



RACIAL EQUITY AND ADVANCING THE FUTURE OF MANUFACTURING

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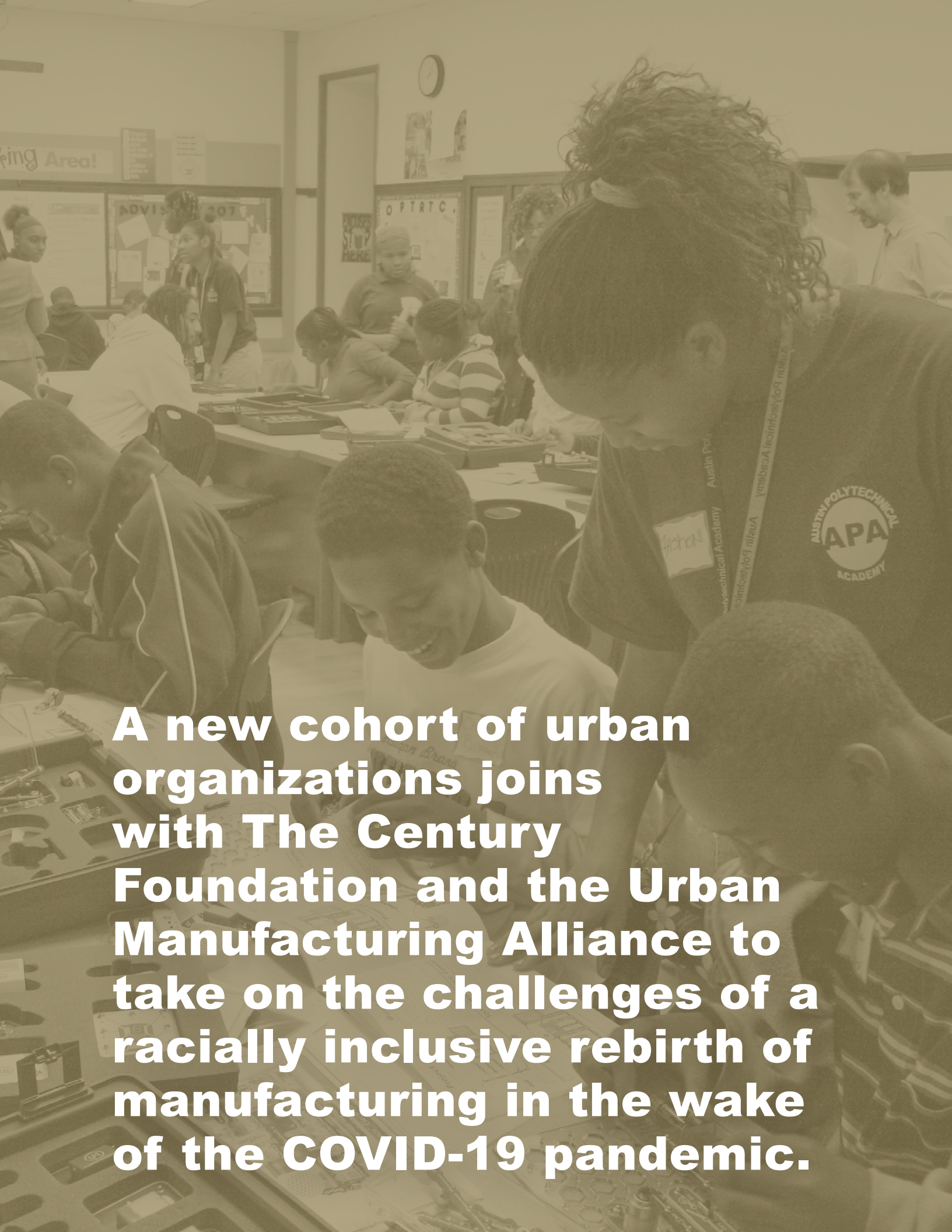
