Who We Are

The Center for Economic Inclusion (Center) is the nation’s first organization dedicated exclusively to creating an economy that works for everyone in a major U.S. metropolitan area. With the partnership and investment of local and regional governments, community based organizations and investors, the Center is advancing policies to dismantle systemic racism and build new economic engines with and within Black, Indigenous, Asian and Latinx and Immigrant communities.

Approach:

- Connect local action with policymaking at the state and regional level.
- Equip public and private sector employers to dismantle institutional racism to close racial income, employment and wealth gaps.
- Elevate data-informed, market-responsive solutions at the intersections of human capital, economic development, transportation, and housing, that center Black, Indigenous, Asian and Latinx voices and racial equity.

Policy Priorities:
The Center for Economic Inclusion, with the leadership of a Workforce and Education Policy Committee, a cross-sector coalition of committed leaders, is advancing a two-pronged policy agenda:

1. Mitigate Barriers to Equitable Upward Mobility
2. Redesign Education and Workforce Development

Community Economic Development Policy Agenda

To revitalize and catalyze inclusive regional economies throughout the State of Minnesota, the Center for Economic Inclusion will support and lobby for:

- Budget, tax and economic policies which catalyze shared prosperity, close racial employment, income and wealth gaps, and stimulate inclusive economic growth.
- Revitalize Inclusive Regional Economies
- A disparities impact note for any proposed legislation if it appears enactment could have a significant impact on increasing or decreasing racial disparities.
- Investments in to stimulate business ownership in growing industries, commercial land ownership, land banking, and property ownership and improvement for Black business
owners and entrepreneurs to address historic wealth extraction and devaluation and accelerate wealth creation.

- Incentives for employers, particularly focused on Black, Indigenous, Asian and Latinx employers to close wage gaps in growth sectors.

**Workforce Policy Priorities**

**Mitigate Barriers to Equitable Upward Mobility**

   a. Prioritize short-term, in-demand education and training as allowable uses of state education and training dollars.
      - 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
      - Allow and encourage flexible use of state workforce development dollars to support low-wage jobseekers in mitigating prior academic debt, in order to increase pursuit of credentialing

**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.

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² Ibid
• 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 models available to students.

c. More flexible use of the Workforce Development Fund to respond to local needs, system opportunities and racial equity.

2. Black, Indigenous, Asian and Latinx and Community Centered Processes and Investments


**Workforce & Education Policy Committee Strategic Advisors:**
The following entities are thought partners in shaping and advancing the Center’s education and workforce policy agenda.
PUBLIC POLICY STRATEGIC PARTNERS

The Center for Economic Inclusion has established strategic partnerships with two Coalitions to both inform the Center’s agenda and to further racially inclusive economic growth and public policy: The Racial Equity & Joy Pre-Coalition and the City of Saint Paul Legislative Advocacy Work Group. The purpose and composition of these partnerships is outlined below.

Racial Equity and Joy Pre-Coalition is a group of advocates from Minnesota nonprofit organizations who are committed to increasing racial equity through state legislation. This coalition, formed August 2019, is made up of organizations who are committed to advancing racial equity in Minnesota and within our organizations.

Racial Equity and Joy Pre-Coalition identifies issues that none of our organizations can tackle alone, but together we can move. This coalition exists to make that racial equity and inclusion a reality for every Minnesotan. We want Minnesota to be a place where everyone can thrive and be proud of the state, they call home.

2021 Legislative Focus:
Because the pandemic has exacerbated already known racial disparities, our upcoming work at the Capitol will focus on ensuring BIPOC communities are not further harmed in proposed budget cuts across public support programs and state agencies. We are committed to advancing economic, health, and racial justice for the upcoming legislative session that begins in January 2021.

Racial Equity and Joy Coalition is made up of following members:
- The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
- Catholic Charities
- Center for Economic Inclusion
- Coalition of Asian American Leaders
- Lutheran Social Service of MN
- Minnesota Budget Project
- Minnesota Council of Nonprofits
- People Serving People
- Pillsbury United Communities
- The UpTake
Voices for Racial Justice
Wilder Foundation
YWCA Minneapolis

City of Saint Paul Legislative Advocacy Workgroup
- Black Civic Network
- Center for Economic Inclusion
- Coalition of Asian American Leaders
- HOME Line
- Homes for All
- J. Alex Frank
- Minnesota African Coalition
- Minnesota Asset Building Coalition
- Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless
- Minnesota Housing Partnership
- Neighborhood Development Center
- Take Action Minnesota