Quality Careers & Workplaces Toolkit

Enhance Job Quality | Become an Employer of Choice | Attract and Retain Top Talent

CareerRise

GOOD JOBS • SKILLED EMPLOYEES • STRONG COMMUNITIES

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Quality Careers and Workplaces: Definitions

It's no secret that the labor market is highly competitive, with a growing number of employers vying for a shrinking pool of available job seekers. Two important terms for employers in this environment are "job quality" and "employer of choice". Improving job quality has an impact on a company's ability to attract and retain talent and carries broader social and economic implications. Being an employer of choice can help a business stand out from their competition when it comes to sustaining and growing their workforce.

Below you'll find definitions for job quality and employer of choice, and in the following pages pages you'll find details about components of high-quality jobs, tools for assessing and improving your workplace, and resources for becoming recognized as an employer of choice.

Job Quality

"A quality job means one's work is valued and respected and meaningfully contributes to the goals of the organization. It encompasses having a voice in one's workplace and the opportunity to shape one's work life, as well as having accessible opportunities to learn and grow. Quality work affords an individual the opportunity to save, to build the security and confidence that allows one to plan for the future, and to participate in the life of and see oneself as a valued member of a community."
-- Aspen Institute

Employer of Choice

"An employer of choice is someone whom workers choose to work for when presented with other employment choices. This choice is a conscious decision made when joining an organization and when deciding to stay with that organization."
-- HRM America

A quality job is where legacies are realized. When you are proud of where you work and you are challenged to do your best, the experience is transformational. At Holder, we refer to each other as associates, rather than employees, because together we build our legacies. Our collective passion extends beyond construction; we are building livelihoods. Job quality evolves and thrives over time through the satisfaction of doing our best work together.

Beth Lowry, Executive Vice President
Holder Construction

Job Quality Matters

Why does focusing on job quality matter? The impacts go further than hiring and retaining employees. The Good Jobs Institute outlined the financial case for businesses to invest in job quality. Employee turnover and burnout have negative impacts on financial outcomes; conversely, investing in human capital yields positive business results.

Financial Benefits of Investing in Job Quality

1 Cost Mitigation

Cost mitigation is all about **reducing financial losses by maintaining a stable workforce and creating more efficient operations.** By creating a workplace where employees feel valued, empowered, appropriately compensated, and equipped with the necessary tools, employers can save money. A few examples of potential savings include:

- Employee turnover costs -- recruiting, training, etc.
- Overtime pay -- for employees covering a workforce shortage
- Inventory shrink -- less experienced or overworked staff are more prone to mistakes

2 Revenue Uplift

Employees working in good jobs are likely to create the kind of environment customers want to support. Investing in efficient operations and a positive employee experience enhance the customer experience as well, leading to more earning opportunities, like:

- Fewer stockouts -- experienced, invested staff know how to keep the supply chain working
- Larger purchases -- a positive customer experience increases the likelihood of greater spending
- Customer loyalty -- a customer will return to a well-run business again and again

3 Labor Productivity Gains

Investing in more efficient processes means employees spend more time on value-adding tasks and less time on frustrating low-value tasks. **This means using your labor force more effectively and creating savings** through:

- Managed absenteeism -- operating with slack can reduce the business impact of absent employees
- Strategic operations -- thoughtful approaches to business can reduce the time employees spend on less valuable tasks, like resetting displays or managing preventable supply chain problems

Job Quality Impacts

In Not Just a Job: New Evidence on the Quality of Work in the United States, Gallup published the findings of the "Great Job Demonstration Survey in which 10 dimensions of job quality are examined across the U.S. labor force and jobs were qualified as "good," "mediocre," or "bad." Below you will find data and examples illustrating the impact job quality has on your organization and your community.

Understanding Employees' Needs

Three criteria rank higher in importance to workers than level of pay, regardless of income level: Enjoying their day-to-day work, having stable and predictable pay, and having a sense of purpose.

Only 54% of workers are satisfied with their current pay level – pay and benefits are the largest sources of job quality disappointment.