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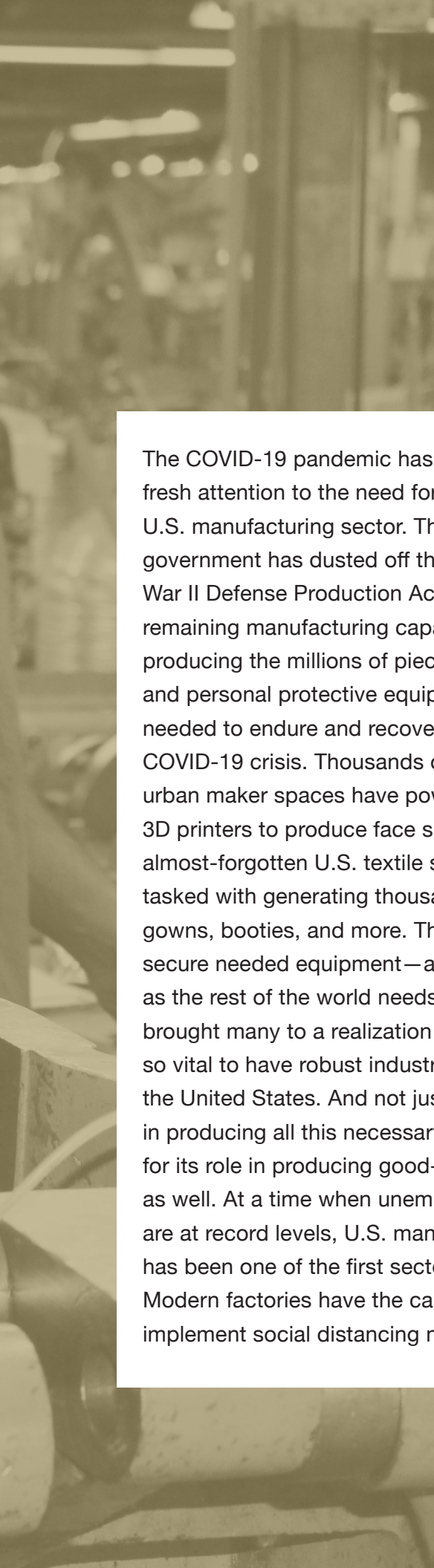
Urban
Manufacturing
Alliance



