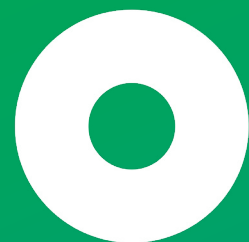


MEANINGFUL WORK & WEALTH

Personal, family, and community wealth provides the means for healthy, secure lives. That includes good-paying, fulfilling jobs and careers, and financial security that extends across the life span.

People are happy when their work is productive and rewarding. Beyond the importance of earning a paycheck, meaningful work lifts up entire families and communities. Wealth shapes living standards not only for people today, but also for future generations. Being able to afford assets, like a home or a computer, allows people to participate more fully in work, school, and community life.





MEANINGFUL WORK & WEALTH

REWARDING WORK & CAREERS

37% of US households and **58%** of households of color lack a basic level of savings needed to survive at the poverty level for three months

27.6M people in the United States were employed in low-wage occupations in 2018, constituting roughly **17%** of the civilian labor force

26% of the US labor force applied for unemployment insurance by the end of May 2020 as a result of the pandemic

40% of Americans say they would quit their job or start a business if they had the tools and resources to do so

\$160K: the average annual tax benefit of families making over \$1M/year, compared with an average of \$226 for working families

WEALTH AND WORK STATUS ARE SHAPED BY CONDITIONS OUTSIDE AN INDIVIDUAL'S CONTROL—and far too many Americans lack economic opportunity. Changes in the employment landscape, such as the rise of gig work and decline in union membership, have had an impact on overall job quality in America. Many employees face stagnating wages, decreased purchasing power, and fewer employer-provided benefits.

Poverty and financial insecurity lead to toxic stress, chronic disease, and other poor mental and physical health outcomes. The health and financial crises caused by COVID-19 are devastating Communities of Color and other vulnerable populations. Economic insecurity, by nearly every conceivable metric, has risen for individuals, households, businesses, and governments.

By taking a cradle-to-grave financial security approach and conducting a racial equity analysis on all proposed solutions, we can help ensure that wealth is built to support multiple generations and a prosperous future for all.

KEY ISSUES

- **We must rebuild the broken minimum wage** and social safety net system that no longer guarantees an adequate or decent standard of living in this country.
- **We must consider programmatic and community-driven solutions** alongside policy solutions to support meaningful work and wealth building.
- **Systemic racism and discrimination** have been embedded within public and institutional policies. Any new program or policy should be assessed for its potential impact on different racial and ethnic groups.
- **Having better data on race and wealth** will allow us to target interventions and design responsive policies to build wealth in all communities across the country.

*Facts adapted from the
Meaningful Work &
Wealth Deep Dive*

PIVOTAL MOVES

A SELECTION OF IDEAS FOR CHANGING COURSE

BOOST HOUSEHOLD WEALTH

Decouple benefits from employment to ensure all workers have access to sick leave and caregiver leave, health insurance, retirement benefits, and childcare assistance.

Expand the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Development Accounts to support families with children.

Establish a minimum wage requirement tied to the local cost of living.

Direct first-time homebuyer credits and matched savings initiatives to households of color and low-income communities.

Offer a debt bailout to the American people that matches the relief given to banks in 2008.

BOOST COMMUNITY WEALTH

Strengthen the Community Reinvestment Act by:

- Involving communities in assessing institutions' performance
- Investing in community-driven solutions, with an emphasis on solutions led by and accountable to Black, Indigenous and other Communities of Color

Infuse capital into Community Development Financial Institutions to:

- Build the capacity of entrepreneurs of color
- Increase access to equity products, venture capital, and state and local entrepreneurial catalyst grants

Overhaul the credit-rating system to center experiences of women and People of Color.

Enforce public rules, consumer protections, and regulations across private, public, and philanthropic sectors.

Provide universal access to banking through postal banking.

CONNECTIONS

LIFELONG LEARNING

Among many connections between learning and work, universal pre-K and childcare can provide critical educational and social-emotional learning support to children while enabling parents and guardians to work.

BASIC NEEDS

Savings is vital to achieving financial stability and building financial security, as it ensures that individuals can weather unexpected shocks, work toward their long-term goals, and build assets. Medical debt stands in the way of households' ability to save. By discharging debt and providing asset-building support, we can greatly increase family financial security and health.

PATH TO RENEWAL

Our current moment calls for big transformations in the way we approach work and wealth. We need a new "New Deal" that not only closes the racial wealth divide in a generation, but also promotes broad-based financial security for all Americans.

To pay for the new New Deal, and invest in the creative capacity of entrepreneurs, we need to turn our tax policy right-side up. Our current system rewards the rich, misses the middle, and penalizes the poor. Federal and state governments should turn these existing upside-down subsidies into an investment in the productive capacity of all people.

ADAPTED FROM THE [MEANINGFUL WORK & WEALTH](#) DEEP DIVE

In a groundbreaking study, William Bradford successfully makes the case that **Black entrepreneurs reduce the racial wealth gap**. Bradford's analysis, based on his study of income data on family wealth between 1999 and 2009, shows that Black entrepreneurship significantly reduces wealth disparities between Black and White families in the United States. According to Bradford, self-employed entrepreneurs of any race have higher wealth levels and more upward mobility than do those who are employed in the labor force.

PROSPERITY NOW