



FUTURE OF WORK

Goals for the Future of Work Action Lab

Develop partnerships among nonprofits, public agencies, educational institutions, and businesses to address systemic workforce barriers, with a target of initiating five new collaborative workforce initiatives within two years.

1. Strengthen Workforce Leadership Capacity

Engage 25 senior-level workforce leaders annually in systems-thinking, racial equity, and skills-first strategies to empower them to drive organizational and regional change.

2. Increase Access to Skills-Based Hiring Practices

Facilitate awareness of and innovation related to skills-first hiring policies across 15 organizations in the Triangle region, reducing reliance on degree-based qualifications and broadening access to career pathways for underrepresented groups.

3. Foster Equity-Driven Workforce Strategies

Develop recommendations that apply a racial equity lens to addressing disparities in employment and career advancement opportunities for marginalized communities.

4. Develop a Regional Workforce Vision

Collaborate with Fellows to create a five-year workforce Action Agenda for the Triangle, focused on equitable access to quality jobs and career mobility with action steps and timelines to improve equitable access.

5. Identify and Address Systemic Bottlenecks

Through Collaborative Learning Labs, engage stakeholders to uncover and propose solutions to at least three systemic barriers impacting workforce development in the Triangle region.

6. Enhance Employer Engagement

Support 10-15 employers in developing and implementing workforce strategies that prioritize job quality, equitable talent development, and ongoing employee support.

7. Improve Leadership Practices Through Assessment

Support leadership effectiveness through individual and organizational goal setting with leaders.

8. Build Regional Workforce Ecosystem Resilience

Launch initiatives to improve workforce adaptability to future challenges, such as automation and shifting labor demands, by piloting three innovative solutions in partnership with local employers and training organizations.

9. Measure and Communicate Impact

Develop an impact dashboard to track metrics like increased employment opportunities, wage growth, and reduction in skills gaps, with annual public reports to demonstrate progress and refine strategies. These goals align the Future of Work Action Lab with the Workforce Leadership Academy framework to deliver measurable, equity-focused improvements to the Research Triangle's workforce ecosystem.

Regional Strategy Application

1. Values of United Way of the Greater Triangle are:

a. Anti Racism

We seek to understand and disrupt the ways racism shows up in our organizational culture, our work, and the Greater Triangle region.

b. Centering Community

We listen to, learn from, and amplify the voices of the people and communities most impacted by poverty and racism.

c. Solidarity

We leverage our tools, resources, and networks to partner with communities in achieving the change they seek.

d. Intentional Care

We recognize the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals by prioritizing relationships over transactions and extending care to ourselves, our partners, and our communities.

e. Sense of Possibility

We listen to, learn from, and amplify the voices of the people and communities most impacted by poverty and racism

How does your work explicitly align with our values in strategy, execution, and evaluation? (required)
500 words

2. Systems Thinking Experience

How has your organization contributed to systems-level change in workforce development or related fields? Can you provide examples of initiatives or collaborations you have engaged in organizationally that address regional challenges related to employment access for marginalized communities and/or the work of upskilling local talent?

3. Regional Collaboration Capacity

What role does your organization currently play in regional workforce development partnerships? How have you engaged in or facilitated cross-sector collaboration with public agencies, employers, or other nonprofits? What networks, partnerships, or stakeholder relationships enhance your ability to drive systems-level change?

4. Vision for Regional Workforce Ecosystem

What is your organization's vision for an equitable, skills-driven workforce ecosystem in the region? How do you see your organization contributing to this vision?

5. Racial Equity Integration

How does your organization apply a racial equity lens to systems-level strategy, particularly in addressing workforce disparities and creating pathways for underrepresented groups?

6. Data and Evaluation Capacity

How does your organization use data to identify regional workforce challenges and opportunities and to inform your organizational priorities? Please provide a brief description of your organizational data/evaluation capacity to support measuring and evaluating collaborative regional initiatives.

7. Identified Workforce Ecosystem Strengths and Needs

From your data and evaluation analysis, what key strengths and needs has your organization identified for the regional workforce ecosystem? This could include an evaluation of career pathways, credentialing programs, community support, etc. Please cite from where this data is sourced.

