

# Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP) Job Quality Work Group

## Phase One Report

### Work Group Co-Leads

Paulette Beadling, Career Pathways Policy Associate, Workforce Board

Darcy Hoffman, Director of Business Services, Workforce Southwest Washington

### Work Group Sponsor

Cherika Carter, Secretary Treasurer, Washington State Labor Council

### Work Group Members

Anne Goranson, Strategic Initiatives Manager, Employment Security Department

Emmanuel Flores, Workforce Development Director, Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

Jeannine Chandler, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Business Relations Manager,  
Department of Social and Health Services

Jessica Barr, North Sound Regional Director, Employment Security Department

John Glynn, Manager of Strategic Initiatives, Washington Workforce Association

Kairie Pierce, Workforce Innovation Sector Lead, Dept. of Commerce

Tessa McClellan, Director of Industry Strategies, Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King  
County

September 2025



## Work Group mission, vision and goal statement

**Workforce Board and Work Group Vision:** Every Washington community is thriving, inclusive, and economically resilient.

**Workforce Board and Work Group Mission:** We champion strategies, and align organizations and stakeholders statewide to enable the future of work, which ensures a successful business climate and livable-wage jobs for all.

**Work Group goal statement:** The Job Quality Work Group aims to:

- Define a shared, equity-centered job quality framework for Washington State’s workforce system
- Establish measurable indicators to track progress
- Promote the framework’s adoption by educating interest-holders on its benefits and various uses
- Focus on efforts to increase job quality for all and foster equal partnership between employers and workers
- Recognize that strong job quality is foundational to thriving communities and economic development across the state

## Table of Contents

How we got here	Page 3
Why a job quality framework and definition are needed	Page 3
Workgroup process	Page 4
A draft job quality framework	Page 5
Definition considerations	Page 5
Measurement considerations	Page 9
Potential future activities	Page 13

## How we got here – Year one activity milestones

- Work group established; monthly meetings started June 2024
- Creation of and agreement on a year one timeline; July 2024
- Development of a statewide job quality survey; August-November 2024
- Survey deployment; November 2024-February 2025
- Survey data analysis and creation of a survey [key findings summary report](#); February-May 2025
- Completion of a [literature review](#); June-July 2025
- Completion of a year one progress report with framework recommendations

## Why a framework and definition are needed

Defining job quality and developing a supporting framework is foundational—it turns a broad aspiration of the state’s workforce system into a cohesive, strategic, and accountable effort that can drive meaningful change in our state’s labor market. Key reasons for developing a job quality definition and framework include the following:

**Creates a shared understanding and language.** Job quality can mean different things to different groups. A clear definition builds a common understanding of what makes a good job. This reduces confusion and helps policymakers, employers, workers, and advocates take coordinated action.

**Sets a clear vision and goals.** Defining job quality from the start gives the strategy specific and measurable priorities. It guides decisions about which policies, sectors, or programs to focus on and turns broad ideas into concrete goals.

**Allows consistent measurement and evaluation.** A clear definition and framework make it possible to track progress, measure impact, and spot gaps. Without this clarity, efforts may lack accountability or show mixed results. It also supports the use of evidence-based policymaking.

**Encourages collaboration across sectors.** Workforce development, economic development, education, labor, and other sectors often work separately. A shared framework for job quality can be used to connect efforts and encourage collaboration.

**Promotes equity and inclusion.** A well-designed definition can focus on equity by highlighting which workers and sectors face the biggest challenges. It ensures strategies improve conditions for people who have historically been left out or had limited access to opportunities.

**Builds public and community support.** Explaining clearly what job quality means can strengthen public trust. It shows why improving job quality is important for economic growth, worker well-being, and healthy communities.

## Workgroup process

The workgroup arrived at the following framework requirements, job quality elements and considerations based on their review of existing federal, state and regional job quality frameworks, [job quality survey results](#), and a review of relevant literature.

### Requirements for the Framework

- The framework should be easy for employers and other interest-holders to access
- Simple is better; it needs to be digestible
- Focus on values rather than compliance
- Holistic approach
- Continuum model (recognizes that job quality exists on a spectrum, not simply good vs. bad)
- Reflect that there are certain elements of job quality that form a foundation for a quality job
- Reflect how workers experience job quality—as a set of interconnected elements, where core essentials are tightly linked with other important factors
- Inclusive of all industries, all types of companies, all types of jobs
- Incorporates the [UW self-sufficiency calculator](#) as a measurement tool

## A draft job quality framework

There are three foundational features of job quality as identified by the work group:

1. Stability
2. Opportunity
3. Belonging

These categories include the following job quality characteristics:

### Stability

- Compensation (self-sufficiency income)
- Comprehensive benefits
- Job safety and job security
- Flexible work arrangements

### Opportunity

- Accessible recruitment and hiring and onboarding practices
- Career advancement and professional development
- Tech-enabled, worker-centered artificial intelligence integration

### Belonging

- Worker rights, voice, empowerment and representation
- Workplace culture and engagement
- Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA)

## Considerations

The workgroup's research identified key considerations for defining and measuring job quality.

