



National Fund for Workforce Solutions

IMPACT REPORT 2022

MAKING THE SHIFT TOWARD A JUST AND EQUITABLE ECONOMY



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> Message from the President and CEO



Amanda Cage
President and CEO

The pandemic's seismic effects have put the spotlight on workers and the workplace. Rarely have we seen issues such as job quality, worker voice and power, racial equity, and workplace culture be such a large part of the national conversation. The National Fund for Workforce Solutions has advanced many of these topics over the past 15 years, and we believe it's important for these worthy conversations to continue.

This is the time to make the shift toward a more just and equitable economy. We need to reorient our priorities, our practices, and our mindsets to meet the moment. We cannot afford to let structural inequities persist and prevent families, businesses, and communities from prospering. We must focus explicitly on eliminating racial gaps in employment, income, and wealth.

The National Fund identifies advancing workforce equity as our chief priority. We move the needle on equity in partnership with our strong network of regional workforce collaboratives and employers, harnessing expertise and local leadership across 26 states and the District of Columbia. Together, we are action-oriented and learn by doing. We are committed to sharing our measurable contributions to achieving the vision of a just and equitable economy: when all jobs are good jobs, race does not dictate employment outcomes, and all workers have resources required to thrive.

➤ About the National Fund



> Nationally Powered, Locally Driven

The National Fund for Workforce Solutions collaborates with workers, employers, and communities to advance a skilled workforce, promote good jobs, and invest in equitable outcomes.

In partnership with business leaders, philanthropy, and visionaries in over 30 communities, we are transforming local and national conversations about workforce development.

Focused on lasting change. The National Fund believes that access to ideas, inspiration, and resources at a national level is key to advancing outcomes at a local level. We create positive impact across the country in the following ways:

- Share promising practices and illuminate workforce trends to inform action on the ground.
- Develop tools and frameworks to mobilize change locally.
- Make connections to peers across the country to create a system of support and source of inspiration.
- Provide funding and thought partnership for meaningful shifts in outcomes.
- Amplify the work happening at the local level to reach a wider audience.



Grounded and connected locally. Our network members are doing the hard work of coordinating a complex ecosystem of actors to drive change locally. Through regional workforce collaboratives, they coordinate local efforts around a shared vision to change systems, support and train workers, and improve job quality. In the past year, we added five new collaboratives to our network and anticipate continued growth.

Anchored in deep relationships with employers. Our collaboratives collectively oversee more than 70 industry partnerships in diverse industries, including construction, early childhood education, healthcare, hospitality, information technology (IT), manufacturing, personal finance, and retail. They convene over 1,300 small to midsize businesses to develop talent pipelines and improve job quality, retention, and advancement. We also lead CareerSTAT, a national partnership of healthcare employers and workforce leaders committed to investing in frontline workers.

> A Brief Snapshot of Our History

Making the Shift: National Fund for Workforce Solutions (2007-2022)

NATIONAL FUND ESTABLISHED

2007

The National Fund is established with founding collaboratives in Baltimore, Maryland; Boston, Massachusetts; Chicago, Illinois; New York, New York; San Francisco, California; and Washington, D.C.

EXPANDING OUR REACH

2008-2013

We expand to Atlanta, Georgia; Dallas, Texas; Danville, Virginia; Des Moines, Iowa; Hartford, Connecticut; Louisville, Kentucky; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Mississippi Delta Region; Mobile, Alabama; Newark, New Jersey; New Orleans, Louisiana; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Sarasota, Florida; Seattle, Washington; and Wichita, Kansas.

2010

We are selected as one of 11 inaugural [*Social Innovation Fund*](#) awardees.

2011

We create [*CareerSTAT*](#) to support healthcare employers that invest in frontline workers.

REFINING OUR FOCUS

2014-2019

We welcome the new communities of Birmingham, Alabama; Cleveland, Ohio; Greensboro, North Carolina; Montgomery, Alabama; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Portland, Oregon; Syracuse, New York; and Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

2016

National Fund becomes an [*independent organization*](#).

2017

We publish the first iteration of the *Job Design Framework*.

2019

We develop the [*Solutions Framework*](#) to describe how we operationalize our mission.

> A Brief Snapshot of Our History (continued)

Making the Shift: National Fund for Workforce Solutions (2007-2022)

CHANGING THE CONVERSATION

2020-2022

We welcome collaboratives in Cincinnati, Ohio; Hawaii; Indianapolis, Indiana; Springfield, Massachusetts; and Wilmington, Delaware.



2020

- > [Amanda Cage](#) joins as the new president and CEO of the National Fund.
- > We publish the [Advancing Workforce Equity](#) series of reports and tools.
- > We form the [Liberation Learning Community](#) to support network leadership in race equity.

2021

- > We release [A Trauma Informed Approach to Workforce](#) and [Toolbox for the Systems Change Mindset](#).
- > We release the updated [Job Design Framework](#) to explicitly name racial equity as the foundation and add a worker voice pillar.

2022

- > We publish [Designing a Human-Centered Workplace](#).
- > We create the [Job Quality Outcome Maps](#).
- > We provide disaggregated data to all network communities through the [Workforce Equity Dashboard](#).



