

Job Quality Starter Guide

AT A GLANCE

This starter guide offers a suite of dynamic tools and tips for state and local workforce boards, workforce development organizations, government agencies, or other stakeholders looking to develop an approach to implement quality job initiatives in their region and for their customers.

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Summary

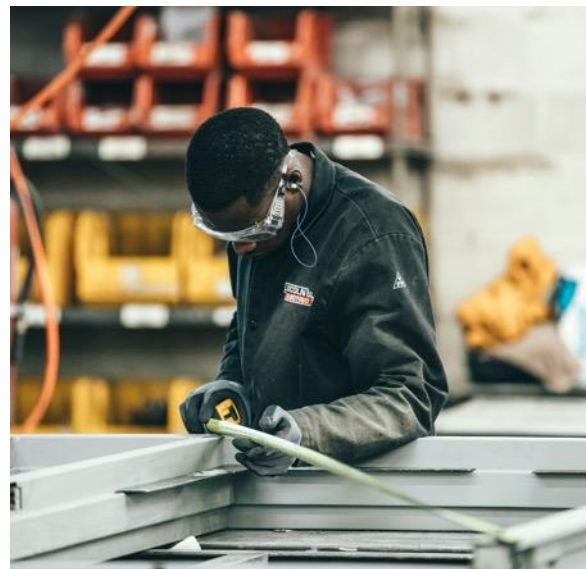
You, as a workforce system professional, are picking up this Job Quality Starter Guide because you're likely interested in advancing job quality in your region or community or have some ideas or even some job quality-related accomplishments under your belt. We're so happy to join you on your job quality journey!

To assist organizations that are exploring effective ways to build job quality into their work and advance job quality in their communities, we have created a new resource. The Job Quality Starter Guide is designed to assist workforce leaders in:

- Applying quality jobs terminology, corresponding principles, and frameworks that resonate across the field.
- Developing a core group of committed stakeholders.
- Activating planning tools that guide your team from ideation to action.
- Providing case examples from the inaugural Department of Labor Job Quality Academy and beyond.

The Job Quality Starter Guide also includes an extensive list of additional resources that can help you progress on your job quality goals.

As you go through the Job Quality Starter Guide, keep in mind that while this tool is oriented around helping organizations and leaders develop and expand discrete job quality projects and initiatives, fully incorporating job quality into your work requires immersing job quality into all facets of your organization and mission. A full embrace of job quality requires us to use its principles as a lens through which all our work is examined, measured, and changed, similar to how diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) is a lens that organizations can use to change their behaviors.



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Introduction

The Job Quality Starter Guide combines resources, tools, and case studies to build toward quality job initiatives from definition to implementation. Key areas include:

Defining Job Quality—These components and terminology are essential to the Department of Labor’s Job Quality Academy and they underpin this starter guide. This will provide you with the contextual foundations to define what job quality might look like in your region.

Design Principles—Iterative design and stakeholder engagement are key drivers of this action-oriented starter guide. These principles reinforce the need to constantly adapt to stakeholder needs for the greatest impact.

Setting Your Foundations—Understand your local area and build a core team of people who are powerbrokers, advocates,

connectors, and conveners for quality jobs. This will ultimately lead to a core team that is influential enough to identify and embed job quality in local area priorities.

Finding Your Focus—Identify your sphere of control and make the best use of your team’s strengths to drive change in your region or state. Levers will help you articulate some potential approaches to implement job quality initiatives.

Developing Your Job Quality Action Plan—Use the Job Quality Action Plan tool to prioritize your strategies, identify quick wins, and identify measures of success.

What’s Next—It’s time to implement! See the host of resources that highlight the impact of applying the good jobs principles to processes at local, regional, and state levels. Measure impact and design sustainable quality job processes, policies, and procedures.

Defining Job Quality

What Is a Quality Job?

Job quality can mean many things to many people, but broadly a quality job is one that helps workers achieve economic stability and mobility, while prioritizing inclusion and worker voice. The U.S. Department of Labor identified [principles of a good job](#) as part of the Good Jobs Initiative, which include the following:

- Equitable recruitment and hiring
- Benefits
- Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA)
- Empowerment and representation
- Job security and working conditions
- Organizational culture
- Payment
- Skills and career advancement

The items represent a mix of worker and employer priorities.

Quality jobs are the foundation of an equitable economy that lifts workers and families and [can make businesses more competitive](#) through increased employee attraction and retention, and even performance and productivity. So many Americans lack work that provides them with decent pay, benefits, safety, or hours that allow them to take care of both their work and home responsibilities. These problems are even more pronounced for workers from historically marginalized communities and in certain industries, such as hospitality and health care. If we want all workers to thrive and grow, we must focus on connecting people to quality jobs.

Additional Resources

Familiarize yourself with the key components of quality jobs. Many great resources already exist. While naming conventions and graphic representations differ, there is general agreement on the core components. During the Job Quality Academy, we curated a few from across the national ecosystem of colleagues and partners. Find them in the [Additional Resources](#) section of this starter guide.

What Is the Job Quality Academy?

The Department of Labor launched its inaugural Job Quality Academy in January 2023. The Job Quality Academy focused on the public workforce system as its primary agent of change to advance job quality. The workforce system [plays an instrumental role](#) in enhancing job quality. Its unique position, characterized by its significant role in the strategic allocation of funding, extensive convening power, and strong connections with diverse stakeholders, enables the workforce system to bridge our nation's evolving work-and-learn ecosystems. The workforce system can use the power of its dollars to drive change, advance policies, empower its clients, and partner with enforcement agencies to protect and educate all workers. This initiative was anchored in the public workforce system but requires engagement and active participation from many different types of partners.

