

# Upskilling Dallas: How to Modernize the City's Workforce for the Jobs of Tomorrow

A Report Commissioned by Dallas Mayor Eric Johnson and Produced by Cicero Group

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# LETTER FROM MAYOR JOHNSON

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The world has been changing quickly over the past few years. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, low-skilled jobs had been disappearing in favor of automation. You can see that when you're in the grocery store checkout line, when you do your banking online, or when you call a customer service hotline and struggle to speak with an actual human.

And it's not too difficult to see that the jobs that have long helped make up the middle class could also be in danger of displacement. Truck drivers. Administrative assistants. Even payroll staff.

In January 2019, the Brookings Institution released a report estimating that 25% of the jobs in the United States could be threatened by automation in the years ahead. These trends will almost certainly continue.

Since 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the pace of changes and economic disruptions. Livelihoods have been upended. People across the city faced furloughs, pay cuts, and layoffs. Businesses closed or were restricted. Restaurants and retail stores had to adapt to a new reality. Schools went virtual.

For many office jobs, remote work became the norm. And for essential workers, the simple act of trying to earn a paycheck meant taking on a significant health risk and hoping for the best.

Planning for the future has been stymied as we've focused on immediate needs from the pandemic, but workforce development is a critical issue for Dallas — one that demands the attention of city leaders, education leaders, and private partners.

Workforce development is also a deeply personal issue to me. My family is from Oak Cliff, where my parents worked low-wage jobs and lacked the opportunity to advance their education and earnings potential. For families like mine, the lack of access and supports to further education and or retool skill sets means we will be left behind. It will mean Dallas, a city with so much talent and potential, could fall backward.

Dallas must be prepared for the future and actively build toward the future we want. That is why I was excited to partner with Dallas College, Cicero Group, and others on this workforce study. As part of its larger commitment to innovative career and technical education programs, Bloomberg Philanthropies generously granted the funds to conduct a study that provides practical recommendations for how we can better support many within our community in finding pathways to better employment and livelihoods.

Mayor Eric Johnson





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Mayor's Office and Cicero Group would like to thank the many community leaders and experts who contributed their time and unique perspective to this study through interviews and participation in the Mayor's Workforce Development Steering Committee.



## STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Harrison Blair**  
Dallas Black Chamber  
of Commerce

**Alan Cohen**  
Child Poverty Action  
Lab

**Jade Grieve**  
Bloomberg  
Philanthropies

**Lee Jackson**  
Texas 2036

**Laurie Larrea**  
Workforce Solutions

**Ben Magill**  
Dallas College

**Beatrice Martinez**  
Dallas Hispanic  
Chamber of  
Commerce

**Elizabeth Caudill  
McClain**  
Dallas Regional  
Chamber

**Carey O'Connor**  
Dallas Thrives

**Jaynie Schultz**  
City Council  
Workforce, Education  
& Equity Committee  
Chair

**Casey Thomas**  
City Council  
Workforce, Education  
& Equity Committee  
Vice Chair

**Jarrad Toussant**  
Dallas Regional  
Chamber

**Pyeper Wilkins**  
Dallas College



# INTRODUCTION

Dallas needs a well-skilled, diverse, and nimble workforce to solidify its status as an economically strong, vibrant, and modern city. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative to understand how this unprecedented event has affected the outlook for Dallas workers.

This report highlights what is known about the current state of the workforce, the impact of automation on workers (especially those in lower-skilled roles), and opportunities for higher-skilled and retrained workers in growth industries. We also consider these issues in light of COVID-19 and its impact on women and people of color, noting that robust inclusion is required for a fully functioning economy.

Most importantly, this report recommends practical solutions. Recognizing that the work of economic and workforce development requires the contributions of many entities – including businesses, nonprofits, educators, and others – this report will focus on the role that the mayor and city leaders play in the quest to ensure more Dallas residents participate successfully in a growing economy now and in the future.

For employers reading this report, the roles of inclusive hiring practices and work environments are paramount to enabling the future workforce of Dallas. It's critical that employers look to invest in and help create pathways where workers can thrive, which is a necessary condition for the success of the solutions in this report.



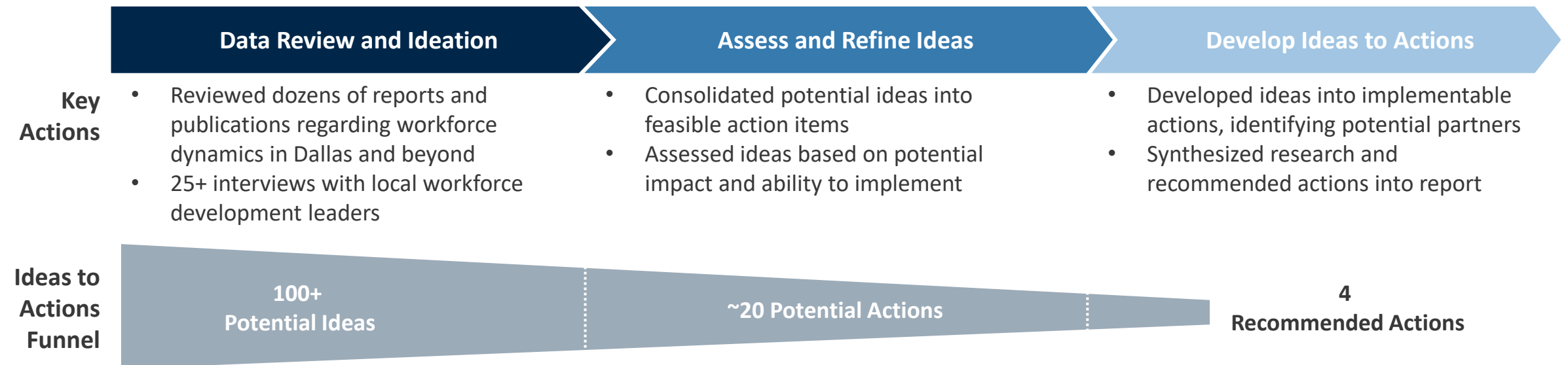
# OBJECTIVES & PROCESS

Mayor Johnson tasked Cicero Group to review existing research and leverage the expertise of dozens of local workforce development experts and stakeholders, including a dedicated Steering Committee, to determine a set of actions the Mayor's Office and city could undertake to improve workforce development efforts in Dallas. The research process includes an expansive review of existing data and literature to develop a broad range of possible actions and then numerous working sessions with workforce development leaders and stakeholders in the City of Dallas to narrow the list of actions considered most relevant, important, and actionable by the Mayor's Office.

## CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Aligned to and Collaborative with Existing Efforts
- Focused on a Clearly Defined Target Population
- Actionable and Feasible for the City to Pursue
- Based on Proven or Promising Impact
- Relevant to the Current State of the Workforce
- Applicable to the Unique Role of the City and Mayor

## PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dallas is an economic powerhouse. And with a diverse business sector that anchors the fourth-largest metropolitan region in the United States, Dallas is primed for more job growth in the years ahead.

But ever-increasing skills mismatches between the workforce and employers threaten to stunt the city's growth and to leave behind parts of its population — particularly those who already live in the city's underserved neighborhoods.

The nature of work was already changing before COVID-19 began to spread around the world. The pandemic further exacerbated and highlighted the challenges that those changes had wrought. Automation threatens a significant number of jobs that make up the middle- and working classes. Entire sectors of the economy and their supply chains have been disrupted. Homes have simultaneously become workplaces and schools. The stark divisions created by longstanding inequities — the digital divide, access to childcare, and educational opportunities — have become even clearer.

The data in this report might cause discomfort and uncertainty, but it should also create a sense of possibility for local governments, educational institutions, nonprofits and private businesses.

Mayor Eric Johnson believes that through a collaborative focus on upskilling, Dallas can help break generational cycles of poverty and, as a city, meet its full economic potential. Through that vision for Dallas, we have created this report, which will recommend strategies to help create a future-proof workforce by examining available data and answering the following questions:

- ▶ Working-age adults comprise more than 35% of the Dallas population. **How are they faring in the current economy and what are their prospects for economic mobility?**
- ▶ The percentage of working-age adults in poverty is higher among those with a high school education or less. **If education is a key pathway to family-sustaining wages, where should efforts be focused to increase education attainment?**
- ▶ There are more individuals ages 35–65 who have less than a high school education compared to the younger 25–34- year-olds. **How can the city orient its efforts and open opportunities to working-age adults?**







# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- ▶ Among jobs that provide a family-sustaining wage, White workers hold 54% of the jobs while Black and Hispanic workers only hold 15% and 16%, respectively. **What actions can be taken to eliminate barriers for Black and Hispanic adults to access better paying jobs?**
- ▶ The Dallas area has dozens of individuals and organizations focused on workforce development efforts. **How can the City of Dallas lead these actors toward measurable results for all its residents?**

The crux of the answers to all the above questions lies in a statement that acts as this report's North Star: Dallas is a city where working-age adults have access to the information and resources necessary to maintain or increase their skills and the ability to earn a sustainable living wage. This statement intentionally and exclusively focuses on working-age adults. From our research, we have seen many strong programs focused on young adults — high school students, recent graduates, and post-secondary students. It is exciting to see these initiatives develop and help young people achieve their dreams.

However, working-age adults — who often have families, financial pressures, and time constraints — lack similar opportunities to continue their growth, change careers, and learn new skills that can help them stay ahead of the economic curve. Too many adults have been left to stagnate or flounder economically as the world shifts under their feet. While a number of organizations in Dallas are focused on various aspects of workforce development, opportunities exist to provide more robust and more focused upskilling efforts for working adults in Dallas.

In this report, we take a practical and collaborative approach to our recommendations. We believe, based on research and stakeholder input, that we have set realistic and measurable goals that can be implemented through collective and discrete actions. We also believe that implementing these recommendations is worth the time, cost, and effort for everyone involved.

