

# Achieving the Promise of Work- The Day After the Crisis

*Achieving the Promise of Work* (APW) is an initiative of the Institute for Work & the Economy that builds collaborations among local stakeholders and community, regional and national partners to:

- Advance equitable policies and practices that lead to successful, family-sustaining, and satisfying careers
- Foster innovating enterprises that derive strength from collective efforts and cumulative learning
- Achieve inclusive and equitable economic, social and cultural benefits regardless of place or status
- Grow successful participatory democratic institutions.

APW is anchored by the Institute's faith in the ingenuity, entrepreneurship and innovative capacity of individuals and collaborations to find solutions to personal and collective challenges. Our approach is to act with humility and without any presumption that the Institute has the answers. Systemic gains are achieved by first listening to what each other has to say, by learning from our experiences and expressed knowledge, and by collectively finding creative approaches that will achieve:

- Sustainable economies that are characterized by a strong and vibrant private sector and stable and equitable growth
- Productivity growth that makes it possible for higher standards of living
- Stable employment opportunities that enable people to remain productive throughout their working lives and provide them with enough savings for decent retirements

## AWP Principles:

1. Business must honor its six key stakeholders and forego shareholder primacy thinking: Customers; Employees; Vendors and suppliers; Communities in which they operate; Shareholders; and the Enterprise itself.
2. Respect and assure workers' standing in determining fair and equitable policies and practices.
3. Government's role is to: Assure an equitable distribution of resources and opportunities; Advance the welfare of whole communities as well as their members; Level the playing field for all six key stakeholders of business
4. Advanced innovations and technologies should: Augment the productive and creative capacities of workers; Expand the possibilities of what can be created; Offer the promise of greater economic growth, sustainable employment security; and mitigate the adverse consequence brought about by hard choices
5. Eliminate and undo discriminatory policies and practices pertaining to race, gender, sexual identity, age, disability, immigrants, veterans, and returning citizens.
6. Recognize and respect the lifetime arc of a career as a core element of a person's identity and self-worth.

- Equitable sharing of income among all those whose work efforts and financial resources contribute to the nation’s productivity.

*Achieving the Promise of Work* is three-pronged:

**Foster community engagement:** A community is a diverse population bounded by place or shared economic and social interests; it can be a neighborhood, a town, a city, an industry, or linked occupations. Policies that affect the futures of work in communities must be informed by the wants, needs, ideas, and opinions of all stakeholders as shared at gatherings on shop floors, around kitchen tables, at places of worship, and in offices, as well as in board rooms.

*Achieving the Promise of Work* will empower these conversations through forward-thinking collaborations involving the ranks of communities, community-based organizations, business, labor, government, education, faith-based organizations, and civic institutions. Collectively, they will decide and act on courses of action that advance equity and equality.

**Encourage and endorse policy innovation:** The current trajectory of the economy must be guided away from low-wage, unstable jobs towards one that embraces greater equity, prosperity, and inclusion.

*Achieving the Promise of Work* will support collaborations among policy makers and people who are challenged by great economic change. Each must learn from the other. This combination of research, practical knowledge, and personal experiences will lead to novel solutions to the issues confronting working communities.

**Establish and support self-actualizing networks:** Linked relationships across communities are needed to produce products and services that bridge boundaries and serve the common good.

*Achieving the Promise of Work* will establish and support networks that address the factors driving changes in the structures of work. These networks will foster, grow, and help sustain the knowledge and actions needed to address transcendent and complex issues.

### Day After Conversations

Our strategy was to convene communities face-to-face, and it remains our long-term plan. But the coronavirus pandemic changed our plans for APW for the foreseeable future. There is a treasure trove of insights and ideas outside the corridors of power in Washington, on Wall Street and in Silicon Valley as to how to move the economy forward and address embedded inequities that threaten to grow if direct actions are not taken. It is important, now more than ever, to look forward and to anticipate the ways business, commerce and jobs will change - and the impact these changes will have on all community stakeholders.

To do this, we are launching a series of virtual “day after” conversations where a diverse group of a dozen or so people who share a common bond are asked to exchange observations, experiences and learnings around current events, to think back about the challenges they faced at the beginning of 2020, and to offer their thoughts about what work, the economy, and the lives of those they serve will be like down the road. The APW project will organize and moderate these virtual convenings, synthesize the conversations and lead the process with partners that result in ideas on how to move forward. We will emphasize involving leaders who are drawn from the ranks of the community. We intend to stimulate action and will share what

we learn with a broad audience including workforce and economic development professionals, policy makers, employers, unions, community organizations and others engaged in recrafting our economy.

Our goal is to give voice to and promote the unfiltered ideas of people who will take on the task of rebuilding the economy. The menu of proposed policies dominating the landscape today are largely retreads of old ideas that have been percolating in Washington, D.C. by think tanks and special interests. While many of these may still have merit, the confluence of events brought about by the pandemic provides an opportunity to be an inflection point for fresh thinking and bold actions that take on the longstanding, festering inequities that tear our social fabric.

History teaches us that bold answers begin in small ways. It often starts with those who have deep knowledge of their communities or those with whom they share an identity. It grows when they share their perceptions and ideas with others with whom they then strategize on how to move ahead collectively. While we cannot promise that the bold, paradigm shattering idea will be produced by any of the conversations that we host, we are confident that many difference-makers will emerge. The protocols for the conversations are designed to push back on pre-pandemic assumptions of economic and workforce behavior and encourage looking beyond the standard approaches.