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To Enhance Community Services and Empower Workers, Local Governments are Building their Own Gig Work Platforms.

Despite historically low unemployment, too many workers in America are effectively sidelined or forced to accept work on the wrong terms. While there is no single solution to this multifaceted problem, an important part of addressing it lies in rethinking gig economy work, much of which is found on digital platforms such as Uber and DoorDash. This kind of work and the app-based way of finding it have become core features of our economy.

But this growing and poorly understood corner of America's labor market and service economy is now at a turning point. Many public officials, worker advocates, and others are understandably skeptical about gig economy work and how it can benefit communities—not just the companies and consumers relying on contracted workers.

Yet gig workers are meeting many critical needs, whether as helping hands at home, transporting people and goods, or delivering other skilled tasks in flexible ways. Now, two years after the American Rescue Plan Act's passage, that law's historic federal aid is flowing to states and localities, many of which are using the funds to develop locally driven innovations that invest creatively in their low-income workforce. This presents an opportunity to drive change that would benefit millions of people in need of gig work services as well as the workers (who are disproportionately women and people of color) who deliver them.

Continue reading.

The Brookings Institution

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