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Job Quality Playbook

Strategy Development Guide

RFA is helping workforce and economic development agencies develop and implement practices and policies that promote good and equitable jobs within their jurisdictions. This template helps agency leaders develop an overarching job quality strategy that includes:

- A **framework** to introduce the high-level focus, make the case for change, and communicate to key stakeholders;
- Minimum **standards**, or criteria that define a quality job for your project to serve as a starting point for goal setting, measurement, and policy and practice change;
- **Goals** that inform budget, policy and practice change; and
- **New or expanded policies and practices** that promote good and equitable jobs.

This guide will walk your agency through key questions and considerations as you develop a job quality strategy. While we understand and appreciate this work is not always linear, we use the following nine steps to help agencies advance on their journey.

1. **Understand your environment:** What is the broader context for your project?
2. **Develop a job quality framework:** How will you communicate efforts and make the case for change?
3. **Draft initial job quality standards:** What, at minimum, defines a quality job in your jurisdiction?
4. **Establish a baseline:** What percentage of jobs meet those minimum standards in your community? Within your agency and contractors? Within relevant public employment workforce programs?
5. **Build a broad coalition for good jobs and equity:** What stakeholders do you need to bring along?
6. **Establish job quality goals:** What do you want to achieve through your projects?
7. **Design the measurement infrastructure:** How will you track progress?
8. **Develop and implement new or expanded job quality policies and practices:** How are you operationalizing the strategy?
9. **Measure and publicly report on your progress:** How are you holding yourself and stakeholders accountable?



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1. Understand your environment

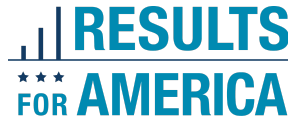
Begin to develop a shared understanding of the operating environment in which your team is pursuing this work. This will require reviewing existing data and engaging key stakeholders in dialogue.

Consider the following:

- *What job quality standards, requirements, worker protections, and agency policies and practices are already in place? (e.g. wage requirements, state or local scheduling ordinances, safety regulations, criteria for employer partners, etc.)*
- *What equity and job quality commitments have already been made and how are they progressing, and how might your project connect with them?*
- *What do you know from available economic and labor market data?*
- *What have you heard from your staff, partners, participants, and/or residents about what job quality means to them?*
- *Which policies and practices at your agency support equity and job quality? Which programs and interventions may be hindering equity and job quality? Where are you unsure?*

Key data points, assumptions, external factors, and other observations that form your team's shared understanding of the context of your work

2. Develop a job quality framework



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After understanding your operating context, you will develop a draft Job Quality Framework that defines the problem you are trying to solve, makes the case for change, and outlines the high-level job quality components you are focused on as part of your initiative. Your framework may also include key partners you are working with to affect change. You should also consider where your organization is positioned to have an impact; remember, you can drive change through multiple “levers” (e.g., procurement, empowerment, policy, HR, monitoring and enforcement).

Your job quality framework provides a high level way to think about both the scope and the framing of your job quality work. It is often useful in communicating externally to funders, executive leadership, and policymakers who want to quickly understand the high-level “why”, “what”, “who”, and “how” of your initiative. As you iterate on a framework and a definition, make sure to consider how your information will apply to a variety of stakeholders.

Examples:

- *The US Department of Labor and US Department of Commerce published a joint framework within themes, or [Good Jobs Principles](#) outlining their focus areas.*
- *[Colorado](#) State Workforce Board structures their framework by actions (Elevate, Create, Attract) which are then tied to specific stakeholders.*
- *The [San Diego County](#) Workforce Board structures their framework (Job Necessities, Job Opportunities and Job Features) by job quality components from the worker perspective. It also gives a sense of the relationship or order of the work.*

Consider the following:

- *Language in the framework can help connect your work to other efforts by using terminology and organizing constructs that are well known and understood.*
- *Frameworks are commonly represented as a visual which captures the universe of work with a few key terms.*
- *Interactive examples such as case studies, video interviews with workers, quotes from employers can help substantiate why certain aspects of the framework are important.*

Job Quality Framework (Could be a link to an example you'd like to adopt)

3. Draft initial job quality standards



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While the framework provides a high-level approach to your work and is helpful for communication and consensus building, further specificity is needed to set goals and serve as a starting point for policy and practice change. At this step, you will develop an initial draft of minimum standards that defines a quality job for your team as part of this project.

