



Addressing Job Quality and Equity in a Time of Crisis: Tools and Case Studies from Local Government, Workforce Development, and Policy Advocacy

Hosted by the Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program

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Description

Even before the pandemic and associated economic fallout, one in four working adults in the US earned a wage insufficient to lift a small family out of poverty. The impact of this situation on families was immediately evident as we saw unprecedented food lines emerge overnight, as we watched essential workers shoulder health risks to provide the goods and services we rely on, and as we learned of the disproportionate toll borne by communities of color in this crisis. As we look to recover from our intersecting crises, ensuring that more jobs are quality jobs will be essential to a sustainable recovery.

This conversation is about how quietly courageous leaders in city government, policy advocacy, and workforce development are innovating to improve the quality of jobs in their communities. This webinar draws from experiences of leaders who contributed to our [Job Quality Tools Library](#), a compendium of tools and resources curated from a range of organizations to share ideas about opportunities to improve job quality. The webinar also includes tips about how to use the Library and responds to as many of your questions as time allowed.

Speakers include **Grace Heffernan**, Sr. Project Manager, Thomas P. Miller and Associates (Formerly Towards Employment); **Mariko Lockhart**, Director, Seattle Office for Civil Rights; **Sharmili Majmudar**, Executive Vice President of Policy and Organizational Impact, Women Employed; and moderator **Jenny Weissbourd**, Associate Director, Workforce Strategies Initiative, The Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program.

Speakers

Grace Heffernan

Sr. Project Manager, Thomas P. Miller and Associates (Formerly Towards Employment)

As a project manager, Grace Heffernan has supported the efforts of changemakers both near and far from her home in Northeast Ohio. From the female-owned community banks of Tanzania to neighborhood-based economic development in Cleveland, she has worked to be a part of the infrastructure that supports equitable community growth and development.

Currently, Grace is a Sr. Project Manager at Thomas P. Miller and Associates (TPMA), where she is responsible for the planning, coordination, and support of teams executing a portfolio of workforce development projects. Prior to joining TPMA, she was a Sr. Project Manager at Towards Employment, where she managed a number of initiatives aimed at systems-level change, including competency-based hiring initiatives with TalentNEO and Hope Street Group, implementation of the Sustainable Workforce Model with WorkLab Innovations, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Generation Work Initiative, which aims to further align the workforce system to improve employment outcomes for young adults.

Grace is civically active in her hometown of Cleveland, Ohio, and serves in roles across a number of organizations, including the Detroit Shoreway Community Development Corporation, the Northeast Ohio Worker Center, and Towards Employment.

Mariko Lockhart

Director, Seattle Office for Civil Rights

Mariko is the director of the Seattle Office for Civil Rights (SOCR), which coordinates the Race and Social Justice Initiative, a citywide effort to end institutional racism in city government. Additionally, SOCR advances race and social justice through its policy work with elected officials and supports four commissions, including the LGBTQ Commission, Women's Commission, Human Rights Commission, and Commission for People with disAbilities. The office also enforces federal and local civil rights laws on illegal discrimination, along with Seattle's All-gender Restroom Ordinance, the Ban on Providing Conversion Therapy to Minors, and the Fair Chance Housing Ordinance.

Prior to serving in this role, Mariko worked at the Aspen Institute's Forum for Community Solutions on a national effort to prepare young people who are out of work and out of school for employment opportunities, with a focus on those provided by a corporate coalition of more than 50 US-based companies. Her leadership roles have included director of the City of Seattle's Youth Violence Prevention Initiative and president and state director of Communities in Schools of New Jersey, where she led the state affiliate of the nation's largest organization dedicated to keeping kids in school and helping them succeed in life.

Mariko identifies as Black and Japanese and uses she/her pronouns.

Sharmili Majmudar

Executive Vice President of Policy and Organizational Impact, Women Employed

Sharmili Majmudar oversees Women Employed's development and implementation of strategic policy and systems change priorities advancing economic justice for women. She heads the organization's advocacy efforts for the voluntary implementation of aspects of good quality jobs so employees can achieve economic stability, developing and leading WE's collaborations with employers. In partnership with employers seeking to advance gender equity, she also advocates for best practices on sexual harassment, equal pay, and other issues of gender bias that create barriers for women in the workplace.

Sharmili also serves on the Board of Directors of the Crossroads Fund, a public foundation that supports grassroots organizations doing racial, social, and economic justice work in the Chicago area. She was featured as one of 2014's National Asian Pacific Women's Forum's Everyday Heroines, is a recipient of

the Chicago Foundation for Women's Impact Award, and was honored at the Chicago Woman Magazine's International Women Leaders Luncheon in 2017.

Before joining Women Employed in 2017, Majmudar served for almost a decade as the Executive Director of Rape Victim Advocates (RVA), whose mission is to ensure that survivors of sexual assault are treated with dignity and compassion. Under her leadership, RVA established impactful collaborations with schools, hospitals, universities, public officials, corporations, and other partners.

Majmudar earned a Bachelor of Arts in English and Psychology from The George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and a Master of Social Work from Loyola University Chicago's Graduate School of Social Work.

Moderator

Jenny Weissbourd

Associate Director, Workforce Strategies Initiative, The Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program

Jenny is the associate director of the Workforce Strategies Initiative at the Aspen Institute [Economic Opportunities Program](#). Her work focuses on improving economic mobility and job quality for low- and moderate-income workers. She leads applied research and capacity building projects that support the development of innovative approaches to improving jobs and economic opportunities. Jenny is the author of numerous publications and is a regular public speaker on workforce issues.

From 2011 to 2015, Jenny managed strategy and development at The Food Trust, a national leader in increasing healthy food access in underserved communities. Jenny engaged cross-sector partners and guided the development of new programs focused on improving public health and spurring inclusive economic growth, including a small business training program. Previously, she built the capacity of nonprofit and government clients as a consultant at Fairmount Ventures.

As a graduate student, Jenny worked with faculty at MIT's Institute for Work and Employment Research to research labor policy, business operations to improve job quality, and worker voice and organizing in the 21st century economy. She also served as a Dukakis Policy Fellow for Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo, and an intern in Amazon's Retail Leadership Development Program. Jenny holds an MBA from MIT and an MPA from Harvard, where she was a fellow at the Center for Public Leadership and an editor of the LGBTQ Policy Journal. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts from Brown, where she studied the history of US social movements.

Outside of work, Jenny has served on the board of Prometheus Radio Project, a media policy nonprofit, and helped to launch and lead a philanthropic giving circle.