THE CENTURY
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A new cohort of urban organizations joins with The Century Foundation and the Urban Manufacturing Alliance to take on the challenges of a racially inclusive rebirth of manufacturing in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

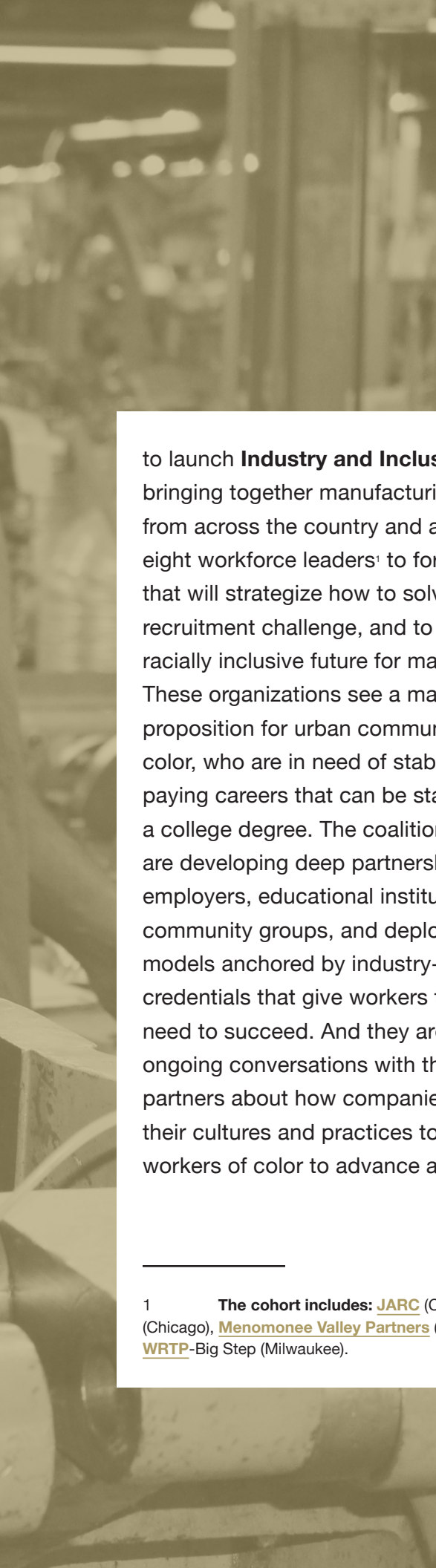


The COVID-19 pandemic has brought fresh attention to the need for a strong U.S. manufacturing sector. The federal government has dusted off the World War II Defense Production Act to turn our remaining manufacturing capacity towards producing the millions of pieces of medical and personal protective equipment (PPE) needed to endure and recover from the COVID-19 crisis. Thousands of makers and urban maker spaces have powered up their 3D printers to produce face shields, and the almost-forgotten U.S. textile sector has been tasked with generating thousands of masks, gowns, booties, and more. The challenge to secure needed equipment—at the same time as the rest of the world needs it as well—has brought many to a realization of why it is so vital to have robust industrial capacity in the United States. And not just for its role in producing all this necessary equipment: for its role in producing good-paying jobs, as well. At a time when unemployment rates are at record levels, U.S. manufacturing has been one of the first sectors to reopen. Modern factories have the capacity to implement social distancing more so than

service sectors and have a demand for workers.

But U.S. manufacturing can't reach its potential for delivering critical goods to the economy and creating well-paying jobs for communities if it does not have access to a skilled workforce. The future of the industrial sector relies on finding a new generation of workers to replace a rapidly aging one. Even before factoring in the need for new medical supply capacity, estimates have told us that an additional 2.4 million manufacturing workers are needed in the next decade. Furthermore, these new workers will have to be skilled at managing the technologies that are radically changing how we manufacture. To achieve these goals, manufacturing will need to take on the challenge of incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion into how it composes its workforce, especially when it comes to career ladders, from entry-level careers to jobs in skilled trades and management.

That's why the Urban Manufacturing Alliance is teaming up with The Century Foundation



to launch **Industry and Inclusion 4.0**. We're bringing together manufacturing experts from across the country and a cohort of eight workforce leaders¹ to form a coalition that will strategize how to solve our national recruitment challenge, and to forge a more racially inclusive future for manufacturing. These organizations see a major win-win proposition for urban communities of color, who are in need of stable, good-paying careers that can be started without a college degree. The coalition members are developing deep partnerships with employers, educational institutions, and community groups, and deploying training models anchored by industry-recognized credentials that give workers the tools they need to succeed. And they are engaging in ongoing conversations with their industry partners about how companies can change their cultures and practices to enable new workers of color to advance and thrive.

It's a challenge that will likely grow more complex in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic's economic impact, given that training facilities face ongoing closures even as factories reopen. While it's natural to want to "return to normalcy" after the pandemic, not only might that not be possible, but it should not be our goal. When it comes to racial equity, the last few weeks have taught all of us in America that we need to heed the call these tragedies have made to us to build a new future for our country, and ascend out of this crisis.

¹ **The cohort includes:** [JARC](#) (Chicago/Baltimore), [LIFT](#) (Detroit), [MAGNET](#) (Cleveland), [Manufacturing Renaissance](#) (Chicago), [Menomonee Valley Partners](#) (Milwaukee), [MxD](#) (Chicago), [Northland Workforce Training Center](#) (Buffalo), and [WRTP](#)-Big Step (Milwaukee).



