

## Jobs and Race

Addressing Race and Cultural Competence in the Jobs Initiative

THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION



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**Prepared for the Annie E. Casey Foundation by Marcia Kingslow**

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## Foreword

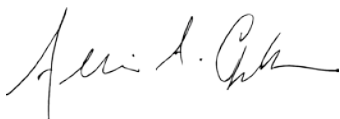
The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Jobs Initiative set out to increase job opportunities, particularly for young men of color, by improving connections between low-income neighborhoods and regional economies. To support this goal, the Casey Foundation worked with six sites across the country to address racial inequities and cultural competence in their respective labor markets. This work demonstrated that developing practices and systems that enable *all* workers to succeed in the workforce requires changing not only the skills and expectations of job seekers and entry-level workers but also how public and private systems promote equitable access and measure progress among the people they serve — and how businesses hire, support and promote their workers.

The Jobs Initiative and subsequent investments from the Casey Foundation and others have emphasized the fundamental role of employers in workforce development, educating practitioners, funders and policymakers about the importance of using strategies that deeply engage business to design and implement effective employment and training programs. These strategies, which focus on the specific skills employers need as well as the challenges facing low-income workers, are now embedded in various state and federal policies.

But this success in promoting effective, employer-driven workforce strategies has not always incorporated an explicit focus on equity in terms of access, training, hiring and support. This is ironic, given advocacy for sector-specific workforce development grew out of a concern for breaking down barriers to family-supporting jobs and careers for people of color and women in industries such as construction and manufacturing.

In today's labor market, racial equity continues to be major concern in industries ranging from hospitality to information technology. As the workforce development field continues to embrace the importance of partnerships with employers, it is more important than ever that we identify strategies for increasing employment opportunities for job seekers of color and addressing biases in local labor markets and industries.

For this reason, we have sought to mine the Casey Foundation's lessons and experiences from the Jobs Initiative, on which we believe the workforce development field can build. The Foundation will continue to underscore the role that industry and employer partnerships can play in promoting equitable hiring and career advancement opportunities for job seekers of color.



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## Introduction

From 1995 to 2005,<sup>1</sup> the Annie E. Casey Foundation implemented a new workforce development initiative driven by the fact that children whose parents are trapped in jobs that do not pay family-supporting wages or are unemployed are less likely to succeed in school and life. The Jobs Initiative invested \$30 million over a 10-year period in six cities — Denver, Milwaukee, New Orleans, Philadelphia, St. Louis and Seattle — to demonstrate how improvements in urban labor markets can expand access to better-paying jobs for young men and women, ages 18 to 35, living in low-income neighborhoods. The initiative particularly focused on female-headed and two-parent households and, notably, young fathers of color.<sup>2</sup> This report describes how the Jobs Initiative addressed the complex subject of jobs and race.

The focus on people of color was an intentional part of the Jobs Initiative's design. It evolved from detailed analyses demonstrating that complex historical, social and economic factors led to disproportionately poor employment rates for certain racial and ethnic groups, particularly African-American men.<sup>3</sup> Technological changes and structural shifts in the economy redefined industries and occupations, widened wage disparities and spurred the movement of jobs and wealth from central cities. One result was the concentration of poor residents in inner-city neighborhoods<sup>4</sup> that offered few job opportunities, were cut off from employment centers in other parts of the city and the suburbs and were overwhelmingly black and Latino. Real and perceived gaps in basic education, as well as technical and workplace skills, further limited access to employment and training opportunities for people of color. (These factors and the research that influenced the Jobs Initiative's design are summarized in Appendix A.)

Moreover, the historic pervasiveness of discrimination based on race and ethnicity in job recruitment, hiring, wages, promotions and other aspects of employment remained widespread during the design of the Jobs Initiative. Employers with limited exposure to people of color or different cultural norms were much more likely to hold prejudiced views and practice racial discrimination.<sup>5</sup> They were less likely to understand or accept that structural racism<sup>6</sup> and discrimination contribute to hiring, wage and advancement inequities among people of color. They were also dismissive of workplace discrimination as an issue.<sup>7</sup>

The Jobs Initiative's design and early implementation in the 1990s coincided with a period of strong economic growth and labor market expansion. Employers were highly motivated to find new workers and retain existing ones and thus more willing to diversify their workplaces. The Jobs Initiative sought to leverage this opportunity and demonstrate how new workforce development practices and policies could yield long-term benefits to disadvantaged job seekers, employers and workforce development systems. Doing that would require strengthening the connection between inner-city neighborhoods and regional labor markets; customizing outreach, recruitment, training and support structures to meet the needs of low-income job seekers and people of color; and developing a diverse set of stakeholders to work together in new ways.

Many of the Jobs Initiative's conceptual and operational elements took race into consideration. (These elements are discussed in more detail in "The Jobs Initiative's Core Strategies" on p. 10.) Cultural competence,<sup>8</sup> a core value of the Casey Foundation, was referenced in the Jobs Initiative's design material, but its application to workforce development was not well understood. The Jobs Initiative framework papers, guidance to applicant sites and planning guidelines for participating sites all underscored the importance of serving communities of color, developing governance structures and partnerships that were racially and ethnically diverse and addressing job seekers' skills and workplace conditions that make it difficult for people of color to succeed. The Foundation sought to understand the racial dynamics in candidate sites and incorporated this into the site selection criteria. Once underway, the Initiative disaggregated participant outcomes by race and ethnicity to better understand the effectiveness of its strategies.

This report complements two prior reports<sup>9</sup> about the initiative's work on jobs, race and cultural competence by examining how the Foundation and sites handled race and cultural competence throughout the initiative, including Casey's efforts to advance new practices, learning activities and work at the site level. This information may be instructive for those interested in advancing racial equity within a complex initiative or as part of a broader set of objectives. This report also dives deeper into the strategies, tactics and projects developed by the Jobs Initiative sites to improve outcomes for job seekers of color and employers. Finally, it explores how race and cultural competence informed policy and system reform efforts under the initiative, as well as challenges the sites and the Foundation faced in undertaking this important work.

## Overview of the Jobs Initiative

The long-term objective of the Jobs Initiative was to improve how public and private workforce development, economic development, human services and other systems serve job seekers living in low-income urban neighborhoods, as well as employers operating in regional economies. The Jobs Initiative was implemented in three phases. Over the course of the eight-year initiative, sites developed partnerships and assessed their regional economies, implemented jobs projects and prototypes and pursued strategies to improve the workforce system for the long term.

The Jobs Initiative built on several key assumptions about how to change the way labor markets functioned for low-income job seekers and employers:

- The need to focus on **regional labor markets** to address the physical isolation and disconnection of inner-city job seekers from suburban job centers.
- The need for a strong **civic infrastructure**, which involves multiple public- and private-sector stakeholders and leaders from diverse segments of the community who can marshal the forces and resources required to achieve workforce development innovations and system changes.

- The need for a **development intermediary**, or local institutional home for the initiative, with relationships across the civic infrastructure to guide planning; manage multisector partnerships and investments; implement sector-specific workforce development strategies that met worker and employer needs; and advance policy and system reform.
- The need to focus on a specific **community** — a distressed, low-income neighborhood with a population between 50,000 and 100,000 — to provide access to job seekers and community institutions able to serve as a pipeline for preparing prospective workers for regional jobs projects.
- The need for **neighborhood organizations** with deep ties to community residents, other organizations and service providers to manage outreach, recruitment, training, case management and job-retention services.

Other key elements of the initiative included:

- Adopting an entrepreneurial approach to strengthen the connections between low-income job seekers and employers who offered good jobs and to address policy and system-level barriers.
- Testing assumptions and strategies through jobs projects (see “The Jobs Initiative’s Core Strategies” on p. 10 for more on these projects) and prototypes before going to a larger scale and using projects to help craft long-term system change strategies.
- Developing jobs projects that expanded access for residents of low-income neighborhoods using specific strategies (see “The Jobs Initiative’s Core Strategies” for detailed strategy descriptions).
- Involving employers in the design of jobs projects, customizing training programs to their needs and providing services that address workforce development issues.
- Targeting industry sectors and occupations that offered good entry-level jobs and fewer barriers to low-income, nontraditional workers of color.
- Placing participants in jobs that paid well above the minimum wage and offered benefits and career advancement opportunities.
- Shifting the measure of participants’ success from job placement and short-term retention in a job to long-term retention in the labor market.
- Using data, assessment tools and planning models to define outcomes and developing measures of success that increased accountability, identified necessary course corrections and increased the likelihood of success.

The Casey Foundation sought to test assumptions in various economic, political and social environments with different types of development intermediaries and communities.

The six sites that participated in the Jobs Initiative were in cities with a range of geographies, civic environments, political cultures, economies and dominant industry sectors. They also varied in their racial and ethnic composition, community engagement and neighborhood dynamics.

Denver selected an operating foundation as its development intermediary; Milwaukee, a labor/community coalition; New Orleans, a multiracial civic group; Philadelphia, a regional community development financial institution; St. Louis, a regional council of government; and Seattle, a city economic development agency. The Foundation expected these intermediaries to exhibit a strong commitment to improving the way workforce systems serve low-income communities and people of color.

Milwaukee, New Orleans, Philadelphia and Seattle each had a sophisticated understanding of how race affected job opportunities in their regional economies and engaged in candid discussions about the problems affecting low-income populations and communities of color as a precursor to determining their target communities, partners and strategies. Denver and St. Louis were less willing to engage in this type of discourse. Only Milwaukee and New Orleans elected governance boards on which people of color represented the majority.<sup>10</sup>

The Casey Foundation developed a set of guidelines that sites used to create strategic investment plans and jobs projects. These guidelines outlined the roles, responsibilities and anticipated outcomes of the site implementers, participants, employers and other stakeholders. They also reiterated the expectation that the Jobs Initiative would address race by:

- demonstrating a commitment to jobs for low-income people, particularly people of color in inner-city neighborhoods;
- designing jobs projects and support services to respond to the needs of young men of color;
- helping employers overcome implicit biases<sup>11</sup> against disadvantaged job seekers from inner-city neighborhoods; and
- recognizing the role that minority-owned enterprises play in hiring job seekers of color, as well as the constraints they face in growing their businesses.<sup>12</sup>

Although the Casey Foundation set clear expectations for the initiative, it did not provide specific guidance on how sites should meet those expectations, particularly those around increasing job opportunities for low-income job seekers of color. In addition, the approach to work around race and cultural competence across sites didn't emerge until the second year of the initiative, after sites had developed strategic plans describing their project plans and expected outcomes.



## SITE APPROACHES TO ADDRESSING RACIAL AND ETHNIC BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

The racial and ethnic composition of the target communities was an important site selection criterion (see Table 1). Historical, cultural, political and economic factors shaped how the sites grappled with racial considerations, as did the organizational dynamics of their intermediaries.<sup>13</sup>

Table 1. Racial and Ethnic Composition of Jobs Initiative Communities

City	Community	Asian	African American	Latino	American Indian	White
Denver Workforce Initiative	89,885	3%	26%	50%	-	21%
Milwaukee Jobs Initiative	n/a	4%	65%	15%	1%	14%
New Orleans Jobs Initiative	66,754	-	90%	2%	-	8%
Philadelphia Jobs Initiative	89,428	2%	91%	3%	-	4%
St. Louis Regional Jobs Initiative	94,224	-	91%	<1%	<1%	8%
Seattle Jobs Initiative	120,888	30%	29%	7%	2%	32%

Source: 1996 data compiled by Abt Associates for the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The Seattle Jobs Initiative collected considerable data on race, ethnicity, gender and the challenges faced by residents of its community. The site identified racism as a top barrier, as well as proxies for race and ethnicity, such as community of residence and language barriers. The site investigated diversity within community organizations, as well as their capacity to serve men of color and customize curricula and services to different racial and ethnic groups. Seattle also examined the participation rates of people of color in union apprenticeship programs, as well as enrollment and completion rates at community colleges.

The Philadelphia Jobs Initiative conducted a neighborhood labor-market assessment to gauge barriers to employment and employers' perceptions of community residents. This helped the site identify subsets of the target population that might be best suited for proposed projects, such as targeting job-ready black men ages 18 to 25 for Philadelphia's manufacturing sector project.

Driven by the legacy of labor exploitation in the South, the New Orleans Jobs Initiative focused intently on race. From its perspective, job opportunities were limited for African Americans in New Orleans because structural and institutionalized forms of racism hindered black economic development. The site focused on public housing developments and included representatives of tenants' associations on its multiracial governance board. Community representatives selected

the president of one of the nation's largest black-owned banks as board chair because of his efforts to advance racial equity in mainstream business and economic development circles.

The St. Louis Regional Jobs Initiative initially had difficulty navigating the region's divisive racial politics. Data collected about community residents were limited and not well segmented, nor did the site have a good understanding of the capacity of neighborhood organizations to serve the target population. St. Louis' capacity to address racial issues improved considerably with a shift in focus initiated by a new site director.

Regardless of the extent to which issues of race, ethnicity and culture were considered during the initiative's early years, none of the sites were prepared to address the many barriers people of color faced or several of their partners' limited capacity to fully address them.