About

This webinar is the tenth in our [Job Quality in Practice webinar series](#). The Job Quality in Practice series is designed to support practitioners across fields – including workforce development, economic development, investing and lending, policy, worker advocacy, and business – to address job quality in their work. Webinars share updates on current conditions and priorities as well as actionable tools and approaches. We also seek to highlight leading practitioners' work and create connections across disciplines. We are grateful to Prudential Financial for its support of our Job Quality in Practice webinar series and our ongoing efforts to advance a job quality field of practice.

The [Economic Opportunities Program](#) advances strategies, policies, and ideas to help low- and moderate-income people thrive in a changing economy. [Follow us on social media](#) and [join our mailing list](#) to stay connected to our work, including events, publications, blog posts, and more.

Transcript

Jenny Weissbourd (00:00:00)

Good afternoon and thank you for joining us. I'm Jenny Weissbourd, associate director with the Aspen Institute's Economic Opportunities Program. At the Economic Opportunities Program, we focus on advancing more just economy by expanding individuals' opportunities to connect to quality work, to participate in business ownership, and to build the economic stability necessary to pursue opportunity. We recognize that race, gender, and place all dictate who has access to economic opportunity in America and we work to advance an inclusive vision of economic justice.

I'm thrilled to welcome you to today's conversation, addressing job quality and equity in the time of crisis, tools and case studies from local government, Workforce development and policy advocacy. This conversation is part of our ongoing job quality and practice series, in which we highlight innovative work by practitioners and businesses to advance job quality. We're grateful to Prudential Financial for their support of this work.

Before we start, let's quickly review the technology. All attendees will be muted. Closed captioning is available for the event. To activate it, click the CC button at the bottom of the screen. We really welcome your questions and your comments, so please use the Q&A button on the bottom of the Zoom window for questions and you can also upvote questions of interest to you. We'll leave plenty of time for questions and try to get to as many as we can.

Please, also feel welcome to engage and share resources in the chat box throughout the conversation. We encourage you to tweet along with us. We'll be using the hashtag job quality. If you have technical issues, which we're hoping you won't have, but if you do, you can email us at eop.program@aspeninstitute.org. Finally, we're recording and the webinar will be shared via email and posted on our website.

I'm going to begin today's conversation by providing a brief introduction to our Job Quality Tools Library. I'll share why we developed it and walk you through the major sections so you know how to navigate it. There's a lot there. I'm not going to be able to get into everything, but I'll lay the foundation of what it is and how you might use it.

After that, you'll hear from three amazing leaders from across fields policy advocacy, Workforce development and local government, whose organizations have tools featured in the Library. They'll dive into three specific examples of tools that you can put to work immediately in your efforts to improve job quality and equity.

Let's begin. Why did we build the Job Quality Tools Library? Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, one in four working adults in the US earned a wage insufficient to lift a small family out of poverty. For decades, US workers have faced stagnant wages, eroding benefits and increasingly unstable employment and because of factors including occupational segregation and discrimination, women and people of color are overrepresented in unstable low wage jobs.

In recent years, practitioners across fields have taken notice of this decline in job quality. Workforce development providers connecting people to work have recognized that even as people get better

educated and better prepared for work, work isn't getting better for them. Economic development professionals have struggled to strengthen regional economies when the new jobs being created can support a family and so on.

As leaders of local initiatives have recognized the need to focus on addressing the challenge of job quality, they've asked for practical tools to help them improve jobs and economic opportunity in their own organizations, in the businesses they partner with and in their local labor markets.

In response, in the spring of 2020, we launched our Job Quality Tools Library, a collection of more than 100 curated tools and resources developed by innovative organizations across the country who are engaging in practical action to improve jobs. Many partners, including many of you on this webinar, share tools and ideas to help us build the Library.

Let's begin with a quick tour. The Job Quality Tools Library is organized in five main sections. We have resources to help you understand and define job quality, assess job quality in an organization, learn how to talk with businesses about improving job quality, address specific attributes of a quality job like wages or scheduling, and sustain and monitor job quality practices over time.

In addition to those five main sections, we've created a special page of resources that directly respond to COVID-19. You'll see this map on our Library homepage and you can click on the sections to go to the area of the Library that's most relevant to your current interest.

There are also several other ways to navigate the Library to find what you're looking for. We've designed it so that you can get from one point to any other point in one to two clicks and we hope the navigation is intuitive, but I'll share a couple tips.

One way to navigate the Library is to focus on the tools relevant to your field. On the homepage, you'll see the index of tools by field below the table of contents. If you click the link for Workforce development, for example, you'll see a list of all tools in the Library that can be used by Workforce professionals listed alphabetically by source.

On every page of the Library, you'll see the same table of contents so that you can navigate to the five sections I mentioned and the special COVID-19 session. You can use the table of contents to navigate the Library based on what you're interested in or where you are in your job quality journey.

For example, if you're looking for a tool to help you tackle a specific element of job quality like wages or a supportive work environment, you might go to section four, which is the largest section of the Library. As you can see on the right, this section is broken down into subsections that reflect elements that workers say are core to a quality job.

Let's say you're interested in strengthening equity and inclusion in your own organization or within a business that you partner with, you might click that subsection on equity inclusion and this has actually been one of our most visited areas of the Library over the past several months, which I'm sure won't come as a surprise.

Now, I would bring you to a set of tools to help you start to strengthen equity and inclusion across your own policies and practices or with employer partners, tools like organizational self-assessments and racial impact analysis tools. You'll hear about one of these tools during today's panel, a terrific racial equity toolkit from the City of Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative.

I'll note that although we have a dedicated subsection of equity tools, you'll also find equity and inclusion tools distributed throughout the Library, which reflects our belief in centering equity in all efforts to improve job quality.

The Library is a work in progress. We're continuing to expand it and refine it as we hear from you and learn about new approaches and tools that organizations are using. We're releasing a survey this week and we really hope you'll fill it out and share your perspectives. What does job quality look like for you? What resources do you need? What challenges are you facing? We'd love to learn from you and your work.

Now, I'm excited to transition to our panel. For the rest of today's conversation, you'll be hearing from three leaders who are doing cutting edge work on the ground across different fields to advance job quality and equity. Let me briefly introduce them. There's bio information on our website. I'm not going to go into a lot of detail but please do take a look. This is a particularly amazing group.

Grace Heffernan is a Workforce development leader. She's a Senior Project Manager at Thomas P. Miller & Associates and formerly was with Towards Employment. Mariko Lockhart brings the local government perspective. She's the Director of Seattle's Office for Civil Rights. Finally, we have Sharmili Majmudar, who approaches job quality from the policy advocacy perspective. She is Executive Vice President of Policy and Organizational Impact at Women Employed.