8. Experience with Employer Engagement

What success has your organization had in engaging employers to adopt equitable workforce strategies, such as skills-first hiring or job quality improvements?

9. Adaptability and Innovation

How has your organization adapted to shifting workforce trends (e.g., automation, remote work)? How do you innovate to stay ahead of emerging challenges?

10. Sustainability and Scalability

What resources and infrastructure does your organization bring to support long-term, scalable systems-change efforts? How do you plan to sustain impact beyond initial engagements?

Pathway Strategy Rubric

1. How does your work explicitly align with our values in strategy, execution, and evaluation? (500 words)

Prompt: Describe how your work aligns with the United Way of the Greater Triangle's values of Anti-Racism, Centering Community, Solidarity, Intentional Care, and Sense of Possibility.

- **Low (1–3):** Mentions values superficially with little connection to strategy, execution, or evaluation. No examples or measurable outcomes provided.
- **Moderate (4–6):** Aligns with 2–3 values and gives examples of how they are incorporated into work but lacks depth or clear evidence of impact.
- **High (7–10):** Fully integrates 4–5 values into strategy, execution, and evaluation. Provides detailed examples and demonstrates measurable and sustained alignment with these values.

2. Systems Thinking Experience

Prompt: How has your organization contributed to systems-level change in workforce development or related fields? Share examples of initiatives or collaborations addressing regional challenges in employment access or upskilling marginalized communities.



- **Low (1–3):** Provides limited or vague examples of systems-level change. Focuses on small scale or isolated initiatives without addressing broader impacts.
- **Moderate (4–6):** Highlights involvement in systems-level initiatives with moderate detail. Contributions are impactful but limited in scale or collaboration scope.
- **High (7–10):** Demonstrates significant contributions to systems-level change with clear examples of regional impact. Describes initiatives or collaborations with measurable, transformative outcomes addressing structural challenges.

3. Regional Collaboration Capacity

Prompt: *What role does your organization play in regional workforce partnerships? How have you engaged in cross-sector collaboration, and what stakeholder relationships enhance your ability to drive change?*

- **Low (1–3):** Minimal or vague mention of partnerships or cross-sector collaboration. Limited role in driving regional initiatives.
- **Moderate (4–6):** Provides examples of involvement in regional partnerships with some cross-sector collaboration. Contributions are moderately impactful or focused on specific areas.
- **High (7–10):** Demonstrates active leadership or facilitation in regional partnerships with strong cross-sector collaboration. Clear examples of stakeholder engagement and impactful contributions to regional workforce efforts.

4. Vision for Regional Workforce Ecosystem

Prompt: *What is your organization's vision for an equitable, skills-driven workforce ecosystem, and how do you contribute to it?*

- **Low (1–3):** Vision is vague or generic with limited alignment to equity or skills-driven ecosystems. Contribution is unclear or underdeveloped.
- **Moderate (4–6):** Vision is clear and aligned with an equitable, skills-driven ecosystem. Contribution is moderately detailed but lacks innovation or evidence of a strategic role.
- **High (7–10):** Vision is bold, detailed, and deeply aligned with equity and skill-building. Clearly articulates innovative contributions and a leadership role in achieving this vision.

5. Racial Equity Integration

Prompt: *How does your organization apply a racial equity lens to systems-level strategy in workforce development?*

- **Low (1–3):** Provides limited or vague evidence of racial equity integration. No clear connection to workforce disparities or pathways for underrepresented groups.
- **Moderate (4–6):** Applies a racial equity lens to some strategies. Addresses workforce disparities with moderate examples of pathways or outcomes for underrepresented groups.
- **High (7–10):** Fully integrates racial equity into systems-level strategies. Demonstrates clear, transformative efforts to address disparities and create equitable pathways, with measurable impacts.

