

Job Quality: Taking Your First (or Next) Step

October 27, 2022

Where are you on your job quality journey?

1. Pioneer

("We are leading the field; I'm looking to showcase and accelerate our efforts.")

2. Connecting dots

("I'm working on a bunch of job quality projects, but it feels ad-hoc.")

3. Making it real

("We all agree job quality matters at a high level, but what does it look like on the ground?")

4. Just setting out

("I'm here to begin my job quality journey.")

WHAT WE'LL COVER IN THE NEXT 90 MINUTES...

1. Job Quality | “Why (Now)” (10 minutes)

2. RFA's Job Quality Framework (10 minutes)

3. Government Action Impacting Job Quality (30 minutes)

4. Table Discussions, Share Out, and Close (40 min)

Work isn't adding up.

29%

of *employed* people
unable to make ends
meet leaving...

16%

of kids living in
poverty

Today is ripe for change.



**Workers front
and center in
pandemic +
recovery story**



**\$7T in federal
relief** and recovery
funding from ARP
and IIJA

RFA's Job Quality & Equity Framework (10 minutes)

RFA Job Quality & Equity Framework

What goes into a high quality job?

Why are high quality jobs important?



Eight Job Quality Components

Organizing and
narrowing the focus



Government Action Impacting Job Quality (30 minutes)

“In recent years, cities, counties, and other localities have become innovators and leaders in standing up for working people. Responding to increased inequality, degraded working conditions, and insufficient or inconsistent worker protections at the state and federal level, localities have in many cases joined states as the “laboratories” of experimentation (as Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis described) in relation to workplace matters.”

The Role of Local Government in Protecting Worker Rights
(The Economic Policy Institute, 2022)

Foundational Tenets

Laying the
groundwork for
sustainable
government action
to improve job
quality



Strategy

Establishes a job
quality framework for
communicating why
change matters

Sets minimum
standards that define
job quality for
the agency

Creates goals that
inform budget, policy
and practice change



Equity

Recognizes how
historical and systemic
inequity impact
job quality

Informed by the lived
experiences and
perspectives of those
most impacted

Evaluates gaps
in who is served
and addresses
disparate impacts



Measurement & Data

Aligns existing
data systems

Invests in collection
and measurement to
fill data gaps

Tracks progress
against goals &
evaluates impact
to build the
evidence base



Leading by Example

Addresses internal HR
and procurement
policies and practices

Ensures
necessary
resources
are available

Demonstrates
commitment and
leadership

Job Quality Levers

Opportunities for government agencies to improve
job quality for workers in their communities

Procurement

Empowerment

Policy

HR Practices

**Monitoring and
Enforcement**



Procurement

Procurement can influence the quality of jobs and equity of access through how funds are used, and for what purpose. Agencies can use procurement practices to directly fund job quality or equity related projects, to prioritize diversity and high quality jobs in the organizations they choose to fund, and through the procurement process itself as a means of advancing job quality.

Considerations:

- How might we introduce or strengthen job quality priorities in the **purchasing** we make, **RFPs** we release, and contract performance measures we **negotiate**?
- How might our agency's procurement practices influence job quality for the frontline workers of **our contractors**?

Leading Example:

- **Travis County (TX):** In 2016, the Travis County purchasing offices adopted the Better Builder Certification that defines job quality standards for public construction projects. These standards were defined by workers themselves through grassroots organizing with low-income construction workers of color, many of whom spoke limited English. Over \$9B of public works projects adhere to these standards, improving job quality for 10,000+ workers.



Empowerment

Empowerment practices provide the employees, partners, and customers of your agency with voice and representation. This lever can be used to shift away from a practice of designing for, to designing with. Empowerment practices recognize historical and systemic inequities, and intentionally equips individuals to participate at the decision-making table in real and meaningful ways.

Consideration:

- How might we elevate the **voice** and perspectives of **frontline workers** to inform our agency's work?
- How have we solicited the voices of **our own workers**?

