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Markle Partners with City of Phoenix, LinkedIn, Arizona State University, Maricopa Community College System, edX, and Local Employers to Launch Rework America Connected and Build a 21st Century Digital Labor Market for Middle-Skill Jobseekers

Phoenix, AZ – Markle Foundation CEO and President Zoë Baird today joined with Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton, LinkedIn Co-Founder Allen Blue, Arizona State University President Michael M. Crow, representatives of the Maricopa Community College System, edX, and Phoenix employers to announce **Rework America Connected**, a partnership that will use online technology to improve the way jobseekers find jobs and learn new skills, and improve the way employers find workers.

The online platform will provide an opportunity for many more Americans to qualify for good-paying careers, whether or not they have a college degree. Through this portal, employers will be able to more effectively fill available positions with skilled employees and grow their businesses. More than half of all American employers say a lack of skilled workers is the reason so many jobs remain unfilled.

Rework America Connected is building the platform in partnership with LinkedIn, Arizona State University, and edX. The partners will work with the City of Phoenix and Phoenix employers and educators to connect, enhance, and scale efforts already underway, and tailor the program to Phoenix's needs. The goal is to connect individuals—from the skilled, mid-career worker whose job has been reshaped by technology to the retail worker looking for a leg up into a middle-skill career—to professional and educational opportunities and develop a more qualified workforce for Phoenix employers.

“As the digital economy continues to rapidly change our work lives, we have an opportunity here in Phoenix to help thousands land middle-skill jobs that offer them a way toward meaningful career paths,” said **Markle CEO and President Zoë Baird, who leads Rework America**. “There are so many people who have the capacity to move into better jobs, and so many businesses who need skilled workers; now we need to connect both and put opportunity within reach. Imagine the possibilities if businesses use concrete skill sets as their benchmarks for employment, and education and training providers offer credentials that identify a jobseeker’s capabilities. We could open doors for so many who are ready to tackle a wide range of work and who want the opportunity to thrive in today’s economy.”

“Rework America Connected has the potential to lower barriers to high-quality training and education options for Arizona’s jobseekers, enabling them to embark on a meaningful career in our networked economy,” said **Arizona State University President Michael M. Crow**. “We are proud to apply ASU’s expertise in digital academic advising and online learning to this important initiative.”

With guidance from employers, the cutting edge online platform will be able to customize tools and data to industry-specific employment needs. Rework America will draw on innovative classroom and online educational content from providers like community colleges to ensure job seekers have access to

the most up-to-date trainings. The program will also engage a sophisticated recruitment and targeting effort to engage middle-skill workers who are often disconnected from such career paths.

“Phoenix is known for using technological innovation to improve workers’ economic security, and Rework America Connected will help the city’s workers pursue better career paths and gain the skills they need to succeed in today’s economy,” said **Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton**. “And by ending Phoenix’s skills mismatch, the platform will help local employers find enough skilled workers to grow their businesses at the speed they like.”

“LinkedIn’s vision is to create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce,” said **LinkedIn VP Product Management and Co-Founder Allen Blue**. “With Rework America Connected, we are taking another step towards achieving that vision. Through greater transparency between employers, educators, and jobseekers, we’re aiming to create greater economic opportunity for middle-skilled workers.”

Markle is drawing on the best resources from the public and private sectors in greater Phoenix to create this network. Maricopa County Community Colleges, a system renowned for its workforce development initiatives and industry-specific skill programs, will serve as a premier education content provider. ASU, in conjunction with LinkedIn and edX, will provide technological expertise to Rework America Connected, helping build a 21st century interest inventory and skills assessment tool that will help jobseekers determine the best pathway to follow. Job seekers also can access ASU pathways through credentials offered by Maricopa County Community Colleges, regardless of whether they’re pursuing a college diploma.

“The Greater Phoenix metropolitan area can have the most prepared workers in the country if we leverage the power of the Internet to help them train for the work of the future,” said **Estrella Mountain Community College President Ernest Lara, who represents the partnership of the Maricopa Community College System**. “The Rework America Connected platform will help jumpstart this process by connecting workers to the jobs that are already available across Arizona.”

The City of Phoenix and local employers will assist in the execution of the effort, supplying important data and information to increase the online platform’s efficiency. Additional local employers supporting Rework American Connected include **Arizona Public Service, Go Daddy, Arizona Manufacturing Partnership, Arizona Technology Council and Walmart Foundation**.

“We are thrilled to help the workforce of today and tomorrow identify and secure careers,” said **Ty Freeland, Manager of Talent Acquisition for Arizona Public Service**. “Rework America Connected will help us connect with our future employees online and ensure they have the skills to make more of an impact on day one.”

“The Walmart Foundation is committed to increasing economic mobility for retail workers through our Retail Opportunity Initiative and that is why we’ve allied with the Markle Foundation and Rework America Connected,” said **Julie Gehrki, Senior Director of the Walmart Foundation**. “The Walmart Foundation is excited to partner in Phoenix with other employers to leverage technology in order to create pathways in retail and adjacent sectors.”

Phoenix will be the first city to participate in Rework America Connected and Colorado will be the first state in the nation. Rework America Connected chose these locations for their track record and commitment to job creation, education, innovation, and partnerships aimed at improving the lives of its citizens.

Employers, jobseekers, educational institutions, and community-based organizations interested in participating in the program are welcome to visit www.reworkamericaconnected.org to join the coalition or sign up for more information. Rework America Connected can also be found on Facebook at Rework America and on Twitter [@ReworkAmerica](https://twitter.com/ReworkAmerica).

Rework America Connected is a key part of the Markle Foundation's Rework America initiative, which is driving real solutions to the disruptive changes brought on by technology and globalization. Rework America's 56 members are leaders from across a diverse spectrum who are focused on innovations to create opportunities for Americans in today's networked economy. Most recently, Markle's members released a collectively [authored book](#), "*America's Moment: Creating Opportunity in the Connected Age*," which offers an agenda for action to create new paths for good and meaningful work and outlines recommendations to navigate the changing economic landscape of the connected age.

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Rework America Connected is now known as Skillful.

About Markle and Rework America

Markle leverages the potential of information technology to drive solutions to some of the nation's most pressing problems in the areas of health, the economy, and national security. Markle's current initiative, Rework America, is focused on accelerating innovations that use the forces of technology and globalization to return opportunities to Americans in today's rapidly changing networked economy. For more information, visit markle.org, follow the foundation on Twitter [@MarkleFdn](https://twitter.com/MarkleFdn), and visit [Rework America](#).