

Jobs for ALL: Recommendations for Ensuring Equitable Access & Outcomes for Subsidized Employment and Jobs Guarantee Proposals



HEARTLAND **ALLIANCE**



Heartland Alliance, one of the world's leading anti-poverty organizations, works in communities in the U.S. and abroad to serve those who are homeless, living in poverty, or seeking safety. It provides a comprehensive array of services in the areas of health, housing, jobs and justice – and leads state and national policy efforts, which target lasting change for individuals and society.

To learn more about Heartland Alliance's work, visit
www.heartlandalliance.org

Table of Contents

Table of Contents..... 1

Acknowledgements..... 2

Introduction..... 3

Overarching Policy Goals of Subsidized Employment Initiatives..... 6

Recommendations Towards Equity..... 7

Recommendations to Advance National Debate & Action..... 14

Toward A Unifying Proposal..... 15

Acknowledgements

This brief was drawn from our partnerships with transitional jobs and subsidized employment programs across the country and those operated by our teams at Heartland Alliance.

This brief was also made possible through the contributions of people with lived experience of chronic unemployment and poverty who have generously shared their experiences and insights so programs and policy could improve over time and the field may benefit.

Authors: Chris Warland and Melissa Young, Heartland Alliance

Research and editorial support: Caitlin C. Schnur and Quintin Williams, Heartland Alliance

Designers: Amber Crossen, Heartland Alliance

Cover image information:

Photo is of Scottie Brown, a crew chief for READI Chicago, where he supervises a small crew of participants during their subsidized work experience, spending the day with them, helping them practice cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) skills, and even working alongside them to set a positive example. Scottie is also part of Onboard Chicago, a new initiative of Heartland Alliance focused on working with employers to strengthen their approach to hiring and retaining workers who have been involved with the criminal justice system. [Read more about Scottie, OnBoard Chicago and the READI Chicago Program.](#)

(Photo by Jane Bodmer)

Extended Uses: Heartland Alliance encourages the use of this report. Reproductions in whole or in part are allowable without permission provided appropriate references are given.

Suggested Citation: Warland, C., & Young, M., (2019, November). Jobs for ALL: Recommendations for Ensuring Equitable Access & Outcomes for Subsidized Employment and Jobs Guarantee Proposals. Heartland Alliance.

Introduction

The competitive labor market excludes many people who want to work and who can and do work when offered employment opportunities and support to mitigate barriers to employment.

Despite the current strength of the labor market, it is estimated that 1.5 to 5.8 million workers in the U.S. are considered “missing,” meaning they are neither employed nor actively seeking a job.¹ The Department of Labor’s most comprehensive alternative unemployment rate measure was 6.9 percent (seasonally adjusted) in September 2019, a measure that includes people who want to work but are discouraged from looking and people working part time because they cannot find full-time jobs.² These are people who would be either working or looking for work if job opportunities were stronger. In addition to these realities people of color, and in particular black workers, consistently experience unemployment at rates that are double that of white workers—regardless of the business cycle.

Even when the economy is healthy, millions of people in the U.S. face barriers to employment and struggle to access and keep employment. The burden of chronic joblessness is borne out unequally and concentrated among people of color. In particular, black workers, women, younger and older workers, new Americans, individuals with a criminal record, people with disabilities, individuals who identify as LGBTQ, and those with lower educational attainment and limited access or proximity to employment opportunities, among others, are likely to face chronic unemployment. The employment situation is particularly bleak for populations such as youth who may have been involved in the juvenile justice or child welfare systems, individuals experiencing homelessness, people with histories of arrest, charge, or conviction and those returning to communities from incarceration, non-custodial parents, and others. The underlying reasons that millions of Americans face chronic unemployment reflect structural, human capital, health, and situational factors that often overlap and exacerbate each other.



To address unemployment and underemployment, the U.S. has leveraged subsidized employment programs as a policy tool across the business cycle. These strategies have been shown to be an effective tool for connecting adults and youth to work and staving off massive job loss during times of recession. During expansionary periods, these strategies have been shown to help address personal and structural barriers to employment among chronically unemployed jobseekers.