Only 48% of workers are satisfied with their capacity for effecting change at work. Overall, workers report low satisfaction in their ability to change things at work they don't like.

Job Quality For Recruitment and Retention

Workers in full-time jobs tend to have higher job quality than part-time workers, but those who work 55 hours or more per week report lower job quality and usually work multiple jobs.

Even during periods of low unemployment, **workers in "bad" jobs are twice as likely to be actively looking for new work** as those in good jobs.

Satisfaction with autonomy, career development opportunities, and job security influence whether workers decide to look for a new job.

Job Quality For Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Economic Opportunity

Just 28% of workers in the bottom fifth of annual income are in "good" jobs.

Hispanic men and black women express the most job disappointment.

31% of black women work in "bad" jobs, higher than any other racial or gender group; this group expresses disappointment around control over schedule, income stability, and enjoying day-to-day experiences.

Asian workers have higher education and income levels than white Americans on average but **express significantly lower job quality**, related to missing the opportunity to do what they do best every day.

Lower-income workers were much less likely to experience satisfaction across all 10 dimension of job quality.

Diversity, Racial Equity, and Inclusion

The topics of diversity, racial equity, and inclusion lie are central to many of the workforce development and quality job issues present not only at a national level, but also at the local level. Numerous studies indicate that individuals in racial minority groups -- especially Black individuals -- face disproportionate hurdles when it comes to economic opportunity, career advancement, and quality of work. The resources below can help your business identify strategies for creating a more equitable work experience.

Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce: ATL Action for Racial Equity

The Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce (MAC) has developed a robust and comprehensive set of resources for employers interested in learning and doing more about racial equity and inclusion. Visit their page for links to national and local organizations dedicated to promoting these values, and check out the ATL Action for Racial Equity Plan.

ATLRacialEquity.com

MAC's ATL Action for Racial Equity initiative aims to advance racial equity and inclusion through partnership with Metro Atlanta's expansive business community. Over 240 companies in the region have signed on to this initiative and the number continues to grow. This website features opportunities for businesses to join the coalition and download playbooks.

ATL Action For Racial Equity Playbooks:

Corporate Policies | Inclusive Economic Development | Education | Workforce Development

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Georgia Diversity Council

The Georgia Diversity Council (GADC) is a membership organization whose vision is to "transform our workplace into environments where people are valued for their uniqueness and are confident that their contributions matter." The organization hosts webinar events on topics like Inclusive Recruiting and Inclusive Leadership. Additionally, GADC provides businesses with a variety of services, including:

National Diversity Council Consultation | DiversityFIRST Certification | DiversityFIRST Toolkit

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Race Matters: Organizational Self-Assessment

Unintended racial prejudices are deeply rooted in all U.S. institutions. Use this questionnaire to find out if they are part of your organization. The questions use a racial lens to size up staffing and operational aspects. The assessment then offers additional tools and next steps based on how the organization scores. This tool is part of a Race Matters toolkit.

Changing the Odds: Progress and Promise in Atlanta

Atlanta has historically lead the nation in income inequality, which is tied to factors like zip code, race, and family income. Read this article to learn more about partnerships, initiatives, and other work being done to promote equity.

Job Quality for Social Justice

Data from numerous sources show that minority groups have unique job quality concerns. When considering job quality and becoming an employer of choice, review this data and keep in mind how inclusivity, equity, and corporate social responsibility fit into those strategies.

LGBTQ+

Nearly 1 in 10 LGBT employees **left a job** because the environment was unwelcoming

LGBTQ+ employees experience greater workplace dissatisfaction across multiple dimensions

More than 25% of **transgender people have been fired or denied a job opportunity** due to their gender identity

On average, **gay men are paid less** than their straight counterparts with the same education, skills, and experience

Sources: Glassdoor, Out and Equal, IZA

Individuals with Disabilities

Only 21.6% of workers with disabilities are **employed in high quality jobs** compared to their nondisabled peers

"People with disabilities who worked full-time had a **15% lower chance of holding a good job** than workers without disabilities."

