



Skillful State Network Grows to 26 States

More Than Half of U.S. Governors Collaborate to Expand Opportunity in the Digital Economy for the Nearly Seven in 10 Adults without a College Degree

NEW YORK CITY – April 18, 2019 – The Skillful State Network, a Markle Foundation initiative, today announced its expansion to 26 member states. The governors of California, Connecticut, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Pennsylvania have joined the founding states in the Network’s efforts to create a labor market in which skills learned anywhere are valued and people can rapidly and affordably access the information and training needed for good jobs in the digital economy. Entering its second year, the Skillful State Network fosters collaboration among innovative governors from states large and small, coast to coast and across the political spectrum. The governors in the Skillful State Network have made workforce development a state priority and are committed to acting on proven practices that enable their residents and employers to thrive.

“The Skillful State Network acts on the urgent need for leadership to bring the talent of Americans into the rapidly changing digital economy. Governors are joining together to break down the barriers keeping too many people from finding good careers,” said Zoë Baird, CEO and President of the Markle Foundation. “With bipartisan gubernatorial leadership from 26 states across the country, we are giving people greater power in the labor market to pursue rewarding careers.”

“Workforce development is a top priority for Indiana’s Next Level agenda, and collaborating with the Skillful State Network advances our efforts to transform the labor market to meet current and future needs for high-wage, in-demand jobs,” said Indiana Governor Eric J. Holcomb, one of the founding Network members. “This transformation begins at home and includes providing

states the tools they need, such as flexible funding options for education and training. Together, we’ll unleash opportunity for individuals to secure industry-validated credentials and become part of our workforce pipeline. I am excited to work with my fellow governors in finding ways to support America’s workers and businesses in staying strong, resilient and competitive in the 21st century economy.”

The Skillful State Network launched in 2018 to drive transition to labor markets in which skills are valued as well as degrees, and people can access the tools and build the skills necessary to thrive in today’s digital economy. Members share innovative ideas and proven practices each can adopt to achieve workforce goals and growth, for example, effectively aligning education with industry; providing robust

Skillful State Network Members

Arkansas	Gov. Hutchinson
California	Gov. Newsom
Colorado	Gov. Polis
Connecticut	Gov. Lamont
Delaware	Gov. Carney
Illinois	Gov. Pritzker
Indiana	Gov. Holcomb
Kansas	Gov. Kelly
Kentucky	Gov. Bevin
Massachusetts	Gov. Baker
Michigan	Gov. Whitmer
Minnesota	Gov. Walz
Missouri	Gov. Parson
Montana	Gov. Bullock
New Jersey	Gov. Murphy
North Carolina	Gov. Cooper
North Dakota	Gov. Burgum
Ohio	Gov. DeWine
Pennsylvania	Gov. Wolf
Rhode Island	Gov. Raimondo
Tennessee	Gov. Lee
Utah	Gov. Herbert
Vermont	Gov. Scott
Virginia	Gov. Northam
Washington	Gov. Inslee
Wisconsin	Gov. Evers

For more information about member state involvement, quotes from the governors and examples of workforce initiatives, please [visit here](#).



data on skills needed to jobseekers; and training employers on skills-based practices to find talent from other sectors or with informal training. The Network is enabling a systems-level change in the labor market.

The Network is grounded in Skillful's work in Colorado and Indiana, where Skillful works directly to align the efforts of the state, employers, educators, and local workforce boards behind a mutually reinforcing strategy. Drawing on its on-the-ground operations, Skillful produced the [Skillful State Playbook](#), a step-by-step guide to help states build a skills-based labor market, which includes tools and resources for implementation. One signature initiative currently operating in Colorado and Indiana, the Skillful Coaching Corps (SCC), is an upskilling program for career coaches. Applying tools and training from the Corps, coaches are better equipped to help job seekers and incumbent workers learn what skills are in demand and how to demonstrate or obtain those skills. The Skillful State Network continues to draw key learnings and practices from Skillful Colorado and Skillful Indiana, and supports transformation at a scale and pace not possible through individual state actions alone.

"We are thrilled to welcome the eight new member states to the Skillful State Network, as well as the newly elected governors from founding member states Colorado, Ohio, Tennessee, Illinois, and Wisconsin. The importance of this issue and the value of the Network transcends changes in administration and even party," said Beth Cobert, CEO of Skillful. "Workforce development is a nonpartisan issue as every state confronts helping workers transition to digital economy jobs. These new voices will strengthen this already forward-thinking group in this our second year."

Network members will continue to share assets, foster partnerships, and hone methods of engagement within their labor markets. The free and public availability of the Skillful State Playbook supports the open sharing of key learnings and practices. Skillful State Network members may draw from and contribute tools to the Playbook.

All interested states are invited to join the Network by contacting *Skillful CEO Beth Cobert* at beth.cobert@markle.org, (212) 713-7633.

Download the Skillful State Playbook [here](#).

Find more information about Skillful [here](#).

About Skillful

Skillful, a non-profit initiative of the Markle Foundation, is dedicated to enabling all Americans – particularly those without a four-year college degree – to secure good jobs in a changing economy. Skillful, in partnership with Microsoft, is developing skills-based training and employment practices in collaboration with state governments, local employers, educators and workforce development organizations. With its partners, Skillful is working to create a labor market in which skills are valued, and people can more easily access the information and education they need to keep pace with technology's impact on work. Skillful currently operates in two states, Skillful Colorado and Skillful Indiana, bringing investment, training, tools and innovative methods to augment local workforce development efforts. It formed and facilitates the Skillful State Network, a collaboration among 26 state governors to accelerate the development and deployment of effective skills-based practices to transform their labor markets. Skillful is grateful for support provided by Lumina Foundation and Walmart, and its partnerships with the states of Colorado and Indiana, Purdue University and Purdue



Extensions and many great local organizations committed to strengthening their local workforce and creating better opportunities for all.

About The Markle Foundation

The Markle Foundation works to realize the potential of technology to achieve breakthroughs in addressing some of the nation's most pressing issues. Markle challenges itself and diverse partners to deploy their varied expertise to identify solutions and achieve systemic change. Today as advanced technology and automation change the very nature of work, Markle's priority is advancing solutions toward a skills-based labor market that will enable Americans to transition to the opportunities of the digital economy. Markle's workforce initiatives include [Skillful](#) and the [Rework America Task Force](#). They follow Markle's success in creating policy and technology architecture that has enabled improvements in healthcare, national security and access to the Internet. For more information, visit markle.org, follow [@MarkleFdn](#) and [@ReworkAmerica](#) on Twitter, and read our book, [America's Moment](#).