The inaugural academy offered professional development and strategic planning to teams from key components of the workforce system, such as local workforce boards, education and training providers, employers, and labor unions. The 16 teams from diverse communities across the country engaged in an intensive series of design sessions aimed at developing job quality action plans for their communities within four to five months of acceptance into the academy. By the end of the academy, participants gained a greater understanding of job quality principles, how to incorporate them into their policies and programs, and immediate next steps on where to begin for the most impact.



How to Use the Starter Guide

The Job Quality Academy served as an accelerator. It sped up the process for core stakeholders and leaders to gain clarity and buy-in on the critical and widespread issues of job quality that impacts many workers. Communities enhanced their job-quality strategies through intensive, in-person summits and structured design-thinking activities. You can achieve similar results by using the tools in this Job Quality Starter Guide. Some groups may choose to work with a facilitator or coach, while others will implement the process using internal resources.

When engaging with the tools in this starter guide to develop a Job Quality Action Plan, we have two design principles that organizations should keep in mind throughout the process.

Iteration and Prototyping

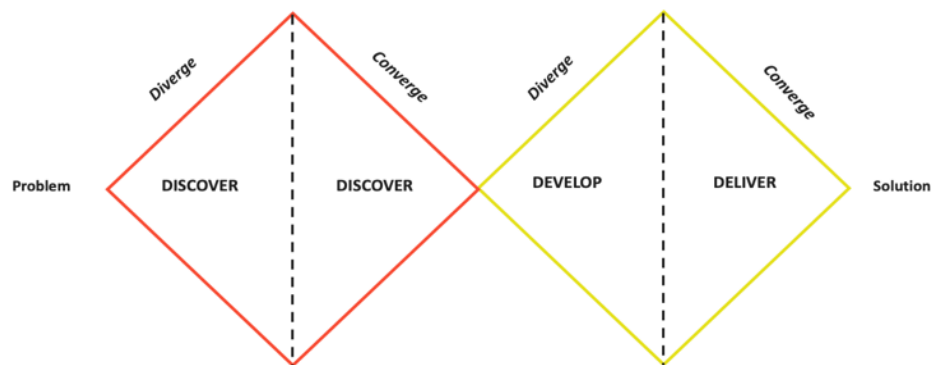
There is no one-size-fits-all model for implementing job quality initiatives. Iteration is a critical principle in this work. Typically, in the public and nonprofit sectors, pilot programs are the preferred method of iterating. However, developing and running a pilot can, in some cases, take years and can be expensive.

Given that there is so much time, energy, and dollars invested in a pilot, program managers and other leaders often don't feel like there is room to fail. Rapid prototyping not only helps reduce those real costs but also allow leaders to fail fast and pivot to test better solutions. It's difficult to break our learned behaviors of having finalized plans before implementing, but when engaging with new concepts and ideas it's important to spend time prototyping and testing assumptions. When you work in draft form, you end up creating far more opportunities to explore.

In the Double Diamond model you can iterate, alternating between widening your perspective to take in more information - from stakeholders, from brainstorming, from additional research - and narrowing your perspective by taking that universe of information and focusing in on the most important elements relevant to your work. You can continue to diverge and converge as many times as you want.

Job Quality Academy team EmployIndy developed a broad understanding of regional barriers to job quality. In their workforce challenge, they homed in on the construction industry. During an important brainstorming session, the core team discovered four essential sectors within the construction industry where they were most strategically positioned to make an impact. See the full case study in [Case Examples](#).

The Double Diamond Model



Adapted from the Nielsen Norman Group

Stakeholder Engagement

An important element of prototyping is getting feedback. Because we don't always have full visibility, carry inherent bias, and make assumptions, creating job quality strategies that truly understand and address stakeholder needs proves challenging when working in isolation. This often leads to initiatives that miss the root of the problem or struggle to obtain buy-in or adoption from customers and other stakeholders. Instead, get feedback from jobseekers on what job quality means to them, from employers on implementation challenges, and from nonprofit or government partners on program or policy implications. Whenever you have an opportunity to test assumptions with your stakeholders, you should take it. This guide notes when such opportunities arise.

You can use a variety of different methodologies for engaging stakeholders and getting feedback. Throughout this guide, we highlight several approaches and techniques for different situations.

Appreciative Inquiry

Standard qualitative data collection methods include surveys, interviews, and focus groups. To potentially enhance their effectiveness, consider incorporating Appreciative Inquiry into the research or study design. This approach complements traditional qualitative techniques by focusing on organizational and social engagement through tailored questions and dialogues. Appreciative Inquiry encourages participants to identify and acknowledge the strengths, advantages, and opportunities within their communities, organizations, or teams. By deliberately highlighting these positive aspects, Appreciative Inquiry offers a constructive perspective, aiming to inform and shape future development and improvement. (See the **Appreciative Inquiry Interview Guide Template** from the Center for Appreciative Inquiry.)

Setting Your Foundations

Understanding Your Local Environment

It's important to understand your environment and context. Is there agreement in the community on what job quality means? Does job quality have the support of elected officials or other leaders, such as the governor or cabinet members? Is there grant funding in the pipeline that lends itself to the incorporation of job quality principles, such as federal infrastructure spending? Is there even agreement on what job quality means? Understanding the landscape can give you a sense of the key stakeholders for inclusion in your planning and can also help you build a case for why job quality is important for your local economy.

You're likely not the only organization or collection of leaders in your region interested in job quality. Spend some time researching or having introductory conversations with others in your region. Whether you partner with them or not, you might be able to get a head start on data collection, understand possible levers

of action, and build allies for the future. Having multiple job quality initiatives in a region can only benefit your collective work, and it helps even further to be collectively aware and supportive of one another's efforts.

