

Toolbox for Low-Wage Workers

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Under a grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Sagamore Institute has developed this web page as a "toolbox" for organizations and officials that assist low-wage workers. The Sagamore Institute has not developed any of these items but rather has gathered these tools and publications in one location to aid in accessibility and to provide organizations opportunities to learn from one another.

Organizations that Produce Tools for Employers

- Center for Workforce Preparedness
www.uschamber.org/cwp
- Corporate Voices for Working Families
www.cvworkingfamilies.org
- Employee Services Management Association
www.esmassn.org/about/
- Families and Work Institute
www.familiesandwork.org
- Finance Project
www.financeproject.org
- Jobs for the Future
www.jff.org
- National Association of Manufacturers Center for Workforce Success
www.nam.org/s_nam/sec.asp?CID=86&DID=84
- National Association of Workforce Boards
www.nawb.org
- U.S. Department of Labor
www.doleta.gov
- Workforce Innovation Networks (WINs)
www.uschamber.com/icw/strategies/wins/default.htm
- Work Force Strategy Center
www.workforcestrategy.org (Click on "Toolkit")
- WorkSource Partners
www.worksourcepartners.com/new/overview_Introduction.shtml
- SFWorks
www.sfworks.org

Employer Tools and Practices for Low-Wage Workers

- "The Career Pathways How To Guide," Workforce Strategy Center
This report is the second in a series of publications about Career Pathways. Building a career pathway is a process of adapting existing programs and services—and adding new ones—to enable individuals to advance to successively higher levels of education and employment in the target sectors. Where it is most effective, the career pathways process helps to transform institutions and organizations involved in education, employment and social services. The process strengthens cooperation between them. This document sets out a step-by-step protocol for building career pathways on the local level and discusses how state-level officials can support local efforts.
- "Workforce Intermediaries: Generating Benefits for Employers and Workers," Partnership for Employer-Employee Responsive Systems
This report summarizes the collective work of the Partnership for Employer-Employee Responsive Systems (PEERS), funded by the Ford Foundation. It is the product of a two-year research effort that suggests that workers and employers benefit when employers use workforce intermediaries to improve or link jobs or to locate or provide skills training and employment supports.
- "Close the Gap: A Business Response to Our Region's Growing Disparity," Greater Twin Cities United Way
This toolkit is intended to promote practical suggestions for employers to make a positive impact on disparities issues.

- [“Delivering a Local EITC: Lessons from the San Francisco Working Families Credit,”](#) Brookings Institute
This paper tells the story of the credit, now in its second year, explaining how the program worked in its first year of operation and describing lessons learned and best practices for those considering developing a similar program.
- [“Employer Toolkit.com: Baltimore’s Online Source for Work Support,”](#) Baltimore Workforce Investment Board
This site helps visitors navigate more than 500 services to build and retain a company’s workforce. These services are made available by over 200 public and nonprofit organizations.
- [“Employer Toolkit on Work Incentives,”](#) Virginia Business Leadership Network The Virginia Business Leadership Network recently published this on-line guide for employers on how federal work incentives can positively impact productivity, expand the workforce, and provide information on resources.
- [“Employee Toolkit Template: Child Care Options for Small Businesses,”](#) National Child Care Information Center
This toolkit identifies the business case for employers investing in child care and includes a strategic planning outline, assessment tools to identify the child care needs of employees and existing organizational and community resources, and a worksheet that can be used to assess the costs and benefits of child care investments. It also highlights the advantages to businesses of partnering with community organizations and public agencies to improve child care. Plus, it offers several examples of successful child care public-private partnerships. The tool also highlights ways that both large and small employers can address the child care needs of their employees and their community. The toolkit also provides links to state-specific tool kits.
- [“Finders, Keepers: Business Taking Action to Secure Skilled Workers,”](#) Center for Workforce Preparation
This publication shares the success stories of five Chambers of Commerce (four local and one state) that developed innovative pilot programs in workforce development.
- [“Getting Connected: Strategies for Expanding the Employment Networks of Low-Income People,”](#) Public Private Ventures
PPV takes an in-depth look at employment networks and how they function for low-income job seekers; it also examines the role of employment and training organizations in expanding and improving the employment networks of their participants. In addition, the report looks at promising strategies, including profiles of four promising approaches, each exemplified by the work of a particular organization.
- [“How Can Employers Increase the Productivity and Retention of Entry-Level, Hourly Employees?”](#) Families and Work Institute
This report highlights aspects of workplace effectiveness for employers and employees.
- [“Investing in Low Wage Workers: Lessons from Family Child Care in Rhode Island,”](#) Public Private Ventures
This report profiles Day Care Justice Coop, an initiative established in 1999 with assistance from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation as part of a national, multi-site initiative focused on sectoral employment. The Coop was a membership association of family child care providers that came together to create services that supported their work and to push the state to improve the economic status of these jobs.
- [“Leveraging Business and Markets for Low-Income People,”](#) Ford Foundation
This publication is a compilation of examples of businesses that use core operating resources and competencies in ways that contribute to large-scale improvement in income and assets for low-income people, while still benefiting the business itself.
- [“Locally Grown: Key Strategies for Expanding Workforce Services,”](#) Public Private Ventures
This report highlights the key elements that made three organizations successful and provided communities with employment and asset-building opportunities.
- [“Low Wage Worker Employer Toolkit,”](#) The Council for Labor & Economic Growth
This employer tool provides information on the business case for employers investing in low-wage workers, ways employers can assist their low-wage employees with child care, how to inform employees of tax credits available to low-wage workers, how employers can provide individual development accounts to their employees, and how employers can help their employees access social services.
- [“Make Tax Time Pay,”](#) Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
This site links to information on who is eligible for the EIC and CTC and how to claim these credits. It presents key components of successful Tax Credit Outreach Campaigns, ideas to promote the tax