### **Definition: What is job quality as it relates to Washington's workforce system?**

The workgroup determined that the definition should be broad to fit jobs across industries and geographies and should be a resource for a range of partners. They initially intended to recommend a formal definition of job quality based on the framework itself after gathering industry, system, and user feedback and finalizing the framework. However, a request was made at the Aug. 20, 2025, board meeting for the group to formalize a draft definition. That draft definition is included below.

## Definitions of job quality

The workgroup reviewed existing definitions of job quality and good/quality jobs to inform their work.

Note: Most people commonly understand a good job or quality job to refer to a job that meets basic standards like fair wages, some benefits, and safe working conditions. Employment that supports a stable livelihood may not always include things like long-term growth or worker voice.

Job quality, however, is a comprehensive concept that includes more than pay, benefits, and safe working conditions. It encompasses things like career advancement opportunities, inclusive culture, worker voice, supportive and engaging environments, stability, and more. Job quality also emphasizes economic mobility, equity, and long-term well-being. This comprehensive concept aligns with the job quality workgroup's activities over the last year, creating a draft job quality framework to potentially guide Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP) implementation. TAP is the state's four-year strategy for a strong and successful workforce development system that aims to help employers, workers and communities succeed.

Examples of job quality definitions include:

**Urban Institute/Aspen Institute adaptation.** The conditions resulting from a continuum of job characteristics that relate to worker preferences and well-being, including their economic stability and security, balance, prospects for upward mobility and opportunity as well as equity, respect, voice, and belonging.

**Colorado State Workforce Development Council.** The council defines job quality as occurring on a continuum, and when the features of a job meet the needs of workers and allow the business to thrive. At a minimum, a good job allows for workers to meet basic needs by providing:

- Wages that provide predictable income that covers basic living expenses and allows for wealth building
- Benefits that facilitate a healthy, stable life
- A schedule that enables workers to balance the other demands of life
- Working conditions offer an environment that promotes physical, emotional, and psychological safety and wellness
- Employers establish transparent growth opportunities to advance along a career pathway and increase pay

- Sense of belonging in an inclusive environment where individuals are accepted and connected to one another

**The Aspen Institute.** (This definition is for good jobs as opposed to job quality.)

- Economic stability. Good jobs provide workers with confidence that they can meet their basic needs — for healthy food, a safe place to live, healthcare, and other essentials — for themselves and their families now and in the future.
- Economic mobility. Good jobs provide clear pathways into them and an equitable chance of hiring. They provide mobility over a career through opportunities to learn, to advance to new positions, to be recognized for accomplishments, to save, and to build wealth.
- Equity, respect, and voice. Good jobs respect the contributions that people bring to an organization, without regard to their gender, race, ethnicity, level of educational attainment, or other demographic characteristics. They engage workers in understanding their work and how it advances the goals of the organization. Workers in good jobs have the power to ensure that concerns about working conditions or ideas for improving workplaces will be fairly considered and acted upon.

**San Diego Workforce Partnership.** (This definition is for a quality job.)

- A quality job is a position that contributes to household stability through:
  - Reliable, predictable earnings which provide a pathway to self-sufficiency for family size
  - Working conditions that are safe, free from discrimination and harassment, and welcoming of workers concerns and ideas for improvement
  - Opportunities to learn, grow and advance either within the organization or the field
  - A set of support systems, benefits and options that align with the needs of a workers' life circumstances and career goals

**Columbia-Willamette Workforce Collaborative.** Definition includes quality jobs standards, self-sufficiency wages, safe working conditions, worker engagement, predictable hours, comprehensive benefits, accessible hiring and onboarding practices, and training and advancement opportunities. Details follow.

- Quality jobs standards bring clarity to the conversations on job quality in the region and serve as a tool for the local workforce development boards to further focus their program offerings to job seekers and businesses, as well as their partnerships with employers and community-based organizations.

- Self-sufficiency wages. A quality job provides sufficient income to afford a decent standard of living. For example, jobs that offer pay consistent with published self-sufficiency standards that consider family composition and cost of living.
- Safe working conditions/worker engagement. A quality job offers employees dignity and respect and welcomes engagement in workplace operations. For example, quality jobs uphold and enforce anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies and provide reasonable accommodation to employees with disabilities.
- Predictable hours. A quality job offers employees predictability on the number of hours they are offered per week to minimize hardship on employees and their families.
- Comprehensive benefits. A quality job provides basic benefits that increase economic security, improve health and overall well-being. Quality jobs include healthcare, childcare, transportation, wellness programs, and access to retirement savings programs, among other supports.
- Accessible hiring and onboarding practices. A quality job offers transparent and accessible hiring and onboarding practices to ensure that employer and employee are set for success.
- Training and advancement opportunities. A quality job provides opportunities to build skills and access new roles and responsibilities in a workplace. For example, quality jobs offer internal pathways to support career progression, professional development, and incumbent worker training opportunities.

