Who We Are:
The Center for Economic Inclusion (Center) is the nation’s first organization dedicated to advancing economic inclusion in a major U.S. metropolitan area. Backed by local funders, such as U.S. Bank, and national funders, such as JPMorgan Chase, the Center is advancing policies to dismantle systemic racism and build new economic engines with and within communities of color.

Approach:
- Advance racial equity and elevate Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) voices.
- Connect local action with policymaking at the state and regional level.
- Advocate for data-driven, market-responsive solutions at the intersections of human capital, economic development, education and workforce development.

Policy Priorities:
The Center’s Workforce and Education Policy Committee, a cross-sector coalition of committed leaders, seeks to advance a policy agenda in two areas:
1. Help People Rebound and Advance
2. Redesign Education and Workforce Development

Strategic Advisors:
The following entities are thought partners in shaping and advancing this agenda.
Help People Rebound and Advance
1. Eliminate barriers to post-secondary attainment, especially for BIPOC individuals.
   a. Ensure that short-term, in-demand education and training credentials in and outside of higher education are prioritized as allowable uses of state education and training resources.
   - The wage premium for short-term programs is often comparable or higher than associate’s degrees and even bachelor’s degrees in certain fields. Certificate holders earn 30% more than individuals with only a high school diploma.
   - There are wide racial disparities in post-secondary attainment among those aged 25 to 44, with just 28% of American Indian and 37% of Black Minnesotans attaining a certificate or higher, compared to 67.8% of White Minnesotans.
   - Offering Pell Grants for short occupational programs to low-income students with a bachelor’s degree increased program enrollment and completion by about 20 percentage points.¹
   - Offering Pell Grants for very short-term occupational training programs increased program enrollment and completion by about 10 percentage points.²

Redesign Education and Workforce Development
1. Scale targeted career pathway efforts to meet labor market needs and advance inclusive growth and economic inclusion, particularly for BIPOC individuals and single parents.
   a. Increase Pathways to Prosperity (e.g., Career Pathway) Funding
      - 75% who completed a Career Pathway program gained related employment.
      - After successfully completing a Career Pathway program, participants with less than a high school degree saw a 73% increase in wages.
      - Career Pathway programs are effective and efficient because they focus on training for high-demand careers and coordinate existing funding to ensure participants have the education and holistic support necessary to be hired in careers with family-supporting wages.
   b. Expand best-practice models of delivering precollege-level coursework (developmental education) and other academic support services as a means of addressing a key contributor to racial disparities in attainment of post-secondary credentials. This could include making contextualized, accelerated, tuition-free or reduced tuition models available to students.
   c. More flexible use of the Workforce Development Fund to respond to local needs, system opportunities and racial equity.

2. BIPOC and Community Centered Processes and Investments
   a. Prioritize investments toward eliminating racial disparities and ensuring inclusion of BIPOC talent.

² Ibid