> Methodology

No single report can adequately demonstrate the total impact of our network. Various stakeholders may experience benefits that go unreported, and our efforts to change systems are, by design, meant to improve outcomes at a scale that cannot easily be tracked. However, this report demonstrates the scope and reach of network activities including the number of positively affected employers, job seekers, and workers.



Network at a Glance



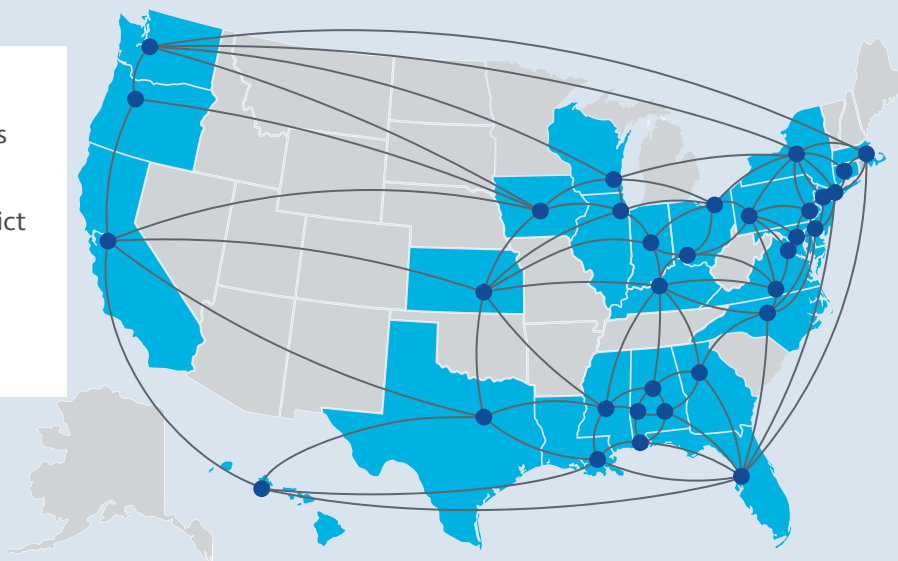
> Network at a Glance

Network at a Glance

34
collaboratives

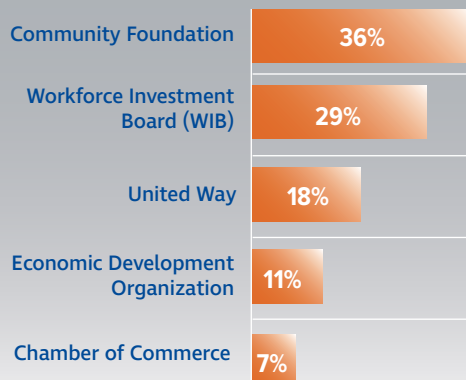
26
states + District
of Columbia

133
counties

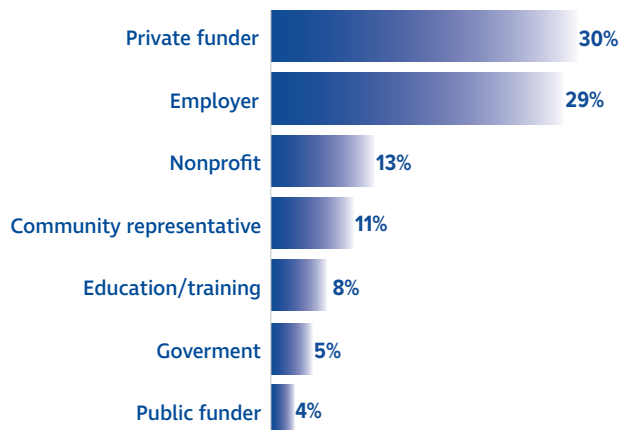


The diversity of our network is a strength. Roughly half of regional workforce collaboratives' board leadership and staff self-identify as people of color. Collaboratives are housed within a variety of organizations with considerable resources, serving urban and rural geographies. Our network orients around action and we recognize that change is best driven by local stakeholders rooted in the community taking coordinated action.

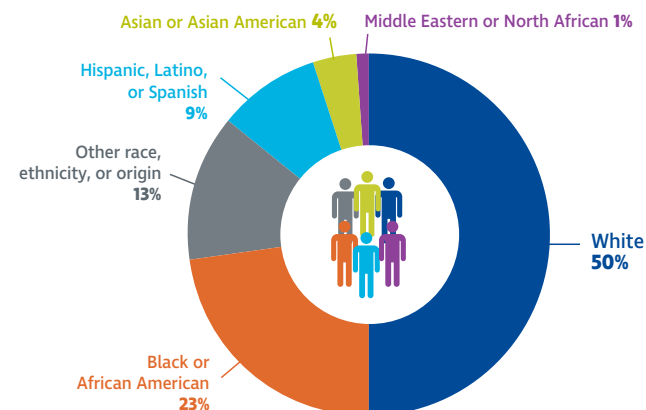
Collaborative Home by Type



Network Board/Advisory Leadership



Network Board/Advisory Leadership Identify as:



COLLABORATIVE SPOTLIGHT ReWork the Bay



ReWork the Bay envisions an equitable Bay Area where everyone has access to quality, empowered jobs that allow them to benefit from and shape the region's growing economy. They believe it should be possible for everyone to live full lives with security, dignity, and agency in our work, home, and communities.

