



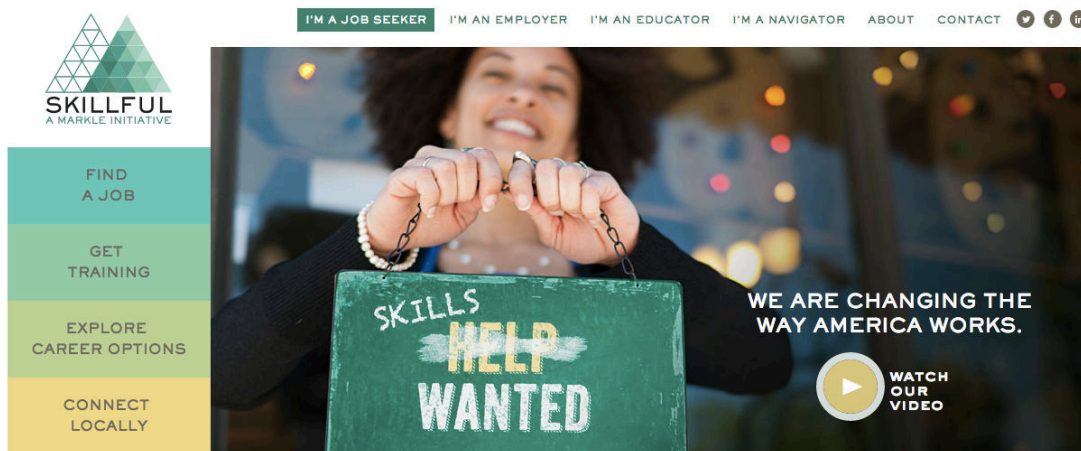
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 17, 2016

CONTACT: press@skillful.com

Skillful Goes Live in Colorado: Markle, LinkedIn and the State of Colorado Expand Opportunities for Job Seekers without College Degrees

Skillful Creates Transparency for Needed Skills through Online Platform and On-the-Ground Community Resources that Connect Job Seekers, Employers and Educators



More than 70% of Americans lack a college degree, but that doesn't mean they're lacking in skills. If you're one of the many people in this country who are unemployed or under-employed because you don't have that degree, you need a new way in—a

The SKILLFULSM mission is to give you that way in. How? By providing the tools you need to learn which industries are hiring, what kinds of jobs are available, what skills are required to do them, and where to find training in those skills—plus FREE career

Denver, CO –Governor John Hickenlooper joined Markle Foundation CEO and President Zoë Baird and LinkedIn Co-Founder Allen Blue today as Skillful went live in the state of Colorado. Jobseekers, employers, and educators from around the state also were on hand for the roll-out of [Skillful](#), a new skills-based platform that values people's skills, not just degrees, and which supports lifelong learning in today's rapidly changing economy.

Skillful is a network of online tools and on-the ground resources that connects job seekers to fast growing and well-paying jobs and to the educators who can help them get training, acquire new skills, and advance their careers. Skillful's tools and in-person support will help job seekers identify the specific skills and training needed to obtain available jobs, even if they don't have a college degree. It meets job seekers where they are – online or in their community – through career navigators who can help guide them through their job search.

—More—

Skillful also works with employers to offer innovative tools and advisors to broaden their talent pool by helping them create skills-based job descriptions and to hire workers based on the core skills needed for the job.

Skillful tools are informed by data and insights from some of the best research firms in the nation - LinkedIn, Civis Analytics, and North Star Opinion Research, and strategy support was provided by McKinsey & Company.

Skillful is geared toward middle-skill job seekers: individuals with a high school diploma, but not a four-year degree. Research conducted by the state revealed that in Colorado, [40% of the state's "top jobs"](#) – those with high annual openings, above average growth rates – do not require a four-year degree. These are good jobs that pay well, with many of them offering a median salary above \$50,000 a year. By working with employers to clearly define the skills needed for these jobs, and by making it easier for job seekers to learn or demonstrate these skills, Skillful will create more career paths for those without a college degree. At the same time, it is providing businesses across the state with direct access to the skilled employees they need to fill their open positions.