Now is the time to Upskill Dallas and build a more competitive and more equitable city — one that invests in all of its people.



To answer the previous questions, we developed a North Star to ground our thinking and drive forward toward actionable recommendations. **Dallas is a city where working-age adults have access to the information and resources necessary to maintain or increase their skills and ability to earn a sustainable living wage.** This statement intentionally focuses on working-age adults. From our work, we see many robust efforts circling around young adults – high school students, graduates, and post-secondary students. It is exciting to see these initiatives unfold. We want a similar energy for working-age adults who have not benefitted from those efforts.

This report takes a practical approach to generating recommendations. It reflects a strong commitment from city leaders to work together and generate measurable results. Our expectation is that as stakeholders begin to implement these recommendations, the City of Dallas will see measurable improvements among working-age adults.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

01

Workforce Liaison

Appoint an individual to implement these recommendations, track progress, and ensure the city is represented in regional workforce development efforts.

02

Formal Collaboration

Establish a formal agreement with existing workforce development organizations to align efforts and accountability for outcomes.

03

Program Engagement

Leverage the Mayor’s unique role to communicate and promote local upskilling programs to target audiences.

04

Navigation Support

Refine digital supports to assist working-age adults in navigating upskilling opportunities and resources.

DESIRED CHANGE

Greater **accountability** for city-led initiatives and opportunities to more easily **collaborate** with city support in ongoing workforce development efforts.

**Hundreds of working-age adults with higher-wage jobs** as a result of successful upskilling, and a **replicable model** for how the city and other stakeholders can drive workforce outcomes together.

**Greater awareness of and participation in** existing upskilling and training programs by working-age adults; increased support from local organizations to help **mitigate barriers** for individuals interested or engaged in education and training programs.

**Thousands of working-age adults with clear pathways to a better job** that suits their unique circumstances, abilities, and a better understanding of the available programs to support working-age adults and where there may be gaps.



# CURRENT STATE: CITY OF DALLAS

The City of Dallas is a growing economic hub for top-tier businesses, with a robust network of small businesses and gig workers. While economic growth continues, economic mobility has been uneven and has excluded some populations. Many in the workforce have faced challenges in pursuing, maintaining, and advancing in their careers. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many issues in the Dallas communities, with particular impact on people of color and women.

The City of Dallas faces immediate workforce needs as it recovers from COVID-19, but the progress cannot stop there. Mayor Johnson's vision intends to shape the economy of the future, laying a foundation for the workforce and economy of 2050 and beyond.

A robust network of Dallas-based organizations is already actively engaged in serving the current workforce and preparing the workforce of tomorrow. Dallas College, Workforce Solutions, Dallas Thrives, and many others are building powerful partnerships that

traverse business, nonprofit, education, and government. The city's efforts, alongside existing initiatives, will ensure that Dallas has a workforce prepared to meet the opportunities and demands of the region.

Through extensive conversations with key stakeholders and the aggregation of existing data into structured frameworks, we have developed a North Star, or vision, for the City of Dallas which has directed this study and its recommendations:

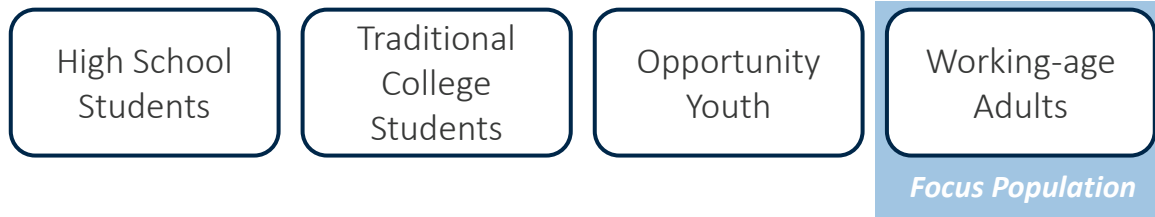
**Dallas is a city where working-age adults have access to the information and resources necessary to maintain or increase their skills and ability to earn a sustainable living wage.**

In the following sections, we provide additional context for the focus of this study and its recommendations, including a detailed review of the existing ecosystem, barriers and challenges confronting many of Dallas's working-age adult population.

# CURRENT STATE | THE AREAS OF FOCUS

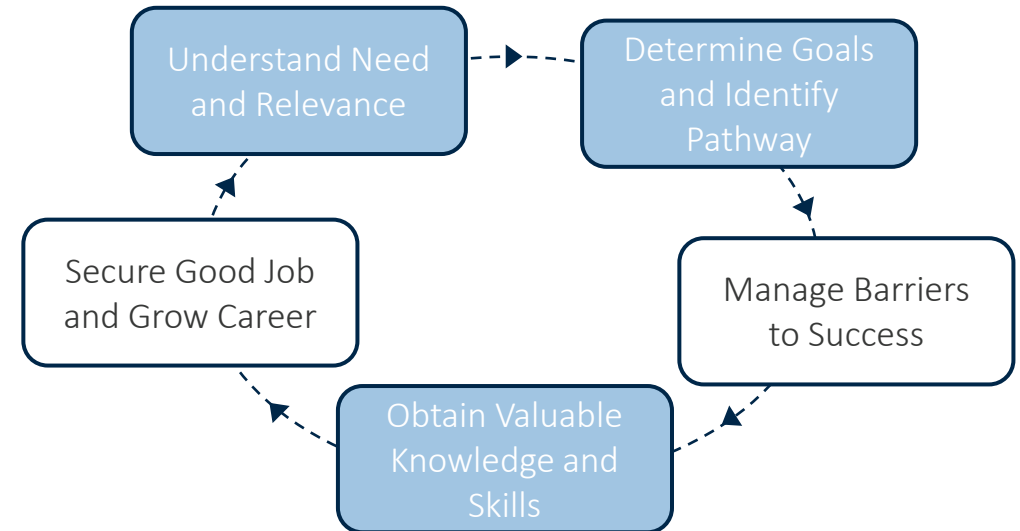
While workforce development concerns bind organizations together, they diverge around the populations of interest and approaches to impact. An analysis of those interests revealed an opportunity. There are many resources and initiatives that exist to serve K-12 and college-age students; however, there is less energy and focus on serving working-age adults – who comprise 55% of the population in the City of Dallas.<sup>1</sup>

## KEY WORKFORCE POPULATIONS



The resources and services of workforce development initiatives and programs often align with an earning and learning cycle,<sup>2</sup> which demonstrates a journey for all workers and learners to obtain skills and secure a good job with opportunity for growth.

## EARNING AND LEARNING CYCLE



From our discussions with the Steering Committee for this study, we determined that each potential action by the Mayor's Office and City of Dallas should reflect specific steps within the earning and learning cycle – *Understand the Need and Relevance, Determine Goals and Identify Pathways, Obtain Knowledge and Skills.*



# OUR NORTH STAR

To guide our efforts to meet the needs of working-age adults in the earning and learning cycle, we formulated a North Star. This statement has guided our recommendations to focus on members of the community most in need of support and who are often overlooked by current efforts. The recommendations to follow are aligned to this North Star.

Dallas is a city where  
**working-age adults** have  
access to the **information**  
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**sustainable living wage.**

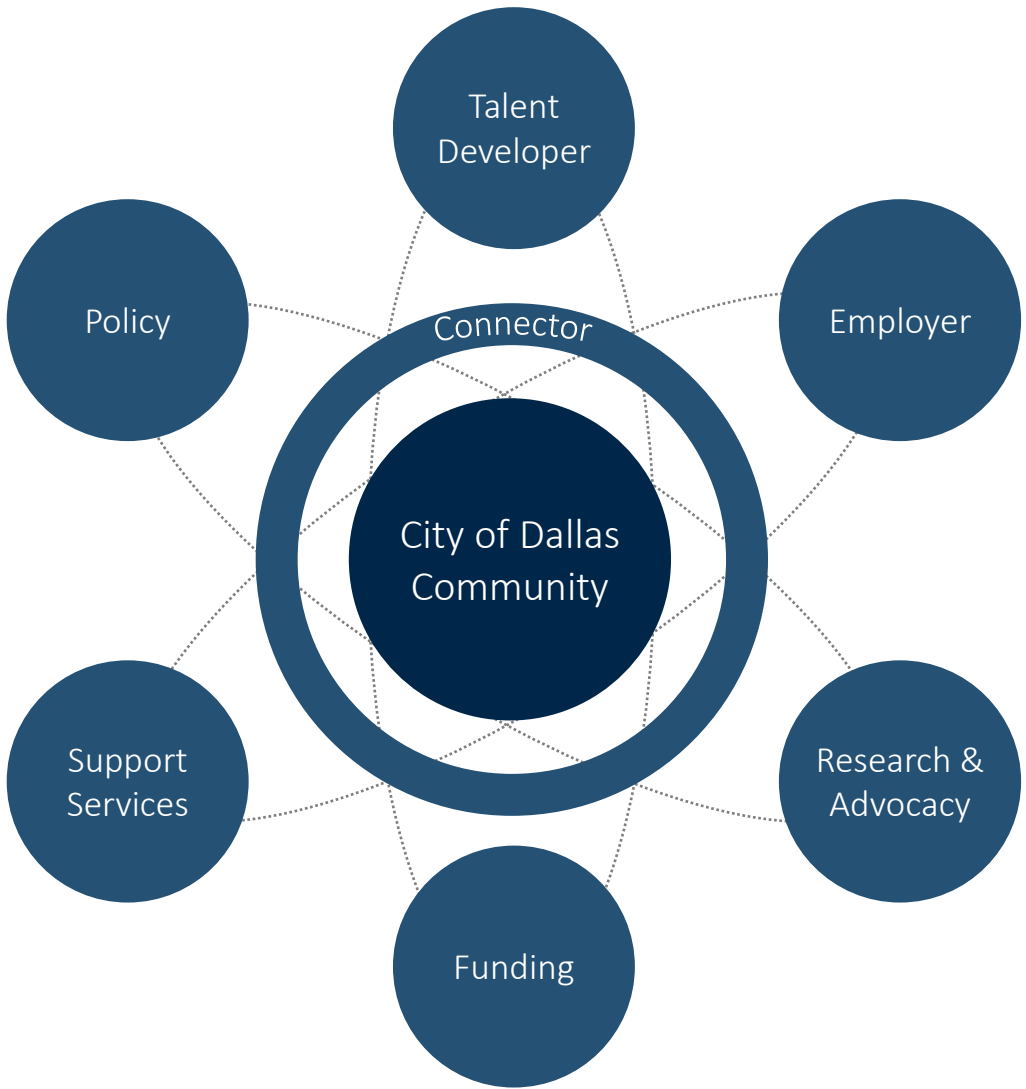
- ▶ **working-age adults** – between the ages of 25–65, currently in the workforce or having participated previously
- ▶ **information** – the awareness of and ability to access and navigate information to understand how to improve current employment circumstances
- ▶ **resources** – programs or support services that provide education and training, employment guidance and preparation, or help to manage personal barriers to success (e.g., childcare, financing, technology, food security, housing, transportation)
- ▶ **maintain or increase their skill and ability** – having capabilities that are desirable by employers and the ability to secure stable employment, and reskill or upskill as needed
- ▶ **sustainable living wage** – employment that provides sufficient compensation to meet basic needs and opportunity for social mobility for an individual or family; on average of at least \$42K per year

**DALLAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ECOSYSTEM**

The City of Dallas has a robust network of workforce development organizations striving to improve the skills of the workforce and opportunities available for workers. While having numerous organizations aimed at improving workforce development in Dallas is advantageous given the myriad needs and complexity of the issues, it also can be a challenge to understand and navigate to ensure new efforts are additive to existing work.

Based on our research, we have identified the following roles that exist in the current ecosystem.

<b>Talent Developer</b>	Providing education, training, skill-building, etc. directly to individuals; often including support for job search and placement.
<b>Employer</b>	Hiring individuals and compensating them for work; ideally offering family-sustaining compensation and providing equitable opportunities.
<b>Support Services</b>	Offering resources and services to reduce possible barriers to succeeding in education and career pathways (e.g., childcare, transportation, finances, etc.)
<b>Research &amp; Advocacy</b>	Understanding the needs, gaps, and opportunities that exist within the workforce and Dallas; often proposing potential solutions.
<b>Funding</b>	Providing financial resources to help develop or scale programs of other organizations; may be philanthropic funding or other investment.
<b>Policy</b>	Creating parameters by which other individuals' organizations must abide by; often influencing others' roles or operations.
<b>Connector</b>	Building connections across the ecosystem to align efforts or grow collaboration to enhance impact.



# CURRENT STATE | THE ECOSYSTEM

Dallas Workforce Development Ecosystem Roles

<i>Illustrative Organizations</i>	Talent Developer	Employer	Support Services	Research & Advocacy	Funding	Policy	Connector
Accenture		X		O			
AT&T		X			O		
Child Poverty Action Lab				X			O
City of Dallas			O		X	O	
Commit				X	O	O	O
Communities Foundation of Texas				O	X		O
Dallas Black Chamber of Commerce		X					O
Dallas Citizens Council				X			O
Dallas College	X	O	O	O	O		O
Dallas County Promise				X			O
Dallas Regional Chamber		X					O
Dallas Thrives				X			O
Early Matters Dallas				X			O
Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas				X			O
JP Morgan Chase		X			O		
Mayor's Office				O	X	O	X
Microsoft		X			O		
North Dallas Chamber of Commerce		X		O			
Oak Cliff Chamber of Commerce		X					O
Texas 2036				X			O
Texas Women's Foundation				O	X		O
United Way of Metropolitan Dallas				X	X		X
Universities (e.g., UT Dallas, UNT Dallas, SMU)	X						
Workforce Solutions Dallas			X	O	O		O

The table shown is not intended to be representative of all organizations supporting workforce development efforts in the City of Dallas, but an illustration of the roles within the robust workforce development ecosystem.

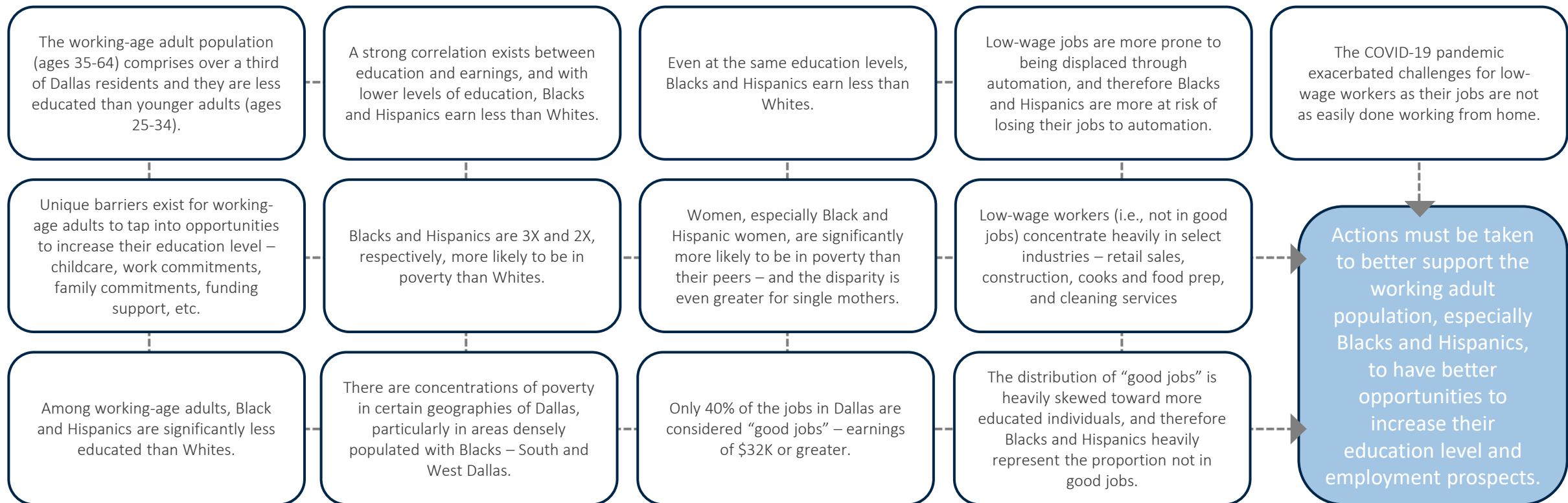
As noted in the table, the primary roles for the Mayor's Office and the City of Dallas are *Connector* and *Funder*. These roles are based on the distinct resources and capabilities possessed by each organization. The recommendations cited later in this report are significantly driven by the primary roles of the Mayor's Office and City of Dallas, which as a result lead to recommendations that often require partnerships with other organizations in the ecosystem.

X – Primary Role, O – Secondary Role



# CURRENT STATE | KEY INSIGHTS MAP

There are numerous reports, facts, and statistics regarding the challenges that exist for working-age adults in Dallas, especially Black and Hispanic adults. It can be a messy puzzle to put together how disparate data analyses and pieces fit to tell a cohesive story, but with enough of the pieces, the picture becomes clear that significant disparities in income, employment, education, and access to opportunities exist. Below are key insights that informed our work and the pages that follow provide additional information and data visualizations:



## LOW-INCOME WORKING-AGE ADULTS

Working-age adults make up over 35% (approximately 480K) of the City of Dallas population and 40% of households in the City of Dallas are low income, with the greatest disparities among minority groups including Black, Hispanic, and female-led households.<sup>3</sup>

According to Dallas Thrives, a quality job, or a “High Priority Job,” is one which helps meet livable wage thresholds based on household size and composition – for Dallas County the average annualized household livable wage is approximately \$43K.\* For this study, we have considered low-income working-age adults in households that typically fall short of this livable wage and lack sustaining jobs.<sup>4</sup>

Low-income working-age adults are typically in jobs characterized by a few challenges, such as limited growth opportunities, high risk of automation, and a call for relatively low skills. To move into family-sustaining jobs, low-income working-age adults often need additional skill development (upskilling or reskilling).

In some contexts, this population is also referred to as “the working poor,” signaling that many are employed but don’t make a sustainable living wage.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, because they are working and obtain an income, albeit not a living wage, they don’t qualify for many federal and state government support resources and programs.

This circumstances of this population resonates with many in Dallas, especially Mayor Johnson. As he recalls his childhood growing up in Oak Cliff, Mayor Johnson often tells the story of his parents who were employed in low-wage jobs to support the family and

constantly confronting the inability to “give up what they had, in order to get what they needed [e.g., education or upskilling] to get ahead.”

Exacerbating employment challenges for working-age adults is a troubling trend in upskilling participation. Average participation in upskilling decreases with age, and the 45–64-year age group is the least well-educated age group in Dallas,<sup>6</sup> making re-entry or advancement into the labor force especially difficult as Dallas recovers from COVID-19. This has worrisome implications for Dallas working-age adults struggling to maintain a family-sustaining wage, as poverty rates have a strong positive correlation with lower employment rates and lower levels of education.