Better yet, join or participate in an existing coalition or initiative. It doesn't have to be narrowly focused on job quality, but on related issues that you could build into a job quality focus. Connecting to an established project could help focus your scope and shorten your time to launch and help you sustain the effort over time. For example, you could form a job quality subcommittee with an existing industry sector standing committee in your region. Or you could incorporate job quality principles into known upcoming planning and policy work, like a five-year plan or a request for proposal process. Leveraging a built-in structure, timeline, and scope can help anchor your initial work.

Assembling a Team

Team Composition

There is no single ideal group of stakeholders whom you can work with to tackle job quality in your community. What’s important is the mix of organizations who represent your region and job quality area of focus as well as having a clear sense of team roles and responsibilities. The Job Quality Academy included the mix of organizations listed below as an Initial starting point for advancing job quality conversations.

Note: Different teams or collections of stakeholders may be needed to address different aspects of job quality. Job quality can be applied in a myriad of ways and isn’t a static issue. The initial team or coalition is just a starting point.

Organizational Types

<p>Workforce Development</p> <p>Workforce Board, American Job Center, youth providers, community college.</p>	<p>Worker Voice Representation</p> <p>Local union chapter, worker center, worker board, business resource groups (BRGs), worker-owned co-op or employee stock ownership plans (ESOPs).</p>
<p>Industry</p> <p>Employer, industry association.</p>	<p>Government</p> <p>Tribal entities, mayor, county commissioners or governor’s office, local or state agency.</p>
<p>Community-Based Organization</p> <p>Community development corporation, faith-based organization, neighborhood association, neighborhood health centers, etc.</p>	

Organizational Personas

We’ve identified several organizational personas that can add value to your team, regardless of organizational type. You don’t necessarily need every persona on your team, but it’s important to have a balance. For example, if you have all advocates and powerbrokers, but no conveners, your

team will struggle to meet and stick to deadlines. If you have all conveners and connectors but no powerbrokers, your priorities may be stymied or overlooked by regional or state decisionmakers. We have included a template below.

<p>The Powerbroker</p> <p>This organization has access to your region's permission structures and can give cover to new ideas.</p>	<p>The Advocate</p> <p>This person or organization knows how to bring important issues to the forefront. They can help with incorporating worker voice as well as dissemination of the final action plan.</p>
<p>The Connector</p> <p>This person or organization knows everyone and everything that's going on in the region. Rely on them to bring in important stakeholders for feedback and alignment</p>	<p>The Convener</p> <p>This organization is best situated for bringing team members together. This could also be called the team lead. They may already be leading similar cross-sector partnerships and have the infrastructure and the model to host.</p>



Key Considerations

Mistakes made when forming a team can hamper your ability to make meaningful progress further down the line. Here are some common derailers and tips on how to combat them:

- **Team members who aren't at the right level of decision-making.** Not all team members need to be at the most senior level of an organization, but they do need to either have a direct line to a key decision-maker or the ability to give confidence to the team that their organization is able to deliver on its promises.
- **Team transitions.** Sometimes a team member will leave their position, potentially taking with them valuable institutional knowledge. This is most acute when a convener organization pulls out of a partnership, as there may be confusion as to who should set the agenda in their absence, leading to slowed momentum. To manage this risk, in your team contract or agreement, make sure that all roles have a clear backup in case of a temporary or permanent absence.
- **Budget.** Budget cuts and shifting funder priorities can result in work being held up. This isn't just about dollars to deploy but will also impact whether a team member can spend time on things. At best it slows things down, at worst it brings things to a halt. Having a plan for how things will be funded and where additional funds can be found is an important part of getting to lift off.

Building Shared Commitment

How will your team work together to achieve your goals even before you know what your goals might be? It's important to set up some basic infrastructure of accountability to keep the team on track. During the Job Quality Academy, in-person summits and coaching provided those check-in points and deadlines. Absent those mechanisms, how will your team work together?

Use the team Project Charter Template in [Additional Resources](#) to make sure your team members align on how to operate together effectively and revisit it periodically as your work evolves.

Finding Your Focus

Key Levers for Change

Now that you've assembled your core team, it's important to think about how your organizations typically exert influence and drive change in your region or state. This will ultimately help guide your action plans. Results For America has identified five levers for change in [their Job Quality Playbook](#) that we've adopted here. You likely use all these levers in some capacity but think about which ones best represent your team's key strengths, competencies, and sphere of control. These levers are practical methods to make your job quality dreams into a reality.

Procurement

You might use purchasing power to incentivize change. This includes the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and other workforce service contracting and purchasing of services and products you need to manage your organization's day-to-day operations. Find [examples of how you can apply the procurement lever](#). Check out another [case study on using government buying power](#).

Empowerment

You might embrace, model, or encourage inclusive participation in decision-making by collaborating meaningfully with people, customers, and community or employer partners at different levels to achieve shared goals. See [examples of how you can apply the empowerment lever](#). Check out a case study on practices and policies centered on worker's experiences [and priorities](#).

Policy

You might adopt (or adapt) policies inside your organization and within partnership networks to boost equity and improve job quality. You might also advance public policy—through legislative or regulatory means, for example—that advances job quality. See [examples of how you can apply the policy lever](#). Check out a [case study on advancing job quality through administrative and legislative actions](#).

Human Resource Practices

You might embrace standard-setting practices internally that ensure diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging, emphasize development and advancement, and establish transparent ways to measure progress—through employee surveys or other feedback loops—and support these practices through partnerships or procurement. See examples of how you can apply the HR practices [lever](#). Check out case studies on [public sector job design and becoming an employer of choice](#).

