<u>Full-Time</u>
Business owner or partner.....	11%	7%	6%	17%	12%
Senior management.....	9	7	7	2	12
Mid-level management.....	19	20	22	12	24
Mid-level, but <b>not</b> in management.....	23	20	19	22	24
Supportive role or entry level role.....	29	33	33	37	23
--					
Prefer not to answer.....	9	13	13	9	5

12. Which of the following best describes <[IF EMPLOYED] the industry you work in> <[IF UNEMPLOYED] the industry you worked in at your previous job> <[IF STUDENT] the industry you plan to work in>?

		<u>POC</u>	<u>18-34</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>	<u>Full-Time</u>
Professional services like legal, finance, insurance, consulting, or similar.....	17%	13%	10%	15%	21%
Retail, shopkeeping, customer service, or similar.....	15	15	17	20	13
Skilled trades, construction, manual labor, or similar.....	13	12	13	11	15
Medicine, mental health, home care, or similar.....	11	14	14	12	10
Education, social services, non-profits, or similar.....	10	9	8	13	10
Hospitality, food and drink service, or similar.....	9	10	10	11	8
Science, tech, engineering, mathematics, or similar.....	6	5	6	3	8
Transportation, shipping, delivery, logistics, or similar.....	5	7	5	4	5
Public safety, firefighting, security, or similar.....	2	2	2	2	2
The arts, writing, audio/visual, or similar.....	2	3	3	3	1
Extraction, agriculture, ranching, or similar.....	1	1	2	1	1
--					
Prefer not to answer.....	8	9	10	7	6

13. (ONLY IF EMPLOYED) Are there opportunities for growth at your current job?

		<u>POC</u>	<u>18-34</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>	<u>Full-Time</u>
Yes.....	69%	76%	83%	59%	73%
No.....	29	22	15	37	26
--					
Prefer not to answer.....	2	2	2	4	2

14.	(ONLY IF EMPLOYED) Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your current job?		<u>POC</u>	<u>18-34</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>	<u>Full-Time</u>
	SATISFIED.....	82%	75%	77%	80%	83%
	DISSATISFIED.....	17%	22%	21%	20%	16%
	Very satisfied.....	39%	27%	35%	34%	41%
	Somewhat satisfied.....	43	48	43	45	42
	Somewhat dissatisfied.....	12	16	15	16	11
	Very dissatisfied.....	5	6	6	4	5
	—					
	Prefer not to answer.....	1	3	2	1	1
<hr/>						
15.	(ONLY IF EMPLOYED) In the past year, have you changed jobs?		<u>POC</u>	<u>18-34</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>	<u>Full-Time</u>
	Yes, I have changed jobs.....	22%	35%	44%	24%	21%
	No, I have not changed jobs.....	78	63	55	75	78
	—					
	Prefer not to answer.....	1	2	1	1	1
<hr/>						
16.	(ONLY IF HAVE NOT CHANGED JOBS) In the past year, have you considered changing jobs?		<u>POC</u>	<u>18-34</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>	<u>Full-Time</u>
	Yes, I have considered changing jobs.....	36%	54%	55%	31%	37%
	No, I have not considered changing jobs.....	64	46	45	69	63
	—					
	Prefer not to answer.....	*	*	-	-	*
<hr/>						
17.	(ONLY IF UNEMPLOYED OR CHANGED JOBS OR CONSIDERED CHANGING JOBS) What was the biggest reason you <changed jobs> <considered changing jobs>? (RANDOMIZE)		<u>POC</u>	<u>18-34</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>	<u>Full-Time</u>
	Higher pay.....	43%	45%	45%	48%	54%
	Better working conditions.....	11	11	13	9	14
	Lost job.....	11	11	9	8	4
	More respect in the workplace.....	7	7	8	2	8
	Access to benefits, like health insurance.....	6	8	7	7	7
	Changing career.....	3	4	4	5	4
	Access to paid time off and sick leave.....	2	2	3	6	2
	Entering the work force for the first time.....	1	*	1	-	*
	Other.....	11	8	6	11	5
	—					
	Prefer not to answer.....	4	4	4	4	1
<hr/>						
18.	In your experience, has accessing job training and job search assistance been... (PINWHEEL ROTATE)		<u>POC</u>	<u>18-34</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>	<u>Full-Time</u>
	EASY.....	51%	49%	48%	54%	55%
	DIFFICULT.....	34%	40%	46%	29%	30%
	Very easy.....	15%	13%	15%	12%	18%
	Somewhat easy.....	36	36	33	42	38
	Somewhat difficult.....	25	30	35	22	24
	Very difficult.....	9	11	11	7	6
	—					
	Not sure.....	15	10	6	17	15

There are a lot of reasons why a job might be considered a “good job.” Here is a list of some of those reasons. For each one, please indicate whether it is very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important to you personally as part of a good job.

RANDOMIZE		TOTAL IMPT	TOTAL NOT	Very Impt	Smwt Impt	Not Too Impt	Not At All Impt	Not Sure
19.	Safe, healthy, and accessible working conditions	96%	4%	69%	26%	3%	0%	0%
	<u>People of Color</u>	97%	2%	74	22	2	*	1
	<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	95%	4%	75	20	4	*	1
	<u>Part-time</u>	96%	3%	73	22	3	*	1
	<u>Full-time</u>	96%	4%	68	28	3	1	*
20.	Job security	95%	4%	72	23	4	1	1
	<u>People of Color</u>	95%	4%	74	20	4	*	2
	<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	92%	6%	71	21	6	*	2
	<u>Part-time</u>	93%	5%	67	26	4	1	2
	<u>Full-time</u>	96%	3%	74	22	3	*	1
21.	Stable, family-sustaining pay	93%	6%	73	21	5	1	1
	<u>People of Color</u>	93%	6%	77	17	4	1	1
	<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	92%	7%	75	17	6	1	1
	<u>Part-time</u>	91%	8%	66	25	7	1	1
	<u>Full-time</u>	96%	4%	76	20	4	*	1
22.	Fair, reliable, and flexible scheduling practices	91%	8%	59	32	7	1	1
	<u>People of Color</u>	92%	6%	68	24	6	1	1
	<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	90%	9%	70	21	8	1	1
	<u>Part-time</u>	92%	7%	60	32	6	1	1
	<u>Full-time</u>	91%	9%	59	32	8	1	1
23.	Wealth-building opportunities such as the ability to save and access to a 401k	89%	10%	56	33	7	2	1
	<u>People of Color</u>	92%	6%	64	29	5	1	1
	<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	89%	10%	60	29	9	1	2
	<u>Part-time</u>	83%	15%	48	36	12	2	2
	<u>Full-time</u>	91%	8%	60	32	6	2	1
24.	Transparency and accountability in the organization	88%	10%	54	34	8	2	2
	<u>People of Color</u>	88%	9%	59	29	8	1	2
	<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	88%	10%	57	31	9	1	2
	<u>Part-time</u>	91%	7%	55	36	6	1	2



25.	Paid leave	<u>Full-time</u>	88%	10%	55	34	9	2	1
			87%	12%	56	31	9	2	2
		<u>People of Color</u>	90%	7%	63	27	7	*	3
		<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	84%	14%	55	29	13	1	2
		<u>Part-time</u>	83%	15%	49	33	11	4	2
		<u>Full-time</u>	90%	9%	61	29	7	2	1
26.	Promotion and advancement opportunities		87%	11%	54	34	9	2	1
		<u>People of Color</u>	92%	6%	64	28	6	*	2
		<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	89%	9%	60	29	8	1	2
		<u>Part-time</u>	83%	15%	44	39	11	4	2
		<u>Full-time</u>	89%	9%	58	32	8	1	1
		27.	A sense of belonging and purpose		87%	12%	50	37	10
<u>People of Color</u>	87%			11%	50	37	9	2	2
<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	84%			14%	53	31	12	3	2
<u>Part-time</u>	86%			14%	50	36	10	3	1
<u>Full-time</u>	89%			10%	52	37	8	2	1
28.	Accessible, paid training and development opportunities				86%	13%	45	41	11
		<u>People of Color</u>	92%	6%	60	32	5	1	2
		<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	91%	7%	58	33	6	1	2
		<u>Part-time</u>	81%	18%	40	41	15	3	1
		<u>Full-time</u>	87%	12%	45	42	9	2	2
		29.	The ability to have a say in and improve the workplace		85%	14%	44	41	12
<u>People of Color</u>	90%			9%	53	36	8	1	1
<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	87%			12%	56	31	11	1	1
<u>Part-time</u>	82%			17%	41	41	14	3	2
<u>Full-time</u>	86%			13%	45	41	11	2	1
30.	Policies and practices that advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility				76%	22%	43	33	13
		<u>People of Color</u>	87%	11%	56	31	7	4	2
		<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	87%	11%	60	27	8	3	1
		<u>Part-time</u>	74%	24%	43	31	14	10	2
		<u>Full-time</u>	77%	21%	42	35	12	9	1

31. Thinking about that same list of items, how many of these things do you have in <[IF EMPLOYED] your position at your current job> <[IF UNEMPLOYED] your position at your previous job>? You may select all that apply. (RANDOMIZE)

MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED; TOTAL DOES NOT ADD TO 100%

		<u>POC</u>	<u>18-34</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>	<u>Full-Time</u>
Safe, healthy, and accessible working conditions .....	58%	51%	51%	64%	61%
Job security .....	52	41	43	50	59
Fair, reliable, and flexible scheduling practices .....	50	45	49	65	50
A sense of belonging and purpose .....	49	39	41	57	50
Paid leave .....	46	44	37	29	57
Stable, family-sustaining pay .....	41	32	35	28	50
Wealth-building opportunities such as the ability to save and access to a 401k.....	39	39	39	22	48
Promotion and advancement opportunities .....	37	37	40	32	41
The ability to have a say in and improve the workplace .....	35	32	29	41	35
Policies and practices that advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility .....	34	33	34	32	37
Accessible, paid training and development opportunities.....	30	31	32	28	32
Transparency and accountability in the organization .....	30	25	28	33	32
Not sure.....	7	9	8	5	4

32. The next questions will be about “workforce development.” As you may know, the federal government partners with state governments to provide workforce training funding for people who are looking for work or would like to transition to a new job. These services include workforce training and education and job search assistance. Do you support or oppose the federal government investing in workforce development initiatives?

