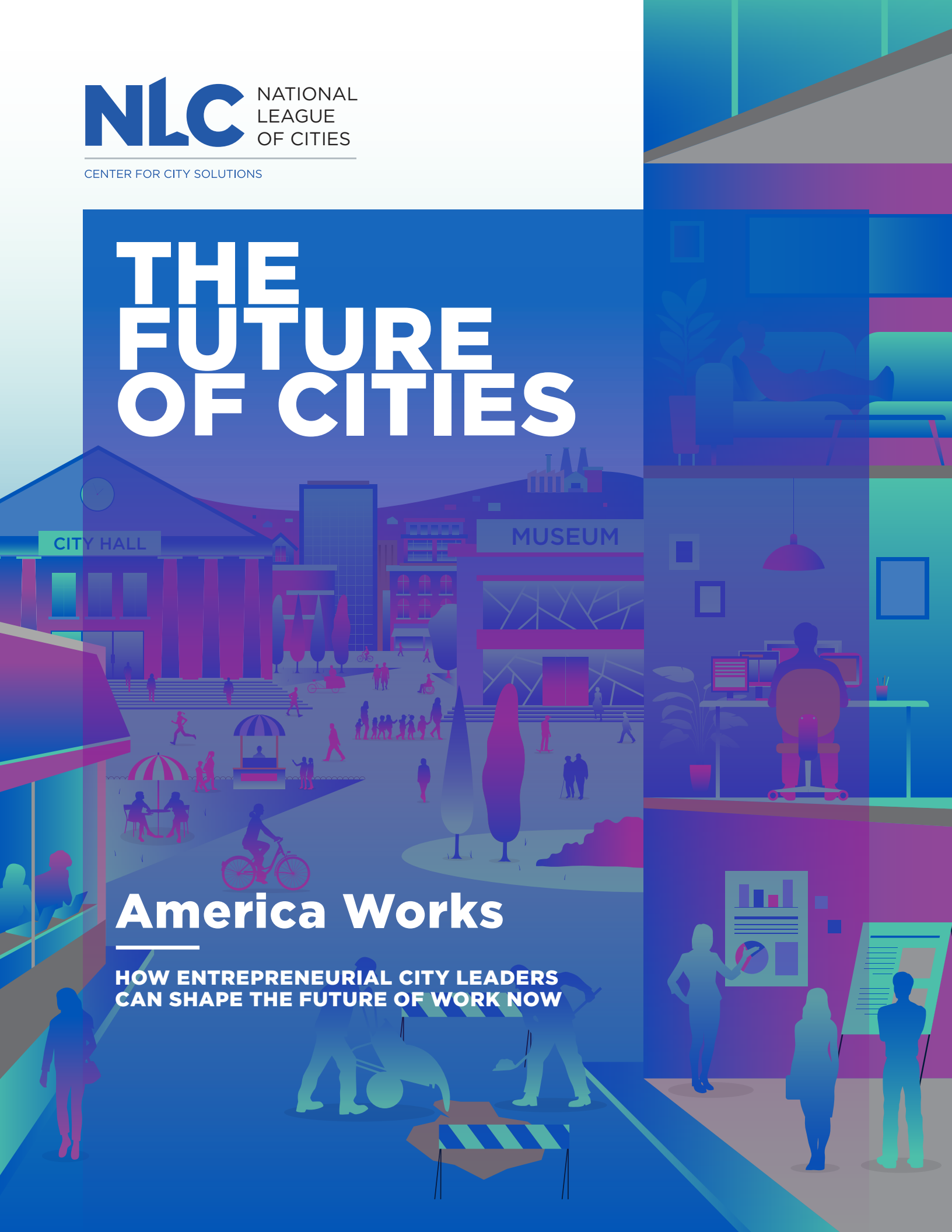


THE FUTURE OF CITIES

America Works

HOW ENTREPRENEURIAL CITY LEADERS
CAN SHAPE THE FUTURE OF WORK NOW





CENTER FOR CITY SOLUTIONS

About the National League of Cities

The National League of Cities (NLC) is the voice of America's cities, towns and villages, representing more than 200 million people. NLC works to strengthen local leadership, influence federal policy and drive innovative solutions.

NLC's Center for City Solutions provides research and analysis on key topics and trends important to cities, creative solutions to improve the quality of life in communities, inspiration and ideas for local officials to use in tackling tough issues, and opportunities for city leaders to connect with peers, share experiences and learn about innovative approaches in cities.

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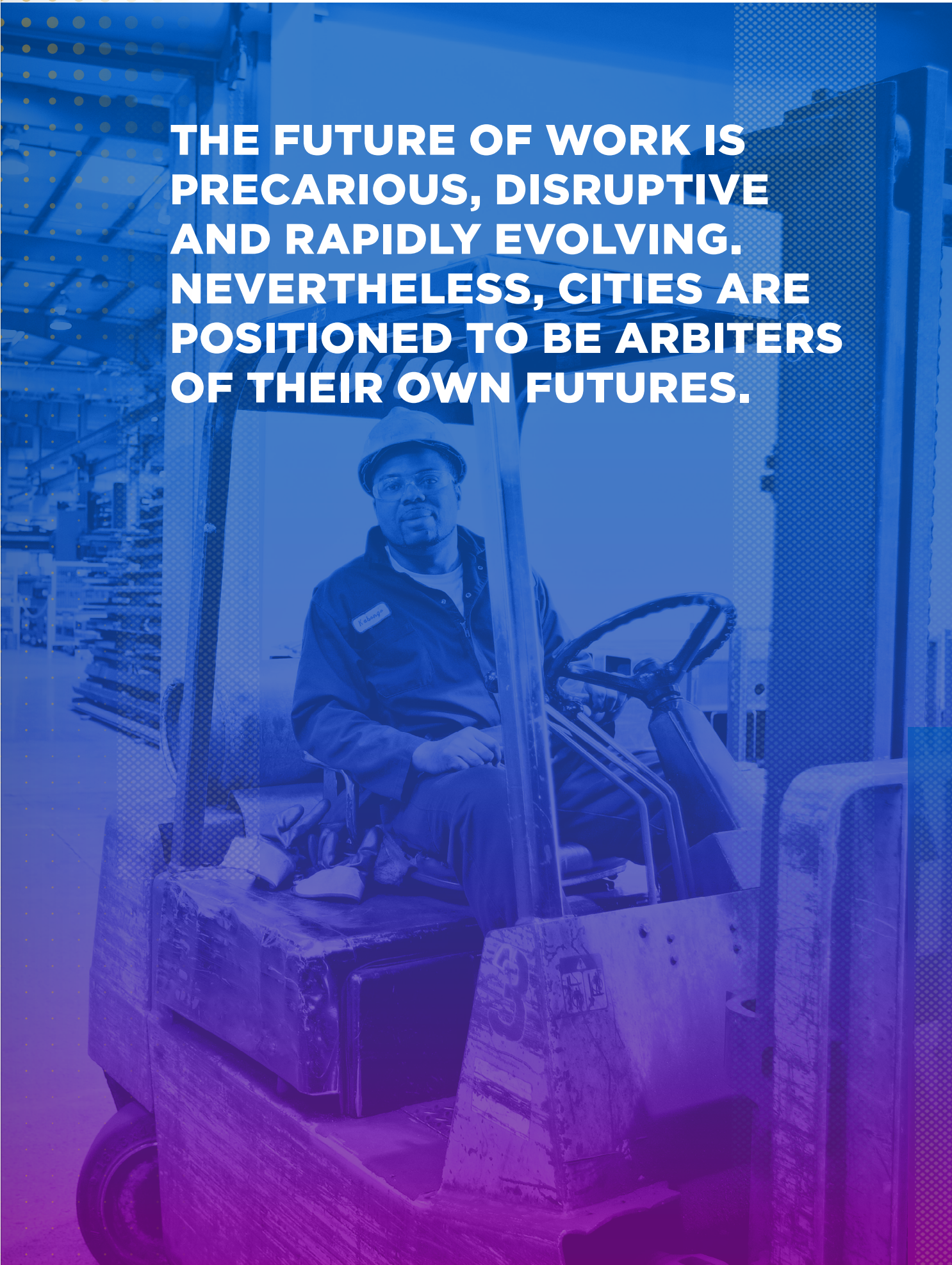
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**THE FUTURE OF WORK IS
PRECARIOUS, DISRUPTIVE
AND RAPIDLY EVOLVING.
NEVERTHELESS, CITIES ARE
POSITIONED TO BE ARBITERS
OF THEIR OWN FUTURES.**

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FOREWORD

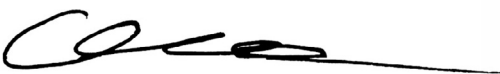
The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we live — and especially the way we work. The last two and a half years have redefined what essential work means for many and made the lines between work and home blurrier than ever for others. But as more people both head back to the office and pilot new remote work arrangements, we are far from finished figuring out how to navigate shifts in the workplace. With technological advancements like digitization, artificial intelligence and automation on the horizon, the workforce is set to evolve even more dramatically in the coming years.

With this in mind, the National League of Cities set forth to investigate the state of work in America’s cities, towns and villages today, and to explore the key drivers that will shape how the workplace changes over the next 10 years. How city leaders choose to respond to those drivers will have enormous impacts on residents in communities everywhere.

Knowing this, many are already exploring the ways they can adapt and stay on the

cutting edge of workforce trends to ensure that their communities remain relevant and inclusive for years to come. We hope this report will help give local leaders insight into the strategies that are working well so far, the challenges they should expect to face and the opportunities they can take advantage of. Equipped with that knowledge, city leaders can chart a vision that takes both the changing nature of work and the context of their communities into account.

The future of our local economies is in the hands of today’s city leaders. By preparing for tomorrow’s workplaces now, we can use technological changes to our advantage and ensure cities remain places of opportunity for everyone.



Clarence E. Anthony
CEO and Executive Director
National League of Cities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dramatic changes to the way we work are already in motion. Automation, artificial intelligence (AI) and advanced robotics are having cascading impacts on the workforce. These developments will displace millions of American jobs — but will also create millions more. As work becomes more and more digitized, the economy will be increasingly decentralized and urbanized. The housing crisis, coupled with the migration of a massive number of newly mobile workers, is changing the landscapes of communities and exacerbating persistent racial and social inequalities. Meanwhile, childcare costs and income variability are on the rise, and the threat of the climate crisis is becoming more and more pronounced. Indeed, the future of work is precarious, disruptive and rapidly evolving.

Nevertheless, cities are positioned to be arbiters of their own futures. This report presents the state of work in cities today, the five drivers that will shape the next 10 years and strategies for city leaders across four

pillars: opportunity, talent, place and social infrastructure. America’s cities are diverse, and this report seeks to provide generalized and nuanced guidance across six city typologies: Superstar, Rising Star, Mighty Middle, Suburban Village, Zoom Town and Rural Town.

The future of work will be defined by entrepreneurial city leaders. The strategies and case studies outlined in this report showcase mayors and city leaders who turned bold visions for their city into actionable plans with clear goals, owners and community voice. Many of the challenges cities face, and the strategies outlined in this report, require city leaders to embrace bold ideas, allow for agility and adaptability, and test innovative solutions through policy, programs and public-private partnerships. As conveners, employers and policymakers, city leaders can take entrepreneurial steps to successfully navigate the changing nature of work and build inclusive cities of opportunity and community for years to come.

THE STATE OF WORK TODAY

The state of work in the 21st century is in upheaval. Once-in-a-generation events like the Great Recession and COVID-19 pandemic have dramatically accelerated shifts in how Americans work. Economists coined the term “the Great Resignation” to describe the millions of workers who, because of low pay, lack of growth opportunities, feeling disrespected and childcare issues, have quit their jobs since the pandemic began in 2020.¹

A nation of cities with dramatically different economies of work

Cities play a critical role in preparing for the future of work and situating themselves as places with thriving workforces. The U.S. is made up of 19,000 cities, towns and villages, each with unique economic

circumstances shaped by historical, geographic and demographic factors. Depending on where workers live, they may find dramatically different employment opportunities, pay and work cultures.

Cities are categorized by six future of work typologies

The dense clustering of talent and other economic assets in metro regions remains a fundamental driver of innovation and economic growth, making cities a critical piece of the economy. This report selects 37 municipalities from across the country to examine a range of workforce conditions that all cities are facing. This analysis led to six city typologies that describe the variety in local economies.

Future of work in cities typologies



Superstar: America’s largest and most economically vibrant places. Superstar cities have more than 1 million residents, many high-opportunity jobs and multiple thriving industries. Superstar cities tend to have strong job growth and higher incomes than other places but often have high income inequality and high costs of living that can strain low- and middle-income families.



Rising Star: Historically midsize cities that have experienced population growth, attracted growing industries and may grow to become superstar cities. These cities have populations over 250,000 with high-opportunity jobs and rising costs of living.



