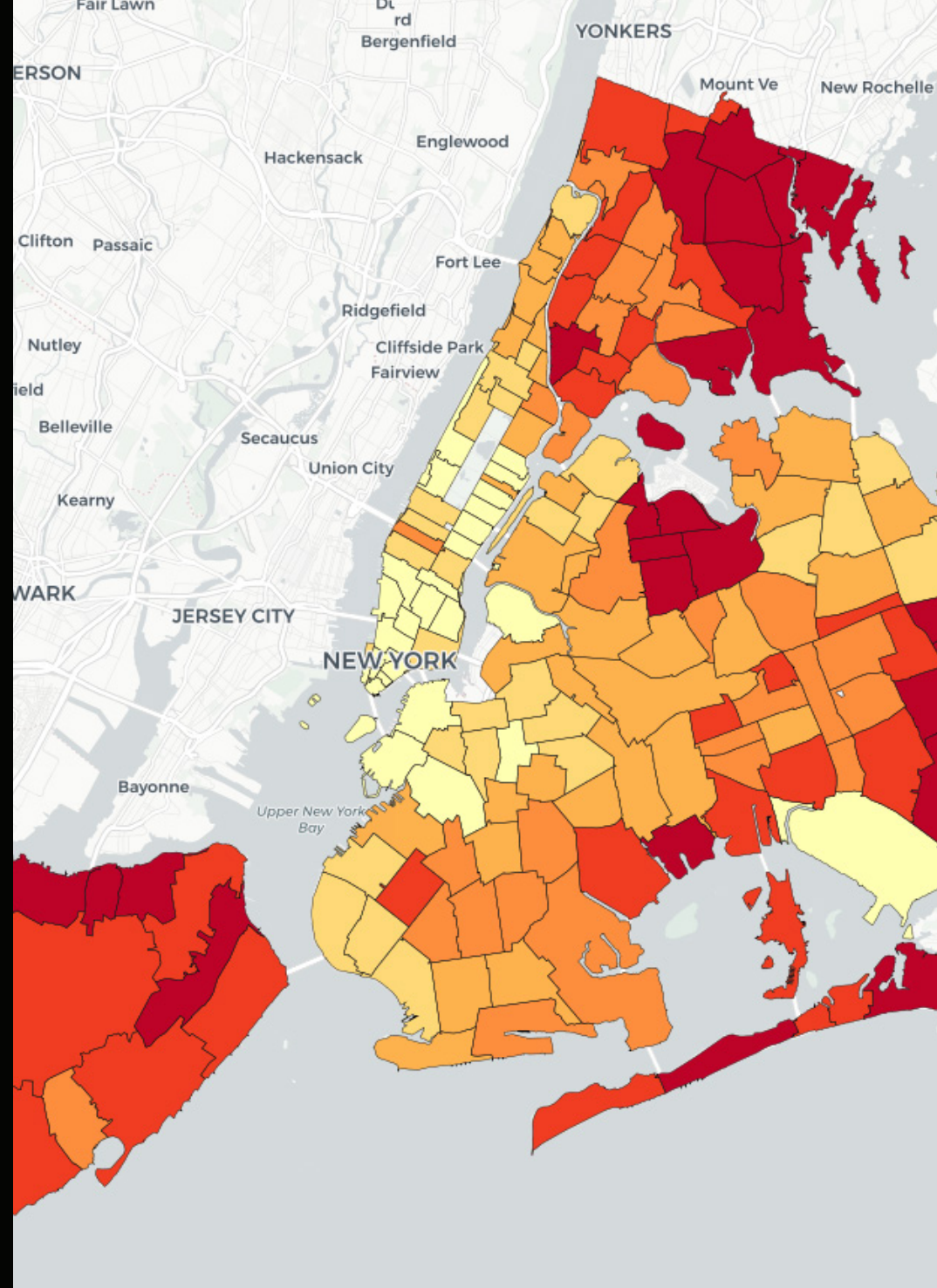


Recovery For All

A Vision for New York City's
Equitable Economic Recovery

NY Workforce Recovery Strategy Group
July 2020



New York City must turn its focus to a local economic recovery centered on equity

In response to the growing crisis of unemployment and small business collapse in New York City as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, over 80 leaders from the private and human services sectors have partnered to form the **NY Workforce Recovery Strategy Group** and create space for a solutions-oriented discussion to the current economic challenges.

Together, this group of leaders and experts have developed strategies for NYC's recovery in the following areas:

- » Education & Training Ecosystem for the Displaced Workforce & Marginalized Communities
- » Rebuilding through Public Works & Direct Public Employment
- » Relief Programs for Individuals & Hard-Hit Communities
- » Recovery for Local Small Businesses & Nonprofits and Support for New Business Development

An economic and workforce development strategy focused on opportunity, equity, education and training will reshape New York City's economy to create healthier communities, more skilled workers, deeper talent pools, and a more resilient business climate.