Education and Enforcement

You might ensure that workers and employers understand their rights, protections, and responsibilities under the law through education and linkages to enforcement agencies. See examples for how you can apply the [education and enforcement lever](#). Check out a [case study on protecting workers and supporting businesses](#).

Developing Your Job Quality Action Plan

What Success Might Look Like

The following tools are meant to help you achieve **three primary outcomes**:

1. **An engaged, empowered team.** An aligned team can advance job quality throughout their region. We hope that, following the completion of these activities, they come away thinking of themselves as leaders in their own job quality contexts.
2. **A shared set of goals, strategies, and preliminary approach to job quality.**
3. **A compelling pitch** or set of talking points for the teams to use to support community and stakeholder engagement, advance policy, fundraise, or whatever actions are needed based on team goals.

Each tool below has an explanation of its purpose and a set of guiding questions or considerations to orient the team.

Team Value Proposition Exercise

A value proposition is a statement defining the customers that you plan to serve and how you plan on serving them. It's the first step in creating what will become a more detailed action plan or set of strategies. This statement will help your team align on a common understanding of your shared goals and strengths.

“Our Job Quality work aims to help _____
(Who → target customers)
 to _____ and _____
(What → reduce painpoints) (What → achieve aspirations)
 by _____ . The primary lever/s we
(How → key strategies/offerings)
 will use to accomplish this is/are _____
(Procurement, Empowerment, Policy, HR Practice, Education and Enforcement)
 .”

Source

Here’s an example of a completed value proposition:

“Our Job Quality work aims to help **essential health care workers** to **reduce attrition** and **build a more supportive work environment** by encouraging a **health care environment with patient care as a focus**. The primary lever/s we will use to accomplish this is/are **empowerment and HR practices**.”

Guiding Questions

- What aspects of job quality are you seeking to improve?
- Who will be impacted by your work? Which job seekers or workers? Which sectors, employers, or communities? Customers may change over time and often include multiple groups. Be as specific as you can about your plans and commitments. These will drive your work on metrics, measurement, and assessing change over the course of the project or initiative.
- What specifically will you do to help these stakeholders accomplish their aims? Be sure to include both what will reduce pain points and achieve aspirations.
- How will you achieve your goals? What strategies will you use? What levers for change? See here for a facilitation guide for identifying key levers.
- What will be different if you succeed? What kinds of metrics or indicators would you look to for evidence of change?

Job Quality Canvas

Now that you have an initial value proposition, your core team can start working on your Job Quality Action Canvas, adapted from Strategyzer. The canvas is a visual tool for tracking, goal setting, and reflecting as you move from ideation to implementation. Each square of the canvas will help you clarify and connect the different elements of what will eventually be your action plan. The canvas will be your guide and reference document for core team efforts going forward, mapping directly to a pitch that you will eventually present to community stakeholders. You don't need to fill out each square or have all the answers at the beginning. You should revisit this canvas every so often to update and test your assumptions. However, you should try to follow the order below when filling out the different sections.



JOB QUALITY TEAM CANVAS

Team Name/Homebase: _____

MISSION: Boost Job Quality by [insert value proposition]

Key Partners 	Key Strategies 	Extended/Expanded Value Propositions 	Buy-in & Support 	Beneficiaries 
	Key Assets/Resources 		Implementation/Launch 	
Budget/Cost Considerations 		Impact Measures/KPIs/Milestones 		

Inspired by Strategyzer's Mission Canvas/strategyzer.com

[Source](#)

To start, take your value proposition and map it to the canvas. For example, map your customers from the value proposition to the “Beneficiaries” square and your strategies to the “Key Strategies” square. This is a first draft. You will continue to build out and iterate this canvas as you advance your work.

Using the Canvas

- **Mission:** “Our Job Quality works aims to... [Value proposition from above].”
- **Key Partners:** What organization or stakeholders can contribute to your strategies and supplement or fill gaps in your assets and resources? This could include an employer or group of employers. Be as specific as you can around industry sector.
- **Key Strategies:** Start by adopting from both the “primary levers” and “key strategies/offerings” components of the value proposition exercise.
- **Key Assets/Resources:** What makes your partnership or team unique? What can you bring to the table that others can't? What are your core skills and competencies as organizations that can be used to advance job quality?
- **Budget/Cost Considerations:** Is this a funding-heavy set of approaches, or something more lightweight? Which strategies will require up front capital investment versus ongoing support? Can this be covered by existing organizational budgets?
- **Extended/Expanded Value Proposition:** Refer to your value proposition worksheet. Is there anything you would add?
- **Buy-in and Support:** How can your partners provide value? What can they bring to the table that will advance your collective goals? In what ways can your partners work together? This could be funding, influence and reach, programmatic support, etc.
- **Implementation Launch:** What actions do you want to tackle first? This could be something that's the most urgent, or it could be a quick win.
- **Impact Measures/Key Milestones:** How will you know if you are succeeding? What data can you collect that relates to your strategies?
- **Beneficiaries:** Start by expanding from the “target customers” component of the value proposition exercise. This could include jobseekers, current employees, or employers, among others. Be sure to include what industry sectors or specific demographics beneficiaries represent.

Pitch to Stakeholders

If you've gone through the previous exercises with your core team, you likely have alignment and a strong foundation for your action plan. Now it's time to get some community feedback by pitching your initial thoughts (captured in the canvas) in an "elevator" pitch. This is your second opportunity to diverge (as referenced in the Double Diamond Model) by bringing in new data. Not only will this exercise help you test your assumptions, but it will also help you practice making your case and achieving buy-in and support. You should pitch it to the organizations and individuals you identified in your "Key Partners" and "Beneficiaries" canvas sections if you have the opportunity.