Full-time positions are more likely to meet the definition of a "good job"; people with disabilities are much **more likely to hold part-time positions** than their nondisabled peers

Source: Project E3TC

Women

Even though more women complete post-secondary education than men, **their wages are lower on average** than their male counterparts'.

The cost of childcare forces many women to **choose between high-quality childcare and full time employment.**

" The tax treatment of married couples tends to raise the tax rate for the spouse who is the lower earner in a couple, and in most couples, **that secondary earner is female**."

Source: Project E3TC

Veterans

Veterans report their greatest employment struggle is **finding jobs that match their past military training and experience**

Besides leaving for a new opportunity, **veterans' most likely reasons for leaving a job** are lack of advancement opportunities, the quality of work (finding it tedious, unchallenging, or unfulfilling), and inadequate compensation or benefits.

Veterans want **the opportunity to use their knowledge and skills.**

Source: Syracuse University / VetAdvisor

Elements of Job Quality

We reviewed the literature on job quality and found 7 consistent themes. Each of these themes will resonate differently depending on the workplace environment. Below you will find descriptions and suggestions in each of these elements as well as ideas for supporting your business' job quality plan.

Pay & Benefits

Compensation (including wages and benefits) is one of the most widely recognized and impactful elements of a quality job. Maintaining competitive wages is one strategy for becoming an employer of choice. Benefits like health, dental, and vision insurance, paid time off, retirement, and disability coverage are also key contributors to job quality.

Some companies find other creative ways of compensating their employees, like bonus programs, stock options, and equity sharing. Benefits like employer-based loans or giving employees access to their earned wages prior to the scheduled pay date are other unique incentives.

Safety & Security

Safety means having measures in place to reduce risk of physical harm. It also means keeping employees safe from abuse, exploitation, harassment, and discrimination.

Establishing and sticking to guidelines for safety and personal conduct help employees feel safe. Having a method for employees to file grievances and believe they will be responded to without repercussion is a quality of an employer of choice.

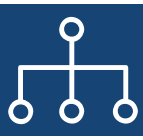
Security – the reasonable expectation that one's position will be available for the medium-to-long term – is also vital.

Scheduling

Scheduling as a job quality element is comprised of three components: stability, predictability, and work-life balance. Employees who know when and where they are working in advance are more likely to feel job satisfaction.

Availability of sufficient work hours is important to employees paid hourly, for both pay and minimum work-hour requirements for benefits.

Scheduling practices that empower employees to manage personal life needs (flexible scheduling, paid time off, remote work, etc.) contribute to an employer of choice environment.



Structure

Structure means having the systems and operations in place that empower employees' ability to be successful.

- Do employees have access to the equipment, tools, and technology they need?
- Are roles and chains of command clearly defined?
- Are there open lines of communication both horizontally and vertically?
- Are employees and teams empowered to take initiative and solve problems?
- Are processes in place to manage the employee experience (e.g. human resources, payroll, etc.)?

Elements of Job Quality

Achievement & Advancement

Many employees, especially those in entry-level positions, will want to advance their careers by expanding their roles or moving into new ones. Employers can support their employees' growth within the company by making it easier to move into higher-skilled and higher-paying positions -- creating career pathways.

This can be done by providing training for the knowledge and skills needed for role advancement, as well as supporting the employee's education through other means, like allowing employees to learn during the workday.

Cross-training invests in employees' skillsets while increasing the company's ability to meet changing needs. A common pathway for employees is from front-line worker to management; providing the right kind of leadership training will set workers up for success.

Recognition

Feeling valued is important to every worker. Recognition can take the form of internal recognition (among colleagues within the organization) or external recognition (highlighting the individual's success outside the organization).

Purpose & Belonging

A high-quality job helps employees meet tangible needs as well as intangible needs. This includes the basic human needs of feeling as though one's work matters, and feeling a sense of belonging to something larger than themselves.

- Do employees feel a sense of pride about the work they do and the organization they work for?
- Do they feel welcome and included, regardless of age, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, etc.?
- Do they feel a sense of ownership in their organization's success?
- Do they have the chance to share ideas, solve problems, make improvements?