COVID-19 Has Exposed Deep Inequities in NYC

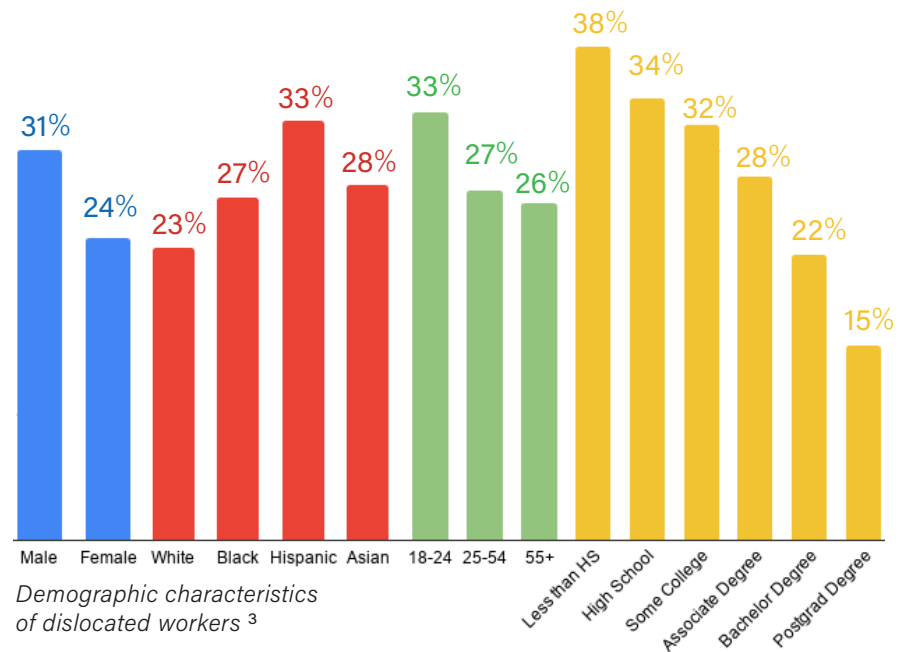
New York City was the national epicenter for COVID-19 crisis. The health and economic impacts have caused sudden and deep damage to the city's economy and claimed the lives of over 20,000 New Yorkers — 88% of whom were persons of color.¹ Through May, over 1.25 million New Yorkers faced unemployment and steep economic insecurity — 892,000 private sector and government jobs were lost, and 330,000 independent contractors filed for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance. The city's unemployment rate stood at 18.3% - with marginalized communities facing the highest rates of displacement.²

The pandemic has shown us who keeps our city running — food delivery workers, home health aides and nurses, cab drivers, custodial workers among many. Despite their essential status to our economy, inequity here expresses itself as low wages, few safety supports, and long and unstable schedules.

The recent weeks of peaceful protests over the current and historically unequal treatment of Black and Brown people by institutions and systems of power have made it abundantly clear that New Yorkers want a stronger safety net and economy that proactively benefits the many, not the few.

An equitable recovery requires bold and decisive action and must center on:

- » Hardest hit and marginalized communities
- » Small businesses and community-based organizations
- » Racial and economic justice
- » Voices of a diverse community of leaders



¹ Age-adjusted rates of lab confirmed COVID-19 cases. NYC Health Department (April 16, 2020). See: <https://on.nyc.gov/3i4Pyo>

^{2, 3} The Covid-19 New York City Economy Three Months In: Reopening, and a Continuing Low-Wage Worker Recession. Center for New York City Affairs (June 2020). See: bit.ly/2O36q0W

Guiding Principles for Policy Development & Investment

City and State leaders should focus on building the foundation of a **21st century local, interconnected and participatory economy that provides resiliency and well-being for all**. This requires prioritizing the needs of communities, job seekers and businesses that have been hardest hit by this pandemic and the systemic marginalization and disinvestment that existed prior to the COVID-19 crisis and subsequent recession.

We urge the Mayor's administration and City Council to take a leadership role in the implementation of these recommendations for an equitable local recovery, and to appropriately advocate to their State and Federal colleagues for the changes necessary to be innovative and adequately resourced. Without new sources of revenue coming from the NYS Governor and Legislature, as well as significant investments from the Federal government, the equitable recovery that New Yorkers need at this historic moment will not succeed.

- » **“Back to normal” is not good enough:** “Normal” for millions of New Yorkers meant multiple low-wage jobs with little mobility, no access to healthcare or other benefits, little economic security and unsafe working conditions, and unpredictable schedules. A stronger and inclusive economy that ensures job quality, career mobility, living wage pay and benefits, stable schedules, and safe working conditions is the new starting line.
- » **Prioritize & collaborate with impacted communities:** Ensure that programs and investments prioritize the communities, individuals and small businesses that have been hardest hit by this pandemic, and particularly those facing historic marginalization and disinvestment. Work in collaboration with community based organizations and local stakeholders to build policy, programs and investments, enabling innovation not regulation.
- » **No austerity budgeting - Invest in a sustainable economy built from the bottom-up:** Rebuilding NYC's economy with a focus on its workforce and local small businesses is an investment in our future economy and tax base, not an act of charity. An equitable recovery plan must reprioritize and redirect resources toward community investments through a combination of new revenue streams and increased cuts in other portions of the City budget.