A major systemic barrier to realizing this vision is the decades of income growth captured by people in the highest paid jobs. Earned income has declined by 9% for those in the lowest paid jobs. To build a more equitable regional economy, ReWork the Bay in 2018 organized and hosted a Racial Capitalism Funder Community of Practice. Two years later, the organization partnered with Funders for a Just Economy to expand this work nationally.

This effort involves communities exploring, identifying, and testing ways funders can continue to take significant steps toward anti-racism in their grantmaking strategies, processes, and community engagement to create a more just and inclusive economy.

"We learned within ReWork the Bay's racial capitalism cohort that, while racial capitalism offers important explanations for phenomena like the racial wealth gap, it is up to us to practice our way out of it. And practicing our way out of it means being open to multiple viewpoints that span reforming, divesting, and creating alternatives to systems of racial capitalism."

- Community of Practice participant



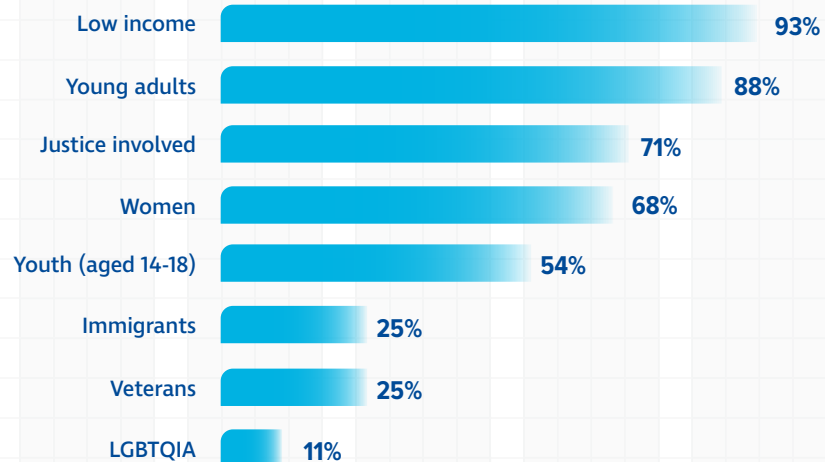
EQUITY | CO-INVEST | SYSTEMS CHANGE

> Who We Serve

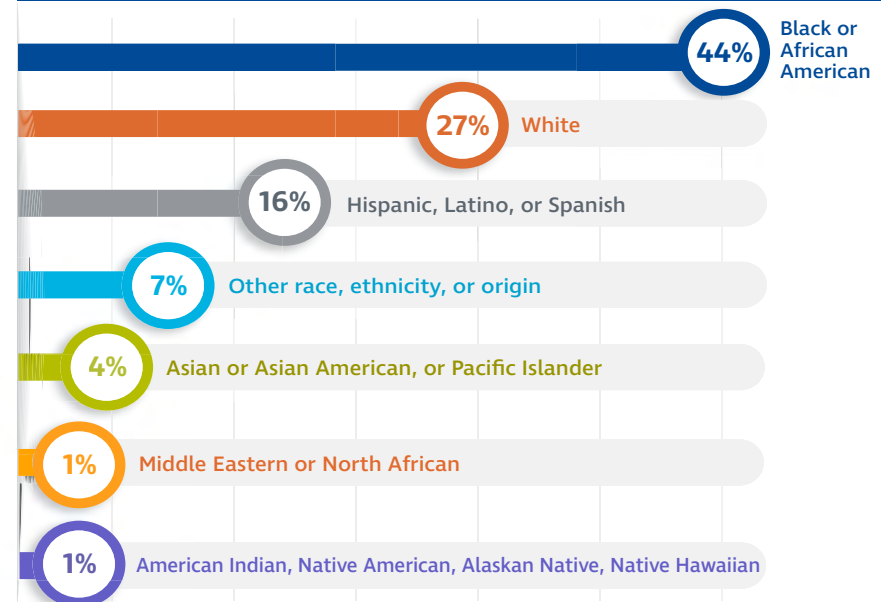
The National Fund is committed to the advancement of individuals and communities historically left behind in the labor market due to structural inequities in access to economic opportunities.

Our ability to advance workforce equity requires a deep understanding of needs on the ground. Our collaboratives use disaggregated labor market information to drive conversations with employers and partners about racial equity in the workforce.

Percentage of Collaboratives Prioritizing the Following Populations



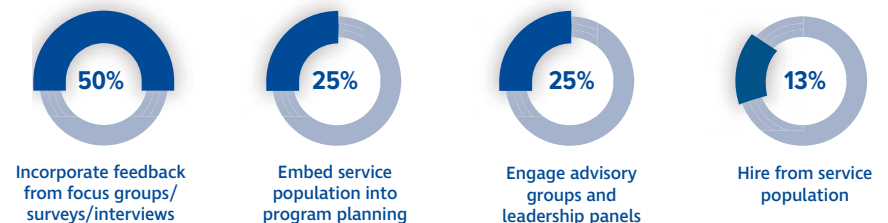
Racial & Ethnic Composition of Populations Served



"We believe that people with lived experience must be engaged as partners and co-creators of their workforce and training journey and ecosystem."