**Washington Student Achievement Council's Washington Jobs Initiative.** (This program is supported by a \$23.5 million [Good Jobs Challenge](#) grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce.)

- Quality jobs are defined as those that provide a family-sustaining wage, benefits (including paid leave, health insurance, and retirement), and opportunities for career advancement

**TAP Work Group Job Quality draft definition.** Job quality encompasses a continuum of job characteristics that shape worker preferences and well-being while providing employers with the foundation to attract, retain, and fully engage their workforce. The characteristics are grouped into three foundational features of job quality: stability, opportunity and belonging.

- Stability refers to the foundational elements of a job that provide workers with consistent and secure conditions, enabling them to maintain their livelihood and plan for the future with confidence. A stable job supports an individual's overall well-being through four interconnected elements:
  - Compensation at or above self-sufficiency standard



- Comprehensive benefits
- Job safety and job security
- Flexible work arrangements
- Opportunity refers to the extent to which a job offers equitable access to growth, learning, and long-term career success. It emphasizes removing barriers and creating pathways that allow all workers—regardless of background or starting point—to thrive, adapt, and advance in a changing workforce increasingly shaped by new and emerging technologies, with decisions designed to strengthen both employer competitiveness and worker well-being. Core elements of opportunity include:
  - Accessible recruitment, hiring and onboarding practices
  - Career advancement and professional development
  - Tech-enabled, worker-centered artificial intelligence integration
- Belonging refers to the extent to which workers feel valued, supported, respected, and included in the workplace. It emphasizes the human and relational aspects of job quality—ensuring that employees are not just present, but are heard, empowered, and able to fully participate in shaping their work experience. Belonging is created through three interconnected elements:
  - Worker rights, voice, empowerment and representation
  - Workplace culture and engagement
  - Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA)

## **Measurement: How should job quality be measured?**

Once the foundational framework is in place, the next step is to test and explore approaches to measurement, such as statistical modeling. Future phases may focus on identifying or refining which core elements should be prioritized for measurement. Just as job quality itself is multidimensional, so too must the strategies for measuring it. What works well for one element may not apply to another. The goal is not to find a single correct way to measure job quality, but to recognize the value of multiple methods and perspectives. Exploring a range of measurement approaches will provide a more accurate and more complete picture of job quality across its many dimensions.

There are some questions to explore with the Board and system interest-holders when it comes to measuring job quality. Their input will help determine the next steps for a future phase of work to include measuring job quality elements.

- Should the focus be on one category of job quality elements, such as stability or opportunity?
- Does it make sense to start with what survey respondents told us was most important? (compensation)
- Where does the workforce development system have the most opportunity to make an impact?
- Where does the Board have the most opportunity to make an impact?

Measuring this information is complex. We need to look at the different data sources we plan to use and check if they can provide the details we want to measure. This means carefully reviewing the data each source gives us and removing sources that don't fit or can't be connected back to workforce system users.

Doing this work will take time, careful decisions, resources, and expertise in data analysis. The Workforce Board already has some staff with the skills to help but additional resources would likely be needed.

Below is an early list of possible ways to measure job quality. Please note, there are caveats and more time is needed to explore the possibilities. There are many ways in which job quality and its elements can be measured.

### **Measurement data accessible now**

**Compensation.** This element can be measured to show the average increase in income over time. There are a number of sources such as:

- Employment Security Department ([Covered Employment \(QCEW\) | Employment Security Department](#))
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics ([Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics](#))
- Census American Community Survey data ([S1903: Median Income in the Past 12 ... - Census Bureau Table](#)) has median household income by race and gender demographics, but note that it is income versus wages and includes non-wage components such as transfers.

The work group recommends incorporating the University of Washington Self Sufficiency Calculator into the framework if the Board and partners can agree on measuring household

income versus an individual's wages. For example, a quality job compensates workers at or above the calculator's living wage threshold.

**Diversity and inclusion.** This element could be monitored by tracking the increased representation of underrepresented groups within the workforce. Census data provides labor force participation rate by race, by state.<sup>1</sup> A question could also be added to the Workforce Board's employer survey to supplement this data, including a question about representation of underrepresented groups in leadership roles.

**Worker rights.** Union coverage or membership rate (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics), percent of workers with collective bargaining agreements in place. (Not all professions are unionized.)

