In the wake of the Great Recession and the still-unfinished economic recovery, the United States is at a critical juncture. Accelerating social and technological forces—globalization, automation, and the rise of artificial intelligence, among other developments—are driving growth at an aggregate level, but also contributing to growing racial and economic inequality. At the same time, the nation is rapidly becoming a majority people-of-color nation, and with each passing decade, the depth of racial economic exclusion poses a greater threat to our national prosperity. Amidst changing regional economic conditions, a clear understanding of how these trends interact at the regional level—where local stakeholders have crucial opportunities to take action—is a vital part of building thriving, equitable economies.
Given that the training and education requirements of advanced industry jobs make them largely inaccessible to economically insecure workers—particularly workers of color—these findings suggest that the development of advanced industries alone is an insufficient strategy for raising overall levels of economic security and reducing racial gaps therein. To tap the talent and potential of all residents and chart a course for inclusive growth, American metros must pursue targeted and comprehensive strategies that advance racial equity, build worker power, and promote high-road business models. Our analysis recommends three priority areas.

Priority 1: Improve the quality of service jobs to expand economic security and foster racial equity.

Priority 2: Revitalize manufacturing by supporting labor organizing and the development of worker-ownership structures.

Priority 3: Design economic development strategies tailored to regional and inter-regional conditions.

Read the report to learn what it reveals about your metro area and to see more recommendations for advancing inclusive growth.

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