— Greater Newark Funders Collaborative

Incorporating Lived Experience Across the Network



COLLABORATIVE SPOTLIGHT New Orleans Works



New Orleans Works (NOW) is a public/private initiative led by foundations and regional public workforce systems to generate employer-focused workforce development solutions that offer low wage entry-level and incumbent workers the opportunity for career advancement and enable key industry sectors to fulfill their workforce needs.

New Orleans' unemployment rate is a modest 4.8%, but this official statistic does not accurately capture the many individuals older than age 16 — an estimated 40% of whom are Black men — who are not participating fully or at all in the labor market.

To address this gap, NOW funds programs that offer holistic training and credentialing. This approach includes teaching technical skills in high-demand health care jobs such as patient care technicians and certified nursing assistants, and training and credentialing opportunities in clean water and other green infrastructure jobs.

John, an artist, started green infrastructure training six months after release from prison, and he is now certified and employed at a landscaping firm. John is also taking computer-aided design (CAD) classes part time at Delgado, where he is on track to becoming a landscape architect.

"This training gave John a whole new direction, and he incorporated his gifts and passion into a career. He has a car, shows up every day for work, and he's on track. He never thought he would have a chance due to his incarceration."

- Executive Director



EQUIP WORKERS | JOB TRAINING

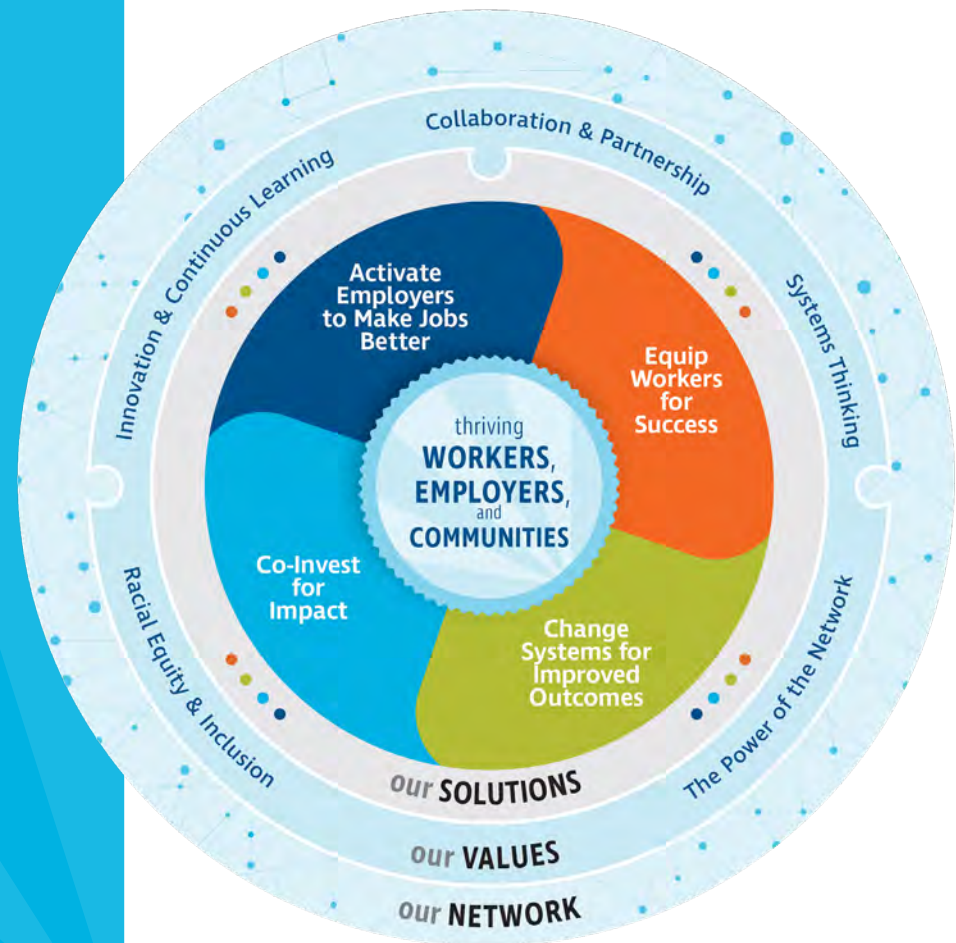


[➤ Our Solutions](#)

> Our Solutions Framework

Our solutions framework reflects lessons learned leading regional workforce interventions over the past 15 years. Demand-driven training alone cannot address the factors that perpetuate racial inequity in the labor market. We believe we must act in four areas:

- **Activate employers to make jobs better.** We help employers become more competitive by establishing new practices that promote the well-being, retention, and advancement of workers.
- **Equip workers for success.** We center workers and connect them with the upskilling, supports, and advocacy they need to thrive.
- **Change systems for improved outcomes.** We uncover root causes and tackle systemic barriers that perpetuate structural inequities.
- **Co-invest for impact.** We convene local leaders and pool or align public, private, and corporate resources to support a shared strategic vision for workforce development at the regional level.



