**DRAFT** - Ascend Employer Principles Message Box[[1]](#footnote-0)

***Need/Opportunity: We can no longer afford to have breadwinning and caregiving be conflicting responsibilities for working families. There is a growing economic and societal demand to shift how we support working families.***

*This message explains the challenges that currently exist or the need that you are working to meet.*

* Long-standing workplace policies and practices have prevented *w*orking parents and caregivers, particularly families of color, from fully participating in the workforce. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have only exacerbated that reality and revealed how critical comprehensive, integrated, and fair family policies are for businesses, workers, families, and communities to thrive.
* This, paired with the variety of factors behind the current labor shortage, are leading employers to rethink sustainable offerings to better attract and retain workers. And it’s long overdue.
* People are looking to work for employers that provide the conditions and benefits that support their family life and align with their values.
* In making decisions on what to buy, what brands to advocate for and invest in, consumers and investors make decisions based on their beliefs and values.
* Examples/Proof Points - stories/ stats *- TBD*
	+ *Stats*
		- *Child care – Today, mothers spend the equivalent of a full-time job on child care. Moms spend an average of eight hours a day on direct or indirect child care activities. ([19th News](https://19thnews.org/2021/08/moms-child-care-pandemic-full-time-job/); [Brookings](https://www.hamiltonproject.org/blog/mothers_time_use_update))*
		- *Child care – The average cost of child care is around $10K a year per child ([U.S. Treasury](https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/The-Economics-of-Childcare-Supply-09-14-final.pdf))*
		- *Child care - The labor force now has 1 million fewer women than it did when the pandemic began — and childcare has been cited as one of the major reasons why, according to the National Women's Law Center. The cost of child care now amounts to 31% of the average income for women. ([CBS News](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/child-care-keeping-women-from-work/))*
		- *Paid Leave - U.S. is only 1 of 41 countries that does not mandate any paid leave for new parents ([Pew Research](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/12/16/u-s-lacks-mandated-paid-parental-leave/))*
		- *Family – More than 60M people are raising children in the U.S. (*[*Census*](https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2021/demo/families/cps-2021.html)*)*
		- *Labor – More than 4.5M people quit their jobs in November 2021, a record and the highest recorded since the US. DOL started recording 2 decades ago (*[*NYT*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/04/business/economy/job-openings-coronavirus.html)*)*
		- *Labor - “Industries seeing higher rates of quitting than others are leisure, hospitality, retail, and healthcare - generally low-paying industries (*[*Guardian*](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/jan/04/great-resignation-quitting-us-unemployment-economy) *via US Bureau Labor Statistics)*
		- *Labor - Between February 2020 and February 2021, employment losses were largest among workers in the leisure and hospitality, government, and education and health services industries (*[*Economic Policy Institute*](https://www.epi.org/publication/swa-2020-employment-report/)*)*
		- *Gender Equity – Working mothers have faced the largest setbacks/ hurdles.*
		- *Racial Equity - Workers of color were more likely than White workers to say they had less than two weeks’ advance notice of their schedules. Minority workers were also more likely to be on call, have shifts canceled, or be scheduled for fewer hours than they wanted. These shifts make it hard for parents to plan their schedules, particularly around child care. (*[*Bloomberg*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-01-31/minority-shift-workers-more-likely-to-face-unstable-schedules)*,* [*Harvard Shift Project*](https://shift.hks.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/COVIDUpdate_Brief_Final.pdf)*)*
		- *Values* - Of 36,000 people surveyed across 28 countries, 60% said they will choose a place to work based on their beliefs and values, according to the [2022 Edelman Trust Barometer](https://www.edelman.com/trust/2022-trust-barometer).
		- Consumer Demand: Of 36,000 people surveyed across 28 countries, 58% will buy or advocate for brands and 80% will invest based on their beliefs and values, according to the [2022 Edelman Trust Barometer](https://www.edelman.com/trust/2022-trust-barometer).
	+ *Stories*
		- [*https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-business-lifestyle-health-careers-075d3b0ab89baffc5e2b9a80e11dcf34*](https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-business-lifestyle-health-careers-075d3b0ab89baffc5e2b9a80e11dcf34)
		- [*https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2022/01/08/omicron-working-parents-schools/*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2022/01/08/omicron-working-parents-schools/)

***What We Do: Ascend and its employer partners have created the Four Employer Principles for Family Prosperity as a roadmap m that can help shift the field.***

*This message point delineates what you are doing to address the need or problem.*

* Ascend’s community partners and employer leaders from across the country have partnered together to createEmployer Principles for Family-Supportive Policies and Benefits, a roadmap for employers to design their own policies and benefit programs that mutually meet theirs and their employees’ needs.
* Ascend convened small, mid-size, large and diverse employers in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors to develop the principles informed by their employees, helping to ensure they align with working families' needs and are ultimately effective.
* In many communities, the largest employers are in the public and nonprofit sectors (e.g. schools and hospitals) - their leadership has tremendous impacts on the lives of local employees and their families across income levels, and especially for families of color.
* These four principles address policy and benefit trends that have focused on family supportive policies in hiring, inclusivity, engagement, retainment, and equity.
* These principles provide guidance for employers to develop the policies that mutually suits their employees and their business.
* *Examples/Proof Points - stories/ stats – TBD*