Mighty Middle: Cities with populations between 50,000 and 250,000 that have stable or declining economies with a few dominant industries and a lower cost of living than their larger peer cities. Some of these places have post-industrial or service economies and tend to have slower growth than Superstar and Rising Star cities.



Suburban Village: The cities, towns and villages just outside of America’s largest cities that make up the metro area of these population centers. The majority of residents are families with children under the age of 18 and older adults. Suburban Villages vary in their transit accessibility, mixed-use amenities and social infrastructure. Their economies are often oriented around the nearby urban center.



Zoom Town: Cities and towns with fewer than 100,000 residents that have transformed from university towns or seasonal tourist destinations into hot spots for remote talent. Zoom Towns tend to have high and rising costs of living and infrastructure that is straining to accommodate population influxes. They often have economies that are anchored by one industry or attraction.



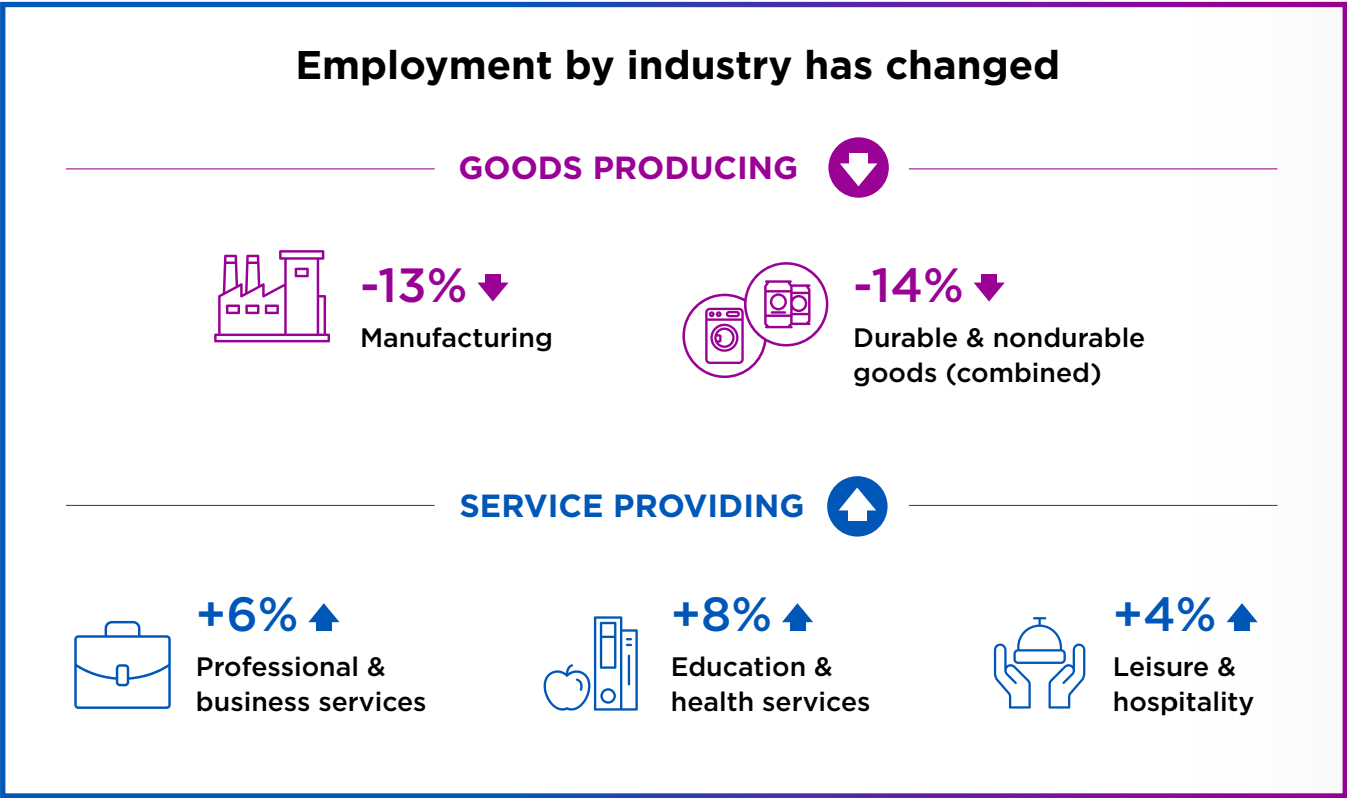
Rural Town: Small cities and towns with fewer than 50,000 residents that are not located near a larger population center. Some Rural Towns have stable economies with a small group of businesses or tourist attractions while others struggle with little economic opportunity and declining populations.

Summary of work across the U.S.

Major shifts in the balance of industries and regional opportunity

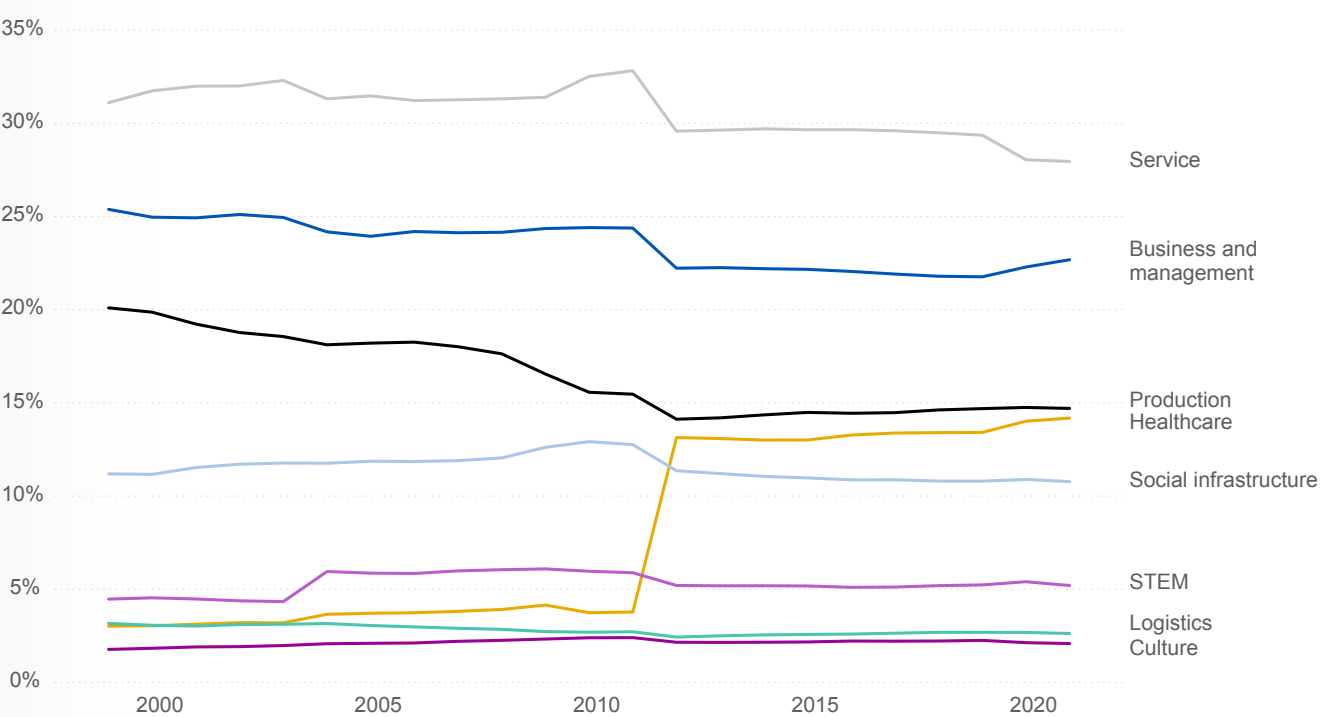
Since 1919, when the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics first began publishing monthly data on employment and earnings, American cities have seen significant shifts in the balance of industries. Service-providing industries have steadily increased their share of employment from 50 to 71 percent of the workforce while

the share of employment in goods-producing industries fell from 37 to 14 percent.² This decline in manufacturing has caused economic hardship in Mighty Middle and Rural Towns that were once centers of production and lagging economic mobility in the South. Meanwhile, a technological revolution spurred new opportunities in growing industries in Superstar and Rising Star cities.³



* This data refers to percentage change in nonfarm employment from 1979 to 2019.
Source: Harris, K. (2020). *Forty years of falling manufacturing employment*. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. www.bls.gov/opub/btn/volume-9/forty-years-of-falling-manufacturing-employment.ht

Figure 1. Changes in the number of jobs by occupation group from 1997 to 2020



Note: As of 2020, service occupations accounted for the largest portion of employment across the country with occupations in business and management employing the second most people.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (n.d.). *Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics*. [Dataset]. www.bls.gov/oes/#data

Most common jobs in largest occupational groups



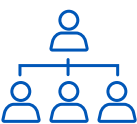
Service occupations: Retail salespersons, fast food and counter workers, cashiers, customer service representatives, janitors and cleaners



Healthcare: Home health aides, nurses, nursing assistants, medical assistants



STEM: Software developers and analysts, computer systems analysts, network and computer systems administrators, civil engineers



Business management: Office clerks, general and operations managers, secretaries, project management, business or operations specialists, accounting and auditing clerks



Logistics: Laborers and material movers, stockers, passenger vehicle drivers, packers and packagers, first-line supervisors of transportation and material-moving workers



Production: Truck drivers, construction laborers, miscellaneous assemblers and fabricators, carpenters



Culture: Hairdressers and cosmetologists, public relations specialists, graphic designers, coaches and scouts, supervisors of service, entertainment and recreation workers



Social infrastructure: Teachers, teaching assistants, security guards, childcare workers

“CORPORATE CONCENTRATION OF POWER AND RACIAL AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY ARE THE GREATEST THREATS TO BUILDING A BETTER AMERICAN CAPITALISM.”

- NATALIE FOSTER, PRESIDENT, ECONOMIC SECURITY PROJECT

A shift from small businesses to large employers and independent contractors

Although the number of small companies have risen over the past decades, their share of total employment has fallen. New business formation rates are at an all-time high, accounting for most of employment growth, but older firms continue to account for most of overall employment.⁴ As larger companies have gained power over the workforce, a greater percentage of workers at these companies are contractors and outsourcing agencies, resulting in more flexibility for some workers through alternative work arrangements but also less stability and fewer job benefits.



Alternative work arrangements have become more common, but it is difficult to measure the number of workers who fall into this category because of the great variation in types of work arrangements. Estimates range from 10 percent to 33 percent of the total workforce. The work that falls into this category includes:

- 1099 contractors and freelancers
- Employed by outsourcing agencies
- Gig workers
- Self-employed workers

An increasing flexibility and mobility for many workers

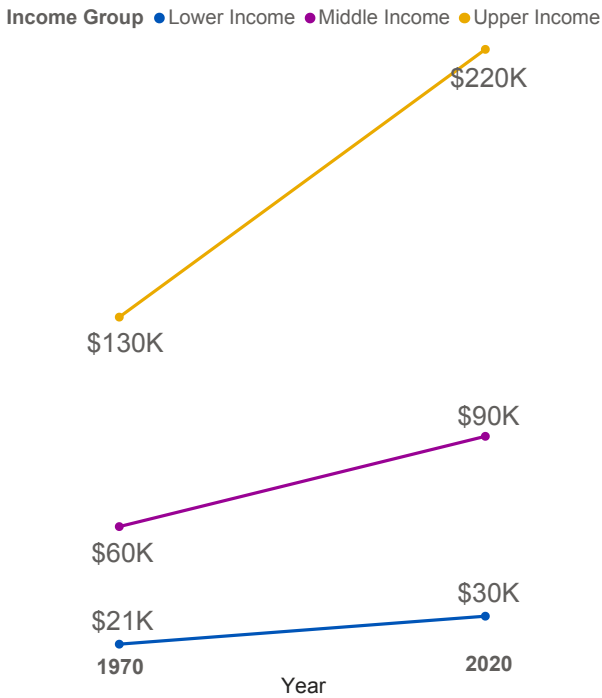
A significant share of the American workforce has accessed new flexibility through increasingly common options for remote work. While a majority (53%) of workers say their jobs can be done remotely if they were allowed, just 22 percent of workers work entirely remotely and 17 percent work remotely some of the time.⁵ This has had downstream effects on transit systems, downtown businesses and commercial real estate as more and more workers and companies opt out of commuting for working from home. Although remote work and increased flexibility of hours is revolutionary for desk workers, its benefits are not distributed evenly across the workforce, primarily excluding low-income and less-educated workers who may benefit most from that flexibility.