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#### **The Jobs Initiative's Core Strategies**

The initiative employed six types of strategies<sup>14</sup> that factored in the realities of regional labor markets; the barriers that low-skilled, low-wage job seekers face; the hurdles that growth-oriented employers encounter; and the changes needed within public and private workforce systems. Implicit in these strategies was a focus on obstacles for people of color and gaps in the systems serving low-income urban neighborhoods.

- **Job brokering** responds to the lack of connections low-income job seekers have with formal and informal hiring networks and training resources by building the capacity of community-based organizations to serve as brokers between employers and prospective employees. This approach involves building deep employer relationships and aligning job readiness, basic skills, technical training and support services with employers' needs. Effective job brokering helps businesses address discriminatory practices and job seekers adjust to workplace norms, while strengthening informal hiring networks in communities of color. The strategy assumes that job brokers have the capacity to navigate issues involving race and discrimination.
- **Human services job creation** leverages public human service investments to create jobs for residents of low-income communities, while expanding the availability of services that support working families. This strategy targets jobs in areas such as child care, home health assistance and food services, as well as jobs in companies and social enterprises that provide goods and services to public agencies.
- **Sectoral interventions** target high-growth industry sectors that offer good entry-level jobs. The approach involves working closely with employers to address company-level workforce needs and with networks of employers to address long-term hiring, training and job-quality issues specific to the sector. Stronger connections between economic and workforce development increase access to existing jobs and help stimulate job creation. The Jobs Initiative targeted

sectors traditionally dominated by men, such as manufacturing and construction, to increase opportunities for young men of color.

- Spatial mobility strategies respond to the changes in local and regional economies and public policies that isolate residents of inner-city neighborhoods from city and suburban job centers. These strategies connected residents with job sites using alternative transportation and promoted policy reforms designed to increase accessibility.
- Capitalization and enterprise development strategies encourage the formation and growth of businesses that are disposed to hiring low-income job seekers. These strategies particularly target companies owned by people of color and involve not only helping firms address hiring needs but also considering how access to capital, markets and technical assistance affect these companies and inner-city businesses.
- Jobs policy networks address gaps and inefficiencies in the way public and private workforce development systems respond to low-income job seekers and collaborate with related systems. These networks were designed to build on lessons from other Jobs Initiative strategies. This strategy assumes that policy advocacy for jobs will occur at multiple levels and involve alliances among broad sets of community and civic stakeholders.

The Jobs Initiative sites had the flexibility to develop jobs projects in any or all of these areas, based on local conditions and opportunities. Projects were expected to produce specific outcomes related to wages, job quality and retention.

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## Mobilizing to Address Race and Cultural Competence

This section traces the arc of the Jobs Initiative's work around race, ethnicity and cultural competence, beginning with initial efforts that dovetailed with the planning phase (1995–1997) through the capacity-building phase (1997–2000) and the implementation phase (2000–2005).

During the latter part of the Jobs Initiative's planning phase, two sites noticed racial inequities in their job placement and retention rates. The community partner responsible for recruiting and placing participants in jobs in Philadelphia, Ogontz Avenue Revitalization Corporation, observed that employers were not granting African-American men interviews or offering them jobs at the same rate as their white counterparts. The Denver Workforce Initiative observed similar patterns.

Despite having strong partnerships with a range of employers, other Jobs Initiative sites reported encountering employers who were reluctant to hire certain job seekers. The sites attributed this to employers' limited exposure to job seekers of color or negative perceptions about them. The sites found it particularly troublesome that some employers used various behavioral and cultural attributes as proxies for race or ethnicity in turning down applicants — an indication of the extent to which employers lacked effective ways to assess and measure soft skills for low-wage jobs. Sites also reported that new hires were experiencing subtle and overt racism on the job.

Although the Foundation devoted considerable attention to labor market discrimination, skill building and the structural and systemic barriers facing job seekers of color, Casey's assumptions about how issues related to race, ethnicity and culture would affect the implementation of the Jobs Initiative were not well developed. For example, despite the Foundation's expectation that the sites address the needs of young men of color, Casey offered little guidance on what this meant in practice. The Foundation assumed sites had a tacit understanding about the importance of race in labor market success. However, without an overarching framework and specific measures of progress and goals, sites were left to determine how they would consider and address race on their own.

Realizing sites needed additional guidance, the Foundation began to offer more support in tackling the challenges related to race and ethnicity. In 1996, Casey worked with a core group of site representatives to organize a meeting primarily focused on the challenges facing African-American men participating in the initiative, as they represented the majority of men involved but were interviewed and hired less frequently than their peers. The meeting focused on developing strategies to improve job-readiness training, change employers' perceptions about job seekers of color and teach participants how to recognize and handle racial bias and hostility in the workplace.

That first meeting led to the creation of a workgroup focused on developing strategies to reduce disparities in job outcomes for people of color by focusing on soft skills. The group consisted of Foundation and site staff, as well as policy experts, workforce development practitioners and

researchers who could help inform the workgroup and provide technical assistance to the sites. The Foundation determined sites should drive this effort based on their experiences — while ensuring the work remained grounded in the initiative's goals.

## **DEVELOPING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND AGENDA FOCUSED ON RACE AND SOFT SKILLS**

In June 1997, the Foundation hosted a conference that brought together initiative staff, site teams and consultants, along with a range of academics, practitioners and employers to delve into research and best practices associated with addressing issues of race and soft skills,<sup>15</sup> and to develop a framework for incorporating the findings into the initiative. The research detailed many of the racial inequities that informed the Jobs Initiative's design, such as the impact of deindustrialization, the migration of the middle class from inner cities and concentrated poverty on jobs, job access and skill development in communities of color (discussed in Appendix A). It also validated the sites' experience in attempting to place job seekers of color.

Then-University of Chicago professor and sociologist William Julius Wilson's groundbreaking work on the impact of structural changes in the economy on African-American communities revealed the prevalence of discrimination. He found that 74 percent of employers held negative perceptions about black workers and that these views were more pronounced in firms employing fewer workers of color, blue-collar industries and predominantly white suburban areas.<sup>16</sup> Other researchers found that employers were more likely to evaluate African-American men seeking jobs and workers based on soft skills than on the technical skills required for the job. In assessing the soft skills of people of color, employers tended to use subjective information and negative perceptions based on race or ethnicity.<sup>17</sup> In the absence of overt disqualifiers, employers were more likely to ask people of color for credentials higher than the work required.

As sites would have to address racial barriers to work within the context of the Jobs Initiative, the workgroup focused on building skills and support systems that would improve job outcomes for people of color, as opposed to directly challenging workplace discrimination. Several important findings guided the workgroup:

- Jobs increasingly required higher technical skills and a range of other skills that the workforce development field would come to classify as soft skills.<sup>18</sup>
- The workforce development field needed a definition of soft skills that took into account variations across industry sectors and businesses, as well as the barriers low-skilled job seekers and workers and people of color faced.
- Soft skills are influenced by cultural and environmental factors that employers may not understand.<sup>19</sup>

- Without clarity about the characteristics that constitute soft skills, employers may conflate soft skills and race and make assessments based on racial and ethnic stereotypes rather than objective criteria.
- Dating back to the 1970s, the effect of soft-skills training on one's ability to get and keep a job was thought to be negligible,<sup>20</sup> which contributed to workforce development organizations' limited ability to implement soft-skills strategies.

On a practical level, sites knew the absence of effective soft-skills training would hurt retention. Low retention resulted in uneven work histories, lower earnings over time and fewer opportunities to build skills, making it harder to find work. Low retention also led to increased turnover rates for employers and reinforced negative perceptions about low-income workers and people of color.<sup>21</sup>

The workgroup developed a working definition of soft skills that delineated:

- cognitive skills, such as problem solving, decision making, adaptability, initiative and risk assessment;
- communication skills, such as speaking, listening and comprehending instructions;
- work skills, including workplace habits, accepting responsibility, following instructions, having a willingness to learn, self-awareness and physical appearance; and
- interpersonal skills, including teamwork and conflict management.

Notably, the workgroup challenged assumptions commonly found in industrial psychology that soft skills are fixed traits that cannot be changed. In light of findings that poor cognitive skills reduced the employability of black men,<sup>22</sup> the group found research placing such skills squarely in the column of soft skills — which can be cultivated and learned — particularly important. Practitioners in the workgroup reported successfully building critical thinking and problem-solving skills as part of training curricula for soft and life skills. Research on code switching — understanding which codes of conduct are appropriate for particular settings — also influenced the group, showing that men of color, like everyone, adapt their behavior to the norms of multiple environments once they clearly see the distinctions.<sup>23</sup>

Over the course of the next year, the Foundation continued to support the workgroup, developing a network of technical assistance providers and helping sites as they developed strategies and products to address soft-skill issues. The Foundation also commissioned research that resulted in two groundbreaking studies: (1) a literature review and taxonomy for understanding how soft skills factor into hiring decisions and gaps in skills among people of color<sup>24</sup> and (2) a catalogue of organizations that provided soft-skills training.<sup>25</sup> The workgroup also examined employment discrimination, drawing on the Fair Employment Council of Greater Washington's documentation of patterns of racial discrimination in hiring. A major Jobs Initiative conference in August 1998

showcased these and other resources, as well as products and strategies from the sites and others, in addition to providing technical assistance.

## **REFINING THE FRAMEWORK: MOVING FROM SOFT SKILLS TO CULTURAL COMPETENCE**

As the Jobs Initiative progressed, the sites developed training sessions specifically for soft skills, with the benefits reflected in their participants' success in securing jobs. Soft-skills training proved critical to meeting initial three-month retention targets.<sup>26</sup> However, new workers continued to report instances of workplace bias, difficulties with supervisors and coworkers and other experiences that appeared to be associated with race, ethnicity or culture. The workgroup recognized the need for a different framework. The notion of cultural competence provided a broader framework for understanding how race and ethnicity affect employment and retention, placing them alongside a range of characteristics such as cultural diversity, socioeconomic background, language, religion, ability, gender and sexual orientation.

Cultivating cultural competence meant broadening the discussion to include employers, many of which needed tools to help them work with nontraditional and diverse workforces. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, which required public benefit recipients to work in exchange for receiving assistance, injected a much-needed supply of workers into a tight labor market — a supply largely consisting of individuals, primarily women, who had minimal work experience, severe basic skill deficiencies and multiple barriers to employment. This forced the Jobs Initiative sites to modify their strategies and absorb more hard-to-employ job seekers and people of color with limited work experience.

With a new appreciation for cultural competence, the workgroup shifted its focus to developing the initiative's strategy on race, ethnicity and culture in workforce development, with assistance from additional experts. The team crafted a definition of cultural competence in workforce development building on the foundation laid in the health and human services fields: "Cultural competence in workforce development is understanding and integrating the web of behaviors, attitudes, and policies that foster effective work in cross-cultural situations involving job seekers, job training and employment organizations, employees, and employers."<sup>27</sup>

This definition recognized the changing nature of regional economies and workplaces and the value of diversity. It treated racial, ethnic and cultural differences as assets that could help employers adapt to changing workplaces and markets. Cultural differences among people of color that were unfamiliar to employers were not viewed as deficits but as norms and behaviors that could be modified in different environments. Moreover, the cultural competence framework offered a means of aligning the workgroup's efforts with the structure of the Jobs Initiative and the strategies associated with the range of services for job seekers.

The workgroup also identified intermediary organizations as key agents in promoting “culturally competent behavior, attitudes and policies that bridge potential gaps between job seekers and employers.”<sup>28</sup> Indeed, the Jobs Initiative’s development intermediaries were integral to embedding cultural competence in their initiatives and increasing buy-in among their partners. The push for cultural competence also provided a vehicle to engage at the project, organizational, policy and system levels (discussed in subsequent sections). The potential to influence policies and systems underscored the importance of addressing structural and systemic barriers rather than solely focusing on the characteristics and skills of job seekers.

As a tactic, focusing more broadly on cultural competence also helped engage a wider range of stakeholders, including those who may have perceived the race and soft skills language and initial attention to African-American men as too narrow. Strategies for promoting cultural competence could address racism in the workplace as well as other barriers that people of color experienced. The sites devoted more attention to the cultural competence needs of employers and frontline supervisors and to modifying workplace rules and practices to fit the realities of a diverse workforce. The Foundation commissioned two guidebooks in these areas — one for workers and another for supervisors.<sup>29</sup> The sites also developed tools, manuals and guides customized to their industry sectors and employer needs.

## **REINFORCING THE FRAMEWORK**

In addition to having clear conceptual frameworks to guide the race, ethnicity and cultural competence work, a number of activities helped it take root.

**Multidisciplinary workgroup structure.** The workgroup on race and soft skills, as well as the cultural competence team, consisted of Casey staff members, site representatives, researchers, practitioners and policy experts from a range of disciplines, including workforce development, labor economics, law and sociology. The site representatives were highly engaged and led the process by defining the problem, shaping the workgroup’s charge and contributing to the research. The researchers’ findings and perspectives were critical to codesigning strategies and tools. Creating a multidisciplinary workgroup, as opposed to having a consultant take on the cultural competence work, was critical to mining the experience of the sites and embedding the work as an integral part of the initiative.