Most recently, during 2009 and 2010, 39 states and the District of Columbia operated subsidized employment programs for the purpose of getting individuals into work quickly. Over 260,000 individuals were placed into subsidized jobs. More targeted and smaller scale subsidized employment programs (often called transitional jobs programs) have been implemented across the country in over 26 states focusing on individuals who face

RESEARCH EVIDENCE FOR SUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT

Evaluations of subsidized employment strategies demonstrate that these programs can have a range of promising impacts.³ Perhaps most significantly, these programs effectively connect people to employment who would not be working otherwise, and demonstrate that there are many people not currently participating in the workforce who would be willing and able to work if their barriers to employment were removed. In many studies, for example, 80 to 100 percent of treatment group participants who were offered a subsidized job participated in work.⁴ These programs have been shown to significantly raise individual and family earnings, benefit employers on a number of measures,⁵ and have positive economic ripple effects in communities.⁶ With targeted investments, these programs can be expanded rapidly in states.⁷ These programs also have been shown to contribute to lowering recidivism and increasing public safety,⁸ reducing public benefits receipt,⁹ and improving the lives of children.¹⁰ In many instances, the financial benefits of these programs far outweigh the costs.¹¹

personal, situational, and structural barriers to employment. These programs have targeted youth who are out of school and work, people experiencing homelessness or unstable housing, individuals with a criminal record or those returning from incarceration, non-custodial parents, veterans, low-income families, and others—often disproportionately people of color.

A National Subsidized Employment Program

Today, the idea of a national subsidized employment program or a more expansive federal jobs guarantee has gained some traction among policy advocates and decision makers, thought leaders, and economists. Many such proposals have been released and others are in development. Many of the current proposals reflect variations on how the federal government can and should operationalize access to employment for all. Despite their differences, what these proposals have in common is the notion that the government should play stronger a role in ensuring that everyone who wants to work has access to the labor market by either:

1. Subsidizing wages in full or in part for workers who are not accommodated by the private labor market; or
2. Creating large numbers of public sector jobs for unemployed workers; or
3. A combination of both approaches.

The goals, legislative frameworks, and implementation decisions that encompass these policy ideas have often tried to hold in balance notions of universal program access for all unemployed jobseekers while addressing inequity by targeting the intervention to particular populations facing barriers to employment.

Targeting is Crucial

In order to truly achieve equitable access and outcomes for current and historically marginalized workers, the policy design of these kinds of initiatives must be carefully constructed to consider and address structural factors that prevent full access to employment and account for flexibility and resources to address personal or situational factors that might prevent employment success. Unless the policy design and implementation of these initiatives deliberately and affirmatively includes them, any initiative to offer federally subsidized employment risks leaving out workers who have been systemically excluded from economic opportunity—including proposals structured and characterized as a jobs guarantee.

For example, because of the overreach of the criminal justice system in communities of color, a federal jobs guarantee proposal that denies or restricts access to employment opportunities for people with criminal records or individuals who have certain types of criminal offenses will exclude large swaths of men of color from accessing employment opportunities.

In particular, we know that without careful scrutiny, policy and implementation decisions can deny access to opportunity for people living in communities that have been divested of or where quality job prospects are few, people who are distrustful of institutions and unlikely to seek out assistance, people who have been isolated by extreme poverty and homelessness, people who have been traumatized by violence and deprivation, people who have been stigmatized by justice system involvement, and people who have found it difficult to work due to health, mental health, or substance use issues.

Scope of this Paper

In this discussion paper we present overarching goals to guide policy proposals and a set of recommendations for the design and implementation. Our recommendations are deliberately aimed at ensuring that the legislative and implementation frameworks developed to support these kinds of initiatives achieve equitable access to these programs and equitable outcomes for marginalized workers.

We may be approaching a time when these policy ideas can garner national interest and also greater political traction. To this end, we offer recommendations and action steps that we believe are essential to ensuring that the momentum for these policy ideas continues to gain traction and stakeholders develop inclusive campaigns and coalitions to advance national conversations.

SUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS, & EQUITY AT HEARTLAND ALLIANCE

Heartland Alliance has over [two decades](#) of experience in advocating for, designing, implementing, evaluating, and improving subsidized employment and transitional jobs programs. We have a long history of engaging with partners who have implemented variations on these programs across the country and we have spent considerable time learning from and listening to the perspectives of individuals who have participated in these programs. For several years we have been consulting with a variety of stakeholders to develop and draft model federal, state, and local policies that establish subsidized and transitional jobs programs.

Our evolving perspectives on addressing poverty and inequity, which are grounded in human rights, have contributed significantly to the ideas we put forth here.

+Overarching Policy Goals of Subsidized Employment Initiatives

We believe that four overarching goals should guide policy proposals to establish a national subsidized employment program or federal jobs guarantee. While there are and have been other important goals of these programs, we believe these four overarching goals should be at the center of any large scale subsidized employment or federal jobs guarantee:



1. Redress inequity. Proposals to establish a national subsidized employment program or federal jobs guarantee should strive explicitly through the policy design to redress racial, gender, and other economic inequities. Doing so will require a commitment to codifying many of the recommendations provided here into law and incentivizing the implementation of many of the program concepts discussed throughout this brief.



2. Reduce poverty and improve well-being of individuals and families. Proposals to establish a national subsidized employment program or federal jobs guarantee can and should strive to improve the well-being of individuals and families across a number of domains. In addition to the positive financial impacts of a job, proposed initiatives should strive to reflect ways that equitable access to employment and opportunity can improve children's well-being, promote successful criminal justice system reentry efforts, reduce housing instability and homelessness, address violence and healing in communities, and other measures of well-being.



3. Build inclusive economies. Proposals to establish a national subsidized employment program or federal jobs guarantee have the potential to invest in communities in real and inclusive ways. Proposals should strive to achieve positive ripple effects for local economies and shared access and opportunity toward prosperity for people facing the greatest barriers to employment. One key feature of an inclusive economy is that everyone who wants to work has access to a quality job.



4. Stabilize the economy. Proposals to establish a national subsidized employment program or federal jobs guarantee should reflect a commitment to stabilizing the economy throughout the business cycle.

Recommendations towards Equity & Inclusiveness: How to Ensure that A Federal Subsidized Jobs Program will Truly Guarantee a Job for Those Who Need it the Most

In order to ensure that current and historically marginalized jobseekers are not left out of any proposed subsidized employment initiative, we offer the following recommendations to help ensure such an initiative is equitable, inclusive, and accessible for all jobseekers.¹

Underlying these recommendations is our belief that the federal policy framework for a universally available subsidized employment program should hold in balance the goals of local flexibility to implement these models according to the best interests and needs of chronically unemployed workers and local economies while also ensuring that protections and assurances are in place to ensure equity, inclusivity, and quality. We can ensure that, regardless of the business cycle, everyone who wants to work has access to employment. These recommendations are intended to ensure that this vision is realized.

Ensure Equity and Inclusiveness



1. Ensure zero exclusion from work policies through a “public option” for employment and incentivize other program elements through the policy structure. Even under the best economic conditions and with the availability of wage subsidies, the private labor market often does not accommodate everyone who would prefer to work. Any effort to establish a national subsidized employment option should include policy structures that ensure that everyone who wants to work has access to employment.

This means that proposals should include a “public option” for direct employment in the public sector when the private sector labor market in communities is unable to provide enough quality work opportunities for those who seek them.



2. Offer a range of work opportunities in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors. Experience and evidence reinforce that a range of employment opportunities best supports the interests and needs of workers and communities. Research indicates that different types of subsidized employment work better for different jobseekers based on their skills, learning needs, prior work experience, and barriers to employment.