		<u>POC</u>	<u>18-34</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>	<u>Full-Time</u>
SUPPORT .....	81%	83%	83%	79%	83%
OPPOSE.....	10%	9%	9%	12%	9%
Strongly support.....	44%	49%	46%	41%	45%
Somewhat support .....	37	34	37	38	38
Somewhat oppose.....	8	8	8	11	7
Strongly oppose .....	2	1	1	1	2
Not sure.....	9	9	7	9	8

33. How big of a priority do you think workforce development should be for the federal government?

		<u>POC</u>	<u>18-34</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>	<u>Full-Time</u>
TOP / HIGH PRIORITY .....	53%	66%	68%	51%	55%
LOW / NOT A PRIORITY .....	13%	6%	6%	15%	13%
A top priority .....	20%	27%	29%	14%	21%
A high, but not top, priority .....	34	39	39	38	34
A medium priority .....	28	22	22	28	27
A low priority.....	9	5	5	13	8
Not a priority at all .....	4	1	2	3	4
Not sure.....	5	5	4	5	5

34. In your opinion, who has the MOST responsibility for ensuring that the jobs people are able to get are good, quality jobs – (RANDOMIZE) <the federal government>, <employers>, or <workers>? Please rank in order from one to three, with one having the MOST responsibility and three having the LEAST.

		<u>POC</u>	<u>18-34</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>	<u>Full-Time</u>
Employers					
Ranked 1 <sup>st</sup> .....	50%	40%	38%	48%	50%
Ranked 2 <sup>nd</sup> .....	35	41	43	38	34
Ranked 3 <sup>rd</sup> .....	6	8	10	6	7
The federal government					
Ranked 1 <sup>st</sup> .....	23%	34%	37%	25%	23%
Ranked 2 <sup>nd</sup> .....	27	25	24	22	28
Ranked 3 <sup>rd</sup> .....	42	30	30	45	41
Workers					
Ranked 1 <sup>st</sup> .....	18%	15%	16%	19%	18%
Ranked 2 <sup>nd</sup> .....	30	23	24	32	30
Ranked 3 <sup>rd</sup> .....	43	51	51	42	44
Not sure.....	9	11	10	8	9

Now, here is a list of proposed workforce development policies the federal government could enact. For each one, please indicate if you support or oppose that policy.

	RANDOMIZE	TOTAL SUPPORT	TOTAL OPPOSE	Strongly Support	Smt Support	Smt Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Not Sure
35.	Encouraging businesses to create good, quality jobs by targeting workforce and economic development services to companies who want to invest in their workers	86%	9%	49%	38%	7%	2%	5%
	<u>People of Color</u>	88%	7%	60	28	6	1	4
	<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	86%	10%	59	27	8	2	4
	<u>Part-time</u>	90%	6%	49	41	4	2	4
	<u>Full-time</u>	85%	9%	48	37	7	2	5
36.	Increasing availability of and reducing barriers to accessing job search, job training, and placement services	85%	10%	45	40	8	1	6
	<u>People of Color</u>	87%	8%	55	33	7	1	5
	<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	85%	11%	55	31	10	1	3
	<u>Part-time</u>	85%	8%	44	42	6	1	7
	<u>Full-time</u>	85%	10%	44	41	8	2	5
37.	Reducing costs for education by incentivizing employers to provide apprenticeship and paid on-the-job training, or providing free and low-cost technical training that lead to good, quality jobs	84%	12%	49	35	9	3	4
	<u>People of Color</u>	86%	10%	60	26	6	3	4
	<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	85%	12%	61	24	9	3	3
	<u>Part-time</u>	86%	9%	51	35	5	4	5
	<u>Full-time</u>	84%	12%	48	36	10	2	4
38.	Increasing access to benefits and protections for workers in part-time, contract, gig, and other forms of compensated work beyond traditional full-time employment	81%	13%	46	35	10	3	5

	<u>People of Color</u>	87%	9%	57	30	7	2	4
	<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	86%	11%	58	28	8	3	3
	<u>Part-time</u>	82%	12%	50	32	10	2	5
	<u>Full-time</u>	81%	13%	45	36	9	4	6
39.	Giving workers more say in the workplace management or stake in a company's success through shared ownership or profit-sharing structures	79%	15%	39	41	10	4	6
	<u>People of Color</u>	84%	11%	49	35	9	3	4
	<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	86%	11%	48	37	9	1	4
	<u>Part-time</u>	81%	13%	41	40	8	6	6
	<u>Full-time</u>	79%	15%	39	40	11	4	5
40.	Establishing a Civilian Climate Corps or similar programs to train workers and fill in-demand jobs ensuring every young adult has access to a job if they want it	76%	18%	38	38	11	6	7
	<u>People of Color</u>	82%	13%	49	33	9	4	5
	<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	80%	15%	51	29	12	3	5
	<u>Part-time</u>	75%	19%	38	37	12	7	6
	<u>Full-time</u>	77%	16%	37	40	11	6	7

ROTATE POSITIVE MESSAGE BATTERY (Q41-48) AND NEGATIVE MESSAGE BATTERY (Q49-54)

Here are some statements from supporters of workforce development initiatives. For each one, please indicate if you find that statement to be very convincing, somewhat convincing, not very convincing, or not at all convincing as a reason to support workforce development initiatives.

	RANDOMIZE	TOTAL CONV	TOTAL NOT	Very Conv	Smwt Conv	Not Very	Not At All	Not Sure
41.	[ALL WORKERS] All workers deserve a chance to have a good quality job to support their families.	82%	15%	50%	32%	11%	4%	3%
	<u>People of Color</u>	83%	14%	61	22	11	3	3
	<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	83%	13%	59	25	10	4	3
	<u>Part-time</u>	85%	12%	49	36	7	5	2
	<u>Full-time</u>	81%	15%	49	32	11	4	4
42.	[QUALITY] The training and skills provided through workforce development initiatives should be geared towards helping all people find and obtain GOOD, QUALITY jobs. The focus is not on getting people into any job, but into good jobs that will sustain them and their families.	80%	15%	42	38	12	4	5
	<u>People of Color</u>	83%	12%	50	33	10	2	5
	<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	81%	14%	46	35	13	1	5
	<u>Part-time</u>	84%	13%	44	39	11	2	4
	<u>Full-time</u>	79%	16%	41	38	12	4	5

43.	[HELPS BUSINESSES] Creating and promoting good quality jobs helps businesses. It increases workforce retention and the number of skilled workers, improving productivity and making businesses more competitive.		80%	15%	40	40	11	4	5
		<u>People of Color</u>	82%	13%	48	34	11	3	4
		<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	82%	14%	49	33	11	2	4
		<u>Part-time</u>	80%	14%	38	42	12	2	5
		<u>Full-time</u>	80%	16%	41	38	11	4	5
44.	[CHILDREN] About one-third of children live in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment, limiting their access to health care and other resources critical to their healthy development.		74%	21%	38	36	16	5	5
		<u>People of Color</u>	80%	16%	47	33	13	3	5
		<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	79%	17%	43	35	14	3	4
		<u>Part-time</u>	75%	20%	39	35	16	4	5
		<u>Full-time</u>	73%	22%	37	35	16	6	6
45.	[ECONOMY] Good jobs are essential to a healthy economy, successful businesses, and strong communities. Yet only 44% of working people in the United States report having a "good job."		73%	21%	39	34	17	4	5
		<u>People of Color</u>	78%	17%	46	33	14	3	5
		<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	80%	15%	45	35	13	2	4
		<u>Part-time</u>	74%	22%	42	32	19	4	4
		<u>Full-time</u>	73%	21%	38	36	16	5	5
46.	[COVID] The pandemic and economic situation the past few years has highlighted more than ever the need for a complete overhaul of the workforce. We need workforce development solutions to get workers prepared for a new labor market and ensure they have good quality jobs.		72%	23%	36	36	16	7	5
		<u>People of Color</u>	79%	16%	44	35	12	4	5
		<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	81%	15%	45	36	12	3	5
		<u>Part-time</u>	76%	19%	41	35	14	5	5
		<u>Full-time</u>	72%	23%	36	36	15	8	5
47.	[STRUGGLE] Millions of Americans struggle to find jobs or are stuck in low-wage positions with little chance for advancement, they lack adequate benefits, face discrimination and harassment, and cope with other daily challenges.		71%	24%	37	34	17	7	5
		<u>People of Color</u>	80%	16%	47	32	11	5	4
		<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	83%	13%	48	35	10	3	4
		<u>Part-time</u>	71%	23%	39	33	16	6	6
		<u>Full-time</u>	71%	24%	36	35	18	7	5
48.	[LOW WAGES] More than a third of the workforce – 53 million people and disproportionately women, people of color, and immigrants – struggle with low wages. For strong economic growth, we must address the discriminatory impact of poor jobs on marginalized communities.		69%	25%	38	31	16	10	6
		<u>People of Color</u>	79%	16%	51	27	12	5	5
		<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	75%	21%	48	27	14	6	4
		<u>Part-time</u>	69%	25%	40	30	17	8	6

<u>Full-time</u>	69%	26%	37	32	16	10	6
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Here are some statements from opponents of workforce development initiatives. For each one, please indicate if you find that statement to give you very serious doubts, somewhat serious doubts, minor doubts, or no real doubts about workforce development initiatives.