Seven Lessons for a Just and Inclusive Manufacturing Sector

It won't be easy. Company attention is now trained on economic survival, diverting attention away

from programs that can upgrade the skills of its existing workers; and increasing labor market slack could take away resources from hiring and investing in a diverse workforce. But rather than descend into worse economic and racial disparities, our cohort will strive to make manufacturing communities stronger. As we dive into this year-long national cohort project, from which we expect to learn so much, here are seven things we've already learned about the crucial role that workforce development organizations are playing in ensuring workers are still being trained for existing and future job openings, while engaging with manufacturers to shape the future of the industry.

While it's natural to want to "return to normalcy" after the pandemic, not only might that not be possible, but it should not be our goal.

Our cohort organizations are ready to take on the challenge of building a more inclusive economy as we climb out of the COVID-19 crisis.

Cohort members expect increased interest in upcoming training classes from community members stung by unemployment. These organizations are ready to play the long game in engaging corporate partners to take a hard look at their own workforce, including frontline production workers (who are most likely to be people of color) as a valuable resource to nurture and to move into better paid skilled trades and management positions as a strategy to remain competitive in difficult times. The agenda includes translating the openness of manufacturing owners into change on the shop floor, where biases and ingrained patterns can interfere with the success of new hires and cause managers to miss out on talent within their own midst. Addressing this challenge has become more complicated for workforce development organizations accustomed to visiting factory floors, who are now limited to online interactions with managers and workers. Companies that are serious about pursuing diversity and inclusion will need to work with organizations like the ones in the cohort to help leaders and those who work together daily to find common ground. The events of the last several weeks, and last several years, have reminded us how deep the seeds of racial mistrust are in America, and how positive efforts cannot afford to be dislodged by those who won't embrace change.

Manufacturing workforce organizations offered coordination between industry and community in pre-COVID-19 times, and that coordination is even more critical now.

For essential manufacturing companies pivoting to changing demands (like producing PPE), manufacturing workforce organizations are behind the scenes making sure companies' workforce needs are met. Other, often smaller, manufacturers are struggling to keep their doors open, but when they do open, they'll be able to rely on a swath of trained workers ready to be hired. One of our cohort members, MAGNET, in Cleveland, offers a full spectrum of manufacturing services, including technical services, market consulting, and workforce support, to help manufacturers in any stage of dealing with this crisis. JARC of Baltimore and Chicago offers customized training for companies with existing and new employees, which can happen at the factory site and would be accessible before schools reopen. All manufacturers should have access to these types of organizations to ensure employees' skills can continually match employer needs without disruption. In Detroit, LIFT is 3D-printing N95 masks and has connected members of its manufacturing ecosystem to the government and other manufacturers to assist in manufacturing critical supplies. In Chicago, MxD is directly addressing medical supply shortages by producing materials from its shop floor and distributing digital plans to others who want to make face shields. They are also leading long-term efforts to increase the production capacity of manufacturers to meet medical crises.

Our cohort is helping the most vulnerable to cope with the economic downturn.