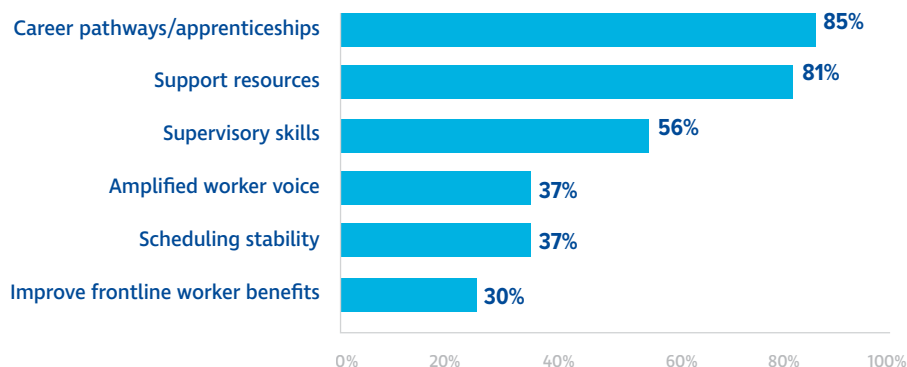


Activate Employers to Make Jobs Better



The National Fund is a leader in the field, testing job quality interventions with businesses and developing practical field-building tools grounded in both action and research. We expand the capacity of our collaboratives to activate employers through peer learning and one-on-one coaching. We offer businesses a guide on how to center worker voices to enhance the quality of frontline jobs and improve outcomes, and we provide them with empirical research that connects practices to business goals.

Industry Partnerships Implementing Business Practice Changes



Note: These initiatives cover a two-year period from 2020-2022

6,000



➤ workers employed by business adopting job quality practices with the National Fund

1,394



➤ employers engaged with National Fund collaboratives

76



➤ industry partnerships across the network

64



➤ certified minority-owned businesses in industry partnerships

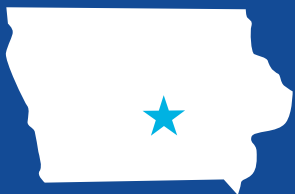
20



➤ collaboratives established formal job quality improvement initiatives with employers

COLLABORATIVE SPOTLIGHT Central Iowa Works

Des Moines



Central Iowa Works is a workforce intermediary that works with employers to recruit and retain workers by improving the quality of their jobs and works with people in their community that could fill these positions either with the right training or the right connections. They believe equity is the intentional inclusion of everyone in society, and it is achieved when systemic, institutional, and historical barriers that are based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and other identities are dismantled and no longer predict socioeconomic, education, and health outcomes.

The organization focuses on providing the training and support necessary to increase the workforce participation by changing the face of the workforce in Iowa. They are addressing systemic barriers that have greater impact on people of color. A key

example is the HealthWorks initiative, launched five years ago to diversify the nursing workforce and increase nurses' income. In Iowa, even before the start of COVID-19, 95.7% of registered nurses (RNs) were White, and more than 20% of nurses were eligible to retire. HealthWorks provides participants with financial assistance and, importantly, case management services. The case managers help participants when a barrier comes up in their studies or lives and moves them along the nursing career pathway. Five years later, more than two-thirds of HealthWorks participants are people of color. To date, more than 93 participants have become RNs, with an average wage jump of over \$10 per hour. More than 500 participants are still in the pipeline.

