

Seattle Jobs Initiative - Strategic Plan 2021

With Key Performance Indicators

Adopted by the Board of Directors: June 16, 2021

Seattle Jobs Initiative (hereafter SJI) is an organization deeply committed to and guided in its daily work by its mission. Bounded by a set of values, SJI drives toward its vision for the future through an identity statement that defines how it will accomplish its mission and vision.

Mission

Seattle Jobs Initiative supports people from under-invested communities to build careers. By creating equitable workforce systems and developing impactful partnerships, we address structural racism.

Vision

Every worker has a career that allows them, their family, and community to thrive.

Values

Integrity: We are responsible to our community and are committed to honesty, accountability, transparency, and excellence as we act as good stewards of our resources.

Equity: We partner to remove racial and other systemic barriers in order to gain equitable, inclusive access to living wage jobs and careers for all.

Innovation: We are committed to meaningful change through knowledge, curiosity, and adaptability

Grit: We embody determination, perseverance, and resilience in pursuit of our vision. We do not give up.

Empathy: We endeavor to do all of our work from a position of humility and respect for all people that is grounded in caring, compassion, and understanding.

Collaboration: We invest in authentic partnerships. Good things happen when we work together.

Identity

We advance our mission of empowering people to build careers by forming equitable partnerships that address structural racism to create a more impactful workforce system. We seek to help individuals, their families, and communities to thrive and accomplish

this this by serving individuals, communities, organizations, employers, and public agencies in Washington and the United States.

SJI completes its work through:

- Direct and indirect services including participant-centered program design and implementation
- Consulting and technical assistance
- Research and evaluation
- Systems change work with community partners who work with people impacted by institutional racism and systemic barriers

SJI emphasizes its competitive advantage of:

- Independence and nimbleness
- The ability to connect the dots in the workforce ecosystem through a broad perspective and wide network of partners
- A virtuous circle of research and action that helps us develop/create and improve programs through an iterative design process

SJI is sustained by regional, state, federal, and private funding.

Delivery on Mission

SJI delivers on its mission through four operational pillars: direct services, systems leadership, policy and research and consulting. The strategic plan below, created as the world emerged from a pandemic, provides a roadmap for how these operational pillars will rise to the realities of a post-pandemic society. The plan reflects a process of broad and participatory analysis, discernment, and collective decision-making. Areas of analysis included input from stakeholders (Appendix 1) and key challenges and opportunities (Appendix 2).

The roadmap contains goals, strategies for achieving those goals and metrics to identify the extent to which the goals are being met.

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GOAL ONE: Empower underinvested communities and people to participate in and benefit from an inclusive economic recovery.

Key Strategy 1.1: Develop partnerships with regional employers, training trusts, and related organizations to advance talent pipelines from historically excluded communities.

KPI 1.1.1: Sustain existing employer hiring relationships with no more than a ten percent loss over three years.

KPI 1.1.2: Add ten new employer commitments to interview or hire participants during 2022.

KPI 1.1.3: Add one new training trust per year with a career pathway.

KPI 1.1.4: Increase BIPOC participant employment and/or long term training enrollment rate from 55 percent to 70 percent.

Key Strategy 1.2: Partner with BIPOC led and BIPOC serving community organizations to help them build capacity in career navigation skills and workforce development programming in underinvested communities.

KPI1.2.1: Achieve a score of 75 percent effectiveness on a career development effectiveness instrument provided to partner CBOs.

KPI 1.2.2: Add two new underinvested communities served each year.

KPI 1.2.3: Increase the number of BIPOC CBO staff receiving technical assistance or training by ten percent each year from the 2021 baseline.

Key Strategy 1.3: Leverage the virtuous cycle of program development and research to develop unique and innovative programs and community informed/participatory research.

KPI 1.3.1: Develop a career development effectiveness survey by the end of 2022 in collaboration with BIPOC partners.

KPI 1.3.2: Complete two evaluations per year that inform improvement in workforce programs.