Thank you so much to each of you for joining us. We're going to get started with a little bit of background on your organizations. Sharmili, I'd like to start with you. Tell us about the policy advocacy work that you do at Women Employed and how job quality fits into your efforts to advance equity for women.

Sharmili Majmudar (00:07:28)

Thank you so much. I'm so grateful to be here, to be with such an amazing group of folks on the panel but also all of you who are attending virtually as well from all over, including South Africa. How exciting?

Women Employed has been around since 1973. Our mission is to improve the economic status of women and to remove barriers to economic equity. We seek to build women's economic power by closing the wealth gap at the intersection of race and gender. We do that by creating policy change, expanding access to educational opportunities, and advocating for fair and inclusive workplaces. We really see centering women in this narrative as being critical to making sure that all of our families and communities thrive.

One of the things that I would highlight in terms of job quality is that we do approach it from a number of perspectives but from the public policy and legislative policy perspective, what we're really trying to do is set a floor, establish what those minimum standards are that really allow for people to be in the best position possible to make decisions for themselves and their families in terms of their economic well-being.

We want to give workers choices and ensure that the quality of the jobs that they're in, allow them to make those important choices. That means that we advocate for things like paid sick leave, paid family and medical leave, fair scheduling practices, pay equity in all of its complexity as well. We do that understanding that our workplaces are not really actually designed for the modern Workforce, that in many ways, our workplaces are actually designed around an outdated stereotype of who the most common or norm of a worker is, which is generally male and generally like a sole breadwinner in a household, when the reality is so different.

Women are often co-breadwinners in many households, particularly in households of color, are the primary breadwinners and they have responsibilities ranging not only from what they do at work, but also what they have to do at home.

We have to consider when we're designing our workplaces and thinking about what needs our Workforce has, that we're designing it with these folks in mind, people who have real caregiving responsibilities for children or elders, household responsibilities, who are responsible for their home, putting their kids in school, all of these different things and we want them to be able to bring their best selves to work and for employers to really benefit from having these dedicated, loyal, really great workers who can focus on what they need to do because they're appropriately supported.

Jenny Weissbourd (00:10:41)

Thanks Sharmili. I really appreciate the link you made between job quality and gender equity there. Grace, I want to go to you next. You're a leader in Cleveland's Workforce Development System. How did you come to focus on job quality and your work? Why do you think it's important for Workforce providers to work with employers to improve the quality of jobs?

Grace Heffernan (00:11:02)

Thanks, Jenny. I would just echo Sharmili's comments that I am truly thrilled to be here and so many of the people that I look up to in Workforce have been on these types of panels. It's a thrill to be here with all of you.

I am actually just one of many leaders in Cuyahoga County who are working to improve outcomes for young adults in our Workforce system. Primarily, we're focused on that through an initiative called Generation Work, which is an Annie E. Casey funded initiative about aligning and building efficiencies in the young adult Workforce system.

One of the pillars of that work is really around deepening employer engagement. About three years ago, Annie E. Casey Foundation asked us to start collecting some data, some early data on the number of employers we were engaging with as Workforce organizations across the Workforce system and just getting a sense of like what was that number like? It turned out that number was close to 1,000 companies annually. We had this real aha moment.

Up until that time, we had kind of been having our conversations with employers about job quality and race equity, and sort of maybe one off situations or small round table settings and we really realized there was this opportunity to harness our collective efforts and really start to work at scale on issues of job quality with employers.

Once we had this kind of quantitative number in mind, we really wanted to better understand what were those engagements like? We kind of had a hunch that they were on the more transactional side of the work. Things like those sort of foundational placement questions you might be interested in, how many jobs do you have open? When does the job star wages? What we wanted to know is where are those conversations about job quality and race equity? Where are they happening?

We partnered with the Aspen Institute to conduct a survey of local employer engagement staff to really get that exact question. We found out pretty quickly that those conversations really weren't happening, and perhaps even more illuminating was sort of the why behind that. I think it sort of fell into two categories.

The first was that employee engagement staff just didn't really feel equipped to have those conversations with business. Then, secondly, and probably really telling about sort of our industry as Workforce practitioners is that employer engagement staff didn't necessarily feel like that was their place. They didn't necessarily think that they were empowered to have those conversations with

business. Really, it I would say, job quality became a central theme of our work after the findings of that survey. It's really been sort of that goalposts that we've been working towards ever since.

Jenny Weissbourd (00:14:23)

Thanks, Grace. Excited to hear more in a few minutes about how you developed a coordinated approach to work on job quality and race equity but for now, I want to turn to you, Mariko. You direct Seattle's Office for Civil Rights and Seattle is nationally recognized for its efforts to center racial equity and social justice and policymaking. Of course, we can't talk about job quality without talking about racial equity. I'd love to hear from you what it looks like for a city government to take a racial equity approach.

Mariko Lockhart (00:14:55)

Thanks for the question, Jenny. Again, echoing my colleagues on the call, how excited and grateful I am to be part of this conversation. The City of Seattle launched what we call the Race and Social Justice Initiative in 2004. We believe it's the oldest government effort to address institutional racism in the country. We have learned a lot of lessons along the way and are happy to share those.

We started out with a focus on a lot of training because we were introducing this concept to our thousands of city employees, focusing on building an understanding and knowledge base on the history of structural and systemic racism in this country and the role that city government has played and can play in addressing those institutional barriers.

Since then, we have expanded to build an infrastructure internal to the city of antiracist organizers. Every department in our city has a group of folks we call Change Teams and they are employees that are volunteering to work on how to advance racial equity, both internally in their departments and also in their lines of business, in terms of policy and practice and how resources are invested.

Our office works to support them through training and technical assistance and convening. We also have implemented assessment measures. We conduct racial equity, our RSJ Initiative conducts surveys of both employees and community periodically to assess what is the perception and understanding of where the city's at in terms of our progress on racial equity. Of course, we've developed a racial equity toolkit, which you mentioned earlier, Jenny and I know we'll be talking about our tools later.

I would just highlight one example that was initiated fairly early after we launched the Race and Social Justice Initiative, which was looking at how do we incorporate a racial equity analysis into the practice of government and one of the most important places that we can do that is in our budgeting process.

Every year, our city undergoes a certain amount of process to determine the next year's budget, even though we have a biennial budget and every department that wants to make a change in terms of adding funding to a specific program or initiative, adding staff or eliminating positions or moving funding from one place to another, any change that departments want to make in their budget, they need to fill out a request form and that request form asks the question, what is the Race and Social Justice impact of this request. That requires that all departments are taking into account and analyzing what could be the unintended impacts of this change, if it goes through.

