Jobs for the Future

Equity-Focused Employer Engagement

A preview of JFF's resource to be published this October

Melissa MacGregor | Director | mmacgregor@jff.org
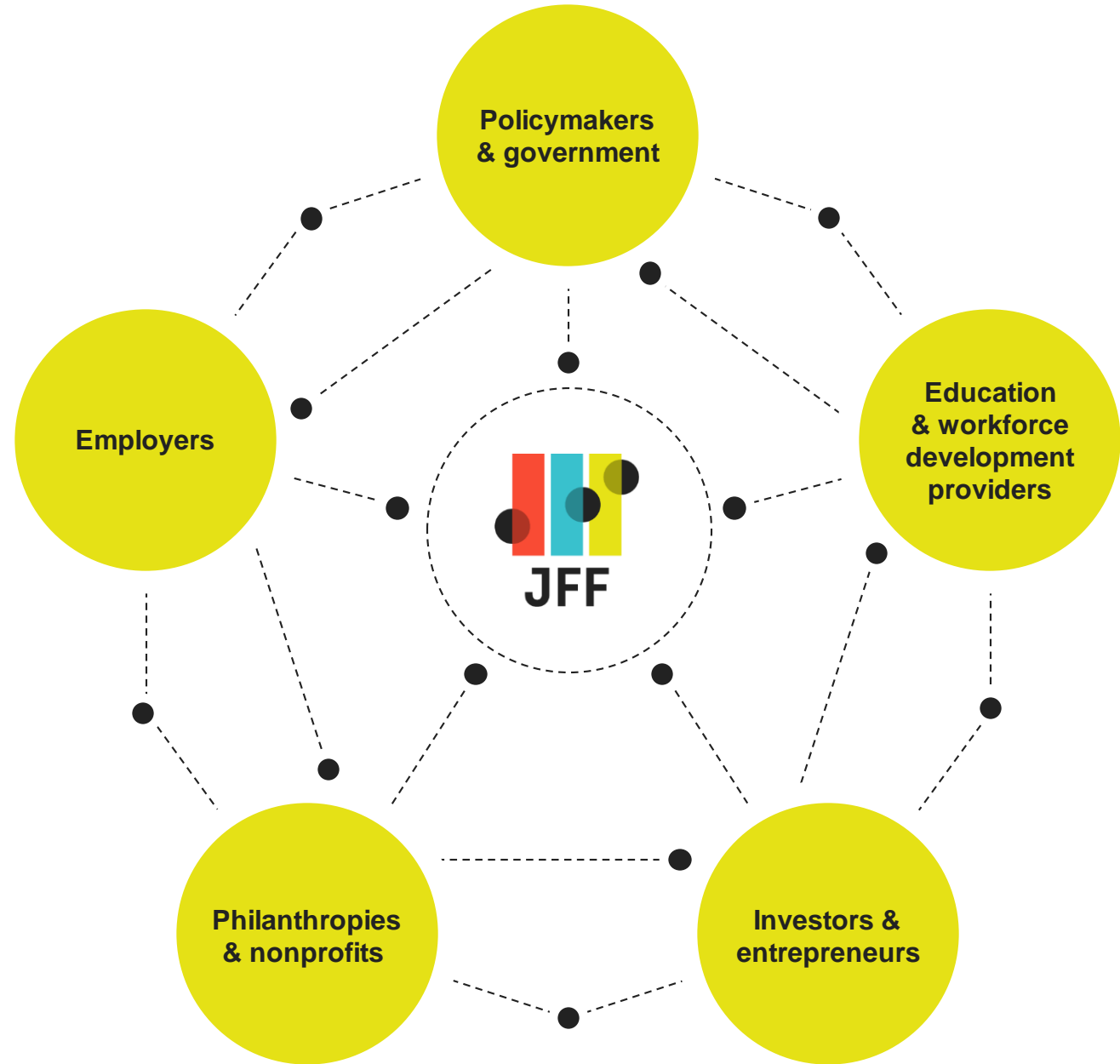
JFF'S MISSION