KPI 1.3.3: Create at least one co-learning opportunity with BIPOC CBO partners.

Key Strategy 1.4: Use the principles of human-centered and equity by design to proactively develop and/or expand on-ramps into emerging and in-demand career pathways and build capacity to sustain the program model.

KPI 1.4.1: Add four emerging and/or in-demand career programs developed in partnership with CBO partners by the end of 2022.

KPI 1.4.2: 85 percent of participants from BIPOC communities will complete a milestone in a career pathway development program.

Key Strategy 1.5: Address digital equity gaps in underserved communities by supporting access to devices, quality high-speed internet, and digital literacy training.

KPI 1.5.1: Add 300 BIPOC individuals with new device and internet access per year.

KPI 1.5.2: Add 150 BIPOC individuals completing digital literacy training per year.

KPI 1.5.3: 90 percent of individuals will achieve competency on the appropriate digital literacy skill assessment.

GOAL TWO: Solidify SJI's role in the Seattle King County workforce development ecosystem while expanding its work to include the greater Puget Sound region.

Key Strategy 2.1: Solidify SJI's role in the Seattle King County workforce development ecosystem by identifying and leading elements in the Workforce Development Council of Seattle King-County strategic plan.

KPI 2.1.1: Define SJI's role(s) in the WDC that is formalized through an MOU by the end of 2022.

Key Strategy 2.2: Expand partnerships to create an expanded service footprint in the greater Puget Sound region based on community needs.

KPI 2.2.1: Establish at least one new program in Snohomish County in 2022.

KPI 2.2.2: Establish at least one new program in Pierce County in 2022.

KPI 2.2.3: Establish at least one new program outside the City of Seattle in King County in 2022.

Key Strategy 2.3: Expand IHAP activities beyond King County by building capacity for other regions to adopt and sustain the program model.

KPI 2.3.1: Develop six new sustainable IHAP programs outside of King County over 3 years, at least two by the end of 2022.

Key Strategy 2.4: Expand employer engagement activities recognizing the evolving regional nature of the Puget Sound labor market.

KPI 2.4.1: Increase SJI participation in four new or existing industry leadership coalitions over three years.

KPI 2.4.2: Ten employers/training trusts will support SJI by providing economic support in 2022.

GOAL THREE: Expand and diversify SJI's work as a nationally known provider of technical assistance and research.

Key Strategy 3.1: Expand SJI's capacity for multiple areas of SNAP E&T technical assistance, evaluation, and research, provided to USDA/FNS, States, Counties, and providers.

KPI 3.1.1: Add five new clients served by SJI research over three years.

KPI 3.1.2: Add ten new clients served by SNAP E&T technical assistance over three years.

KPI 3.1.3: Fifty percent of existing clients will continue their relationship with SJI.

KPI 3.1.4: Add three new clients served by SJI consulting over three years.

Key Strategy 3.2: Develop an expanded and sustainable Student-Centered Design program, while also expanding the approach beyond colleges to support government and community programs.

KPI 3.2.1: Generate \$250,000 revenue through Participant Centered Design work by the end of 2022.

KPI 3.2.2: Expand the Participant Centered Design work to include one non-higher education client by the end of 2022.

Key Strategy 3.3: Identify for development at least one more area of subject matter expertise leading to multi-year national and local research and technical assistance engagements building on SJI's regional work.

KPI 3.3.1: Develop a business plan for a new area of consulting by 2022.

Key Strategy 3.4: Expand SJI's capacity to offer external research services beyond the Seattle area by identifying and building competency in one or more unique research niches.

KPI 3.4.1: Add two new research offerings per year.

KPI 3.4.2: Add five new research clients outside of the City of Seattle over three years.

KPI 3.4.3: Research revenue outside the City of Seattle will exceed \$125,000.

Key Strategy 3.5: Expand the breadth and depth of strategic partnerships with national workforce and economic development organizations to support national reach and improve regional outcomes.

KPI 3.5.1: Add 50 new national audiences who consume/subscribe to SJI research per year.