		VERY/ SMWT	MINOR/ NO REAL	Very Srs	Smwt Srs	Minor Doubts	No Real Doubts	Not Sure
49. [HURT SMALL BIZ] Regulations hurt small businesses and actually slow down the economy. Businesses are still recovering from the pandemic and more costly regulations will force prices up for consumers and force some businesses to close.	RANDOMIZE	47%	43%	21%	26%	24%	19%	10%
<u>People of Color</u>		49%	39%	24	25	23	15	12
<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>		51%	39%	26	26	23	17	9
<u>Part-time</u>		46%	43%	21	25	28	14	11
<u>Full-time</u>		48%	42%	21	27	22	20	10
50. [PRIORITIES] The government has more important priorities than workforce development. They should be worried about reigning in inflation, decreasing the deficit, and crime and public safety.		46%	45%	22	24	24	21	9
<u>People of Color</u>		53%	37%	26	27	21	17	10
<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>		57%	36%	25	31	23	13	7
<u>Part-time</u>		44%	46%	22	22	24	22	10
<u>Full-time</u>		46%	46%	21	25	23	22	9
51. [BUREAUCRACY] Federal agencies enacting workforce development programs are just another addition to a bloated bureaucracy that is not well-equipped to improve the workforce. There is not enough transparency around how these initiatives are being enacted or if they are even working.		46%	44%	20	26	26	18	11
<u>People of Color</u>		50%	37%	22	28	25	12	13
<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>		56%	36%	23	33	24	12	8
<u>Part-time</u>		44%	45%	20	24	26	19	11
<u>Full-time</u>		46%	44%	21	25	26	19	10
52. [OVERSTEPPING] The government is overstepping its bounds with workforce development policies. Rather than forcing more regulations on businesses, we should trust employers to run their business and train and attract workers.		45%	46%	21	24	26	20	9
<u>People of Color</u>		49%	43%	23	26	28	15	8
<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>		52%	42%	26	26	29	14	6
<u>Part-time</u>		44%	49%	22	22	32	17	7
<u>Full-time</u>		46%	45%	21	25	25	20	9

53.	[INEFFECTIVE] Workforce development programs are ineffective in training workers to fill open positions. There are thousands of open positions but no one to fill them. Current programs are failing to help workers get the skills they need.	45%	45%	20	25	27	18	10
	<u>People of Color</u>	50%	39%	24	27	28	11	11
	<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	53%	39%	26	27	26	13	8
	<u>Part-time</u>	44%	46%	20	24	25	21	9
	<u>Full-time</u>	44%	46%	19	25	28	18	10
54.	[STATE LEVEL] Workforce development is important, but should be undertaken at the state level not federal. Each state knows how to best manage their economy and fill jobs, and the federal government should stay out of it.	40%	48%	17	23	26	22	12
	<u>People of Color</u>	48%	41%	21	26	26	16	11
	<u>Youth (age 18-34)</u>	50%	39%	21	29	27	13	11
	<u>Part-time</u>	39%	50%	17	22	28	23	11
	<u>Full-time</u>	41%	47%	17	24	25	21	12

55. After hearing more information, do you support or oppose investing in workforce development initiatives?

		<u>POC</u>	<u>18-34</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>	<u>Full-Time</u>
SUPPORT .....	75%	82%	83%	79%	75%
OPPOSE .....	16%	10%	10%	14%	16%
Strongly support .....	34%	40%	41%	31%	35%
Somewhat support .....	41	43	42	48	40
Somewhat oppose .....	12	8	10	12	11
Strongly oppose .....	4	2	*	3	5
--					
Not sure .....	9	8	7	6	9

56. And how big of a priority do you think workforce development should be for the federal government?

		<u>POC</u>	<u>18-34</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>	<u>Full-Time</u>
TOP / HIGH PRIORITY .....	53%	64%	67%	52%	53%
LOW / NOT A PRIORITY .....	17%	8%	6%	18%	17%
A top priority .....	20%	29%	30%	14%	22%
A high, but not top, priority .....	33	36	38	38	32
A medium priority .....	26	23	24	26	25
A low priority .....	11	6	4	13	10
Not a priority at all .....	6	2	2	4	7
--					
Not sure .....	5	4	3	4	5

## DEMOGRAPHICS

These last few questions are for statistical purposes.

57. What is the highest level of education you have fully completed?

Less than high school .....	2%
High school or GED .....	31
Some college or associate's degree .....	31
Bachelor's degree .....	21
Postgraduate or advanced degree .....	13
—	
Prefer not to answer .....	*

58. Regardless of how you plan to vote, in politics, as of today, which of the following best describes how you consider yourself?

DEMOCRAT .....	41%
REPUBLICAN .....	40%
Strong Democrat .....	26%
Not strong Democrat .....	11
Independent, lean Democratic .....	5
Independent .....	11
Independent, lean Republican .....	4
Not strong Republican .....	12
Strong Republican .....	24
Something else .....	2
—	
Prefer not to answer .....	6

59. Thinking in political terms, would you say that you are (ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM, BOTTOM TO TOP) Conservative, Moderate, or Liberal?

LIBERAL .....	32%
CONSERVATIVE .....	36%
Very liberal .....	15%
Somewhat liberal .....	17
Moderate .....	27
Somewhat conservative .....	17
Very conservative .....	18
—	
Prefer not to answer .....	5

60. Which of the following best describes your household income from all sources in 2021? Your best guess is fine.

Less than \$25,000 .....	14%
At least \$25,000 but less than \$50,000 .....	28
At least \$50,000 but less than \$75,000 .....	19
At least \$75,000 but less than \$100,000 .....	14
At least \$100,000 but less than \$200,000 .....	17
\$200,000 or more .....	3
—	
Prefer not to answer .....	4



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61. Are you or is any member of your household a current or retired union member?

YES .....	20%
Yes, I am a current union member .....	10%
Yes, someone in my household is a current union member .....	5
Yes, I am a retired union member .....	2
Yes, someone in my household is a retired union member .....	3
<u>Nobody</u> in my household is a current or retired union member. ....	77
—	
Prefer not to answer.....	3

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62. (ONLY IF REGISTERED TO VOTE) In the 2020 election for president, did you vote for Democrat Joe Biden, Republican Donald Trump, someone else, or did you not vote in this election?

Democrat Joe Biden.....	35%
Republican Donald Trump .....	32
Someone else.....	3
Did not vote in this election.....	14
—	
Prefer not to answer.....	3
Not registered.....	13

---

That completes our survey. Thank you VERY MUCH for your time.

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Region

Northeast.....	20%
South .....	36
Midwest .....	20
West.....	24

Key Research Findings -  
May 2023

NATIONAL  
WORKER  
SENTIMENT &  
WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT  
SURVEY

This research was funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

We thank them for their support but acknowledge that the findings and conclusions presented in this report are those of the author(s) alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Foundation.

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# Survey Methodology

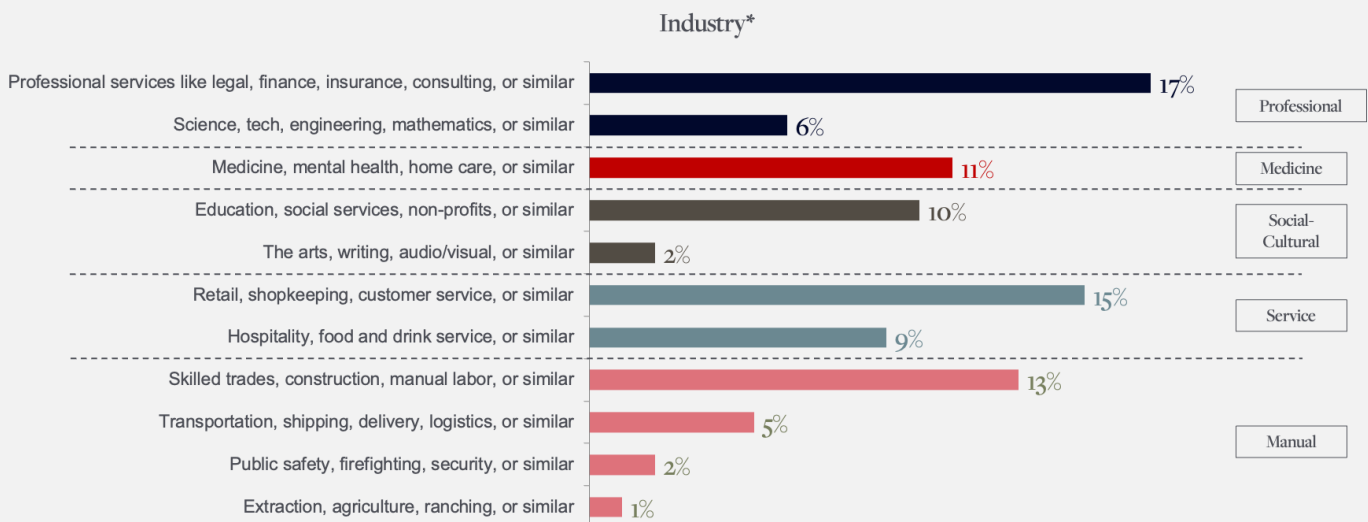
Strategies 360 conducted a mixed-mode survey among 1,200 adults nationwide, including an oversample of 594 people of color.

Interviews were conducted December 5-8, 2022. Online interviews via panel were used to ensure greater coverage of the population sampled.

The margin of error for a survey of 1,200 interviews is  $\pm 2.8\%$  and 594 interviews is  $\pm 4.0\%$  at the 95% confidence level. The margin of error is higher for subsamples.