Middle-class jobs are shrinking

Since the 1970s, incomes have trended upward for all income levels but have grown more for upper-income households than for lower- and middle-income households. Additionally, the share of adults who live in middle-class

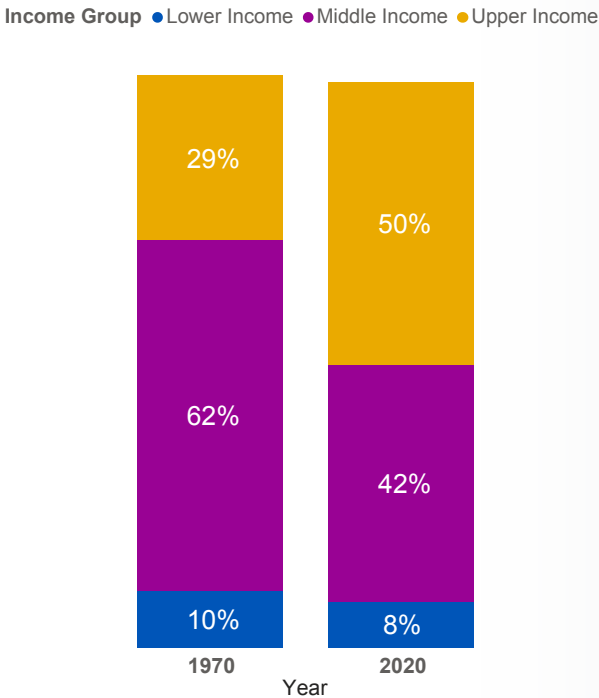
households fell from 61 percent in 1971 to 50 percent in 2021 as the number of adults in both the upper- and lower-income tiers grew.⁶ Overall, the trends over the past decade and income data today paint a picture of wide and growing income inequality in the U.S.

Figure 2. Median household income increases for all income groups from 1970 to 2020



Source: Kochhar, R., & Sechopoulos, S. (2022, April 20). *How the American middle class has changed in the past five decades*. Pew Research Center. www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/04/20/how-the-american-middle-class-has-changed-in-the-past-five-decades

Figure 3. Income growth for upper income significantly outpaces growth for middle and low income



Which workers have jobs that could be done remotely?⁷

Based on a February 2020 analysis of labor market data from the Current Population Survey, using a classification system to determine whether a job can be done fully remotely or not.



Pushing for good jobs now and in the future

In June 2022, the White House hosted the first ever Good Jobs Summit in partnership with the Families and Workers Fund. Rachel Korberg, the group's executive director, frames the challenge simply: **"We currently have more jobs than workers in this country, but we don't have enough good jobs. We have an opportunity in this next decade to focus not only on the quantity of jobs but the quality of jobs."** The Summit reviewed 20 definitions of job quality from employers, researchers and workers and identified three essential components of a good job: (1) economic stability, (2) economic mobility and (3) equity, respect and voice.

Who thinks that they have a good job?

The U.S. does not have a jobs shortage, but there is a good jobs shortage. According to a recent Gallup survey of **more than 6,000 workers measuring worker satisfaction and importance across 10 dimensions of job quality, fewer than half of U.S. workers are in good jobs.** Race, ethnicity and gender are strongly correlated with job quality.⁸

- Only 40 percent of American workers are in good jobs.
- Just 54 percent of workers overall are satisfied with their current pay level.
- 31 percent of Black women work in bad jobs, a higher percentage than in any other large racial or gender group.
- Enjoying their day-to-day work, having stable and predictable pay, and having a sense of purpose rate more highly than level of pay among U.S. workers' criteria for job quality — even among those in the bottom 20 percent of incomes.

Unsustainable race, gender, class inequality across workforce

Profound inequities persist in the economic system that reinforce historic inequalities across the U.S. Although men still outearn women by 17 percent, this wage gap has narrowed over time for White women and is narrower among younger workers. Intersectional wage gaps persist, however, especially in pink collar care-oriented fields dominated by women of color. White men continue to outearn Black and Hispanic men. Hispanic women experience the largest pay gap, earning 57 cents for every \$1 earned by White, non-Hispanic men in 2020. There is also a large and growing income gap between workers with a bachelor’s degree and those with lower levels of formal education. Employer educational requirements prevent millions of workers with relevant skill sets from accessing opportunities. Workforce shifts and growing inequality lead to dwindling opportunities for people without college degrees to earn a family-supporting wage.⁹

Figure 4. The gender wage gap is more extreme for women of all races/ethnicities when compared to men

Comparison of 2020 median earnings for full-time year round workers by race/ethnicity and gender



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). *Current Population Survey: PINC-05. Work Experience-People 15 Years Old and Over, by Total Money Earnings, Age, Race, Hispanic Origin, Sex, and Disability Status: 2020* [Dataset]. www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/cps-pinc/pinc-05.html

Economic burdens for workers and families are straining workers

As inequalities persist, rising costs have outpaced income growth and placed further burdens on low-income workers and workers from communities of color. In 2020 a record 30 percent of households were cost-burdened,* and even more low-income and households of color lack access to affordable housing.¹⁰ America is facing a housing affordability crisis for both renters and owners. While American homeowners gained \$6 trillion in wealth since 2020, those gains were accrued unevenly. Less than half of adults under the age of 40 own homes today, and the Black homeownership rate is lower now than it was a decade ago.¹¹

Americans are further burdened by high costs of medical care, education and childcare. American workers collectively owe \$1.7 trillion in student debt and \$195 billion in medical debt.¹² Childcare costs account for 14 percent of earnings for

dual income households and 35 percent for single income families. The economic burden of housing, debt and childcare has left many working families in a precarious financial position.

Variety of economic realities across America’s six city typologies

Although the median household income in the U.S. was \$67,521 in 2020, this figure varied considerably by city. Ranging from Superstars to Rural Towns, the cities featured in this report capture much of this income variation, living conditions and costs. For example, in Youngstown, OH, the median household income was \$30,129 — a stark contrast to that of \$119,136 in San Francisco, CA. Some cities have thriving technology sectors with high venture capital investment, while others are dominated by the manufacturing, service or tourism industries. Together, this group of cities will frame the economic conditions shaping the future of work in America.

“HOUSING AND CHILDCARE ARE WORKFORCE INFRASTRUCTURE. IF YOU HAVE NO HOME, YOU HAVE NO WORK. IF YOU HAVE NO CHILDCARE, YOU CANNOT WORK.”

— BRIT FONTENOT, DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, BOZEMAN, MT

* The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines a household as cost-burdened if their housing costs exceed 30 percent of their gross annual income.

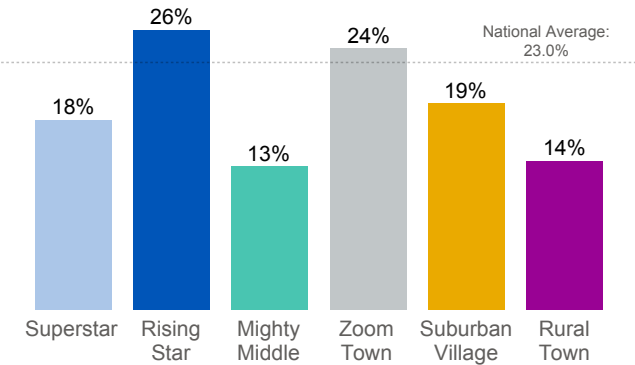
Exploring the future of work with city typologies

To enable city leaders to better understand current economic conditions in their communities and prepare for the future of work, NLC has established a framework of six city typologies. Each typology has accompanying indicators that illustrate the varying economic conditions in cities, towns and villages across the country. The economic indicators explore income, population and cost of living, and how those indicators have changed over time. The 37 cities chosen to help establish the framework are divided across the 6 typologies and

capture a range of places and local experiences across the country. Figure 7 shows the locations and typologies of the 37 cities. City leaders should consider these indicators for their own communities and determine which typology best describes their city. This report will give examples and recommendations that are reflective of the six typologies. These recommendations will be most useful to city leaders if they can place their own community within the typology framework.

For more data on the 37 cities in this sample see Appendix, pages 67-68.

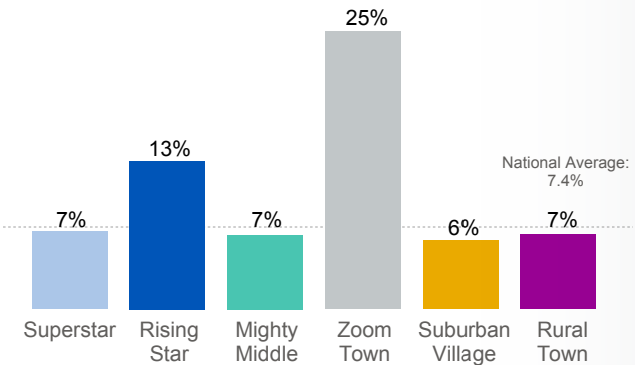
Figure 5. Percent change in median household income (2010-2020)



Note: Rising Stars and Zoom Towns had the highest growth in median household income between 2010 and 2020, followed by Suburban Villages and Superstar Cities.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *American Community Survey 2016-2020 5-Year Data Release*. [Dataset]. www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs

Figure 6. Percent change in population (2010-2020)



Note: Rising Stars and Zoom Towns had the greatest population growth between 2010 and 2020, with the others experiencing population growth close to the national average.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *Decennial Census Results 2020 and 2010*. [Dataset]. www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census.html

Figure 7. Map of the 37 cities and their typologies

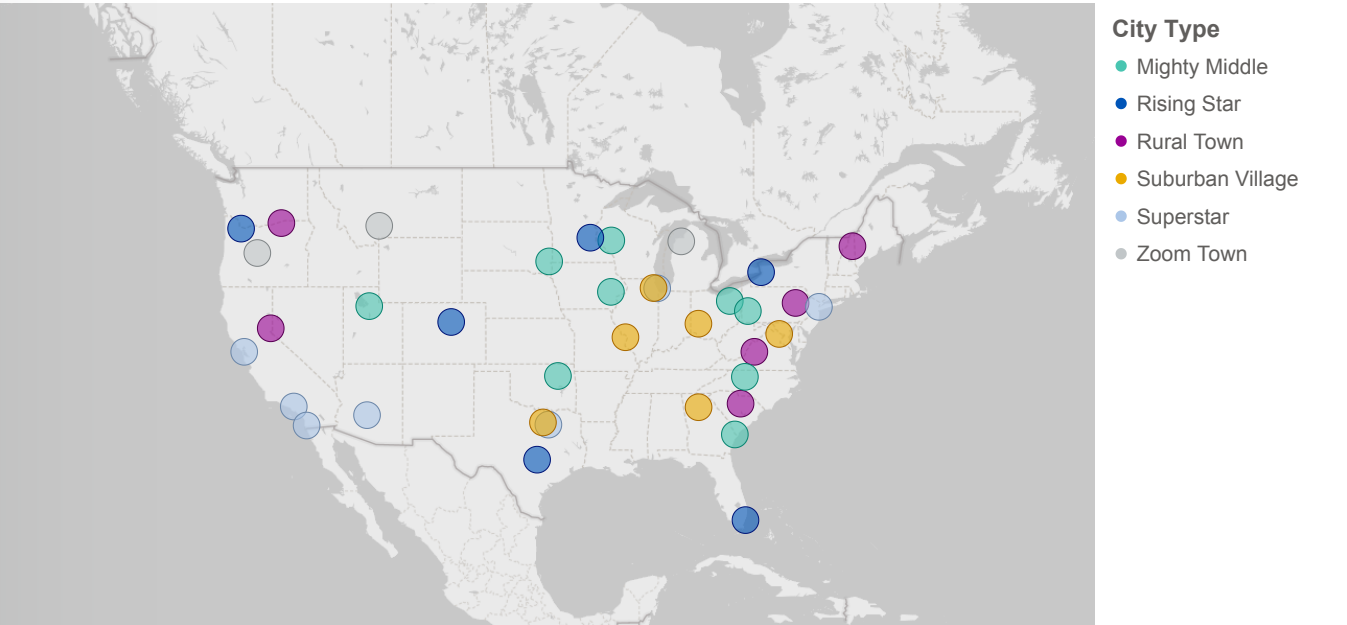
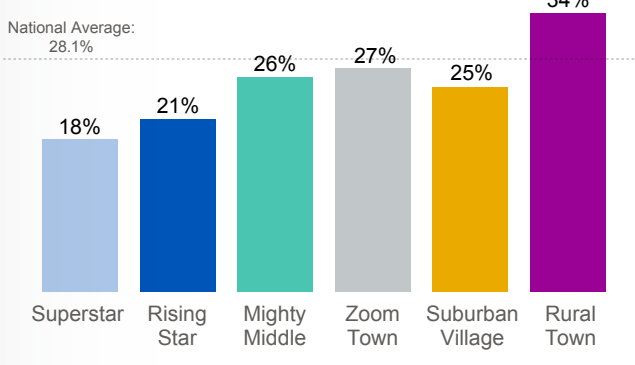


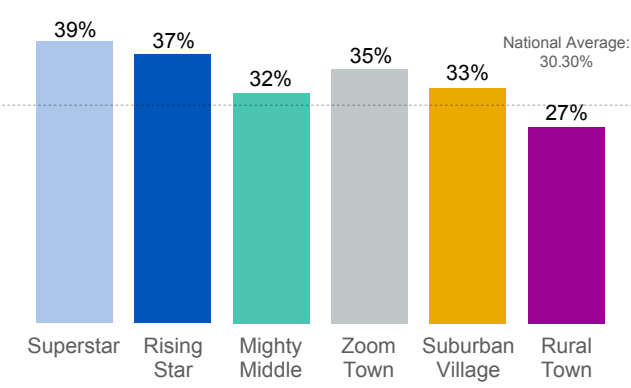
Figure 8. Percent of income spent on transportation



Note: The financial burden of transportation was highest in Rural Towns and Zoom Towns, and relatively lower in Superstars and Rising Stars, which often have higher population density and more public transit options.