***How We Do It: Employers develop family-friendly policies and practices that align to their employees’ needs and remain nimble and innovative to respond to the changing landscape.***

*This message point describes how you are addressing the need or problem, with specific actions or steps taken.*

* Policies and practices to support families are not one-size-fits-all and will evolve, sometimes rapidly, with the landscape. The best approaches will differ from sector to community to employees and require employers to continuously engage with families.
* From school bus driver shortages, sparse or costly child care needs, to shifts back to online learning in response to COVID-19 surges - employers must remain nimble and be innovative.
* These four principles elevate the need for universal benefits for all employees, equitable policies from hiring throughout employment, connecting health supports, and partnerships where parents’ and caregivers’ voices are valued as important stakeholders.
* These four principles are intended to start a national dialogue with private, public, and nonprofit sector employers and recognize the shared responsibility to advance family prosperity for employees, their families, and communities.
* As a first step, Ascend and its Family Prosperity Innovation Community partners will be conducting a public information campaign to bring onboard 50-100 employer signatories, committing themselves and their organizations to embracing family supportive workplace policies and practices.
* *Examples/Proof Points:*
	+ ***Provide holistic support by closing the transportation gap:*** Good News Mountaineer Garage of West Virginia partners with the state’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program to provide donated cars to TANF recipients. A 2009 program survey revealed that 35 percent of car recipients reported increased ability to attend school activities for their children and access to better childcare options. Twenty-one percent of recipients moved into better housing, and 31 percent reported that they were able to improve their medical care.
	+ ***On-site childcare for all employees:*** Cisco Systems constructed the LifeConnections Children’s Learning Center, operated by Bright Horizons, on its campus in Milpitas, California. The Learning Center is open to all Cisco employees, and contractors’ children can attend for a fee. Income-based scholarships are available. The Learning Center provides full- and part-time care for up to 450 children and functions as a back-up childcare option for unexpected lapses in childcare.

***Vision: Working families thrive with supportive workplaces and are empowered to achieve their vision of success.***

*This message point explains the end result of what the efforts will accomplish and how the need will be ultimately met.*

* Working parents and caregivers are essential to the vitality of our communities and economy.
* As business leaders reimagine their policies and practices to address the labor shortage, supporting working parents will attract, retain and truly support the needs of families today.
* Together, a community of businesses and employers can put a real stake in the ground - taking matters into their own hands to build back a better workforce for families - one that is sustainable, equitable and actively informed by parents and caregivers.
* The time to address these structural inequities is now, when we are rebuilding systems that impact our lives and dictate the kind of life we each can have.
* With urgency, we must dramatically change the trajectory of our economy and the prosperity of the families who fuel it. Let's create the conditions and implement the policies that can make meaningful, sustainable change for all families and employers.
* Examples/Proof Points:
	+ Companies that provide paid family and medical leave save money and improve workplace stability through increased employee retention, productivity, and morale. ([National Partnership for Women and Families](https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/paid-leave/paid-leave-good-for-business.pdf))
	+ Companies with diverse workforces see higher rates of productivity – and produce more revenue from innovation (new products and services) – than their less-diverse peers. ([Barrons](https://www.barrons.com/articles/how-a-diverse-workforce-can-help-company-performance-51546625800))

Additional messages for FAQs or talking points

Family-centered, employer-driven policies

* In partnership with employers and with our family values at the center, we developed these guiding principles for employers to develop policies that mutually fit the needs of the families they employ and their business. We know there is not a one-size-fits all approach to implementing policies and practices.
* While the sector has an overarching sense of what families need, the principles guide employers to develop policies and practices that reflect their understanding of and commitment to employees values, consumer demand for demonstration of shared values and accountability, and their role in the community.

Wages

* A focus solely on wages does not provide families with an end-all solution to lift them out of poverty.
* While increased wages are a positive step forward for workers, they can inadvertently result in the ‘benefits cliff,’ which disqualifies workers from public benefits and leaves them worse off.

Unions

* TBD

Family Focus

* There is no one-size-fits-all solution, and business needs can be as diverse as its workers. These principles are a starting point to engage employers in starting to shift their policies and practices to better support workers. These are not an exhaustive list of policies and practices or guidelines.
* All workers have experienced disruption, and organizations need to listen to and engage all workers, not just parents. These principles center parents and families because of the inordinate pressure and exacerbated disruptions they’ve experienced in their family and professional lives.
* Investments in caregiving workers don’t just improve morale and productivity, but they result in tangible, positive impact for children and the next generation.
1. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)