



# Pathways to high-quality jobs for young adults

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# Agenda

Research question

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Defining our measures

Job quality

Disadvantaged backgrounds

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Implications & recommendations



# Research question





# Research question

How do young people find their way to high-quality jobs in adulthood?

- Specifically, adolescents who are less likely to enroll in and complete a college degree immediately after high school
- For these young people, are there particular education, training, and employment experiences in their teens and early- to mid-20s that make a difference?





Data source



# Data source: The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1997

Nationally representative survey of people born between 1980 and 1984

Its first round of questions began in 1997, when respondents were between the ages of 12 and 18

17 rounds of questions have been fielded in all, and respondents are now in their early to mid-thirties

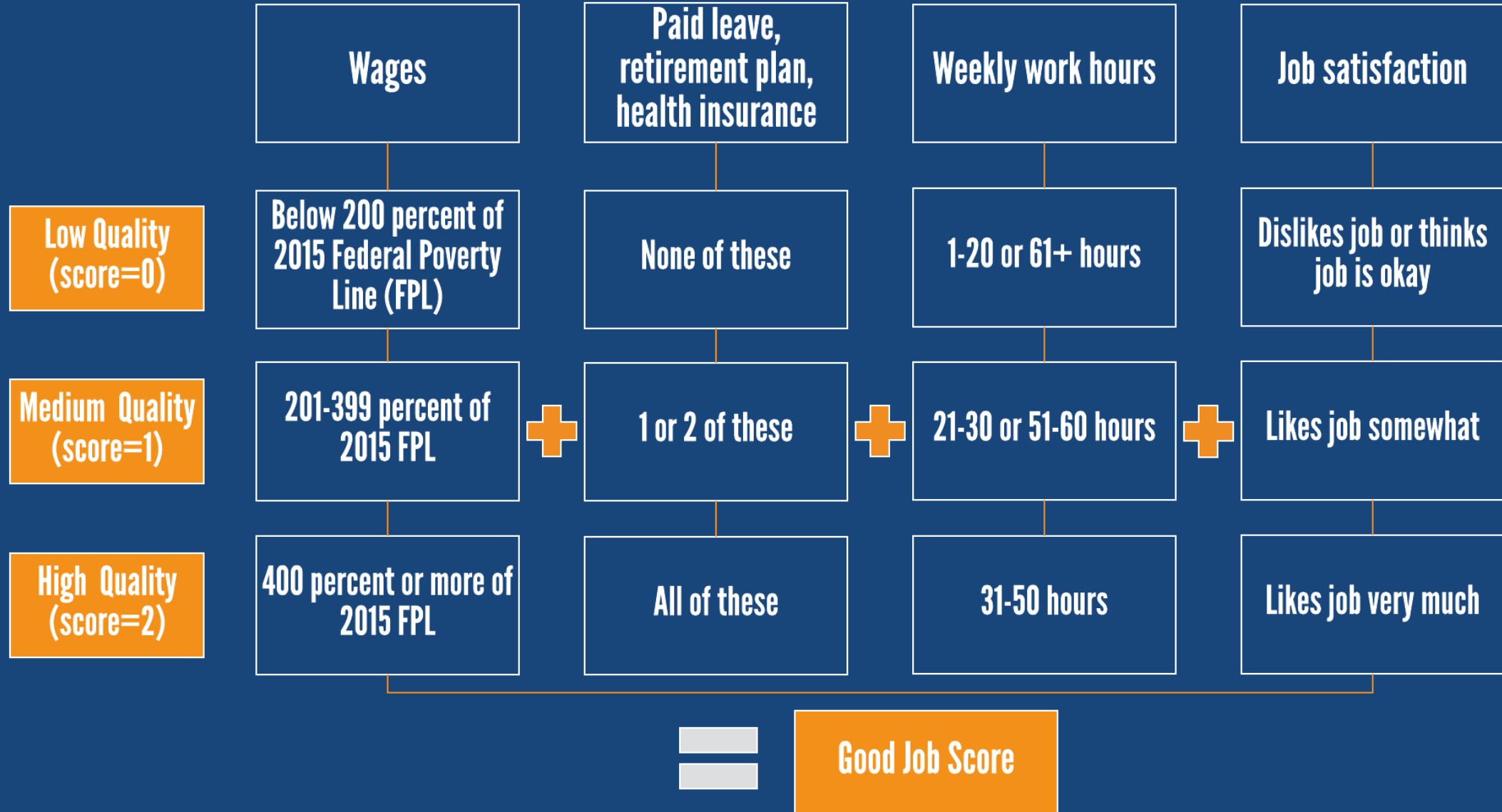




# Defining our measures



# Defining the job quality index





# Distribution of job quality scores

**Wages**

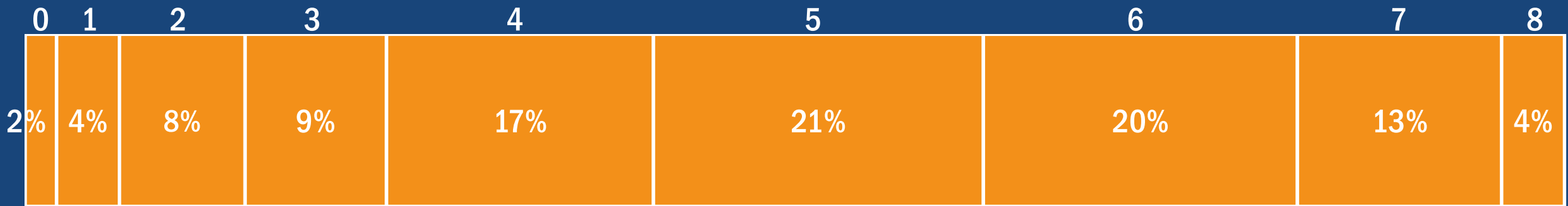
**Paid leave,  
retirement plan,  
health insurance**