KPI 3.5.2: Add ten new national presentations over three years.

KPI 3.5.3: Add two new national grant proposals accepted per year.

KPI 3.5.4: SJI Senior leadership members will serve on three boards or advisory committees for national organizations or initiatives.

GOAL FOUR: Develop a robust set of internal processes that will strengthen SJI's capacity.

Key Strategy 4.1: Expand board membership to be more inclusive of diverse voices and experiences and embark on an intentional board development journey to implement governance best practices.

KPI 4.1.1: Total board membership over three years will increase to 13 positions with at least one former client serving as a board member.

KPI 4.1.2: Within three years board positions will be held by diverse board members representing the communities that SJI serves.

KPI 4.1.3: Conduct and complete an evaluation of board governance documents and enact any necessary changes by 2022.

KPI 4.1.4: Add at least one new board development session per year.

KPI 4.1.5: Achieve 100% of board participation in board development per year.

Key Strategy 4.2: Implement equity-centered workplace practices within the organization as we evolve the workplace culture.

KPI 4.2.1: Complete an equity audit of all policies to determine if there are exclusionary policies or behaviors by the end of 2022.

KPI 4.2.2: Incorporate at least one DEI centered training outcome in 100% of team members professional development plans by the end of 2022.

KPI 4.2.3: Achieve 85% retention among BIPOC team members and 25% of BIPOC staff receive a promotion or other type of career advancement by the end of 2022.

KPI 4.2.4: Re-establish a race-equity committee among SJI staff with an annual workplan to support organizational DEI efforts.

Key Strategy 4.3: Develop a theory of change/change model that centers racial equity and addresses organizational intersectionality for all of SJI's work.

KPI 4.3.1: Design and implement a model for equity-centered change by the end of 2022.

Key Strategy 4.4: Develop diversified, multi-year, and sustainable funding streams.

KPI 4.4.1: No more than 20% of the SJI operating budget is from a single funder by the end of 2023.

KPI 4.4.2: 50% of funding for work under Goals One and Two does not contain geographic limits on spending or program activities by 2023.

KPI 4.4.3: 25% of SJI funding is in multi-year commitments by 2023.

KPI 4.4.4: \$100,000 per year comes from corporate foundations and/or sponsorships in the form of unrestricted giving by 2023.

Key Strategy 4.5: Strengthen and/or expand database and IT capabilities to participate in a shared data ecosystem and use data internally to make data-driven decisions.

KPI 4.5.1: Using the planned City of Seattle workforce data ecosystem report, assess SJI's capacity to participate in a shared data network.

KPI 4.5.2: Create a process to use SJI data for program improvement by 2022.

Key strategy 4.6: Develop a comprehensive communication strategy that will enhance SJI's brand.

KPI 4.6.1: Understand gaps in SJI branding needed to achieve expansion goals by 2021.

KPI 4.6.2: Complete SJI rebrand by 2022.

KPI 4.6.3: Create SJI marketing and market analysis plan by the end of 2021.

KPI 4.6.4: Implement new branding and marketing system by 2022.

KPI 4.6.5: Revise SJI website by the end of 2022.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder Perceptions in 2021

April 7, 2021

Van L. Davis, PhD – Principal, Foghlam Consulting

BOARD REPORT - Analysis of the SJI Stakeholder Interviews

Nine interviews were conducted with ten SJI stakeholders including a former client and current staff member, representatives of the Seattle WDC, representatives of the City of Seattle, program officers at ECMC, labor representatives, and representatives from the US Department of Agriculture. A list of interviewees is included at the end of the report.