When developing your job quality standards, you should consider the following:

- *What is the living wage for your area? We recommend using the [MIT Living Wage Calculator](#).*
- *What protections should be in place for all workers?*
- *What are the primary safety and security concerns of workers in your area?*
- *What benefits are crucial for workers and what expectations are there about cost-sharing and accessibility?*
- *What do stable, predictable, and fair schedules look like?*
- *Are workers able to participate in unions? Do employee owned companies exist in your area?*
- *How might workers provide input into an initial draft?*
- *How might employers provide input into your draft?*

We recommend starting with the following job quality components as minimum standards:

- *Earnings - living wage*
- *Benefits - health and well being, education, wealth building, supportive services, safety net*
- *Schedules - stable, predictable and fair*
- *Safety and Security - physical, mental, emotional and job structure*

Other components you can consider:

- *Learning and Career Development - career paths, training and skill development and recognition and advancement*
- *Voice and Representation - formal representation, participatory management and employee engagement,*
- *Environment and Culture - use of skills, sense of connection, stability and autonomy*
- *Purpose and Dignity - meaningfulness, mattering and personal alignment*

Example:

San Diego County defines a quality job as having at least the following:

Earnings: At least \$22.75 an hour (2022 living wage for an adult with no kids based on MIT's Living Wage Calculator)

Schedule: Stable and fair ([link](#))

- **Stability:** Employers provide a good faith estimate of an employee's schedule at time of hire.
- **Predictability:** Employers provide employees seven-day schedules 14 days in advance. Employers provide "predictability pay" for short-notice changes and allow workers to decline short-notice requests.



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- Reliability: Employers do not employ “on-call” scheduling.
- Rest: Employers pay time-and-a-half for any hours worked between closing and opening shifts separated by less than 11 hours.
- Opportunity: Employers offer any needed hours to current, qualified part-time workers before hiring new workers or using contractors or staffing agencies

Benefits: Full time workers are eligible for health, vision, dental with at least 50% employer paid within 30 days of employment

Safety and security: Follow all state and federal laws regarding workplace health safety (OSHA, EEOC, ADA), including anti-discrimination and anti-harassment.

Draft Standards for your Agency or Project:

4. Establish a baseline

Based on the data you gathered in step one and the framework and definition you developed in steps two and three, work to establish the baseline number and percent of good jobs for workers and employers served by your agency. This could be agency and contractor FTEs, a specific industry (e.g., child care, behavioral health, construction), and/or through a specific program (e.g., job placements through public employment and workforce programs like TANF or WIOA). Take the extra step to disaggregate data by race/ethnicity, gender, and other key demographics. Narrow the focus to data sets and issues that your organization (or your partners) are uniquely positioned to address (e.g. participants within TANF and WIOA funded programs, child care workers, etc.).

Consider the following:

- *What portion of existing jobs or job placements meet your minimum job quality standards? Where do those jobs sit (sector, industry, geography)?*
- *How many workers have access to those jobs?*
- *What are the characteristics of those workers?*
- *Which workers are left out?*
- *Which components of job quality are missing? Where do existing goals fall short (e.g. wage too low, schedules not considered)?*
- *Are your internal jobs high quality? What about those of your contractors?*

Initial data set(s) for establishing baseline. Start with the most accessible and relevant data to your organization’s work.



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Number and percent of jobs (or job placements) that meet minimum job quality standards. *Note: You will likely have gaps at this stage of your work (e.g., 40% of 2021 TANF & WIOA job placements met draft standards for earnings, we don't know about schedules, benefits, or safety and security).*

Notable disparities by race/ethnicity, gender, or other key demographics (e.g., while 60% of white participants were placed in wages that met our earnings standards, compared to 30% of Latinx participants).