**Weekly work hours**

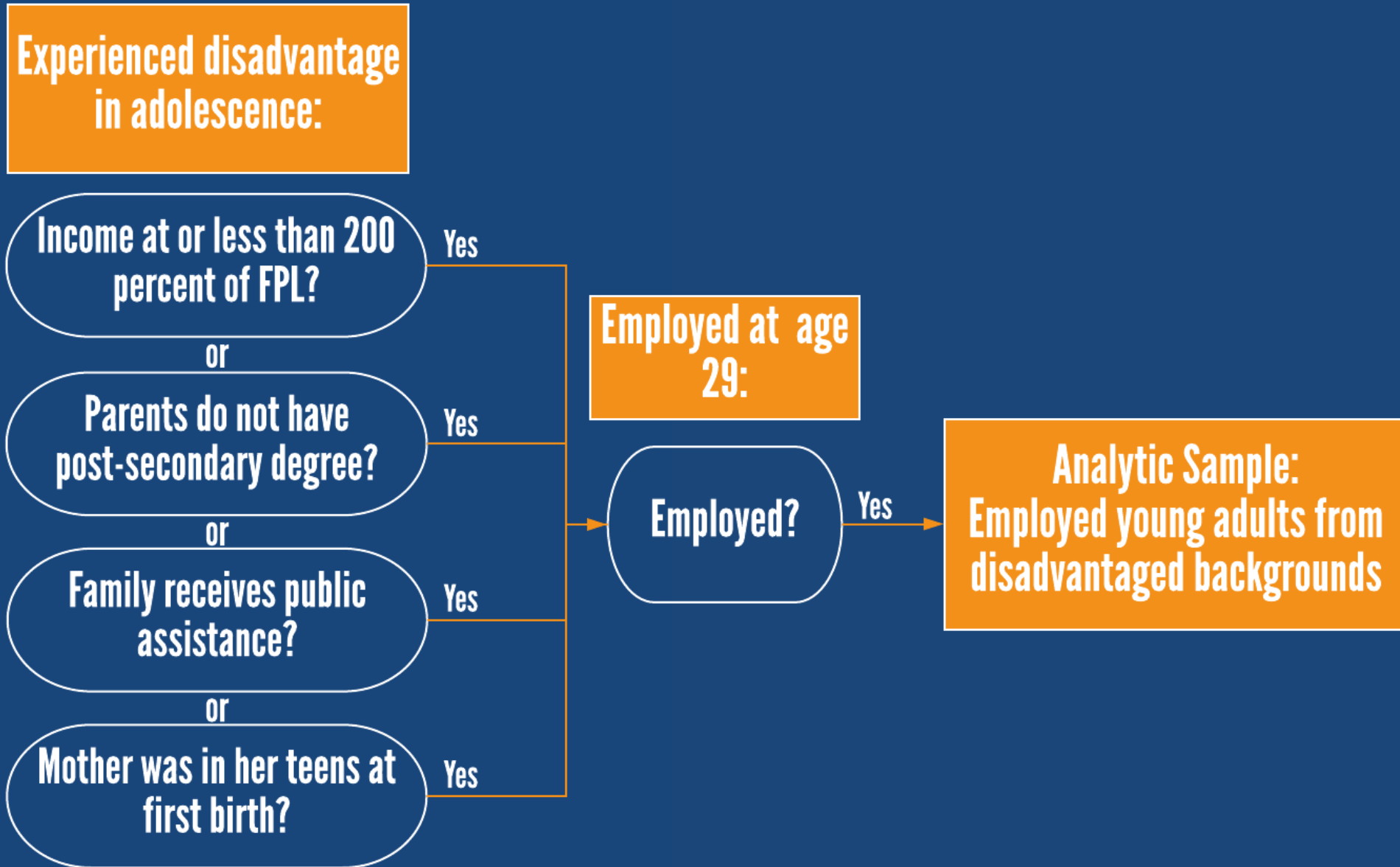
**Job satisfaction**



**Distribution of job quality scores from 0 to 8**



# Defining the sample using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997





# Most 29-year-olds are employed, but background matters

79%

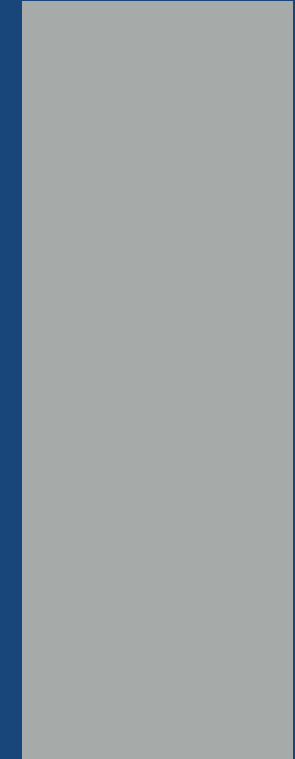
of 29-year-olds from disadvantaged backgrounds are employed

79%



Disadvantaged

90%



Not disadvantaged

# 29-year-olds from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to hold high-quality jobs

38%

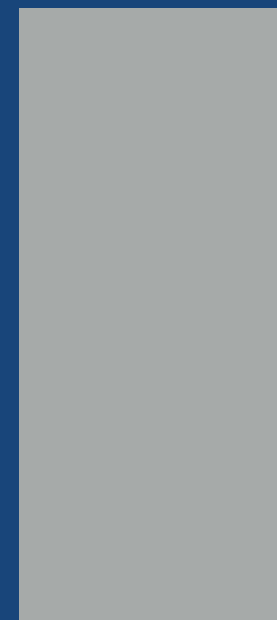
of 29-year-olds from disadvantaged backgrounds are employed in high quality jobs

38%



Disadvantaged

48%



Not disadvantaged



# Analytic strategy



# Key variables of interest

	Adolescence	Emerging Adulthood	Young Adulthood
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationship-based CTE programs</li> <li>Other CTE programs</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highest degree earned (by age 27)</li> </ul>
Training			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training program participation</li> <li>Received training certificate (by age 27)</li> </ul>
Employment			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weeks unemployed</li> </ul>
Demographic and other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weeks worked in summer or school year</li> <li>Intensity of school year work</li> <li>Paid internship</li> <li>Freelance work</li> <li>Teen employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weeks unemployed</li> <li>Paid internship</li> <li>Wages at age 23</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First child by age 19</li> <li>Married/cohabiting at age 27</li> </ul>



