In early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic shut down the world’s economy with thousands of industries closing their doors to business and shifting to a remote work environment. Fast forward to late 2021 and the Great Resignation where over 2 million individuals willingly terminated their jobs. With the rise of remote work and the gig economy, what new industry pathways are being shaped creating pathways of economic mobility and independence?

**Panel 5: Contributing Factors**

K-12, housing, healthcare, transportation, cultural/faith

In light of racial equity issues and the COVID-19 pandemic, communities and families on the edge of poverty have further fallen behind. Factors that contribute to a strong and stable working class include childcare assistance, stable housing, transportation, and community engagement. With our country digging its way out of an economic recession, how can we overcome barriers to economic self-sufficiency and contribute to a strong Middle Class?