Jobs for the Future drives transformation of the U.S. education and workforce systems to achieve <mark>equitable economic advancement</mark> for all.
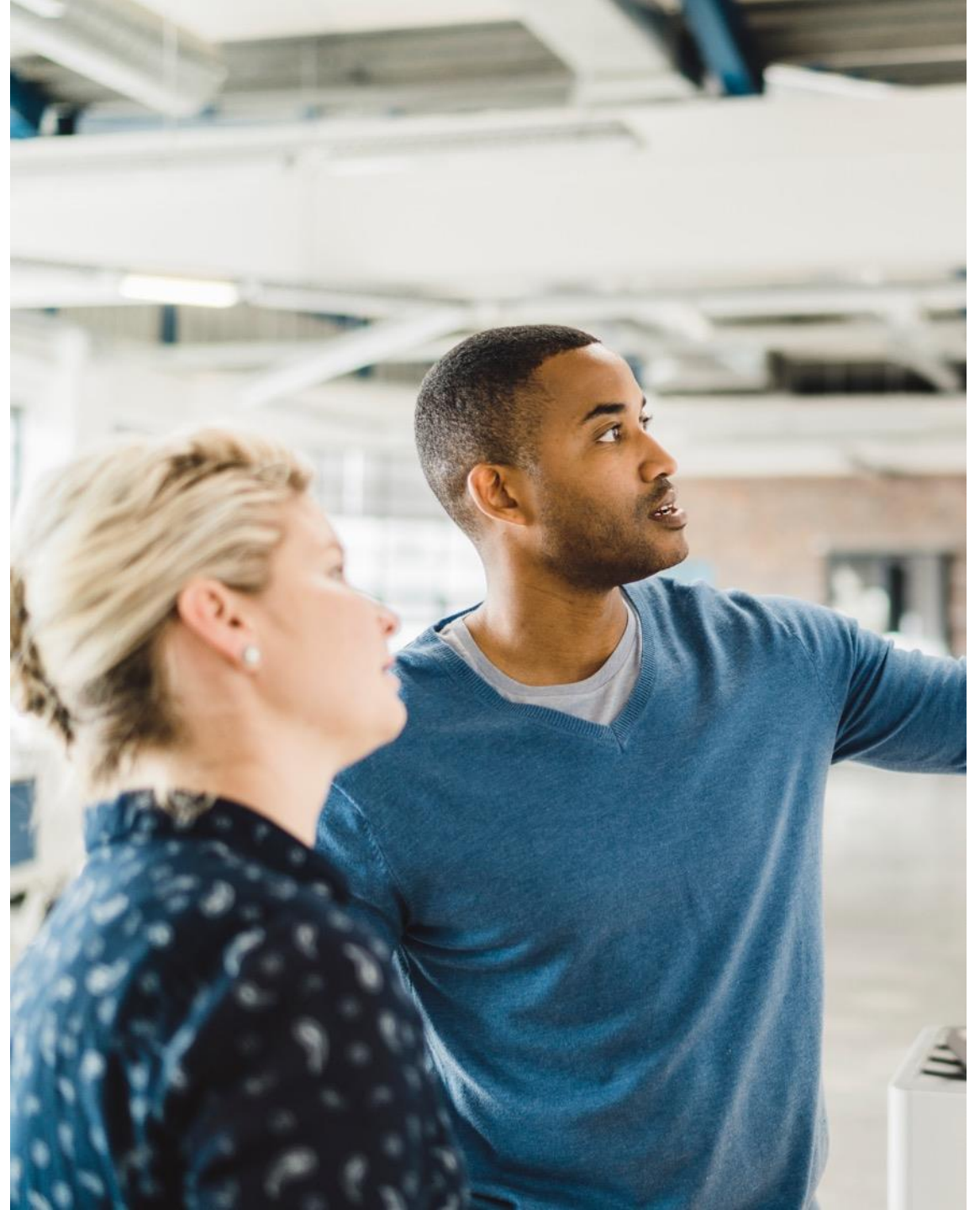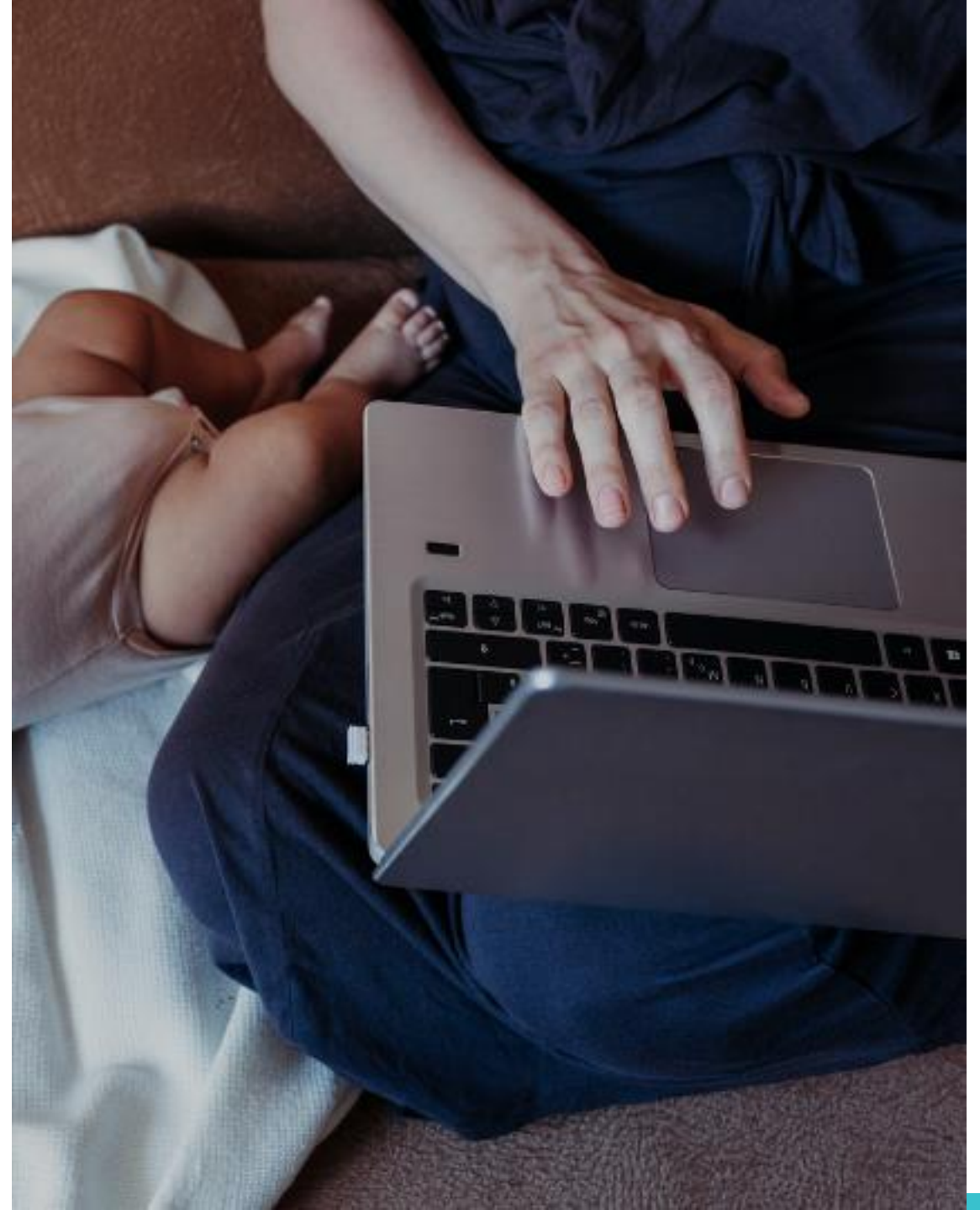
The problem we're trying to solve