Interviewees were asked to reflect on SJI's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities for growth, and draft vision. What follows is a summation of those interviews. High-level takeaways include:

- Interviewees had a strong positive reaction to SJI and the work it does. Of particular note were SJI's commitment to equity and the quality of SJI's leadership staff.
- Internal and external perceptions about SJI are largely positive although external perceptions reveal issues less visible to internal staff and board members such as diversity challenges and staffing instability.
- Several interviewees warned that the possibility for tension between SJI and the Seattle WDC is high given the potential overlap between the two organizations as well as the tension between WDC and the City of Seattle's Office of Economic Development. As a result, it is critical that SJI align its work with the WDC while maintaining its independence.
- Board leadership and advocacy will be needed to ensure that relationships between SJI, City of Seattle, and the Seattle King County WDC are strengthened to do the work envisioned in the new strategic plan.
- SJI must consider expanding its geographic scope as more immigrant communities and poverty affected individuals are forced out of Seattle and move into the surrounding counties.
- A significant amount of analysis and organizational change will need to be done at the staff level to ensure that the organization has adequate human and fiscal resources for the road ahead.

1. Organizational strengths

- A strong commitment to equity.
- The presence of research, policy, and direct services creates opportunities for a "virtuous circle" that allows policy to impact practice and practice to impact policy. These three elements also allow SJI to be a thought partner with various entities.

- SJI’s national and regional work gives it a unique perspective that balances regional and national concerns and highlights an understanding of both regional and national politics.
- SJI is nimble and adaptable, and, as a result, able to pivot to meet community needs as necessary. SJI’s nimbleness has been on display during the pandemic as the organization has both changed the delivery of some services as well as providing new services.
- SJI is centers families and communities in its work. The organization even goes so far as to use representatives of communities as mentors and staff for direct service programs.
- SJI is the center of a broad network of partners and serves as a neutral and credible source while working with the City of Seattle, Seattle King County WDC, organized labor, and businesses.
- SJI has a strong leadership base that has diverse perspectives on the intersection of workforce, education systems, community partners, and employers.

2. Organizational weaknesses

- Although SJI has deep expertise in SNAP E&T work, there is concern that:
 - technical assistance needs may be evolving faster than SJI’s expertise
 - SJI may not be well positioned to help providers look beyond the current technical assistance work and think about both assessment and quality
 - the risk adverse nature of the federal government could lead to SJI stagnating
- SJI’s technical expertise is deep but narrow. SJI may not have the capacity to discern the “next big thing” in the federal landscape and pivot to meet new needs.
- Although one of SJI’s strengths is that it is both a service provider and a technical assistance provider, there is tension between these two sides of the SJI house. This raises concerns that the contracting/technical assistance area may be perennially understaffed and spread too thin for the amount of consulting/technical assistance work that SJI does.
- As SJI grows, several potential dangers emerge, including:
 - the organization will spread itself too thin
 - the organization might grow less collaborative
 - the organization will grow more disconnected with the communities it has historically served
- Historically, SJI has experienced high turnover rates among both its staff and its leadership. As a result, SJI may need to do more relationship building under its new leadership to counteract any negative perceptions in the field.
- Although SJI has a commitment to diversity, the organization’s leadership and the board are not reflective of the communities that SJI serves.
- The relationship between SJI, the City of Seattle Office of Economic Development, and the Seattle King County WDC is uncertain. SJI runs the risk of offering duplicative services with the WDC.

- The name **Seattle** Jobs Initiative may place the organization at a disadvantage should it decide to expand outside of Seattle.

3. Opportunities for growth

- SJI is uniquely situated to act as a bridge:
 - between WIOA and career/technical education, especially CTE at community colleges
 - between local community based organizations and the workforce ecosystem
 - among regional entities, especially the City of Seattle and the Seattle King County WDC
- Assisting in the evolution of apprenticeship programs including
 - apprenticeship best practice
 - expansion of apprenticeship programs to provide alternative pathways from high school to careers
- Act as a place for innovation and testing that takes advantage of SJI's unique position as both a direct service provider and a research organization.
- Reimagine the regional workforce ecosystem
- Expansion of student-centered design work and leadership in helping institutions understand both the process of student-centered design and the opportunities to use student-centered design in a number of areas.
- Educating and advocating for the expansion of SNAP eligibility to college students. Although there are currently organizations advocating this expansion, those organizations lack expertise in SNAP. SJI is uniquely situated to understand both the workforce education environment as well as SNAP.
- Integration of community and technical assistance dollars in order to create blended systems that create new career pathways.

