

#16: Jobs & Employment

OPTIONAL METRIC FOR CATEGORY A & B & C COMMUNITIES

METRIC TOPICS

Pick and report one community-defined measure each for:

- 16.1 **Jobs**
- 16.2 **Employment**
- 16.3 **Income**
- 16.4 **Poverty**

METRIC DEFINITION

- **Jobs** are a fundamental and reinforcing part of an individual's identity, social networks and sense of purpose. A good local economy is one that creates and sustains meaningful jobs and businesses, including jobs in the “green” economy. Much data from national, state, tribal, regional and city organizations attempt to provide a snapshot each year on the number, type, location, and quality of jobs and businesses in each local. “Living wage” jobs are variously defined by governmental entities and are one way of characterizing the quality of jobs in the community. (Metric 16.1)
- **Employment** numbers reflect the percent of a community’s population working, not working, and underemployed. Data comparisons can include unemployment rates of self-determined subsets of community members; for example, the unemployment rate of community members in the workforce aged 18-26 compared to the overall unemployment rate. (Metric 16.2)
- **Income** reports dollars earned by the average, or median resident, or by household. Comparisons can be made to income relative to rents, mortgages and living wages. Income distribution data can be used to look at income inequality, as this affects the wellbeing of community members. Typically, this inequality is reported as the Gini coefficient (the gap between rich and poor), reported on a scale from 0 to 1, but calculated Ginis exist only for counties in the U.S. (Metric 16.3)
- **Poverty** has many definitions and measures. While the federal government defines a poverty income level, communities may use a state, tribal, county or city dollar level to better reflect, for the local context, what level of income significantly challenges community members from fulfilling their minimal potential as active participants in society. (Metric 16.4)

DATA SOURCES

- Census QuickFacts <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>. See the guide to [using census data](#) for more help.
- Social income inequality and jobs per worker data at <https://livabilityindex.aarp.org/>

METRIC CALCULATION AND PUBLIC REPORTING

- **Jobs** – suggested data points are:
 - Jobs per worker

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- Jobs per acre in mixed-use commercial and neighborhood districts
- % of jobs that pay a living wage
- % of labor force working the green jobs sector
- % of business start-ups that survive 5 years
- **Employment** - depending on the size of your community, issues of concern, and availability of data, different data points might be:
 - % of residents employed
 - % of residents unemployment
 - Unemployment disparity: ratio of unemployment rates between a subset of residents and the community-wide unemployment rate
- **Income** – overall community data points and disparity calculations include:
 - Median household income
 - Personal income per capita
 - Income disparity: % of total personal income going to top 20% vs. bottom 80% of earners
- **Poverty** – many data points may be available; common ones are:
 - % individuals living at or below a poverty line (defined locally)
 - % of households living below the federal poverty line

METRIC RATIONALE

The GreenStep program challenges participants to “achieve their sustainability and quality-of-life goals.” While the 29 GreenStep best practices focus on environmental issues, with a strong community-wide economic thread, jobs and employment for individuals are inherent in building greater sustainability in a community. Hence this one GreenStep metric focuses on these issues of individual work, employment and jobs.

Two disparity measures are included as options in these GreenStep metrics. For unemployment, some Minnesota communities are very concerned about disproportionately high unemployment in certain subsets of community residents. And related to income, studies, including by the American Community Survey (U.S. Census: 2014) show that Americans are happier when income inequality is low. While local and tribal governments have very limited ability to affect these numbers, a review of policies and programs that incentivize certain types of businesses and jobs may identify actions a community can take to address the disparities. For example, does the city/tribe subsidize small businesses, start-ups, existing businesses, home-based businesses, big-box stores, warehouses, manufacturers?

GreenStep suggests measures but is not specifying a specific metric for each metric topic and leaves it to each community to choose relevant metrics and report that data.

STEP 5 METRIC TARGETS

While there is no shortage of public and private organizations urging communities to hit specific targets in this jobs/employment area, and while there are funding streams related to specific targets, each community is unique and can best set realistic targets that are finely tuned to the community’s history, current capabilities, and aspirations.

At a state level, the Minnesota Compass (<https://www.mncompass.org/economy/overview>) provides an overview of what’s happening in Minnesota.

LEED FOR CITIES & COMMUNITIES

<https://www.usgbc.org/leed/rating-systems/leed-for-cities-communities>

QL Prerequisite: Demographic & Social Equity Assessment

- Conduct a demographic and social equity assessment for the city that addresses the following categories:
 - Demographic and socio-economic characteristics: Age cohorts; race/ethnic composition; other prominent sociocultural groups present, such as migrants, religious groups, and linguistically isolated; people with disabilities, median household income and proportion of residents living below poverty line; education attainment (people with less than high school education).
 - History of housing and neighborhood development: Brief history of development noting critical points of change for the overall city or specific neighborhoods; housing market analysis; information on unhoused population.
 - Distribution of social infrastructure, assets, and services: Parks, libraries, recreation centers, schools, fire stations, police stations, hospitals/health services, internet (broadband) connectivity, and supermarket/grocery stores with a produce section.

QL Prerequisite: Quality of Life Performance

- Measure all of the Quality of Life parameters listed below for one whole calendar year within the last five years. Points are based on city's performance in Arc combined across four categories – Education, Equitability, Prosperity, and Health and Safety.
 - 1. Education
 - Population with (at least) a High School Degree – Percentage of adult population
 - Population with (at least) a Bachelor's Degree – Percentage of adult population
 - 2. Equitability
 - Median Gross Rent as a % of Household Income
 - Gini Coefficient – A number between 0 and 1
 - 3. Prosperity
 - Median Household Income – Median household income in equivalent US dollars
 - Unemployment Rate – Percent of population 16 years and over
 - 4. Health and Safety
 - Median Air Quality Index (AQI) – A number between 0 and 500
 - Air Quality Days Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups – Number of days
 - Violent Crime – per year per capita
- Obtain a minimum Quality of Life Performance score of 40 on Arc.

RELATED BEST PRACTICE ACTIONS

- [27.2](#) Integrate climate resilience into city or tribal **planning, policy, operations, and budgeting** processes.
- [27.3](#) Increase **social connectedness** through engagement, capacity building, public investment, and opportunities for economically vulnerable residents to improve their economic prosperity and resilience to climate change.

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[NEED HELP? CONTACT](#)

Kristin Mroz, [GreenStep Cities Coordinator](#), 651-757-2793 or Kristin.mroz-risse@state.mn.us

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