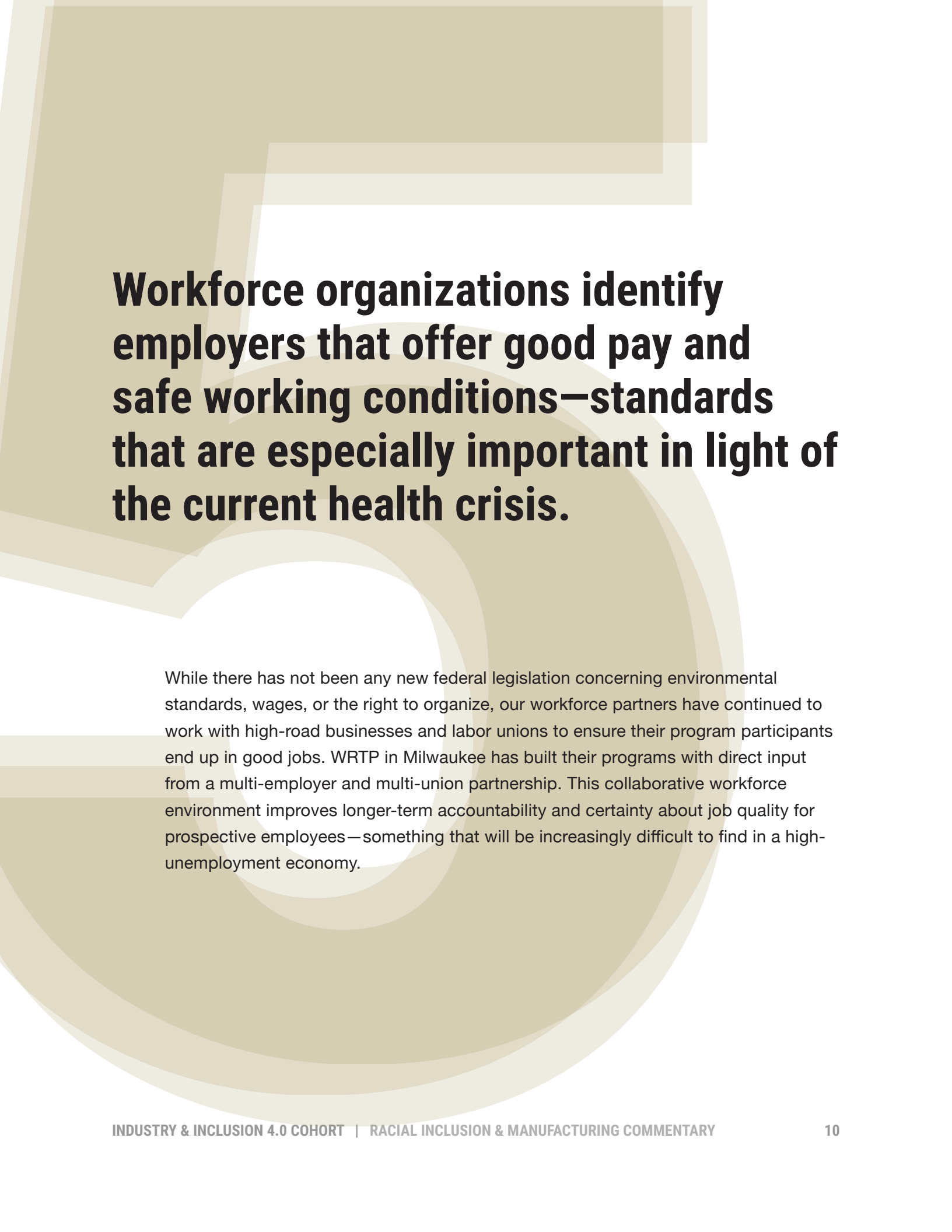
The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated existing inequalities, and we are glad to lift up organizations working to cushion the blow to vulnerable communities. These organizations serve youth and unemployed adults who have barriers to entry and help them not only get trained and placed into decent entry-level jobs, but also advocate for firms to improve retention and upward mobility. The best economic security is a good job with benefits, and the success of cohort members at placing people of color into manufacturing jobs with good pay and benefits is bolstering families and entire communities.

The mission of our cohort members is to provide this type of economic security both during and after the COVID-19 crisis, just as they had been doing so before it began. They offer technical training and industry recognized-credentials that will help bring their students to the top of applicant pools when hiring ramps up. Each of the organizations use industry-recognized credentials such as the metalworking credentials offered by NIMS and the production credentials offered by the Manufacturing Skills

Standards Council. First and foremost, these industry credentials provide a structured introduction for students to the reality of manufacturing, and assess their readiness for manufacturing work for potential employers and placing agencies. For example, the Northland Workforce Training Center in Buffalo, situated in a major rehabilitated industrial development facility in the city's largely African-American East Side, has partnered with the Buffalo Urban League and the Catholic Charities of Western New York to assist with recruiting, assessments, and wrap-around services so that residents can take advantage of offerings in the city's community. This ensures that the community being served is aware of what jobs are available while also preparing them for those jobs. Many cohort members work with schools to various degrees to increase young people's awareness of opportunities in the manufacturing sector. Cohort members offer a host of other services, from transportation to soft-skill training and continual mentorship—the latter two of which are still being offered, virtually in many cases, as the pandemic continues.

