

JOB QUALITY COMPETENCIES: GUIDE FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS

The National Fund for Workforce Solutions believes that good jobs are essential for workers, employers, and their communities.

- For **workers**, good jobs provide a safe respectful workplace, a livable wage and benefits, support to do their best work, and the opportunity to advance and develop their skills.
- For **employers**, good jobs are a competitive advantage—both to attract and retain the best workers, and to offer the highest-quality customer service and product.
- For **communities**, good jobs are the foundation of a strong, equitable economy.

The National Fund has invested in more than one-third of its 30+ regional workforce funder collaboratives to advance job quality. Our collaboratives have learned that a unique set of competencies are needed to work with employers to revise their internal business practices to design better jobs. Collaboratives must have the ability to build a different, closer, and more trusting relationship with employers to support them on a job quality journey.

Recognizing that there is a range of capacity across its network of collaboratives, the National Fund created this guide to help current and future collaboratives understand what knowledge, skills, and abilities are needed to do the work, wherever they may be—or aspire to be.

How to Use this Guide

The purpose of this guide is to highlight the competencies that National Fund collaboratives need in order to embark on job quality work with employers. The key word here is collaboratives, not specifically “collaborative directors.” Ensuring that someone has (or is developing) the requisite skills and deploys those skills at the right time is key to developing high performing collaboratives.

Categories of Competencies

Executive Influence Skills
 Business Skills
 Industry Operations Knowledge
 Organizational Design and Development
 Talent Acquisition and Management, HR Policies and Practices
 Equity Mindset
 Systems Change Design Skills
 Systems Change Implementation Skills

Collaboratives can use this document in the following ways:

- To assess these competencies against existing collaborative structure and/or membership to identify gaps, measure “bench strength” (i.e., number of people with similar skills who can backfill for each other), and facilitate succession planning for key leadership roles
- To inform the recruitment and hiring process (or professional development planning) for key positions, such as collaborative director, for new National Fund collaboratives or for existing ones that are undergoing a transition
- To drive partnership discussions with organizations not currently engaged in the work of your collaborative but are needed to produce outcomes
- To inform collaboratives seeking technical assistance from others in the National Fund network or the National Fund national office
- To communicate the value of collaboratives to employers and/or other stakeholders

Competencies in Detail

Below are descriptions of the core types of competencies. At the end of this document, there is information on where to find or develop these competencies.

Executive Influence Skills

- Understand employers' motivations and readiness for change – customer requirements, business results, community impact, peer influence, corporate and/or personal reputation, etc.
- Understand employers' current business plans/strategies and overall health – controlled or aggressive growth, on solid footing or in crisis, etc.
- Ability to tailor messages and identify influencer(s) accordingly (know who the key players are and have access to them) and ability to work with people in power
- Understand how CEO/C-suite direction translates throughout the organization and how that might impact adoption of job quality changes

Business Skills

- Ability to work at the speed of business and understand how and why that can vary
- Understand profit and loss and balance sheet dynamics and how to add value and/or create value proposition
- Competitive environment and industry trends
- Strategic thinking
- Branding and marketing

Industry Operations Knowledge

- Organizational infrastructure and workflows
- Basic business operations for targeted departments, in context of workforce needs/issues
- LEAN, Kaizen, and other operational designs and approaches
- Communication and translation skills – ability to credibly speak and write in their language and translate workforce jargon into business-relatable terms
- How operational changes are considered, designed, and implemented
- Where and how to find sector-specific expertise

Organizational Design and Development

- Ownership and management models, including employee ownership, gainsharing, open book management, team- or self-managed teams, etc.
- Career ladder options, inside and outside of specific industries

- Knowledge of organized labor, labor relationships, and labor/management committee experience (where applicable)
- Organizational culture and organizational design to foster frontline worker continuous learning, innovation, and problem-solving (i.e., "idea-driven organizations")

Talent Acquisition and Management, HR Policies and Practices

- Employee engagement strategies and assessments (formal and informal) and how to frame results with management
- Understand the National Fund's [Job Design Framework](#) and toolkits and how to use them to identify opportunities
- Compensation and benefits policies
- Culture change expertise

Equity Mindset and Actions

- Current and future workforce demographics, disaggregated by race, gender, occupation, wage rate, and reasons why current situation exists (legacy, systems, policies, social norms, etc.)
- Ability to conduct courageous conversations around opportunities to create a more diverse and equitable organization (message framing, cultural competence, business case, etc.)
- Business-aligned action planning to address the identified issues, specifically in recruiting, retention, advancement, and compensation

Systems Change Design Skills

- Seven design elements: define success, define targeted population, design for greatest likelihood of adoption (diffusability), specify incentives, incentivize outcomes not behavior, secure commitments upfront, listen to the system; then ability to adapt
- Ability to create a memorandum of understanding with substance, i.e., explicit responsibilities for all parties, especially employers, and access to data
- Sustainability planning

Systems Change Facilitation and Implementation Skills

- Ability to frame and communicate the role and value of the collaborative and the value they provide to the employer
- Employee engagement skills to facilitate their ongoing input, feedback, and co-design of interventions
- Project management skills, ability to provide technical assistance when and where needed
- Ability to track and report on results, implement continuous quality improvement

Competencies and Resources

	Executive Influence Skills	Business Skills	Industry Operations Knowledgs	Organizational Design and Development	Talent Acquisition and Management, HR Policies and Practices	Equity Mindset	Systems Change Design Skills	Systems Change Implementation Skills
Employers in Your Collaborative	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Chambers	✓	✓						
Economic Developers	✓	✓						
Retired CEOs/ SCORE	✓							
Vistage	✓							
Employer Associations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Business Leaders United (BLU)		✓						
SHRM		✓		✓	✓			
Organized Labor	✓	✓	✓			✓		
Social Enterprise Development Organizations	✓	✓				✓		
Business Consultants		✓	✓	✓	✓			
National Fund Regional Collaboratives		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Local Equity Efforts						✓		
National Equity Efforts						✓		
National Fund Staff and Consultants					✓		✓	✓
National Fund Publications							✓	✓
Pinkerton Papers by Steven Dawson							✓	



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About National Fund for Workforce Solutions

The National Fund for Workforce Solutions invests in a dynamic national network of 30+ communities taking a demand-driven, evidence-based approach to workforce development. At the local level, the National Fund's partner organizations contribute resources, test ideas, collect data, and improve public policies and business practices that help all workers succeed and employers have the talent they need to compete. Learn more at www.NationalFund.org.