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Development**



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# Defining Job Quality

**A Resource for OSWD Stakeholders**

# INTRODUCTION

## Focus and aims of this document

This document serves as a framework for stakeholders of the Office of Strategic Workforce Development (OSWD) including employer partners, community organizations, public agencies, and current and future grantees. Its purpose is to enhance their understanding of job quality and to guide their collective efforts in workforce development. OSWD adopted an initial definition for quality jobs: ***“skilled jobs that pay minimally a living wage for workers to support themselves in the modern economy, allow for career and salary growth, provide economic security, and remove the need for public assistance.”*** Recognizing the need for a more comprehensive approach and drawing from Jobs for the Future's (JFF) Quality Jobs Framework, this document provides a detailed definition and framework for understanding the elements that contribute to job quality.

Job quality is a multidimensional concept, encompassing various aspects that impact the well-being and satisfaction of workers, as well as the success of their employers. While employers play a crucial role in creating quality jobs, achieving widespread job quality and unlocking the full economic potential of our workforce necessitates collaboration among education providers, industry groups, policymakers, and workers themselves. The document below offers a comprehensive approach for OSWD and its partners to delve into, facilitate, and sustain this vital work.

## How to use this document

- i. **Explore the Elements of Job Quality:** Review the chart below, that expands beyond our good job's definition and identifies actionable elements crucial to designing a quality job. Examine each dimension and its components to gain insights into the factors that contribute to job quality.
- ii. **Apply the Framework to Your Work:** Consider how the dimensions of job quality outlined in this document relate to your specific role or organization. Identify areas where you can contribute to enhancing job quality, align your efforts to focus on outcomes in quality jobs, and integrate these insights into your strategies, programs, and funding applications.
- iii. **Center Workers' Voices:** Keep sight of the importance of workers' voices in your pursuit of job quality. Build thoughtful avenues to engage with workers and seek their input to ensure that their perspectives and needs are integrated into your strategies, programs, and decision-making.

- . **Collaborate with Stakeholders:** Remember that improving job quality requires collaboration among policymakers, workforce development providers, industry groups, and employers. Seek opportunities to collaborate, share best practices, and align efforts to collectively advance job quality goals.
- i. **Evaluate and Monitor Progress:** Regularly assess and monitor the impact of your initiatives and strategies on job quality outcomes. Evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, identify areas for improvement, and adjust as necessary.

Stakeholders including potential grantees are encouraged to use this resource to implement practices and advocate for policies that improve job quality and expand the availability of quality jobs as defined by OSWD. Incorporating the principles outlined here, we can work together to foster a thriving and equitable workforce in New York State, for the benefit of workers, families, businesses and the broader economy.

## DEFINING JOB QUALITY

### Elements of Quality Jobs

On the next page, you will find a table containing a framework to utilize in exploring job quality elements.

## Quality Jobs for All New Yorkers

Compensation	Advancement	Structure	Agency + Culture
<p><b>I. Livable Wages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All workers are paid a regionally informed living wage*</li> <li>Wages are periodically reviewed and adjusted</li> </ul> <p><b>II. Fairness and Transparency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The total rewards package is fair, transparent, and equitable</li> <li>Workers have clear and accessible information about compensation and benefits</li> </ul> <p><b>III. Comprehensive Benefits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers receive opt-out benefits within 6 months of employment</li> <li>Benefits include healthcare, dental, vision, and a retirement plan with an employer match</li> <li>Monthly premiums cost workers less than 10% of their monthly income</li> </ul> <p><b>IV. Paid Leave</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers are provided with a minimum of six weeks of paid family and sick leave, whether through PTO or other leave policies</li> <li>Workers receive a minimum of 15 additional paid vacation days per year within their first year of employment</li> </ul>	<p><b>I. Skills-Based Practices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hiring and advancement decisions are based on skills and competencies rather than tenure or degrees</li> <li>Employers provide work that utilizes worker's skills and encourage continued growth</li> </ul> <p><b>II. Pathways to Mobility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managers are expected to do career planning with employees</li> <li>Workers have access to well-defined career pathways outlining how to progress within their organization or industry</li> <li>Organizations prioritize internal mobility and fill job openings from within whenever possible</li> </ul> <p><b>III. Career Coaching and Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers have access to ongoing coaching and training to help them advance in their careers</li> <li>Professional development and training are accessible, equitable, and lead to credentials that hold labor market value</li> </ul>	<p><b>I. Safe, Healthy, and Accessible Workplaces</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workplaces comply with all state and federal laws regarding workplace safety</li> <li>Workers are free from harassment, discrimination, or other forms of misconduct</li> <li>Workers are provided with reasonable accommodations to perform their job</li> </ul> <p><b>II. Proper Classification</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers are properly classified as employees, contractors, or other relevant categories</li> <li>Workers receive all relevant benefits and protections based on their classification</li> </ul> <p><b>III. Fair Scheduling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers have access and input into clear and predictable schedules</li> <li>Schedules are communicated in advance and change only with reasonable notice</li> </ul> <p><b>V. Job Security</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers are protected from arbitrary or discriminatory discipline or dismissal</li> <li>Workers can expect to be treated fairly and equitably in all employment decisions</li> </ul>	<p><b>I. Transparent HR function</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers have access to transparent and responsive human resources support</li> <li>Policies and practices are in place to protect and respect all staff</li> </ul> <p><b>II. Meaningful Commitment to DEI</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employers prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices to remove barriers and ensure equitable treatment of all workers</li> </ul> <p><b>III. Belonging and Psychological Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers are provided with a supportive work environment that fosters belonging, value, and respect</li> <li>Workers are recognized for their contributions to the organization</li> </ul> <p><b>IV. Ability to Organize</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers have the right to organize collectively without fear of retaliation or discrimination</li> </ul> <p><b>V. Opportunities for Input</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers are encouraged to provide input into their individual work, as well as organizational decisions</li> <li>Workers are prompted with opportunities to share their ideas, suggestions, and expertise without retaliation</li> </ul>