**Technical assistance.** The Foundation offered technical assistance to the sites in areas such as documenting discrimination, understanding the relationship between soft skills and retention and developing outreach strategies for people of color. The Foundation intentionally identified providers of color for these efforts.

**Conferences and sharing information.** Conferences helped bolster the sites’ efforts and share lessons from the cultural competence work. The Foundation held cultural competence conferences annually during the capacity-building and implementation phases to provide technical assistance



and foster peer learning. Other initiative conferences offered cultural competence sessions and featured topics such as the value of cultural competence to employers and strategies to address discrimination in hiring. A 2001 conference included initiative participants, some of whom spoke candidly about their experiences with workplace racism. That discussion led several sites to expand supervisory training efforts, develop peer-mentoring programs and routinely solicit participant input.

The Foundation typically invited other funders, research and evaluation organizations, workforce intermediary organizations, public agencies and others to its conferences, increasing exposure to the cultural competence work in the initiative, in addition to cohosting conferences with stakeholders in non-initiative cities.

**Reports and resource materials.** The Foundation built a library of research, how-to guides, best-practice assessments, documentation, databases and evaluative reports on cultural competence topics that was available to the sites and others in the workforce field. Topical reports written for and about the Jobs Initiative increasingly included descriptions of site efforts to address employment discrimination in labor markets and identified cultural competence as a core component of successful job initiatives. (See Appendix B for a list of relevant reports.)

**Jobs and race web page and online resources.** The Foundation added a section on jobs and race to its website to broadly share its strategy on race, ethnicity and cultural competence. The website included cultural competence reports, products and links to research organizations, advocacy organizations for racial and ethnic groups and other resources. It also included an extensive database with demographic, labor force, occupation and wage information for 100 metropolitan areas and measured discrimination in entry-level hiring by industry.

## Supply-Side Strategies Addressing Race and Cultural Competence

A core tenet of the Jobs Initiative that distinguished it from other workforce development efforts was its emphasis on both job seekers and employers. All sites developed strategies to embed cultural competence in their work with job seekers, such as modifying outreach, recruitment and assessment practices; improving people's qualifications through job-readiness training; and supporting job seekers after they were placed in jobs through case management, retention and advancement services. These strategies were distinguished from demand-side strategies designed to address employers' cultural competence and workplace conditions.

Local factors influenced which set of strategies the sites chose to pursue. The New Orleans Jobs Initiative and St. Louis Regional Jobs Initiative felt constrained by the legacy of discriminatory southern power structures and determined that demand-side strategies would be less effective than supply-side approaches concentrating on job seekers. They therefore turned their attention to helping participants build soft skills and navigate the workplace. The characteristics of the job seekers also influenced site strategies. New Orleans' focus on public housing developments and Seattle's focus on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participants required intensive strategies aimed at hard-to-serve populations. This section highlights the supply-side strategies, tools and products that sites developed during the Jobs Initiative.

### **BUILDING INFORMAL NETWORKS AND RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS**

Sites used a number of approaches to offset the lack of effective job networks in inner-city neighborhoods and to recruit and screen prospective participants. The Denver Workforce Initiative developed a community coaching model to help build job networks, broker job connections, recruit entry-level job seekers and provide ongoing retention support. The coaches came from community organizations, neighborhood associations and businesses and generally worked with job seekers with similar racial or ethnic backgrounds. Denver developed a community coaching manual, as well as performance measures for coaches.

To augment its participant recruitment and assessment activities, Denver developed an index to help employment counselors assess participants' initial job readiness using four criteria: (1) work habits and behaviors, (2) attitudes and values, (3) communication and interpersonal skills and (4) ability to cope with stress and life challenges. The index was an alternative to screening tools with implicit biases against people of color and enabled counselors to better determine job seekers' skills and training needs. The index also generated a readiness score that helped employers gauge an individual's soft skills and potential for staying in the job and advancing.

New Orleans created a cadre of walker/talkers, hired from the target area of 10 public housing developments, to reach job seekers, a model based on a community empowerment approach. The model incorporated a structural racism lens<sup>30</sup> that relied on individuals with roots in the community to conduct outreach and recruitment. Walker/talkers also gave residents information

about available jobs, skill requirements and training resources, in addition to conducting outreach to job seekers, families, neighborhood organizations, informal block associations and social clubs, merchants and others.

The long-term strategy was to use such community engagement to advocate for residents' increased access to jobs for infrastructure or development projects. As the city of New Orleans lacked workforce support services and referral networks, the walker/talkers also provided informal referral services and case management to help new workers adjust to the working world. New Orleans also developed an intake and assessment manual to help service providers and training organizations overcome class and racial biases, including internalized racism.

The community organization responsible for the Philadelphia Jobs Initiative's recruitment and placement components, Ogontz Avenue Revitalization Corporation, was an established community development corporation, but it lacked workforce development experience and was unprepared to address the barriers that black and Latino men faced. Philadelphia worked with a cultural competence expert to develop an outreach and engagement strategy for young men of color. Its manufacturing training program, which primarily targeted African-American men, used marketing tactics, such as mass mailings to community residents and ads in local papers and community newsletters, to educate black job seekers and families about jobs. Philadelphia also replicated Project STRIVE, a four-week soft-skills training program specifically for African Americans with limited skills, and recruited participants through workforce development and social services referral networks, the courts and programs focused on noncustodial parents or domestic violence.

## **SITE EFFORTS TO IMPROVE SOFT SKILLS AND JOB READINESS**

The cultural competence work in the Jobs Initiative focused on improving soft skills to help job seekers of color. Employers increasingly viewed communication skills, teamwork, willingness to learn and reliability as more important requirements for entry-level positions than technical skills. They also considered characteristics such as enthusiasm, friendliness, dress and appearance to be important. Employers frequently cited the lack of a positive work attitude as the reason for excluding individuals of color or relegating them to marginal jobs. This rationale was influenced by long-held stereotypes, particularly about African-American men.<sup>31</sup> As noted earlier, employers were more likely to evaluate black men based on soft skills rather than technical ones — and, in the absence of overt disqualifiers, to ask people of color for credentials higher than the work required. At the same time, the sites understood that many participants did not have strong job-readiness skills. Almost all sites developed programs that responded to these issues.

New Orleans, for example, was especially influenced by research showing that the movement of jobs, institutions and working people away from black communities not only contributed to joblessness but also deprived residents of exposure to working people and role models.<sup>32</sup> The

New Orleans Jobs Initiative team understood the need for soft skills in this context and did not accept that the problems solely resulted from behavioral factors or an inherently poor work ethic. New Orleans addressed behavioral changes that would increase individuals' employability from the perspective of code switching without devaluing their cultural norms. Notably, the team engaged community residents, employers and training providers in designing its curriculum for soft skills. Involving employers was a figurative stamp of approval and an inducement to employer partners to hire local Jobs Initiative participants.

This four-week pre-employment training program equipped job seekers with soft and life skills that would help them navigate the workplace and handle cultural differences. The training was designed to build skills related to decision making, personal discipline, teamwork, communication, conflict management, work procedures and career advancement. It was also designed to counteract employers' negative perceptions about African Americans, as well as those internalized by job seekers of color. Notably, the training helped participants understand structural racism, develop skills to handle race and gender biases in the workplace and build code-switching skills. The curriculum was tailored to participants with at least fourth-grade math and reading levels and could be customized by industry sector. Trainers, drawn from community organizations, used interactive, experiential and other nontraditional instructional methods.<sup>33</sup>

In Seattle, community partners had varying experience delivering training for soft skills. The Seattle Jobs Initiative developed a model program geared toward multiple learning levels and styles that addressed workplace and life skills. The use of common tools and training materials helped build consistency across the local initiative's network of providers. Seattle also encouraged job brokers who were engaging employers to collaborate with partnering community organizations to explore aligning training for soft skills with training for jobs in specific sectors. Ultimately, Seattle influenced its technical training providers to also train for soft skills, and a number of community colleges adopted the soft-skills curriculum.

Denver developed a training curriculum for job readiness and soft skills to help entry-level workers build communication, thinking and problem-solving skills. Denver also produced a similar guidebook for youth and a companion volume to help new workers understand the unspoken rules of the workplace. These curricula focused on workplace rules and strategies, but they did not specifically address issues related to racial discrimination, as Denver chose instead to use market-based approaches to try to correct labor market challenges.<sup>34</sup>

As the work on race and soft skills unfolded, the St. Louis Regional Jobs Initiative began to question whether it had the right partner to develop and deliver a responsive soft-skills program and provide job-retention support. The local initiative formed a new partnership with Better Family Life, an African-American multiservice organization with a deep understanding of St. Louis history and the economic forces that limited job opportunities for black residents. Better Family Life incorporated this perspective into the pre-employment soft-skills training developed for the St.

Louis Regional Jobs Initiative. The training was part of an integrated set of services the organization provided in partnership with St. Louis Community College, which also included assessments for job readiness and skills, adult basic education, training for technical skills and case management.<sup>35</sup>

## **BASIC SKILLS AND LANGUAGE TRAINING**

The Jobs Initiative sites worked with participants who often lacked adequate education. Indeed, 34 percent did not have a high school diploma, and about 17 percent had limited English language skills.<sup>36</sup>

Adult basic education and instruction for English language learners were important components of the Seattle Jobs Initiative's projects. Nearly 30 percent of residents in the target community had less than a 12th-grade education, compared with less than 14 percent citywide. Fifty-four percent of Latinos and 36 percent of Asian and Pacific Islanders reported that having limited English was a significant problem.<sup>37</sup> Seattle embedded adult basic education and English language instruction into its sector-training programs and worked with some manufacturing partners to develop on-site, customized vocational/English-as-a-second-language programs.

The Philadelphia Jobs Initiative geared its 61-week manufacturing training program toward African-American men. About 70 percent of participants could not meet the eighth-grade proficiency level required to enroll. In response, the Philadelphia Jobs Initiative partnered with the Community College of Philadelphia to develop a 10-week customized basic skill training program, a first for the college.

Residents living in the 10 public housing developments in New Orleans were comparatively less job-ready than their counterparts in other sites. For many, literacy was the biggest barrier, with average skill levels between the sixth and eighth grades. While New Orleans did not embed basic skill training into its projects, it designed training curricula to be accessible to people at a fourth-grade reading level. It also used contextualized learning methods in its vocational and technical training programs.

The Milwaukee Jobs Initiative and its primary partner, Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership, offered an array of workforce development services to its employer members, including adult basic education, GED and classes for English language learners, which were routinely provided at worksites. They also provided training on workplace Spanish for supervisors.

## **RETENTION SERVICES**

The Jobs Initiative's attention to retention represented a significant departure from standard workforce development practices, which typically focused on job placement or short-term retention as measures of success. Casey established a one-year minimum retention goal that

included a lapse in employment of no more than 30 days. The Foundation also emphasized the provision of intensive case management and other support services during that one-year period. Sites applied the cultural competence lens to a number of job-retention strategies that encouraged employers to extend more opportunities to people of color and nontraditional workers. These included case management, mentoring programs and peer networks.

Seattle's nine community-based partners were deeply rooted in communities of color and involved in a range of pre-employment activities. However, they were not well prepared to deliver effective case management and retention services to the target communities of the local Jobs Initiative, particularly individuals facing significant barriers to employment. Whether this was the result of funding sources that didn't emphasize providing such services or organizational limitations, Seattle identified this as a major gap that could potentially derail long-term retention outcomes, particularly given its ambitious two-year retention goal. To help build the capacity of its partners, Seattle developed a guidebook and assessment tool to increase the quality of case management and retention services. Written for case managers, retention specialists and supervisors, the guidebook included best practices and examples of the case management services required at different points in the process of preparing for, obtaining and maintaining employment. It also described the types of barriers hard-to-serve populations faced, with a focus on participants of color, immigrants and refugees.

The Seattle Jobs Initiative also used human services funding from the city of Seattle to create the Ready to Earn Fund, which aimed to offset the dearth of emergency resources available to hard-to-serve job seekers and new workers by enabling them to cover basic needs such as housing, child care, food, transportation and clothing. Training participants and workers could receive up to \$3,000 over a three-year period — but only after other sources were exhausted. Applications to the Ready to Earn Fund revealed a host of other problems participants faced, such as traffic violations, utility shutoffs, child support payments, legal issues, learning disabilities and mental health and substance abuse issues. The Seattle Jobs Initiative tracked these needs and used the information to modify its projects and city policies and to connect participants with a broader set of support services. Seattle also secured additional public funding and publicized the fund to case managers.

Seattle provided case management services for up to 24 months after participants completed training, with intensive services during the first six months. This emphasis on case management and support services contributed to its strong one-year retention rate of 68 percent — the highest of any site.

Mentoring programs and peer networks served as key support for initiative participants and improved retention. A 2002 Foundation report revealed the challenges graduates of the initiative and their families faced, including the effect that racism had on their working and personal lives.<sup>38</sup> Mentoring was an important part of long-term support systems to help people adjust to the

working world, including managing the stresses of a sometimes hostile work environment. These programs also helped address the documented lack of role models for people of color living in inner-city neighborhoods.