¹ In this section, we are referring to proposals that subsidize wages for workers or create a “public option” for employment interchangeably. This is not intended to minimize the differences of these approaches. Throughout history, these approaches have had similar policy and program goals and structures and sometimes have been called subsidized employment, transitional jobs, public option or publically funded jobs, or jobs of last resort. At times these terms have been used interchangeably to refer to similar sets of ideas. What these strategies have in common is the notion that the federal government should play a role in ensuring that everyone who wants to work can access the labor market by subsidizing wages in full or in part for workers who are not accommodated by the private labor market. .

Specifically, some workers experiencing more barriers or with less prior work experience may be better served by subsidized positions in community-based organizations, public sector entities, or social enterprises, whereas subsidized placements with private sector employers increase the likelihood that more skilled and experienced workers will be hired into unsubsidized positions.¹²

Moreover, in many communities, the local capacity and expertise to deliver subsidized employment programming lies exclusively within community-based organizations; in other communities, the public workforce system, city government, or other public entity may have the most capacity to implement. Therefore, any effort to establish a national subsidized employment option should offer opportunities for workers to engage in subsidized work within public, private, or non-profit settings, and within social enterprises, based on workers' needs and community capacity.

In addition to options for the type and setting of subsidized work, different workers will benefit from varying lengths of subsidized work experience. Workers with less prior work experience, more skill development needs, or greater employment barriers may need a longer subsidized work experience—up to and including indefinite rather than strictly time-limited positions.

Finally, the development of large scale subsidized employment programs has the potential to benefit women-owned and minority businesses directly through the placement of subsidized and unsubsidized workers as well as support the development of worker-owned businesses. Care may be taken in legislative language to promote the engagement of these businesses and placement of workers.



3. Create equity for people with disabilities and others with limited ability to work due to personal or structural barriers.

Since one important goal of any national subsidized employment program should be to improve the overall wellbeing of individuals and families living in poverty, accommodations should be made for people with disabilities and others who, due to life circumstances, find it challenging to work, or to work full time. People with disabilities often benefit from engaging in work, both as a way to increase their income and as a way of feeling connected to their communities. However, the threat of losing benefits can stand in the way of pursuing employment. Any national subsidized employment program should seek to eliminate “benefit cliffs” for people receiving disability benefits who wish to work, offer part-time subsidized employment in order to accommodate individuals with disabilities who cannot or choose not to work full time, guarantee the reinstatement of disability benefits for people who leave subsidized employment, and include outreach and engagement activities to inform people with disabilities that subsidized work is available to them and will not endanger their benefits. Moreover, such a proposal might include provisions to ensure that people with disabilities who are unable to take advantage of subsidized employment receive benefit income similar to what they would receive if they were able to accept the offer of work.

Likewise, many people without diagnosed disabilities may be unable to work full time, or at all, due to undiagnosed conditions, structural barriers, and life circumstances, such as those acting as caregivers for family members or those with a substance use disorder.

These potential workers should also have the option of working part time without a minimum hourly requirement, access to assessment for disability benefits, access to customized employment options, and access to other income supports and basic assistance supports.

Support & Protect Workers



4. Prevent discrimination and bias. Chronic unemployment and exclusion from economic opportunity is not experienced equally. Individuals and communities of color experience higher unemployment, lower pay, less household wealth, and fewer opportunities than whites. For example, black workers still make only 82.5 cents on every dollar earned by white workers. In 2015, black men's average hourly wages were 31 percent lower than white men's and black women's wages were 34.2 percent lower.¹³ In the same year, black women's wages were still 12.2 percent lower than black men's. In 2017, the black unemployment rate was 7.5 percent—roughly twice the white unemployment rate.¹⁴ In addition, African Americans are 2.5 times more likely to live in poverty than whites, and the median white family has almost ten times as much wealth as the median black family.

Moreover, as it relates to access to employment opportunities, many states and localities have long histories of institutional racial discrimination and marginalization of people and communities based on their race, ethnicity, faith, gender, and sexual orientation. These local biases may manifest if state and local governments are given full latitude to design and administer subsidized employment programming to respond to local needs and circumstances. To maintain the flexibility of local control while ensuring equity, federal subsidized employment legislation should establish explicit and enforceable data collection and methods to identify and correct discrimination in job availability, job type, and pay, as well as the means to analyze and correct inequitable outcomes whether or not they result from overt or deliberate discrimination.