Source: HUD GIS Helpdesk. (2020, July 7). *Location Affordability Index v.3*. Department of Housing and Urban Development. <https://hudgis-hud.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/location-affordability-index-v-3/explore>

Figure 9. Percent of occupied housing units with excessive housing cost (30% or more of income)

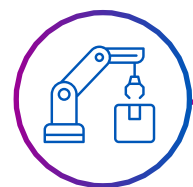


Note: Housing costs were a burden on a high number of residents across the typologies, reflecting rising housing costs across the country in cities of all types

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *American Community Survey 2016-2020 5-Year Data Release*. [Dataset]. www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs

FIVE DRIVERS WILL SHAPE THE NEXT 10 YEARS OF WORK

The state of work has changed rapidly in the last two years, making it difficult to predict what this next decade will hold. Despite these fluctuations, NLC research shows that five drivers will shape the future of work in cities in the coming decade:



The robots are coming, but the workers are not.



Flexibility of work will usher in the era of villages, in cities big and small.



The urban housing crisis will continue as demand exceeds supply.



Workers will demand the American Dream.



Climate change will be the defining challenge and economic opportunity for cities.



1. The robots are coming, but the workers are not

Advanced technology has cascading impacts on the workforce, both positive and negative. In the next 10 years, technology will both displace millions of American jobs and create millions more jobs that require specialized training. The workforce will be strained by a shortage of workers rather than a shortage of jobs.

Automation is creating more jobs than it is destroying

Advanced technology is already positively and negatively impacting workers. The pandemic created strong incentives to further automate work. At least 260,000 U.S. jobs have been displaced by automation since 2020, and recent research from MIT predicts robots could replace as many as 2 million more workers in manufacturing alone by 2025, with negative employment and wage effects and disparity by industry and geographic region.¹³ But automation and robots have created more jobs than they have destroyed.¹⁴ AI, robotics and automation have spurred new industries, occupations and breakthrough advances in everything from vaccine development to electric vehicle manufacturing and indoor farming. American production and manufacturing, due to increased productivity and continued decoupling

from China, stands to reimagine and reshore some of the 5 million jobs lost since 2000.¹⁵

Automation will intensify racial, regional and class inequality

Automation will affect workers unevenly. The “new automation” of advanced robotics and AI will widen the range of tasks and jobs machines can perform but has the potential to increase the scale of worker displacement. Workers who complement new automation and perform tasks beyond the abilities of machines will benefit, while workers performing tasks that are substituted by machines will be left out. Black Americans and rural workers are more likely to work in jobs that will be displaced by automation and are less likely to live in areas that will benefit from new opportunities.¹⁶ While McKinsey research suggests that most displaced workers will stay in their occupational category, and only about 9 percent will have to find a new line of work entirely, America’s workforce will need practical skills matching, training programs and a 21st-century social infrastructure. Otherwise, this recasting and shift of work will devastate millions of workers, families and local communities, further exacerbating racial, class and regional inequalities.¹⁷

Labor shortage will persist and accelerate automation

The trend toward automation will continue alongside labor shortages across all industries and occupations. America is graying, with the population over age 65 expected to increase from 16 percent today to more than 21 percent by the end of the decade.¹⁸ At the same time, the U.S. population growth rate is currently at an all-time low due to a record

low birth rate of 1.6 and a sharp decrease in net immigration, which declined from 1 million new Americans per year in 2016 to less than 250,000 every year since.¹⁹ If these trends continue, the incentive to automate jobs will remain strong — and wages and worker power will also increase. While the robots are indeed coming, American workers are poised to take advantage of the benefits of automation — if city leaders are strategic.



2. Flexibility of work will usher in the era of villages, in cities big and small

The rise of Superstar Cities defined the first two decades of the 21st century. This next decade will be defined by increased flexibility in where, how and when workers work and the rise of walkable villages in cities of all sizes.

Decentralized urbanization will continue across all cities

Today half of the world’s population lives in urban areas. The United Nations predicts that this figure will be nearly two-thirds by 2050.²⁰ During the last decade, flourishing Superstar Cities became more connected with each other and less connected with regional and smaller cities.²¹ Superstar Cities, and specifically their central business districts, became centers of talent, opportunity and social capital. While many predicted the COVID-19 pandemic would spell the end of cities entirely, instead it catalyzed a massive migratory rebalancing within and across cities. Recent Brookings research shows how Superstar cities and many Mighty Middle cities saw total population decline in the immediate aftershock of the pandemic. However, more recent LinkedIn data shows that these cities have rebounded in 2022.²² Suburban Villages and Rural Towns in proximity to those cities grew as residents who wanted to remain nearby sought more space to live and work. Zoom Towns and Rising Stars in the Sun Belt and Suburban Villages and Mighty

Middle cities boomed as newly remote workers, who could choose to live anywhere, sought more amenities, lower cost of living and higher quality of life.²³ Patterns of urbanization today are shaped by a reimagining of where and how work is done, a decentralizing economy and increasingly digital and flexible work.

Increased flexibility will move the workforce and economic life into neighborhoods

While the pandemic catalyzed a national transition to remote work, this shift was already a decade in the making. Many workers no longer need an office to do their work and do not want to go back to commuting. According to the Federal Reserve’s most recent survey of households, 53 percent of workers said they work remotely or could do their work remotely if their employer allowed them.²⁴ Recent studies have found that 89 percent of people said commuting was the reason they preferred to work remotely, and cities with shorter commutes had higher rates of returning to the office than cities with long commutes, suggesting the strain of long commutes from downtown offices to affordable housing might be coming to an end.²⁵ In fact, 64 percent of remote workers would consider looking for a new job if they were forced back to the office every day.²⁶

“MY ADVICE TO CITY LEADERS WOULD BE TO SURF THE WAVE. DON’T BE KING CANUTE SCREAMING AT THE WAVE TO STOP.”

- DEREK THOMPSON, STAFF WRITER, THE ATLANTIC

While new norms are still evolving, many workers are likely to work a hybrid schedule, splitting their work time between the office and their home.²⁷ Organizations will begin to be more strategic about how, when and why they bring teams together to reimagine offices or offsite venues. Work will increasingly be done remotely and asynchronously, but culture and strategy will be created together in person, and collaboration and innovation will be improved through in person engagement.²⁸ This structural change will not just impact remote workers, it will require changes to the built environment. Flexible

work means workers will spend more time and a greater share of their income in the neighborhood where they live, increasing demand for new and existing neighborhood retail, restaurants, coffee shops, coworking spaces and childcare centers. It could also create the conditions for displacement and siloed neighborhoods of high opportunity and low opportunity, so cities will need to invest in anti-displacement strategies, transit and housing across all neighborhoods to ensure every neighborhood is a place of community and inclusive opportunity.²⁹ The era of villages in cities big and small has arrived.³⁰



3. The urban housing crisis will continue as demand exceeds supply

In the next decade the housing crisis will persist as demand exceeds the supply of affordable rental and owner-occupied housing for workers across income levels. Workers, employers and cities themselves are hurt by high housing costs, as labor shortages are partially spurred by a lack of proximate affordable housing.

Lack of urban housing supply is driving the affordability crisis

In 2022 the median home price in 481 American cities reached \$1 million, tripling in one year. According to the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard, 30 percent of all households are housing cost-burdened.³¹ Three major supply-side factors have contributed to this shortage: (1) zoning policies that make it difficult to build dense multi-family homes; (2) the high cost of labor, materials

and land; (3) and the fear of overbuilding in the aftermath of the Great Recession.³² These forces left America about 3.8 million homes short of meeting the post-2020 tsunami of demand catalyzed by first-time home buyers and migration enabled by remote work.³³

Housing crisis will persist and exacerbate inequality without intervention

City leaders all over the country are actively reforming zoning codes to encourage density and housing of all types. Housing construction for both single-family and multi-family housing are at their highest rate since 1973, but supply is primarily being added at the upper end of the market. Increased demand for housing in already high-demand neighborhoods can lead to displacement and further social racial inequality.³⁴

“HENRY GEORGE HAD IT RIGHT IN THE 1860S. THE WORLD IS DIVIDED INTO THREE CLASSES: CAPITALISTS, LABORER AND LANDLORDS. WHO TAKES ALL THE SURPLUS? THE LANDLORDS. WE’VE CREATED AN ECONOMY OF WORK WHERE ALL THE SURPLUS OF OUR LABOR IS GOING TO THE DIRT.”

- RICHARD FLORIDA, CREATIVE CLASS GROUP



4. Workers will demand the American Dream

Strained by inequality, increased income variability and rising costs of housing and childcare, an increasingly powerful workforce will demand a new social infrastructure. Cities are leading the way in creating or convening innovative solutions for a more resilient workforce.

Shrinking middle class, growing household burdens and increased income instability

If current patterns continue, inequality is going to worsen, and the middle class will continue to shrink. The percentage of wages earned by middle-income workers in America shrunk from 62 percent in 1970 to 42 percent in 2020 and is expected to continue declining.³⁵ A growing number of workers are likely to experience income variability and decreased benefits as the percentage of contract-based and on-demand alternative work arrangements increase from about one-third of the workforce today to over half the workforce by 2030. The costs of housing and childcare are unsustainably high. At a time when only 68 percent of American adults say they could cover an unexpected expense of \$400, the balance sheet for American workers is increasingly precarious — and disproportionately so for people of color, rural workers and women.³⁶

Rising worker power and popular support for a new social infrastructure

Worker power has decreased over the last four decades, and unionization is at an all-time low. Nevertheless, since 2020 worker power has climbed — a trend that may continue as employers compete for talent and worker mobility increases, enabling workers to seek better protections and benefits by changing jobs or through organizing.³⁷ Recent polling suggests that 70 percent of Americans support paid parental leave for both parents, and more than 80 percent of Americans support government support for childcare and pre-K. Support for guaranteed income has increased fivefold in the last decade, with more than 55 percent of Americans currently in favor.³⁸ The combination of these forces will create the potential for benefits competition from employers and state and local governments alike. Building this social infrastructure will likely happen as a competing marketplace of solutions and pilots are generated at the local and state level, along with new forms of worker guilds and organized labor. Entrepreneurial city leaders will begin to build new social infrastructure in this decade to meet the challenge of growing inequality and support the needs of workers.



5. Climate change will be the defining challenge and economic opportunity for cities

Running out of time to decarbonize

As the IPCC has repeatedly warned, the 2020s are the last decade to take action to avert the worst consequences of climate change.³⁹ Cities are responsible for 75 percent of all CO2 emissions, primarily from transportation and buildings. According to a recent Harvard survey, more than 75 percent of Americans said they have experienced extreme weather in the last five years, and most did not receive money from the federal government to address the impact.⁴⁰ Cities are at the center of the climate debate both in contributing to the scale of the problem and in experiencing its effects, so city leaders must lead the transformation into a sustainable economy.

Cities stand to create millions of jobs

The climate crisis is also a climate opportunity, and cities are already leading with action. A growing movement to electrify, decarbonize and transition cities to 24/7 carbon-free energy is projected to create 25 million new jobs in the next 10 years.⁴¹ LinkedIn's 2022 Green Skills

Report found that the top five fastest growing green jobs are sustainability manager, wind turbine technician, solar consultant, ecologist, and environmental health and safety specialist.⁴² Skills associated with sustainability and climate change will be in demand across industries. In Los Angeles alone, the clean tech economy already employs more people than total coal jobs in the U.S. and is expected to grow to 600,000 jobs by 2050.⁴³ Hundreds of cities have launched Community Choice Aggregation programs to procure clean power on behalf of their communities, creating good green jobs while decarbonizing their local economies.⁴⁴

City leaders must act now

It will require courageous and entrepreneurial city leaders to electrify and decarbonize their local economies. Leaders of American cities must meet their residents' needs and protect cities from environmental harm while building the momentum to create new industries, employment opportunities, networks and solutions to meet these urgent, existential challenges.

“WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY IN THIS NEXT DECADE TO FOCUS NOT ONLY ON THE QUANTITY OF JOBS BUT THE QUALITY OF JOBS.”

- RACHEL KORBERG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE FAMILIES AND WORKERS FUND

SO WHAT CAN CITIES DO?