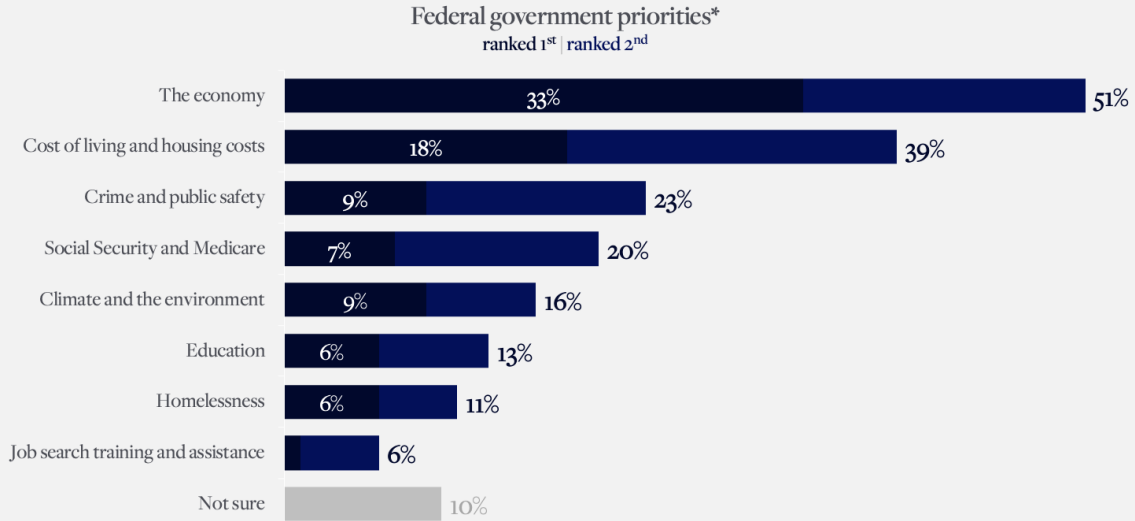
# WORKER LANDSCAPE

## WORKERS ARE IN A WIDE-RANGE OF INDUSTRIES.



\*Which of the following best describes <[IF EMPLOYED] the industry you work in-><[IF UNEMPLOYED] the industry you worked in at your previous job-><[IF STUDENT] the industry you plan to work in-?>

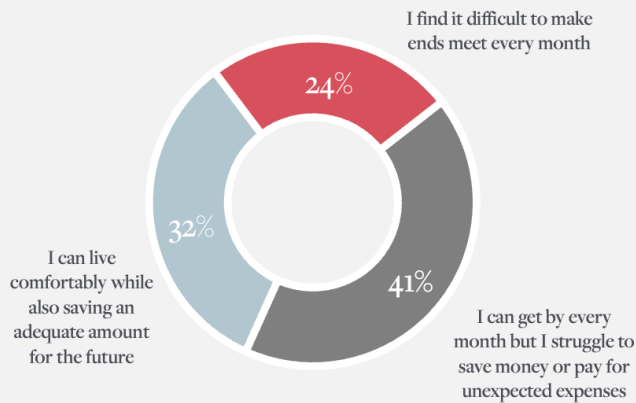
## WORKERS SEE THE ECONOMY AS THE TOP PRIORITY, FOLLOWED BY COST OF LIVING AND HOUSING COSTS.



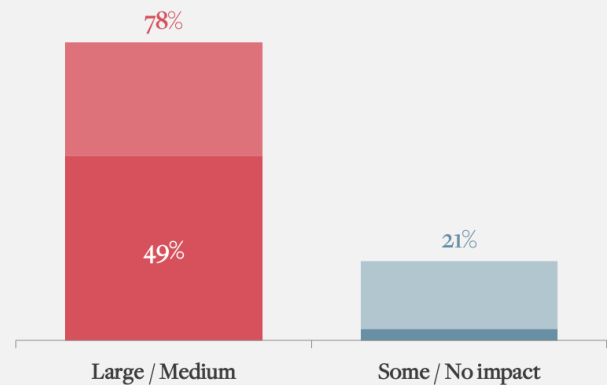
\*Please rank the following on a scale of one to eight, where one is the TOP priority for the federal government to focus on and eight is the LEAST important priority.

## FURTHERMORE, 65% SAY THEY STRUGGLE TO GET BY OR FIND IT DIFFICULT TO MAKE ENDS MEET AND INFLATION IS HAVING A SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT ON OVER THREE-QUARTERS OF WORKERS.

### Personal financial situation\*



### Inflation impact\*\*



\*\*Which of the following best describes your current personal financial situation?

\*\*How big of an impact would you say rising prices are having on your personal financial situation?

THOSE WHO ARE LOW-INCOME, WOMEN, AND PEOPLE OF COLOR ARE STRUGGLING THE MOST FINANCIALLY.

Personal financial situation

Most likely to say “struggle to get by” or “find it difficult to make ends meet”	
Unemployed	87
HHI <\$50k	83
Non-college women	80
<50 women	80
Latino	78
Women of color	77
Entry-level / Support	77

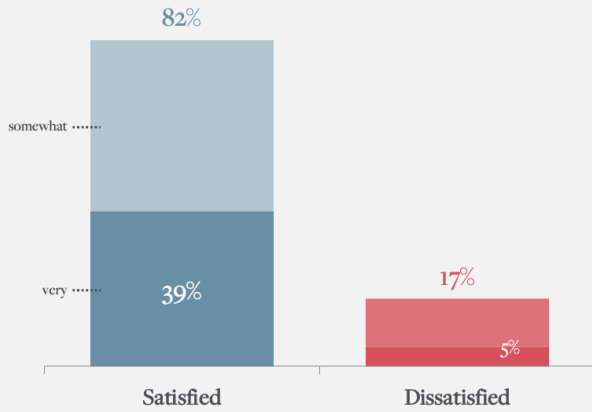
Inflation impact

Most likely to say “large impact”	
Latino	63
HHI <\$50k	61
Non-college women	61
Women of color	60
Unemployed	60
Non-college POC	59
<50 women	59
<50 POC	58

# JOB CHARACTERISTICS

**A MAJORITY OF WORKERS ARE SATISFIED WITH THEIR JOB. LATINO WORKERS, THOSE IN THE NORTHEAST, AND ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER WORKERS HAVE THE LOWEST SATISFACTION.**

**Job satisfaction**  
only among those employed\*



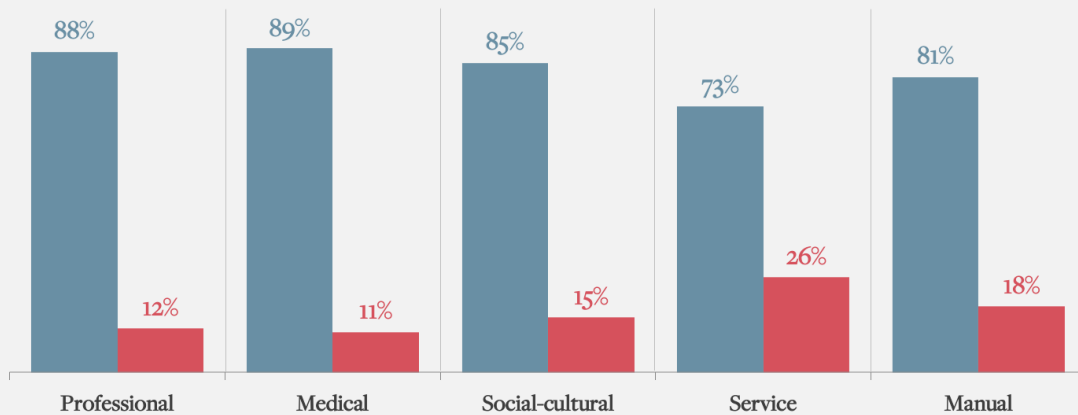
\*Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your current job?  
\*\*Small sample size; n=50

**Job satisfaction among key groups**  
only among those employed\*

Group	% Satisfied	% Dissatisfied
Age 18-34	77	21
Age 35-49	81	17
Age 50-64	83	16
Age 65+	88	12
White	86	14
Latino	75	21
Black	83	15
Asian/Pacific Islander**	69	29
Northeast	73	25
South	84	15
Midwest	85	14
West	84	15

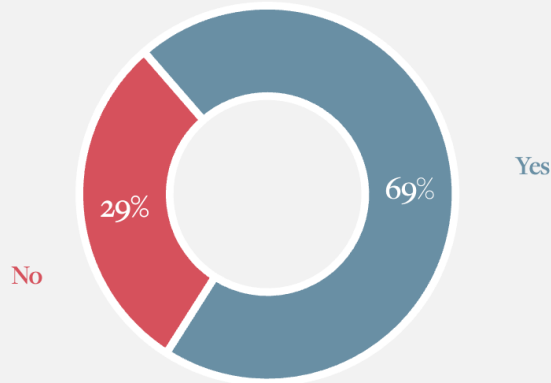
**ALTHOUGH A MAJORITY ARE STILL SATISFIED WITH THEIR JOBS, THOSE IN THE SERVICE INDUSTRY ARE THE LEAST SATISFIED WITH THEIR JOBS. THESE WORKERS ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY AGE 18-34, WOMEN, HAVE LESS THAN A 4-YEAR DEGREE, LOW-INCOME, AND EMPLOYED PART-TIME.**

**Job satisfaction by industry**  
only among those employed



**THE MAJORITY OF WORKERS ALSO REPORT THAT THEY HAVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH IN THEIR CURRENT JOB. ENTRY-LEVEL/SUPPORT WORKERS, THOSE IN THE NORTHEAST, AND ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER WORKERS HAVE THE LEAST OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH.**