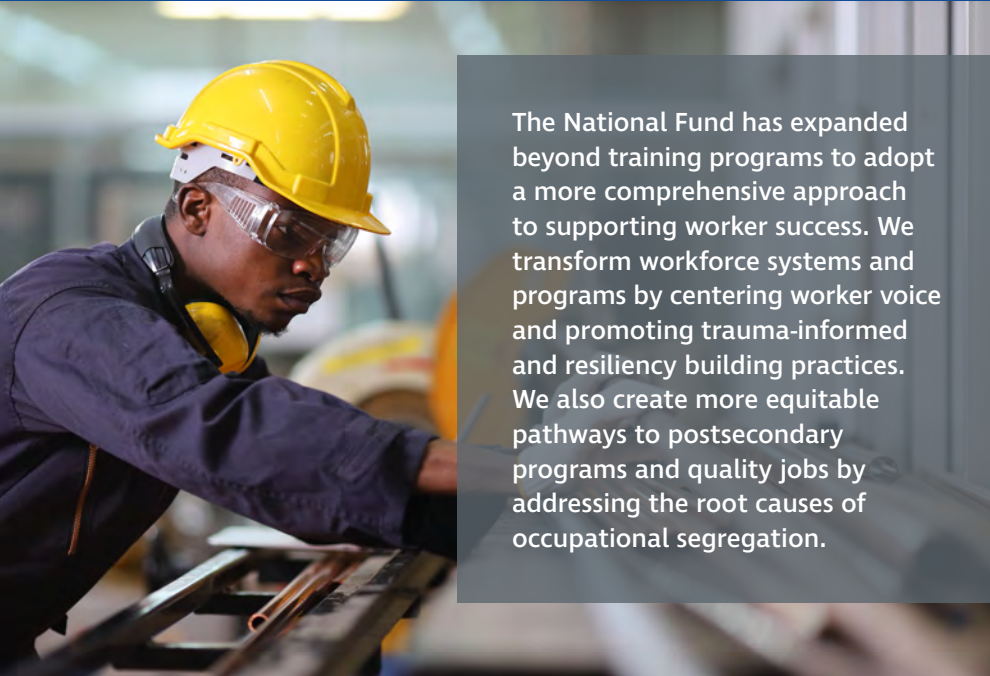


Erica's story exemplifies the impact of HealthWorks. Erica was working as a receptionist in a clinic when her supervisor suggested she train with HealthWorks to become an RN. In 2017, Erica connected with a HealthWorks case manager who helped her enroll in classes and pay for her tuition, books, and transportation costs. Erica started the nursing prerequisite classes and completed both basic and advanced certified nursing assistant classes. She worked with her case manager to develop a resume and moved into a patient care tech position at UnityPoint. Erica resumed her training in fall 2020, when COVID-19 lockdowns were lifted, and graduated as an RN in fall 2021. She passed her NCLEX exam in February 2022 and accepted a position as lead RN at Primary Healthcare.

EQUITY | EQUIP WORKERS



Equip Workers For Success



The National Fund has expanded beyond training programs to adopt a more comprehensive approach to supporting worker success. We transform workforce systems and programs by centering worker voice and promoting trauma-informed and resiliency building practices. We also create more equitable pathways to postsecondary programs and quality jobs by addressing the root causes of occupational segregation.

Job Seekers Completing Training



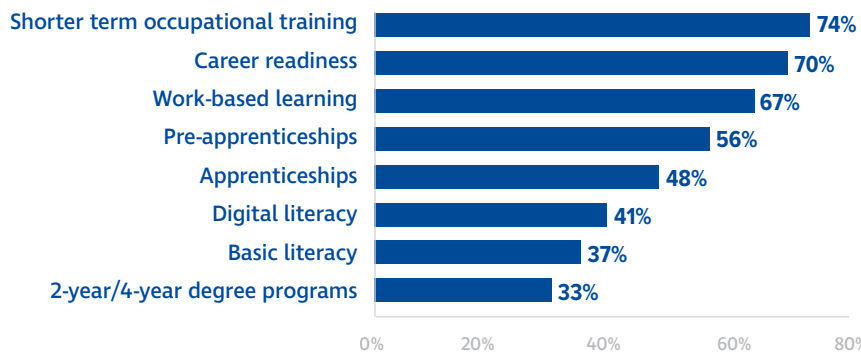
11,835

Incumbent Workers Completing Career Advancement Training



1,859

Percentage of Collaboratives Providing Training by Type



Job Seekers Gaining Employment



30,468

Incumbent Workers Advancing in Careers



1,286

COLLABORATIVE SPOTLIGHT **Kentuckiana Workforce Partners**



Kentuckiana Workforce Partners helps job seekers find jobs and good careers, education, and training, and they help employers meet their workforce needs by connecting them with skilled, qualified employees. As the Workforce Development Board for the Louisville region, they believe a racially equitable workforce is one where race or immigration status is no longer associated with one's workforce development outcomes or need for services.

Racial equity is both a process and an outcome for this organization. As a process, racial equity aims to ensure that no one is left behind. This is accomplished by providing resources and investments to dismantle the barriers affecting historically excluded racial and ethnic groups. As an outcome, this means race and ethnicity no longer influence how a person fares in society.

Recently, Kentuckiana Workforce Partners repositioned their programmatic and communications efforts to grow the Black middle class in Louisville. This shift included partnering with Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) and Greater Louisville Inc. (GLI), and a local chamber of commerce group called The Academies of Louisville. Modeled after a similar initiative in Nashville, The Academies of Louisville facilitates collaboration between institutions and regional industries to remove barriers that youths face in obtaining high-quality careers.

A refugee from the Democratic Republic of the Congo — now a student in JCPS — entered The Academies to learn about opportunities in manufacturing. When the time came to register for SummerWorks, the youth summer work experience program, the student knew he wanted a position at GE Appliances. He recently completed his senior year co-op experience at the company, which led to a full-time job.