6. Data and Evaluation Capacity

Prompt: *How does your organization use data to identify workforce challenges and opportunities, and how does it support measuring collaborative initiatives?*

- **Low (1–3):** Limited use of data; provides vague or anecdotal insights. Evaluation capacity is minimal or unclear.
- **Moderate (4–6):** Uses data moderately to inform priorities. Has basic evaluation capacity but limited ability to support collaborative initiatives.
- **High (7–10):** Demonstrates strong data use and advanced evaluation capacity. Uses insights to inform priorities and measure collaborative regional initiatives with clear metrics and results.

7. Identified Workforce Ecosystem Strengths and Needs

Prompt: *What strengths and needs has your organization identified for the regional workforce ecosystem? Cite data sources.*

- **Low (1–3):** Identifies general strengths and needs with limited detail. Data sources are unclear or not cited.
- **Moderate (4–6):** Provides some strengths and needs with moderate detail. References data sources, but insights lack depth or regional specificity.
- **High (7–10):** Clearly identifies key strengths and needs with robust detail and regional specificity. Cites credible data sources and offers actionable insights.

8. Experience with Employer Engagement

Prompt: *What success has your organization had in engaging employers to adopt equitable workforce strategies, such as skills-first hiring or job quality improvements?*

- **Low (1–3):** Minimal or vague mention of employer engagement. No clear examples of equitable workforce strategies or success stories.
- **Moderate (4–6):** Provides moderate examples of employer engagement with some success in equitable workforce strategies. Lacks depth or innovation.
- **High (7–10):** Demonstrates significant success in employer engagement with clear, impactful examples of equitable workforce strategies. Highlights innovative approaches and measurable outcomes.

9. Adaptability and Innovation

Prompt: *How has your organization adapted to shifting workforce trends (e.g., automation, remote work)? How do you innovate to address emerging challenges?*

- **Low (1–3):** Limited or vague examples of adaptability or innovation. Focuses on past methods without addressing emerging trends.
 - **Moderate (4–6):** Shares some examples of adaptability and innovation with moderate alignment to workforce trends. Lacks a clear forward-looking strategy.
 - **High (7–10):** Demonstrates strong adaptability and innovation in response to workforce trends. Provides forward-looking strategies and clear examples of addressing emerging challenges.
-

10. Sustainability and Scalability

Prompt: *What resources and infrastructure does your organization bring to support long-term, scalable systems-change efforts? How do you plan to sustain impact beyond initial engagements?*

- **Low (1–3):** Limited resources or vague plans for scalability and sustainability. Efforts lack alignment to long-term systems change.
- **Moderate (4–6):** Provides moderate resources and infrastructure with some plans for scalability. Sustained impact is addressed but not fully developed.
- **High (7–10):** Demonstrates strong resources and infrastructure with clear, detailed plans for scalability and sustainability. Aligns efforts with long-term systems change goals.

Pathway Navigators

Summary:

The Pathway Navigators Initiative has been designed to meet the career advancement needs of underrepresented constituents in the Triangle leveraging national best practices including:

- Acknowledging the power of strong community relationships by engaging credible messengers that are based at community institutions like community-based organizations, schools, etc.
- Ensuring that these credible messengers and their organizations have current and thorough information on a wide range of available career advancement opportunities in a particular geography. Additionally, that organization staff serving in a coaching capacity,
- have the skills and tools they need to help individuals seeking career advancement to find the right fit and match for their interests and aptitudes, emphasizing the autonomy of individuals to choose their own path after receiving support, access, and information.
- Recognizing that shifting mindsets and beliefs about what is possible in populations that have been long marginalized from economic mobility, requires holistic support, clear and transparent information, and warm hand offs between the steps in the process to achieve career advancement.

Outcomes for this work will include:

- Pathway Navigators will share resources and best practices, ensuring accurate and current information about career advancement opportunities in the Triangle.
- Coaching best practices will be elevated across the Triangle with a focus on supporting individuals to identify their own pathway toward career advancement.



- Education, training, and upskilling opportunities across the Triangle will be organized and shared more broadly and effectively through partner organizations and movement building and the development of a communication strategy.

