How to Use the Road Map

JFF invites policymakers, business and civic leaders, and their community partners to use The State Policy Road Map for an Equitable Economic Recovery to guide their states' recoveries from the pandemic-induced downturn and to establish a longer-term vision for resilient, diversified, and inclusive economies for a better and brighter tomorrow.

The *Road Map* is intentionally designed to provide state policymakers and influencers with a range of concrete and proven strategies for getting people back to work, creating new jobs, revitalizing communities, and meeting the talent development needs of today's students, workers, and employers across well-established and emerging sectors of the economy. In the *Road Map*, JFF emphasizes the need to develop policies that intentionally close equity gaps to education, jobs, and opportunities along income and racial lines because such an equity-minded approach is not only right thing to do but it's good for businesses, for taxpayers, and for the quality of places.

Core Principles for Policy Design

The topics and recommendations presented in the *Road Map* are driven by JFF's belief that all federal, state, and local policy measures should be intentionally designed to drive upward mobility, close equity gaps, scale evidence-based practices, spur innovation, and align systems. The box below describes the four tenets underlying the *Road Map*:

1. Drive upward mobility by supporting individuals' social and economic advancement

2. Close equity gaps by acknowledging current and historic disparities in access to opportunity

3. Build on what works by scaling evidence-based strategies while catalyzing innovation

4. Integrate and coordinate systems by supporting comprehensive approaches to complex problems

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Organizing Structure of the Road Map

The *Road Map* is centered around three policy pillars:

1. Help all People Rebound and Advance
2. Revitalize Regional Economies Inclusively
3. Redesign Education and Workforce Development Systems

JFF chose to take this three-pronged approach in recognition of the fact that an equitable recovery requires an interdependent set of reforms across the ecosystem of re-employment and training services, work supports, economic and community development, and secondary and postsecondary education. Each of the three pillars includes three or four key strategies that serve as the best bets for achieving meaningful impact for **people**, **places**, and **systems**. The box below summarizes the major topics explored in the *Road Map*:

Pillar 1: Help People Rebound and Advance

- Rapid skill-building and credential attainment strategies
- Career navigation services
- Innovative financing options to pay for education and training
- Financial and social supports

Pillar 2 Revitalize Regional Economies Inclusively

- Job-generating investments
- Inclusive approaches to economic development
- Job quality
- Regional sector strategies

Pillar 3: Redesign Education and Workforce Development Systems

- Skills-based education and employment infrastructure
- Accelerated and efficient pathways
- Work-based learning

For each of the 11 strategies featured in the *Road Map*, JFF gives a primer that explains why the issue area is critical to an equitable recovery and discusses challenges and barriers that could inhibit efforts to pursue a particular strategy. We present four policy recommendations that provide tangible steps that state policymakers can take. And to demonstrate that progress is in fact possible, we highlight states and local or regional authorities that are taking exemplary action. Each strategy section concludes with a list of JFF resources to guide further and deeper examination of the issues at hand.

Accounting for Different Policy Contexts and Levers for Change

While JFF recognizes that each state has different policy conditions and contexts, we believe every state can and should make meaningful progress in adopting the policy recommendations in the *Road Map*. Through the use of the *Road Map*, states can chart a path from where they are to where they want to be by assessing their progress across the continuum of "Foundational," "Advanced," and "Transformational" policy steps. The *Road Map*

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draws on an array of policy levers to drive change. While the *Road Map* does include some targeted new investments, it also points out how the right metrics, enabling conditions, and implementation supports can catalyze change and improvement. Below, we provide more detailed descriptions and definitions for the continuum of policy steps and levers included in the *Road Map*:

Policy Steps

For each of the 11 policy strategies listed above, JFF suggests a range of actions that states can take across the three-level continuum. Here's a breakdown of the types of goals states should pursue with policies at each level:

‣ **Foundational steps** embody the minimum threshold that every state should meet when making plans and taking action related to education, workforce development, and economic development, with the aim of advancing toward economic recovery.

‣ **Advanced steps** build upon baseline efforts by calling for more aggressive steps toward economic recovery. They also put more emphasis on interventions and strategies that target underrepresented and in-need populations.

‣ **Transformational steps** boldly reimagine existing structures and systems and propose development of entirely new ones with the express intention of keeping up with the future of work and closing equity gaps by removing barriers to quality educational opportunities, good jobs, and economic well-being, so that people from underrepresented and in-need subgroups may fully contribute to and benefit from economic recovery.

Levers for Policy Change

The policies included in JFF's state *Road Map* employ a mix of approaches to bringing about change, rather than solely relying on additional state or local funding. Here are some examples of the measures they make use of:

‣ **Enabling mechanisms:** Incentives to encourage innovation and foster stronger collaboration across systems to accelerate the implementation of evidence-based approaches.

‣ **Funding schemes:** Financial resources, incentives, and tax policy changes that spur much-needed investments in the implementation of evidence-based approaches.

‣ **Implementation standards:** Guidance from policymakers on how practitioners or institutions should implement proven policy-based approaches.

‣ **Governance measures:** Incentives that reward efforts to make systemic changes in the structure and operations of institutions and key stakeholders.

‣ **Directives:** High-level mandates that set clear expectations and deadlines for the actions practitioners and partners should take.

‣ **Capacity-building measures:** Professional development opportunities and technical assistance to help practitioners improve their work.

> **JFF Support**
> *Policy experts at JFF are available to help state policymakers and policy influencers set and achieve their policy priorities. For more information, contact David Altstadt at daltstadt@jff.org*