The future of work will be defined by entrepreneurial city leaders. The strategies and case studies outlined in this section showcase mayors and city leaders who turned bold visions for their city into actionable plans with clear goals, project owners and community voice. Many of the challenges cities face, and the strategies outlined in this report, require city leaders to embrace bold ideas, allow for agility and adaptability, and test innovative

solutions through policy, programs and public-private partnerships. This section provides guidance for how city leaders can lead their communities across **four areas of action: opportunity, talent, place and social infrastructure**. As conveners, employers and policymakers, cities can take entrepreneurial steps to successfully navigate the changing nature of work and build inclusive centers of opportunity and community for years to come.

Four Areas of Action



Opportunity

Bring economic development into the 21st century

- Lead local employers to develop inclusive opportunity
- Create a vibrant and inclusive startup and innovation ecosystem
- Connect local talent to remote opportunity



Talent

Prepare your workforce to meet the moment

- Unleash your existing talent
- Teach students 21st-century skills
- Support paid internships and apprenticeships for early and midcareer workers
- Support effective early and midcareer training programs



Place

Cities for people

- Create a city of villages
- Think big about walkable outdoor destinations
- Build more housing



Social infrastructure

Create a more equitable, resilient and dynamic workforce

- Lead by example on good jobs
- Support universal family leave and childcare
- Streamline all locally administered benefits to be more like guaranteed income



Opportunity: Bring economic development into the 21st century

Economic development in cities is evolving beyond landing commercial real estate deals and attracting big corporate headquarters. As employers, purchasers and conveners, cities are positioned to cultivate holistic economic ecosystems that sustain inclusive entrepreneurship and opportunity while attracting talent and jobs, not just individual firms. An undersupply of young, skilled workers

raises concern for the future growth and productivity for city workforces. To fill potentially thousands of job openings available to workers at all education levels, cities can prioritize jobs in high-opportunity jobs and industries. City leaders need to lead local employers to develop inclusive opportunity, create a vibrant startup and innovation ecosystem, and connect local talent with remote opportunity.⁴⁵



Figure 10. Highest growth, high opportunity jobs by occupation

Occupation	Projected 2020-2030 Growth	Median Occupation Wage	Percent Difference Between Median Wage and Job Zone
Airline pilots, copilots, and flight engineers	14%	\$202,180	152%
Nurse anesthetists	13%	\$195,610	116%
Computer and information systems managers	11%	\$159,010	98%
Dentists, general	8%	\$160,370	77%
Commercial pilots	11%	\$99,640	74%
Physicists	9%	\$152,430	69%
Marketing managers	10%	\$135,030	68%
Financial managers	17%	\$131,710	64%
Petroleum engineers	8%	\$130,850	63%
Sales managers	7%	\$127,490	59%
Advertising and promotions managers	10%	\$127,150	58%
Human resources managers	9%	\$126,230	57%
Aerospace engineers	8%	\$122,270	52%
Training and development managers	11%	\$120,130	50%
Flight attendants	30%	\$61,640	49%
Millwrights	10%	\$60,330	46%
Radiation therapists	9%	\$82,790	45%
Food service managers	15%	\$59,440	44%
Captains, mates, and pilots of water vessels	14%	\$81,640	43%
Lawyers	9%	\$127,990	42%

See Appendix, page 67 for more information about high opportunity jobs.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2021). *Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics*. [Dataset]. www.bls.gov/oes/#data; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2020). *Occupational projections and worker characteristics*. [Dataset]. www.bls.gov/emp/occupational-projections-and-characteristics.htm; LinkUp. (2021). *Job Market Data*. [Dataset]. www.linkup.com/data

Lead local employers to develop inclusive opportunity

City leaders should use their convening power to engage a diverse coalition of employers, educational institutions and stakeholders to co-create priorities for addressing historic employment and wealth inequalities. By engaging all stakeholders — including employers, workforce development boards, chambers of commerce, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions and community leaders — cities can foster inclusive and advantageous economic opportunity and growth. City leaders should work to convene diverse coalitions that co-create strategic economic development and innovation cluster goals, hiring targets, procurement and vendor goals, and actionable plans that connect job seekers with potential employers.

David Fine, economic developer manager in Bozeman, MT, underscores “the importance

of human relationships and working in partnership to develop a virtuous cycle of high-quality jobs and a local pipeline of talent.” Bozeman city leaders convened and coordinated local startups and major companies in photonics, quantum computing and autonomous vehicle sectors along with Montana State University and the top-secret Applied Research Lab to establish hiring targets, custom associate’s degree programs and recruit strategy-aligned companies like Hyundai and Aurora.⁴⁶

Create a vibrant and inclusive startup and innovation ecosystem

A thriving and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem is built on people, partnerships and policy environments that encourage innovation. As conveners, cities can foster interactions between entrepreneurs, workers and entrepreneurship support

organizations. As connectors, cities can catalyze partnerships and ideation between startups, research institutions and regional industry leaders.

Cities must be explicit in their communication to create a startup- and innovation-friendly culture in which policies do not conflict with the economic ecosystem they want to create. An entrepreneurial city leader should invite entrepreneurs in their community and around the world to help their city imagine and build the future. Ecosystems need to be nurtured and maintained, so city leaders should build a presence in the community to enhance access, facilitate inclusive placemaking and offer ongoing capital and business support services for entrepreneurs and underrepresented community members by leveraging city hall’s convening power.



“CITY LEADERS SHOULD BE ASKING THEMSELVES EVERY DAY: HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR CITY A LABORATORY FOR THE PEOPLE WHO ARE TRYING TO CREATE THE FUTURE?”

- BRYAN WALSH, EDITOR OF FUTURE PERFECT @ VOX

RISE OF THE REST CREATED A PLAYBOOK THAT HAS HELPED HUNDREDS OF AMERICAN CITIES DEVELOP THEIR INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS.

<https://revolution.com/playbook/file/rotr2018ecosystemplaybook.pdf>

CHECK OUT NLC’S ROADMAP TO INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR MORE INFORMATION.

www.nlc.org/future-of-cities-roadmap



Tulsa, OK

Aiming high with an entrepreneurial mayor in Tulsa, OK

How Tulsa, OK, became globally competitive through governance and partnerships to strengthen its inclusivity, opportunity and community

When G. T. Bynum ran for mayor in 2016, he was motivated by the belief that Tulsa was “underachieving as a community because they were not aiming high.” Once elected, Mayor Bynum got to work to “make Tulsa a globally competitive city.” Tulsa focused on ensuring inclusive, equitable opportunity for all Tulsans:

Implemented the New Tulsans Initiative

to better serve and celebrate migrant communities through monthly citizenship ceremonies, language support in ESL courses and connecting job seekers with employment and training.

Invested in public space improvements to attract new workers. For Mayor Bynum, Tulsa’s

Gathering Place “is not a trophy park. It is a reminder that you can interact with people in different ways to create civil discourse.”

Launched Tulsa Remote to attract remote workers, bringing in more than 1,200 new residents by offering \$10,000 relocation payments, curated housing support and access to coworking spaces.⁴⁷ Tulsa Remote contributed to \$62 million in new local earnings in 2021 and one new job created in Tulsa for every two remote workers.

Creating a strategic vision and transparent evaluations

Tulsa has prioritized community engagement and data-informed practices to co-create a

vision of the future. In 2018, the city worked with the Rockefeller Foundation to create the Resilience Strategy — a plan of action for building an inclusive, equitable city, informed by continuous community feedback.⁴⁸ In 2020, Tulsa was awarded a What Works Cities Certification for its Urban Data Pioneers Program.⁴⁹ This work pairs residents with city employees to analyze data to identify and explore solutions to key challenges and present policy recommendations. Tulsa publishes annual evaluations of the city’s progress toward its objectives that are a public reminder of all the work ahead.

Considering new governance models

The release of Tulsa’s 2018 plan coincided with the establishment of the Mayor’s Office of Resilience and Equity, tasked with implementing 41 tangible actions within the plan. In 2021, Tulsa restructured the Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity into the more streamlined Partner Tulsa, which combines five public entities into a single organization that is chaired by the mayor and leads community and economic development initiatives.

Partnering with philanthropy to amplify the impact of city efforts

Through its public-private partnerships, Tulsa has deepened the impact of its work. The George Kaiser Family Foundation has supported and funded many major citywide

projects, including the Gathering Place and Tulsa Remote. Tulsa has partnered with Bloomberg Philanthropies, receiving a \$1 million award for its winning 2018 public art for the “Greenwood Initiative,” honoring the site of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre.⁵⁰

Building community trust through efficient resource management

Mayor Bynum attributes success for Tulsa’s ambitious goals to building community trust through specific action plans, extensive public engagement and demonstrating progress on core government functions. A ballot initiative to construct a lake in the Arkansas River, a project discussed since 1964, passed with widespread approval because of extensive public engagement and more than 100 town hall meetings. On June 29, 2022, Tulsa approved the largest budget in city history of \$945 million, an 18.2 percent increase from FY22, enabling the city to think big about how to support residents today and tomorrow.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Implementing ambitious projects requires a strategic vision and transparent evaluations, considering new governance models, partnering with philanthropy to amplify the impact of city efforts and building community trust through efficient resource management.



Denver, CO

Becoming a startup city in Denver, CO

How Denver fosters a thriving economic ecosystem by building up communities, hosting events and supporting entrepreneurs

Denver, CO, is consistently ranked among leading U.S. and international cities for startup ecosystems.⁵¹ Denver is home to more than 1,000 active startups and a strong network of over 6,000 angel investors.⁵² The tech labor force has grown by 23.8 percent since 2018 and been a major contributor to Denver's job growth.⁵³ Job seekers, employees, entrepreneurs and businesses are drawn to Denver because of its amenities and quality of life, low cost of living, public support for entrepreneurship and thriving private-sector business ecosystem.⁵⁴

Building community by hosting collaborative events

Denver Startup Week attracts more than 20,000 attendees annually and hosts more than 359 events with educational

workshops, keynotes and networking events for entrepreneurs.⁵⁵ Events focus on mingling among business leaders, job seekers and investors, and encourage discussions on new challenges and the trading of expertise to drive productivity, new businesses and collaborative innovation.⁵⁶ The City of Denver acts as a convener, connecting startups to businesses as well as job seekers and entrepreneurs to the resources they need to thrive.

Helping jump-start businesses and continuing support

The City of Denver's Economic Development and Opportunity office offers a startup checklist in seven languages for first-time founders, business planning support, free online resources and an expansive training

and wage subsidy program that enables startups to source and hire talent quickly.⁵⁷ The city's Microlending Program provides loans of up to \$50,000 to small businesses and entrepreneurs who lack access to traditional financial resources.⁵⁸ The Denver Small Business Development Center Network provides technical assistance to help navigate the permitting, regulatory and legal hurdles to starting a business.⁵⁹ Public initiatives like these connect entrepreneurs with the necessary resources to build, grow and thrive in Denver's competitive business ecosystem.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

A thriving ecosystem can enable local economic development. Connecting established business leaders to small businesses and entrepreneurs, providing financial support and helping entrepreneurs navigate complex legal processes prepares a community for what is next.

Working with the private sector to incorporate their expertise

The 9-month CiviCO Leadership Academy has graduated more than 300 executives and business leaders from the public, private and nonprofit sectors focused on civic challenges.⁶⁰ The Colorado Governors Fellowship Program for mid- to senior career executives places these leaders directly into government positions to "breathe new life into government challenges."⁶¹

Connect local talent to remote opportunity

City economic development teams have an opportunity to attract remote jobs and workers in this decade. The first wave of remote work has been defined by employed workers becoming mobile, but the next wave can be defined by opportunity becoming mobile.

City leaders in Rural Towns and Mighty Middle cities can create programs and incentives to attract remote workers. The Topeka Relocation Initiative offers remote workers \$10,000 if they buy a home. The Savannah Technology Workforce Incentive reimburses moving expenses for remote tech workers. Tulsa Remote offers moving reimbursement, free membership in the local coworking space, support with finding housing, and curated networking and social events to integrate remote workers into the local economy and community.⁶²

City leaders should leverage federal infrastructure funding to invest in high-speed broadband internet and build out programs to train and match local talent for remote opportunities. Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program has done this to great effect with cities and towns across 23 mountain counties: Teleworks USA has matched 3,400 eastern Kentuckians with remote opportunities at global and national employers, resulting in over \$76 million in new wages being brought into the region.⁶³

Although Rural Towns, Suburban Villages and Mighty Middle cities experienced varying degrees of talent migration to Superstar cities during the last 20 years, city leaders now have an opportunity to tap into the social capital of their hometown diaspora. City leaders should leverage social and professional networks to map and engage those who are employed at national and global companies, calling on them to either return home or to connect local talent with good remote jobs at their companies.