For example, who will be burdened? Who will benefit from that decision? That process is incorporated into our regular budgeting process every year. We're now working to expand on that work and look at how we can revise our budgeting process overall, to make it more transparent and accessible, and how we can connect the budgeting process to those Change Teams that I mentioned in a more

integral way, going forward, looking at our 2022 budget and seeing how much more we can push our processes to drive racial equity.

Jenny Weissbourd (00:19:15)

It's amazing. I want to sort of continue with this thread of how we can operationalize job quality and equity by turning to the valuable tools that each of you contributed to our Job Quality Tools Library. I'm interested to hear about how and why you develop them and how they're being used on the ground to strengthen jobs.

As we go through these, I'm going to ask my colleagues to share each tool in the Zoom chat so that folks in the audience can kind of follow along with them. Grace, let's start with you in the employer engagement question bank. This tool is designed to help Workforce professionals ask questions about their job quality and their racial equity. Tell us about why you developed it and how Workforce organizations in Cleveland are using it.

Grace Heffernan (00:20:05)

Sure. I told you about the survey that we conducted. Once we had the results of that, I think we saw kind of two pieces of work forming. The first was around this issue that Workforce employer engagement staff really needed to have the tools and the training and the language to be able to move their conversations with employers from some of this more transactional discussion, to more of these nuanced conversations around job quality and race equity, and more of that kind of relationship building that goes along with all of that.

Then, the second aspect of it was that employer engagement staff had to feel empowered to be able to make good decisions for young people based on the information that they were getting from business. To that first piece, that's really where we relied heavily on the existing tools in the job quality Library and also expertise in our own community.

We formed a working group with Workforce Development Professionals and Economic Development Professionals to create a question bank tool. The purpose of the question bank tool was truly to be a resource for employer engagement staff as they were going into businesses to really have a guide to their conversation to some of those key areas of job quality and race equity that we know are critically important to understanding about a business or a job opportunity, before you can make a good decision for a young person. That was the first piece and in some ways, looking back on it, that might have actually even been the easier part of the work because then it was taking that tool and really using it.

The second piece about empowering staff to do their work differently and think differently about their role in the Workforce system and their role as stewards of our beautiful, magical, young adults in our community and the talent that they can be for business, that's really been the big shift that we're working towards.

For any of my job developer folks on the call, how do we find out today that a young person's placement may not have been a good fit? Well, most of the time, the young person has been on the job for a couple of weeks and they come back and they talk to their job coach or career coach, case manager, and the horror stories roll in, right? It's like there's racist language being used in the workplace. I feel like I'm being treated unfairly. Maybe I'm feeling discriminated against. I feel like there's a huge generational gap that like I'm just not equipped for.

Yeah, that's kind of like standard operating procedure. How do we get into this? It's something that Clair Minson explores in her essay, *Workforce Development Needs a Reckoning*. If you have not had an opportunity to read that essay, I would absolutely recommend it. If anyone wants to organize Clair to have a TED talk on this topic, I would gladly sign up to attend but part of what she talks about is this idea of Workforce development, the employer has always been king and that we orient ourselves to the needs of the employer.

Really, when we're asking employer engagement staff to have these tough conversations with employers on the front end and to really start getting choosy and saying no to working with some companies, we're really asking for a huge culture shift in Workforce development. That's not just even in Cuyahoga County. I think that's lots of places. That's been the trick, right? There is creating the tool and then now the real work is like really having it adopted in a wholesale way.

Jenny Weissbourd (00:24:25)

Yeah, that's really helpful. Can you say a little more about how that's going in terms of, are you seeing that kind of capacity building and mindset shift happening among the providers who are using the tool?

Grace Heffernan (00:24:41)

Sure. We have covered a lot about employer engagement in our community through the survey and the subsequent tool development, and we've actually launched an employer engagement community of practice. We were finding really bright pockets of work across our young adult work for system, but we didn't have the alignment or the efficiencies built in to be able to share that knowledge and that capacity across employer engagement staff. I do think we're seeing staff beginning to really think about their job differently.

We're also providing a monthly space to use the language of equity, use the language of job quality, these are, I think of it as like any type of exercise, right? You need to build those skills. Absolutely, I think we're seeing progress. No greater show of that than the fact that our employer engagement community has really stepped up to continue to have this conversation together.

Jenny Weissbourd (00:25:48)

That's great to hear. Mariko, I'll turn to you next and the Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiatives racial equity toolkit, tell us about the history of the tool and how it's being used today.

Mariko Lockhart (00:26:01)

Yeah, I think one of the things that's getting highlighted in this conversation is we asked for folks to focus on racial equity and to integrate it into practices, but the need for tools and then the need for support with those tools is so important. While we had the big goals and aspirations in launching the recent Social Justice Initiative, it was really clear that departments needed a tool to break down how do we integrate a racial equity analysis.

The office at that time established or created that racial equity toolkit and it is now, some version of it or an adaptation of it, is now used throughout the country and several 100 municipalities. The reason for

that is the people who were in our office at that time are now leading race equity efforts at a national level.

Glenn Harris, who's the President of Race Forward was the Race and Social Justice Initiative manager in Seattle and created the tool along with my predecessor, Julie Nelson, who now leads the Government Alliance on Race and Equity. Through those national organizations, they've been able to share much of the work and what is helpful to other jurisdictions around the country.

In Seattle, we now are at the point where every department is required to do a minimum of four racial equity toolkit analyses per year. It's a little bit of an arbitrary number. Some folks question the reason for it, while other departments say, "If you didn't give us the minimum number, we might get lazy and not conduct racial equity analyses." Then, we have departments that do 30 to 40 of them.

The goal with the tool is to ask decision makers to pause and to take into account what is the impact on those people who will be most affected by this decision. First, there's an important piece, the heart, we often say, of the racial equity toolkit is the community engagement, being sure that we engage those who will be most impacted by this decision.

Very often that our people of color, communities of color, LGBTQ communities, those who are historically have been marginalized and oppressed, we want to make sure that we are always listening to those voices because that is the history of our country is that they have not been taken into account when policies and decisions are made.

We provide technical assistance to departments when they are going to launch and undertake an RET, they can sometimes take quite a long time because that engagement hasn't been done if the relationships with community aren't there then it's really starting from a beginning point.

An example of an RET, I was just reading recently, a report on an RET that was done in 2015, the mayor issued an executive order and there was also a joint resolution with city council that outline the need for a citywide employee engagement survey. Grace, we're talking about surveys and the important information we can gather from them, this was to understand the barriers to inclusion that might exist at the city that could result in disproportionate departure rates for people of color and women.

How we would gather that information was going to be really important. We wanted to make sure that the survey itself was inclusive, that we were asking the right people, that the right people were even hearing about the survey and having access to answering it.