Workplace mentors typically had racial, ethnic or cultural backgrounds similar to their assigned mentee. They also helped reduce the sense of isolation, especially for the 69 percent of participants who were the only Jobs Initiative participant in their workplace<sup>39</sup> or for those placed in companies with few people of color.

The Milwaukee Jobs Initiative's primary partner was Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership, a labor-management intermediary that would later absorb that initiative. Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership worked closely with BIG STEP, a long-standing consortium of building trades unions and contractor associations that expressly formed to help people of color and women move into the building trades. Together, they provided a range of pre-apprenticeship services and training for job seekers interested in state-approved apprenticeships. BIG STEP had close ties to an association formed by African-American construction workers who were members of the Laborers' Union. They served as workplace mentors for new employees coming through the Milwaukee Jobs Initiative, helping them adapt to workplace norms and identifying skill-building, training and advancement opportunities. Perceptions of favoritism toward African Americans on the part of white workers who were not participating in the program sometimes resulted in hostile work environments. Notably, the mentors also helped new workers understand the company's grievance procedures and antidiscrimination laws. Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership developed training guides and curricula for employers interested in developing in-house mentoring programs. Customized guides were developed and distributed widely in the regional partnership's employer network. The site also developed a training guide for peer advisors to help seasoned employees work with new and incumbent workers.

Seattle formed a support group for men of color, primarily serving African-American men in the manufacturing training program, responding to the isolation many graduates experienced in workplaces with few people of color or cultural norms different from their own. The group met weekly to reinforce soft skills and cultural competence training. The group also provided an important space for people to discuss incidences of workplace racism and address personal problems that impeded success on the job. The group evolved to address retention and advancement. An experienced Seattle Jobs Initiative staff member of color facilitated the group, which also provided peer-mentoring activities. Seattle created a similar group for women of color.

St. Louis sought to extend the mentoring concept broadly into the community, collaborating with community partner Better Family Life to develop a curriculum and guidebook to help community members create mentoring programs for job seekers and new workers. The program was intergenerational, pairing older mentors with young TANF recipients who were transitioning to work. Mentoring and other retention services were available for up to two years. St. Louis also

organized an alumni network to orient new workers and serve as a support group. The network also helped participants deepen connections with their communities by becoming involved in community service activities.

## **CAREER ADVANCEMENT**

Career advancement was not well understood at the start of the initiative. However, inequities in the rates at which low-wage workers and workers of color received wage increases, promotions and other benefits associated with advancement were common, as was the practice of concentrating people of color in occupations that offered limited upward mobility.

Along the workforce development continuum of services, advancement is the next step after retention. Successful long-term retention was driven by training for technical skills — unlike successful short-term retention, which was a function of soft skills. The emphasis was therefore placed on connecting incumbent workers with postsecondary education and training opportunities.

This may have affected how the cultural competence workgroup regarded soft-skills training in the context of advancement. Because of the team's focus on the soft skills required for job *placement* — coupled with the phasing of the initiative and the disconnect between the team and the career advancement research and design work others were doing — the team did not examine the types of soft skills entry-level workers of color would need for career advancement. These included, for example, enhancing interpersonal, problem-solving and higher-level soft skills; demonstrating initiative and promotion potential to supervisors; participating in and navigating internal and industry networks; and working with workplace mentors, career coaches and peer networks focused on advancement.

## **TRANSITIONAL JOBS**

Several sites placed low-skilled job seekers in temporary employment to allow them to gain work experience that could lead to full-time jobs. This strategy was effective for TANF participants and others with limited work experience and facing multiple barriers. Although this approach did not have a specific cultural competence component, it was a vehicle to increase job access for more people of color.

Seattle developed a subsidized internship program to provide work experience and income for up to nine months for individuals receiving TANF benefits. St. Louis also worked with TANF participants, and both sites focused on transitional jobs in the business services sector. Philadelphia worked with temp agencies that placed people in the health care industry. Participants typically received pre-employment training, case management and supportive services.



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**The End Result: Participant Placement and Retention in the Jobs Initiative**

Evaluation data collected between September 1996 and December 2004 show that the six Jobs Initiative sites enrolled more than 25,000 participants and placed more than 11,200 in jobs in over 40 jobs projects.<sup>40</sup> Eighty-six percent of enrollees were people of color — 64 percent African American, 2 percent American Indian or Alaska Native, 10 percent Asian and Pacific Islander, 8 percent Latino and 2 percent identified as other.

Placement rates by race and ethnicity show that people of color were placed in jobs at higher rates than their white counterparts, with the exception of American Indians or Alaska Natives.

	<b>African American</b>	<b>American Indian/Alaska Native</b>	<b>Asian and Pacific Islander</b>	<b>Latino</b>	<b>White</b>
Placement rate	45%	38%	51%	57%	41%
Retention rate	49%	43%	76%	56%	51%
Participants received wage gain	65%	67%	71%	72%	70%
Average hourly wage	\$8.16	\$8.79	\$8.74	\$8.47	\$9.68
Percentage wage gain	14%	23%	17%	20%	19%

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## Demand-Side Strategies Addressing Race and Cultural Competence

The research that shaped Casey's perspective on jobs and race showed that employers often held implicit and explicit racial biases and practiced racial discrimination. Some advocates argued the onus to build soft skills should not be on employees alone; employers needed training, too. The Jobs Initiative's cultural competence team and several sites advocated countering workplace discrimination by training supervisors and managers in communication, problem solving, evaluating employee performance and other skills to engage a diverse workforce. This was a relatively benign, nonconfrontational approach to a seemingly intractable problem. Moreover, soft-skills training for supervisors was a prudent business decision for employers who faced tight labor markets and had limited experience with people of color and nontraditional workers. Sites appealed to employers' self-interests by demonstrating the costs of having inflexible rules, hostile work environments and a workforce lacking diversity — and showing how initiative products and services could reduce employee turnover and increase retention.

Sites found providing supervisor training more appealing than directly challenging employer practices. Some operated in environments with little history of confronting long-standing employment discrimination. Others inclined to do so recognized it would require an inordinate amount of time, resources and political capital and would likely fail in a competitive labor market. Sites with limited capacity focused on building the cultural competence of training providers, service organizations and their frontline staff instead of fighting a losing battle against resistant employers.

Other sites took advantage of trusted relationships with employers to increase opportunities for job seekers of color. Some employers addressed workplace racism directly by providing diversity training and setting a tone of inclusion. Others changed hiring practices that adversely affected people of color, eliminating criteria that were not germane to the skill sets needed to do the job, such as criminal background checks or requiring a driver's license or high school diploma. This section examines these employer-focused, demand-side strategies.

### **SUPERVISOR TRAINING**

Denver developed a training resource as a companion piece to its soft-skills training for participants and pitched it to employers as a retention tool to orient new supervisors and help them build self-awareness, management skills and cultural competence. The training introduced frontline supervisors to the needs of entry-level workers and offered approaches to help integrate them into the workplace. It included modules to help employers understand workforce diversity, different cultural norms and effective communication and problem-solving tactics.<sup>41</sup>

The Seattle Jobs Initiative developed its soft-skills training curriculum for supervisors in response to a spike in new middle-management positions in the city's fast-growing economy. This growth had implications for the initiative's target population, as many of the individuals filling these

positions had limited experience managing people and little exposure to different racial and ethnic groups. Many employers recognized this gap, which increased their willingness to work with the Seattle Jobs Initiative. The curriculum was developed specifically for managers and supervisors overseeing workers from different racial and ethnic backgrounds and introduced them to the array of barriers low-income workers and people of color face in balancing work and life. It also provided self-awareness training, introduced concepts such as code switching and provided strategies to manage conflicts that might involve race, ethnicity or culture. The curriculum provided tools to help supervisors coach employees, translate unwritten rules in the workplace and improve worker performance. Building on the work of Denver and Seattle, the Foundation commissioned a training guide for supervisors to share these approaches with other sites and the workforce development field.<sup>42</sup>

## **EFFECTIVE EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT**

Engaging employers on issues of race and cultural competence requires a considerable level of trust and finesse. Although Milwaukee was not very active in the Jobs Initiative's soft-skills and cultural competence teams,<sup>43</sup> it was in many ways better positioned to influence employers and advance racial equity.

Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership, a key manufacturing-sector partner, had ties to labor unions, union members and others who advocated diversifying Milwaukee's unions in the 1980s. The unions' efforts led manufacturing firms to pay more attention to cultural competence and resulted in an increase in African-American union leadership in the 1990s. The Milwaukee site leaders entered the Jobs Initiative having witnessed improvements in job access for people of color under various labor market conditions and understood the value of this approach. A primary objective of Milwaukee's strategy was to increase the representation and success of workers of color, particularly in apprenticeships and skilled trades.

As a labor-management intermediary, Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership had equally close relationships with employers — the result of its ability to minimize labor-management tensions and help employers improve operations. These trusted relationships allowed the partnership to candidly raise job access and workplace equity issues. The partnership also found that companies with strong union relationships were in a better position to address racial issues and change human resource policies. Partnering with unions helped embed cultural competence in manufacturing firms and led to increases in hiring people of color. One firm went from having no employees of color when it joined the Milwaukee Jobs Initiative to counting them as more than 30 percent of its workforce. Its union also elected an African American to a leadership position.

Unions were involved in helping businesses develop diversity and retention strategies and often sought to align their efforts with those of the Milwaukee Jobs Initiative and the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership. As previously noted, union members served as workplace

mentors and established peer-mentoring programs. In some instances, managers addressed external forms of discrimination that workers of color faced, such as challenging police who stopped them indiscriminately or banks that didn't cash their paychecks. Milwaukee's employer partners also supported advocacy campaigns to establish more public transportation routes between inner-city neighborhoods and suburban job sites.

New Orleans also built on trusted relationships with employers. Its governing board included representatives of several multiracial, faith-based organizations and clergy. These organizations and member churches included white-owned businesses in particular industry sectors, some of which became deeply involved in the initiative. They were also willing to serve as emissaries to other employers, which was important in a region rife with discriminatory hiring practices.

## **CAPITALIZATION AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

Several sites developed jobs for participants through investments in small and minority-owned businesses. Philadelphia used a strategy to link economic development and workforce investments. The Philadelphia Jobs Initiative's intermediary, Delaware Valley Community Reinvestment Fund (now known as The Reinvestment Fund), created a venture fund to provide capital and development assistance to small and minority-owned businesses in sectors that typically employ lower-skilled workers. The strategy involved linking these companies with neighborhood job brokers (see "The Jobs Initiative's Core Strategies" on p. 10 for more on job brokering). The venture fund also provided investment capital to a large, minority-owned customer service company. The deal hinged on the company's commitment to training 60 initiative participants. The Philadelphia Jobs Initiative's workforce development services included modifications to human resource practices, retention services and supervisory training. Delaware Valley Community Reinvestment Fund also helped companies secure wage subsidies and other incentives.

The Seattle Jobs Initiative, which was initially run by the city's economic development agency, geared the city's small business loan fund, business technical assistance program and local hiring agreements toward firms located in or hiring from the Seattle Jobs Initiative's target community. In the absence of large- and mid-sized firms owned by people of color, the St. Louis Regional Jobs Initiative secured jobs and internships with a few, mostly small, businesses open to working with its target population.

Although the New Orleans Jobs Initiative saw itself as part of a broad black economic development agenda, it did not have a formal business development strategy. However, it identified an important role for businesses owned by people of color as an avenue to jobs in white-owned companies. For example, one of the initiative's employer partners was a small, black-owned machine shop — the only one in the city. Like many black-owned businesses in New Orleans, lack of access to capital and other resources limited its growth. Nonetheless, the

company was recognized as a solid producer by manufacturers in its supply chain — so much so that white-owned companies regularly poached its employees, who were all African American. By formalizing its role as a feeder to large manufacturers, the company could secure more business and move more initiative graduates through the shop, essentially providing them with an industry stamp of approval.

## **USING EMPLOYER DISCRIMINATION ASSESSMENTS**

The Foundation launched the Jobs Initiative during a time of high growth and low unemployment. All sites found willing employer partners during this period, but they also encountered employers unwilling to consider the initiative's target populations, despite tight labor market conditions. The sites needed strategies and tools to help understand and measure employment discrimination. The Fair Employment Council of Greater Washington conducted comparison tests involving job applicants of different races with identical credentials and found that 25 percent of employers treated African-American job seekers differently from white applicants with the same credentials, and 22 percent treated Latinos differently.<sup>44</sup> Black and Latino job applicants were less likely to receive interviews and job offers, which mirrored many participants' experiences. The Fair Employment Council's training helped participants recognize and address employment discrimination, including using U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity laws and other protections.

As the economy shifted and labor markets began to contract in the 2000s, some members of the Jobs Initiative's cultural competence team advocated more direct tactics to address racial discrimination. A 2000 study by two economists found that "conscious or unconscious discrimination" against women or people of color existed in more than 20 percent of U.S. workplaces and was deeply entrenched in 7 to 12 percent of them.<sup>45</sup> Additional research commissioned by the Foundation provided the sites with methods to detect, measure and classify employers who did discriminate and provided remedies to change these patterns through antidiscrimination and diversity training, typically targeting the 80 percent of companies in which racism was not as entrenched.