Opportunities for growth only among those employed\*



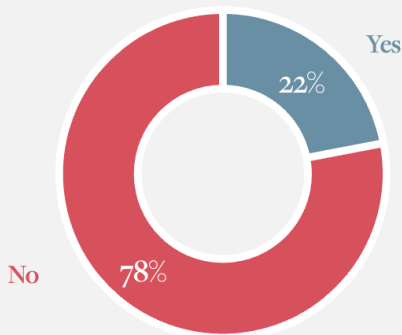
Opportunities for growth by key groups only among those employed\*

	% Yes	% No
Management	75	24
Mid-Level	67	31
Entry/Support	64	33
Age 18-34	83	15
Age 35-49	77	22
Age 50-64	64	34
Age 65+	50	46
White	65	33
Latino	75	24
Black	88	10
Asian/Pacific Islander**	63	34
Northeast	62	37
South	70	28
Midwest	66	30
West	78	21

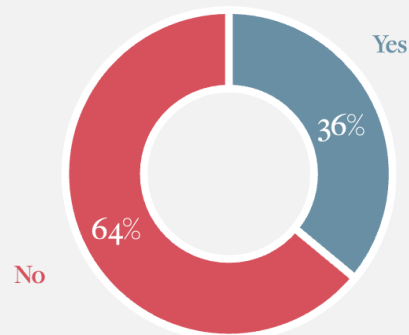
\*Are there opportunities for growth at your current job?  
 \*\*Small sample size; n=50

**FEWER THAN A QUARTER HAVE CHANGED JOBS IN THE PAST YEAR, WHILE JUST OVER A THIRD HAVE CONSIDERED IT. WORKERS OF COLOR, YOUNGER WORKERS, AND THOSE WHO FIND IT DIFFICULT TO MAKE ENDS MEET WERE THE MOST LIKELY TO HAVE CHANGED OR CONSIDERED CHANGING JOBS.**

In the past year, have you changed jobs?\*



In the past year, have you considered changing jobs?\*\*\*

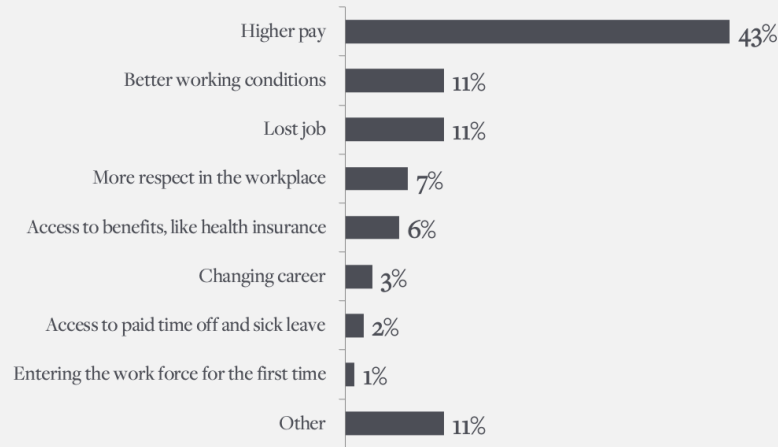


\*Only asked if employed  
 \*\*\*Only asked if have not changed jobs



**HIGHER PAY IS BY FAR THE TOP REASON TO CHANGE OR CONSIDER CHANGING JOBS, FOLLOWED BY BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS AND LOSING THEIR JOB.**

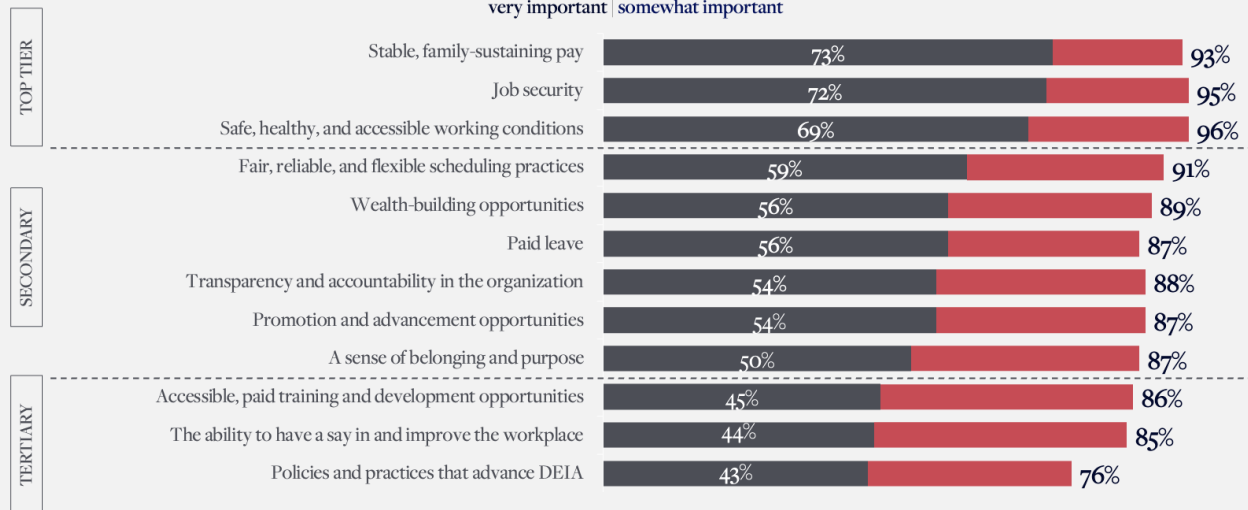
What was the biggest reason you changed jobs/considered changing jobs?\*



\*Only asked if changed jobs, considered changing jobs, or unemployed

**WHEN IT COMES TO WHAT DEFINES A QUALITY JOB, ALL THE TESTED ELEMENTS ARE IMPORTANT TO OVER THREE-QUARTERS OF THOSE IN THE WORKFORCE. HOWEVER, STABLE PAY, JOB SECURITY, AND WORKING CONDITIONS LEAD THE PACK.**

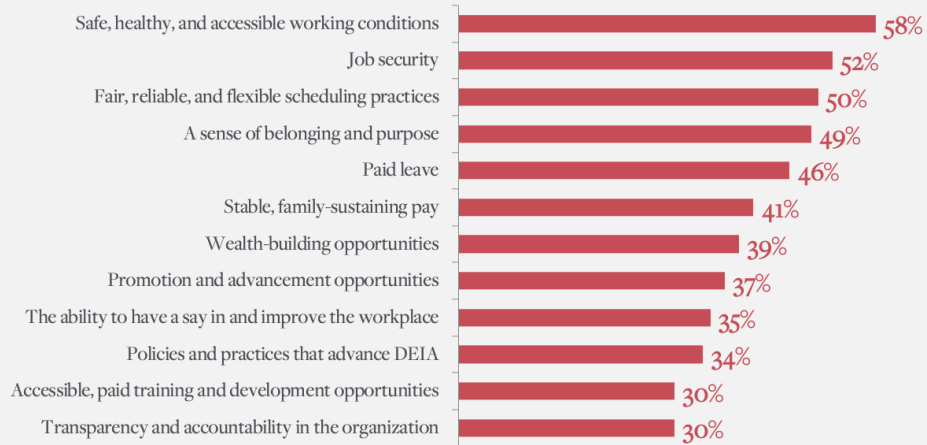
Job qualities\*  
very important | somewhat important



\*"There are a lot of reasons why a job might be considered a "good job." Here is a list of some of those reasons. For each one, please indicate whether it is very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important to you personally as part of a good job."

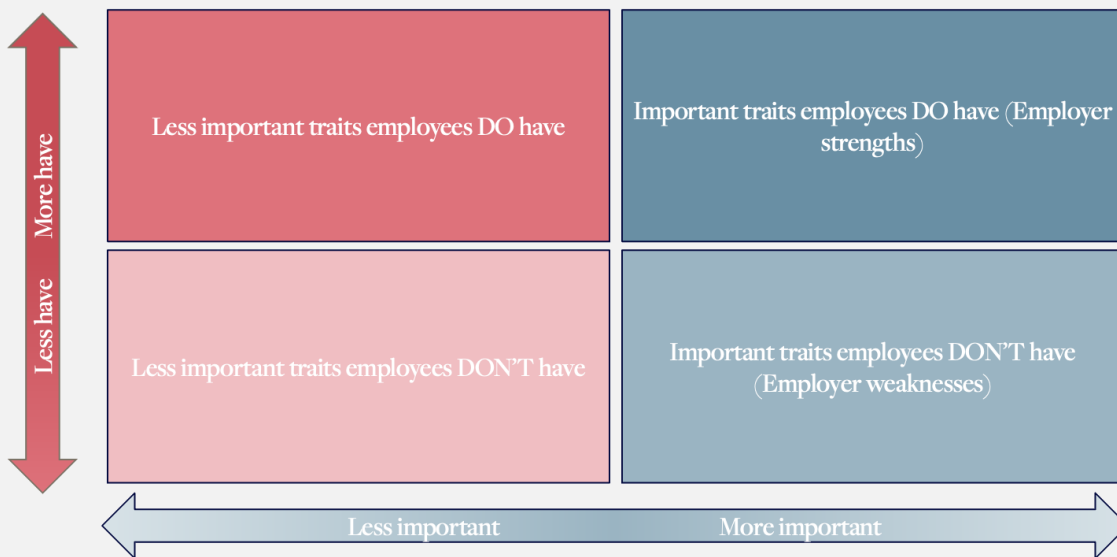
USING THE SAME ELEMENTS TO SEE WHAT WORKERS HAVE IN THEIR JOBS, A MAJORITY HAVE SAFE WORKING CONDITIONS, JOB SECURITY, AND FAIR SCHEDULING PRACTICES, BUT ARE MORE LIKELY TO LACK TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACCESSIBLE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