Additionally, any federal subsidized employment proposal should consider harm reduction principles when approaching substance use among jobseekers, including avoiding drug testing except when absolutely necessary for safety reasons, ensuring workers' access to treatment for substance use disorders, and offering reemployment opportunities for workers who are terminated due to substance use issues.



5. Offer supports to meet the needs of workers and promote success. Many people who want to work are unable to work due to barriers that could be removed or mitigated through support services. Any proposal to establish a national subsidized employment structure should include or highly incentivize the use of flexible funding and system connections that support the delivery of targeted,

In order to ensure that no one is made worse off by the introduction of federally-supported subsidized work, any subsidized employment legislation should explicitly protect, or even enhance, existing safety-net and antipoverty programs so as not to further impoverish those who do not or cannot accept the offer of work. To this end, any proposal to develop a subsidized employment program should expressly prohibit the use of the program as a requirement for low-income individuals to receive basic needs or income supports.

individualized support services that enable workers to be successful in employment. These support services include expanded child care access, transportation assistance, legal services, housing, mental and physical health care, substance use treatment, and outreach and engagement, among other things. We know that failure to address employment barriers will amount to a de facto exclusion from subsidized work for those jobseekers who need it the most.

Because individuals living in poverty often face trauma and violence, we highly recommend that both programming and policy structures be designed to promote the use of [trauma-informed workforce development services](#) and entire systems of support. People who have experienced trauma often experience challenges succeeding in employment,¹⁵ in part because normal human responses to having been traumatized can appear to employers as disengagement or combativeness. Employment service providers as well as employer partners should be aware of how the symptoms of trauma manifest in the workplace and take care to avoid re-traumatizing workers. Moreover, the principles of trauma-informed care can be applied to social policy to create policies that support ideals such as physical and emotional safety, transparency, and empowerment.¹⁶ Because engagement in work can be used in policy proposals in ways that are punitive or disingenuous, it is critical that proposals for a federal subsidized employment initiative be trauma-informed and transparently inclusive and supportive of chronically unemployed, low-income jobseekers.

Subsidized employment should also be structured to accommodate the learning and developmental needs of workers with limited prior experience in the workforce. Strategies for doing so include structuring corrective or disciplinary policies to focus on skill development and learning as opposed to punishment, training frontline managers to coach subsidized workers on successful workplace behavior, and offering opportunities to apply for reemployment for workers who are terminated or otherwise separate from their subsidized job.

Finally, many workers may benefit from and be interested in furthering basic skills and education; until structural changes can be made to raise wages and improve job quality, the acquisition of occupational skills and credentials is necessary for low-income workers to access higher wages and employer-provided benefits. To that end—and in alignment with worker interests and goals—proposals should support job advancement opportunities and access to education and training such as pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, on-the-job or sectoral training opportunities, or opportunities to further basic skills and education. Providing access to these types of opportunities can be accomplished through partnerships with other federal programs and services, including but not limited to those available through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.



6. Actively seek to improve wages and job quality for all workers.

Employment alone is not enough to lift individuals and families out of poverty if wages remain inadequate to sustain basic needs. Many workers experience poverty and homelessness in spite of working, many work part-time when they would prefer full-time work, and many are subject to unpredictable and inconsistent scheduling that makes it difficult to arrange for childcare, plan household budgets, or work

a second job if necessary. In addition, about a third of workers are employed in positions that do not offer benefits such as health insurance, retirement benefits, or paid time off.¹⁷ Research and experience tells us that job quality directly impacts retention in employment. Moreover, ample evidence correlates poverty to experiences of increased trauma, eviction, homelessness, poor physical and mental health, decreased well-being, and other negative outcomes for individuals and families.¹⁸

One important goal of any federal subsidized employment proposal should be reducing poverty and increasing wages and job quality for all workers, rather than just introducing more jobseekers to the ranks of the working poor. This goal may be accomplished through a “public option” for employment that offers higher wages and better benefits than the worst current offerings in the private labor market, in order to incite low-quality employers to offer comparable packages. If subsidized employment becomes a universally available option for both chronically unemployed and displaced workers, this type of full-employment policy may improve and stabilize wage growth throughout the business cycle. Subsidized employment legislation could also include wage and job quality mandates for employer partners hosting subsidized workers or include increased federal minimum wage and job quality provisions.