The economists also tabulated racial barriers to entry-level jobs among large employers, the geographic proximity of entry-level jobs to inner cities and the degree of segregation in targeted occupations in the six Jobs Initiative cities. These data showed that employers in Seattle, Denver and New Orleans were more willing to hire workers of color than those in Philadelphia, St. Louis and Milwaukee, which helped sites devise customized employer engagement strategies. Seattle, for example, used the data to identify a pool of health care employers actively seeking to diversify their workforces. This information informed a prototype for bilingual participants and led to training for bilingual medical interpreters, community health workers and physician's assistants.

## COMPANY SIZE AND CORPORATE CULTURE

The data in the employer discrimination research focused on companies with at least 100 employees, but by 2000, nearly 60 percent of Jobs Initiative employers for which data were available had no more than 50 employees.<sup>46</sup> No data are available on the number of those companies that participated in the sites' cultural competence activities or that were minority-owned businesses as a way to gauge benefits to workers of color. The research also noted that smaller companies tend to have weaker human resource policies. In the 80 percent of companies where racism was not entrenched in the corporate culture, problems perceived as racial discrimination may have resulted from the lack of effective policies. Finally, the research showed that companies were more likely to take part in workforce development focused on low-income individuals and people of color if the process was easy and the benefits were clear.<sup>47</sup> The experiences of the Milwaukee, Philadelphia and Denver initiatives discussed in this section echo these findings.

## Race, Cultural Competence and System Change

The final four years of the initiative, known as the implementation phase, focused on using the results and lessons from jobs projects to inform policy reform and embed and institutionalize system changes to improve employment opportunities for low-income and inner-city job seekers. A distinct set of criteria about the interrelated forces that drive system change in regional labor markets guided this phase. These drivers include the *relationships* among public, private and nonprofit stakeholders; the flow of *resources* that support labor market activities; the level of *power and authority* of various stakeholders; the quality and transmission of *information* in labor markets; and the formal and informal *policies* that govern behavior within labor markets.<sup>48</sup> Race, ethnicity, gender, class and culture affect each of these drivers.

At the start of the implementation phase, the sites were poised to address a broader set of race-related inequities that could inform the policy and system reform objectives, such as measuring and challenging workplace discrimination or addressing racial inequity in public policies. Several factors affected the extent to which this occurred:

- The original framing of the cultural competence work identified the need for better practices and policies across the continuum of workforce development services. The Foundation assumed this would inform the sites' system reform agendas. However, some members of the initial workgroup on issues of race and soft skills took a cautious stance toward policy advocacy. Given the Jobs Initiative's early focus on project-level programs and services to improve job placement and retention, some workgroup members were concerned that raising policy issues at that stage would alienate employers and affect jobs projects. Additionally, the project-level focus limited consideration of long-term policy reform and system changes before the implementation phase.
- Weak connections between the cultural competence workgroup and the initiative's other technical assistance providers and consultants affected the extent to which issues related to race and ethnicity were reflected in the system reform work. Foundation consultants focused on system reform did not participate in the cultural competence work, and Casey did not create formal mechanisms to transfer lessons and insights to them beyond the cross-site conferences.
- The initiative's final years dovetailed with the economic downturn in the early 2000s. Sites redoubled efforts to stabilize job retention. They also turned their attention to career advancement, which was emerging as a new workforce development standard. Casey's original design assumption was that the sites would institutionalize their jobs projects within partner organizations or agencies and shift their focus in later years from operational aspects to system change and policy advocacy. In actuality, the sites continued to work at the project level while trying to launch their jobs policy networks and system change agendas.<sup>49</sup> The

persistent focus on projects may have unintentionally limited the extent to which sites proactively aligned the cultural competence and system change work.

Despite these issues, several sites achieved system changes influenced by the cultural competence work. In other cases, they achieved policy and system changes that had direct bearing on jobs and race but were not necessarily an outgrowth of the cultural competence team's work. A 2007 Foundation report drawing on lessons and best practices from the Jobs Initiative underscored some of these policy advocacy efforts, emphasizing the importance of cultural competence in designing and delivering job training and support services and the need to build employee and employer soft skills, among other system improvements.<sup>50</sup>

## **INSTITUTIONALIZING CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN SEATTLE**

The Seattle Jobs Initiative understood that it had to build its own cultural competence and find the right language to talk about jobs, race and discrimination before it could develop effective strategies and influence its partners. Seattle conducted diversity workshops and brought in technical assistance providers to work with its entire staff to understand concepts such as structural racism. This work led the Seattle Jobs Initiative to change its hiring practices and how it worked in communities. The organization added cultural competence standards to its personnel manual, and all new staff received cultural competence training. As staff members moved to other organizations, many continued to use these tools and methods in their new positions and networks.

After critically assessing and building its own cultural competence, Seattle set about doing so with its many community-based partner organizations. Despite having strong roots in various racial and ethnic communities, the Seattle Jobs Initiative wanted to ensure these organizations' staffs were diverse and reflected the groups they were serving. Seattle conducted cultural competence training with many partners and included cultural competence targets in all performance contracts. It also became more intentional about building cultural competence into its sector programs to help change workplace culture.

Several factors may have contributed to Seattle's achievements in these areas, including the multicultural composition of its target populations, organizational leadership and independence and a civic environment and mayoral administration that were sensitive to racial equity issues. Although the correlation between these activities and how participants fared was not measured, it is worth noting that Seattle exceeded the other sites in most measures. New Orleans and St. Louis also incorporated cultural competence into their staff training but did not see the same results.



## **ADOPTING SOFT-SKILLS TRAINING AS STANDARD PRACTICE IN NEW ORLEANS AND SEATTLE**

New Orleans' training program aimed to equip African Americans living in and around the city's public housing developments with soft skills that would help them enter and navigate the workplace. New Orleans rejected conventional soft-skills training that focused on participants' deficits in favor of a model based on self-knowledge and empowerment, the first of its kind in the city. The New Orleans Jobs Initiative achieved widespread use of the curriculum, still in use today, among local workforce training organizations and social service organizations. Similarly, the Seattle Jobs Initiative pushed technical training providers to include soft skills as a standard component of their curricula, and a number of community colleges adopted the local initiative's curriculum.

## **WAIVERS AND OTHER SUPPORT TO INCREASE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES IN SEATTLE AND PHILADELPHIA**

One of the cultural competence team's findings was that African Americans and Latinos participating in public job-training programs were less likely than their white counterparts to receive training for occupational skills.<sup>51</sup> Part of Seattle's system reform agenda focused on securing better job opportunities for TANF participants. The Seattle Jobs Initiative used its position as a city agency to secure a waiver to the state's new work requirements for TANF recipients, allowing initiative participants to enroll in training programs. This move directly countered rules that would further trap low-income job seekers in low-skill, low-wage jobs. Other Washington state jurisdictions followed Seattle's lead and obtained similar waivers. As a substantial number of Seattle's TANF participants were people of color, this increased their likelihood of landing good jobs.

Philadelphia designed a long-term technical training program that would lead to well-paying, entry-level jobs in precision manufacturing. The program, Philadelphia Area Accelerated Manufacturing Education (PhAME), was modeled after Focus: HOPE in Detroit, one of the first advanced manufacturing training programs to specifically target African-American men. However, the 61-week training course placed an inordinate financial burden on these young men, many of whom had families. The Philadelphia Jobs Initiative worked with Philadelphia Interfaith Action, an interdenominational coalition of churches, to influence the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry to allocate \$2 million for stipends for PhAME participants — an impressive win in an era of diminished funding. Faced with the potential loss of these funds in later years, the church coalition redoubled its advocacy efforts. Joined by employers, it successfully lobbied the state for an additional \$5 million in support of stipends and operating funds for PhAME.

## **PROMOTING CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

Like many community colleges, Seattle's colleges were much more focused on academic programs than on vocational training for nontraditional students. The Seattle Jobs Initiative focused its career advancement and system change efforts on expanding access to vocational education in two-year technical and community colleges. This included improving cultural competence by challenging the comparatively slow progression of people of color through developmental education and other noncredit programs, moving more people into credit-bearing programs and using modules and stackable credentials that allowed them to work toward a degree or certification in stages. It also involved making financial aid resources available to nontraditional students, incorporating soft skills into technical training programs and working with community-based organizations to make case management and support services more widely available.

Seattle worked with multiple colleges in the local community college system, including Seattle Vocational Institute, which was located in the target community and predominantly served students of color. The college, which provided technical instruction for the initiative's jobs project in the business/office sector, had a poor track record of transitioning students to for-credit programs and was resistant to change. Seattle applied its cultural competence expertise to help the college understand and address student needs and make occupational programs more accessible. Seattle also managed to have the college reclassify the business/office sector training as a for-credit program.

In St. Louis, the cultural competence work led to identifying new partners for job-readiness training. Better Family Life, the local initiative's community partner, conducted outreach, recruitment, soft-skills training and case management. The St. Louis Regional Jobs Initiative facilitated a partnership between Better Family Life and St. Louis Community College that resulted in the college establishing a satellite campus in the target community to provide adult basic education and vocational training. The college is now anchored in that neighborhood and offers an array of short-term certificate programs.

Similarly, Milwaukee Jobs Initiative influenced one of its community college partners to increase access to inner-city residents by establishing a satellite program in its target community. Another local community college restructured a number of training programs into smaller modules to better meet the needs of nontraditional students.

## **USING APPRENTICESHIPS TO CREATE JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

Several U.S. Supreme Court decisions<sup>52</sup> before and during the initiative weakened affirmative action, making it more difficult for people of color to secure jobs in construction. However, some municipalities and private institutions developed hiring agreements and other provisions for

economic inclusion — which intentionally connects low-income residents and neighborhoods with job and contracting opportunities generated from economic development projects — to diversify their workforces.

The St. Louis Regional Jobs Initiative focused on apprenticeship training to chip away at the institutionalized racism<sup>53</sup> that permeated the region's heavily unionized construction industry. The St. Louis initiative successfully advocated for local legislation requiring public construction projects to assign a minimum number of labor hours to apprentices as a way to include more people of color in unionized trades. St. Louis also organized the Construction Industry Workforce Policy Network to shape its approach and generate industry and public buy-in. To stimulate demand for apprentices of color, the local initiative partnered with an association of contractors of color and a city alderman who was also a leader in the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

Tactically, the St. Louis initiative presented the apprenticeship utilization requirement as a demand-driven strategy to counteract industry skill shortages, which minimized union resistance to new workers. Linking the requirement to economic development helped reduce perceptions that it was an affirmative-action policy — a prudent approach in such a racially divided region. St. Louis collaborated with building trade unions to recruit African Americans into apprenticeships and developed peer-mentoring programs to help orient and retain apprentices. It also expanded its pre-apprenticeship training programs to build a pipeline for the slots. Performance targets were linked not only to increased apprenticeship hours under the new requirement but also to an overall increase in African-American representation in regional construction trades. St. Louis also leveraged the apprenticeship requirement to gain entry into manufacturing training programs for job seekers of color.

## Conceptual and Operational Considerations and Challenges

### INTEGRATING CULTURAL COMPETENCE INTO THE JOBS INITIATIVE

Although the Foundation workgroup emphasized the importance of applying the cultural competence framework “at every point along the workforce development continuum” and integrating it into the Jobs Initiative’s policy and system change components, this did not fully occur. A 2006 report documented sites’ difficulty in doing so and attributed this to several factors. In addition to managing jobs projects and planning for system change efforts down the road, the sites were engaged in multiple reporting, evaluation and technical assistance activities, making it difficult to incorporate new elements. The highly structured nature of the Jobs Initiative also made it difficult to integrate cultural competence with performance standards, which therefore impeded the tracking of such efforts, including how this information might have informed jobs projects and system change targets. As noted earlier, the cultural competence work was managed independently from other initiative activities.<sup>54</sup>

Former site staff and cultural competence team members credit the Casey Foundation for recognizing structural and institutionalized forms of racism and acknowledging the barriers facing African-American men and other people of color. They also understood that the Foundation greatly valued, respected and supported the cultural competence work. At the same time, most interviewees thought Casey should have been more intentional about fully integrating cultural competence into all components of the initiative. Additionally, some of the researchers and other experts on the cultural competence team said they were not involved enough in the initiative, or experienced with large-scale workforce development projects, to help connect their efforts with the rest of the work. Other team members, such as mid-level staff and project managers, thought they did not have the clout to influence how the Jobs Initiative incorporated cultural competence. Most interviewees, including technical assistance providers and evaluators, felt that guidance needed to come from the Foundation to integrate the work across the initiative.

### SITE APPROACHES TO CULTURAL COMPETENCE

In the absence of explicit guidance from Casey, the sites participated in the race and cultural competence work in different ways. Initially, managers of jobs projects most affected by soft-skill issues represented their respective local initiative, with site directors participating less frequently, if at all. Directors became more involved as the focus shifted to cultural competence.