Job qualities in current or past jobs  
multiple responses accepted; total does not add to 100%\*

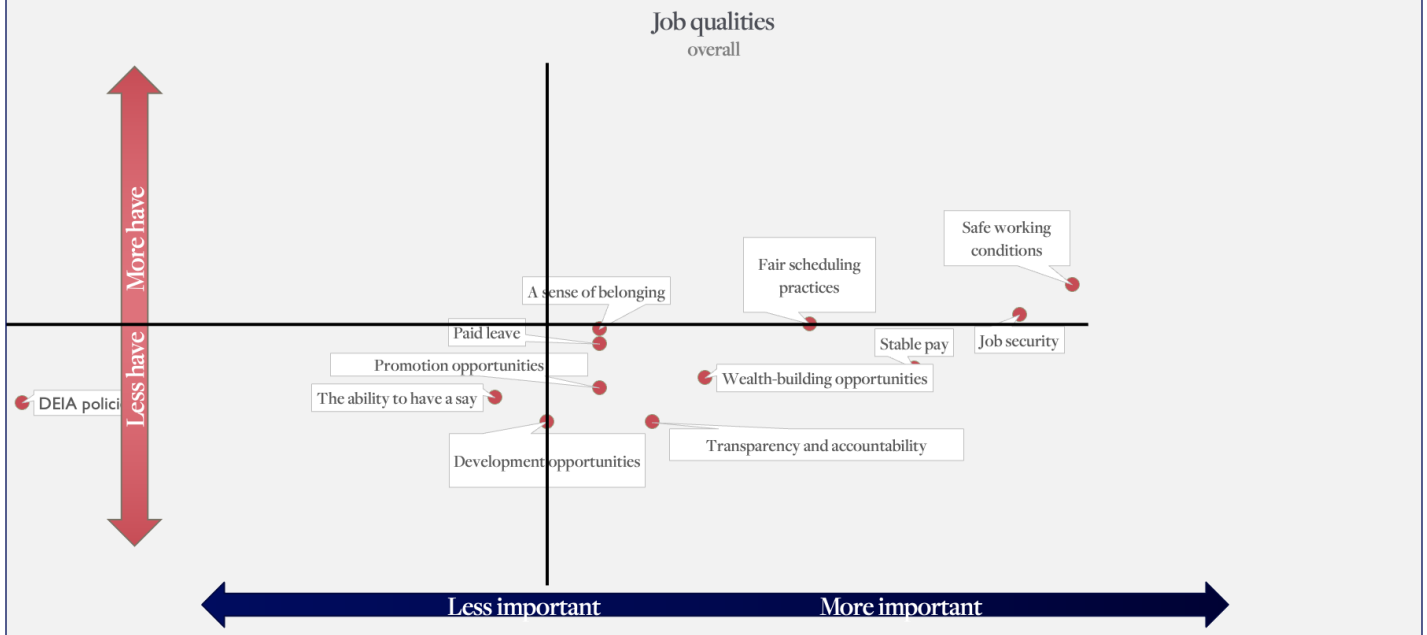


\*Thinking about that same list of items, how many of these things do you have in <[IF EMPLOYED] your position at your current job><[IF UNEMPLOYED] your position at your previous job? You may select all that apply. (RANDOMIZE)\*

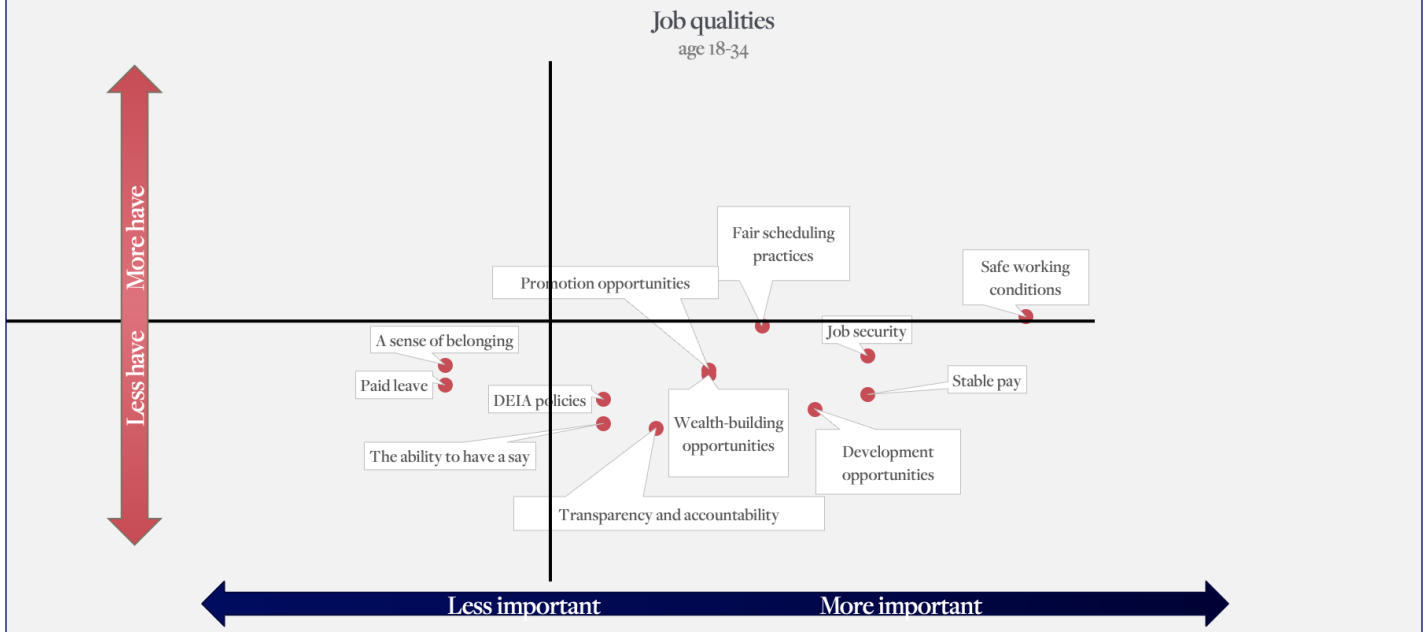
PLOTTING THIS INFORMATION TOGETHER, THERE ARE FOUR CATEGORIES.



EMPLOYER WEAKNESSES INCLUDE STABLE PAY, WEALTH-BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES, AND PROMOTION OPPORTUNITIES, WHILE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARE RIGHT ON THE CUSP.



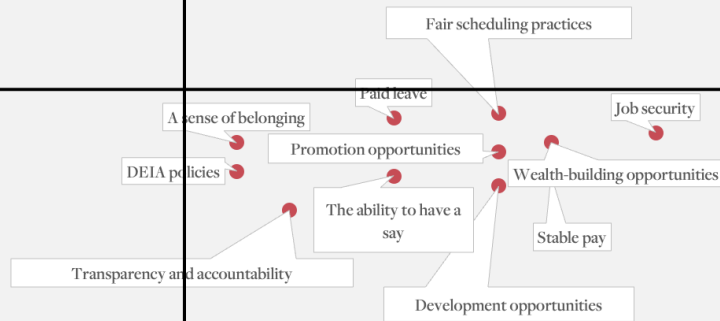
FOR YOUNGER WORKERS, THEY ARE LACKING ACCESS TO MOST ELEMENTS THEY IDENTIFY AS IMPORTANT FOR A QUALITY JOB.



WORKERS OF COLOR DO NOT HAVE WIDESPREAD ACCESS TO ANY OF THE ELEMENTS THAT MAKE A QUALITY JOB.

Job qualities  
people of color

More have  
Less have

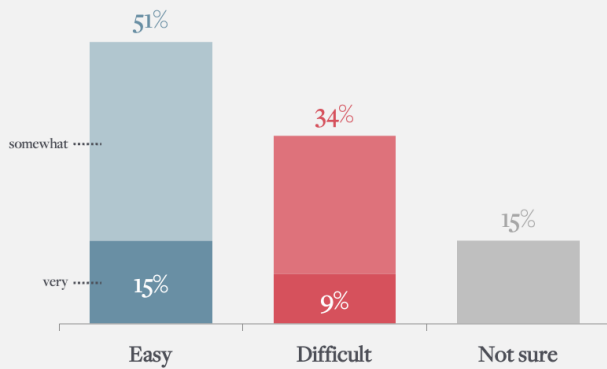


Less important      More important

# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES & SUPPORT

THE MAJORITY OF THOSE IN THE WORKFORCE SAY THAT IT HAS BEEN EASY TO ACCESS JOB ASSISTANCE; HOWEVER, FEW FIND IT TO BE VERY EASY. THOSE WHO ARE UNEMPLOYED REPORT HAVING A HARDER TIME ACCESSING JOB ASSISTANCE.