Here's a short guide to crafting a short, five-to-ten-minute pitch deck. You don't need more than that at this stage. Remember, this is a prototype, so you should keep these early-stage products concise. The depth of the conversation and feedback is the most important part!

Guiding Questions

- **Audience:** Who are you pitching and why? How does their buy-in impact your strategy?
- **Clarity:** Was the concept pitch clear and easy to understand? How might it be improved?
- **Value Proposition:** Did the concept pitch effectively communicate intended value or benefits?
- **Innovation/Creativity:** How does this connect to other policies or leadership priorities? Did the concept include new or innovative ideas?
- **Feasibility:** Is the concept achievable? Could it be improved to boost the chances of success?
- **Intended Impact:** Is the concept likely to succeed? To promote learning?
- **Blind Spot:** What questions do we need help answering?

This is a great opportunity to bring a broad group of stakeholders together around job quality. One of the Job Quality Academy teams, led by the Kentucky Workforce Development Board, held a half-day retreat after working through their value proposition and job quality canvas called the "Job Quality Champions Meeting." See the full case study and draft agenda for a local or regional job quality gathering in [Case Examples](#).

Once you've concluded your pitch, or pitches if you've shown your concept to multiple groups of stakeholders, be sure you incorporate their feedback back into your Job Quality Canvas.

Measuring Success

Measuring success is one of the biggest challenges in job quality, both because we may not initially know what we want to measure and because collecting data may be difficult. This exercise helps you to determine key performance indicators that will help your team to understand the impact that something is having or whether we are achieving the intended goal without unintended consequences.

Data provides a great opportunity to understand all aspects of a program or project but getting there may require a shift in your thinking. You can use your job quality work as an opportunity to transform your data collection perspectives and create a more future-oriented approach to data and measurement. Check out some key mindset shifts below:

Opportunity-Oriented Data Thinking

From...	To...
Tracking performance data	Analyzing impact and return on investment (ROI) <i>e.g. benefits cliffs, reduction in subsidy, savings</i>
Focus on agency-level data	Using admin, statistical and/or commercial data to contextualize and connect
Quantitative analysis	Inclusion of worker voice <i>e.g. survey responses, net promoter scores</i>
Aggregated views	Disaggregation and intersectionality
Data silos	Data sharing <i>e.g. agreements, data lakes, APIs</i>
In-house analysis	Public/private partnerships <i>e.g. Jedx, Coleridge Initiative, RIPL, ATLAS</i>
Point in time	Longitudinal analysis

As you begin to complete the worksheets below, keep these shifts in mind. Use them as a method to validate whether you have considered all the options. For example, ask yourself/your team the following:

- Are there ways that we can think about success that go beyond what is required in existing performance metrics?
- Are there other agencies or stakeholders that should be at the table given the data they manage or collect?
- Are there state or federal sources of information that we should explore as we identify where we are and where we want to go?
- Have we included qualitative data in our understanding of success? If not, what types of qualitative data might we have or need?
- As we think about both the current and future state, are we considering potential disparate impacts? Does our data allow us to look at information by gender, race, or other demographics?
- Where can we work together to better understand our current state? How can we put our data together to understand our impact?
- As we consider the impact we want to have, the data needed, and the indicators available, do we have the capacity within this organization/team? Where might we need to look outside for support?
- As we consider the impact we want to have, what data will we need to consider changes over time? How long might it take to see the results of some of our efforts and how might this influence the indicators we choose?

Now that you are ready to think big about data, use the Collecting Data worksheet below to capture the details. Begin with where you are now and the change you hope to achieve, consider how you will know if you are successful.

In this first worksheet, focus on identifying the types or categories of data (e.g., enrollment data broken down by demographics, marketing data by channel) that you will need to understand your current state, where the data sits, and whether it exists. Then begin to outline a high-level picture of what types of information you would need to understand if you achieved your desired result.

- **Baseline data** might include elements such as average wages in your region, living wage or self-sufficiency wage, participation rates in a program or training, survey results, employer productivity or occupational segregation. Some of the baseline data will be information you already collect; some will be information you can easily access from other sources (e.g.,

state LMI data). When possible, note where the data sits (e.g., case management system, HR database, state LMI database) as this indicates which stakeholders will need to be involved to access or use it.

- You may also notice that some of what you would like to know about where you are today is not readily available. That's OK. Capture the desired information in the list and indicate that the data doesn't exist. These gaps represent information that your agency, or one of your partners, may be able to collect in the future. Keep these gaps in mind as you prioritize your work. Collecting data to fill the gaps may become part of your project.
- **Data that describes the desired change** may include information such as shifts in participation, awareness, or completion of a training program. It may also include disaggregated results that shed light on the differences that populations or subpopulations are experiencing from your work. Understanding whether a change was achieved often requires using data in new ways (e.g., new calculations, comparisons), connecting data (e.g., linking participant information, comparing different data sets, using qualitative data for context), or expanding the timeframe (e.g., tracking information year over year). It may also require collecting new information through changes to your existing systems or implementing new collection mechanisms such as qualitative surveys, interviews, or focus groups.

Collecting Data to Track Success

Keeping in mind the differences you will see if you are successful, what data will you need to tell your story? What would you need to understand about:

- Your starting point or baseline
- The people who are involved
- The changes that will occur through your work, and
- The long-term effects of the changes?

Instructions: In the tables on the next page, list the types of data your agency has or needs to accomplish this work. Then, dialogue with other organizations in your group to understand what they have or need. Use the conversation to create an integrated list of data and its sources (or potential sources).