Education & Training Ecosystem for the Displaced Workforce & Marginalized Communities

New York City and State have consistently underinvested in adult education and job training over the course of decades. These failed policies and inadequate systems have sustained racial and economic inequity, and a continued impoverishment of our communities. New Yorkers who were failed by the public school system have been abandoned as adults without access to education and training that would empower them with real economic opportunity with living wages, career mobility and job quality.

The COVID-19 crisis has had tragic consequences for unemployed, underemployed and low-wage workers. If the City does not take dramatic action to support New Yorkers in short-term hiring and relief efforts as well as long-term training and career development, the racial and economic inequity across the five boroughs will be worse in 2025 than it was in 2015. Now is the time to deeply invest in strengthening our communities and their economic future by building a system that is data informed, ensures that services are easy to access, and is responsive to labor market needs and the needs of New Yorkers.

- » Develop, expand and fund employment programs that meet immediate relief efforts to jumpstart businesses and (re)hiring including transitional employment, wage subsidy, work based learning programs and apprenticeships

Recommendations continue on next page





Education & Training Ecosystem for the Displaced Workforce & Marginalized Communities

Recommendations continue from previous page

- » Enable flexibility for workforce development contracts reflective of COVID and post-COVID requirements
- » Provide guidance, supplies and infrastructure to ensure COVID-safe in-person training and services
- » Use a local outreach and referral networks to support targeted local hiring in hardest hit communities
- » Create resources for employers to work with service providers to infuse labor market needs into curricula
- » Strengthen connections between union and non-union training programs and strengthen pre-apprenticeship programs
- » Develop, expand and fund training programs for upskilling, reskilling and job placement
- » Develop, expand and fund a city-wide 21st century career development system focused on training, upskilling, employment & education supports for a post-COVID economy
- » Integrate workforce development into all economic development efforts that arise to jumpstart the economy & build in sustainable funding sources





Rebuilding Through Public Works & Direct Public Employment

New York City can leverage this moment of crisis through robust public works programs. This includes investing in rebuilding and repairing existing infrastructure — including transportation, education, recreation, housing and community facilities — and making targeted new investments that promote equity, access to opportunity, and long term careers. Priority should be given to investments in communities most heavily affected by the public health and economic crisis.

Public investment in a large-scale set of infrastructure projects (both physical and social infrastructure) could achieve two key goals at once: employing tens of thousands of New Yorkers whose private sector jobs have been lost in the crisis, and helping New York address a looming crisis of even greater magnitude: the climate crisis.

- » Invest in accelerated public projects to repair and rebuild public infrastructure
- » Invest in longer-term infrastructure projects that create equitable opportunity
- » Potential projects include Broadband Installation and Digital Infrastructure; Repairs, Enhancements, and Greening of NYCHA Facilities; Public Transportation; the “Cleaner and Greener New York” plan; Public Health Infrastructure; Social & Opportunity Infrastructure; Childcare Infrastructure





Relief Programs for Individuals & Hard-Hit Communities

Relief programs and services need to be expanded to support New Yorkers continuing to struggle from the health and economic fallout caused by the pandemic. Direct individual relief programs should be focused on community-scale monetary support for the areas most under-resourced now. This means expanding the narrow means-testing cash assistance programs that existed before and a true universal basic income for all New Yorkers.

- » Provide direct cash assistance to individuals and families in neighborhoods most affected by COVID-19
- » Provide expanded tax credit options to all low-income New Yorkers such as expanded NYS Earned-Income Tax Credit and Child & Dependent Care Tax Credit





Recovery for Local Small Businesses & Nonprofits, and Support for New Business Development

The health crisis has caused most small businesses to cease over the past three months. Our recommendations for supporting this small business rebound with the most flexibility possible, and entail incentives to help businesses re-hire from communities affected by COVID-19, as well as regulatory streamlining, and public incubator support for new small businesses.

It is imperative that we recognize that small businesses make up the majority of NYC's workforce, and that the city employment base urgently needs successful re-openings of as many businesses as possible.

- » Help small businesses and new businesses start back up with less red tape
- » Provide free and/or low-cost technology and technical expertise to local businesses
- » Use wage subsidies to promote small business inclusive hiring
- » Restructure the workforce system to better serve small businesses & incentivize training and employment partnerships
- » Provide "incubator" assistance to new businesses and worker co-ops starting up in NYC



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NYC EMPLOYMENT
+ TRAINING
COALITION

**THE STRONG VOICE FOR NEW YORK CITY'S
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY**

A Vision for New York City's Equitable Economic Recovery

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