Sources: Aspen Institute, The Balance, Gallup, Good Jobs Institute, National Fund for Workforce Solutions

Elements of Job Quality

Need more information about these job quality elements or how to incorporate them into your workplace? We've compiled a list of articles, toolkits, and websites to help.
Note: **it is critical** to consult with a qualified human resources professional and/or employment lawyer before implementing any policy changes that affect your workforce.

Pay & Benefits

Atlanta CareerRise Economic Mobility Dashboard

[Atlanta CareerRise Economic Mobility Dashboard]
Visit Atlanta CareerRise's Economic Mobility Dashboard, click the "By Wage" tab, then "Data Explorer" to view data on wages by industry and occupation, compared across experience level and geography.

[Living Wage Calculator]

[Pay Analysis Tool]

[What Is Bonus Pay?]

[Income Advance Guide]

[Georgia Chamber SMART Plan]
This program provides small businesses (2-50 employees) access to Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield health plans, available through membership with the Georgia Chamber or participating local chambers.

[The 16 Most Popular Employee Perks]

[What's in a Comprehensive Employee Benefits Package?]

[Are You Getting the Best Benefit From Your Employee Benefits?]

[Benefits Resource Guide]

[Why Temporary and Seasonal Employees Need Access to Benefits]

Scheduling

[Sample Hourly Employee Attendance Policy]

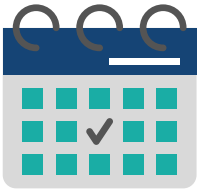
[Sample Paid Time Off Policy]

[Setting Employee Work Schedules: A Manager's Guide]

[Flexible Scheduling Best Practices For Your Company]

[Managing Flexible Work Arrangements]

[Operate with Slack]



Elements of Job Quality

Safety & Security

Georgia Tech OSHA Consultation Program
Georgia Tech offers a free, confidential on-site OSHA compliance consultation for small- and medium-sized businesses. Their site also provides links to employer tools, free webinars, and training courses.

OSHA: Safe Workplace Is Sound Business

OSHA: Help for Employers

Compliance Assistance Quick Start

Psychological Safety: What It Is and Why It's Important at Work

Open Door Policy Sample for the Workplace

Importance of Employee Job Security for Workplace Success

Why is Employee Job Security So Important to Company Success?

Tips About Dealing with Problems When There Is No HR

What Is Harassment?

Structure

Sample Human Resources Policies and Procedures

How and Why to Create a Small Business Organizational Chart

Understanding the Chain of Command in Your Workplace

Office Space: Physical space, equipment and supplies are required to run an efficient office

Giving Staff The Tools To Do Their Jobs

How to Improve Employee Engagement: Focus on Productivity

Organization & Planning

Change Management Wisdom About Strategy, People, and Communication

Team Norms Sample

Elements of Job Quality

Achievement & Advancement

[WorkSource Services for Employers & Trainers]

WorkSource is Georgia's federally-funded employment and training system, and offers a suite of services to employers to help grow and develop their talent pool. Your local WorkSource location can help offset the cost of training new employees with On-The-Job Training support, develop Customized Training to create a workforce with specified skills, retain skilled employees or avert a potential layoff with Incumbent Worker Training, and build a talent pipeline by setting up a Registered Apprenticeship.

[Developing Employees Toolkit]

[Steps to Create a Career Development Plan]

[What Is a Career Path?]

[Developing Management Toolkit]

[Want 16 Ways to Foster Learning in Your Organization?]

[What Are Micro-Credentials and How Can They Benefit Both Businesses and Employees?]

[Designing and Managing Educational Assistance Programs]

[What Is Important About On-the-Job Training?]