Millions of people are unfairly shut out of quality jobs and the chance for a better life. Our education and workforce systems are broken. They are inequitable, disconnected, hard to navigate, and filled with barriers to economic advancement.

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Our solution

Jobs for the Future drives transformation of those systems so every person can secure a quality job and the chance for a better life. We are reimagining what's possible— leading public, private, and nonprofit sector changemakers to new ideas, promising innovations, and equitable ways to help millions more people advance.

Funded by Lumina Foundation

WEI + ICCB

Support short-term credential attainment targeting Black learners that results in employment earnings at least 30% above the standard MIT Livable Wage rates.

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Learn what the WEI colleges are doing to achieve such success in employment outcomes and use these insights to update the 2015 Employer Engagement Toolkit.

Overview of timeline

Began working with WEI colleges last May

Surveys & Listening Sessions

Workshops, Office Hours, Symposium

Writing and editing this summer

Publish date tentatively set for October

Equity-Focused Employer Engagement

Content of the Field-Guide

- Institutional goals – Why partner?
- Internal collaboration and coordination
- Field Work
- Setting everyone up for success centered in equity
- Sustainability
- Action planning

Institutional Goals

Why partner with employers?
Definitions
Starting with a broad institutional goal for DEIA in Employer Engagement
Understanding the college within the local workforce ecosystem

Equity-Focused Employer Engagement

Knowing your institution

Anchoring your **employer engagement** strategy and practices in your institution's DEIA goals and strategy is crucial to both programmatic success and sustainability

Everyone at your college is in the business of successful student outcomes; one of which is **employment.**

Why should this employer invest in an ongoing collaborative partnership with my college?

Community colleges are in the business of developing the **very thing** employers value and need.

DEFINING DEIA

Diversity: The representation and proactive valuing of varied identities, differences, and perspectives, honoring our lived experiences collectively and individually.

Equity: Intentional distribution of access and resources to remove the predictability of success or failure that correlates with entrenched outcome disparities in our society.

Inclusion: The creation of a culture of belonging that prioritizes the contribution and participation of all people in executing an organization's mission, values, and goals.

Accessibility: The facilitation of full and independent access for all people to employment, facilities, services, and information through intentional design, development of accommodations, and respect for the wide range of human ability.