In pursuing upskilling and reskilling programs, working-age adults face challenges that distinguish them from their younger counterparts. These challenges include things like:

- fewer skill development programs available to working-age adults
- lack of or limited time to participate in programs due to existing employment and family demands
- possible elimination or reduction of household income if they take time off to participate in programs
- difficulty affording program fees to participate in programs due to low-income jobs
- difficulty obtaining funding to participate in programs because college-age students or those without employment receive priority funding
- obtaining and affording childcare to participate in programs

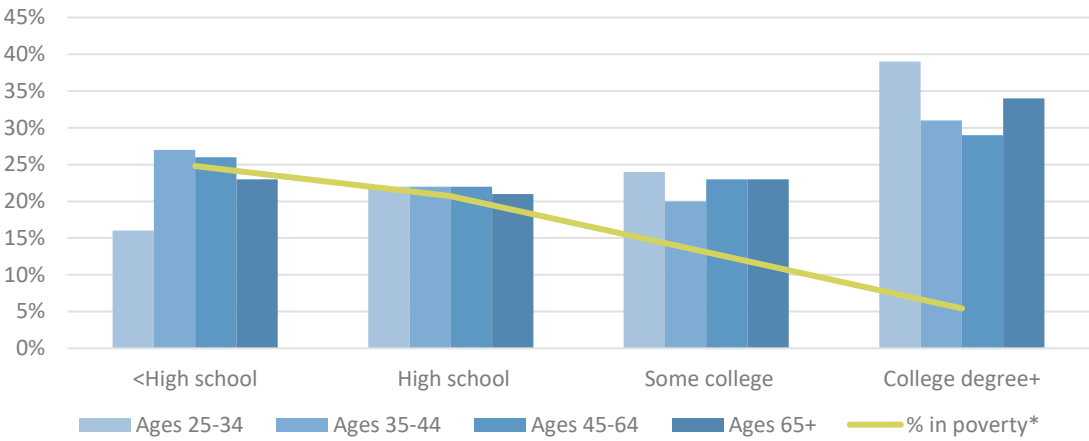
**EDUCATION LEVELS AND EARNINGS**

Low-income working-age adults are more likely to have lower levels of education than middle- and high-income working-age adults.

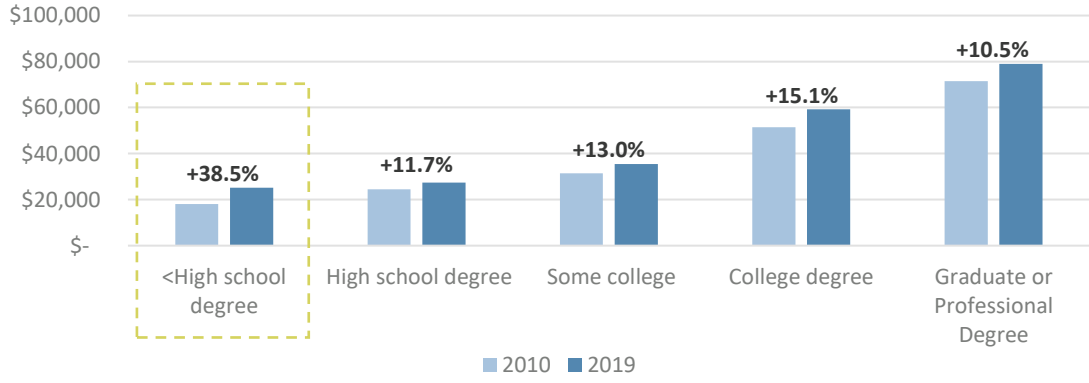
The percent of working-age adults in poverty is higher among those with a high school education or less, and there are more individuals ages 35–65 who have less than a high school education compared to the younger 25–34-year-olds. College degree holders earn 2X more and graduate degree holders earn 3X more on average than high school graduates without any college experience.

Because education is often associated with skill level, many employers reward higher levels of education, which is reflected in job descriptions and hiring processes in many organizations. As a result, working-age adults with lower levels of education often face barriers to obtaining good jobs with growth potential, or in transitioning to new careers. For working-age adults who cannot, or choose not to pursue a college degree, other skill development programs (like certificate or credential programs) can be tools to demonstrate their knowledge and skill sets.

Recently, many employers are beginning to adapt their job requirements to be more inclusive of other indicators of skill and experience as they recognize there are a variety of pathways that can yield valuable employees.<sup>7</sup> While this idea of skills-based hiring is relatively new, this effort along with other factors, could be an indicator for growing incomes among individuals less formal education. In Dallas, income of individuals with less than a high school degree grew 2-3X faster than income for high school, college, or post-graduate graduates from 2010 to 2019; however, the income for individuals with less education, especially no high school degree, lags significantly behind their more educated peers.



**Levels of Education for Working-age Adults.** Working-age adults ages 45+ are less educated on average, making them particularly vulnerable to workforce changes and automation.



**Changes in Income by Education Level in Dallas.** Income for individuals without a high school degree grew 2-3X faster than income for those with higher levels of education from 2010 to 2019. Even with the increase, income for those with lower levels of education still lags behind those with higher levels.



### RACIAL DISPARITIES AND POVERTY

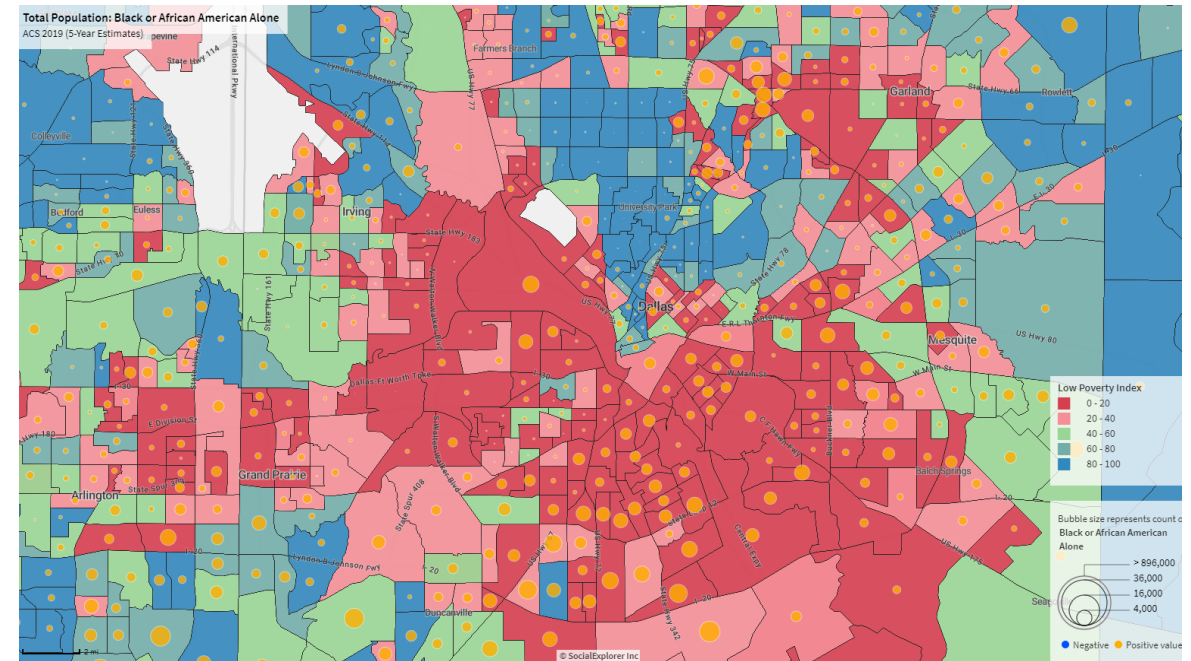
The City of Dallas has vibrant Black and Hispanic communities, making up 24.3% and 33.1% of the population, respectively.<sup>8</sup> However, these demographics face notable socioeconomic differences relative to other racial or ethnic populations. More than one fourth of Black Dallas residents are in poverty (3X the rate of White residents) and more than one fifth of Hispanic Dallas residents are in poverty (2.5X the rate of White residents). And while all demographic groups saw income increases from 2010 to 2019 (especially the Hispanic population), Black income grew 25% slower than White income, signaling an increase in the racial income divide over the past 10 years.

The City of Dallas, like many other urban centers in the US, continues to face the effects of redlining (policies by the federal government in the 1930s that explicitly separated and invested less in Black communities). This is starkly shown in the map on the right.

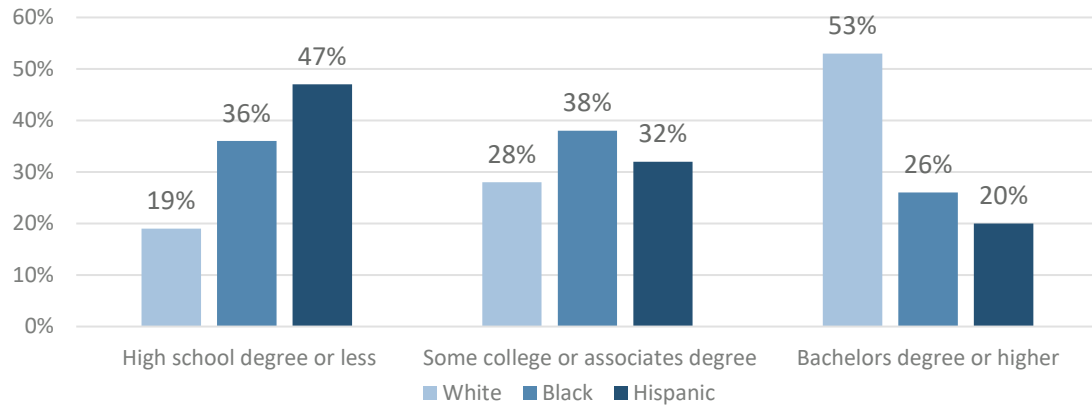
This map demonstrates that poverty (dark red) is most prevalent in the southeast and west regions of Dallas City, as well as in the far northeast corner of the city. The Black population of Dallas (measured by the size of the yellow dot in each city region) is overwhelmingly concentrated in high poverty regions.

The overlap of poverty and race is not as strong as you move farther away from the center of the City of Dallas. There are significant Black populations in the far southwest, far northeast, and northwest corners of the map where poverty is less prevalent. This indicates that Blacks are low income in the City of Dallas and middle class outside of the city, revealing that racial inequity is concentrated in the City of Dallas.