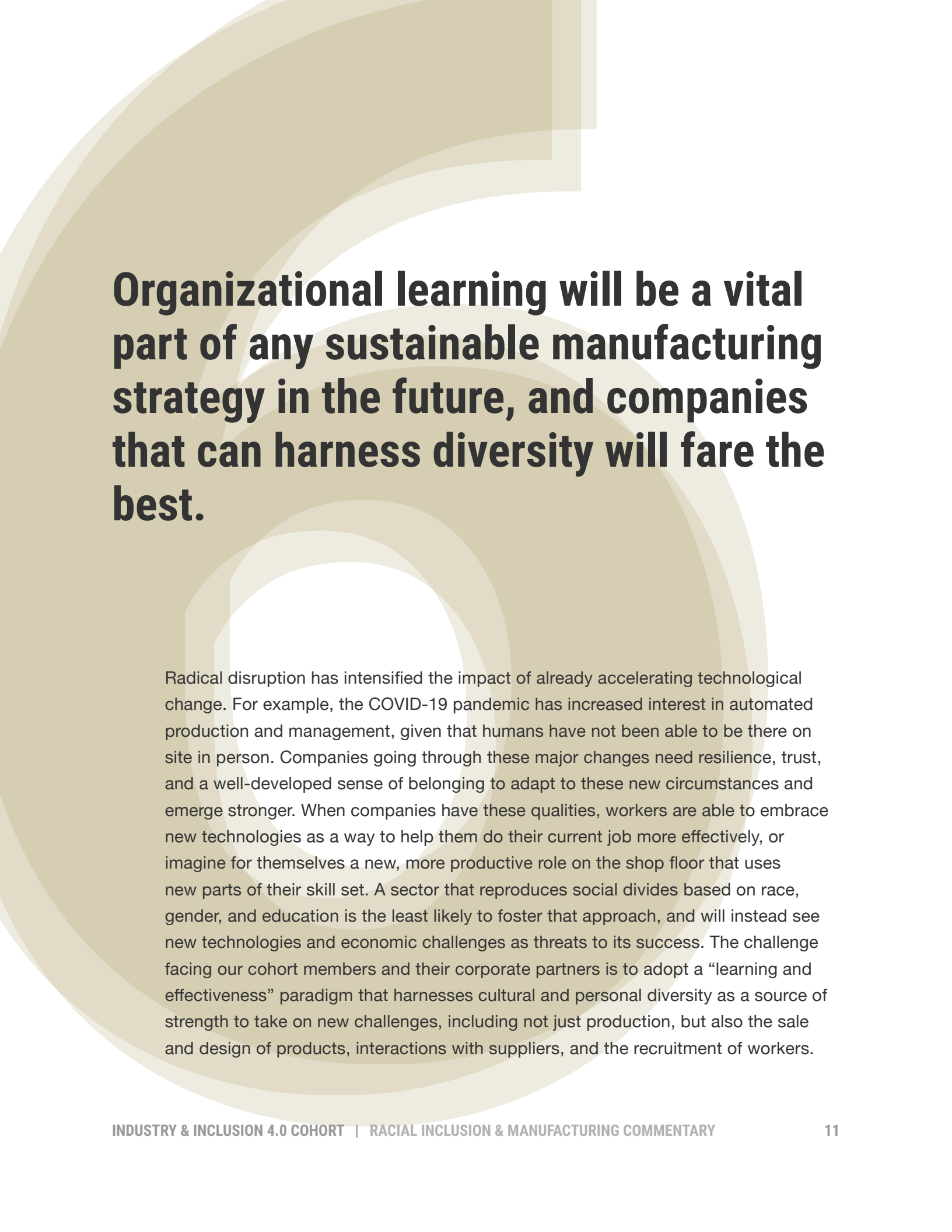
The steps that programs take now can strengthen and diversify their programs in the long run.