Racial equity toolkit was done on that process itself and also how the results of the survey would be used. Would they be used to actually make change that was a really key part because so often we gather information and then we don't bring it back to those that we've reached out to and they don't see the results of all of the information and time that they put into giving us their input. That's one example of racial equity toolkit being used with respect to the workplace.

Another thing I would say is, the reason that we have the toolkit is to ask departments and any decision maker to pause and go through a specific set of six steps and that includes community engagement, includes data analysis but ideally, we wouldn't need the toolkit because that would be how we make decisions, be how we move forward with new initiatives.

Because we have had the toolkit in use for so many years at this point, it is becoming part of the way we make decisions and think about new initiatives. Recently, with the impact of COVID on our economy and the huge drastic reduction in revenue, we were looking as the city at budget reductions.

We have a body that Workforce Equity Policy Advisory Committee that does just really amazing work. They were forward thinking and did an analysis of the impact on Workforce at the last recession and identified that those who were laid off at the highest rates were women of color and in particular, black women and they wanted to identify a tool that would help departments make decisions if they had to make a layoff to at least know what the racial equity impact would be on their Workforce in eliminating different positions with a goal of reducing the disproportionate impact.

They undertook an analysis and are working to develop a tool for that. That's not necessarily a racial equity toolkit, but it shows that how much we are integrating and assimilating that perspective in how we approach the work.

Jenny Weissbourd (00:32:43)

Yeah, those specific examples are really helpful. Sharmili, I want to ask you about an Employee's tool, filing an employment discrimination charge with the EEOC, I have to say I love how simple and accessible this tool is. I'm curious why women employed developed it and how members of this audience can use it.

Sharmili Majmudar (00:33:06)

Why we developed it is exactly how you described it, Jenny, is to make simple and accessible things that feel often obscure or opaque. One of the things that is a signature of what would an employee does is to take this step beyond policymaking and actually look at how we ensure that people know what their rights are and know how to access those rights as well.

A law is only as good as it is implemented and enforced. For many workplace-related laws, the expectation is that enforcement is going to be complaint-driven. That is that the employee is the one, the worker is the one who's going to have to file a complaint or file a charge in order to get the issue addressed.

Now, we do think that there are some ways to be more proactive and not just dependent on complaints because there's a power imbalance between workers and employers but even within complaint-driven situations, workers need to have access to things that are understandable on what their rights are, what they have access to, who they're supposed to talk to, how they can file a complaint or a charge, how they are protected while they are filing those complaints and charges, right?

We can pass all sorts of laws related to job quality and we do and all of these kind of things that could be thought of as simply procedural are actually critical to making sure that the law has its intended impact. The tool that we have in the Job Quality Tools Library is a great example of that. We've done different tools and different educational campaigns for things like paid sick days.

Part of the importance too is that as our laws evolve to be more inclusive in how we think about workplaces. For example, our paid sick leave law in Chicago includes an expansive and inclusive family definition. You can take, you're eligible for paid sick time to care for someone who is a family member or like a family member, right?

This is particularly important when it comes to LGBTQ communities. It's important for immigrant and refugee communities. It's important for all of us who have families that are chosen and constructed rather than necessarily being the families of origin, right? But for a worker to understand that, we have to make that information accessible to them.

We've done something similar with knowing what your leave rights are around COVID because there was federal legislation passed about paid leave but understanding kind of what am I entitled to? How do I get to it? How do I talk to my employer about it? All of those things are not easy to find and worker's rights organizations, our partners that arise who have a tool in the Tools Library in the COVID section would be a great example of that as well, that we need to provide this kind of information, education and support for workers so that we're really closing the loop and making sure that policy does drive forward job quality.

Jenny Weissbourd (00:36:42)

Yeah. Have you engaged other kinds of partners in that educational effort, Workforce development or otherwise?

Sharmili Majmudar (00:36:50)

Absolutely, yes. I would say, Grace's work, Mariko's work, they're critical partners. Government agencies, our Workforce development partners, we helped to champion a no salary history bill a couple of years ago, which prohibits the employers from asking questions about salary history as a way of helping to close the gender and racial wage gap.

Now, this is absolutely critical for Workforce Development to understand because you're right at that point of attaching someone to a job and they need to understand what their rights are but the employers that you're working with, also need to understand what the implications of the laws are. Salary history is one of those things that's kind of baked into application systems like it's automated, right?

We did work with local Workforce Development partners, with our business service managers, and other folks to ensure that they understood what the implication of the new law was, that they were able to empower their job seekers in understanding that and helping to navigate if it came up, but also with their employers making sure that they understood what they were now legally required to do.

We've also worked really closely with our City of Chicago's new office of labor standards, which is also doing a lot of education for employers but then also trying to make sure that it's providing kind of as simple as possible navigation for workers who have questions, possibly complaints that they need to surface. Those partners are, as we said, you're not going to have policy have the intended impact unless all of these things are working together. These are critical partners in ensuring that we are making the strides that we intend to make.

Jenny Weissbourd (00:38:53)

Well said. Well, Sharmili and Grace, I've appreciated that you both mentioned other tools you're aware of in the Library, and whether you're using it in your work. I'd like you to talk a little bit more about that as a way to help organizations understand how they can make use of the Library and job quality tools and approaches in their work.

Grace, I'm going to go to you first. Can you say a quick word about how Workforce development organizations can use the Tools Library, maybe to build on the conversations they start using your question bank tool?

Grace Heffernan (00:39:28)

Yeah, Jenny, thanks for coming to me. I felt like Sharmili was throwing up the softball. I was like, I can just hit this out of the park [inaudible 00:39:37].

Jenny Weissbourd (00:39:39)

I knew you could.

Grace Heffernan (00:39:42)

Thank you, Sharmili, for teeing me up like that. I actually, I think we're really thinking about our work in a very similar way. We obviously are using our question bank tool because we want to collect more and better information about employer practice and policy around issues that we really care about, but we also see our employers as partners, right? It's sort of a two-way street.

We view the question bank as really an opportunity to give them a chance to have some reflection, to really think critically about some of their own policies and practices that may be affecting, frankly, their business bottom line. That's a value that our employer engagement staff can bring to business to really be able to help them think through some of these issues that maybe aren't a part of their day-to-day operations.

When we organize the question bank, we really tried to organize it in a way to touch on sort of those key areas that we felt were both important to us and for young people, but also for employers to be thinking about as they're thinking about how they can meet their recruitment needs, meet their retention needs, and have really great outcomes for their employees.

Just high level, we ask questions, sort of in the bucket of like hiring, compensation, and scheduling. We ask about employee engagement, development, and advancement, and then some pretty robust questions around sort of workplace composition and diversity. We think that those conversations, in many ways, are the types of conversations that employers want to be having in some cases, but they just haven't had the time, no one has asked them.