credits and examples of how organizations across the country are helping communities claim the EIC and CTC. It also describes methods to connect workers to free tax filing assistance programs, asset development opportunities and information to help workers with other tax credit-related concerns.

- [“Model Workplace Supports for the Lower-Wage Employee,”](#) Corporate Voices for America
This is a toolkit of best practices for lower-wage employees.
- [“Employer Guide: Speaking Out for Working Families,”](#) Corporate Voices for Working Families
This guide educates employers on the federal benefits and tax credits their low-wage workers may be eligible for and how they can make employees aware of these benefits. Some programs include: Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child Tax Credit (CTC), State Children’s Health Insurance (SCHIP), Food Stamps, and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). These tax credits and federal benefits are based on income-eligibility.
- [“Workplace Flexibility,”](#) Families and Work Institute
This guide is for companies considering flexible work arrangements. It explains the range of flexible work options available, provides principles of working with flexibility for employees and employers, and gives a step-by-step implementation plan.
- [“Kentucky’s Workforce Toolkit: The Resource for Employers,”](#) Kentucky Workforce Investment Board
Information is provided here about services that are available to employers who want to hire additional employees, improve the performance of their employees, find ways to finance training of current and new employees, or restructure their business. Sections include:
 - How employers can find and hire qualified workers;
 - Recruiting workers who match the employer’s needs, including untapped populations such as youth, older workers, welfare recipients, veterans, and persons with disabilities;
 - How training can upgrade employee skills;
 - Strategies and programs that are available to assist communities;
 - Economic growth, encouraging job retention and creation by working with existing businesses and industry;
 - Information on using tax credits for hiring job seekers from various target groups and on other programs to financially assist the employer and the workforce; and
 - Information on employment and training programs that meet a variety of needs.
- [“Recent Trends in the EITC,”](#) Brookings Institution
This report provides examples of how cities have used volunteer tax preparation services rather than commercial companies to increase the use of EITC for eligible individuals and families.
- [“Workforce Intermediaries: Powering Regional Economies in the New Century,”](#) Annie E. Casey Foundation
This report assesses lessons learned from three key workforce intermediaries funded by Casey. Intermediaries help advance local workforce agendas, provide funding, and bring focus to a range of stakeholders. They also support both employers and workers. This report provides insights about the importance of the intermediary approach and the qualities of organizations that can best serve in this role.
- [“The Mobility Agenda New Ideas and Strategies for Low-Wage Work: National Scan Summary,”](#) Center for Community Change
This paper highlights several policies that can improve the jobs of low wage workers, including: leave and flexible work schedule policies; employer investment strategies; “democratic workplaces;” accountable development; portable retirement accounts; healthcare coverage; and wage and hour enforcement.
- [“Framework for a New Safety Net for Low-Income Working Families,”](#) Urban Institute
This paper conceptualizes a framework for a new safety net for low-income working families that is rooted in their most essential needs. The paper describes these families’ circumstances, discusses gaps in current safety-net programs and explores possible alternative approaches to meeting families’ most pressing needs. It is organized around five key goals: enabling parents to meet the needs of their family while working in lower-wage jobs, helping families overcome gaps in parental employment, supporting parents’ job advancement, helping parents combine work and child-rearing, and improving children’s well-being and development.
- [“Innovative Employment Approaches and Programs for Low-Income Families,”](#) Karin Martinson, Pamela A. Holcomb and Urban Institute
This paper is designed to assist states and localities in identifying innovative strategies to promote stable employment and wage growth among low-income populations. It distills key lessons from the body of research undertaken to date and identifies innovative approaches and programs for improving the employment prospects of low-income families. The paper presents a typology of four relatively broad employment strategies, and within each, a number of innovative approaches and

several programs that exemplify each approach. Overall, the paper identifies and profiles 12 innovative approaches and 51 programs for improving the economic success of low-income parents. The paper discusses why each approach is innovative and provides a description of the key components of each.

- “Work Supports and Low-Wage Workers: The Promise of Employer Involvement,” Finance Project This publication increases knowledge on how to involve employers in work supports for low-wage workers. Drawing from employer practices, it presents promising models and strategies for engaging employers in extending work supports to low-wage workers. These models lay out the many options that businesses, and the organizations with which they partner, have to assist low-wage workers.