



THE HIGH LINE NETWORK LAUNCHES NEW PUBLICATION: *INSPIRATION FROM THE FIELD: STRATEGIES AND TACTICS FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT*

The Third Publication from the Network Focuses on Creating Pathways to Living Wage Careers in Park Construction

NEW YORK, NY (October 30, 2025) — The High Line Network—a coalition of more than 45 nonprofit organizations transforming underutilized infrastructure into new urban landscapes across North America led by the High Line, New York City's iconic elevated park—today announces the launch of the publication *Inspiration from the Field: Strategies and Tactics for Workforce Development*. Developed by the High Line Network and featuring research and evaluation by the Urban Institute, this latest research publication in the High Line Network's catalogue is drawn from case studies of 11 workforce initiatives from member organizations across the country. It serves as a planning resource for creating pathways to living wage, highly skilled careers in park construction for practitioners in the field of infrastructure reuse, as well as city officials, urban planners, nonprofit leaders, and other community members. The publication will launch to the public with [a free, virtual event](#) on November 6, 2025.

"Serving more than 50 million visitors across North America each year, infrastructure reuse leaders in the High Line Network have enormous impact on their communities, and considerable influence in determining best practices in the larger field of urban greenspaces as well," said Alan van Capelle, Executive Director of Friends of the High Line, which leads the High Line Network. "*Inspiration from the Field: Strategies and Tactics for Workforce Development* showcases how seriously High Line Network members take their responsibility to their communities, and the power these experts have in coming together to share their experiences and ideas."

"As high-profile spaces that attract new investment, infrastructure reuse sites are well-positioned to create opportunities for their communities," said Kira Strong, Senior Director, High Line Network. "From ensuring community members have pathways to existing workforce development programming, to securing intentional hiring commitments and supporting local contractors, infrastructure reuse projects can ensure new investment flows directly into neighboring communities. The High Line Network is proud to offer *Inspiration from the Field: Strategies and Tactics for Workforce Development* as a resource for providing greater community-wealth building."

Inspiration from the Field: Strategies and Tactics for Workforce Development shares proven, community-centered approaches for integrating intentional and inclusive

workforce development into the design and construction of public spaces. Rooted in a pilot led by Washington D.C.'s Building Bridges Across the River and four other Network members transforming infrastructure across the country, the publication highlights 11 scalable models that create living-wage careers through park development. Combining [research and pilot evaluation data from the Urban Institute](#) with firsthand stories from training program alumni, it offers actionable insights for park professionals, citymakers, and civic leaders. The publication demonstrates how public spaces can generate lasting economic opportunity, build trust, and ensure investment stays in the communities they serve.

The publication will formally launch at 2:30 p.m. on November 6, 2025 at [a free, public virtual event](#) that will feature a panel discussion with participants from each of the five Network member organizations that participated in the workforce development pilot, moderated by the pilot's research and evaluation team from Urban Institute. Attendees will also have the opportunity to join breakout groups with workforce development leaders from across the High Line Network to collectively discuss winning program strategies and supports, including youth employment programs, incentives and wraparound services, choosing workforce program partners, high value certifications, and more.

Building Bridges Across the River launched the workforce development pilot with four other Network members—India Basin Waterfront Park (San Francisco, California), Trinity Park Conservancy (Dallas, Texas), The Riverline (Buffalo, New York), and Grand River Corridor (Grand Rapids, Michigan)—each at different stages of development, with different local partners, political support, and funding scaffolds. Together, over the course of three years they tested strategies for workforce development and creating living-wage careers in the construction of urban green spaces. Ideas and learnings were shared within the High Line Network during the Network's 2023 Policy Lab, a convening of practitioners around the theme of infrastructure reuse's economic impact and building community wealth through localized training and hiring programs.

The culmination of this pilot—both the research collected and data analyzed by Urban Institute, as well the personal stories of training program alumni—resulted in *Inspiration from the Field: Strategies and Tactics for Workforce Development*. *Inspiration from the Field* offers a model for workforce development that park professionals and city makers everywhere can use to unlock new economic opportunities in their communities. It demonstrates scalable training models and impactful supports that public spaces everywhere can use to ensure neighboring residents benefit—from offering stipends so that participants can enroll in training programs without missing out on crucial income, to providing meals and transportation. While the pilot focused on adult workforce development, *Inspiration from the Field* also highlights several teen employment programs, and how these programs can offer meaningful jobs where young people can

explore career paths, cultivate skills, meet mentors, and grow into the next generation of parks advocates.

As high-profile community spaces that attract significant amounts of new investment, civic spaces are able to attract and refer community members to existing workforce development programming, while at the other end of this pipeline, they can leverage their status as purchasers of services to secure hiring commitments and support local contractors—ensuring new investment flows directly into communities in the park's footprint. Workforce development programs also build community trust and ensure that park dollars stay in the community. This publication aims to inspire park projects across the country to integrate workforce development into their strategies for creating leading public spaces, built by and for the community.

Presented by the High Line, the High Line Network is a peer to peer group of infrastructure reuse projects. As cities become denser and land for traditional parks becomes more scarce, residents are finding creative ways to bring greenspace to their neighborhoods. Projects in the High Line Network transform underutilized infrastructure into new urban landscapes. Redefining what a park can be, these hybrid spaces are also public squares, open-air museums, botanical gardens, social service organizations, walkways, transit corridors, and more.

SUPPORT

Lead support for the High Line Network and for this publication is provided by the Freedom Together Foundation.

Evaluation for this publication by Urban Institute.

MEDIA CONTACT

Janelle Grace | High Line | 646.774.2536 | janelle.grace@thehighline.org