I'll tell you that anecdotally, we're hearing through our employer engagement question bank that after the events of last summer, the murders of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd and many others, in the subsequent Racial Justice Movement that has followed, that employers are more ready and more open to having these types of conversations than they really have been in the past.

The employer engagement tool is really that opening of the door with your relationship to the employer. If you're doing it, right, there should hopefully be some questions that come up like, "Oh, I didn't think of that. Oh, I really would like my benefits package to be better," or "I want to work on my workplace culture." That's really where I think our work has depended on the Job Quality [Tools] Library.

I can tell you that we've relied heavily on the Aspen reimagining retail toolkit, the toolkit for engaging with employers and opportunity youth. Then, there's two sections in the Library that we really go back to and in some cases, even refer resources out to our employer partners, so that they can have some more of that education and understanding about what they could be doing different or better.

Those two areas, the first is like, you can take kind of what we're doing and go that next step, which is the assessing of employers around issues of job quality, right? You could really get deeper into this work

and start measuring and tracking and benchmarking employers particularly if you are interested in taking them kind of on a journey, so to speak.

Then, there's also a set of tools around strengthening job quality in the workplace. Those are like just the really practical tools when it's like an employer asks you about recruitment or a wage analysis that you can pull tools from the Job Quality [Tools] Library and you're not having to reinvent the wheel. That's really how we've used the tools in the Library. We don't necessarily see ourselves as the people who should be taking employers on a full racial equity journey or full job quality journey.

I mean, there are plenty of consultants out there. I mean, that is like serious soul searching, heavily resource work but we can, by opening up these discussions, refer them to really great tools that already exist and are out there. Thank you, Jenny. Thank you, Sharmili. There we are.

Jenny Weissbourd (00:44:31)

Sharmili, I'm just going to hand it back to you very, very quickly to say a word about how you're using the Library or especially the work you've done locally to create a job quality definition, which is such interesting work.

Sharmili Majmudar (00:44:45)

Sure. I mean, I think we're still exploring that. As Women Employed, we're taking an intersectional approach to thinking about what job quality means and what may be the needs that more specifically speak to women and particularly black and Latinx women but as far as the Library goes, I think one of the areas that has been particularly useful for us is that there's a whole series of tools that are calculators and metrics that really helped to illuminate kind of what are the costs when we're not advancing certain areas of job quality or thinking about there's the cost of turnover calculator, for example. There's the living wage calculator.

Both of those are within the Library. We're often called upon to quantify the impact of taking action or not taking action and having tools and metrics available like that in one place with we know are included with the lens of job quality is really helpful to us as we're doing our policy work. We've actually also been involved in the local Chicago Reimagine Retail effort as well. I think the Library has been helpful in that way as well. Most of our partners around the table actually are in Workforce Development and are doing more work directly with employers. It's been useful from that perspective too.

Jenny Weissbourd (00:46:33)

Great. Mariko, I want to come back to you. As I mentioned earlier, in the month since we launched the Library, one of the sections that's gotten the most traffic, the equity and inclusion subsection, that includes Seattle's tool. We know that many cities and nonprofits are working to strengthen their equity practices. You talked a little bit about what it looks like to do this work when you've been at it for 15 plus years but for those in the audience who are newer to this work, what advice would you give them about where to start?

Mariko Lockhart (00:47:06)

That's a great question, Jenny. I think, on the one hand, I've seen organizations even outside of government jump in and just they heard about the racial equity toolkit, and they just start using it on some program or decision that they need to make.

On the other hand, I think, like Grace was talking about, there is this really burgeoning interest on the part of, I think, every organization across this country and probably the world after the racial justice reckoning that has been launched after the murder of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor and others. There is this interest and I think, again, a sense of like, "Okay, what do we do?" I'm sure all of us have seen the many, many postings for director of equity and inclusion in organizations all over the place and sort of like there's an immediate need to do something and figure out what that is.

I think those are all good efforts. I would say, look internally. I think every organization has a lot of employees who are really interested in addressing racial equity within their lines of business and within their organizations. There are going to be people who are going to be champions, natural leaders in this space. I would look to engage and interrogate that internally.

Then, another thing I would say is, there's no, I have found particularly since I've been working with the Office for Civil Rights, there is no decision, there is no action that cannot be explored more with a focus on equity. If you're organizing a meeting, who is invited? Who did the inviting? Who had the idea for them? I mean, there's just every aspect of it. Who set the agenda? Who will be impacted by the decisions made in that meeting and were they brought into the planning of the meeting? Was it co-designed? That's just one meeting in one of many meetings of a day, right? There is really no decision that we can make that couldn't be improved by a focus on racial equity.

The other thing I know that Sharmili and Grace are both talking about the assessment, that would be certainly one of the first places I would look to just looking at your own Workforce. What are the... Get a good disaggregated demographic breakdown of the Workforce and what jobs do people, are occupied by what people? Where are people of color located within that ecosystem? Where are white people occupying jobs? Who gets promoted and at what rates? Who is disciplined? All of these things, I think in engaging with staff, you will find that there are a lot of perceptions about how those practices are implemented and their racial impact on staff.

I think there there's no wrong... I would say there's probably no wrong door to begin this process where there's some heat, where there's some interest in the organization, I would start there, start having a conversation. I'm not sure I would jump to hiring somebody to do it, can bring in somebody, the expert from the outside but there's so much wisdom in our own organizations, especially from black indigenous people of color, LGBTQ people with disabilities. People who have experienced the harder parts of our workplaces are the ones who will have the most expertise around how to make improvements.

Jenny Weissbourd (00:51:16)

I want to do one last turbo round of questions before we open it up to audience questions. We're getting a lot of really interesting ones coming in. I want to make sure to leave plenty of time but it does feel important to recognize that it can feel like a daunting time to focus on job quality as we face this pandemic economy when so many workers are really desperate for any job. I want to ask about why and how you all have continued to focus on job quality during this time. Sharmili, maybe we can start with you, why has this continued to be a priority for you?

Sharmili Majmudar (00:51:51)

I think there is absolutely no better time for us to be focused on job quality. This is the opportunity. We are going to have to be doing so much rebuilding and recovery and that is the opportunity to institutionalize and systematize the changes that are necessary.

The fact is, is that pre-pandemic, we were not in a situation where workplaces were working for everyone. We still had an economy that actually shut a lot of people out. What we build to now and how we structure our recovery really needs to keep in mind that we are not trying to return to the past but we are trying to execute and realize a vision for the future that is as inclusive that as it possibly can be.