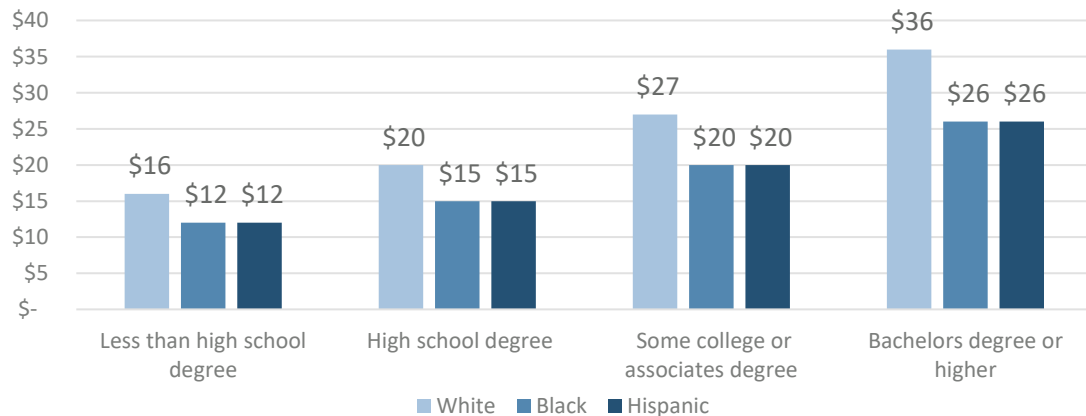
Race	Males Below Poverty Line	Females Below Poverty Line	Total Below Poverty Line	Inflation Adjusted Income 2019	Household Income Change 2010-2019
White	7.8%	9.0%	8.6%	\$82,850	28.0%
Black	23.4%	26.8%	26.2%	\$36,165	21.0%
Hispanic	19.3%	24.9%	22.1%	\$45,545	33.9%
Overall	17.0%	20.8%	18.9%	\$52,580	26.1%



**Race and Poverty in the City of Dallas.** The Black population of Dallas (measured by the size of the yellow dot in each city region) is overwhelmingly concentrated in high poverty regions (dark red).



**Levels of Education by Race/Ethnicity.** Of those age 25+ in Dallas, the Black and Hispanic communities achieve significantly lower levels of educational attainment compared to White communities.<sup>9</sup>



**Median Hourly Wage by Educational Attainment and Race/Ethnicity.** Of those age 25-64 in Dallas and Collin Counties, the Black and Hispanic communities earn lower wages across all levels of educational attainment.<sup>10</sup>

## RACIAL DISPARITIES IN EDUCATION

It is well documented that formal education is highly correlated with earnings. Unfortunately, in the City of Dallas there are significant differences in education attainment between racial and ethnic groups. Blacks and Hispanics are nearly 3X and 5X less likely to have a college degree than Whites. Further, nearly 50% of Hispanics have less than a high school degree which severely limits their ability to be attractive candidates for even many entry-level jobs.

While increased educational attainment is critical toward improving the earnings for all, there are still wage disparities between racial and ethnic groups with the same education level. At every education level – less than high school through college degrees – Blacks and Hispanics earn a lower median wage than their White counterparts. There are different possible explanations for this disparity, including the types of jobs and industries worked in by each racial or ethnic group, but the gaps are stark and suggest possible structural barriers and biases that may be limiting the fair compensation for Blacks and Hispanics.

There are many workforce development efforts across Dallas that aim to increase the educational attainment for minority populations, especially Blacks and Hispanics. The recommendations of this report share similar aims to increase awareness and access to educational and upskilling opportunities for the Black and Hispanic community. While these efforts should improve circumstances for everyone, the ongoing disparity in wage earnings suggests additional efforts will be required to cultivate an equitable workforce.

## RACIAL DISPARITIES IN EMPLOYMENT

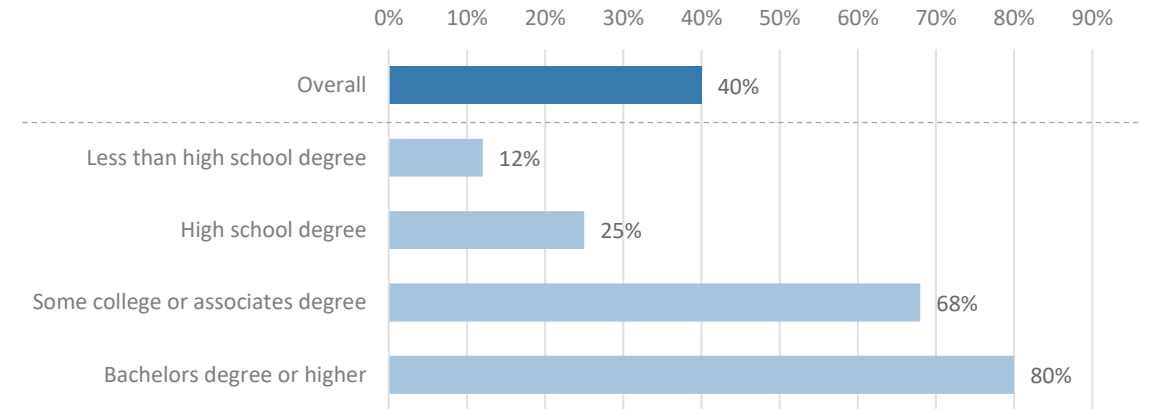
Dallas is home to a robust and diverse economy, with 22 Fortune 500 companies in the Dallas-Fort Worth Area.<sup>11</sup> The breadth of companies, large and small, across Dallas present significant employment opportunities. However, there is evidence that not all the employment opportunities are “good jobs” and the individuals filling the good jobs do not appropriately represent Dallas’s diverse community.

In this context and analysis, the United Way of Metropolitan Dallas has defined a good job as an occupation with annual compensation greater than \$32,232, with stable or positive future growth in the number of jobs and resilience to automation. Given these criteria, only 40% of jobs are considered “good jobs.” Note, whether these good jobs translate to a sustainable living wage depends on the household size and composition.

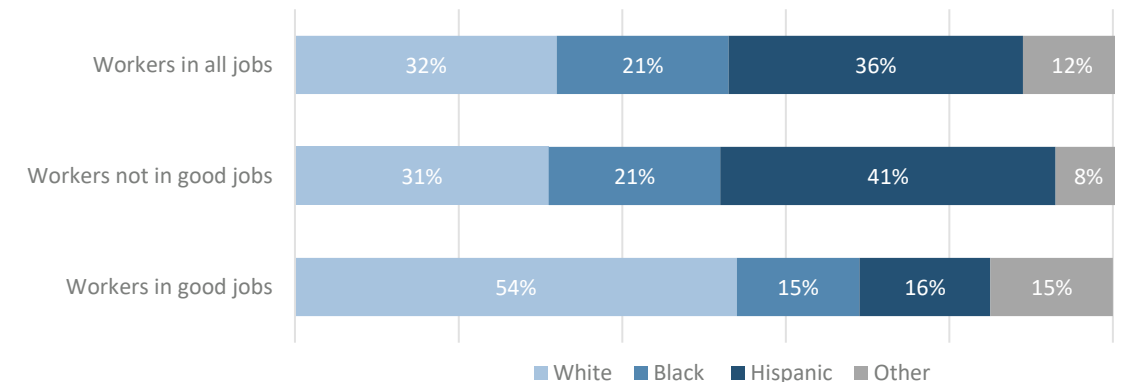
The share of who holds these good jobs is unsurprisingly positively correlated with educational attainment. The higher the level of education, the more likely an individual is to be in a good job. The jobs for 80% of individuals with Bachelor’s degrees or more meet the criteria of a good job.

When good jobs are compared across racial and ethnic groups, there are notable differences in the distribution of workers. Among all the good jobs, White workers hold 54% of the jobs while Black and Hispanic workers only hold 15% and 16%, respectively. The distribution of workers among jobs that are not good completes the discouraging story as numbers increase for Black and Hispanic workers to 21% and 41%, respectively.

As noted previously, education and skill building is not likely the only solution to improving the lives of minority populations in Dallas, but there is strong evidence that it can be a driver to improved economic circumstance.



**Share of Workers in Good Jobs by Education Level.** In Dallas and Collin Counties, the share of workers in good jobs is higher for those with higher levels of education.<sup>12</sup>



**Distribution of Workers in Good Jobs by Race/Ethnicity.** In Dallas and Collin Counties, there is an unequal distribution of workers in good jobs by race, revealing that there are lower proportions of BIPOC individuals in good jobs compared to their white counterparts.<sup>12</sup>

## GENDER AND FAMILIAL DISPARITIES

In addition to racial disparities, gender and familial disparities are also prevalent among working-age adults.

Women, and especially single-female-led households, face severe disadvantages in Dallas. More than 20% of women are poor, and they are more than 20% more likely to be poor than men. More than 30% of all households headed by a single woman are below the poverty line, increasing to more than 40% if a woman has children. Single-female-led households are more than 3X as likely to be in poverty as married households, and more than twice as likely to be in poverty than single-male-led households. Across all household demographics, having children significantly exacerbates the incidence of poverty.

Working-age adults with children are likely to face increased challenges in participating in upskilling or reskilling programs due to the burden of childcare costs. Low-income working-age adults often do not have surplus income to pay the high costs of childcare. Even for households with two parents, both incomes are often required to sustain the home.

