



National Fund
for **Workforce Solutions**

Healing Through Trauma
Informed Work Readiness
May 11, 2023

Healing Through Trauma-Informed Work Readiness



Today's Goals

- Understand different ways of framing and defining “work readiness”
- Understand the importance collaboration and partnership
- Hear examples of promising practices from the National Fund’s network of regional workforce collaboratives
 - Chicago, IL - Worker Rights Education
 - Springfield, MA – trauma-informed needs assessment and practitioner supports

A little bit about me...

Carrie Felton

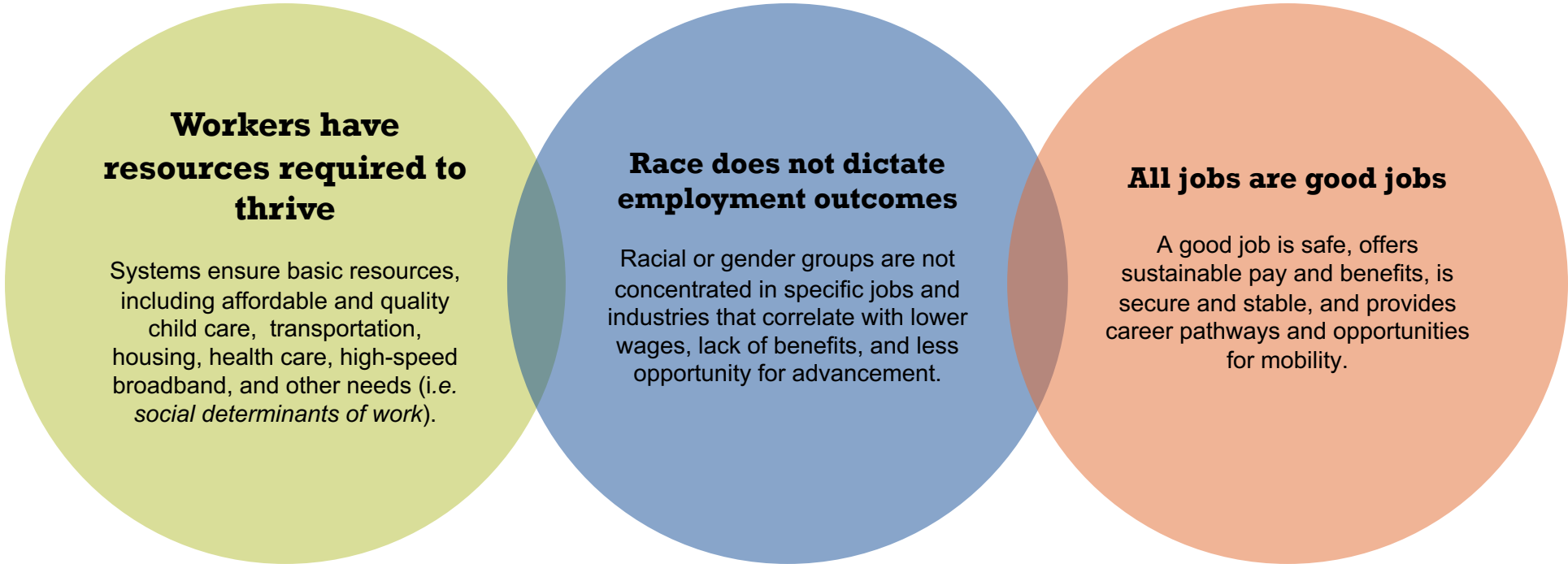


Program Director
Equipping Workers for Success
National Fund for Workforce
Solutions



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Workers have resources required to thrive

Systems ensure basic resources, including affordable and quality child care, transportation, housing, health care, high-speed broadband, and other needs (i.e. *social determinants of work*).

Race does not dictate employment outcomes

Racial or gender groups are not concentrated in specific jobs and industries that correlate with lower wages, lack of benefits, and less opportunity for advancement.

All jobs are good jobs

A good job is safe, offers sustainable pay and benefits, is secure and stable, and provides career pathways and opportunities for mobility.



Understanding the impact
of trauma helps us
advance workforce equity.



Institutions and systems that
promote resilience are critical
to ensuring people who have
experienced trauma can thrive.

Grounding

What does it mean to be
"work-ready"?

- WIOA?
- Workforce service and training providers?
- Employers?
- Job seekers?

Chicago Jobs Council Career Readiness Framework



“...the strategies used to deliver job readiness content actually matter more than the content of what is delivered.”

Five Tiers of Economic Empowerment



How do the people you work with navigate their needs across these tiers? What are common sticking points?



Collaboration is Essential





**Survivor support organizations
are essential bridges to
training and skills development
opportunities for survivors.**

What organizations do you currently partner with?
What does that partnership look like?



Collaboration is Essential...and Challenging

Challenges

- Different language, frameworks, and culture
- “That’s not our job!”
- Lack of resources, incentives, and mandates to collaborate
- Turnover can make lasting partnerships difficult

Strategies

- Establishing mutually beneficial goals
- Establishing regular touchpoints
- Collaborative/reciprocal training
- Shared leadership and governance
- Partnerships at institutional and systems levels (MOU, shared funding, strategic plans, collective impact, etc.)