Leading Examples:

- **Multiple workforce boards:** Including (and compensating) jobseekers and frontline workers to help design programs and evaluate RFPs
- **Durham (NC):** formed the Workers' Rights Commission as an advisory body to the city council. Members are workers appointed by the city council to provide a public forum to discuss workers' rights, conduct studies, recommend pro-worker policies for the city council's state legislative agenda, and provide channels of communication between organized and unorganized workers



Policy

Policy helps to set the tone for the agency and also defines the processes, structures and requirements that influence job quality and equity outcomes. Agencies can directly influence what is mandated, incentivized, or prohibited through regulations. Further, this lever can be a powerful signal to the community on how important job quality and equity are, encouraging change within other organizations.

Consideration:

- What role does our agency have in setting and informing city, county, or state policy that **can improve job quality at scale**?
- Can **boards or commissions** make meaningful changes outside the legislative process?

Leading Examples:

- **Multiple workforce agencies:** Minimum wage requirements to receive WIOA on-the-job training subsidies.
- **State of CO:** the State Medical Services Board made an emergency rule change to raise the minimum wage of all direct care workers to \$15/hour, using ARPA funds.
- **City of Atlanta (GA):** Passed a living wage ordinance defining good jobs as paying at least \$40,000/yr.



HR Practices

Human resource practices help agencies “walk the talk” on job quality and equity. HR can set the standard for how employees are treated, not only at the time of hire, but throughout the employment life cycle. Internal HR practices are a good place to begin the journey of improving job quality and equity; a sound foundation in HR is essential for advanced work down the road.

Consideration:

- Is our agency an **employer of choice** in our community?
- Are we asking employers in our community to do anything **we aren’t willing to do ourselves**?
- Do we have **workplace equity challenges** we need to name and work on?

Leading Examples:

- **San Diego Workforce Partnership (CA):** Pulled WIOA funded career centers in-house to improve wages and other quality features for frontline staff, increased intern wages to local living wages, offering hybrid work environment, and other job quality improvements.
- **Boulder County HHS (CO):** Adopted a babies-at-work policy to allow new parent employees to be with their infants up to 12 mo. of age while at work, reducing the burden of finding/paying for childcare, and supporting infant/parent health.



Monitoring & Enforcement

Monitoring & Enforcement ensures workers are protected through existing laws and employers are held accountable for not following required job quality legal protections. This includes monitoring job quality protections and contract requirements related to procurement policies, incentive programs, wage subsidy programs, and other policies that go beyond federal, state, and local labor law.

Consideration:

- How are **current worker protections**, incentive program requirements, and contract requirements enforced?
- How might our agency be involved in **strengthening monitoring** and enforcement in the future?
- How can our government help **inform and educate** the public on labor requirements and protections?

Leading Example:

- **Minneapolis (MN):** The Labor Standards Enforcement Division was created within the city's Department of Civil Rights in 2016. The office has five FTEs, and it enforces the city's paid sick and safe time, minimum wage, wage theft, and freelance worker protections laws.
- Multiple workforce agencies provide **free business education** offerings in partnership with SBDCs, Economic development, chambers of commerce and law firms offering updates on legislative session impacts to business

Table Discussions & Share Outs (35 minutes)

Question 1:

Why is improving job quality and workplace equity important to you?

Question 2:

Why does it matter to your agency?

Question 3: Which lever(s) are you best positioned to influence? Why?

Wrap up & Reflection (5 minutes)

Wrapping Up | Next Steps & Tools

- ✓ **November 8th: Families & Workers Fund & US DOL: Reimagining Job Quality Measurement [Virtual Event](#)**
- ✓ **December 5th: Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill Funding & Job Quality Webinar (Results for America)**

Session Reflection

✓ **Share verbally:**

Wows - something you're interested in

Wonders - remaining questions

✓ **Write silently:**

What is one thing you learned today that you can apply immediately when you get home next week?