Gaps in available data to benchmark (e.g., stable and fair schedules are critically important workers in our jurisdiction and need to be in our standards, but we don't yet have a line of sight on how to measure it).

Other notable findings, challenges, and observations:

5. Build a broad coalition for good jobs and equity

Examine what existing initiatives, legislative or regulatory directives, worker organizations, or prominent employers in the jurisdiction promote aspects of your job quality



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framework and/or initial job quality standards. This will shed light on which policymakers may be champions, where funding may be available, and what partnerships will be critical to inform and advance your project goals.

Consider the following:

- Which elected officials are leading public policy and budget discussions about expanding job quality?
- Which government agencies have published job quality or equity commitments, policies, or practices?
- How might your efforts connect with organized labor and other worker advocacy organizations?
- Who are the major business leaders promoting or modeling job quality in your community?
- What are other community, faith, or academic leaders doing and saying about job quality?
- Where are funds being invested to support job quality (ARP, IJJA, state programs) and to what degree are you leveraging them?
- What sectors of your community are not prominently included in JQ discussions and how might they be better engaged?
- Which agencies or partners have data sources you need access to?

Key Partners:

Existing Initiatives:

Additional Funding Sources:

Other:



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Drawing on steps 1-5 above, outline specific, actionable goals for your job quality strategy. These goals should be directly aligned with the projects and initiatives your organization focuses on to make them relevant to your daily work. You may choose to focus on specific sectors, occupations, or even components of job quality (e.g. earnings and benefits). Create a short set of goal statements that capture what you aim to accomplish and by when (e.g. allocate 75% of wage subsidies to quality jobs that meet our agency standards by 2024 or create apprenticeship pathways in cyber security for 500 BIPOC individuals). Remember that goals are essentially visions for your organization that have quantifiable or qualitative results. Your goals will inform your priorities, guide your budget, influence hiring and skill building and define data collection needs.

Consider the following:

- *Consider relevant external (e.g., empowerment, policy, monitoring & enforcement) and internal (e.g., HR and procurement) “levers of change”.*
- *Align to key inflection points (e.g. deployment of funding, fiscal year, launch of new program, policy cycles)*
- *Structure goal statements in ways that are actionable (clear what caused the change), meaningful (easy to understand) and accessible (data can be collected and analyzed)*
- *Keep in mind that it may take multiple programs, funding streams or partnerships to achieve a given goal*

Example: By June 30, 2027...

- *70% percent of job placements from workforce investments are in quality jobs. Disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, and other priority demographic groups.*
- *100% of agency FTEs working on agency funded projects are in quality jobs.*
- *80% of all contracts have living wage and stable scheduling requirements consistent with our standards*
- *Year over year increases in the number of workers in jurisdiction that have formal representation (e.g., union) or an ownership stake in their company (ESOP, worker cooperatives, etc.).*
- *Support 100 companies in service sector jobs to shift to stable and fair scheduling practices, improving job quality for at least 1000 workers*

Goal 1:

Goal 2:

Goal 3:

Goal 4:

Goal 5:



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7. Design the measurement infrastructure

Using your work in step 4, 5, and 6, crosswalk each goal to a specific data source or plan to collect data to ensure you can track progress against your goals.

For each goal, consider the following:

- What data do you need to track progress against this goal?
- Do you currently have access to this data?
- Are you able to disaggregate the data by race/ethnicity, gender, and other key demographic goals?
- If you don't currently have access to the needed data, are there other government agencies or partners that may "own" or have access to the needed data?
- If the data does not currently exist, is there a feasible way to begin collecting it (e.g., representative survey, adding field to enrollment field, etc.)
- Do you have the technical expertise and bandwidth needed to design and build the reporting infrastructure needed for the long term?

Goal 1 Measurement Plan:

Goal 2 Measurement Plan:

Goal 3 Measurement Plan:

Goal 4 Measurement Plan:

Goal 5 Measurement Plan:



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Notes:

8. Develop and implement new or expanded job quality policies and practices

What specific policies and practices will your agency or project begin or expand to promote job quality?

9. Measure and publicly report on your progress

How will you communicate progress against job quality goals over the course of your project?



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