Application Questions

1. Values of United Way of the Greater Triangle are:

a. Anti Racism

We seek to understand and disrupt the ways racism shows up in our organizational culture, our work, and the Greater Triangle region.

b. Centering Community

We listen to, learn from, and amplify the voices of the people and communities most impacted by poverty and racism.

c. Solidarity

We leverage our tools, resources, and networks to partner with communities in achieving the change they seek.

d. Intentional Care

We recognize the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals by prioritizing relationships over transactions and extending care to ourselves, our partners, and our communities.

e. Sense of Possibility

We listen to, learn from, and amplify the voices of the people and communities most impacted by poverty and racism

How does your work explicitly align with our values in strategy, execution, and evaluation? (required)
500 words

2. Organizational Mission Alignment

How does your organization's mission and vision align with addressing systemic barriers in workforce development and promoting equitable career pathways?

3. Community Reach and Engagement

What populations and specific geographical communities does your organization primarily serve, and how do you engage underrepresented or marginalized communities in workforce initiatives?

4. Describe the Community You Serve

Describe the community you serve with demographic information, the strengths of the community, and supports that would be best utilized.



5. Workforce Development Expertise

Can you share examples of past or current educational and career advancement programs you've implemented? What measurable impacts have these programs had on participants?

6. Coaching + Career Advancement

What is your experience supporting individuals to explore and select a career advancement plan? What kinds of options do you share and what does the exploration and coaching process look like in your work?

7. Partnerships and Networks

What relationships does your organization maintain with employers, training institutions, and public agencies? How have these partnerships supported workforce or career pathway initiatives?

8. Commitment to Racial Equity

How does your organization integrate a racial equity lens into your programs, policies, and workforce strategies?

9. Resource Capacity and Scalability

What resources (staff, funding, infrastructure) does your organization currently have to act as a pathways navigator? Are you prepared to scale your efforts as part of this initiative including attending quarterly training and best practice sharing events.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

How does your organization measure the success and impact of your programs? Are you equipped to track outcomes at a participant level and share insights with cross-sector partners?

Pathway Navigator Rubric

1. How does your work explicitly align with our values in strategy, execution, and evaluation? (500 words)

Prompt: Describe how your work aligns with the United Way of the Greater Triangle's values of Anti-Racism, Centering Community, Solidarity, Intentional Care, and Sense of Possibility.

- **Low (1–3):** Mentions values superficially with little connection to strategy, execution, or evaluation. No examples or measurable outcomes provided.
 - **Moderate (4–6):** Aligns with 2–3 values and gives examples of how they are incorporated into work but lacks depth or clear evidence of impact.
 - **High (7–10):** Fully integrates 4–5 values into strategy, execution, and evaluation. Provides detailed examples and demonstrates measurable and sustained alignment with these values.
-

2. Systems Thinking Experience

Prompt: *How has your organization contributed to systems-level change in workforce development or related fields? Share examples of initiatives or collaborations addressing regional challenges in employment access or upskilling marginalized communities.*

- **Low (1–3):** Provides limited or vague examples of systems-level change. Focuses on small-scale or isolated initiatives without addressing broader impacts.
- **Moderate (4–6):** Highlights involvement in systems-level initiatives with moderate detail. Contributions are impactful but limited in scale or collaboration scope.
- **High (7–10):** Demonstrates significant contributions to systems-level change with clear examples of regional impact. Describes initiatives or collaborations with measurable, transformative outcomes addressing structural challenges.

3. Regional Collaboration Capacity

Prompt: *What role does your organization play in regional workforce partnerships? How have you engaged in cross-sector collaboration, and what stakeholder relationships enhance your ability to drive change?*

- **Low (1–3):** Minimal or vague mention of partnerships or cross-sector collaboration. Limited role in driving regional initiatives.
- **Moderate (4–6):** Provides examples of involvement in regional partnerships with some cross-sector collaboration. Contributions are moderately impactful or focused on specific areas.
- **High (7–10):** Demonstrates active leadership or facilitation in regional partnerships with strong cross-sector collaboration. Clear examples of stakeholder engagement and impactful contributions to regional workforce efforts.