All cohort members are operating online now more than ever before. They are building new virtual platforms and programs for their students, and, in effect, are developing new methods that may become permanent aspects of their operations. Manufacturing Renaissance recently ran their M-Pak Makes an M-Pact drive, raising money to supply fifty students with the tools they need for learning at home (including tablets, measuring tapes, and power drills). Of course, an all-virtual setting is not ideal for many programs: as one member said, “It’s hard to teach welding remotely.” But all have demonstrated their dedication and commitment to ensuring programmatic success and completion, despite difficult circumstances—a test of resiliency that all programs so far are passing.



Workforce organizations identify employers that offer good pay and safe working conditions—standards that are especially important in light of the current health crisis.

While there has not been any new federal legislation concerning environmental standards, wages, or the right to organize, our workforce partners have continued to work with high-road businesses and labor unions to ensure their program participants end up in good jobs. WRTP in Milwaukee has built their programs with direct input from a multi-employer and multi-union partnership. This collaborative workforce environment improves longer-term accountability and certainty about job quality for prospective employees—something that will be increasingly difficult to find in a high-unemployment economy.



Organizational learning will be a vital part of any sustainable manufacturing strategy in the future, and companies that can harness diversity will fare the best.

Radical disruption has intensified the impact of already accelerating technological change. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased interest in automated production and management, given that humans have not been able to be there on site in person. Companies going through these major changes need resilience, trust, and a well-developed sense of belonging to adapt to these new circumstances and emerge stronger. When companies have these qualities, workers are able to embrace new technologies as a way to help them do their current job more effectively, or imagine for themselves a new, more productive role on the shop floor that uses new parts of their skill set. A sector that reproduces social divides based on race, gender, and education is the least likely to foster that approach, and will instead see new technologies and economic challenges as threats to its success. The challenge facing our cohort members and their corporate partners is to adopt a “learning and effectiveness” paradigm that harnesses cultural and personal diversity as a source of strength to take on new challenges, including not just production, but also the sale and design of products, interactions with suppliers, and the recruitment of workers.

We have a unique opportunity to change general perceptions of manufacturing.

The unexpected impact of the pandemic and the recent social justice uprisings has brought about a very costly but real chance to reframe the conversation about diversity, equity, and inclusion in ways that may not otherwise have been possible. As communities remember their struggles to secure needed medical equipment—and the sudden vulnerability of service sector jobs due to the virus—manufacturing is gaining new attention. Cohort members are seeking ways to embrace the equity principles that so many millions of Americans are calling for and help facilitate a change in how manufacturing is perceived, and to engage institutional influencers (e.g. education, financial, and religious actors) to communicate the value and opportunities in manufacturing for all. Menomonee Valley Partners has cultivated long-standing relationships with employers in Milwaukee’s densest industrial neighborhood, and is engaging them in an ongoing dialogue about what it will take to recruit those who live in adjacent neighborhoods, which are heavily populated with people of color. The first step has been a series of visits and shadowing that has begun to introduce communities to the sector who have been alienated from good jobs that are often steps away from their homes. This will be a long process that will include the hard, healing work of developing relational credibility between communities, intermediary organizations, and companies. But it is the only foundation for any serious effort for new forms of inclusive economic development.



A Future That Includes Us All

Equity and inclusion, and as they pertain to race in particular, are critical to sectors across the economy in securing talent and incorporating diverse perspectives as they face a challenging and changing environment. African Americans, Latinxs, and Asian Americans have been a crucial part of the history of American manufacturing and its role in the ascent of the world's most powerful industrial nation. As companies, communities, and governments come together to further industrial rebirth, racial equity can and should gain a central place in not only workforce recruitment, but in the overall envisioning of the sector as well.