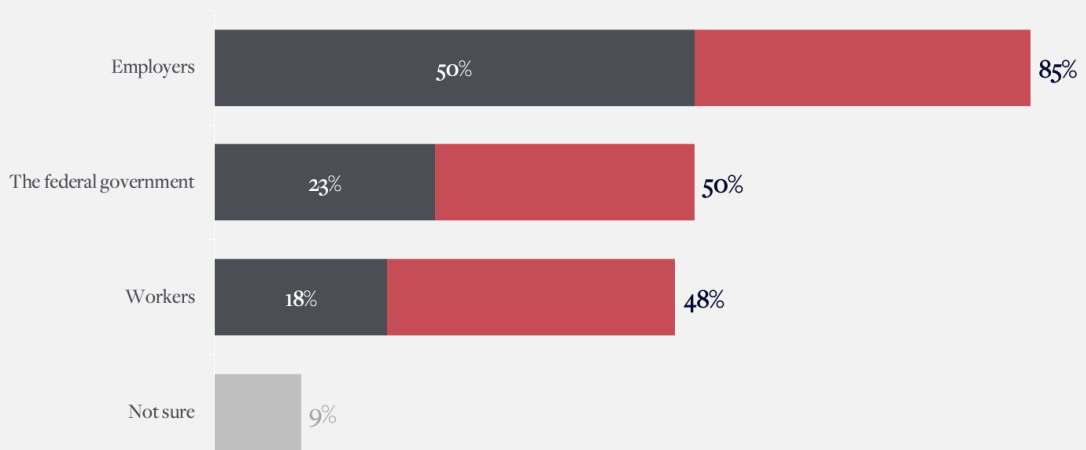
In your experience, has accessing job training and job search assistance been...



	Easy-Difficult
Employed	55-30
Unemployed	29-56

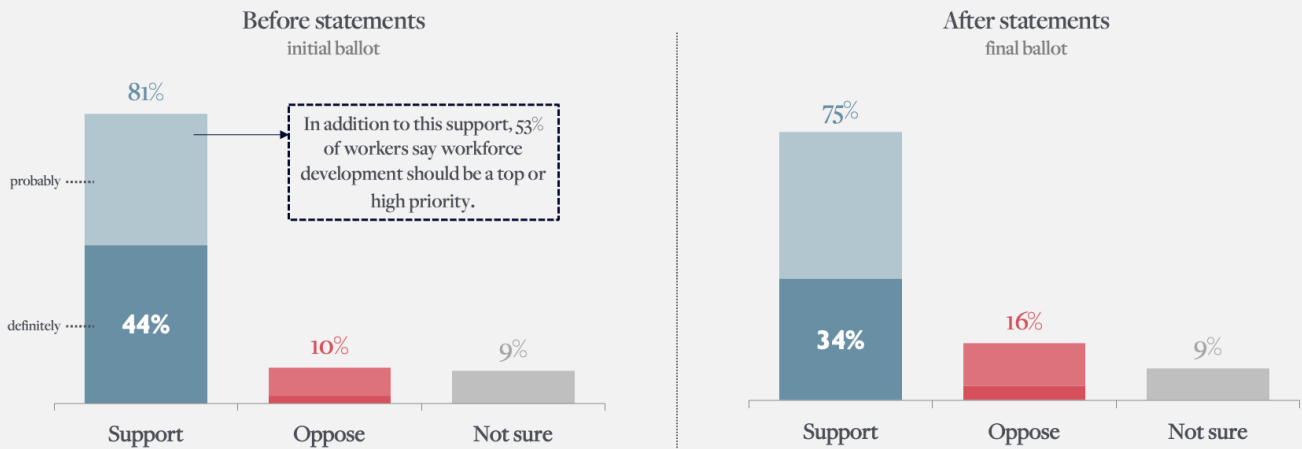
EMPLOYERS TAKE THE LION'S SHARE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENSURING QUALITY JOBS, FOLLOWED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

Who has the MOST responsibility for ensuring that the jobs people are able to get are good, quality jobs?  
ranked 1<sup>st</sup> | ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>



**AT THE OUTSET, A STRONG MAJORITY OF THOSE IN THE WORKFORCE SUPPORT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES; HOWEVER, THIS SUPPORT WEAKENS BOTH OVERALL AND IN INTENSITY AFTER HEARING BOTH STATEMENTS IN FAVOR AND IN OPPOSITION TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.**

As you may know, the federal government partners with state governments to provide workforce training funding for people who are looking for work or would like to transition to a new job. These services include workforce training and education and job search assistance. Do you support or oppose the federal government investing in workforce development initiatives?



**HOWEVER, BLACK WORKERS, YOUNGER WORKERS, LATINO WORKERS, AND THOSE IN THE SERVICE INDUSTRY MAINTAIN HIGH LEVELS OF SUPPORT FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES.**

Trend in support for workforce development by key groups  
support | oppose

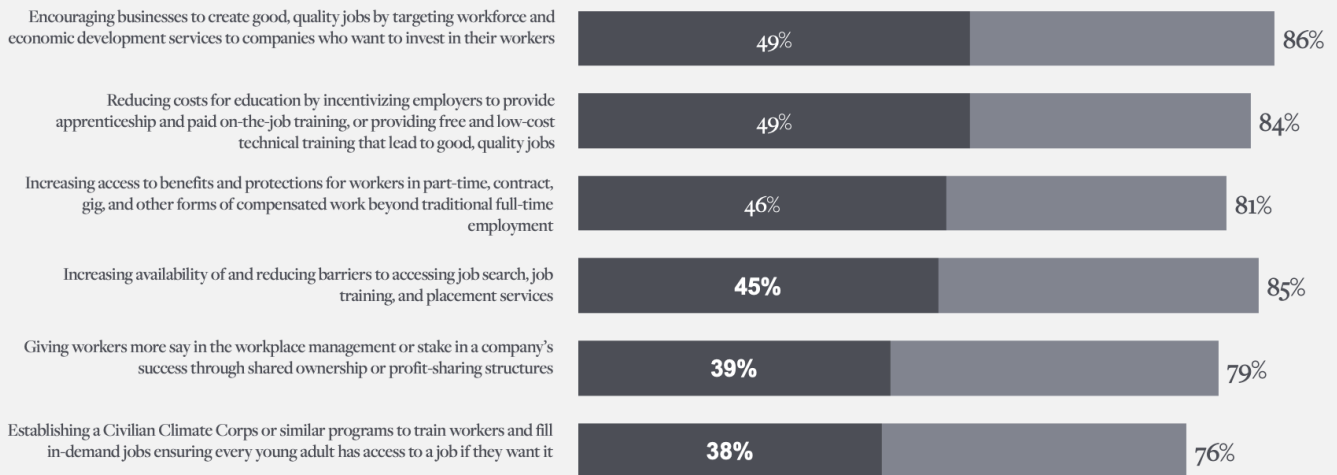
	Initial	Final	Net Δ
Black	82-7	87-8	+4
Age 18-34	83-9	83-10	-1
Latino	84-9	83-9	-1
Service	82-10	83-11	-1
Entry-Level / Support	83-8	77-13	-11
Asian/Pacific Islander*	83-9	74-14	-14

\*Small sample size; n=60

# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

WORKERS OFFER BROAD SUPPORT FOR A RANGE OF POLICY PROPOSALS RELATED TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT. THE TOP POLICIES FOCUS ON ENCOURAGING BUSINESSES TO CREATE QUALITY JOBS AND REDUCING COSTS FOR EDUCATION.

Policy proposals\*  
strongly support | somewhat support



\*Now, here is a list of proposed workforce development policies the federal government could enact. For each one, please indicate if you support or oppose that policy."

YOUNGER WORKERS AND WORKERS OF COLOR ARE ESPECIALLY SUPPORTIVE OF THESE POLICIES. WORKERS ACROSS A HOST OF KEY GROUPS WANT TO SEE PROGRAMS THAT ENCOURAGE BUSINESSES TO CREATE QUALITY JOBS, REDUCE EDUCATION COSTS, AND EXPAND BENEFITS TO ALL TYPES OF WORK,

Policy proposals by key groups

% strongly support

	All Voters	18-34	Latino	Black	Asian/ Pacific Islander*	Entry- Level/ Support	Service	Manual
Encourage Biz	49%	59%	59%	64%	57%	51%	53%	56%
Education Costs	49%	61%	55%	67%	64%	54%	56%	51%
Benefits for All	46%	58%	59%	58%	46%	54%	51%	48%
Job Services	45%	55%	52%	60%	51%	48%	50%	49%
Worker Say	39%	48%	48%	50%	48%	41%	40%	44%
CCC	38%	51%	47%	56%	38%	42%	43%	38%

\*Small sample size; n=60

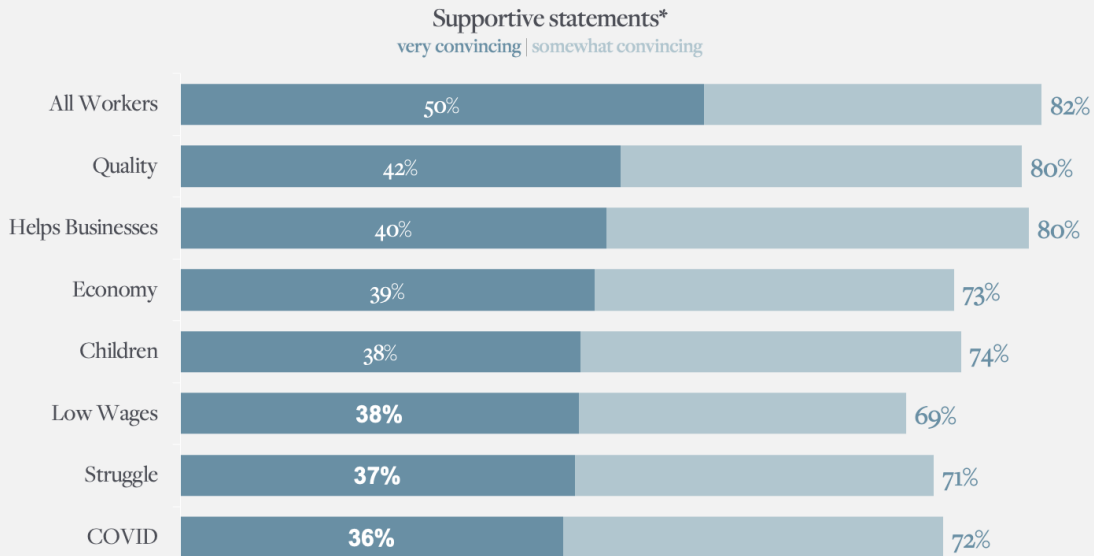
# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES



STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES:

Label	Statement Text
All Workers	All workers deserve a chance to have a good quality job to support their families.
Quality	The training and skills provided through workforce development initiatives should be geared towards helping all people find and obtain GOOD, QUALITY jobs. The focus is not on getting people into any job, but into good jobs that will sustain them and their families.
Helps Businesses	Creating and promoting good quality jobs helps businesses. It increases workforce retention and the number of skilled workers, improving productivity and making businesses more competitive.
Economy	Good jobs are essential to a healthy economy, successful businesses, and strong communities. Yet only 44% of working people in the United States report having a “good job.”
Children	About one-third of children live in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment, limiting their access to health care and other resources critical to their healthy development.
Low Wages	More than a third of the workforce – 53 million people and disproportionately women, people of color, and immigrants – struggle with low wages. For strong economic growth, we must address the discriminatory impact of poor jobs on marginalized communities.
Struggle	Millions of Americans struggle to find jobs or are stuck in low-wage positions with little chance for advancement, they lack adequate benefits, face discrimination and harassment, and cope with other daily challenges.
COVID	The pandemic and economic situation the past few years has highlighted more than ever the need for a complete overhaul of the workforce. We need workforce development solutions to get workers prepared for a new labor market and ensure they have good quality jobs.