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KM

Employer Engagement Model

To

Be

Decided
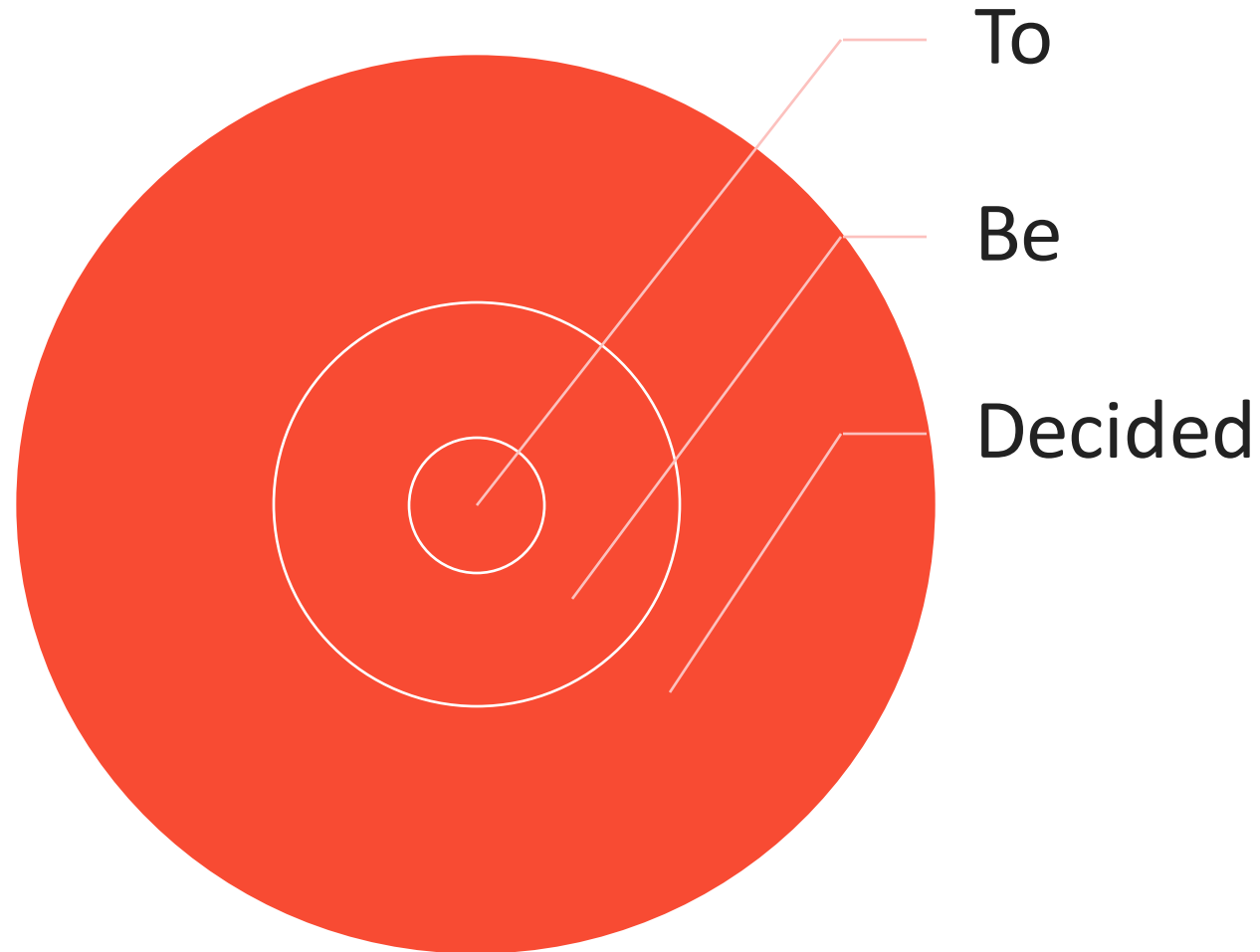
Internal Collaboration & Coordination

Key stakeholder identification

Targeting employers for reciprocity

Labor market analysis

Value proposition

Coordinating mechanism

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What Employers Value Most

Foundational to any good, sustainable relationship is proper reciprocity

Value of college to employers is directly related to effectively understanding and meeting their needs

Employers value:

- Cost-effective, reliable source of talent
- Flexible & nimble training solutions
- Diverse workforce / DEIA support
- Effective communication & mutually beneficial partnerships

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How colleges benefit

Increased placement rates and good quality jobs

Attract career-oriented students

Update and improve the relevance of existing curricula; develop curricula for emerging occupations

Access employers' latest technology, equipment, process innovations, and expertise

Develop practical experience for lecturers

Access in-class presenters and/or adjunct faculty with real-time and hands-on experience

Employer ambassadors speak at events

BW

LABOR MARKET INFORMATION
THE POWER OF LMI IN PATHWAYS

PROGRAM CREATION AND RIGHT-SIZING

Prepare students for careers that are growing, offer advancement and living wage

Ensure that the local economy can support trained graduates

PROGRAM DESIGN

Develop programs of study that align with in-demand credentials

Develop curriculum and WBL to address competencies/ skills of value to labor market

EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS

Understand current and future needs of employers

Arm yourself with information when developing partnerships (including demographics of specific industries and employers)

INFORM STUDENT / FAMILY DECISION-MAKING

Incorporate LMI in to advising and counseling practices, so that students and families make informed choices

Field Work

Effective utilization of data

Align with other regional engagement efforts

Sales cycle activity

Talking with employers in the field

DEIA conversations with employers

Language employers understand

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Sales 101

Generate Leads

Initial Contact

Follow-up

Discovery

Close the Deal

Handle Objections

Present Solutions

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The Five Stages of DEI Maturity

Aware:
- DEI is new to my organization, and we are just becoming aware of its importance

Compliant:
- DEI in my organization is focused on compliance with EEOC and other legal requirements

Tactical:
- DEI has been connected to business initiatives and outcomes in pockets of the organization

Integrated:
- DEI is part of everything we do as an organization, we have both internal and external efforts on DEI

Sustainable:
- DEI efforts are best in class and remain strong over time through our efforts to continuously improve and evolve

https://hbr.org/2022/11/the-five-stages-of-dei-maturity

Make it easy for students and employers to understand what is in it for them

Equip completers with the ability to articulate the skills they have gained through their college courses.