**Job safety and working conditions.** Occupational injury and illness rate or the number of OSHA violations per 1,000 workers (state Department of Labor & Industries data.)

**Fewer people in poverty.** American Community Survey Data (ACS) can be used to measure this.

### **Measurement data available now but not fully accessible**

**Career advancement and professional development.** This could be measured by looking at employee participation in the 12 training programs the workforce system already tracks or monitors (there are 12 programs currently being monitored). With the new occupational data that ESD is collecting, this information could show movement to higher wage quartiles over time. However, it would require significant research resources. Please note, it is not currently possible to break down this data by demographics, because no one currently collects that information.

**Job stability and security.** Percent of workers in full-time versus part time jobs and/or employment to population ratio.

### **Tech-enabled, worker-centered AI integration:**

**Occupational projections and automation risk scores.** Combine state employment projections with tools like [O\\*NET's Automation Index](#) or the [Brookings Institution's automation risk scores](#) to help identify which occupations that AI or automation is most likely to impact. Changes in wages, job openings, and turnover in those occupations could be tracked over time.

**Job displacement trends.** Use unemployment insurance claims data to spot patterns in job losses within sectors undergoing technological transformation (such as manufacturing, retail,

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://data.census.gov/table?q=labor+force+participation&g=040XX00US53>

customer service.) Look for spikes in displacements that coincide with the adoption of new technologies.

**Shifts in job seeker demand and reskilling needs.** Review and quantify the types of training services requested by job seekers (e.g., digital literacy, cybersecurity, AI/data analytics).

**Training enrollment shifts.** Monitor increases in enrollment for programs related to AI, information technology, and digital upskilling. Compare that with enrollment drops in more automatable occupations to gauge workforce response.

**Wage growth/decline in disrupted sectors.** This would require identification of disrupted sectors by NAICS codes, which could then be compared against changes in wages.

**Benefits.** The biannual Workforce Board Employer Survey has historically asked “Which of the following benefits do you provide to any of your employees?” (sick leave, other leave, health insurance, contribution to pension/retirement). It would be possible to consider a revision to this question going forward to be more inclusive of the benefits employers provide to all employees. The original wording assumes a traditional full-time employment model, and some employers may offer different types of benefits depending on employee status (full-time, part-time, seasonal, temporary, contract.) To make the question more inclusive and capture the full range of benefits, one could ask: “Which of the following benefits do you make available to any of your workers (including full-time, part-time, temporary, or seasonal staff)?”

There is also the [National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2022 : U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). It offers benefits information that separates data by 4-digit [Standard Occupational Classification codes](#) with additional detail by industry.

**Recruitment and hiring.** For hiring, compare the demographics (race, gender, age, disability status, veteran status) of those registered in the state’s public workforce system (such as WorkSource) with those who are hired. Data from registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs could be used to measure access to high-quality job pipelines by underrepresented groups and transition rates from training to employment enrollment and completion.

**Employers have the talent they need.** A question could be added to the Workforce Board employer survey to provide insight on this topic.

## Measurement data unavailable now

**Schedule predictability.** It would be ideal to measure the percentage of workers with and without schedule predictability, but the work group was not able to identify a current data source.

**Flexibility, or percentage of workers with flexible schedules.** The state is not currently measuring this. Measuring flexibility would require determining a new method for data collection.

**Culture.** The state is not currently measuring this, so a new method for data collection is needed. Options include surveys, partner data sources, or employer-reported data (via survey most likely) on topics including:

- Existence of DEI initiatives and employee resource groups
- Mental health or wellness benefits offered
- Policies supporting flexibility and caregiving
- Managerial training programs on empathy, equity, and inclusion.

**Increased job quality.** This would depend on the final definition of job quality, what elements are included in the finalized framework and how job quality elements are measured.

## Potential Future Activities

The work group could select activities from the following list based on relevance and capacity. (They are not committing to completing the entire list.) Existing resources do not allow for the completion of this full list in the next phase. The workgroup has flagged two activities as the most important and best next steps to advance job quality for TAP:

- Gather feedback on the draft framework, definition and potential metrics from industry, system partners, and users
- Engage key advisory groups, including the TAP Industry Advisory Committee and Economic Justice Alliance's Advisory Council

The workgroup identified other activities to consider after gathering feedback and engaging advisory groups:

- Build buy-in and align priorities
- Establish a group charter

- Collaboration with the Performance Accountability Work Group to explore and define metrics
- Finalize a clear, practical, and goal-aligned job quality framework
- Determine potential pilot projects
- Define the scope, goals and objectives for a framework initial rollout
- Develop an implementation plan with timeline, resources, communication strategies, and action steps as well as identify necessary policy changes, investments or initiatives to support rollout
- Produce summaries, reports, and policy recommendations as needed