Employment Equity: The Path to a More Competitive Louisiana

Louisiana’s future competitiveness depends on the participation and inclusion of all of our residents, especially those who are locked out of the economy. Employment equity—when everyone who wants to work has a good job that pays family-supporting wages—is the path forward. By addressing lingering societal barriers to full economic inclusion and connecting more Louisianans to career pathways, we can reduce economic insecurity, meet employers’ needs for talent, and bolster economic growth, building a prosperous Louisiana for all.

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Louisiana’s economy is booming, but 800,000 adults are economically insecure...

- Economically Insecure
- Economically Secure

...growth is not reaching everyone. Of economically insecure adults,

- 49% are stuck in low-wage jobs
- 8% are looking for work
- 43% are out of the labor force

“As a young, educated Black male, employers don’t see that – they just see color. Even if you have that degree – you still are not accepted.”

- PAUL, NEW ORLEANS FOCUS GROUP

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Louisiana would be stronger with employment equity. With full employment for all, Louisiana could have seen...

- $3.5 billion in additional economic activity (GDP)
- 163,623 more people connected to work
- 36,536 fewer people in poverty
- $555 million in additional tax revenue

This translates to more than the state’s entire 2016 budget for higher education.
What’s holding Louisianans back?

- Limited childcare and transportation options
- Criminal background checks
- Need for workforce training and skill development

“Finding a job in Louisiana after you’ve been incarcerated is like trying to win the lottery.”
- CARL, BATON ROUGE FOCUS GROUP

The way forward: Employment equity.

1) **Remove barriers** that prevent economically insecure workers from accessing good jobs, e.g., ban the box asking about criminal history on job applications; make childcare more accessible.

2) **Scale up workforce development efforts** that connect struggling workers to quality jobs and career pathways, e.g., through local and targeted hire.

3) **Grow the base of employers committed to providing quality jobs** to disadvantaged workers and supporting the growth of minority- and women-owned businesses.

Data analysis from the National Equity Atlas, a partnership between PolicyLink and the USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE). For details on our methodology, visit [http://plcyink.org/2ApazHr](http://plcyink.org/2ApazHr).

For the full report: [www.nationalequityatlas.org/reports/reports-analyses](http://www.nationalequityatlas.org/reports/reports-analyses)

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