# Career and technical education

## Relationship-based CTE programs

Cooperative education

Internships/apprenticeships

Mentoring

## Other CTE programs

Career majors

Job shadowing

School-sponsored enterprise

Tech prep

# Findings



# Predictors of job quality

## Positive predictors of job quality

Age at first interview and cognitive test scores

High school diplomas and post-secondary degrees earned by age 27

Teen employment between ages 16 and 18

Relationship-based CTE in high school

Higher earnings at age 23

Completing a training program between ages 24 and 27

Being married or cohabiting at age 27

Being Hispanic

## Negative predictors of job quality

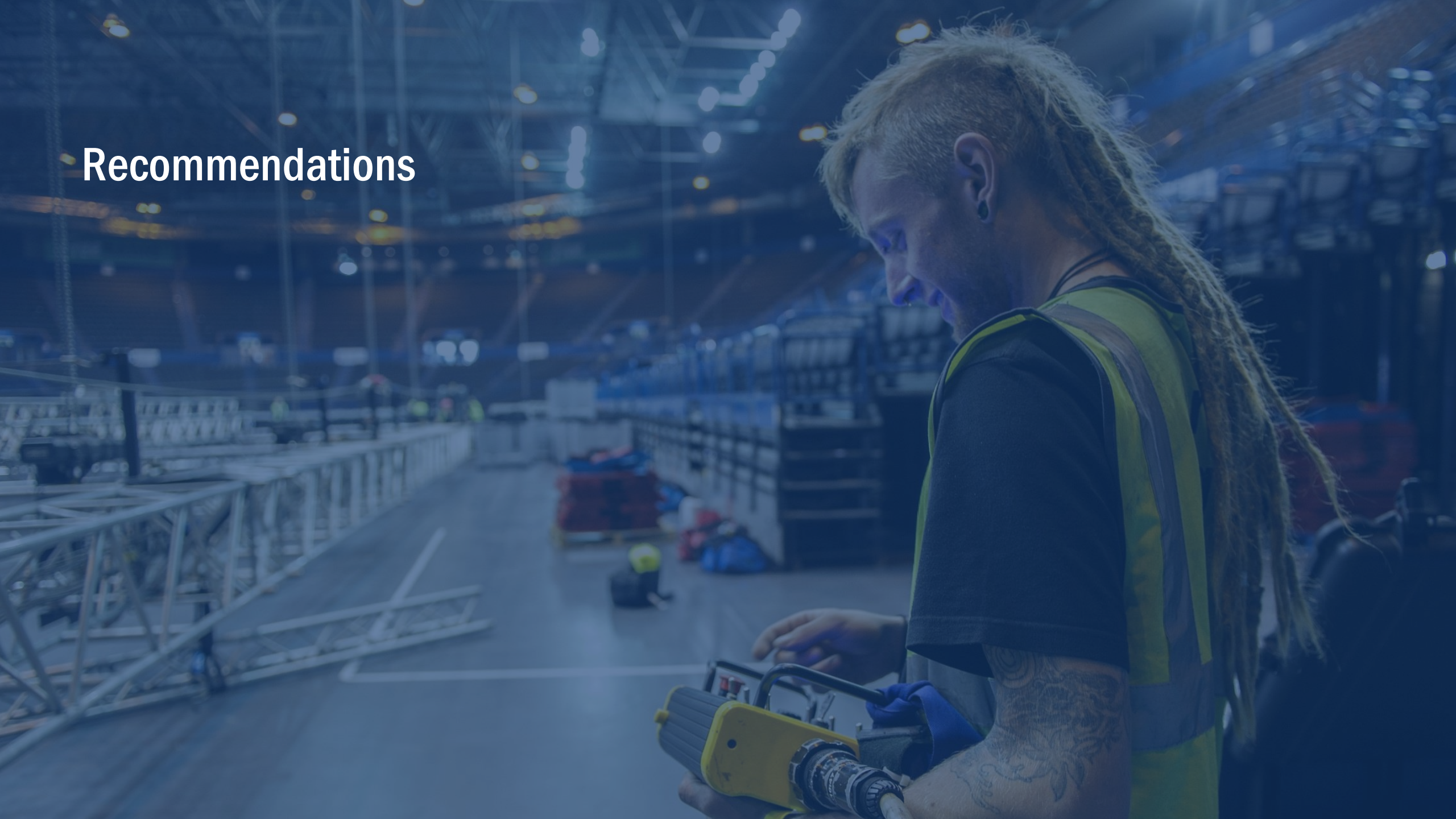
History of incarceration

Unemployment spells in one's 20s

Being female



# Recommendations



# Recommendations

## **Strengthen work-based learning elements of high school career and technical education**

Internships, apprenticeships, cooperative education, and mentorship

## **Increase completion rates of post-secondary degrees**

Advising, financial aid, guided pathways, dual enrollment (high school and college), bridge programs

## **Strengthen on-ramps to employment**

Work-based learning and career exploration in high school, and, for older youth, programs that combine work readiness, skills training, academics, mentoring, supportive services, and paid internships or stipends

## **Promote further research and action on the role of positive relationships in employment and training programs for youth and young adults**





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