Plan & Administer Wisely



7. Design from the ground up.

Many individuals experiencing chronic unemployment interact with multiple existing public systems. Any effort to establish a national subsidized employment or jobs guarantee should create mechanisms for state and local systems to align programs with existing systems through planning or other mechanisms with the goal of improving the well-being of individuals facing chronic unemployment and poverty for whom the strategy is targeted in that community.

Equally important, individuals experiencing chronic unemployment rarely have the opportunity to directly shape the development of these kinds of initiatives. In order to anchor proposals in the perspectives, needs, and interests of people with [lived experience](#) of chronic unemployment, we highly recommend including policy mechanisms that ensure authentic engagement of target populations in local planning and design. One approach to this might be to allow for communities to apply for planning grant opportunities that fund and require local engagement of persons with lived experience of chronic unemployment and poverty to help shape the program. Such a mechanism would be particularly beneficial for states and communities with less experience implementing these programs.





8. Be thoughtful about appropriate federal leadership and agency collaboration to ensure stated goals are upheld.

Experience tells us that in order for these strategies to be effectively designed and implemented, experts within and outside government agencies should be engaged. At the federal level, we highly recommend that federal agencies that have experience designing and implementing these strategies for workers facing barriers to employment serve as administrative entities in collaboration with appropriate federal agencies and other experts as appropriate. We also urge the consideration of creating or leveraging an existing federal interagency convening body to help support the goals of these programs. As flagged throughout this paper, individuals facing barriers to employment may interact with several existing public systems. Federal coordination may be useful to supporting the state and local goals of these programs and modeling successful collaboration.



9. Acknowledge that place matters.

National unemployment numbers or estimates of full employment mask the reality that there is great variation among communities as it relates to the share of their potential workforce engaged in work. For these and other reasons, we believe that any subsidized employment proposal should ensure that mechanisms are in place for communities to access resources and design local program structures that meet the local economic and population needs. Such efforts have the potential to ensure that local responses are crafted to consider geographic differences such as housing cost when setting wages or structuring subsidies and local labor market trends when identifying in-demand occupations and engaging employers. For example, program structures will likely need to be different in rural areas with few employers and difficult transportation challenges as compared to urban areas with long histories of economic exclusion and lack of investment.



10. Establish robust and enforceable mechanisms to prevent misuse of program funds.

Although employers consistently benefit from participating in subsidized employment initiatives,¹⁹ the purpose of these programs is not to create a windfall for employers. Offering wage subsidies to employers may create circumstances in which misuse or even fraud can occur. Moreover, employers may be tempted to displace incumbent workers with subsidized workers, use the availability of subsidized workers to suppress wages, use subsidies to pay for workers they would have employed anyway, or cycle through subsidized workers for “free labor” with no intention of making any permanent hires. In order to avoid situations in which employers capture value intended for workers, subsidized employment or jobs guarantee proposals should include protections such as: wage subsidies paid directly to workers through an intermediary employer of record as opposed to reimbursing employers directly;² controls and enforcement mechanisms to disqualify employers who misuse or abuse the program; and robust non-displacement policies and grievance procedures for displaced workers. Other possible mechanisms for preventing abuse include limiting the size of eligible employer partners to favor small and local businesses, or limiting the percentage of an employer’s workforce made up of subsidized workers as a protection against displacement.

²In some cases, it may be useful to shift subsidized workers onto employer payrolls and begin directly reimbursing employers for wages partway through the subsidy period, in order to encourage employers to hire workers.



11. Measure what matters and hold those in power accountable to equity goals by requiring that all program data is disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender.