EQUITY | WORKER SUCCESS | JOB TRAINING



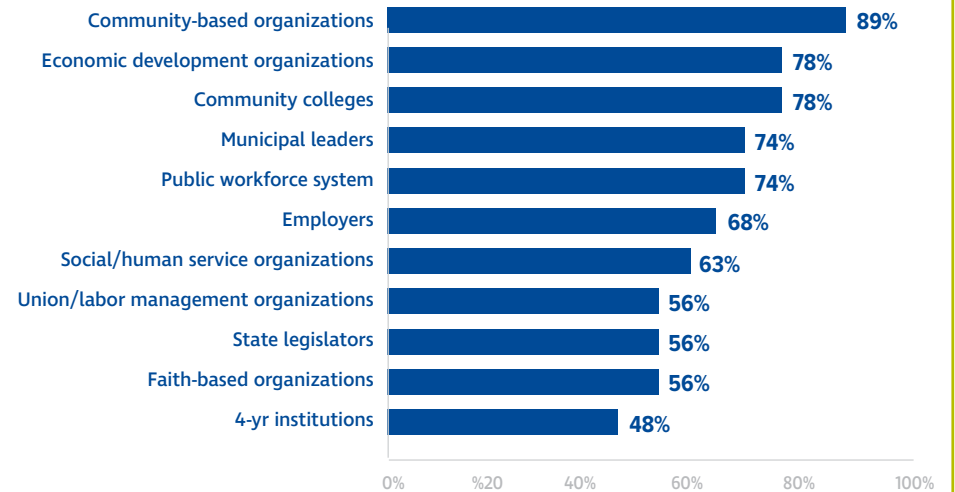
Change Systems for Improved Outcomes

The National Fund was an early implementer of systems thinking in the workforce development field. We support collaboratives to develop solutions to structural challenges that often drive racial inequities, including lack of transportation, childcare or industry-wide equitable hiring practices. We worked deeply in the Bay Area, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, and Seattle to develop localized plans for taking action to change systems to advance workforce equity, which led us to create systems change guides for practitioners.

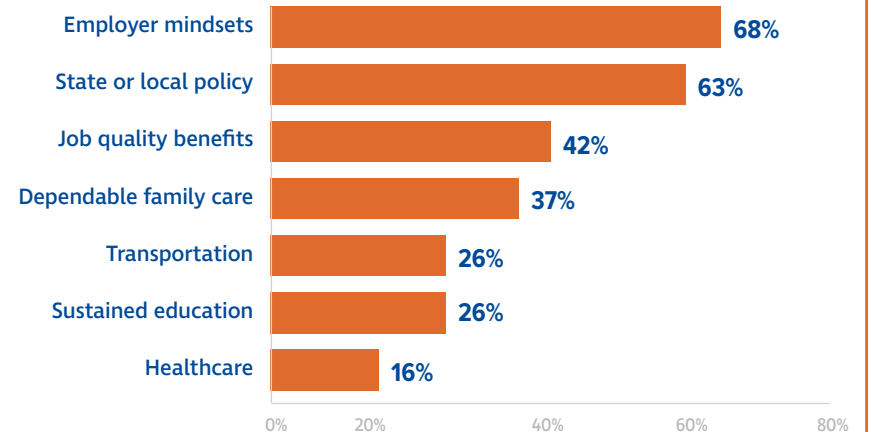
Collaboratives Prioritizing System Change Initiatives



Who Collaboratives Partner With To Change Systems



Collaboratives' Systems Change Areas of Focus



COLLABORATIVE SPOTLIGHT Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance



The **Milwaukee Area Workforce Funding Alliance (MWFA)** seeks to strengthen and expand the Milwaukee area workforce system, improving access to quality job opportunities for low-income individuals who have been excluded from meaningful, safe, individual, and family thriving jobs by decades long policies that have resulted in generational poverty. They lead with empathy and equity so that everyone in their community, regardless of race, gender, sexual identity, age, religion, or nationality can fulfill the dream that resonates for them in their world.

The importance of this work is underscored in a 2020 report from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, which revealed that Milwaukee has the second largest gap in U.S. employment rates between Black and White men. The report found that, compared with other large metropolitan areas, the city also has some of the lowest median annual earnings for Black male and female workers and the worst racial disparity in median earnings between Black and White male workers in the United States. MWFA is using this baseline information to address equity in hiring practices, job

retention, wages, and job quality issues related to Black workers in Milwaukee. Racial equity and inclusion is a central focus area.

MWFA partnered with workforce intermediary Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (W RTP) | BIG STEP to deploy success coaches within the construction industry who guide and support women and people from minority groups in entry-level apprenticeships and jobs. Employers received a readiness assessment to help process, identify, and quantify their baseline numbers on how many women and people of color they have retained and to foster nonconfrontational conversations about equity in the workplace. Success coaches engage in consistent outreach, which reinforces mutual trust and provides workers with a resource for support on the job and in advocating for themselves with employers.

This work led to the creation of an internal Apprentice Review Committee to pair Black and female apprentices with lead workers and supervisors who are informed about and committed to providing safe, inclusive spaces for workers; establishing more meaningful labor relationships; improving retention; and reducing turnover.