Purpose & Belonging

[SHRM-Atlanta | Racial Equality Resources]

[Atlanta Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Resources]

[Georgia Diversity Council]

[Job Quality for Americans with Disabilities]

[6 Ways to Foster Belonging in the Workplace]

[Every Person Matters in a Company, and There is No Such Thing as an Insignificant Position]

[How Community Involvement Programs Can Grow Your Business]

[How to Make Values Intrinsic to Your Organization's Success]

Elements of Job Quality

Recognition

[Creating a Culture of Recognition]

[Managing Employee Recognition Programs]

[The Power of Positive Employee Recognition]

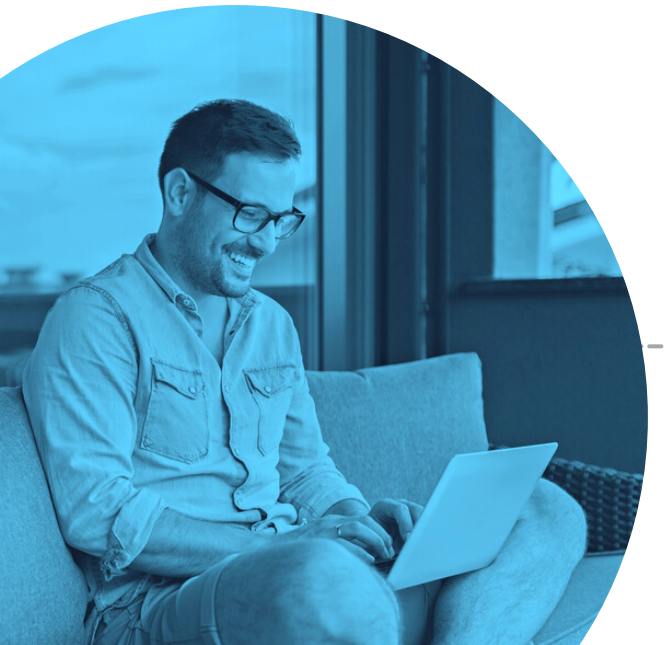
[5 Great Ways to Improve Your Recognition]

[6 Keys to Make Your Employee Recognition Program Succeed]

We spend the greater part of our waking day at the office, even if it is mostly virtual these days. Calendly understands that that level of commitment plays a huge part in the overall quality of life. It is our responsibility to give our best back to the employees in return.

At Calendly, it is essential that each role has a clearly defined purpose, opportunity for growth, line of sight to impact. Beyond role definition and career paths, we also infuse our core values in everything that we do from our unrelenting focus on meeting our customer expectations to striving for an inclusive culture that meets colleagues wherever they are in their life and career journey. Empowering our employees' daily decisions makes us special.

Roy Duvall, Chief Technology Officer
Calendly



Living Wages

Paying a living wage is fundamental to job quality and being an employer of choice. Read below for more information about living wages.

A **living wage** is defined as "the hourly rate that an individual in a household must earn to support his or herself and their family," assuming that person is working a full-time position (at least 2080 hours per year). A **poverty wage** is an hourly wage that would leave a full-time, full-year worker below the federal poverty guideline for their family size.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology provides a Living Wage Calculator which allows users to search for a state, city, or metro area and see the living wage, poverty wage, and minimum wage for the desired area. Below is wage information about the Atlanta metropolitan area as of 2021. Check out Good Job Institute's Pay Analysis tool to see how your employees' earnings match up against the living wage.

