

THE CALIFORNIA HIGH ROAD: A ROAD MAP TO JOB QUALITY

California's economy is the fifth-largest in the world and generates tremendous wealth and prosperity. At the same time, income inequality continues to rise, and people of color are overrepresented in low-wage, dead-end jobs. In 2017, the median wage was \$11.05 per hour, and one in three California workers earned less than \$15 per hour. The decline in economic opportunity and upward mobility exacerbates income inequalities that prevent workers—especially people of color and those who are historically marginalized—from thriving and achieving economic prosperity.

For these workers, simply connecting to a job is not enough. English-language proficiency, immigration status, criminal background, transportation, and childcare challenges prevent workers of color from accessing training and quality employment opportunities. Furthermore, systemic barriers, such as geographic segregation, discrimination, and hiring bias limit opportunities for people of color to achieve economic prosperity. Employers also use practices such as misclassification and subcontracting to increase profits, resulting in an increase in the number of working poor—those who work full-time but cannot earn enough to make ends meet.

High road training partnerships (HRTPs) are raising industry standards by building partnerships that connect workers and communities to safer, healthier, and more highly skilled jobs and a supportive workforce development infrastructure to reach socio-economic success. HRTPs increase the capacity of firms and workers to adapt and compete by addressing industry challenges like mass retirement and the effects of technological advances on the fundamental nature of work.

WHAT IS A QUALITY JOB?

Quality jobs provide family-sustaining wages, health benefits, a pension, worker advancement opportunities, and collective worker input and are stable, predictable, safe and free of discrimination. Quality jobs have the potential to transform workers' lives and create resilient, thriving firms and communities and a more just and equitable economy.

LOW-WAGE WORKER PROFILE

- 76%** are workers of color
- 40%** are immigrants
- 47%** have some college experience

Compared to the total California workforce, low-wage workers are:

- **twice** as likely to work part-time;
- **less** likely to be members of a union;
- **less** likely to receive employer-provided health insurance or retirement benefits;
- **more** likely to live in households with incomes below the federal poverty line; and
- **more** likely to experience high blood pressure, obesity, other chronic illnesses, and premature death.

Source: Low-Wage Work in California Data Explorer

CREATING A WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM THAT ENSURES JOB QUALITY

Family-Sustaining Wages

Family-supporting wages include healthcare, a pension, and paid sick leave and ensure that workers can procure basic necessities such as housing and food for themselves and their families in any location.

Career Pathways

Clearly defined career ladder opportunities lead to family-sustaining wages for workers. Workers must have access to quality education, training, and support services that provide the skills to access opportunities to enter and advance within a specific occupation.

Stable and Predictable Schedules

Work schedules are reliable, predictable, and stable and include enough hours to ensure a family-sustaining income. Workers receive reasonable advance notice of their schedules, clearly defined shifts, and a consistent number of hours.

Worker Voice and Agency

Worker knowledge and expertise is valued and respected. Worker expertise is necessary to the development, design, and implementation of training programs to adequately address industry demand and workforce needs. Workers should also have the right to organize and join unions and other organizations to protect their interests.

Healthy Work Environment

A safe and healthy work environment is key to improving worker relations, morale, job satisfaction and productivity. Adequate training and protection reduce the risk of on-the-job injuries, prevent fatalities, and lessen the impact of long-term health conditions. Socially conscious training that incorporates racial equity practices in a community context helps employers make workplaces safer and meet environmental sustainability standards that improve public health.

Job quality has significant social and economic benefits. Quality jobs can lead to economic stability and better physical and mental health outcomes for workers. A worker with a quality job is less likely to experience stress and anxiety, scheduling instability, or economic insecurity and more likely to experience job and overall life satisfaction, and good physical and mental health.

THE H RTP APPROACH CREATES AN ECOSYSTEM OF ECONOMIC PROSPERITY



Workers

Quality jobs would lead to economic mobility and positively affect workers' and their families' physical and mental health and well-being, relationships, and social and household lives.



Employers

Quality jobs would reduce absenteeism, lower turnover rates, and increase productivity and profits, resulting in the ability to thrive and compete in a high road economy.



Worker Organizations

Quality jobs would improve worker satisfaction, increase membership, strengthen worker power in the workplace, and create a more competitive workforce that lifts industry standards.



Communities

Quality jobs would increase the spending power of workers and help circulate money through local economies to support businesses, increase the number of jobs, create healthy, environmentally sustainable, thriving communities, and grow the economy.