As noted previously, these strategies have been implemented for a range of populations facing barriers to employment and yielded a number of positive outcomes and impacts. For these and other reasons, we believe that federal agencies tasked with administering these programs consider measuring program metrics and outcomes beyond employment outcomes. These could include basic skills acquisition, child support compliance, justice system involvement, physical and mental health, child educational performance and overall wellbeing, family functioning and healthy relationships, changes in employer perceptions toward disadvantaged jobseekers, community economic health, changes in participants' subjective well-being, poverty reduction, community safety, social return on investment, and other measures. Equally important is that policy mechanisms need to be in place to hold communities accountable to serving jobseekers facing barriers to employment and jobseekers that have been historically marginalized from employment opportunities.



12. Support communities in implementing programs.

Experience suggests that communities often need support implementing these models—especially communities that may have been divested of resources and capacity to deliver programs such as these at scale or with fidelity to best and promising practices. To that end, we highly recommend that the policy structure include technical assistance and supports that can be delivered to communities and stakeholders. Based on our experience, required support may include: coordinating peer learning across communities, assistance with planning and program design in alignment with best practices, identifying and cultivating local champions, assessing community capacity to administer programming, strategies for hiring and training personnel, and troubleshooting implementation challenges.



Recommendations to Advance National Debate & Action.

We believe we may be nearing a time when a policy window may open that will allow for these policy ideas to gain more traction.

We believe getting to this point, however, requires a commitment to building infrastructure to advance and deepen the debate: bringing stakeholders together to strategize, listen, and learn; honoring the experiences persons with lived experience of chronic unemployment and poverty by listening closely and documenting their experiences; and holding space for narrative building and communications around the value and import of these approaches. It's with this in mind that we offer recommendations to the field to advance the debate and action related to these policy ideas.

1. Establish national hubs and/or clearinghouses. There are a number of stakeholders and groups that have important contributions to make to advance these policy ideas including academics, economists, advocates, researchers, providers, persons with lived experience of chronic unemployment and poverty, and many others. Currently, the field is fragmented and lacks central hubs, clearinghouses, or sets of intermediaries that have the ongoing capacity, resources, and charge to engage in efforts that strategically advance these ideas alongside a myriad of partners over time.

2. Invest sufficient resources to engage and support persons with lived experience of chronic unemployment and poverty in driving efforts forward. Most often a missing element of policy proposals include the insights and expertise of persons with lived experience of chronic unemployment and poverty. Their perspectives are essential for crafting the policy design and implementation elements of any proposal that seeks to establish a national subsidized employment program or federal jobs guarantee with an equity lens. Moreover, these voices are important to shaping the narratives and values that will support the advancement of these efforts and to driving efforts forward. Sufficient resources, energy, and capacity building efforts need to be deployed to support bringing these stakeholders to the table to inform and drive efforts.

3. Support continued piloting & experimentation. To date, subsidized employment and transitional jobs strategies represent some of the most rigorously evaluated workforce solutions. Still, there may be need and interest in the field to pilot municipal jobs guarantee solutions, test these strategies for particular populations, or in combination with other supports to continue to learn more from targeted implementation.

Toward A Unifying Proposal

We encourage stakeholders to come together to strategize and outline a bold and inclusive campaign that leverages the strengths of many partners to advance these ideas.

We encourage the thought leaders, advocates, and policy makers leading and supporting these efforts to seek common ground around a set of policies that are bold and ambitious but also thoroughly considered and implementable. We urge stakeholders to ground these developing proposals in the perspectives of program providers who have implemented these models for decades and persons with lived experience of chronic unemployment and poverty. Finally, and most important, we urge stakeholders to put forth proposals that are affirmatively inclusive of the individuals and communities who are so often left behind by otherwise well-meaning and well-designed policies.