Interviewees

- Marcie Foster, US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services
- Rachel Gragg, US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services
- Tarrell Harrison, former SJI client and current SJI staff member
- Matt Houghton, City of Seattle Office of Economic Development
- Marie Kurose, Workforce Development Council of Seattle King County
- Shana Peschek, Machinist Institute
- Jason Petrait, Workforce Development Council of Seattle King County
- Rosario Torres and Jennifer Zeisler, ECMC Foundation
- Lindsey Woolsey, Woolsey Group/Next Gen Sector Partnerships

Appendix 2

Key Challenges and Opportunities in 2021

March 12, 2021

Karen Yoshino, PhD - Associate Foghlam Consulting

BOARD REPORT - Analysis of the SJI Strategic Opportunities discussion

The Seattle Jobs Initiative Board of Directors has defined qualities, capacities and opportunities for setting the direction of SJI for 2021 and beyond. At its meeting of February 18 and through follow-up feedback, the following (selected) questions were answered:

1. Who does SJI serve?

Direct Services	Systems Leadership	Policy & Research	Consulting
Individuals	Municipalities	Primary: Office of Economic Development	SNAP E&T Agencies and Partners
Groups	Colleges	Secondary: Other agencies (CTC, industry sector groups)	Colleges (SCD)
Organizations	Employers		
	Companies & organizations		

This conversation brought into sharp focus the broad reach of SJI both regionally and nationally. While this is a positive position in terms of recognition and ability to work in diverse contexts, it also raises the question of whether there is too broad a span for the organization. One observation questioned “whether our perception of who SJI serves directly is consistent with whether others, including clients, recognize SJI as a direct service provider at all.” This comment, if broadly shared, suggests the need for further analysis on this area.

2. What challenges does SJI face?

Although the full board did not respond in the follow-up process, the challenges identified were more than sufficient to inform future directions for the organization. Also, note that the responses were given before recent congressional legislation that may ease the pathway for SJI going forward. The challenges cited are:

1. Predicted slow pace of economic recovery
2. Volume of low-wage and underemployed with multiple barriers to jobs
3. Uncertainty about how WDC strategy will play out

4. Lack of clarity of the workforce priorities from city leadership (current and next mayoral administration)
5. New economic recovery plan could delay clarification of SJI role

3. How do SJI's current services dovetail (or not) with the challenge?

This question of how SJI’s current services dovetail with challenges (specifically asked in terms of sector access with regard to gender and race, matching hiring demand during recovery, opportunity to leverage research to inform clients' and SJI decisions, and the challenges and opportunities faced by SJI) provided a broad range of responses. While not directly asked, these responses as interpreted suggest that SJI has some clear strengths, as follows:

1. SJI’s relationships with employers in the region implies productive partnerships
2. SJI understands access barriers and could be a significant force for guidance
3. Staff understanding of sectors, access to sectors, and equity can result in new ways for SJI work
4. SJI is very experienced in aligning business needs with the workforce and upskilling clients to meet that need.
5. Coherent consulting infrastructure
6. Ability to generate systems change

4. What opportunities does SJI have?

Finally, even with a limited number of responses, several significant opportunities for the direction of SJI emerged from the responses, including:

1. Design new post-COVID career pathways
2. Design and disseminate equitable recovery framework
3. Expand SJI Consulting line both regionally and nationally
4. Expand research to provide data on who is impacted and to what extent by policies and and practices.
5. Keep focus on diversifying funding and business development streams
6. Work with WDC’s proposed restructuring and centralization of workforce development funding

Regional Assessment

	Direct Service or Supporting Direct Service	Leading Systems Change	Research and Policy	Consulting Services
City (local)	Green	Green	Green	Red
County (WDC Region)	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red
Puget Sound Region	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red
Statewide	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
National	Red	Red	Red	Green

Doing now

Prior & pending

Little to none