Several factors affected their participation, including their capacity to incorporate all of the new strategies or practices introduced by the Foundation. Some site directors viewed the push for cultural competence as another competing element, as opposed to an overarching framework. Ultimately, it was up to them to determine how to apply it.

Perspectives on fostering cultural competence varied across the initiative. New Orleans, for example, determined it could be most effective by building the capacity of neighborhood training organizations to develop cultural competence and address gaps in soft skills among participants. Seattle took a similar stance but also invested considerable energy in building its own organization's cultural competence. By contrast, Denver's site director and project managers disagreed about how to address race in planning and strategies, pushing the project managers to find workarounds to accomplish cultural competence objectives, such as presenting programs and services as demand-driven and developing irrefutable metrics about their effectiveness. Philadelphia's Jobs Policy Network did not include a racial equity perspective in its system change work.

Additionally, the concept of racial equity was less prevalent in the workforce development field at the time of the Jobs Initiative. Although the initiative was far ahead of the field in this regard, it was working with development intermediaries, sponsoring organizations and site partners that may not have understood the importance of cultural competence or were tentative about its application. This complicated how site directors may have approached the work. While cultural competence provided the language to have tough discussions about race, as well as tools and processes to translate them into concrete actions, the site directors still had to work within the confines of their institutional and civic cultures.

## **ENGAGING LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES OF COLOR**

Some of the key local service providers — particularly frontline training partners and other community-based organizations — working with the sites had limited capacity, which in turn affected their cultural competence. Many serving the initiative's low-income job seekers had deep roots in low-income communities of color but often faced resource gaps that constrained programs, networking, uptake of best practices and professional development. One manifestation of this was a lack of cultural competence — even among organizations and practitioners of the same racial or ethnic background as the individuals they served.

Intermediaries and multiservice organizations led by people of color were better endowed and stronger organizationally than small community-based and grassroots organizations, but that did not necessarily make them better Jobs Initiative partners.<sup>55</sup> Several sites partnered with mainstream organizations serving people of color at the outset of the initiative only to find they had weak ties to residents and could not conduct outreach and recruitment. This was the case with the Denver Workforce Initiative, which originally selected the Denver Urban League to administer soft-skills training. Many of the coaches were community matriarchs who brought their own biases to the work and related poorly to the young, predominantly male target population. Denver ultimately formed a partnership with an established workforce organization that hired younger coaches.

Initially, the St. Louis Regional Jobs Initiative debated whether to align with grassroots organizations like ACORN or with more mainstream ones like the Urban League. The site eventually formed a successful partnership with Better Family Life, a community organization that used racial equity as the guiding framework for its work with low-income individuals facing barriers.

Tenant representatives from public housing developments exerted considerable influence in the community-driven application process in New Orleans. They proposed an alternative governance structure and decision-making process for the New Orleans Jobs Initiative and rejected traditional black-led organizations and mainstream intermediaries proposed as the development intermediary and neighborhood organization because they had failed low-income African-Americans residents. New Orleans created a multiracial, cross-class governance body — reportedly the first of its kind in the city — and used tenant associations and faith-based groups deeply rooted in communities to fulfill the Foundation's requirement that neighborhood organizations be involved in planning and implementing various aspects of the initiative, such as recruitment and job-readiness training.

In Philadelphia, the African-American community development corporation designated as the neighborhood organization was rooted in an area of the target community that was considerably better off. The pool of potential participants from the organization's existing network was limited, and it struggled to recruit from other parts of the community. Additionally, the organization's limited understanding of the target population and lack of prior workforce development experience led to several miscalculations in Philadelphia's strategy. For example, although Philadelphia's 61-week manufacturing training program was free and included stipends, its length dissuaded many candidates from enrolling and kept some participants from completing it. Ultimately, Philadelphia reorganized the program into modules with flexible entry and exit.

Casey's funding approach<sup>56</sup> for the initiative, which required sites to use performance-based contracts with their partners, made it difficult to support smaller neighborhood organizations that were perhaps better connected with residents of marginalized communities. Unlike larger, more established organizations, these entities were less likely to receive philanthropic support or multiyear grants — and therefore struggled to absorb project costs on the front end, which performance-based contracts would necessitate. An unintended consequence in some sites was that this led to creaming and increased recruiting from outside the target community to meet performance targets. In some cases, as in Philadelphia's STRIVE replication, this resulted in enrolling fewer participants of color.

## **DATA COLLECTION AND EVALUATION**

The sites developed sophisticated management information systems to track job placement and retention by sector and specific participant characteristics. Overall enrollment data captured

participants' racial and ethnic background. However, the performance data used for reports to the Casey Foundation did not require disaggregating by race and ethnicity. While the sites may have run special internal reports to gauge, for example, how well people of color were doing in specific sectors or whether their retention rates were consistent, this was not part of the standard analyses and cross-site discussions.

Members of the cultural competence team advocated disaggregating participant outcomes by race and ethnicity and modifying the Jobs Initiative's evaluation plan to include quantitative and qualitative indicators that would shed light on what contributed to the outcomes of racial and ethnic groups. The team also suggested examining the effects of race and ethnicity on project design, strategies and outcomes in finer detail.

The evaluation design aligned with the same initial set of Foundation guidelines that sites used to create their strategic investment plans and jobs projects, making it difficult to incorporate every new element into the evaluation. At an operational level, no formal coordination existed between the evaluation and cultural competence teams. Without guidance from the Casey Foundation to do otherwise, the evaluation team members treated race and cultural competence as they did other new information and approaches introduced during the initiative, addressing those issues within the existing structure as best they could.

Nonetheless, the evaluation included race and ethnicity in some measures and examined qualitative factors associated with the cultural competence work. The evaluation's baseline analyses of the target communities, which were conducted before the formation of the workgroup on race and soft skills, included comparative data related to race, ethnicity and language. The treatment of issues involving race and ethnicity in those analyses (which examined the regional economy, labor, government and workforce development institutions) was less robust and not distinct. The evaluation reports prepared throughout the initiative included breakdowns of participant outcomes around enrollment, placement and retention by race and ethnicity — but not for long-term indicators such as wage increases, promotions or subsequent education and training. They also did not examine company or sector data by race or ethnicity.<sup>57</sup>

A national team with local liaisons from each site oversaw the evaluation. The team included people of color, which was strategically important for sites like New Orleans, where a complex history of race and class affected initiative design and implementation.

In addition to the formal evaluation, the Casey Foundation assessed progress and captured emerging lessons in other ways, including quarterly meetings with sites and site self-assessments. In retrospect, making issues related to race and cultural competence a routine part of the site directors' quarterly meetings with the Foundation and a component of site self-assessments might have helped better integrate that work into the overall initiative.

## Summary and Conclusions

This report examines essential elements that made the Jobs Initiative's accomplishments around cultural competence possible and demonstrated how workforce development initiatives used cultural competence to improve and increase employment opportunities for job seekers, workers and employers. This section summarizes key factors that contributed to site success and considers aspects of the work that the Foundation and others might have done differently.

### FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SUCCESS

- **A commitment to racial equity.** The Jobs Initiative acknowledged the problems facing workers of color and committed to doing something about them. The Foundation's organizational commitment and mission, as well as clarity about the problem and its causes, were critical to the initiative's ability to address race, particularly within the context of system change.
- **Processes and strategies to address inequities.** Casey included race and ethnicity in a range of criteria for site selection, stressing the importance of diverse site leadership and partnerships and identifying model job strategies to give low-income individuals and job seekers of color a better chance at obtaining good jobs — and to reduce workplace discrimination. The Foundation's general guidance to the sites also reinforced its expectations that they target low-income people of color and include strategies that mitigated racial barriers to work. Foundation staff, the sites and cultural competence advisors worked collaboratively to define the problem and develop an approach to addressing the needs of job seekers and employers.
- **A site-driven framework.** The cultural competence framework evolved from the direct experiences of the sites and led to strategies and tools that were customized and generalizable, leading to several groundbreaking accomplishments. Research supporting the cultural competence work resulted in a definition of soft skills specific to workforce development and the problems facing people of color; indices and tools to measure soft skills; and a host of soft-skills training curricula and guidebooks. The initiative demonstrated that soft skills are no different from other job-readiness skills — and that employers also have challenges with soft skills and cultural competence. In addition, the work on jobs and issues of race helped make the case for practices that have since become standard, including the relationship between soft-skills training and short-term retention, the importance of case management and the value of retention services for job seekers and employers.

### LESSONS FROM THE SITES

All sites developed new ways to reach communities of color, assess needs, provide training and deliver support services that took race, ethnicity and culture into consideration. While each site made significant contributions, a few notable observations stand out.



- The Seattle Jobs Initiative showed that an effective intermediary must demonstrate its own cultural competence before asking partners to do so. Seattle also showed that organizations can be held accountable for cultural competence if they have proper training, technical assistance and an integrated support infrastructure.
- The Denver Workforce Initiative demonstrated a demand-driven approach that concentrated on developing training products and measurement tools to build the cultural competence of workers and employers. Although this approach attempted to level the playing field for job seekers of color, it was first and foremost focused on employers and downplayed racial and ethnic barriers and workplace discrimination.
- The New Orleans Jobs Initiative showed the power of starting with a racial equity framework and including authentic community voices in the initiative's design and among its leadership. These partnerships, while challenging, enriched the quality of the site's products and services for job seekers. In the end, however, New Orleans could not overcome historic racial barriers that constrained employer participation and restricted funding.

While important to participants' success, cultural competence was not the only way sites addressed racial inequities and structural barriers. Some took a more aggressive stance, made race part of their system reform agenda, actively advocated for workplace changes and used levers outside of workforce development.

- The St. Louis Regional Jobs Initiative showed that an intermediary could successfully engage in policy advocacy and use hiring agreements for the explicit purpose of desegregating targeted industries and trade unions.
- The Milwaukee Jobs Initiative demonstrated the tactical advantage of partnering with institutions and union members who have experience advocating for racial justice and equity in the workplace. Milwaukee also showed how strong relationships among employers, unions and community organizations led to customized workplace services and support that increased access and opportunities for workers of color.
- The Philadelphia Jobs Initiative demonstrated how to use capital investments to generate job opportunities for people of color by connecting high-growth, minority-owned businesses and other firms with neighborhood job pipelines; offering workforce development services packaged as business services provided by community and economic development organizations; and building hiring requirements into investment and lending agreements.

While the workforce development field has made considerable progress in some areas, low-income people of color continue to face steep barriers to work and financial stability.

## Appendix A: Factors Informing the Jobs Initiative's Perspective on Race

This appendix highlights important trends and research about jobs and race that shaped the conceptual and operational frameworks of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Jobs Initiative.<sup>58</sup>

The Foundation created the Jobs Initiative to improve how urban labor markets serve low-income workers. Casey understood that children who grow up in financially unstable families are less likely to succeed in school and beyond. During the design of the Jobs Initiative in the early 1990s, family-supporting jobs were increasingly hard to find, particularly for people of color residing in low-income urban neighborhoods. African Americans in particular were much more likely to experience joblessness, wage disparities, lower job quality and uneven access to education and training. These realities influenced the design of the Jobs Initiative and led the Foundation to identify men of color, and specifically African-American men, as the primary focus of the Jobs Initiative, along with other job seekers facing barriers to work.<sup>59</sup>

In 1990, the unemployment rates for African Americans and Latinos older than 16 were 13 percent and 10 percent, respectively, compared with 5 percent for their white counterparts.<sup>60</sup> Over 22 percent of African-American men ages 25–54 were unemployed, compared with 10 percent of white men. From 1969 to 1987, unemployment among African-American men rose at a rate of 124 percent, compared with 57 percent for white men.<sup>61</sup> Higher incarceration rates for black men contributed to their absence from the labor market — and as providers for their children and families.<sup>62</sup> Children raised in poverty tend to struggle academically, which can affect their long-term success and, ultimately, perpetuate a cycle of poverty.<sup>63</sup>

In 1990, about 80 percent of white children younger than 18 lived in two-parent households, compared with 64 percent of Latino children and only 37 percent of African-American children. Nearly 26 percent of African-American families and 22 percent of Latino families lived below the poverty level, compared with 6.4 percent of their white counterparts.<sup>64</sup> These stark differences, among others, provided the rationale for Casey to address workforce development issues. Other important trends that influenced the Jobs Initiative include:

- **Structural changes in the economy.** Changes in the economy that occurred from the 1970s through the 1990s affected the rate of joblessness among people of color. These changes included deindustrialization; the global outsourcing of U.S. production, especially in manufacturing; the shift to an information- and technology-driven economy; and the expansion of the service sector. These trends coincided with an expansion of the low-wage labor market and the proliferation of low-paying, poor-quality jobs that offer few benefits and limited advancement opportunities. These jobs require minimal technical skills and rely on various soft skills often used to exclude people of color.<sup>65</sup>