Race <sup>13</sup>	Males Below Poverty Line	Females Below Poverty Line	Total Below Poverty Line	Inflation Adjusted Income 2019	Household Income Change 2010-2019
White	7.8%	9.0%	8.6%	\$82,850	28.0%
Black	23.4%	26.8%	26.2%	\$36,165	21.0%
Hispanic	19.3%	24.9%	22.1%	\$45,545	33.9%
Overall	17.0%	20.8%	18.9%	\$52,580	26.1%

Household <sup>14</sup>	Overall Below Poverty Line	Without Children Below Poverty Line	With Children Below Poverty Line
Single-Male-led	13.5%	5.9%	24.4%
Single-Female- Led	31.0%	12.0%	40.3%
Married	9.1%	4.9%	13.6%
All	15.3%	6.4%	23.0%

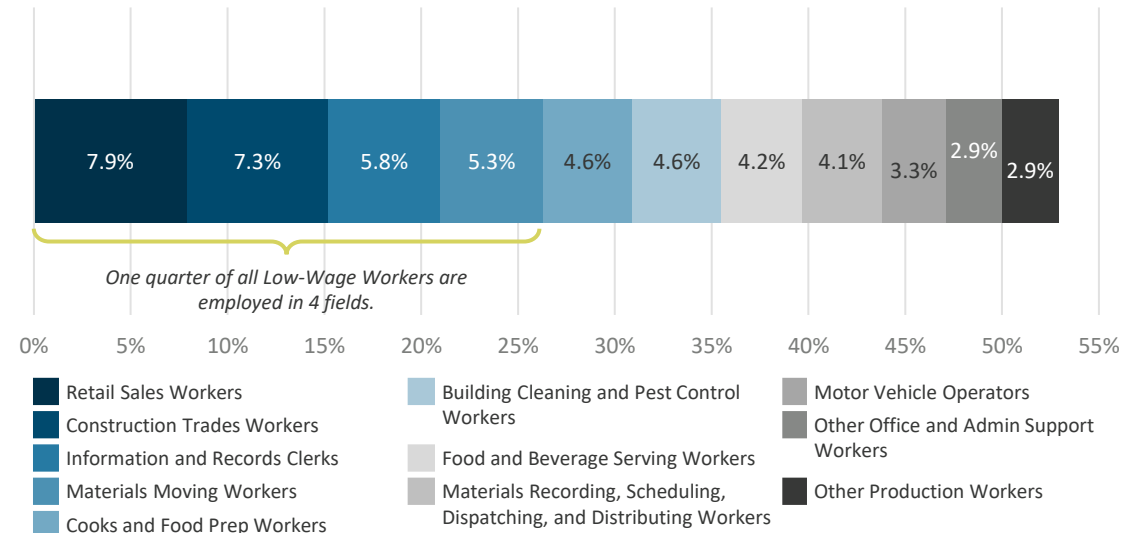




## INDUSTRY FACTORS

A key factor in understanding the disparities that exist between different populations and the inability to obtain good jobs is the concentration of fields in which these jobs exist. Over 50% of workers in low-wage jobs are concentrated in 11 industry fields, with more than 25% concentrated in just four industry fields. While it is likely unrealistic for these fields and jobs to be eliminated, they could be priorities for identifying individuals in the community that would benefit most from support and resources to engage in training or upskilling opportunities.

In contrast to the low-wage fields, there are industries with good jobs in which significant growth is anticipated. And, in many cases, they do not require extensive education requirements. These high-potential and growing industries include fields like law enforcement, finance, healthcare, and business operations. In helping to support individuals transition away from low-wage jobs, these industries and jobs could be strong pathways to obtaining good jobs.



**Employment of Low-Wage Workers in Dallas.** Over half of all low-wage workers in the Dallas Area are employed in 11 fields.<sup>15</sup>

### Good Jobs not Requiring a College Degree

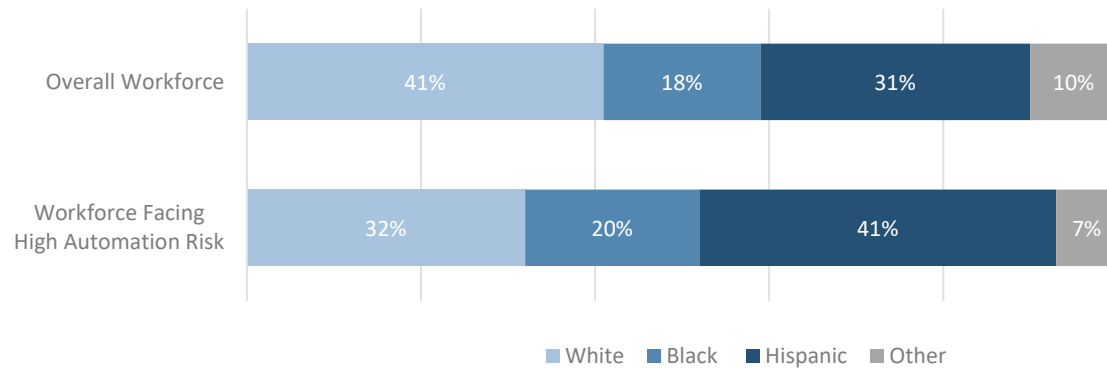
Workforce development organizations can assist working-age adults with low educational attainment transition into these jobs and industries. Many other growing industries with good jobs exist for other levels of education. Additional details can be found in Dallas Thrives' High Priority Jobs Report.<sup>16</sup>

Occupation	Total Employment	10 Year Growth Rate	Average Income
First-line supervisors of retail sales workers	33,340	9%	\$54,655
Food service managers	12,145	9%	\$55,242
Sales representatives of services, except advertising, insurance, financial services	10,636	11%	\$108,976
Electricians	9,630	17%	\$42,649
First-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers	8,093	17%	\$56,891
Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	7,062	17%	\$39,135
First-line supervisors of production and operating workers	6,626	7%	\$64,231
Police officers	5,252	6%	\$68,568
Radio and telecommunications equipment installers and repairers	3,371	14%	\$43,552
Coaches and scouts	2,825	23%	\$54,303
Supervisors of transportation and material moving workers	2,728	16%	\$47,883

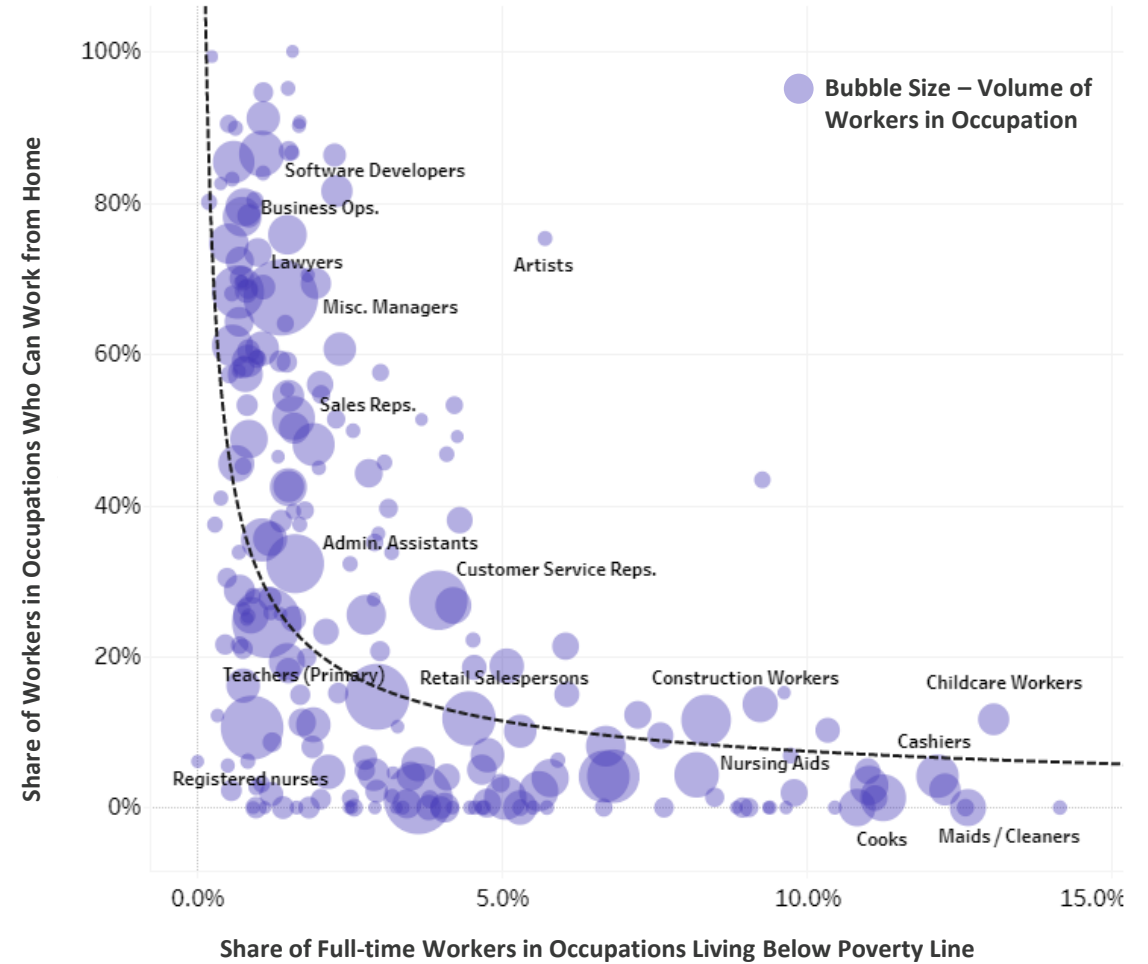
### EMPLOYMENT RISK FACTORS

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing challenges among low-income workers because many of their jobs could not be completed from working at home. In many cases, these jobs require in-person interaction (e.g., childcare workers, cashiers, nursing aids, etc.) that was not permitted during the pandemic. As lockdowns hit, low-wage workers were furloughed or let go.

A growing and more consistent risk confronting low-income workers is being displaced by automation. As shown in previous pages, there are significant disparities by race and ethnicity in the proportion of the population that has good jobs. In correlation with the good jobs, there are significant disparities by race and ethnicity in who is prone to automation risk. The most notable disparity is that jobs held by Hispanic workers represent over 40% of the jobs facing high automation risk.