Collecting Data to Track Success

Data needed to understand our starting point/baseline		Data needed to understand the change	
Type of data	Have it already (HI) Someone else has it (Org name) Doesn't exist (DE)	Type of data	Have it already (HI) Someone else has it (Org name) Doesn't exist (DE)

Now that you have captured the types of information, in this second worksheet, you'll drill down into more specifics on how you expect to see that data change based on your activities.

For example, let's say you are attempting to increase the diversity of successful RFP respondents through a variety of shifts in your procurement process.

- What you know now is how many people respond and their organization type (starting point).
- What you need to understand is who receives information about the RFP to begin with, what support diverse organizations need, and what prevents organizations from submitting (understanding the change).
- Then a key difference or change might be the provision of targeted technical assistance pre-submission, targeted outreach to Black and Latine chambers and nonprofit associations to get the word out, or a willingness to compensate individuals for their time providing perspectives to inform the work.

In this example, you would know that you had successfully reached a more diverse set of potential respondents and increased their success rate if you see:

- **Change:** Percent increase of total award dollars directed to BIPOC organizations (tracked over time), number or percent increase of successful awards where BIPOC organizations were the lead versus a partner, improvements in BIPOC organizations' perceptions on the difficulty of participating in government funding opportunities, and improvements in "net promoter score" indicating the agency is a good partner.

And the changes to your process that you may have made to get there might include:

- Process:** Number or percent of diverse individuals included on selection panels, inclusion of reimbursement of “worker researchers” as an allowable expense on a given percentage of submissions, number and type/theme of technical assistance requests from BIPOC-focused organizations, number or percentage of advertising/presentations delivered to new organizations, and number of hours of training provided to potential respondents on managing government funding.

Measuring Success

Using the data as a reference, what specific indicators or metrics might you collectively use to track change?

- Process indicators (outputs): Counts or % by category or type, dollar amounts
- Change indicators (outcomes): Pre/post comparisons, % or count increase or decrease.

Instructions: For each of the key differences you identified, list possible indicators that could be tracked using the types of data you listed in the previous exercise.

How to Measure Success

We will know that X (expected change) occurred if we see Y (indicator)	
Key differences you expect to see	Indicators
1.	Process: Change:
2.	Process: Change:
3.	Process: Change:
4.	Process: Change:

Based on what you learned about the data available and the measures you intend to use, note the following:

- One type of data you can begin sharing
- One type of data you can begin collecting
- One indicator you can begin tracking

Key Considerations

Research takes thoughtfulness and significant resources to define a research question, develop a hypothesis, and prove or disprove that hypothesis. Here are some common derailers and methods for combatting them.

Fail to designate a clear purpose for data collection: It's vital to clearly define your research question and continuously adapt to the community's needs. You must articulate the value of your research to diverse stakeholders, ensuring that the research is constructive and not merely extractive as well as keep a focus on actionable outcomes.

Set an unrealistic timeline for data collection and analysis: Data collection, whether through surveys, interviews, focus groups, or a mix of research methods involving both qualitative and quantitative data, is an extensive process. Set a reasonable timeline to manage this effectively.

Draw premature conclusions from incomplete data sets: Ensure a balanced approach to data collection, combining systemic and comprehensive methods with random population-based techniques. Utilize the existing data within your region to enrich your research. Then allow initial findings to inform further investigation but be cautious of jumping to causal conclusions without sufficient evidence.

Identifying Your Strategies

You've made a lot of progress! At this point you should have alignment amongst your team on the customers you're trying to serve and the partners you need to bring along; have brainstormed strategies you can take as a coalition to advance job quality; and have determined how you can measure success along the way. As we stated at the beginning of the starter guide, this is not a linear process—you're encouraged to revisit your work to refine and iterate as many times as you need. This next step and tool, Ad-Lib #2, will help you begin to prioritize your strategies.

Looking at your "Key Strategies" square in the Job Quality Canvas, what are some quick wins or foundational actions you can take? Supplement your thinking with your "Budget Considerations" square or other squares on the canvas that identify constraints or opportunities. Now, put those quick wins into "Our first steps are..." rectangle in the Ad-Lib #2 tool below.

For the "We are most excited about..." section, think about longer-term goals. What do you hope to accomplish? Be specific. Why are these goals important?

Finally, take the outputs of your second measurement worksheet and begin to place your measures into the "What will be different if we succeed" rectangle. This describes in more qualitative detail what achieving your goals will look like.

Feel free to show this worksheet to additional stakeholders as well. During the Job Quality Academy, teams turned these tools into posters and hung them on the wall so their peers could review and ask questions about their approach.



**JOB QUALITY
ACADEMY**

Ad-Lib #2: Our JQA Charge

Team _____

“Our Job Quality work aims to help _____
(Who → target customers)
 to _____ and _____ by _____ .
(What → reduce painpoints) (What → achieve aspirations) (How → key strategies/offerings)
 The lever/s we will use to accomplish this is _____ .”
(Procurement, Empowerment, Policy, HR Practice, Education and Enforcement)

Our first steps are . . .

We are most
excited about . . .

What will be different
if we succeed?

Source

Guiding Questions

- Which elements of your strategy are most important or impactful? Which are most urgent?
- Are there any quick wins you can achieve to build momentum early on? Think about how you can prioritize your action steps.
- Do any of your strategies advance existing leadership priorities or other ongoing efforts?

Job Quality Action Plan

If you've completed the previous tools and worksheets, you now have a set of priorities, both short-term and long-term that you and your stakeholders have determined are the most urgent and important to pursue. You can use the Job Quality Action Plan below, a tool that might look familiar, to begin to put these strategies into action.