Consider offering a skills inventory to students that can evolve as they return for additional courses in the future

Competency-based assessments

Speak to employers about how their participation will impact their bottom-line

Don't use terms such as "program of study, learning objectives, college completion rates, academics, the quarter system"

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Setting everyone up for success

Provide structure and support to advance
 DEIA recruitment and retention efforts

Recruitment strategies for people of color

Retention strategies for people of color

Addressing bias in hiring

Professional social capital

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JFF'S QUALITY JOBS FRAMEWORK

Structure

Workplace health and safety, including anti-discrimination and anti-harassment
Proper classification of workers and contractors
Fair, consistent, and predictable scheduling
Job security

Agency & Culture

Belonging and psychological safety
Transparent HR function
Ability to organize
Opportunities for worker input
Meaningful commitment to DEI

Compensation

Pays a living wage
Comprehensive benefits
Fairness and transparency
Paid leave (including family leave & vacation)

Advancement

Skills-based practices
Transparent career pathways
Career coaching and training
Inclusive internal mobility

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Professional Social Capital

A Key to Black Economic Advancement

Elevate current assets.

Focus on participants' strengths & existing networks, rather than what they lack

Build relationships.

Connect learners & workers to people for sustained supportive relationships

Make connections & introductions.

Help learners & workers meet people who can assist them with specific immediate needs.

Formalize career onboarding.

Demonstrate next steps in learners' & workers' career journeys matching individual needs

Enable a continuous learning journey.

Enable people to continue building professional social capital throughout their lives, benefit from networks, and resources at ever stage.

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Sustainability

Building relationships for success in 1 year, 3 years, 5 years and more

Partnership management

Personnel transitions

Using outcomes data to tell your story

Strategies for influencing policy and systems change to promote equity

# Lasting Relationships that continue to add value

What does success look like in the short term and in the long term? What are the differences?

How will the partnership thrive without this one person or even this program?

Continuous Quality Improvement – a cycle of routine engagement to ask partners:

- What is working well?
- What is not working?
- What can we do to make the program better?

