

The Equitable Innovation Economies Initiative releases report on groundbreaking efforts of four cities working to advance more inclusive growth strategies

Prototyping Equity: Local Strategies for a more Inclusive Innovation Economy to be released at the Urban Manufacturing Alliance Convening in Indianapolis, IN on September 14-16, 2016

NEW YORK, NY. September 13, 2016 – Since 2014, a visionary group of leaders from New York, NY, Indianapolis, IN, Portland, OR and San Jose, CA have been piloting new approaches to advancing equity in innovation and manufacturing through the Equitable Innovation Economies (EIE) initiative. Over two years, each city in this community of practice has evaluated a particular economic development project through an equity lens, working to increase benefits for all city residents and communities. EIE's flagship report, **Prototyping Equity: Local strategies for a more inclusive innovation economy** documents this work, including the tools guiding this pilot effort, candid perspectives from each city, and broader insights for the field.

The Pratt Center for Community Development in Brooklyn, NY, and PolicyLink in Oakland, CA are leading this effort, providing technical assistance and facilitation. The Urban Manufacturing Alliance's (UMA) expansive network of over 100 cities has served as a platform for this initiative, and the report will be shared with members at the UMA 2016 National Convening in Indianapolis on September 14-16.

Federal and local leaders have increasingly looked to the innovation economy as an opportunity to catalyze growth. While investments in the innovation economy may drive new jobs and economic growth, they can also exacerbate inequities for cities confronting the loss of middle-wage jobs and widen economic and racial disparities. The EIE focus differs from the status quo by targeting equity in the innovation economy and manufacturing and leveraging assets such as entrepreneurship programs, advanced manufacturing firms, and makerspaces to create diverse, good quality jobs for underserved and disenfranchised communities.

The vision for EIE stems from the recognition that achieving more inclusive growth in innovation and manufacturing will require deliberate, holistic approaches to program design. Each city's projects focused on unique equity challenges across a range of strategies:

- **New York City's Economic Development Corporation** is building a more inclusive production economy by advancing and tracking equity objectives in its advanced manufacturing programs, and breaking down barriers to awareness and access amongst low-income and communities of color.
- **Riley Area Development Corporation and LISC Indianapolis** are focusing on bringing a mix of manufacturing, design, and other small B2B businesses to the redevelopment of the city's Mass Ave Industrial Corridor, a 500-acre underutilized industrial district, and providing on-ramps to quality jobs through local workforce partnerships.
- **Portland Development Commission** has launched an inclusive start up fund to cultivate and provide targeted support to women and entrepreneurs of color. The agency's Strategic Plan also includes a framework for integrating equity into economic development strategies and incorporating inclusion in target industry development.
- **San Jose's Office of Economic Development** is creating pathways into good quality manufacturing jobs in Silicon Valley by introducing workforce programs that connect San Jose youth from low-income neighborhoods with job training, internships and mentoring opportunities in this sector.

"The innovation economy, which includes manufacturing, has emerged as one of the most significant drivers of job growth. But its emphasis on technology and increasing educational requirements make it less accessible to people from disadvantaged communities," said **Adam Friedman, Executive Director of Pratt Center**. "We commend the four EIE pilot cities for taking on these issues and committing to implementation of more equitable economic development strategies in their cities."

“Equity is the bedrock of an innovation economy,” said **Angela Glover Blackwell, PolicyLink President and CEO**. “By unleashing the entrepreneurial spirit of communities of color and creating pathways to tomorrow’s jobs, cities can foster inclusive growth and help all residents reach their full potential. The strategies highlighted in Prototyping Equity are essential to building strong, equitable cities.”

“At its core, our efforts to support production jobs in cities across the country are about equity,” said **Lee Wellington, Executive Director of the Urban Manufacturing Alliance**. “We are at a pivotal moment where manufacturing is both evolving and rebounding in cities. The time is now to address the urgent equity question head on with a range of interventions documented in Prototyping Equity.”

“Indianapolis’ participation in EIE gives community development corporations [like ours] a framework to better understand and incorporate the role inclusivity and access plays in our projects,” said **Eric Strickland, Executive Director, Riley Area Development Corporation**. “Intentional thought about equity is a factor in decision making around where we work, who we work with, and how we hope to connect businesses to the local workforce.”

“While LISC Indianapolis has always emphasized workforce equity in our support for neighborhood-based Centers for Working Families, our participation in EIE has prompted us to think more intentionally about how we can promote the formation of minority-owned startups and also influence the hiring practices of expanding businesses in targeted industrial districts,” said **Tom Orr, Senior Program Officer, LISC Indianapolis**.

“Too many people are being left behind in this economy,” said **Portland Mayor Charles Hales**. “PDC’s participation in the EIE initiative advances our work creating a more inclusive city that offers equitable opportunities for economic growth.”

“Participating in the EIE initiative validated that we were on the right track. The insights we gained on inclusive economic development have informed our new strategic plan, which puts equity and inclusion at the center of our work,” said **Katherine Krajnak, Senior Industry Liaison, Entrepreneurship at Portland Development Commission**.

“The EIE pilot has enabled us to structure a comprehensive way to evaluate how our advanced manufacturing programs are translating into more equitable job opportunities,” commented **Miquela Craytor, Director of Industrial Policy and Vice President, Center for Urban Innovation at the New York City Economic Development Corporation**. Over the last two years, we’ve been able to strategically increase awareness of opportunities in the field amongst communities of color and women, impacting participation as well as deepening our approach to equity throughout our portfolio.”

“A focus on high-tech manufacturing can help ensure that more of our residents share in the prosperity created by our Silicon Valley innovation economy,” said **San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo**. “Our participation in the Equitable Innovation Economies Initiative gives us an opportunity to build upon San José’s rich advanced manufacturing heritage, and, when combined with programs such as SJ Works or SJ Learns, we can provide a pathway to the middle class for thousands of residents.”

“By sharing with and learning from other cities across the country, the EIE collaborative helped us recognize what is uniquely San Jose about our approach to equity in economic development, and how we could broaden our impact,” said **Michelle Thong, Business Development Officer, San Jose Office of Economic Development**. “While preserving middle-skill manufacturing jobs has been a focus for us, EIE pushed us to go farther by leveraging partnerships with our workforce investment agency to connect residents with local employers.”

At the UMA Convening in Indianapolis, the EIE pilot group will showcase their work alongside other cities pursuing similar efforts, including Baltimore, Los Angeles, and Milwaukee. The Surdna Foundation and the Ford Foundation have provided generous support for EIE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT EIE AND TO DOWNLOAD THE REPORT, VISIT [PRATTCENTER.NET/EIE](https://prattcenter.net/eie)

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The Pratt Center for Community Development works for a more just, equitable, and sustainable city for all New Yorkers by empowering communities to plan for and realize their futures.

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