This is the opportunity. This is the opportunity also that will reap rewards, not just for workers themselves, but also for employers, also for our communities. From our perspective, there has been so much generosity and goodwill towards essential workers and frontline workers, for example. We need to back that up. It's great to applaud and it's even better to have a higher minimum wage. Those are really critical. Those should be our jumping off points, right?

Our recognition of the many ways in which our society is structured, invisible and undervalued labor, our realization of that should be the clarion call for us to be moving forward and moving forward with creating job qualities and doing so in partnership between organizations like those that are represented here. Those employers who really do want to be members of their communities and take care of their employees while also moving forward their bottom line.

Jenny Weissbourd (00:53:56)

Very well said. I think all of us were clapping our hands or stomping our feet along with you there. Grace, anything you want to add to that?

Grace Heffernan (00:54:08)

Big ditto, obviously. Related to maybe employer engagement, if anything, I think that the pandemic has only reinforced our belief that you absolutely cannot talk about job quality unless you are also having a conversation about race equity and to do anything less, you are really only having half a conversation.

We've seen that in stark colors in our community. Young people have been hardest hit by the pandemic. They were the first to have their hours cut, the first to lose their jobs and typically were clustered in really vulnerable industries. Those negative impacts were really seen disproportionately by young people of color.

It really had us thinking and doing some soul searching about how do young people of color end up in these vulnerable industries? What role do we play in that? It's something we've been grappling with for a while but I think what the pandemic really did is it put in a way, you really couldn't miss the dire consequences of those short-term, sort of now jobs for young people that are supposed to be stepping stones. The really dire consequences of them becoming sort of like stagnate, really poor work experiences for young people.

I will just close the Philadelphia Fed came out with a report right in the middle of the summer of last year, the pandemic was sort of raging about, a worker who was put into a low wage occupation in one year is more likely to completely fall out of the labor force than they are to advance.

For us, that really just spotlighted that the difference between a young person having a great work experience that leads to a fruitful career and getting stuck in this like hamster wheel, is the degree to which, we, as employer engagement staff are certain that that employer is invested and willing and able to provide a good work experience for young people. It really just, it highlights what I think we thought we knew, but it really put it into sort of terms you couldn't run from.

Jenny Weissbourd (00:56:41)

Mariko, I want to go to you with a very last question about an application of your tool in this pandemic recovery. I understand that Seattle's working with the advocacy organization, ROC, to encourage local restaurants to prioritize racial equity as part of reopening. Tell us about the city's role in that work and why you think it's an important moment for restaurants to prioritize this element of job quality.

Mariko Lockhart (00:57:13)

Yeah, I'm really excited about our partnership with ROC, Restaurant Opportunities Centers-United and our office, we have besides the Race and Social Justice Initiative, which is what I've mostly been talking about, we, of course, also enforce federal and local civil rights laws. We have an enforcement unit as well as a policy division as well.

Our enforcement team has a testing program. I'm sure folks are familiar with the concept of matched pair testing, where with employment or housing, for example, sending in two equally qualified candidates who are matched but for the characteristic you're testing for. In our case, we tested for race in the restaurant with fine dining sector with ROC. ROC is our expert partner in that.

We issued a report. They issued a report last summer and identified that yes, there was bias that happens quite often in those interactions when someone is applying for a job. I think importantly, for any of us who've ever worked in the restaurant industry, which, so many of us have been wait staff. I certainly have. It is a very segregated industry. Who gets the jobs in the back of the house are primarily people of color, and who works in front of the house, primarily white employees.

I think the moment that like what we're living through now with COVID, so many restaurants, some unfortunately, closing down permanently but so many sort of temporarily and then coming back in some proportion, but eventually we hope we'll be coming back 100% in indoor dining and we'll all be back eating in restaurants.

It is an opportunity for those restaurants as they are bringing staff back and hiring staff to really think about and reassess who is getting which jobs and to do an analysis of how are they hiring people? How are they recruiting? It's so often in the restaurant industry word of mouth and of course that is going to perpetuate who is working in the different parts of the house.

We think that the report is a great eye opener. It got a lot of attention at the time last summer. Now, these restaurants hopefully we'll be reopening. It is a perfect opportunity for restaurants to do things differently and as we've been saying, more equitably, like everything that was wrong in the past, we're not going to fix now, but we certainly have an opportunity to make a dent and to start doing things differently.

Race Forward, which I mentioned before, the national organization, developed a racial equity toolkit specifically for the restaurant sector. It includes a self-assessment. You actually calculate how many employees you have. Are they white or are they people of color? Which jobs do they have?

Restaurants can end up with a score and then would have strategies on how they can change that score to be a more racially equitable organization.

I think that partnership has been great. It's been very eye opening for many people, not just in the restaurant industry. I think, using that as a way of how we bring back our economy in that sector and in other sectors as well, we do have an opportunity, and these are the kind of tools that can help us.

Jenny Weissbourd (01:01:01)

I want to open questions now. I'm going to send this first question to you, Mariko. The question is, how will workers with disabilities included in these conversations and considerations about workplace equity?

Mariko Lockhart (01:01:19)

Thank you for that question. I saw it go by in the chat. I was like, "Oh, I should have raised that." Our office, as I said, also enforces federal and local civil rights laws. Disability is one of our protected classes, of course, and we are working more and more to engage and understand Disability Justice.

Recently, we just had a couple of trainings for our own staff because while we work to enforce the laws that protect people with disabilities, we also have to look at how do we go beyond that and really ensure that every opportunity is accessible. That is one of the things that our office tests for is disability with housing and employment. Typically, that is the way.

We don't do a lot, I would say, our office, specifically with a job quality, but our human resource department does. It works specifically in that area and disability is a crosscutting issue that we work in partnership with them and also other departments to address.

Jenny Weissbourd (01:02:51)

This next question, I'll send, how about you, Grace and Sharmili, you both can duke it out to see who wants to take this one but it's a question that's getting a lot of upvotes in our Q&A and it's about whether there are tools that challenge how we value specific types of jobs. For example, a business's finance team getting paid at levels so different from the social services providers, how we value as a society, the pay scales assigned to different kinds of jobs and careers. Have you seen anything that speaks to that?

Grace Heffernan (01:03:27)

I don't know if I have a specific tool. Sharmili, do you... I mean, I could give some thoughts on it, but unless you have a specific tool you want to share?

Sharmili Majmudar (01:03:35)

Same here. Go ahead, Grace.

Grace Heffernan (01:03:37)

Okay, well, I'll kick off and I think this is going to be something that we, in Workforce Development, have to be talking about more and more. You gave the example in the question of the finance department versus maybe someone else in the organization, but you could even think about what we consider in demand industries.