Hometown diaspora: People who left their hometowns (often Rural Towns, Mighty Middles and Suburban Villages) to seek opportunity and settled in high-opportunity cities (often Superstars and Rising Stars) who can now help connect early and midcareer workers in their hometown with good remote jobs at their companies or organizations

Remote work does not always stay remote. City leaders should continue their traditional economic development efforts of attracting companies but can target specific teams or start with a few remote jobs to land and expand relationships with employers rather than convincing an entire company to relocate. In Nashville, TN, Lyft hired so many remote workers that it decided to build a satellite office in the city, which has created more than 750 good jobs for local residents.⁶⁴



Talent: Prepare your workforce to meet the moment

In the coming decade, American cities will face a shortage of qualified workers for good jobs. Some workers have the right skills but the wrong credentials. Some workers have transferable skills but need career pathways or additional job-specific training. Some workers will simply need to be trained. City leaders will need to be entrepreneurial to prepare their local workforce for the new economy by unleashing existing talent, teaching high school students' 21st-century skills and supporting paid internships and outcomes-based training programs for early and midcareer workers.

Unleash your existing talent

There is a gap between worker accreditations and skills required by employers.

Approximately 40 percent of American workers have a college degree, but 70 percent of new jobs require them. Cities should lead by example and encourage local employers to follow by removing college degree requirements from job applications and actively recruiting workers into gateway jobs that provide entry points into organizations. Cities have an important market- and culture-making capacity through their own hiring and vendor policies. When paired with the communications platform of the mayor and other city leaders, cities can provide workers the opportunity to do a job they already have the skills to do, a significant step in filling good jobs and narrowing the talent gap.

Pair qualified workers with opportunity jobs

In March 2022, the State of Maryland, supported by Opportunity@Work, adopted a first in the nation workforce development program to recruit STARs (skilled through alternative routes), qualified workers who do not hold college degrees but have developed valuable skills through other avenues, to state government jobs.⁶⁵ The program succeeded in filling jobs and also built momentum for hiring STARs in other organizations. “For STARs to hear directly from their governor, ‘We recognize it’s hard out there for you STAR. Come work for the state,’ STARs felt valued, they felt proud,” says Opportunity@Work director Kate Naranjo. Local governments can play a powerful role in demonstrating how to utilize STARs for existing roles.

Teach students 21st-century skills

Today’s students will become tomorrow’s workforce and innovators. With the help of federal Perkins Act funding, many cities are already supporting career and technical education opportunities in a variety of fields for students to learn the necessary skills to participate in and shape the future of work.⁶⁶

In Fresno, CA, the Patino School of Entrepreneurship prepares high school students to turn new ideas into businesses. Likewise, in Phoenix, AZ, more than 37,000 students across 49 public high schools have benefited from Western Maricopa Education Center’s innovative career and technical education programs. Entrepreneurial city leaders across the country should take similar action in

convening or creating programs that prepare students for high-growth opportunities.

Support paid internships and apprenticeships for early and midcareer workers

Cities should support paid fellowships and internships for early and midcareer workers to develop on-the-job training and youth employment programs that provide young people pathways into career opportunities while significantly lowering crime.⁶⁷ While about 40 percent of internships are unpaid — and thus inaccessible to underserved communities — internship experience is considered a prerequisite by many employers. Some cities are shifting this status quo, and employers are following suit.

San Diego, CA, utilized state funding to offer underserved young people paid internships and workforce training opportunities in city government.⁶⁸ Shift, a national nonprofit, provides career advancement for military members with placements into fellowships at Fortune 500 companies and technology startups in their last three months of military service.⁶⁹ Though there is no commitment required of employers, approximately 87 percent of Shift fellows are hired full time by the host employer. City leaders who take similar actions will benefit both job seekers and employers by fostering a qualified and productive workforce, growing their city’s economic ecosystems.

Support effective early and midcareer training programs

Most workers who are entering or are already in the workforce do not have time for speculative training or educational programs. They are either in a job and want to train for a career, have lost their job and need to transition to a new occupation or want to strategically improve their skills to remain competitive in their current occupation. Cities can coordinate, amplify and even fund strategic training pathways for early and midcareer workers through train-in-place programs with employers, and labor unions can develop outcomes-based skills programs by partnering with community colleges and boot camps that help match talent to real opportunity.



In Los Angeles, CA, Mayor Garcetti launched the Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator, which offers free technical training, industry-recognized certifications, career coaching, case management and job retention services to help underrepresented groups succeed in the green economy.⁷⁰ The White House Talent Pipeline Challenge allocates over \$800 million for equitable workforce development and calls on cities to serve as regional convenors to build partnerships between employers, community organizations and local training providers.⁷¹

“AMERICANS FROM DIVERSE EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUNDS CAN EXCEL IN THESE CAREERS, WITH THE RIGHT PLAYBOOKS FOR RETRAINING: A FOCUS ON HIGH-DEMAND SKILLS, IMPACTFUL TECHNICAL TRAINING AND COACHING THROUGHOUT THE TRANSITION.”

— REBEKAH ROMBOM, CHIEF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, FLATIRON SCHOOL



Training talent in San Antonio, TX

How San Antonio supports early and midcareer workers and second-chance job seekers to foster economic growth and inclusivity

The City of San Antonio, TX, and Bexar County have prepared for the future of work by focusing on their existing workforce. San Antonio has explored increasing opportunities through early education programs that give students necessary skills, industry partnerships for retraining and train-in-place programs for midcareer workers and expansion of their talent pool by recognizing the untapped potential of overlooked demographics. The city funded its workforce development programs through a ballot initiative that passed a 1/8th cent sales tax expected to generate \$38.5 million over four years to train 10,000 residents without college degrees and 60,000 unemployed residents.⁷²

Creating new models for high school and early career education

The San Antonio Independent School District created six Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools, open-enrollment schools that enable students to simultaneously earn a high school diploma and an associate degree and/or certification.⁷³ Each campus specializes in a specific industry, including engineering, cybersecurity, aerospace, construction and energy. Industry partners offer curriculum support, career mentoring and paid internships to enrolled students.⁷⁴ These partners determine the skills qualifications needed for specific jobs in their sector.

Supporting midcareer training that actually works

The Manufacturing Institute's Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (FAME) is a nationwide network that provides skills training and accreditations. In San Antonio, the Manufacturing Institute identifies individuals interested in upskilling and conducts aptitude assessments to match them with relevant programs. Participants enter nine-week accelerated programs where they study in classrooms for two days and apply their learning on the job three days a week. The FAME curriculum incorporates soft skills training to help participants to thrive in the workplace.

Growing an inclusive talent pool by elevating diversity, equity and inclusion

Bexar County partnered with the Manufacturing Institute and the nonprofit Stand Together to establish a pilot program for second-chance hiring of people with a criminal record. They hosted a job fair with 64 companies for 3,000 job seekers.⁷⁵ Successful second-chance applicants are hired directly by companies and receive a weeklong orientation to basic manufacturing before starting work. Partner organizations also help participants access transportation and childcare, essential to maintaining their jobs.

Second-chance hiring is the practice of hiring individuals who have a criminal record.⁷⁶

One in four Americans currently possess a criminal record. Studies show that employment is the most significant factor in lowering rearrest and reincarceration rates, yet the unemployment rate for people in their first year out of jail or prison is 75 percent.⁷⁷ Research shows that employees with past convictions stay longer and advance faster than their peers.⁷⁸ Second-chance hiring practices reduce barriers to employment and help break the cycle of incarceration while benefiting businesses by providing high-quality talent.⁷⁹



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Cities can expand their talent pool and ensure individuals have tangible, relevant skills by developing training programs that prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion to meet workers' needs and connect job seekers with employers. Cities should develop these programs in partnership with established employers, K-12 schools and local colleges, nonprofits and training organizations to ensure their workforce is ready for the future of work.



Place: Cities for people

Workers have more freedom than ever to live where they want, independent of where their employer is located. The rise of remote work, the decline of the commute and the shift of daily life to neighborhoods provide both the opportunity and the urgency to reimagine and redesign our cities for people rather than cars. To attract jobs and talent, cities must now focus on creating walkable, affordable neighborhoods to grow local economies and strengthen communities.

Create a city of villages

Local leaders have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to redesign our urban areas into 15-minute cities, decentralized walkable villages where residents can work, live and

play within a short walk or bike ride of their home. Entrepreneurial city leaders should use their planning, zoning and convening authorities to enable and encourage walkable mixed-use villages in all neighborhood types. Salt Lake City, UT, has already converted select residential intersections into micro main streets with restaurants, coffee shops, grocery stores and retail — a potential blueprint for Rising Star and Mighty Middle cities. Suburban Villages can convert abandoned strip malls or shopping malls into mixed-use town squares or innovation districts like the transformation of Memorial City Mall into Memorial Town Square in Houston, TX, or the conversion of the former Westside Pavilion Mall into a Google office campus in Los Angeles, CA.⁸⁰

“CITY LEADERS NEED TO REFORM ANTIQUATED ZONING CODES TO ENABLE FLEXIBLE, ADAPTIVE AND MIXED USE — SO THEIR COMMUNITIES CAN GET CREATIVE AND BUILD HOUSING, RESTAURANTS, OFFICE, RETAIL, EXPERIENCES AND POP-UPS WHERE PEOPLE ACTUALLY WANT AND NEED THEM.”

– DIANE HOSKINS, CO-CEO, GENSLER

“CITY LEADERS HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DREAM AND REIMAGINE THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE OF THEIR CITIES THROUGH BIG AND SMALL INNOVATIONS THAT WILL SPUR INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY.”

– KATE WITTELS, PARTNER, HR&A ADVISORS

Being agile and adaptable is critical to supporting a city's economic growth. Cities should reform zoning and permitting policies to be responsive to changing needs and support innovations and experimentation as demonstrated throughout the pandemic — from outdoor dining streeteries and restaurant pop-ups to temporary exhibits in parking lots and rooftops, and microparks in underutilized spaces.

These measures will not only aid existing businesses but attract entrepreneurs and actively foster the development of city villages.





Thoughtful planning in Salt Lake City, UT

How Salt Lake City created the first explicitly planned 15-minute city in the U.S.

The Point, a brownfield development just outside of Salt Lake City, UT, is creating a walkable city of villages from scratch.

Envisioning walkable cities for people

In 2018 the Utah State Legislature created The Point of the Mountain State Land Authority.⁸¹ In 2021 its board approved plans for Utah's first publicly sponsored development that does not prioritize cars, and the first explicitly planned 15-minute city in the U.S.⁸² Envisioned as a model live-work community, The Point is projected to bring 40,000 high-paying, cutting-edge jobs, 7,400 residential units and 140 acres of greenspace, retail space and amenities. The goal is to create an innovation community that attracts the best talent

in the world while demonstrating that cities can grow in more thoughtful ways.

Directly engaging the community

The Mountain State Land Authority's executive director Alan Matheson is most proud of the community engagement process and extensive values research that led to The Point's creation. Ten thousand Utahans contributed their thoughts through surveys, interviews and town halls, which were incorporated directly into the approved master plan.

Encouraging carbon-free development that addresses resident's needs

The Point is envisioned as a one-car community where cars are not prohibited

but public spaces are designed to reduce the need for cars. The Point hopes to provide an example of how cities can encourage individuals to drive less through "commitment to walkability, to open space and to rethinking their street design."⁸³ However, plans currently include 40,000 parking spaces, a contradiction that highlights the challenge of planning for low-car cities when people still demand cars.⁸⁴

Using public land for ambitious projects

The Point will occupy a 600-acre state-owned plot of land between Salt Lake City and Provo that was formerly a prison. Development planning is led by the Mountain State Land Authority's 11-member board, which is composed of state legislators, local elected officials and business leaders and is accountable to the state legislature.⁸⁵ Executive director Matheson attributes the

ability to achieve ambitious car-free goals to the use of state-owned land, freeing them from the profit models of private developers. Yet the Authority is obligated to show that "it is a project that people want and it can deliver financial returns." Directly engaging the community and designing ambitious masterplans for car-light working and living will enable The Point to be financially feasible and accepted by the community and legislature.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Cities can envision and realize ambitious plans to reduce car dependency, provide services and amenities in underserved neighborhoods and ensure residents' needs are met in close proximity to their home.



Creating complete neighborhoods in Portland, OR

How Portland is implementing reforms to improve access to services, amenities and work in existing neighborhoods

In 2015, the Portland Climate Action Plan established the 2030 Complete Neighborhoods objective — calling for 90 percent of Portland residents to be able to easily walk or bicycle to meet all basic daily, nonwork needs and prioritizing underserved neighborhoods.⁸⁶ In complete neighborhoods, the network of streets and sidewalks is interconnected, which makes travel safe and easy for people of all ages and abilities.⁸⁷ Recognizing that this investment can displace existing communities, Portland has actively invested in anti-displacement strategies and revised the data underlying its efforts.

Reforming zoning codes and regulatory processes

In 2020 Portland passed several zoning reforms to increase housing supply and improve regulatory processes and flexibility for developers while maintaining high-quality design standards. The Residential Infill Project increases the number of allowed units per lot, broadens allowable housing configurations (e.g., accessory dwelling units, duplexes, etc.) and removes requirements for off-street parking.⁸⁸ The Design Overlay Zones Amendment Project expedites the permitting of more multi-family and mixed-use projects, saving time

and money, and provides flexibility for design standards, helping architects meet requirements for affordable housing.