Outcomes = Value
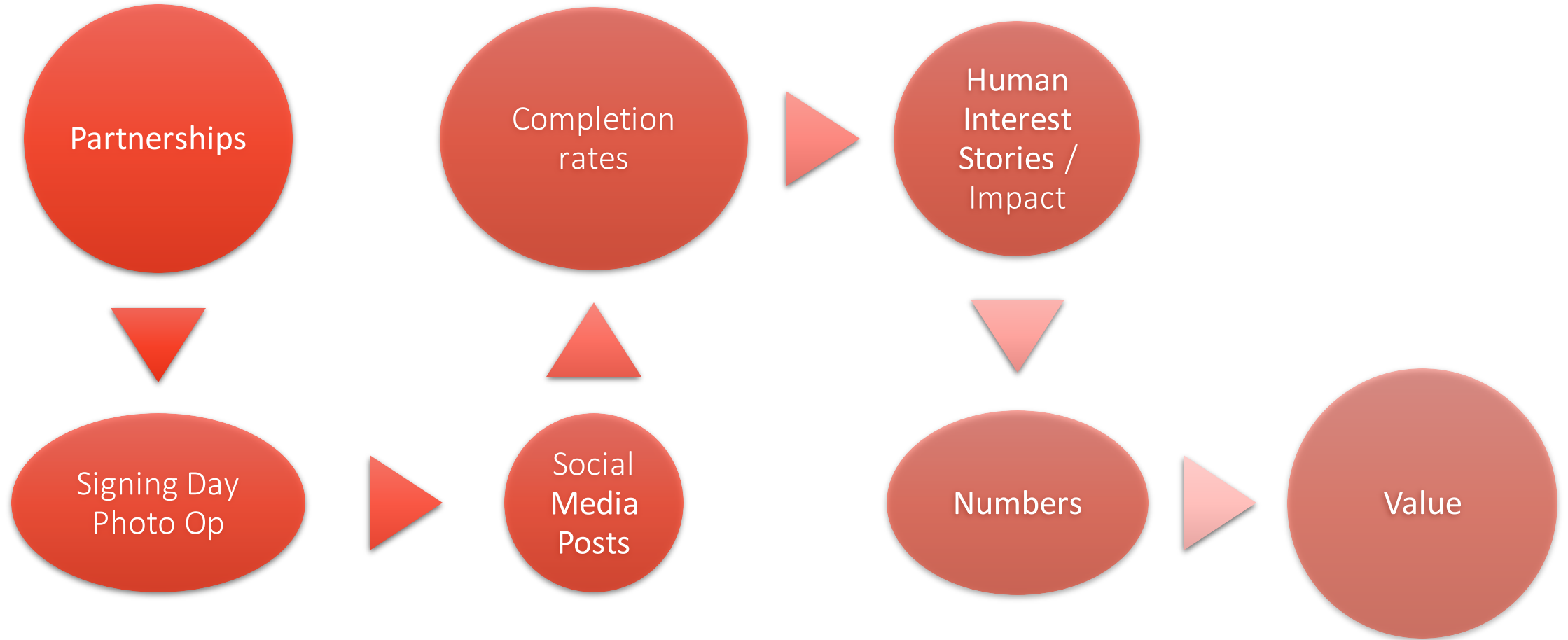
Sector Strategies Support Sustaining Employer Relationships

Deepen relationships with the workforce and economic development organizations in the area

Deepen relationships with employers

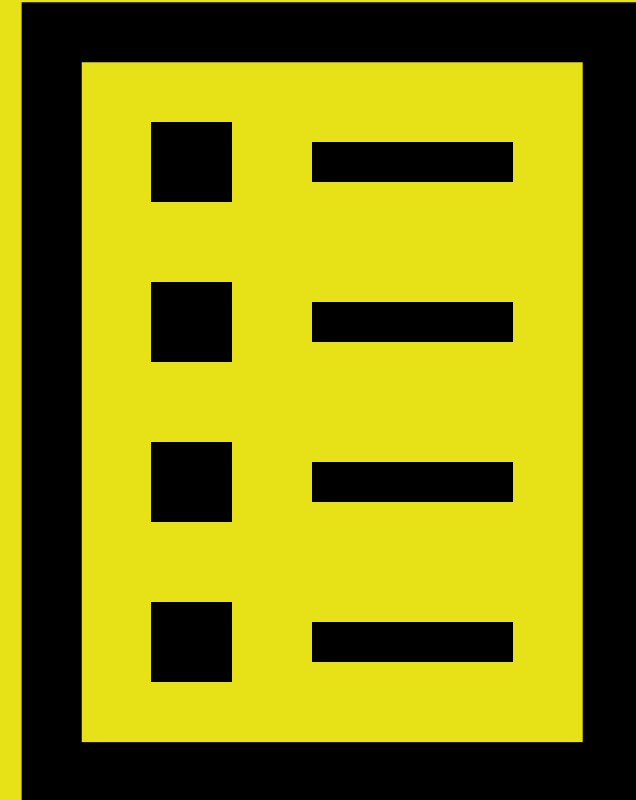Provides clear roadmaps for interested students

Supports clarity on responsibility

Coordinates regional activities within a particular industry

Opportunity for the college to take a leadership role in convening stakeholders for continued conversations