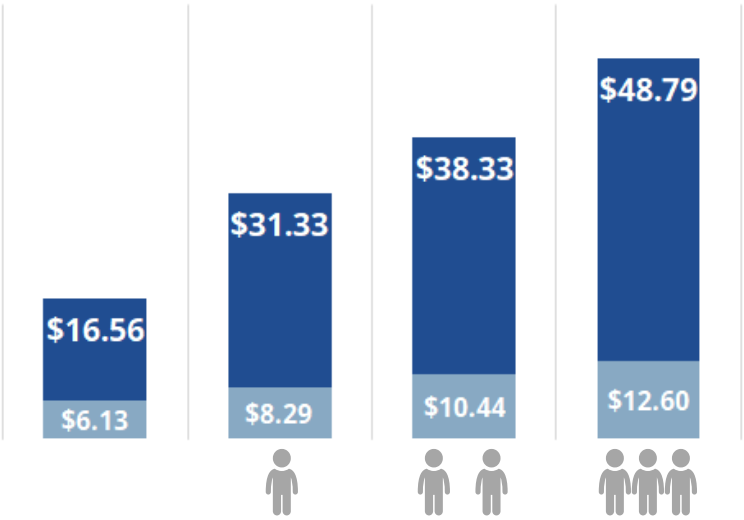
Federal Hourly Minimum Wage: $7.25

$ Atlanta Metro Hourly Living Wage

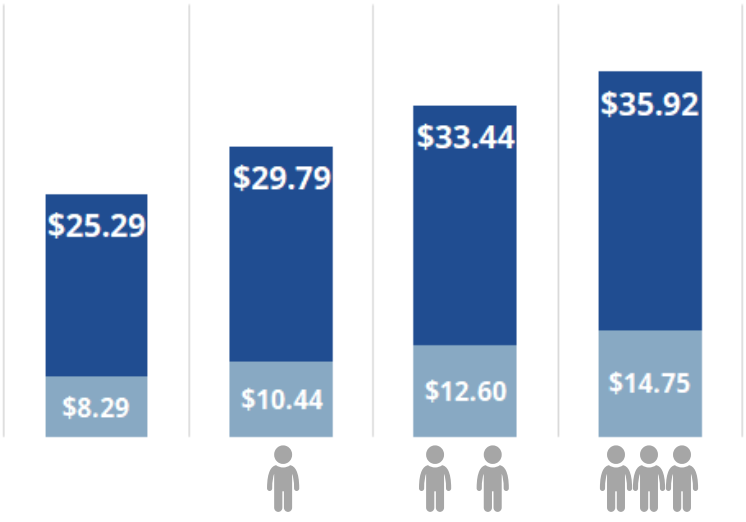
$ Atlanta Metro Hourly Poverty Wage

Number of Children in Household

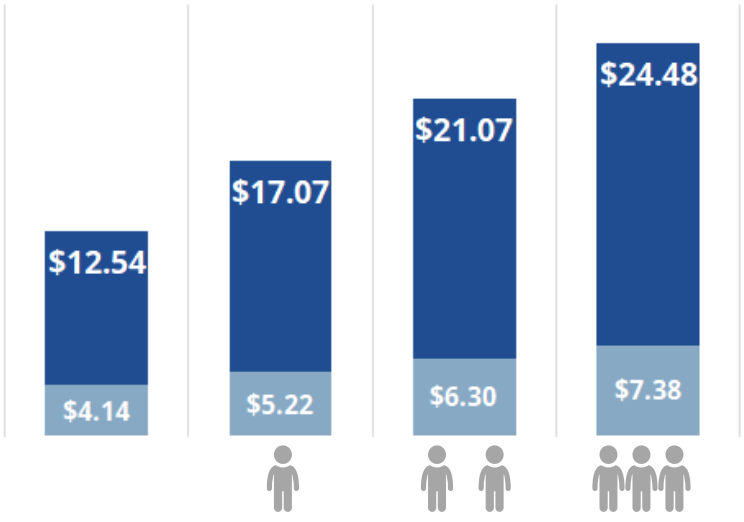
1 Adult



2 Adults (1 working)



2 Adults (both working)



Quality Jobs Partnerships

The following organizations offer different tools and services to evaluate how your company is performing in job quality and culture, give direction on how to build upon existing strengths, and provide strategies for improving upon opportunity areas. Click each logo to visit their respective homepages, or check out links to some of their tools and resources.

GOOD JOBS INSTITUTE

Good Jobs Institute, Inc. (or GJI) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization whose mission is "to help companies thrive by creating good jobs and to redefine what it means to run a successful business." GJI's free-to-use tools can help businesses evaluate their own job quality; they also offer workshops and consultation to help businesses develop a job quality strategy.

Good Jobs Strategy Assessment | Good Jobs Diagnostic | Case Studies | Contact

Great Place To Work.