Prioritizing underserved neighborhoods

Portland conducted baseline studies to map existing walkable areas — analysis that emphasized the need to prioritize underserved, low-income neighborhoods. Portland combines opportunity mapping and residential displacement risk mapping to inform its Complete Neighborhoods Initiative.⁸⁹ Opportunity mapping identifies opportunity-rich communities, who has access to them and what is missing in opportunity-poor communities.

Evaluating where plans fall short

Despite the data-driven evaluation and prioritization of underserved communities, Portland's 2020 Gentrification Study and Displacement Risk map found an increased risk of displacement and continued loss of vulnerable populations between 2014 and 2019, trends the Complete Neighborhoods

Initiative aimed to reverse.⁹⁰ The study found flaws in the initiative's underlying data: It failed to incorporate housing affordability, diversity, cultural infrastructure or elements of social cohesion. Portland took action with its Anti-Displacement Action Plan and convened community coalitions to co-design workshops and policies focused on land use opportunities and priorities for achieving equitable, complete neighborhoods.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Cities must actively engage residents to determine their needs and prioritize those individuals who are often excluded from public participation processes. Data-driven resources like maps can identify underserved neighborhoods but must include multiple indicators of opportunity and risk because they shape how opportunity is defined and who has access to it.

Think big about walkable outdoor destinations

Though remote work has moved much of daily life back to neighborhoods, walkable outdoor destinations serve as citywide amenities that are essential to building a sense of shared place that attracts residents, workers, tourists and potential talent alike.

Cities large and small should leverage public-private partnerships, bond initiatives, philanthropic funding sources and funding made available from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to think big with their

riverfronts, ports, brownfields, abandoned rail lines and existing parks to create walkable outdoor destinations lined with multi-family housing, restaurants, retail, coffee shops and commercial offices spurring both social and economic vibrancy. In the early 2000s, community leaders in New York City came together with local government support to create the High Line by converting a 1.45-mile-long abandoned elevated railway into a public park. Today the High Line is visited by 5 million residents and visitors each year and is expected to generate about \$1 billion in new economic activity and \$500 million in tax revenue this decade.⁹¹



Build more housing

The single most important thing cities can do to positively impact the future of work is build dense, quality, affordable housing in high-opportunity places so workers can access good jobs and afford to remain in the community. At least 30 percent of the households in each of the 37 cities across all six typology cities we examined in this report are cost-burdened. Every city, big or small, should be taking every possible measure to build more housing. Zoning and the development process are two areas that are squarely within city leaders’ authority. Cities should reform antiquated zoning policies that for nearly a century have separated land uses, maximized parking supply and minimized housing supply, enabling systemic racism and divestment from Black and Indigenous communities.⁹²

Reform zoning to encourage multi-family housing

Cities should legalize and encourage housing types beyond single-family. Jenny Schuetz, senior fellow at Brookings Metro and author of *Fixer-Upper: How to Repair America’s Broken Housing System*, says the single most important action cities can take is to “stop making it illegal to build housing.” Conventional zoning policies artificially restrict housing supply by imposing low densities throughout the city, rather than increasing density in areas where it can be supported and integrated into existing neighborhoods through thoughtful design. Cities should allow increased density of lot sizes, eliminate parking requirements and legalize new housing forms such as row houses, duplexes, fourplexes, apartment buildings and accessory dwelling units.

CHECK OUT THESE NLC RESOURCES ON HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

www.nlc.org/resource/homeward-bound-the-road-to-affordable-housing
www.nlc.org/2020-housing-affordability



Diversifying funding in Buffalo, NY

How Buffalo uses public funds to spur private investment, preserve historic spaces and generate good jobs

Faced with declining population and loss of industry, the City of Buffalo, under the leadership of Mayor Byron Brown since 2005, has invested significantly in citywide regeneration strategies to spur private investment, create vibrant public spaces, preserve historic buildings, develop underutilized land and support development of new industries.

Using public funds to spur private investment

Buffalo strategically invests in public realm improvements that generate waterfront vibrancy for residents to enjoy and to encourage private investment in retail, hospitality and amenities to provide jobs and increase the long-term tax base. The 2014

Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, updated in 2019, aims to “make strategic public investments ... to encourage private development investments and generate long-term revenue.”⁹³ Public investment, including \$3 million from the city and \$10 million raised by the Chamber of Commerce from five area banks, spurred additional private investment that increased the total investment in downtown Buffalo to over \$3 billion.⁹⁴

Preserving and modernizing historic space

Buffalo’s Canal District is a reminder of the city’s long-standing connection to its waterfront, in both its industrial past and its forward-looking future. The Riverworks project is a multiphase redevelopment on

the site of a demolished grain silo, which offers multipurpose, year-round entertainment.⁹⁵ State and federal historic tax credits and the city’s gap-loan program, the Buffalo Building Reuse Program, make it financially feasible for developers to purchase and renovate empty buildings like this so long as they preserve their historic character.⁹⁶

Ensuring widespread benefits from economic development strategies

The Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus is a major employment hub founded by a consortium of seven universities and medical institutions. Universities and hospitals are key pillars of many cities’ economic development strategies because they have the potential to generate high levels of employment. However, many labor and community groups, particularly those representing low-income residents and communities of color, state they are left out of hiring processes for these anchor institutions and that their presence changes the neighborhood character, displacing existing residents.⁹⁷ Buffalo is working to ensure that all development comes with active investment in anti-displacement strategies co-created by existing residents.

Investing in underserved neighborhoods, transition spaces

While citywide investments and development have spurred economic development, job growth and public realm improvements, they often target new buildings, homes and walkable

amenities that cater to students, professors and hospital staff, increasing property values, changing the neighborhood character.⁹⁸ Buffalo is working to ensure that all parts of the city benefit from this work. The Niagara Street Gateway Project was intentionally designed to increase interactions between the campuses and residents, reestablish the waterfront vista, improve pedestrian access and safety, and open new spaces for urban development between downtown and the waterfront. Additionally, the East Side Corridor Economic Development Fund is a \$65 million public-private partnership to fund operations, programs, capacity building and community infrastructure in historically overlooked areas.⁹⁹



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Cities can make strategic large-scale investments in their built environment through regeneration projects that prioritize both economic development and widespread community benefits, investing public funds to spur private investment and partnering with anchor institutions to realize their goals. However, this work must include active investment in anti-displacement strategies and partnerships with local organizations that work with underrepresented populations to ensure that large-scale investment meets the needs of existing residents.

Get entrepreneurial with financing options and public-private partnership

Cities should utilize financial instruments to incentivize development of affordable housing. In partnership with their local developer community, cities should maximize use of state and federal housing support through Low Income Housing Tax Credits, Community Development Block Grants and the Home Investment Partnership Program to refurbish and build as much affordable housing as possible. City leaders can pursue an inclusionary housing policy and utilize community benefits agreements or tax increment financing to incentivize developers to build affordable housing. Where possible under city charter and state law, cities can get creative with community land trusts and housing trust funds to develop affordable housing, leverage housing vouchers as a source of income to support local workers or implement rent control as a short-term measure to keep workers and families in their homes until

developers are able to increase supply of rental housing.¹⁰⁰ Opportunities and talent are lost in places where workers cannot afford to live, so cities must prioritize housing in the near term.

Streamline development processes

Cities should streamline development approval processes to be fast, simple and predictable. In Boston, MA, a 2019 report found that only 14 percent of multi-family units were permitted by right, or followed current zoning and did not need special review. Today, Mayor Michelle Wu’s team suggests that a vast majority of development projects are not by right, making ad hoc, discretionary processes the norm. The city is working on reforming the zoning code to “set a series of guidelines that make sense in the urban fabric, offer more by right development to increase housing production and build in efficiency for developers while involving community voices earlier.” Establishing clear, consistent rules benefits both developers and the communities in need of more housing.

“WE NEED TO BE HONEST ABOUT THE HOUSING CRISIS OUR CITIES FACE. UNDER THESE CURRENT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, THE COST OF LAND, LABOR AND MATERIALS SIMPLY MAKES BUILDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT GOVERNMENT OR PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT.”

- CYNDY ANDRUS, MAYOR OF BOZEMAN, MT



Colorado Missing Middle Housing Authority

The State of Colorado is the ninth least affordable state for housing, facing a deficit of more than 225,000 units. Increasing housing prices mean that more than 315,000 households spend over 50 percent of their income on housing.¹⁰¹ The state leveraged federal ARPA funding by passing legislation that allocates \$400 million through loans and grants to build more housing. In June 2022, the legislature created the Middle-Income Housing Authority, responsible for acquiring, constructing, owning and financing affordable rental housing for middle-income residents. The Authority creates incentives for private developers to build and maintain housing for families making between 80 and 120 percent of the area’s income through municipal bonds, entering into public-private partnerships and providing tenant assistance.¹⁰²

One of the bill’s leading sponsors, Senator Jeff Bridges, says that its goal is “to make sure that the folks that are just earning an average wage here — your nurses, your teachers or firefighters — that they can afford to live in the communities where they work.”¹⁰³ The Colorado law makes clear the connection between the state’s workforce and workers’ ability to access affordable housing. It recognizes that language matters. Building support for this institution required the support of all workers — including those who are ineligible for other forms of government support.



Bozeman, MT

Relying on engagement in Bozeman, MT

How Bozeman uses intentional engagement to find housing solutions that work for new and existing residents

Bozeman, MT, a neighbor to Yellowstone National Park, has long experienced the struggle between preservation and use of its natural environments and urban areas. A wave of tourism began in the 1990s that coincided with a development boom in the 2000s. The COVID-19 pandemic brought an influx of new residents. Today, Bozeman is a Zoom Town, drawing many newly mobile remote workers interested in being closer to the benefits offered by Bozeman's great outdoors.

Diagnosing the source of challenges

The influx of new residents and wealth creates the dual challenge of designing Bozeman for growth while meeting

the needs of existing residents. Mayor Cyndy Andrus notes that population growth is not a new phenomenon but says, "What is new for us is the money, the wealth and the fast pace of development we're experiencing now."

Planning for gentle density and infill through good design where it can be supported

Bozeman has been intentional about its growth plan to accommodate its increasing population through infill development and gentle density, the allocation of higher density buildings in areas that can support it, such as around transit centers or commercial districts. The City's 2020 Growth Plan projects 27,000 new residents

by 2045 and emphasizes residential development with nearby commercial and workplace development.¹⁰⁴ Bozeman's Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District Plan was originally designed with extensive public involvement and revised in 2015 to allow larger high-rise development adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods. Mayor Andrus notes that the city has learned that designing public spaces is essential to ensure public buy-in. The city works with architects to ensure it is being thoughtful about bringing together the old and the new through appropriate transition spaces and compatibility with existing neighborhoods.

Negotiating with developers to promote local interests

In 2021, Bozeman City Commission approved the \$2.9 million sale of its former fire station to local developers to redevelop the property for middle-income housing, including a \$1.6 million in subsidy through tax increment financing.¹⁰⁵ The agreement stipulates the project must include at least 50 workforce housing units, targeted at people making no more than 120 percent of the area's median income. Bozeman used the sale of a disused building to negotiate with local developers and create a unique housing option downtown that might not have existed otherwise.¹⁰⁶

Asking the voters to approve specific plans

Like many cities, Bozeman is prevented from levying local taxes or sales taxes to offset new developments or fund the street, water and sewer infrastructure necessary to keep up with the growth. In 2021, Bozeman voters rejected a ballot referendum that would have established a tax to raise money for affordable housing. One commissioner raised residents' property tax fatigue as a source of the failure.¹⁰⁷ Mayor Andrus reflected, "Our lesson from the housing bond was that we were not specific enough about how we were going to spend the money." Community members needed to believe that "voting for affordable housing is voting for your neighbors, but it is also voting for yourself, for your kids' ability to afford a home in the place they grew up."



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Accommodating rapid population growth requires more housing, but drastic changes cannot happen overnight. They require careful consideration of how new development fits within existing neighborhoods, increasing density where it can be supported and being intentional about communicating the project's goals and how it applies to both new and existing residents.



Social infrastructure: Create a more equitable, resilient and dynamic workforce

While Americans wait for Congress to pass social infrastructure measures, city leaders can lead by example and enact new policies to create a more equitable, resilient and dynamic workforce.

Lead by example on good jobs

Many cities are already leaders in implementing common standards and language to define what a good job provides. Even though the federal minimum wage is set below the poverty line, more than 50 cities have set their own higher minimum wage. Good jobs have adequate and accessible benefits and offer job stability in terms of location and scheduling. Twenty cities have laws requiring paid sick days and eight have fair workweek or fair scheduling laws.¹⁰⁸

Cities should pass a minimum wage that meets local standards for stable, family-sustaining pay. Even if a city does not have the authority to pass a minimum wage, every city can set a standard, convene local employers and lead by example by committing to provide good jobs through its procurement power, grant-making authority and employment practices.