To use the Job Quality Action Plan, take what you filled out in the "Our first steps are..." rectangle from the Ad-Lib #2 tool and place them in the "Action Steps" column of the action plan below. You might need to break up some of your quick win strategies into separate steps or milestones. You may also want to order these action steps chronologically, using the "Target Completion Date" column.

You'll also want to think about who is responsible for each action step. This could be an organization best positioned to carry out this work or an individual. If you want to add even more detail, you can use a framework like RACI, below, to determine who is responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed.



RACI Framework

RACI Framework	
<p>R (Responsible)—Project Owner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the day-to-day work, partnerships, and the scope of the project, or a core component of a project • Organize and support the project team • Research options, assess risks, make recommendations, and take action • Usually one person per project, but large projects, may assign multiple project owners as workstreams lead 	<p>A (Accountable)—Project Sponsor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage staffing, resources, and budget • Must be kept up to date on major milestones and progress • Review final deliverables • Responsible for managing success against scope and budget
<p>C (Consulted)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder with opinions • Project team members • Designated workstream leads or other special roles as appropriate. 	<p>I (Informed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive • Department lead • Funder • Others who need to stay informed throughout the project.

Consult your Job Quality Canvas again, considering budget and cost, buy-in, and partners. What resources do you need to carry out that action step? Maybe it's just existing organization or agency staff, or maybe it requires additional funding.

Finally, begin to fill out the "Progress Indicators/Milestones" column. This could be overall measures of success taken from your measurement worksheets, or you could break it up into smaller, project-related pieces such as "Submitting a Grant Proposal" or "Signing a memorandum of understanding(MOU)." Think about what you'll need to accomplish before you are able to move on to the next action step. What is a must-do for that action step?

Job Quality Action Plan

Strategy: (identified goal you are addressing with this strategy)					
Action steps	Person(s)/ partners responsible	Resources needed internal/ external	Progress indicators/ milestones	Target completion date	Other
<i>What you'll need to do to implement the strategy.</i>	<i>Who is responsible for carrying out each action step.</i>	<i>What resources you'll need to complete each action step.</i>	<i>How you know that you have made progress on each action step.</i>	<i>When you expect to complete each action step.</i>	<i>Additional needs, resources or information</i>

Guiding Questions

- Think back to your core team and your organizational personas. Now that you are moving from planning to action, how can the organizations that make up your coalition adjust their roles? Which actions are best suited for different personas or team members?
- Which action steps or milestones are contingent on the success or completion of others? Is it important that they are dependent, or can you separate them? Overly dependent action steps may introduce chokepoints that slow down your progress.

What's Next?

This starter guide can help your team of core partners articulate an initial set of strategies. But that's just the first step in your job quality journey. Depending on your action plan, you'll want to start communicating with your wider region what your vision is through meetings, presentations and factsheets, piloting programs and initiatives, and yes, raising funds to support your work.

Additional Resources

As so many organizations are in this initial visioning and planning phase, us included, we can't yet offer a roadmap for the next stage in your journey. There are a variety of resources though that can help with next steps from the [Good Jobs Institute's resources](#) to [Results For America's playbook](#) to [Pacific Community Ventures' playbook for businesses](#)—all of which get into different aspects of implementation.

We hope that as you make exciting progress and break new ground, you share your discoveries with us and others so we can, together as a field, continue to build and support workers, employers, and communities.

For questions about the Job Quality Starter Guide, contact Ben Sommer, Director at Jobs for the Future at bsommer@jff.org. Please [share your input on the Job Quality Starter Guide](#).

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- Northern Indiana Workforce Board, Inc.
- Pennsylvania WDB
- Pittsburgh Partner4Work
- Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission
- Technical College System of Georgia
- Wisconsin Department of WDB
- Workforce Snohomish

About Jobs for the Future

Jobs for the Future (JFF) drives transformation of the U.S. education and workforce systems to achieve equitable economic advancement for all. Visit us at www.jff.org.

JFF is a national leader in driving advancement in job quality in communities across the country. [See JFF's Quality Jobs Framework here.](#)

About JFF's Language Choices

JFF is committed to using language that promotes equity and human dignity, rooted in the strengths of the people and communities we serve. We develop our content with the awareness that language can perpetuate privilege but also can educate, empower, and drive positive change to create a more equitable society. We routinely reevaluate our efforts as usage evolves. Visit info.jff.org/language-matters for more information.

Additional Resources

Job Quality Academy Foundational Reading List

JFF has assembled this foundational reading list to help “set the table” for your team. We recognize that different team members, partners, and other stakeholders have different understandings and perspectives when it comes to defining and practicing job quality. These readings will help you and your partners work toward a level of shared understanding so you can jump into the work with the background, frameworks, and theories already covered.

- [*Job Quality Toolkit*](#), U.S. Department of Commerce and U.S. Department of Labor
- [*Together We Can Help Employers Create Quality Jobs*](#), Jobs For the Future (JFF)
- [*Understanding Good Jobs: A Review of Definition and Evidence*](#), Urban Institute
- [*Reimagining Job Quality Measurement*](#), The Families and Workers Fund
- [*Building Back Better: A National Jobs Strategy*](#), New America
- [*Worker Voices: Shifting Perspectives and Expectations on Employment*](#), Federal Reserve (Atlanta, Philadelphia, Cleveland, and Chicago)
- [*Racial Equity Readiness Assessment for Workforce Development*](#), Race Forward
- [*Engaging Your Equity Workgroup*](#), National Fund for Workforce Solutions
- [*A Design for Workforce Equity, Fact Sheet*](#), Center for American Progress
- [*Building a More Inclusive Talent Marketplace: Increasing Opportunity Through Community and Business-Led Initiatives*](#), U.S. Chamber Foundation
- [*#FundWorkforceEquity: Advancing Equity in the Workforce Development Ecosystem*](#), Forbes

