

## **Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development and Skillful Bring New Tools and Training to Oklahoma Employers**

**OKLAHOMA CITY, OK, March 9, 2020**– The Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development (OOWD) and Skillful, a Markle Foundation initiative, announced today a partnership to help Oklahoma employers hire more effectively and create more opportunities for jobseekers.

The partnership will provide training in skills-based practices through the Skillful Talent Series, an innovative program which creates a bridge between the workforce and economic development systems by helping employers identify the skills they need for a role and to recognize those skills in candidates, particularly workers without traditional academic credentials, such as a bachelor’s degree, who may otherwise be overlooked.

“We hear from businesses every day that can’t find the workers they need. By supporting employers in adopting skills-based practices, we can dramatically increase the size of the recruitment pool available and help more Oklahomans find meaningful employment in industries critical to expanding the state’s economy. We are thrilled to bring this partnership with Skillful to Oklahoma and hope to expand these efforts in the coming year,” said Sean Kouplen, Secretary of Commerce and Workforce Development.

This partnership will support a state-wide strategy for Oklahoma to position itself among the top ten states in U.S. with the lowest unemployment rate as described in Governor Stitt’s recently released [Council for Workforce and Economic Development Strategic Plan](#). Oklahoma has committed to work with Skillful, and to invest resources, to create a foundation for economic mobility through skills-based training and hiring. This will help employers attract talent and create new opportunities for including those with disabilities, long-term unemployed, seniors, and veterans.

“We are impressed with the work being undertaken in Oklahoma: The state’s overall eagerness to engage employers in skills-based workforce practices and their commitment of leadership and resources to this effort. This partnership approach between Skillful and the Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development, which is a new and more focused form of delivery collaboration for Skillful, allows us to more rapidly share tools and resources, expanding our reach and impact in a sustainable way,” said Skillful CEO Beth Cobert.

First established in Colorado and now expanded to Indiana, Skillful is dedicated to enabling all Americans – particularly those without a four-year college degree – to secure good jobs in a changing economy. Skillful works with local partners to engage employers to help them adopt skills-based practices to support talent acquisition and retention essential to economic success and business growth. Oklahoma learned about Skillful’s approach through the Skillful State Network, a coalition of 29 governors, including Governor Stitt, who have made workforce development a state priority. OOWD is working with Skillful to bring Skillful-developed tools and strategies to employers in the state of Oklahoma. The Skillful Talent Series, a Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM)-certified workshop program, makes the case for the switch to skills-based practices and provides implementation guidance. This includes digital tools, such as the [Skillful Job Posting Generator](#), a free tool employers can use to take the first step in adoption by easily creating a skills-based job posting.

The partnership aims to create a network of Oklahoma-based Skillful Talent Series facilitators, from local workforce organizations, who will conduct programs in their local communities to spread the adoption of skills-based practices in each moment of the talent management lifecycle: hiring, assessment, onboarding, and retention. The program is aligned with the three-year plan for Oklahoma to launch, scale, and systematically deploy the skills-based pilot program to all regions. Also supported by the Oklahoma State Chapter (OKHR) of SHRM, OOWD’s partnership with Skillful aims to add capacity to local workforce boards to better serve employers and build a bridge between OKHR and the workforce system.

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### **About The Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development (OOWD)**

The Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development is a division of the Oklahoma Department of Commerce that works to align resources, education, training and job opportunities to build the state’s workforce. Under the direction of the Governor’s Council for Workforce and Economic Development, Oklahoma Works aims to ensure all Oklahomans have the skills and education necessary to enter and advance in rewarding careers and Oklahoma businesses have the talented workforce they need to succeed. For more information, visit: [www.oklahomaworks.gov](http://www.oklahomaworks.gov). Follow Oklahoma Works on Facebook and Twitter: @OklaWorks.

### **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. In partnership with Microsoft and others, Skillful is developing skills-based training and employment practices in collaboration with state governments, local employers, educators and workforce development organizations. Skillful and its partners are 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 29 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 its partners, including Lumina, Microsoft, Purdue University, Purdue Extensions, and Walmart and the states of Colorado and Indiana.

**For Skillful media inquiries please contact Carrie Gonzalez, [Cgonzalez@Markle.org](mailto:Cgonzalez@Markle.org) or 212.713.7654**