- **Wage disparity.** Structural changes in the economy also led to a reduction in real wages, an increase in low-wage occupations and a widening income gap. From 1973 to 1991, the percentage of U.S. workers earning wages at or below the poverty level increased from 21 percent to 31 percent. The percentage of African-American men earning poverty wages increased from 25 percent in 1979 to 39 percent in 1991. Over the same period, the percentage rose from 27 to 44 percent for Latino men.<sup>66</sup> In 1990, the median income for white men was about \$22,500, compared with roughly \$13,750 for African-American and Latino men.<sup>67</sup>
- **Decline in U.S. manufacturing.** The loss of urban manufacturing had a devastating impact on African-American employment. African Americans working in manufacturing jobs were typically relegated to low-skilled occupations. On average, they earned one-third less and received pay increases at half the rate of their white peers during the period of 1979–1989.<sup>68</sup> African Americans in manufacturing experienced higher displacement rates than white workers and were less likely to be rehired after layoffs.<sup>69</sup> Many of the remaining manufacturing jobs were out of reach for low-skilled workers who could not meet the skill requirements for advanced manufacturing.
- **Decline of unions.** Although workers of color faced historic discriminatory barriers to union membership, those who gained entry to unions tended to fare better than nonunion workers in terms of wages, access to apprenticeships and other training resources and job mobility. The union wage premium — the extent to which union wages outpace nonunion wages — tended to benefit African-American and Latino workers more than their white counterparts.<sup>70</sup> During the 1980s, unions experienced a marked decline in the number of workers and in their collective bargaining power. This decline adversely affected low-wage workers and blue-collar occupations<sup>71</sup> — areas where people of color were concentrated.
- **Lack of access to urban and suburban job centers.** At the regional level, lower land and building costs, tax incentives, new highways and other inducements spurred the growth of suburban job centers. These changes accelerated disinvestment in central cities and increased the departure of many employers and white residents from urban areas. Inefficient public transportation in neighborhoods of color limited access to most job centers, as did discriminatory housing practices that barred low-income housing near suburban job centers. This was exacerbated by low rates of car ownership and driver's license revocations among this population.
- **Concentrated poverty.** In addition to the flight of jobs and white residents from urban neighborhoods, middle-class African Americans also moved out of inner-city neighborhoods, effectively eliminating the benefits associated with income diversity found in black communities prior to desegregation. This reduced the number of employers, informal networks and role models available to low-income residents and contributed to concentrated urban poverty and

segregation by race and geography.<sup>72</sup> From 1970 to 1990, the number of predominantly black and poor census tracts in central cities grew from 3,430 tracts to 5,596 tracts, and the number of people living in high-poverty tracts rose from roughly 7.5 million to 9.4 million.<sup>73</sup>

## BARRIERS TO OPPORTUNITY

Structural factors contributed to and/or combined with a range of employer practices, systemic disconnections and limitations on the part of low-income job seekers to impede their access to well-paying jobs. The Foundation recognized many of these factors had racial equity dimensions. The starkest disparities were found among African Americans.

- **Educational attainment and skill levels.** Low graduation and high dropout rates characterize many inner-city public school districts. In 1990, more than 36 percent of African Americans and 54 percent of Latinos older than 25 and living in central cities had not earned a high school diploma or equivalent credential, compared with 22 percent of their white counterparts. The rates were worse in high-poverty areas, where the dropout rate was more than 35 percent, compared with 10 percent in non-poverty areas,<sup>74</sup> largely relegating dropouts to low-skilled, low-wage jobs. Structural economic changes increased demand for higher skills, postsecondary credentials and soft skills, such as problem solving and critical thinking. Graduates of inner-city high schools were less likely to meet entrance requirements for postsecondary training programs and increasingly became trapped in developmental education programs.
- **Access to technical training.** While job-search, skill-assessment and support services help contribute to getting a job, training for occupational skills, apprenticeships and other technical skill-building activities are essential to keeping a job and moving into a better one. African Americans and Latinos participating in public job-training programs were less likely than white participants to receive training for occupational skills. Some critics attributed this to higher high school dropout rates and lower educational attainment rates among these groups.<sup>75</sup> Private employers were less willing to invest in technical training for those whom they perceived to have weaker soft skills.
- **Soft skills.** Employers increasingly viewed soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, willingness to learn and reliability, as more important than hard skills. Traits such as enthusiasm, friendliness and appearance were also important. Influenced by long-held stereotypes, employers frequently used the lack of a positive attitude toward work or work ethic to exclude blacks or relegate them to marginal jobs.<sup>76</sup> The connection between soft skills and racial and ethnic stereotypes would become more apparent as the Jobs Initiative progressed.
- **Support services.** Low-income job seekers and those from diverse backgrounds tend to need support services to find and keep a job and to advance in their careers. This includes case

management, job coaching, job-support programs and access to public transportation and child care.

- **Involvement in the criminal justice system.** During the design of the Jobs Initiative, the practice of mass incarceration was escalating, resulting in a disproportionate number of men of color entering the criminal justice system, particularly for drug offenses. Having a record substantially reduced their chances of obtaining a good job.<sup>77</sup>
- **Job retention and career advancement.** Low-skilled workers, young adults, single mothers and people of color tended to lose their jobs or leave them more frequently than other workers.<sup>78</sup> African-American men ages 16 to 24, for example, were more likely to lose their jobs than voluntarily leave them. However, African Americans who felt they had experienced negative racial bias from their employer were more likely to leave employment or create circumstances that led to their dismissal,<sup>79</sup> particularly in the absence of competitive wages and other benefits. Low job retention resulted in uneven work histories, slower wage progression and fewer opportunities to build skills. It also translated into high turnover rates for employers and contributed to negative perceptions about low-income workers and those of color.<sup>80</sup> Career advancement was not well understood at the start of the Jobs Initiative, but inequities in the rates at which low-wage workers and individuals of color received wage increases, promotions and other career benefits were known, as was the practice of concentrating people of color in occupations with limited upward mobility.
- **Informal hiring networks.** Social networks — the ties people have with family, friends and others in their community — play a significant role in job-search and hiring processes.<sup>81</sup> Employers rely on their networks and those of valued employees to identify prospective employees. In many industries, informal networks are dominated by one racial or ethnic group. The use of informal hiring networks tended to disadvantage African-American job seekers, as their networks were weakened by the exodus of better-connected residents and concentrated poverty.<sup>82</sup> Employers located in or near low-income African-American neighborhoods were more likely to use external hiring networks.<sup>83</sup> The informal networks among various Latino groups were often associated with enclave labor markets and tended to yield better job access than African-American networks. However, Latino workers generally were concentrated in low-wage and low-quality occupations.<sup>84</sup>
- **Racial discrimination.** Discrimination based on race and ethnicity in job recruitment, hiring, wages, promotions and other aspects of employment was widespread during the Jobs Initiative. Employers who had limited exposure to people of color were much more likely to discriminate. A survey of Chicago employers, for example, showed that 74 percent held negative perceptions about African-American workers. These views were more widely held among firms that employed fewer workers of color, those in blue-collar industries and those located in predominantly white suburban areas.<sup>85</sup>

Employers were more likely to evaluate African-American men seeking jobs based on their soft skills rather than technical ones. Employment testing or auditing designed to detect discrimination showed that job applicants with equal skills and credentials but of different races and ethnicities did not fare equally. Applicants of color, particularly African Americans, were less likely to receive job interviews, job offers and advancement opportunities than white individuals.<sup>86</sup> Employers tended to use subjective information and race-based criteria, such as skin color, language and cultural attributes, to assess the soft skills of people of color.<sup>87</sup>

Moreover, employers were less likely to accept that structural barriers and discrimination affect the hiring of African-American men and contribute to wage and advancement disparities. The Chicago survey also found that most employers were dismissive of workplace discrimination as an issue. Only 4 percent agreed that racial discrimination was a factor in inner-city unemployment rates. Employers were also unaware of the racial stereotypes they held about African-American men.<sup>88</sup> Other forms of discrimination closely associated with race and ethnicity included discrimination against job seekers from certain neighborhoods or zip codes, individuals with ethnic-sounding names and those who used poor grammar. In the absence of soft-skill disqualifiers, people of color were more likely to be asked for credentials higher than the work required.

- **Narrow support for alternative job-creation approaches.** For labor markets to function effectively for low-income individuals, job creation must extend beyond conventional models. Enterprise development, supply-chain strategies, entrepreneurship and commercial development offered untapped opportunities for inner-city job seekers. The Jobs Initiative recognized the importance of linking workforce and economic development approaches and engaging a wider array of employers. Minority business development was central to job creation for job seekers of color. These businesses were more likely to hire workers of color and people with barriers to employment than mainstream companies.<sup>89</sup> Large, stable businesses and small firms in targeted industries such as construction and manufacturing offered better opportunities.
- **Biases in and negative perceptions of public training programs.** Federal job policies reinforced biases about different classes of workers. The Jobs Training Partnership Act of 1982 (JTPA), which was in effect at the start of the Jobs Initiative, attributed unemployment of middle-income job seekers and workers to economic forces — and that of low-income job seekers and workers to deficits in technical and soft skills. The espoused remedy for low-income job seekers was short-term training, which was typically disconnected from employers' needs.<sup>90</sup> Many employers associated these programs with public benefits and negative perceptions about race and ethnicity. Additionally, people of color participating in JTPA programs were less likely than white individuals to receive classroom training, on-the-job training and support services and more likely to only receive job-search services. This was true for African-American participants more than other racial and ethnic groups.<sup>91</sup>

## Appendix B: Cultural Competence Resources

The Annie E. Casey Foundation produced a wide range of reports, guidebooks, curricula and other resources to advance the Jobs Initiative's cultural competence work, some of which are still available through the Foundation's website. Other publications may be available from the author or publisher.

### AVAILABLE ON THE FOUNDATION'S WEBSITE

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- Seattle Jobs Initiative. (n.d.-b). *Teaching the essentials for functioning in the professional workplace*. Seattle, WA: Author.
- Seattle Jobs Initiative. (n.d.-c). *Understanding best practices and standards to retain entry-level workers*. Seattle, WA: Author.
- Trader-Leigh, K. (2002). *Investing in success: A supervisor's guidebook for supporting and retaining new workforce entrants in today's multicultural workforce*. Washington, DC: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.
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## Appendix C: Individuals Interviewed for This Report

### JOBS INITIATIVE SITE DIRECTORS AND STAFF

#### **Denver Workforce Initiative**

Brenda Palms Barber  
Executive Director, North Lawndale Employment Network

#### **Milwaukee Jobs Initiative**

Earl Buford  
President/CEO, Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board

Laura Dresser  
Associate Director, University of Wisconsin-Madison, COWS

#### **New Orleans Jobs Initiative**

Jyaphia Christos-Rodgers  
Community Organizer

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## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Although the Foundation originally envisioned the Jobs Initiative as an eight-year effort, the work in sites continued through 2005.

<sup>2</sup> The terms "minority" and "minorities" were common ways of describing people of color during the period of the Jobs Initiative. Their usage in this report should be understood in that context. Additionally, the term "race" was sometimes used as shorthand for race and ethnicity — a substitution occasionally used in this report.

<sup>3</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (1994). *Framework paper: The AECF Jobs Initiative*. Baltimore, MD: Author.

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<sup>4</sup> The term “inner city” is used throughout this report. During the early stages of the Jobs Initiative, people of color were generally concentrated in or near city centers.

<sup>5</sup> Wilson, W. J. (1996). *When work disappears: The world of the new urban poor*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.

<sup>6</sup> Structural racism is racial bias across institutions and society and describes the cumulative and compounding effects of factors that systematically confer privilege to white people and assign disadvantage to people of color. For more information, see The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2015). *It's time to talk: How to start conversations about racial inequities*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Retrieved from [www.aecf.org/resources/its-time-to-talk-how-to-start-conversations-about-racial-inequities](http://www.aecf.org/resources/its-time-to-talk-how-to-start-conversations-about-racial-inequities)

<sup>7</sup> Dewar, T., & Scheie, D. (1994). *Job opportunity initiatives: Toward a better future for low-income children and youth*. Minneapolis, MN: Rainbow Research, Inc.

<sup>8</sup> Cultural competence is the ability of an individual to understand and respect values, attitudes, beliefs and mores that differ across cultures, and to consider and respond appropriately to these differences in planning, implementing and evaluating programs and interventions. This definition is drawn from the American Association for Health Education and provided by the National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University at [www.ncccurrericula.info/culturalcompetence.html](http://www.ncccurrericula.info/culturalcompetence.html).

<sup>9</sup> Abt Associates Inc. (2001). *Taking the initiative on jobs and race: Innovations in workforce development for minority job seekers and employers*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Retrieved from [www.aecf.org/resources/taking-the-initiative-on-jobs-and-race](http://www.aecf.org/resources/taking-the-initiative-on-jobs-and-race). And, Abt Associates Inc. (2006). *Cultural competence in workforce development: The Jobs Initiative experience*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Retrieved from [www.aecf.org/resources/cultural-competence-in-workforce-development](http://www.aecf.org/resources/cultural-competence-in-workforce-development)

<sup>10</sup> Abt Associates Inc. (1997). *Evaluation of the AECF Jobs Initiative first annual/cross-site report*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED431852.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> For more on implicit bias, visit <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/research/understanding-implicit-bias>

<sup>12</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (1995). *Jobs Initiative national investor's outcomes outline*. Baltimore, MD: Author.

