

Change Up:

# How will New York City Define the Future of Work?

The Partnership for Innovation for the  
Future of Work in New York City

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GREEN**

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## Foreword

The nature of work is changing. Robust industries of the past such as manufacturing are shifting dramatically due to disruptive forces like globalization and automation, while advocates for social stability are influencing the relationship between employers and workers. Even what we perceive as “work” is changing. Cities like New York are on the front lines of this shifting landscape. To drive economic growth that expands economic opportunity and enhances worker security, city leaders understand all too well that they must build more pathways to more quality jobs. The future of cities as thriving, dynamic, and inclusive economic engines is thus inextricably linked to the future of work. It is such an important topic that citizens from all sectors need to participate in imagining this “tomorrow.”

We know that business leaders require a market-driven workforce system to meet their strategic needs. At Barclays, they are addressing these needs by working to upskill the workforce, drive job creation, and support small businesses and entrepreneurs to enhance economic opportunity and social resilience. As the future of work dialogues create opportunities to shape the economy in New York and beyond, Barclays is increasingly leveraging their civic leadership to convene just such conversations. Recognizing that the perspective, energy, and solutions-orientation of social innovators can turn ideas into action, Barclays and Echoing Green teamed up to launch The Partnership for Innovation for the Future of Work in New York City in 2017.

The Partnership hosted city-wide programming, including a Social Innovation Challenge & Bootcamp for young leaders pitching fresh ideas on workforce development; curated salons featuring the work of Echoing Green Fellows who are creating pathways for overlooked talent to enter the New York City workforce; and invited social entrepreneurs focused on the future of work to contribute their perspectives as participants on a Leadership Roundtable. These social entrepreneurs are passionate and relentless transformative social change leaders whose innovative ideas drive positive social and environmental change at scale. Alongside cross-sector workforce development leaders, each brought their essential perspectives to address our central question: *what will we do to ensure all New Yorkers have the opportunity to thrive?*

The Recommendations that follow were generated by the Partnership's Leadership Roundtable working group whose workforce development practitioners, business leaders, policymakers, and social entrepreneurs engaged in design-thinking exercises to develop actionable ideas related to future of work efforts in New York City. At the upcoming "Change Up: Conversations on the Future of Work in New York City," an interactive event that will convene an even broader group of leaders from across the city, these Recommendations will be presented and discussed. Event participants will then offer concrete suggestions on how these Recommendations can be adopted.

## Recommendations

Creating the conditions for growth and good jobs for workers in New York City is complex and requires a multi-faceted approach that includes strategies such as making workforce development a priority; investing in college and career readiness to prepare more New Yorkers for jobs in growing industries; helping more New Yorkers access the good jobs that exist today; developing a good jobs ecosystem built on a foundation of strong policies; helping to ensure that more small businesses can grow; and investing in infrastructure upgrades because they are a powerful good jobs strategy.

The six Recommendations offered by the Leadership Roundtable working group fall into three categories: Shift the Narrative Frame around Work; Update and Standardize Hiring Practices to Promote Equity; and finally, Create Stronger Worker Protections. Each Recommendation speaks directly to the need to help all New York City workers access good, secure jobs—regardless of entry point or worker classification—within a workforce development system committed to lasting worker security.

Shift the Narrative Frame around Work:

## Create a social progress index for the New York City workforce.

Progress on social issues does not automatically accompany economic development. Thus key economic indicators like Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment rates are necessary but not sufficient to determine and track New Yorkers' well-being, including the well-being of its workforce. Factors like job stability, contingent employment, access to benefits, economic mobility, etc., are all important and could be included in a multi-variate index that tracks and measures worker well-being over time. It would be interesting to link this effort to the impending rollout of Opportunity Zones to ensure that not only would the index garner attention, but also that economic development efforts increasingly take a more human-centered approach. The social progress index should include a communications and implementation plan for all businesses and citizens.

## Shift the Narrative Frame around Work: Improve environmental, social, and governance (ESG) reporting.

As ESG investing becomes more mainstream, ESG reporting should also grow into a more robust framework. The “S” in ESG has historically been the weak link in investment analysis to date. Moving beyond worker health and safety to include elements such as worker compensation, grievance mechanisms, workplace diversity, company hiring practices, etc., would go a long way in elevating worker security issues. In addition, by communicating this information and how both companies and workers fare more broadly, ESG reporting could be a useful tool to improve the relationship between employer and employee.

Update and Standardize Hiring Practices to  
Promote Equity:

Create a citywide common application for  
job applicants.