Support universal family leave and childcare

Every working parent in America should have access to paid parental leave, and every child should have access to affordable, quality childcare. Cities should offer paid parental leave and childcare to all city employees. Because nearly every city has a childcare supply shortage, cities should streamline and incentivize the development of new daycares and preschools, working with entrepreneurs to establish these necessary services. In addition to advocating for childcare and universal pre-K at the state and federal level, many mayors are calling on their taxpayers to help fund childcare and pre-K, as Washington, DC, has done, and St. Paul, MN, is currently considering.¹⁰⁹



Streamline all locally administered benefits to be more like guaranteed income

City leaders should model locally administered benefit programs on guaranteed income pilots and leverage easy-to-use technology like Comity or Mastercard City Key to make direct cash payments to residents, provide financial literacy training and increase access to low-cost banking.¹¹⁰

Recent polls suggest that American support for universal basic income has increased from about 12 percent in 2011 to about 55 percent in favor in 2021 — because pilots

have shown strong indication that it works.¹¹¹ Cities like Stockton, CA, Jackson, MS, and Austin, TX, are leading the way with philanthropic support to test and study the impact of no-strings-attached direct payments. The results overwhelmingly show an increase in employment, economic well-being and economic mobility.¹¹²

Guaranteed income is smart policy for a workforce that is increasingly strained by inequalities, income instability and job displacement. City leaders should advocate for the implementation of nationwide guaranteed income.¹¹³

“WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY IN THIS NEXT DECADE TO FOCUS NOT ONLY ON JOB CREATION BUT ON CREATING GOOD JOBS.”

— RACHEL KORBERG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE FAMILIES AND WORKERS FUND



Pittsburgh, PA

Leading by example in Pittsburgh, PA

How Pittsburgh provides necessary wraparound support for its workers and sets the standard across the community

Pittsburgh, PA, is one of the few U.S. cities that committed to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women through city-based ordinances.¹¹⁴ The Pittsburgh Gender Equity Commission has published several reports and an action plan for an intersectional approach to equity that addresses gender, race and other identities together.¹¹⁵ The action plan recommends providing childcare throughout the city for city employees and at city-sponsored events and investing in local childcare providers, specifically women of color.¹¹⁶

Providing childcare for city employees and at city-sponsored events

On days when public schools are closed but city services remain open, Pittsburgh provides on-site pop-up childcare to city employees. Data shows that family-friendly workplace policies lower absenteeism and led to higher retention rates and productivity. The city also funds childcare at up to 20 public meetings — like town halls and community events — a year to boost civic engagement and ensure parents' voices

are not lost in the policymaking process. Council members approved legislation to fund the \$44,000 initiative, which enables the city to provide consistent, high-quality services to constituents and sets an example for family-friendly practices.¹¹⁷

Funding childcare providers

Pittsburgh's Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) received \$6.5 million from the PNC Foundation to pilot a loan program to sustain and stimulate the growth of childcare businesses.¹¹⁸ The URA board allocated \$800,000 to create the Childcare Reinvestment Business Fund, which provides loans to childcare facilities for payroll, staff education, enrollment subsidies and supplies. The program prioritizes minority-led businesses and nonprofits and programs with a significant percentage of children receiving subsidies.¹¹⁹ The city's Child Care Quality Fund has issued \$387,250 in grants to licensed childcare programs to improve the quality of programming and facilities. Grants can be used to improve curriculums, implement

assessment instruments, purchase learning materials, install furniture or equipment and make safety improvements to facilities. To administer the fund, Pittsburgh works with the nonprofit Trying Together.¹²⁰ Pittsburgh's programs prioritize improving the quality of childcare facilities and increasing access to directed resources, which will help expand the number of quality centers, especially in the communities with the highest need.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Cities can provide affordable, high-quality childcare by centering gender and racial equity in their programs. Cities can directly supplement childcare for their employees and for constituents at city meetings. Establishing grant funding for childcare facilities can increase the number of seats for students, improve the quality of childcare and provide essential support for minority-led businesses.



Connecting families to benefits in Philadelphia, PA

How Philadelphia ensures eligible families are receiving existing benefits

ARPA expanded the Child Tax Credit (CTC) and offered direct payments to millions of Americans. Philadelphia, PA, estimated that if every eligible resident received the expanded tax benefits, it could lift 75,000 individuals out of poverty, including 46,000 children.¹²¹ The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) estimated that as many as 14,000 kids in Philadelphia were part of families that were not automatically receiving payments. The city's outreach efforts led to more than 1,500 Philadelphians claiming more than \$6 million in CTC payments and unclaimed stimulus dollars through

its GetCTC.org portal, nonprofit tax prep partners and filing directly with the IRS.

Identifying eligible individuals

To connect with hard-to-reach constituents, the city utilized Community Service Block Grant funds to invest in targeted community-based outreach to boost enrollment. The city relied on local social service data to identify the most vulnerable households and made more than 31,000 phone calls and mailed 20,000 postcards and letters, directing individuals to resources for claiming the advanced CTC.

Connecting individuals with organizations that already provide support

Philadelphia awarded grants to 17 community-based organizations to continue conducting grassroots outreach for the CTC and Earned Income Tax Credit. The city funded trusted nonprofit tax preparation organizations to serve new clients and ensure tax records accurately reflected individuals' needs and eligibility.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Expanding funding for federal income assistance programs like the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax increased the potential for family assistance, but increasing access and uptake for existing benefits required coordinated community outreach. With a coordinated approach and targeted outreach, cities can ensure eligible individuals receive the funds to which they are entitled.



Jackson, MS

Enabling families to make the best choices in Jackson, MS

How Magnolia Mother's Trust is supporting mothers through guaranteed income pilots in Jackson

The Magnolia Mother's Trust provides \$1,000 a month to Black mothers living in extreme poverty in Jackson, MS. It is the first guaranteed income initiative in the U.S. that specifically targets extremely low-income families headed by Black women.¹²²

Partnering to provide holistic support

A 2018 grant from the Economic Security Project, administered by the nonprofit Springboard to Opportunities, provided funds for the first year. The program is now fully funded by private donors.¹²³ The initial funding enabled the Magnolia

Mother's Trust to pilot its theory of change for guaranteed income and prove demonstrated impact, catalyzing additional funding and public support.¹²⁴ Nonprofit partnerships can provide needed funds, particularly for smaller cities that want to implement guaranteed income pilots.

Enabling mothers to decide how to care for their families

Although families receive peer support, individual career coaching and counseling, they are free to decide how best to use their money. The mothers used these funds in a variety of ways. They moved into larger

apartments or made down payments toward homeownership. They paid off credit cards to raise their credit score. They fixed their cars and purchased beds and clothing for their children. They paid for the last credits to earn their degree. They took their kids to the zoo and out to eat. When given money without restrictions, the mothers took care of themselves and their families, providing essential items and bringing joy into their children's lives.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Guaranteed income is smart policy for a workforce that is increasingly strained by inequalities, income instability and job displacement. City leaders should advocate for the implementation of nationwide universal basic income policies while applying lessons from successful pilots to administer existing benefits more seamlessly and effectively to their residents.

Before Magnolia

In 2021, more than 30 percent of American families headed by Black mothers were living in poverty — significantly more than the national rate of 8.7 percent for all families.¹²⁵ One in five Mississippians, or 580,000 residents, live in poverty, yet only 4,142 individuals in the state received benefits under the U.S. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families in 2020. Most people who apply for benefits each month are not approved. Eligible Mississippians received an average of just \$134 a month, compared to the national average, \$505.¹²⁶ Despite high need for cash assistance programs, many Mississippians do not receive assistance from federal programs.

Impact of Magnolia Mother's Trust

In its first year, 20 mothers participated in Magnolia Mother's Trust. By its second year the program was expanded to 110 moms. Before joining the program, the average income for participants was \$11,030 annually. The program more than doubled their income. A 2020 evaluation report found that participating mothers dramatically increased their ability to pay all their bills on time (from 27% to 83%), to save money for emergencies (40% to 88%) and to buy food (64% to 81%).

CONCLUSION

The next 10 years will shape the next hundred. Cities will face great challenges in the next decade, but through bold vision and effective execution, entrepreneurial city leaders can build America's cities, towns and villages into more sustainable and inclusive centers of community and opportunity. In the tumult of the forces shaping this decade, city leaders have an unprecedented opportunity to reimagine and shape the future of work and in doing so realize the promise not only of their communities but of the country.



**THE FUTURE OF OUR
LOCAL ECONOMIES IS IN
THE HANDS OF TODAY'S
CITY LEADERS.**

Appendix

Defining High Opportunity Jobs

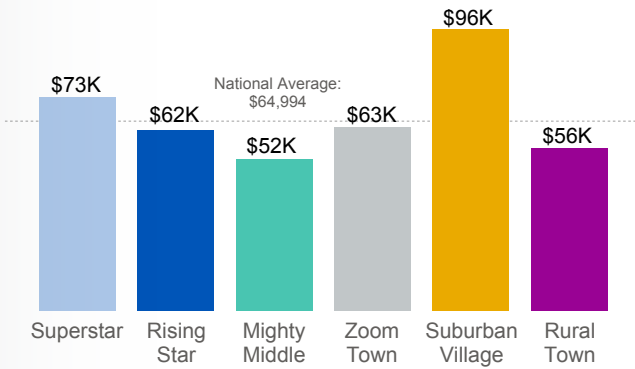
As city leaders prepare for the future of work, they should focus on high opportunity jobs, defined as jobs with high projected growth and high wages relative to the training they require.

To determine the top high opportunity jobs, NLC researchers used several data points. Occupational projection data from BLS was filtered for occupations with projected growth from 2020 to 2030 that is higher than the average of 7.7 percent across all occupations. Occupational employment statistics from BLS were filtered to only include occupations with more than 10,000 in employment. Job posting data shared by LinkUp was filtered

to include occupations with more than 100 job postings in 2021. The highest opportunity occupations are those with the highest percent difference in median wage for that occupation compared to median wage for jobs with similar education and training requirements. Occupation Information Network (O*NET) Job Zones were used to define the level of education and training required for each occupation.

Figure 10 includes jobs that will likely have growing employment opportunities in the coming decade. City leaders can use similar criteria to identify high opportunity jobs in their communities and target workforce development efforts around jobs with high projected growth and strong pay.

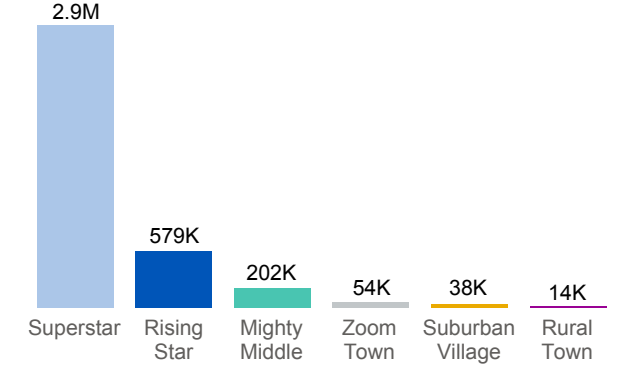
Figure 11. Median household income (2016-2020)



Note: Median Household income between 2016 and 2020 was highest in Suburban Villages, followed by Superstars, and was lowest in Mighty Middle cities.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *American Community Survey 2016-2020 5-Year Data Release*. [Dataset]. www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs

Figure 12. Average population by city type (2020)



Note: Population size is one of the strongest determinants of city typology. Superstars have the highest average population, followed by Rising Stars and then Mighty Middle. Zoom Towns, Suburban Villages and Rural Towns all have average populations under 75,000 residents, and were differentiated based on location relative to other cities, growth trends and income.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *Decennial Census Results 2020*. [Dataset]. www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census.html



Superstar

- Chicago, IL
- Dallas, TX
- Los Angeles, CA
- New York, NY
- Phoenix, AZ
- San Diego, CA
- San Francisco, CA



Rising Star

- Austin, TX
- Buffalo, NY
- Denver, CO
- Miami, FL
- Minneapolis, MN
- Portland, OR



Mighty Middle

- Akron, OH
- Eau Claire, WI
- Iowa City, IA
- Pittsburg, PA
- Salt Lake City, UT
- Savannah, GA
- Sioux Falls, SD
- Tulsa, OK
- Winston Salem, NC



Suburban Village

- Centerville, OH
- Duluth, GA
- Elmhurst, IL
- Ferguson, MO
- Keller, TX
- Reston, VA



Zoom Town

- Bend, OR
- Bozeman, MT
- Traverse City, MI



Rural Town

- Berlin, NH
- Camden, SC
- Hazleton, PA
- Hermiston, OR
- Lexington, VA
- Truckee, CA

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Endnotes

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