<sup>13</sup> The Jobs Initiative's archival material is uneven across the sites, making cross-site comparisons difficult; we provide some illustrative examples.

<sup>14</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (1994).

<sup>15</sup> Soft skills are nontechnical skills, such as communication, teamwork, willingness to learn and reliability. They may also include life skills that address a range of social, psychological, cultural and interpersonal skills needed to function productively and job-readiness skills that focus on job-search practices (online tools, resume writing, applications, interviewing), career coaching/mentoring, knowledge of career paths and other industry and occupational information and, increasingly, academic-readiness skills (tutoring, test preparation, academic coaching, etc.).

<sup>16</sup> Wilson, W. J. (1996).

<sup>17</sup> Wilson, W. J. (1996). And, Moss, P., & Tilly, C. (1995). *“Soft” skills and race: An investigation of black men's employment problems*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation. And, Kirschenman, J., & Neckerman, K. (1991). We'd love to hire them, but...: The meaning of race for employers. In C. Jencks & P. Peterson (Eds.), *The urban underclass* (pp. 203–234). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

<sup>18</sup> Kane, M., Berryman, S., Goslin, D., & Meltzer, A. (1990). *The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills: Identifying and describing the skills required by work*. Washington, DC: Pelavin

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Associates, Inc. Retrieved from  
<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/coo.31924062239557?urlappend=%3Bseq=3>

<sup>19</sup> Moss, P., & Tilly, C. (1995). And, Anderson, E. (1990). *Streetwise: Race, class, and change in an urban community*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. And, Anderson, E. (2000). *Code of the street: Decency, violence and the moral life of the inner city*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.

<sup>20</sup> Dewar, T., & Scheie, D. (1994).

<sup>21</sup> Moss, P., & Tilly, C. (1995).

<sup>22</sup> Holzer, H. J. (1996). *What employers want: Job prospects for less-educated workers*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

<sup>23</sup> Anderson, E. (2000).

<sup>24</sup> Conrad, C. A. (1999). *Soft skills and the minority workforce: A guide for informed discussion*. Washington, DC: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

<sup>25</sup> Leigh, W. A., Lee, D. H., & Lindquist, M. A. (1999.) *Soft skills training: An annotated guide to selected programs*. Washington, DC: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

<sup>26</sup> Hebert, S., & Duenes, L. (n.d.). *Good jobs, better systems: Overall results and lessons learned: Jobs Initiative 1995-2004: Executive summary*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

<sup>27</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2003, July). *Cultural competence in workforce development: Long definition* (Internal Jobs Initiative Working Document). Baltimore, MD: Author.

<sup>28</sup> The cultural competence framework focused on workforce intermediaries as bridges between supply-side and demand-side workforce development strategies and policies. The cultural competence team anticipated that its framework would influence the field and therefore distinguished workforce intermediaries from the Jobs Initiative's development intermediaries, which served as investors and carried out initiative-specific functions.

<sup>29</sup> Trader-Leigh, K. (2003a). *Building cultural competence: A tool kit for workforce development*. Washington, DC: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. And, Trader-Leigh, K. (2003b). *Fresh start: An on-the-job survival guide*. Washington: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

<sup>30</sup> Structural racism is racial bias across institutions and society. It describes the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of factors that systematically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color. See The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2014a). *Embracing equity: Race equity and inclusion action guide*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Retrieved from [www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF\\_EmbracingEquity7Steps-2014.pdf](http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF_EmbracingEquity7Steps-2014.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> Moss, P., & Tilly, C. (1995).

<sup>32</sup> Wilson, W. J. (1996).

<sup>33</sup> Workforce development and social service providers from around the country still use the New Orleans curriculum, *21st Century Success Principles*. It is available through the Lindy Boggs National Center for Community Literacy at Loyola University in New Orleans at [www.literacygno.org/21st-century-success-principles-training/c232u](http://www.literacygno.org/21st-century-success-principles-training/c232u)

<sup>34</sup> These training guides remain in use and may be available through [www.workinitout.com/home.html](http://www.workinitout.com/home.html).

<sup>35</sup> St. Louis' services were housed at a one-stop center strategically located along a light-rail corridor cutting across the highly segregated, predominantly black portions of the city and St. Louis County. The light rail allowed for access to regional job sites and was pivotal to St. Louis' ability to address transportation and geographic barriers to jobs, job training and comprehensive support services.

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- <sup>36</sup> Abt Associates Inc. & The New School University. (2002). *AECF Jobs Initiative: Evaluation of the capacity building phase: April 1997-March 2000*. Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates Inc.
- <sup>37</sup> Seattle Jobs Initiative. (1996). *Strategic investment plan* (Appendix C). Seattle, WA: Author.
- <sup>38</sup> Iversen, R. R. (2002). *Moving up is a steep climb: Parents' work and children's welfare in the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Jobs Initiative*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Retrieved from [www.aecf.org/resources/moving-up-is-a-steep-climb](http://www.aecf.org/resources/moving-up-is-a-steep-climb)
- <sup>39</sup> Abt Associates Inc. & The New School University. (2002). Table 5.
- <sup>40</sup> Dueñes, L. & Hill, T. (2006). *Cultural competence in workforce development: The Jobs Initiative experience*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Retrieved from [www.aecf.org/resources/cultural-competence-in-workforce-development](http://www.aecf.org/resources/cultural-competence-in-workforce-development)
- <sup>41</sup> This training tool, *Managing to Work It Out*, is still used as a proprietary program. Information about all of Denver's Workin' It Out tools is available at [www.workinitout.com/home.html](http://www.workinitout.com/home.html).
- <sup>42</sup> Trader-Leigh, K. (2002). *Investing in success: A supervisor's guidebook for supporting and retaining new workforce entrants in today's multicultural workforce*. Washington, DC: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.
- <sup>43</sup> Milwaukee was also the only site that did not implement a soft-skills project. Some of its partners already included soft-skills elements in their training, and the site had other mechanisms for helping people of color adjust to the workplace, as discussed in the text.
- <sup>44</sup> The original documentation about FEC's work with the Jobs Initiative is no longer available. This section is drawn from Abt Associates Inc. (2001).
- <sup>45</sup> Bendick, Jr., M., & Egan, M. L. (2000). *Changing workplace cultures to reduce employment discrimination*. Washington, DC: Bendick and Egan Economic Consultants, Inc.
- <sup>46</sup> Abt Associates Inc. & The New School University. (2002). Appendix A.
- <sup>47</sup> Bendick, Jr., M. (2000). *Surmounting five common barriers to business cooperation*. Washington, DC: Bendick and Egan Economic Consultants, Inc.
- <sup>48</sup> Jobs for the Future & Integral Assets, Inc. (1999, Rev. 2001). *A framework for labor market systems reform for Jobs Initiative sites*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Retrieved from [www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/materials/FrameworkforLMSR-1.pdf](http://www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/materials/FrameworkforLMSR-1.pdf)
- <sup>49</sup> R. Giloth (personal communication, January 4, 2016).
- <sup>50</sup> Hebert, S. & Waldron, T. (2007). *Strengthening workforce policy: Applying the lessons of the Jobs Initiative to five key challenges*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Retrieved from [www.aecf.org/resources/strengthening-workforce-policy](http://www.aecf.org/resources/strengthening-workforce-policy)
- <sup>51</sup> Conrad, C. A. (2005). *A mixed record: How the public workforce system affects racial and ethnic disparities in the labor market*. Washington, DC: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.
- <sup>52</sup> These cases include *Adarand Constructors Inc. v. Peña*, 515 U.S. 200 (1995), *Hopwood v. Texas*, 78 F.3d 932 (5th Cir. 1996) and *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 306 (2003).
- <sup>53</sup> Institutional racism is racial inequity within institutions and systems of power, such as places of employment, government agencies and social services. It can take the form of unfair policies and practices, discriminatory treatment and inequitable opportunities and outcomes. A school system that concentrates people of color in the most overcrowded and under-resourced schools with the least

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qualified teachers compared to the educational opportunities of white students is an example of institutional racism. Excerpt from The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2014a).

<sup>54</sup> Abt Associates Inc. (2006).

<sup>55</sup> The examples provided in this section are not meant to suggest bypassing such large organizations out of hand, but due diligence is needed to clarify their role and their connections and credibility with targeted groups.

<sup>56</sup> To plan and guide the Jobs Initiative, the Casey Foundation used the Rensselaerville Institute's Outcome Funding framework, which relied on well-defined assumptions and milestones to understand outcomes associated with job placement, job quality, job retention and other measures. Key distinctions of Outcome Funding are its emphasis on funders as investors and strategic partners; job seekers and employers as customers; and outcomes and return on investments as critical measures of success.

<sup>57</sup> Abt Associates Inc. & The New School University. (2002). Appendix A.

<sup>58</sup> This section includes historical data and trends that influenced the Annie E. Casey Foundation's decision to address jobs and create the Jobs Initiative. Much of it was compiled during the 1980s and 1990s. Comparisons by race were often limited to data for blacks and whites and, to a lesser extent, Hispanics. Few sources segmented Asian ethnicities or included Native American populations.

<sup>59</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (1994).

<sup>60</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census. (1993). *1990 Census of population: Social and economic characteristics* (Report Number: CP-2). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce. Retrieved from [www.census.gov/library/publications/1993/dec/cp-2.html](http://www.census.gov/library/publications/1993/dec/cp-2.html)

<sup>61</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (1994).

<sup>62</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2016a). *A shared sentence: The devastating toll of parental incarceration on kids, families and communities*. Baltimore, MD: Author. Retrieved from [www.aecf.org/resources/a-shared-sentence](http://www.aecf.org/resources/a-shared-sentence).

<sup>63</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2012, February 1). *Children living in America's high-poverty communities* (KIDS COUNT Data Snapshot on High-Poverty Communities). Baltimore, MD: Author. Retrieved from [www.aecf.org/resources/data-snapshot-on-high-povertycommunities](http://www.aecf.org/resources/data-snapshot-on-high-povertycommunities). And, The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2014b). *Creating opportunity for families: A two-generation approach* (KIDS COUNT Policy Report). Baltimore, MD: Author. Retrieved from [www.aecf.org/resources/creating-opportunity-for-families](http://www.aecf.org/resources/creating-opportunity-for-families)

<sup>64</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census. (1993).

<sup>65</sup> Moss, P., & Tilly, C. (1995).

<sup>66</sup> Mishel, L. (1995, September 11). *Recent wage trends*. Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.

<sup>67</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census. (1993).

<sup>68</sup> Saunders, L. (1995, April). Relative earning of black men to white men by region, industry. *Monthly Labor Review*, 118(4), 68–73. Retrieved from <https://stats.bls.gov/mlr/1995/04/art8full.pdf>

<sup>69</sup> Kletzer, L. G. (1991, July). Job displacement, 1979-86: How blacks fared relative to whites. *Monthly Labor Review*, 114(7), 17–25.

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- <sup>70</sup> Wunnava, P., & Peled, N. (1999, Summer). Union wage premium by gender and race: Evidence from PSID 1980-1992. *Journal of Labor Research*, 20(3), 415–423. Retrieved from [http://community.middlebury.edu/~wunnava/Recent\\_Papers/JLRSM1999.pdf](http://community.middlebury.edu/~wunnava/Recent_Papers/JLRSM1999.pdf)
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- <sup>76</sup> Moss, P., & Tilly, C. (1995).
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- <sup>78</sup> Olson, L. A., Berg, L., & Conrad, A. (1990). *High job turnover among the urban poor: The Project Match experience*. Evanston, IL: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University.
- <sup>79</sup> Ferguson, R., & Filer, R. (1986). Do better jobs make better workers? Absenteeism and inner city black youth. In R. Freeman & H. Holzer (Eds.), *The black youth employment crisis* (pp. 261–298). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Retrieved from [www.nber.org/chapters/c6288.pdf](http://www.nber.org/chapters/c6288.pdf)
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- <sup>81</sup> Granovetter, M. (1995). *Getting a job: A study of contacts and careers*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- <sup>82</sup> Wilson, W. J. (1987).
- <sup>83</sup> Kasinitz, P., & Rosenberg, J. (1996). Missing the connection: Social isolation and employment on the Brooklyn waterfront. *Social Problems*, 43(2), 180–196.
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<sup>89</sup> Bates, T. (1994, June). Utilization of minority employees in small business: A comparison of nonminority and black-owned urban enterprises. *The Review of Black Political Economy*, 23(1), 113–121.

<sup>90</sup> Mueller, E., & Schwartz, A. (1998). Why local economic development and employment training fail for low-income communities. In R. P. Giloth (Ed.), *Jobs and economic development: Strategies and practice* (pp. 51–52). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

<sup>91</sup> U.S. General Accounting Office. (1991). *Jobs Training Partnership Act: Racial and gender disparities in services*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from [www.gao.gov/products/T-HRD-91-42](http://www.gao.gov/products/T-HRD-91-42)