AMANDA NOVELLO

Amanda Novello is a senior policy associate at The Century Foundation and works with Century's Rediscovering Government Initiative. Her research interests include labor economics, the history of policy and economic

development, and progressive economic policy. Prior to working at Century, she was a researcher and later Assistant Director at the Schwartz Center for Economic Policy Analysis, and co-founder and co-president of oikos NYC, a student organization that focuses on environmentalism in economics. She holds a BA in Economics and Mathematics from the University of Southern California and an MA in Economics from The New School for Social Research.



ANDREW STETTNER

Andrew Stettner is a senior fellow at The Century Foundation. His career as a non-profit leader spans 20 years of experience modernizing workforce protections and social insurance programs at every level, including community organizing, research, policy, and program development. At the National Employment Law Project, he spearheaded a decade-long effort to realign the unemployment

insurance safety net with the needs of the modern workforce that culminated with a multi-billion dollar package of reforms enacted in the Recovery Act in 2009. In 2010, he was elected to the National Academy of Social Insurance in recognition of his leadership in the field and received Jewish Funds for Justice Cornerstone Award for outstanding contribution to social justice by leaders under the age of 40. After working at NELP, he took his research on low take up of social insurance into action designing and implementing multi-million dollar benefits enrollment initiatives first at Seedco and then at Single Stop USA. He has published dozens of policy reports and been frequently cited in media outlets across the country. He is a graduate of Columbia University where he earned a B.A. in Psychology, and also holds an M.P.P. in Public Policy from Georgetown University.



LEE WELLINGTON

Lee Wellington has dedicated her career to industrial development for over a decade. Before joining the UMA as our Founding Executive Director, Lee directed a New York City Council Member's land use decisions and legislative portfolio as Chief of Staff;

helped create NYC's Industrial Business Zones and a broader industrial policy for the NYC Mayor's Office; and administered a New York State tax incentive program, expanding incentive boundaries to include new industrial neighborhoods. Lee was a Planning Fellow at the Pratt Center for Community Development where she coordinated a vacant lot activation program and assisted with a large-scale study of the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Lee received a B.S. in Economics from the Stern School of Business at New York University, a J.D. from Brooklyn Law School, and a M.S. in City and Regional Planning from the Pratt Institute.



KATY STANTON

As Program Director, Katy works closely with the Urban Manufacturing Alliance's (UMA) network to build programming that brings people together between and within cities to support urban manufacturing. She oversees

many of UMA's key research and activities, including UMA's Communities of Practice, in-person events, national research, and membership communication. Building off of 10 years in campaign politics across the country, Katy takes a community-organizing approach to growing UMA's network. She believes that manufacturing creates equitable pathways for people of all backgrounds. She is driven by creating opportunities for storytelling so that people can open their minds to this kind of place-based economic development.



RON WILLIAMS

Ron has been in higher education for 35 years, spending the past 24 years as a faculty member of the Coppin State University (CSU) College of Business where he also served as dean from 2013 until 2017. In 2016 he established a formal relationship between a Coppin State University and Open Works Baltimore, a 34K sq. ft makerspace in Baltimore, which is the first relationship of its kind in the nation between a makerspace and a public HBCU. Ron also served as the principal investigator for the 2019 “Turning Makerspaces into Greater Places: An Organizational Assessment and Economic

Impact Study of Open Works,” (www.GreaterSpacesAndPlaces.com), one of the first comprehensive assessments and economic impact studies of a makerspace in the nation. He is currently conducting research to develop a trust framework for collaborative economic development, particularly across cultural and geographic divides where historical distrust exists. His unique concept of “ingepreneurship” (inge... as in ingenuity) is described in a 2017 Metropolitan Journal article entitled “Creating a University Driven ‘Ingepreneurial’ Ecosystem in West Baltimore: A Strategy for Rust Belt Revitalization.” Ron holds a Ph.D. in management and organization from George Washington University with a concentration in the management of science, technology and innovation, and currently serves on the Boards of Directors of Open Works in Baltimore and the Urban Manufacturing Alliance.

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