WORKERS WOULD LIKE TO SEE THAT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES GIVE ALL WORKERS THE CHANCE TO HAVE A QUALITY JOB AND ENSURE THAT THE JOBS WORKERS ARE RECEIVING ARE QUALITY JOBS AND NOT JUST ANY JOB.



\*Here are some statements from supporters of workforce development initiatives. For each one, please indicate if you find that statement to be very convincing, somewhat convincing, not very convincing, or not at all convincing as a reason to support workforce development initiatives.

**YOUNGER WORKERS AND WORKERS OF COLOR ARE MORE ATTUNED TO ALL SUPPORT STATEMENTS – ESPECIALLY THE EMPHASIS ON ALL WORKERS. CALLING OUT THE DISCRIMINATORY IMPACT OF LOW-QUALITY JOBS AND LOW WAGES RESONATES STRONGLY WITH LATINO AND BLACK WORKERS.**

**Supportive statements by key groups**

\*very convincing

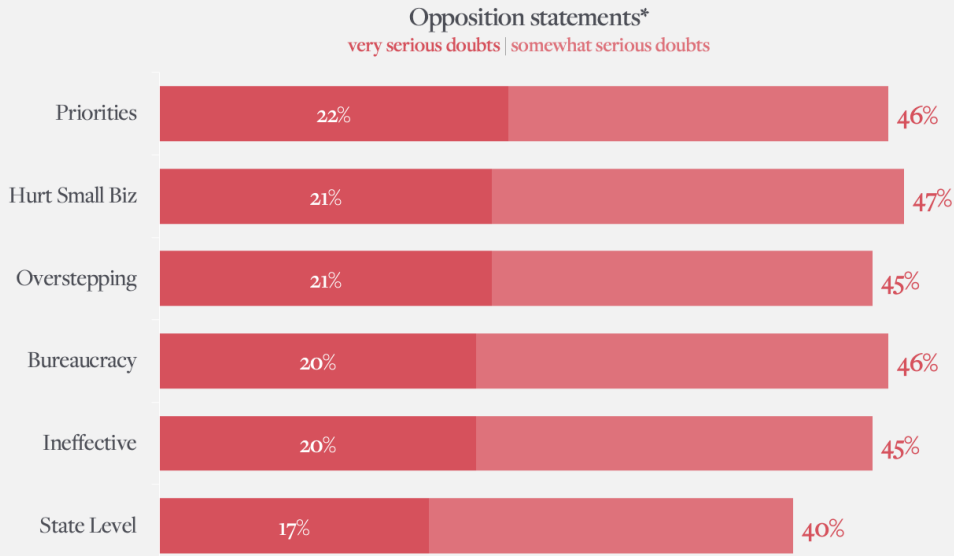
	All Voters	18-34	Latino	Black	Asian/ Pacific Islander*	Entry-Level/ Support	Service
All Workers	50%	59%	65%	62%	53%	56%	58%
Quality	42%	46%	51%	57%	39%	49%	46%
Helps Businesses	40%	49%	50%	51%	37%	44%	45%
Economy	39%	45%	47%	47%	40%	41%	46%
Children	38%	43%	46%	51%	37%	42%	46%
Low Wages	38%	48%	51%	57%	42%	42%	48%
Struggle	37%	48%	46%	52%	39%	45%	47%
COVID	36%	45%	46%	45%	38%	42%	43%

\*Small sample size; n=60

**STATEMENTS IN OPPOSITION TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES:**

Label	Statement Text
Priorities	The government has more important priorities than workforce development. They should be worried about reigning in inflation, decreasing the deficit, and crime and public safety.
Hurt Small Biz	Regulations hurt small businesses and actually slow down the economy. Businesses are still recovering from the pandemic and more costly regulations will force prices up for consumers and force some businesses to close.
Overstepping	The government is overstepping its bounds with workforce development policies. Rather than forcing more regulations on businesses, we should trust employers to run their business and train and attract workers.
Bureaucracy	Federal agencies enacting workforce development programs are just another addition to a bloated bureaucracy that is not well-equipped to improve the workforce. There is not enough transparency around how these initiatives are being enacted or if they are even working.
Ineffective	Workforce development programs are ineffective in training workers to fill open positions. There are thousands of open positions but no one to fill them. Current programs are failing to help workers get the skills they need.
State Level	Workforce development is important, but should be undertaken at the state level not federal. Each state knows how to best manage their economy and fill jobs, and the federal government should stay out of it.

**DIFFERING PRIORITIES AND THE IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES RISES TO THE TOP OF THE LIST OF CONCERNS.**



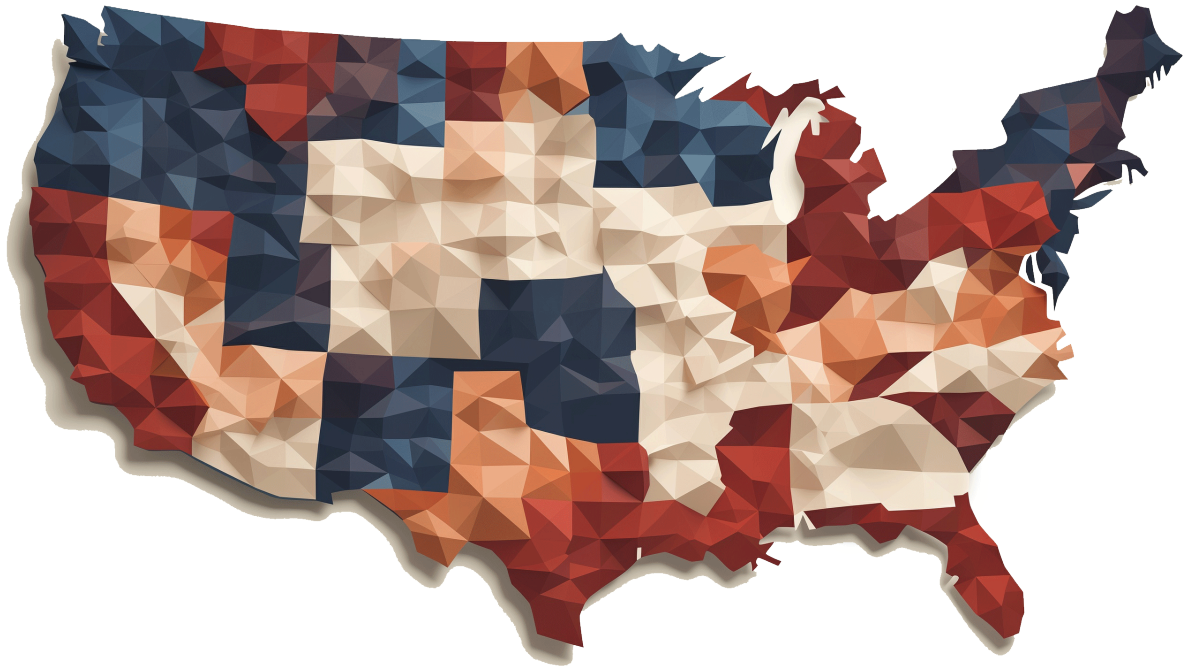
\*Here are some statements from opponents of workforce development initiatives. For each one, please indicate if you find that statement to give you very serious doubts, somewhat serious doubts, minor doubts, or no real doubts about workforce development initiatives.

**CONCERNS ABOUT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OVERSTEPPING THEIR BOUNDS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES BEING INEFFECTIVE AT TRAINING WORKERS FOR AVAILABLE JOBS ARE PARTICULARLY TROUBLING FOR YOUNGER WORKERS AND WORKERS OF COLOR.**

**Opposition statements by key groups**  
 % very serious doubts

	All Voters	18-34	Latino	Black	Asian/ Pacific Islander*	Service	Manual
Priorities	22%	25%	30%	25%	17%	23%	21%
Hurt Small Biz	21%	26%	26%	27%	19%	18%	22%
Overstepping	21%	26%	23%	27%	17%	22%	23%
Bureaucracy	20%	23%	23%	21%	20%	20%	25%
Ineffective	20%	26%	29%	21%	19%	21%	20%
State Level	17%	21%	19%	25%	25%	16%	22%

\*Small sample size; n = 60



**Meeting the Needs of Workers Today  
and Opportunities for the Future:**  
*Advancing A New Vision for Workforce Development*