“Skillful is a new opportunity for people who don’t have a college diploma to show the skills they have and to get connected to great jobs,” said **Zoë Baird, CEO and President of the Markle Foundation**. “Sixty-two percent of Coloradans don’t have a college degree, but they have great skills. Jobs are changing so dramatically because of technology and globalization. People need to be able to learn new skills over the course of a lifetime and to retool throughout their career. Skillful is going to provide new paths for people to show that they have the skills to get jobs that have income growth potential and the opportunity to move in new directions.”

Through the combined efforts of national partners like LinkedIn, edX and Arizona State University, and local partners like the state of Colorado, the Colorado Workforce Development Council and workforce centers, the Colorado Advanced Manufacturing Alliance, the Colorado Technology Association and Goodwill Industries of Denver, Skillful will expand Colorado’s ongoing effort to develop cutting-edge skills programs in the state.

“Colorado has long been committed to ensuring our workers have access to the skills they need to get ahead and Skillful provides a powerful new tool for job seekers to do that,” said **Governor John Hickenlooper**. “We are honored to be the first state to gain access to Skillful, which builds on our efforts to promote skills-based training and hiring in Colorado. It will help keep our state competitive both nationally and globally.”

Colorado is the first state to have access to Skillful. Skillful also will be going live in early April in Phoenix, the first city to use the platform. The national partners chose these locations for their track record and commitment to job and opportunity creation, education and innovation, as well as their commitment to building partnerships aimed at improving the lives of their citizens.

“Forty-four percent of Colorado and Phoenix employers say it’s hard to find people with the right technical skills,” said **LinkedIn VP of Product Management and Co-Founder Allen Blue**. “And fifty-four percent of U.S. workers who have a high school diploma and some or no college education say they don’t know what jobs are available, and if they have the skills needed for those jobs. We’re excited to help overcome this disconnect by partnering with Skillful and providing employers and educators with Economic Graph insights that spur collaboration on curriculum, and to empower job seekers to find training programs that will teach them the skills they need to get the jobs they want.”

LinkedIn is also working with Skillful to help develop more skills-based job descriptions.

For job seekers, Skillful is like GPS for their career. It shows them companies that are hiring, what kinds of jobs are available, the skills required and where to find the training to get those jobs. Skillful is using advanced statistical modeling to power a grassroots campaign to reach middle-skill job seekers in their communities through Skillful navigators based in local non-profits who are experienced advisors and career coaches.

Skillful will provide employers with the data and templates they need to craft job descriptions based on skills versus using degrees as a default. These same skills can help inform on-the-job training or collaborations with educators. Skillful will help facilitate better connections between employers and local education and training institutions, allowing these institutions to tailor programs to ensure workers have the skills and knowledge to be successful. Both of these collaborations will provide businesses with access to a broader talent pool.

“We are engaged with Skillful to help build out a qualified pipeline of employees who we know will be a strong fit for our company,” said **Barbara Brannen, Vice President of Human Resources at Pinnacol Assurance**. “Skillful will allow us to better describe the specific skills required of potential employees. This means less time trying to fill a job and happier, more productive workers which benefits us all.”

Skillful will concentrate opportunities on some of the fastest growing industries in Colorado – advanced manufacturing and information technology.

“Advanced manufacturing is a continually-evolving sector. Skillful will help our business find better talent by focusing our recruitment efforts on skills and abilities,” said **Noel Ginsburg, CEO of Intertech Plastics and Intertech Medical**. “Additionally, by working with local education partners, we can help ensure the trainings they provide are relevant to what to companies like mine need to continue to grow.”

For educators, Skillful will provide crucial data about the employment picture in the regions they are serving and help them develop curricula to better prepare workers for the ever-changing labor landscape.

“Skillful offers us a way to reach more potential students and have greater access to insights about local employers which can help us ensure that our educational programs continue to meet industry needs,” said **Dr. Nancy McCallin, President of the Colorado Community College System**. “We want our students to get the best jobs possible and Skillful will provide us with crucial data about what types of jobs our alumni are getting and about the employment picture in our region, allowing us to adapt our programs to give our students a leg up.”

Skillful users will be able to draw on a set of trained coaches – called navigators – through Goodwill Industries of Denver and Larimer County Workforce Center. These expert navigators also will be able to use the tools and resources from Skillful to better serve their population.

Employers, job seekers, educational institutions and community-based organizations interested in trying Skillful are invited to visit www.skillful.com for more information. Skillful also can be found on Facebook at Facebook.com/JoinSkillful and on Twitter @JoinSkillful.

###