Project Charter Template

Project Charter for [Team Name / Project Name]	
Date:	Purpose: This document serves to establish a shared understanding and commitment among the team members of [Team Name / Project Name] in order to effectively work together towards our common goals.
Part 1: Team Identity and Values	
Team Values:	List core values that define our team culture and work ethic (e.g., respect, inclusivity, innovation).
Team Vision Statement:	A brief statement describing what we aim to achieve as a team.
Part 2: Roles and Responsibilities	
Team Member Details:	List of all team members, including their roles and primary responsibilities.
Stakeholder Engagement:	Outline the role of each stakeholder in the team.
Diversity and Inclusion Statement:	A commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive team environment.
Part 3: Communication Protocol	
Preferred Communication Channels:	(e.g., email, Slack, meetings)

Project Charter for [Team Name / Project Name]	
Meeting Schedule:	Frequency and timing of regular team meetings.
Decision-Making Process:	Describe how decisions will be made (consensus, majority vote, etc.).
Part 4: Goal Setting and Accountability	
Initial Goals:	Outline initial team goals, understanding that these may evolve.
Performance Metrics:	Define how team performance and progress will be measured.
Accountability Mechanisms:	Describe the processes for ensuring individual and team accountability (e.g., regular check-ins, progress reports).
Part 5: Conflict Resolution	
Conflict Resolution Process:	Steps to be taken when a conflict arises among team members.
Feedback Mechanism:	How team members can provide and receive constructive feedback.
Part 6: Adaptation and Flexibility	
Review and Adaptation Process:	How and when the team will review and potentially revise this MOU.
Flexibility Statement:	Acknowledgment of the need for flexibility and adaptability in response to changing circumstances.

Case Examples

EmployIndy

EmployIndy's initial efforts entering the Job Quality Academy focused on the expansion of construction industry career pathways in Marion County, prioritizing the 18- to 30-year-olds who have been historically underrepresented in this sector, which represent both job quality principles of DEIA and skills and career advancement. Through collaboration with team members and partners, it emerged that four critical sub-sectors—HVAC, carpentry, plumbing, and electrical—presented their own unique challenges and approaches. Their consensus was that they needed regional alignment to effectively address these sector-specific disparities. For their next steps, the EmployIndy team will undertake a thorough review of existing adult education models to assess the necessity for local enhancements, the potential requirement for additional resources to expand programs, and to identify which new partners should be involved to advance these objectives. This ongoing evaluation and iterative alignment is crucial for addressing future educational demand and for catalyzing the regional development of quality jobs.

Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board

The Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board invested in actively engaging stakeholders through participatory research efforts. They orchestrated a statewide listening tour, gathering insights from a wide range of partners including employers, public officials, and employees. This collaborative approach helped to distill essential themes for strategic state planning. Additionally, they've effectively incorporated a variety of perspectives into their teaming model. Their signature "Job Quality Champions" meetings, designed to broaden community engagement beyond their core team, included vibrant dialogues on the recognition of employer credentials. By thoroughly preparing and welcoming a breadth of contributions, they've made significant strides in job quality efforts and fostered a collective sense of ownership over job quality principles. Ultimately, the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board identified small and medium manufacturers as their primary market to focus on and will be exploring developing tools to help educate employers around job quality.

Here's a draft agenda for a local or regional job quality gathering:

1. *Why are we here?*
2. *Establishing a Shared Vision:*
 - a. *Sharing our Job Quality Pitch*
 - b. *Feedback session: What did we get right? What did we get wrong? What did we miss?*
3. *Visioning Sessions:*
 - a. *What does success look like? To workers, to employers, to government, to the community?*
4. *Refining our mission statement*
5. *Next steps and action items*

Pennsylvania State Workforce Board

The Pennsylvania State Workforce Board integrated principles from the JFF Quality Jobs Framework into its state-level request for proposals (RFP) for industry partnership grants. Many team members from the Job Quality Academy, who also influence state policy, contributed to incorporating the framework's four core tenets:

- **Compensation:** All forms of pay, benefits, and leave that enable all workers to support themselves and their dependents at the local cost of living.
- **Advancement:** The policies and practices that provide all workers with equitable opportunities to grow their skills, knowledge, and careers within their organization or industry.
- **Agency & Culture:** The extent to which all workers are encouraged and supported to use their expertise to drive change within their organization and have a sense of belonging and value in the workplace.
- **Structure:** The foundational elements that support a safe, healthy, and stable environment for all workers.

Proposals that incorporated these elements received additional points, reinforcing the state's commitment to embedding the tenets of quality jobs within their procurement process.

Workforce Snohomish and the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission

Workforce Snohomish and the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission, representing separate Washington and Oregon teams, had identified many of the same industries to focus their job quality work on construction, manufacturing, information technology, and health care. Seeing that Workforce Snohomish and the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission shared not only industries, but also many of the same stakeholders given their geographic proximity, they joined forces mid-academy. A pivotal leader in Workforce Southwest Washington, located on the state border and serving stakeholders in both states, emerged as a crucial connector between the two states, effectively uniting organizations from across the state line with similar goals and ecosystems. This key organization's central role and its broad network of cross-state partners helped to foster a more collaborative and impactful coalition of organizations and agencies. What's more, this cross-state workforce system alignment is now a key focus of their job quality work, which aims to use the levers of policy and empowerment to achieve their aims.