**Automation Risk by Race/Ethnicity.** Automation risk is concentrated among racial and ethnic minority groups. Hispanic workers are most vulnerable to having their jobs displaced through automation.<sup>17</sup>



**Ability to Work Remotely by Occupation and Poverty.** The occupations least likely to be able to transition to work from home are often among those in which many employees are already below the poverty line, putting those workers at higher risk of job displacement.<sup>18</sup>



## IMPLICATIONS

As seen from data across the previous slides, there are significant disparities in income, employment, education, and access to opportunities. In understanding these insights, three key implications guided our thinking on prospective actions that could be taken by the Mayor's Office and City of Dallas:

1. The workforce development ecosystem in Dallas is dynamic and has an abundance of ongoing initiatives and effort. **As a result, the Mayor's Office and City of Dallas must have the personnel in place to take a consistent and active role in order to effectively partner and influence opportunities as they see best.**
2. The Mayor's Office and City of Dallas play a unique role on the workforce ecosystem, with strengths in funding and connecting (or partnerships). **For the recommendations to be realistic and implementable, they must fit these roles.**
3. There are specific populations, Black and Hispanic working-age adults, most in need of support to improve their ability to access and succeed in education and training programs to attain good jobs. **While all can benefit from improvement to the workforce development system and resources, recommendations should emphasize the unique needs and circumstances of these populations.**
  - a. The unique needs or barriers of this population often include:
    - i. Limited awareness of suitable education and training programs.
    - ii. Challenges to navigate pathways to upskill or secure a better job.
    - iii. Support for funding, childcare, time off from work, and transportation.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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**01**

WORKFORCE LIAISON

**02**

FORMAL COLLABORATION

**03**

PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT

**04**

NAVIGATION SUPPORT



# 01

## WORKFORCE LIASON

Appoint an individual to implement these recommendations, track progress, and ensure the city is represented in workforce development efforts across the region.

---

# OVERVIEW: WORKFORCE LIAISON

---

Appoint an individual to implement these recommendations, track progress, and ensure the city is represented in workforce development efforts across the region.



## THE IDEA IN BRIEF

The City of Dallas has a robust ecosystem of public and private organizations focused on improving the capacity and opportunities for the workforce. These stakeholders include education and training providers, government programs, employers, nonprofit entities, and philanthropists. With such a wealth of resources across Dallas, there is an abundance of programs and initiatives aimed at workforce development. The Mayor's Office and city officials cannot actively engage in every regional workforce development effort. So, when they are involved, their presence elevates certain actions and keeps them connected to the community. A liaison or point person can extend the impact of city leaders and draw in the city's assets and resources to add value.

Ultimately, the liaison is a critical component of successfully implementing the recommendations that follow in this report. This person will clarify goals, encourage organizations to be responsible for achieving those goals, and remove barriers to success. The Workforce Development Liaison within the Mayor's Office would provide a consistent point of connection for workforce development needs, opportunities, and activities. The liaison would serve as representative of the Mayor's Office and city officials at convenings with other workforce development leaders and identify opportunities to offer support. This person would also bring recommendations for partnerships and other engagements to the mayor and the Workforce, Education, and Equity Committee to determine how to engage.

## EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

There are many examples of cities across the country – New York,<sup>1</sup> Chicago,<sup>2</sup> Los Angeles<sup>3</sup> – in which an individual is appointed or hired to lead local workforce development efforts. There are also Texas examples in San Antonio<sup>4</sup> and Houston<sup>5</sup> of individuals leading workforce development on behalf of the Mayor's Office and their respective cities.

The roles for these leaders often focus on three primary objectives: 1) leading out internal initiatives like funding or service programs, 2) getting employers, partner agencies, and other local organizations to effectively work together, and 3) connecting residents to training and employment opportunities.

### CASE STUDY | Appointing Impactful Czars in Dallas

The City of Dallas has a well-established precedent of appointing specialized and well-qualified individuals to serve as leaders and coordinators between the Mayor's Office and existing city-wide efforts. These leaders have overseen efforts across multiple city issues including in the areas of homelessness, health, healthcare access and ethics. These leaders have worked alongside relevant stakeholders, recommended ideas, advised the City's elected leaders and others, and helped the City and other stakeholders take action to address an issue.

A notable recent example of this is the City of Dallas's Health and Healthcare Access Czar. In 2020, Mayor Johnson appointed Dr. Kelvin Baggett as the Health and Healthcare Access Czar. Dr. Baggett's responsibilities were centered on how to make sure the residents of Dallas have access to testing and contact tracing in response to COVID-19.<sup>6</sup>

## GETTING STARTED

The Workforce Liaison role should be respected by other workforce leaders and have positive relationships with all the relevant organizations within Dallas and the region. The mayor and city stakeholders must empower the Liaison to lead and make decisions on their behalf to minimize delays and align efforts.

## POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- Identify and appoint ideal candidate.
- Brief liaison on desired actions to be implemented and available resources (e.g., budget, personnel, expertise).
- Develop a plan for implementing the recommendations in this report to include needed resources, partners, and time commitment.
- Finalize indicators of success for this and all other recommendations and establish baseline measurements.
- Align on how progress will be reported to the mayor and/or the Workforce, Education, and Equity Committee.
- Conduct continuous evaluation of the state of Dallas workforce and lead re-stratification efforts.

## KEY INDICATORS

### IMPLEMENTATION

- # of hours spent supporting initiatives
- # of partnerships
- # of partner meetings

### IMPACT

- N/A - [measured via actions implemented by liaison]



# 02

## FORMAL COLLABORATION

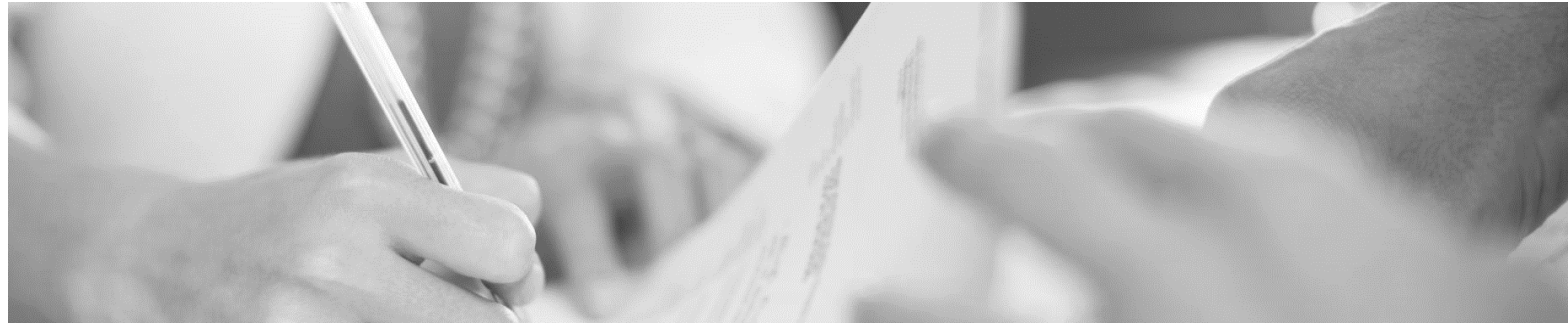
Establish a formal agreement with existing workforce development organizations to align efforts and accountability for outcomes.

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# OVERVIEW: FORMAL COLLABORATION

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Establish a formal agreement with existing workforce development organizations to align efforts and accountability for outcomes



## THE IDEA IN BRIEF

The workforce development challenges in the City of Dallas are complex and often require collaborative and integrated solutions to yield lasting change. To foster and provide ways to collaborate, the Mayor's Office can establish formal agreements (such as interlocal agreements) that bind multiple partners to a common workforce development goal through coordinated funding, provision of service, and desired impact. While informal commitments to work together are helpful, a formal agreement with clear roles and expectations increases the level of accountability for all participating entities and therefore the likelihood of success and impact.

As an initial collaboration through an interlocal agreement, the Mayor's Office could partner with established local workforce development organizations around a common goal to support upskilling working-age adults. The general parameters would commit the Mayor's Office to distribute funds toward a specific education or training program offered by a reputable provider (like Dallas College) and bring in supporting partners (such as Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas) who could deliver critical wraparound services (e.g., childcare, transportation, ESL).

The power of a formal agreement is clear goals, defined commitments, and accountability structures. This formal agreement from the Mayor's Office should include clear outcomes by which success will be measured and partners held accountable. The outcomes could include the numbers of individuals enrolled, graduated, placed in living-wage jobs, and change in earnings.

## EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

An interlocal agreement (ILA) is a written, collaborative contract to formally fund and create a partnership between local government agencies. This type of commitment has been used in workforce development to advance specific projects or initiatives. It must specify the purpose and responsibilities – financial or services – that will be provided by each party.<sup>7</sup>

For the City of Dallas, an interlocal agreement will specify the responsibilities of a variety of partners to provide services or fund programs that benefit the upskilling of working-age adults. Each partner in the ILA will be responsible for providing specified services or funding to facilitate the program’s effectiveness. Ultimately, the ILA strategy will focus on helping working-age adults advance their skills, find access to financial and other support, and advance their careers in meaningful ways.

### CASE STUDY | City of San Antonio

Alamo Area Academies provides a two-year program for high school students to earn both high school and college credit in community college courses to help students advance their education before high school graduation. Programs like this help high school students to be better prepared for entry into college or the workforce upon graduation of high school.

Through an interlocal agreement, the City of San Antonio, Alamo Colleges, local school districts, Workforce Solutions Alamo, and industry partners contracted to support Alamo Area Academies’ delivery of this program. The interlocal agreement provides that students can earn 27-35 hours of college credit through college-level courses provided by the college district at no cost to the students.

Each partner involved is required to make financial or service contributions to the program. For example, the college district and Alamo Area Academies facilitate the program while the City of San Antonio and Workforce Solutions Alamo provide funding to alleviate the costs to students. Industry partners provide aligned and funded internship experiences to prepare students for workforce entry upon program completion.<sup>8</sup>

## GETTING STARTED

There are examples of other successful formal agreements that can serve as models. The mayor and his team can build from those examples (in Dallas and elsewhere) to craft this agreement. This agreement envisions expanding the capacity of already existing programs to serve more individuals. The Liaison can be a helpful resource in moving this agreement forward among all the relevant parties.

## POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- Define criteria to assess and determine which programs are high quality.
- Finalize which program(s) will be funded via ILA investment, amount of funding allocated, and overall timeline.
- Identify the needs and barriers for prospective students and support partners to address needs and minimize barriers.
- Determine the desired results for students and approach for establishing baselines and ongoing impact measurement.
- Draft ILA with clear delineation of roles and responsibilities for each participating entity.
- Review ILA with the legal teams and boards of directors of all partners; all parties agree to terms.

## KEY INDICATORS

### IMPLEMENTATION

- Formal commitment of partners
- Clear goals established for each party
- Clear source of funds and ability to commit those funds to the goals

### IMPACT

- # of individuals enrolled in funded programs
- # of individuals graduated from funded programs
- # of students placed in living-wage jobs with opportunities for growth
- Change in earnings of students who complete programs



# 03

## PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT

Leverage the mayor's unique role to communicate and promote local upskilling programs to target audiences.

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# OVERVIEW: PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT

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Leverage the mayor's unique role to communicate and promote local upskilling programs to target audiences.



## THE IDEA IN BRIEF

There are numerous education, training, and upskilling resources across the City of Dallas. Dallas College alone has more than 150 certificate programs across dozens of industries.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, many programs and resources are not fully leveraged due to low awareness or access by prospective adult students, especially by the adult learners who would likely benefit most from them.

The Mayor's Office and each city council member have a unique role in representing, understanding, and communicating with the local community. The local knowledge and relationships through these elected officials are critical to "meeting people where they are" to build awareness, trust, and motivation for individuals to seek out and engage in education and training opportunities. The communication strategy would include broad promotion and awareness building efforts by the mayor and other city officials via mediums to reach mass audiences (e.g., public forums, press releases, mass media). However, and likely more importantly, the strategy would focus on collaborations with hyper-local entities like faith-based organizations, community centers, local nonprofits, and other community influencers to increase awareness among the individuals most in need of the available opportunities. Additionally, by working through local entities, there is opportunity to get additional supports to address other barriers that may limit an individual's ability to access the upskilling or training resources.

## EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Working age adults who are looking for opportunity or considering participating in a job training program may be more likely to risk such action when the encouragement to do so comes from a trusted community member. As part of an advocacy campaign, the message to seek new work or enroll in an upskilling program is going to be helped or hindered by the messenger. For an audience that could be skeptical or lack motivation, research indicates a messenger that who has shared lived experience and demonstrated success is critical.<sup>12</sup> The personal experience of Mayor Johnson identifying as part the populations intended to be impacted provide validity and trust. Additionally, using local organizations in which there is already familiarity and established relationship can overcome skepticism or doubts regarding the intentions behind the messaging.

### CASE STUDY | Charlotte PIECE Project

In 2016, the city of Charlotte initiated an effort to promote economic opportunity for Charlotte residents through targeted job training and support.

As part of the effort, the city established the “Partners for Inclusive Employment and Career Excellence” Project (PIECE), an adult talent development program delivered in collaboration with Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont and the Urban League of Central Carolinas that targeted individuals with multiple barriers to employment. The program was created by city council and staff, with \$1 million in city funds, to support training individuals and providing access to candidates with specific labor and trade skills. The effort used partners and community members through the local Goodwill to provide a level of trust and familiarity in order to engage prospective participants.

As of 2017, Project PIECE trained 154 individuals, graduated 135 and placed 117 in jobs.<sup>10</sup>

## GETTING STARTED

To do this well, the right messengers need to have the right information. The communications strategy will need to reach the working-age adult population through multiple channels and with clear messaging and actions. Trusted messengers, armed with up-to-date information and opportunities, can connect with their communities in genuine and trustworthy ways. With channels and partners identified, the collateral and messaging must be developed, the content disseminated, and then there must be ongoing efforts to monitor effectiveness of the outreach.

## POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- Identify trusted local partners and channels through which information will be refined and distributed.
- Develop tailored messages, campaign collateral, and intended call to action – information about local programs or navigation support.
- Determine the desired outcomes and metrics by which the communications campaign will assess success and impact.
- Establish baselines against desired outcomes, like awareness of and engagement with existing programs.
- Mobilize partners to disseminate information.
- Conduct follow-up measurement of change in outcomes.

## KEY INDICATORS

### IMPLEMENTATION

- Identified local training organizations
- # of local communications partners

### IMPACT

- Increased awareness of upskilling programs, resources, and tools
- # of working-age adults who participate in upskilling programs

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# 04

# NAVIGATION SUPPORT

Refine digital supports to assist working-age adults in navigating upskilling opportunities and resources.



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# OVERVIEW: NAVIGATION SUPPORT

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Develop a hub to assist working-age adults in navigating upskilling opportunities and resources.



## THE IDEA IN BRIEF

With so many education, training, and upskilling resources across the City of Dallas, career advancement and change can be overwhelming to navigate for working-age adults. Further, the abundance of opportunities can make it difficult to determine which education-to-career pathways are ideal for an individual given his or her unique interests and experience.

The solution is to create an easily accessible, likely digital, platform in which individuals can reflect on their unique skills, experiences, and professional interests, and then be matched with potential education-to-career pathways. The pathways would provide potential job opportunities and career trajectories with accompanying local education and training programs. In addition to the education pathways, the platform could also be supplemented with information about resources that can help combat the most common barriers to pursuing education and training (e.g., childcare, finances, transportation, etc.). In its ideal state, the hub becomes a “one-stop-shop” for information and guidance on how to navigate and get started in pursuing new career opportunities. The hub should also consider options for accessibility for individuals who may not have access digitally – likely via existing community support organizations.

This idea also works well in tandem with the previously mentioned idea on Program Engagement. The promotion of a hub could be the central element of the communications strategy which would provide a simple and consistent message with a clear call to action.

## EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Multiple efforts across the country have created a variety of navigation supports and tools to aid students of all ages as they advance their education and skill development. These supports provide a variety of services, including helping learners identify their interests, relevant programs, job openings, and wraparound supports. Several examples across the nation and in Dallas can be used as references in developing this service, including [Keys to Success](#), [Washington Connection](#), [Idaho LAUNCH](#), [OneTen](#), and [SkillUp Coalition](#).

These supports provide important services to bridge the gaps working-age adults face in the workforce. Specifically, they provide explicit guidance in helping working-age adults understand and navigate pathways to obtaining knowledge and skills, and accessing wraparound services, in order to more effectively move into better jobs and advance in the workforce.

### CASE STUDY | Idaho LAUNCH

Idaho LAUNCH is an online tool to help individuals research and research identify career opportunities, as well as the skills or training they need to advance their careers. Using the results of a statewide survey to Idaho employers, Idaho LAUNCH identified the in-demand skills across the state and then aligned the needed skills with training programs and career pathways. Idahoans can then use the online SKILL SYNC tool to match their skills with employer needs and find programs to help them obtain and advance additional skills to qualify for the in-demand jobs in the region. Additionally, Idaho LAUNCH will connect students with funding to help pay for their upskilling programs. While Idaho LAUNCH is accessible to and has information about all of Idaho, it also breaks down opportunities into distinct regions to provide more localized support. The establishment of Idaho LAUNCH was achieved through numerous public and private partnerships, including with the Idaho Department of Labor.<sup>11</sup>

## GETTING STARTED

This recommendation should not need to start from a blank page. There are several resources available that can be refined to encourage more use and more timely information. In starting with the existing tools, the focus should be on adaptation for mobile phones and text-based options as well as identifying processes for updating resources regularly. Relying on insights from local community partners will also help maximize its usefulness.

### POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- Identify a preferred navigation tool from existing or newly created options and ensure that it presents information and opportunities with a highly effective Dallas-centric focus.
- Identify a specialized team to refine navigation support tools and services.
- Ensure the navigation tool has multiple access channels, especially for those without direct internet access.
- Combine with Program Engagement recommendation to raise awareness and use of platform.
- Liaison builds partnerships to populate and raise awareness of the navigation tool or hub.
- Establish ongoing funding plan and process for tracking usage and performance.

### KEY INDICATORS

#### IMPLEMENTATION

- A Navigation support is created or improved in line with cost and timeliness goals
- # of online visitors
- # of partners
- # of working-age adults who access resources and programs through support

#### IMPACT

- Increased participation and enrollment in education and training programs
- New employers, education, and training partners ask to be included in the support
- Employers, education, and training partners regularly ensure their information is updated
- Local communication partners seek advice on using the support

# CONCLUSION

Dallas needs a well-skilled, diverse, and nimble workforce to remain an economically strong, vibrant, and modern city. A critical element to a strong and lasting Dallas workforce is the ability to enable low income working-age adults, especially Blacks and Hispanics, to upskill and transition to good jobs .

Today, the Black and Hispanic working age adult population lags in education and earnings compared to their White peers and younger community members. The obstacles for this population to access opportunities to increase their education level and improve their earnings are significant, and therefore additional support from the City of Dallas, community and employers are necessary.

This report has recommended four key actions that should be taken so that organizations across the city focused on workforce development can better support the Black and Hispanic low income working age adults.

- 01 Workforce Liaison
- 02 Formal Collaboration
- 03 Program Engagement
- 04 Navigation Support

In closing, we point to research that examined trends in job growth rate and economic mobility among individuals from low-income families. Dallas has the benefit of robust job growth. However, it falls short in seeing that translate into individual mobility, especially compared to other Texas cities (Houston and San Antonio). Taking action to help individuals move into upskilling opportunities and acquire jobs with better wages are part of the solutions that can transform Dallas into a place where mobility is a way of life.



**Upward Mobility versus Job Growth in 30 Largest US Metro Areas.** While Dallas has experienced above average job growth over a long period of time, it is below average in upward mobility - meaning many of those who have been low income have not benefited from the opportunities presented by strong job growth.<sup>13</sup>

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