\* "Living Wage Calculator," Massachusetts Institute of Technology: <https://livingwage.mit.edu/>

## **Additional Considerations for Application**

Whether you are an employer providing jobs or a training provider preparing students for their future, it's crucial to recognize that optimizing job quality is an ongoing and continuous practice. Job quality is not a destination but rather a commitment to the improvement process, considering the diverse and interconnected elements within the worker and workforce ecosystems.

Every journey towards achieving quality jobs starts somewhere. We highly recommend centering the voices of both workers and employers right from the beginning of this endeavor. Adapting the elements of job quality to the specific contexts and capabilities of employers and employees is essential for successful implementation, maintenance, and evolution of quality jobs.

To assist you in this ongoing work, we have compiled a few helpful resources that you can explore as you embark on or continue your journey:

1. [Quality Jobs Framework](#)
2. [Good Jobs Scorecard](#)
3. [Job Quality Outcomes Map](#)

By consistently dedicating attention to improving job quality over time, you will enhance worker experiences, foster workforce efficiency and effectiveness, and contribute to a larger economy that benefits all stakeholders. Remember, this is a continuous journey, and each step towards enhancing job quality brings us closer to achieving equitable economic prosperity for the state as a whole.

## **CONCLUSION**

Building and sustaining quality jobs is an ever-evolving practice, shaped by intricate economic circumstances and conditions. Recognizing this, the pursuit of job quality is a dynamic and collaborative endeavor requiring patience and persistence. As leaders in our state, we have the opportunity and imperative to embrace a comprehensive approach to this important work. To make a meaningful impact, we must move forward with a clear vision and an empathetic understanding of our workforce's diverse needs and aspirations. By placing worker satisfaction at the heart of our efforts, we can create an economic environment that truly values and supports the well-being of workers and families.

Flexibility will also be crucial as we navigate the ever-changing landscape of work. We must be open to both incremental adjustments and transformative changes that respond to emerging needs. This adaptability will enable us to address the evolving challenges and seize opportunities to improve job quality for all.

By investing in job quality, we not only enhance the well-being of our workers but also drive productivity, performance, and the overall prosperity of our communities and economies. This is an invitation for leaders across sectors to join us in this vital mission. Together, we can create a future where quality jobs are the norm, workers thrive, and our state's economy flourishes.

## RESOURCES

### Living Wages

- MIT Living Wage Calculator: <https://livingwage.mit.edu/>

### Defining Quality Jobs

- Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, Uncertain Pathway from Youth to a Good Job: How Limits to Educational Affordability, Work-Based Learning, and Career Counseling Impede Progress toward Good Jobs: <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/pathway/>
- Center for American Progress, Good Jobs for All: How Federal Laws Can Create Pathways From Education and Training to Good Jobs: <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/good-jobs-federal-laws-can-create-pathways-education-training-good-jobs/>
- Good Jobs Institute, Defining Good Jobs: <https://goodjobsinstitute.org/what-is-a-good-job/>
- U.S. Department of Labor, Principles for Good Jobs: <https://www.dol.gov/general/good-jobs/principles>

### Worker-Centered Voice

- Fast Company, 6 choices companies can make to create jobs that people love: <https://www.fastcompany.com/90851117/how-companies-create-good-jobs-wellbeing>

## Additional JFF Resources

- Jobs for the Future, Together we can help employers create quality jobs: <https://www.jff.org/points-of-view/introducing-quality-jobs-framework/>
- Jobs for the Future, Quality jobs, from the worker perspective: <https://www.jff.org/what-we-do/impact-stories/jff-ired/quality-jobs-worker-perspective/>