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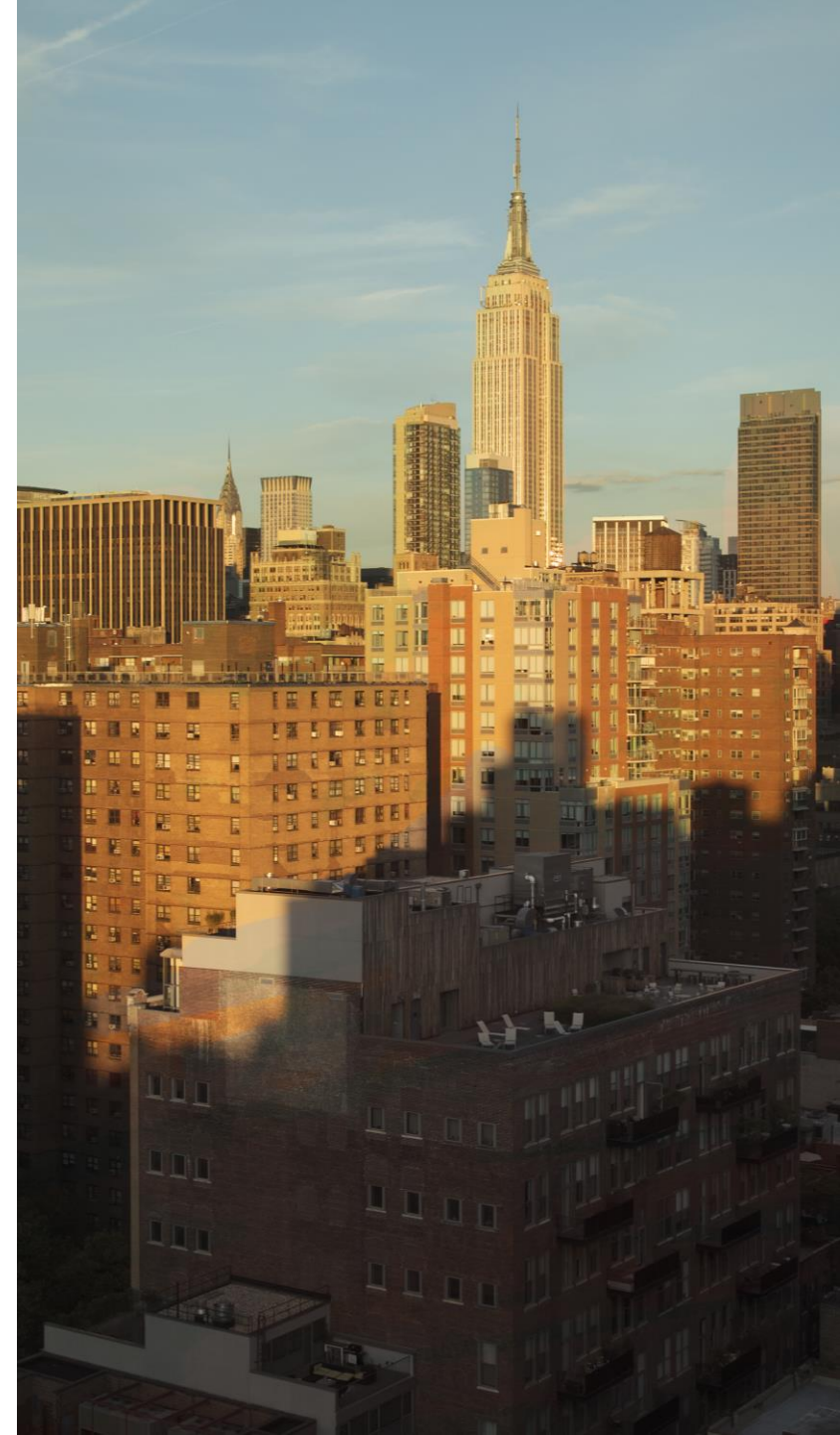
Action Planning

Reflection questions guide action planning

Each section of the new Equity-Focused Employer Engagement Field Guide will be followed by questions colleges can answer for themselves that will build a plan of action.

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College Plan of Action

Guiding statements & self reflection

Marketing plan

Operational plan

Team

THE JFF TEAM

Melissa MacGregor

Director

Andrea Messing-Mathie

Director

Kassandra McGhee

Director

Julia Delgado

Coordinator

Jobs for the Future

Ben Williams

Director