- ¹ Missing Workers: The Missing Part of the Unemployment Story (July 2017). Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved: <https://www.epi.org/publication/missing-workers/>
- ² Retrieved from: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empst.t15.htm>
- ³ Dutta-Gupta, I., Grant, K., Eckel, M., & Edelman, P. (2016). Lessons learned from 40 years of subsidized employment programs: a framework, review of models, and recommendations for helping disadvantaged workers. Washington: Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality.
- ⁴ Bardon, B., Juras, R., Redcross, C., Farrell, M., Bloom, D. (2018). The Enhanced Transitional Jobs Demonstration New Perspectives on Creating Jobs Final Impacts of the Next Generation of Subsidized Employment Programs. MDRC.
- ⁵ Roder, A., & Elliott, M. (2013). Stimulating opportunity: an evaluation of ARRA-funded subsidized employment programs. New York: Economic Mobility Corporation.
- ⁶ Kushner, J. (2012). Chicago Neighborhood JobStart evaluation report: A transitional jobs response to the great recession. Chicago: Social IMPACT Research Center.
- ⁷ Pavetti, L., Schott, L., & Lower-Basch, E. (2011). Creating subsidized employment opportunities for low-income parents: the legacy of the TANF emergency fund. Washington: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.
- ⁸ Redcross, C., Millenky, M. & Rudd, T. (2012). More than A Job: Final Results from the Evaluation of the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) Transitional Jobs Program. New York: MDRC
- ⁹ Huston, A. C., Miller, C., Richburg-Hayes, L., Duncan, G. J., Eldred, C. A., Weisner, T. S., Lowe, E., Mcloyd, V. C., Crosby, D. A., Ripke, M. N., & Redcross, C. (2003). New hope for families and children: Five-year results of a program to reduce poverty and reform welfare New York: MDRC
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Redcross, C., Millenky, M. & Rudd, T. (2012). More than A Job: Final Results from the Evaluation of the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) Transitional Jobs Program. New York: MDRC; Foley, K., Farrell, M., Webster, R., Walter., J. (2018). Reducing Recidivism and Increasing Opportunity. Benefits and Costs of the RecycleForce Enhanced Transitional Jobs Program. MDRC.
- ¹² Glosser, A., Barden, B., Williams, S., & Anderson, C. (November, 2016). Testing two subsidized employment approaches for recipients of temporary assistance for needy families: implementation and early impacts of the Los Angeles county transitional subsidized employment program. MDRC: New York.
- ¹³ Wilson, V., Rodgers W., (2016). Black-white wage gaps expand with rising wage inequality, Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved: <https://www.epi.org/publication/black-white-wage-gaps-expand-with-rising-wage-inequality/#epi-toc-1>
- ¹⁴ Jones, J., Schmitt, J., Wilson, V. (2018). 50 years after the Kerner Commission African Americans are better off in many ways but are still disadvantaged by racial inequality. Retrieved: <https://www.epi.org/publication/50-years-after-the-kerner-commission/>
- ¹⁵ Rosemberg, M., Gultekin, L., & Pardee, M. (May, 2017). High-ACE low wage workers: occupational health nursing research and praxis through a trauma-informed lens. *Workplace Health & Safety*. 66(5). 233-240.
- ¹⁶ Bowen, E., & Murshid, N. (February 2016). Trauma-informed social policy: a conceptual framework for policy analysis and advocacy. *Perspectives from the Social Sciences*. 106(2). 223-229.
- ¹⁷ Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2017. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Washington D.C. Retrieve: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ebs2.pdf>
- ¹⁸ Buitrago, K., Rynell, A., & Tuttle, S. (2017, March). Cycle of Risk: The Intersection of Poverty, Violence, and Trauma in Illinois. Heartland Alliance. Available at www.heartlandalliance.org/povertyreport
- ¹⁹ Kushner, J. (February 2012). Chicago neighborhood JobStart evaluation report: a transitional jobs response to the great recession. Social IMPACT Research Center: Chicago. Retrieved from: <https://www.issuelab.org/resources/16730/16730.pdf>
- Roder, A. & Elliott, M. (September 2013). Stimulating opportunity: an evaluation of ARRA-funded subsidized jobs programs. Economic Mobility Corporation: New York. Retrieved from: <https://economicmobilitycorp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Stimulating-Opportunity-Summary.pdf>