4. Vision for Regional Workforce Ecosystem

Prompt: *What is your organization's vision for an equitable, skills-driven workforce ecosystem, and how do you contribute to it?*

- **Low (1–3):** Vision is vague or generic with limited alignment to equity or skills-driven ecosystems. Contribution is unclear or underdeveloped.
- **Moderate (4–6):** Vision is clear and aligned with an equitable, skills-driven ecosystem. Contribution is moderately detailed but lacks innovation or evidence of a strategic role.
- **High (7–10):** Vision is bold, detailed, and deeply aligned with equity and skill-building. Clearly articulates innovative contributions and a leadership role in achieving this vision.

5. Racial Equity Integration

Prompt: *How does your organization apply a racial equity lens to systems-level strategy in workforce development?*

- **Low (1–3):** Provides limited or vague evidence of racial equity integration. No clear connection to workforce disparities or pathways for underrepresented groups.
 - **Moderate (4–6):** Applies a racial equity lens to some strategies. Addresses workforce disparities with moderate examples of pathways or outcomes for underrepresented groups.
-

- **High (7–10):** Fully integrates racial equity into systems-level strategies. Demonstrates clear, transformative efforts to address disparities and create equitable pathways, with measurable impacts.

6. Data and Evaluation Capacity

Prompt: *How does your organization use data to identify workforce challenges and opportunities, and how does it support measuring collaborative initiatives?*

- **Low (1–3):** Limited use of data; provides vague or anecdotal insights. Evaluation capacity is minimal or unclear.
- **Moderate (4–6):** Uses data moderately to inform priorities. Has basic evaluation capacity but limited ability to support collaborative initiatives.
- **High (7–10):** Demonstrates strong data use and advanced evaluation capacity. Uses insights to inform priorities and measure collaborative regional initiatives with clear metrics and results.

7. Identified Workforce Ecosystem Strengths and Needs

Prompt: *What strengths and needs has your organization identified for the regional workforce ecosystem? Cite data sources.*

- **Low (1–3):** Identifies general strengths and needs with limited detail. Data sources are unclear or not cited.
- **Moderate (4–6):** Provides some strengths and needs with moderate detail. References data sources, but insights lack depth or regional specificity.
- **High (7–10):** Clearly identifies key strengths and needs with robust detail and regional specificity. Cites credible data sources and offers actionable insights.

8. Experience with Employer Engagement

Prompt: *What success has your organization had in engaging employers to adopt equitable workforce strategies, such as skills-first hiring or job quality improvements?*

- **Low (1–3):** Minimal or vague mention of employer engagement. No clear examples of equitable workforce strategies or success stories.
- **Moderate (4–6):** Provides moderate examples of employer engagement with some success in equitable workforce strategies. Lacks depth or innovation.
- **High (7–10):** Demonstrates significant success in employer engagement with clear, impactful examples of equitable workforce strategies. Highlights innovative approaches and measurable outcomes.

9. Adaptability and Innovation

Prompt: *How has your organization adapted to shifting workforce trends (e.g., automation, remote work)? How do you innovate to address emerging challenges?*

- **Low (1–3):** Limited or vague examples of adaptability or innovation. Focuses on past methods without addressing emerging trends.
- **Moderate (4–6):** Shares some examples of adaptability and innovation with moderate

alignment to workforce trends. Lacks a clear forward-looking strategy.

- **High (7–10):** Demonstrates strong adaptability and innovation in response to workforce trends. Provides forward-looking strategies and clear examples of addressing emerging challenges.

10. Sustainability and Scalability

Prompt: *What resources and infrastructure does your organization bring to support long-term, scalable systems-change efforts? How do you plan to sustain impact beyond initial engagements?*

- **Low (1–3):** Limited resources or vague plans for scalability and sustainability. Efforts lack alignment to long-term systems change.
- **Moderate (4–6):** Provides moderate resources and infrastructure with some plans for scalability. Sustained impact is addressed but not fully developed.
- **High (7–10):** Demonstrates strong resources and infrastructure with clear, detailed plans for scalability and sustainability. Aligns efforts with long-term systems change goals.



United Way of the Greater Triangle

United Way of the Greater Triangle

P.O. Box 110583
Durham, NC 27709

(919) 460-8687

unitedwaytriangle.org