Great Place to Work (or GPTW) is well known as the "global authority on workplace culture", whose mission is "to build a better world by helping organizations become a great place to work FOR ALL." GPTW provides employee surveys, certification, and culture consultation and collaborates on job quality strategies.

Employee Surveys | Certification | Resource Library | Case Studies | Contact

TALENT REWIRE
Shared Value in Action

Talent Rewire is an organization dedicated to marrying the concepts of solving employment problems and advancing social justice. Their tools can help organizations rethink their approach to underutilized and underrepresented talent pools.

Resources & Tools | Employer Community | Accelerator, Labs, & Workshops | Contact

the Great Game of Business

The Great Game of Business champions employee engagement and business growth through a unique strategy based on financial transparency with employees, and centered on five psychological concepts in the workplace : status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness. Great Game of Business strives to create a work culture where employees feel empowered and have a stake in the business' success.

What is Open Book Management? | How to Start | DIY Resources | Contact

Recognition

You've done the work, and now you're ready to tell the world you're an employer of choice. The resources below can help your organization establish a reputation that will attract and retain top talent. Click each logo to visit the respective organization's webpage for more information.

About:
Great Place To Work (GPTW) offers abundant resources to develop and highlight employers of choice. Employers who meet certain criteria can achieve Great Place To Work certification.

Eligibility:

- Must have a minimum of 10 employees to participate in workplace culture survey.
- To apply for certification, 65% or more employees must agree the workplace is "a great place to work."
- Must submit a culture brief to GPTW.

Recognition:

- Companies meeting criteria receive a branding toolkit and recognition in GPTW's listings
- GPTW partners with Fortune to increase exposure for top employers
- Certified companies can be included in multiple lists, like "Best Workplaces for Parents" or "People Companies That Care."
- GPTW shares stories on their site about companies whose certification has lead to better outcomes in recruitment and retention

About:
Billing themselves as the "nation's most credible workplace recognition program", Top Workplaces has both national and regional programs for recognizing employers of choice.

Eligibility:
For the Atlanta regional program:

- Must have 50 or more employees in the 17-county region surrounding the Atlanta metro area.
- Complete Top Workplaces employee engagement survey

Recognition:

- Companies will receive tools and branding materials to sustain continued job quality development and promote achievements
- Top Workplaces collaborates with news publications (like the Atlanta Journal-Constitution) to promote participating employers.
- Can receive recognition at the regional or national levels and earn special industry and culture excellence awards

Want to tell the story of how you became an employer of choice? Become a thought leader and inspire a future generation of job quality champions? Submit your story to CareerRise through our QCW Story Submission. CareerRise will publish new stories on their website and build a library of successful workplace transformations and successful practices.

Resources and Connections

What's next? Contact us or explore the additional resource list below.

CareerRise
GOOD JOBS • SKILLED EMPLOYEES • STRONG COMMUNITIES

Need some help getting started on your job quality strategy or becoming an employer of choice?

Want to join a community of employers and workforce development professionals?

Have a story to tell about your Quality Careers and Workplaces journey?

Click here to email the Metro Atlanta Industry Partnerships team. We're here to help.

General Resources	Description	Source
Designing a Quality Job	What makes up a quality job?	NFWS
What is a Good Job?	What makes a job "good"?	GJI
Are You an Employer of Choice?	Characteristics of Employers of Choice	The Balance Careers
Great Jobs Reports	Multiple reports on job quality, the impact of COVID-19 on job quality, pathways for workers	Gallup
Job Quality Report	How to improve job quality for all	Urban Institute
Job Quality Matters		
Investing in Entry-Level Talent	Talent development as a retention strategy	FSG
Advancing Frontline Employees of Color	Creating career pathways for minority employees	FSG
Growing Job Quality and Becoming an Employer of Choice		
Gallup	Consulting and educational resources	
Good Jobs Institute	Consulting and educational resources	
Great Place to Work	Tools, consulting, and workplace recognition	
Talent Rewire	Workshops and learning community	
Top Workplaces	Tools, consulting, and workplace recognition	