In demand industries are great jobs because they were historically jobs for white men, often. As we look to changing our frames around what we consider and value a really good job to be, we're going to have to also do a little bit of unlearning about what makes a good job and start to consider how we invest in sectors. I mean, writing the care sector off is just not good jobs and not treating them and resourcing them in the same way that we resource sort of like in demand sectors.

I just think it's such a missed opportunity. I'm sorry I don't have like a specific question. Maybe behind the reimagining retail toolkit, I think is actually good about thinking about retail in that way, but I'll hand it over to Sharmili. I just wanted to say a thousand times yes, we need to be thinking about that.

Sharmili Majmudar (01:05:04)

I would also add that there are so many ways in which the value of specific roles and the value of labor is both racialized and gendered. Within a company or within a specific role, even janitors versus housekeepers, so like, cleaning staff and kind of like, one tends to be more male dominated, the other more female dominated, and then those kind of are valued differently.

I think we're seeing that certainly with things like the care sector, early childhood education and there are efforts, I think, underway to try and address the scope of what we're talking about with something like early childhood, where it's not just about the childcare infrastructure, for example, is critical for people who are in caregiving roles to be able to even work in the first place. We need it to be affordable, accessible, quality, but we also need to make sure that people in those roles are compensated in a way that is appropriate for what they are doing for us, which is caring for some of the most precious people in our lives, right?

I do think some places to start are high level investments in infrastructure that has, to this date, been extremely under invested in. I think about the childcare infrastructure, but I think about the care infrastructure overall, as well.

We also need to make sure that the protections around something like minimum wage or protections around jobs are extended to those who are in roles that aren't considered traditional employer-employee relationships, right. This might not attached as directly to something like Workforce Development but we have roles like domestic workers, for example, and making sure that the laws that we do have are actually being applied when it comes to providing some of the safety and protection that's necessary but this is a huge issue. As I said, a very, very racialized and gendered in terms of how we think about labor.

Jenny Weissbourd (01:07:17)

Yeah. Very helpful comments and the one thing I would add as it relates to specific tools, this isn't a direct answer to the question, but Grace mentioned that there are a couple of cost of turnover calculators in the Tools Library. I think what those do is show that what can be treated as sort of disposable labor wrongly, losing those people has real cost implications for companies. That can be a

useful way to sort of start the conversation about some of the tangible and intangible ways that not valuing frontline workers can hurt business success.

I want to turn to another question from the chat. This is more of a comment, but I think a useful one to respond to. Mariko, I'm going to throw this one year away. I think it's important to think about who is using the tools. For example, do evaluations conducted by white men differ from those conducted by black women? If those facilitating the tools are senior leadership and orgs are not diverse, I worry about how authentic the findings will be? Can you talk a little bit about the who of tool application and how to be sensitive about it?

Mariko Lockhart (01:08:30)

Yeah, thank you for that question because I think it's really important. I would agree with the sort of premise of the question, which is that it's going to be, you would definitely get different results depending on who is using the tool.

The use of the racial equity toolkit calls for a team of people, not just one person. Unfortunately, it is always easier for an organization to assign it to their race equity leader or to the change team and not integrate it into the fabric of leadership of the department, but we do encourage a spectrum of folks to participate in implementing the toolkit and would always advise that it'd be a diverse team and should not be led by... Particularly, it should not be led by someone who will not be the most impacted.

If we're talking about how do we increase equity, it would be a mistake to have that toolkit led by a white male because they are not the most impacted. Certainly, welcome on the team. Perspectives are really important, but I think that a good point to make and I appreciate you highlighting it.

Jenny Weissbourd (01:09:57)

Grace, this next question is for you. The question is in terms of how employers react to job quality, do you see major differences between large employers, let's say more than 500 employees and small employers, I would say, less than 200 employees? Would be curious how you approach these conversations differently if you do?

Grace Heffernan (01:10:18)

Sure. This is really fascinating and maybe I'll draw from some experience too in other parts of my work, but absolutely, really large businesses, I think they get it in many ways. They can see the bottom line to their company culture and the business case for diversity, in a way sometimes that I think can be very hard for smaller businesses that are working at a smaller scale.

I also think there's really great examples of larger companies who have been able to resource diversity and equity efforts across their organization in really meaningful ways. Yes, I think there is a little bit of a difference but having said that, I think Mariko made this point and it's so important, anyone, any business, any organization can start somewhere with diversity and equity.

Perhaps, larger businesses who've been thinking about this work are more polished or have a more robust strategy in place but absolutely smaller businesses, I think, can astonish you with the types of initiatives that they are able to put in place relatively quickly because of the agility of their organizations, right? It's not trying to change the, I was going to use a boat reference, changing the rudder on the ship in the same way that you do at a large business.

I mean, I guess that's kind of, I don't know if that's a very satisfying answer but definitely larger businesses. They've been talking about this, I think, for a long time and they have the language around it, but I don't think that means that we count smaller businesses out. I will not use any more boat metaphors. That was terrible. I have not... I've never been on a boat. I don't know why I drew that out of my tools.

Jenny Weissbourd (01:12:40)

We're all eager to get on a boat these days, I think. I'll just add to that that we have some resources that I'll ask my colleagues to drop in the chat, including a recent webinar featuring small businesses talking about their experience doing job quality work. I think your point is well taken about the ways that large and small employers may come to this differently but we've also seen examples of small businesses that really, they know all their workers, they hire from the local community, and they have both moral and business interest in making job quality improvements. We hear that perspective come up a lot, too.

We need to close but I'm going to just share one last question not for a verbal conversation but in case any of you want to drop a resource in the chat or anyone in our audience wants to, the question was, what's the best resource you've given employers to help them become more equitable in hiring, promoting and retaining people of color? If something comes to mind, please do share it in the chat.

Thank you again, to all of you for joining us today. This was a fabulous discussion. Thank you to our amazing panelists. I think it underscored why it's so important that we sustain and strengthen our focus on job quality and equity as we rebuild from this crisis.

I also want to thank my Aspen colleagues for their support organizing this event. Thank all of you in our audience for joining us and sharing your questions and comments and resources, what a great discussion in that chat bar. We'll do our best to aggregate and share those resources along with the recording of the webinar.

I also want to remind you that this week, we're releasing our new job quality and practice survey. Please fill that out so that we can learn from you. As an added incentive, we will be selecting five respondents at random to receive a gift card. If your interest in job quality isn't enough, which I hope it will be, that's yet another reason to do it.

Finally, please do take a moment to respond to our quick feedback survey, which will pop up momentarily and check out our slate of upcoming events. We have a great event next week focused on California's future of work initiative. Thanks again to all of you and looking forward to the next conversation.