EQUITY | ACTIVATE EMPLOYERS | BUSINESS PRACTICE CHANGES



Co-Invest for Impact

251

investment relationships

\$67M

total network investments

96

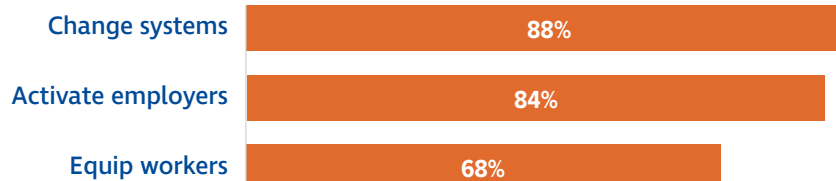
funders making long-term investments (>3 years)

\$32M

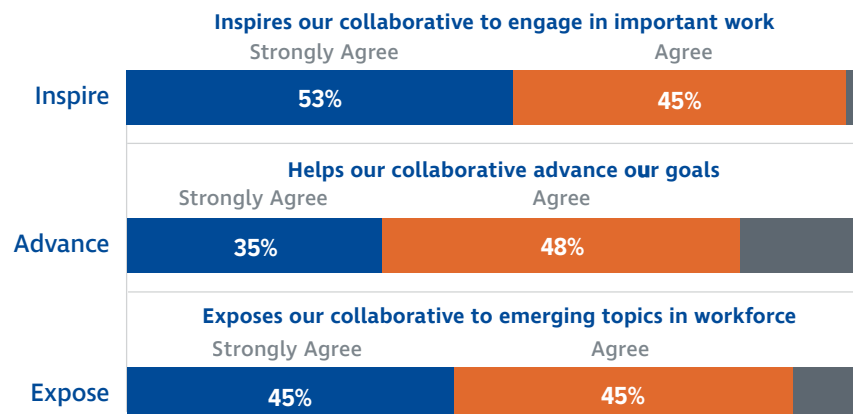
leveraged public funding

A core strength of the National Fund is our ability to leverage public and private resources at the local level. We distribute catalytic funds to our collaboratives so they can blend grant dollars with local resources to spur innovation and transform systems. Co-investment is at the core of every collaboratives' model as they seek to align stakeholders on workforce outcomes.

Collaborative Priorities in the National Fund Solution Framework



Value of the Network



“Co-investment is essential to our work. There is no success without co-investment. It is the strategy to reach scale. The only way we affect things at scale is by coming together as funders, and also working with public sectors and institutions to change behavior.”

- Matt Bruce, Executive Director of the Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance

COLLABORATIVE SPOTLIGHT Triad Workforce Solutions Collaborative



The **Triad Workforce Solutions Collaborative (TWSC)** joins business leaders, educators, workforce development service providers, and funders from Greensboro and High Point to support and accelerate skills and talent development, creating a pipeline of skilled workers to fill jobs of today and the future. It envisions expanding youth apprenticeships by addressing limiting barriers, especially for young adults of color, to participate in and complete these programs.

The essence of what TWSC creates is a pipeline of workers. Through TWSC's Guilford Apprenticeship Partners (GAP), leadership and employer partners advance solutions to address access-related barriers, such as lack of program information or transportation. GAP apprentices attain their associate degree, receive guaranteed raises every year, and get practical on-the-job training.

This program is also representative of the community and employers' desire to diversify their workforce and culture. The program has so far improved access to manufacturing and higher education jobs. It's also diversifying talent. Year-one participants in GAP in 2018 included 14 apprentices, 13 of whom were White men. In a massive shift, the 2022 cohort has 75 apprentices, 51% of whom are people of color and 18% of whom are women.

"GAP student Phillip completed his youth apprenticeship program with Bright Plastics. He called his apprenticeship a "win-win situation" — an opportunity to start a career and earn a college degree without having to worry about the cost of tuition, books, and fees."

- From a recent Annie E. Casey Foundation report published Jan. 8, 2022.



WORKER SUCCESS | APPRENTICESHIP



Toward the Future



> Toward the Future

The National Fund strives to eliminate structural racial inequities by working toward three goals

All workers have resources required to thrive

Systems ensure workers have basic resources, including affordable and quality child care, transportation, housing, healthcare, high-speed broadband, and other needs. (i.e., social determinants of work).

Race does not dictate employment outcomes

Racial or gender groups are not concentrated in specific jobs and industries that correlate with lower wages, lack of benefits, and less opportunity for advancement.

All jobs are good jobs

A good job is safe, offers sustainable pay and benefits, is secure and stable, and provides career pathways and opportunities for mobility.

The National Fund is uniquely positioned to advance these goals:

- Our network has the power to change local systems and policies and align resources toward shared goals.
- Our national platform positions us to challenge the status quo, support peer learning, disseminate key findings, and advance equitable workforce solutions.
- Our approach — comprised of coaching, frameworks and tools, funding, and technical assistance and training — is successfully expanding the capacity of our network and our partners.

Acknowledgments and Contact Information

Acknowledgments

We extend our deepest gratitude to National Fund's Michelle Wilson Ed.D. and KaRon Campbell for their leadership and guidance on this report.

Thanks also to Hollie Marston, Michelle Rafferty, Abigail Wood, and Joshua Enoch for their partnership and critical contributions.

About National Fund for Workforce Solutions

The National Fund for Workforce Solutions' mission is to collaborate with workers, employers, and communities to advance a skilled workforce, promote good jobs, and invest in equitable outcomes. We lead a dynamic national network of over 30 regional collaboratives that convene cross-sector stakeholders and align resources toward shared goals. We also bring together employers within key industries for nationwide peer-to-peer learning and innovation in job quality and career advancement practices. We believe that access to ideas, inspiration, and resources at a national level is key to advancing outcomes at a local level.



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