Examples from the
National Fund



Assessing Work Readiness of Job Seekers with System Involvement in Springfield, MA

Background

- Community Reinvestment and Empowerment (CERP) Initiative supported by Springfield WORKS
- Majority of survey respondents not aware of available supports
- Respondents also identified significant gaps in the process
- Trauma responsive principles were necessary to support people on their journey toward employment

Strategy

- Modified the “Ready, Willing, and Able” assessment tool
 - Uses language that supports resiliency, builds relationships, and is less likely to re-traumatize
 - Asks questions aligned with Social Determinants of Health framework to assess needs
- Implemented a community of practice and series of trainings on trauma-informed approaches for CERP partners

Assessing Work Readiness of Job Seekers with System Involvement in Springfield, MA



Social Determinants of Health Framework in Assessment

Ready, Willing & Able (Interviewer Assessment: Check One)

Tier 1

Ready, Willing & Able

Engage in Training as soon as available, while also utilizing referrals and assistance

Tier 2

Ready & Willing

Utilize referrals & assistance & follow-up in 3/6 months to re-assess

Tier 3

Needs Additional Support

Needs additional education & support to prepare for workforce readiness – follow-up in 6 – 12 months.

The “Ready, Willing, and Able” assessment tool includes next steps for BOTH the jobseeker and the partner

Worker Rights Education as Part of Career Readiness Training

Background

- Quality Vanguard Project supported by the Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance was formed to build worker power to ensure good jobs for workers.
- Weakening of worker power has contributed to decrease in wages and job quality in many jobs and industries. People of color are often overrepresented in lower wage, lower quality jobs.
- Most workers, particularly those that are part of marginalized groups, do not learn about their rights as workers.

Strategy

- A key pillar of the Vanguard work involved developing a worker rights curriculum for job seekers, workers, and training providers.
- Delivered many trainings to frontline workforce providers
- Currently seeking funding to continue building and expanding on the work

Worker Rights Education as Part of Career Readiness Training

Job readiness

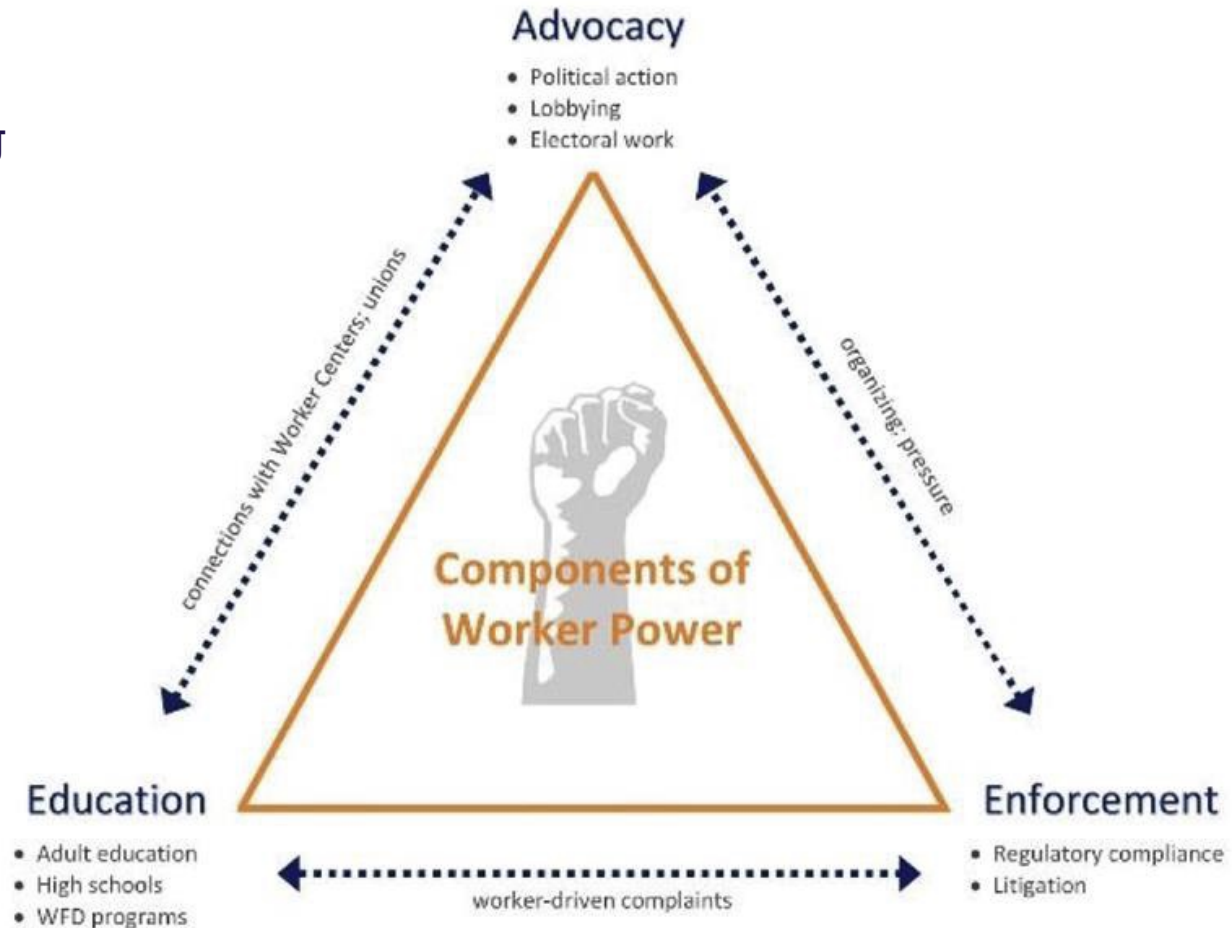
Part of being “job ready” is knowing your rights as a worker

Financial literacy

Protecting against wage theft and other workplace violations helps workers earn more \$ and better support their families

Perfect partnership

Workers + mission-driven CBOs/educational institutions + career focused education



Thank You

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[A Trauma-Informed Approach to Workforce](#)

[Chicago Quality Vanguard Worker Rights Curriculum](#)

Chicago Jobs Council

[Career Readiness Framework](#)