To improve equity in hiring practices, New York City should standardize the entry point for job applicants across the city and within industries (i.e., financial services, retail, hospitality, trade, etc.). A common application utilized by all employers is a starting point to a more equitable hiring landscape. The application should include only relevant qualifications for the job, with a focus on skills, and remove emphasis on non-relevant proxies that perpetuate bias—[like college degrees](#) and referrals. The [Center for Skilled Workforce](#) has designed a framework for such a common application. Key elements include identifying required versus desired level of mastery (beginner, intermediate, advanced); differentiating between knowledge (what one knows) and skill (how knowledge is applied); and focusing on and differentiating between skill type.

Update and Standardize Hiring Practices to Promote Equity:

## Create standardized hiring scorecards for employers.

A standardized common application creates a more equitable entry point for applicants, but biases still tend to arise once applicants advance to phone or in-person interviews. Hiring scorecards could be used as a tool to address inevitable unconscious biases. Scorecards could include a shared-assessment rubric and process, and measure key data markers focused on skills competencies. The assessment should include guidance on which factors hiring managers should and should not consider, along with resources like unconscious bias training.



## Create Stronger Worker Protections:

# Ensure portable benefits and job mobility for all workers.

Good policy can address two issues forcing workers to stay in jobs: fear of losing benefits and non-compete clauses. These issues are amplified by a growing independent worker population that is no longer receiving full-time job benefits. To fill these gaps, the city should actively test methods for workers, consumers, and employers to contribute to pooled, portable benefit funds for independent workers. This could be modeled on [The Black Car Fund](#), which provides Workers' Compensation coverage and other benefits to Black Car operators in the state of New York. The Aspen Institute has proposed several other [portable benefits](#) for independent workers as part of its Future of Work initiative. Another way to address workers' limited job mobility is through active city enforcement of the prohibition of [non-compete clauses](#) in all sectors, including low-wage sectors. Non-compete clauses forbid workers from leaving their jobs to seek comparable employment for one year. While it is illegal to broadly apply non-compete clauses in New York, this law is not well enforced, and most workers are unaware of the clause's limits. Advocating for citywide portable benefits and enforcing the prohibition of overbroad non-compete clauses will ensure a better worker protections in New York City.

## RECOMMENDATION 6

Create Stronger Worker Protections:

Support the rights of workers to meet and confer independently.

Recognizing the power of self-efficacy and agency, workers are the best advocates for workers. Currently, however, only trade unions (501c5s) are recognized bargaining agents on behalf of workers. Independent workers cannot join trade unions as they are not covered by labor law. Legal recognition for bargaining agents needs to expand beyond trade unions. In Seattle, the city council did just that and [approved 501c3 nonprofits to act as bargaining agents for Uber drivers](#).

## Conclusion

To build an inclusive, thriving and equitable workforce in New York City, all stakeholders—business leaders, public officials, investors, philanthropists, social entrepreneurs and more—must continue to convene and act to form a future of work ecosystem that supports all.

## Thank You & Acknowledgements

Echoing Green and Barclays would like to thank the social entrepreneurs (Echoing Green Fellows) and expert community members who participated in this Leadership Roundtable.

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#### ABOUT ECHOING GREEN

Echoing Green identifies tomorrow's transformational leaders today. Through its Fellowships and other innovative leadership initiatives, Echoing Green spots emerging leaders and invests deeply in their success to accelerate their impact.

Echoing Green has been ahead of the curve for more than 30 years, supporting visionaries around the world who are transforming economies, and pursuing racial and gender equity, environmental sustainability, and more. Echoing Green's unparalleled community of talent consists of nearly 800 innovators who have launched leading social enterprises including Teach For America, City Year, One Acre Fund, SKS Microfinance, Public Allies, and more. The organization provides seed-funding and leadership development to a new class of Fellows every year and welcomes them into its lifelong community of leaders.

Echoing Green accelerates talent that will change the world for the better.

As the public, private, and civic sectors work to create good jobs for all New Yorkers, social innovators will play a pivotal role in defining the future of work in New York City. To address the challenges facing the New York City workforce, Echoing Green and Barclays partnered to elevate social innovation's role in the future of work.

The Partnership for Innovation for the Future of Work in New York City hosted city-wide programming to spark practical and actionable ideas. This included: 1) a Social Innovation Challenge targeting local college and university students, recent graduates, and other young leaders in the city. Those with innovative ideas related to the future of work and workforce development participated in a skills-building bootcamp and pitch competition judged by senior Barclays leaders and others; 2) two curated salons ("UpStarts") featuring the important work of Echoing Green social entrepreneurs implementing ideas around workforce development; and 3) a Leadership Roundtable working group, which gathered cross-sector leadership to generate solutions for a more equitable and viable future of work citywide.

How New York City collaborates and innovates to create new opportunities for living wages, worker security, workforce development and career advancement will help guide what the future of work can be, so that the benefits accruing from advancements in technology are shared more broadly and equitably among us all.