



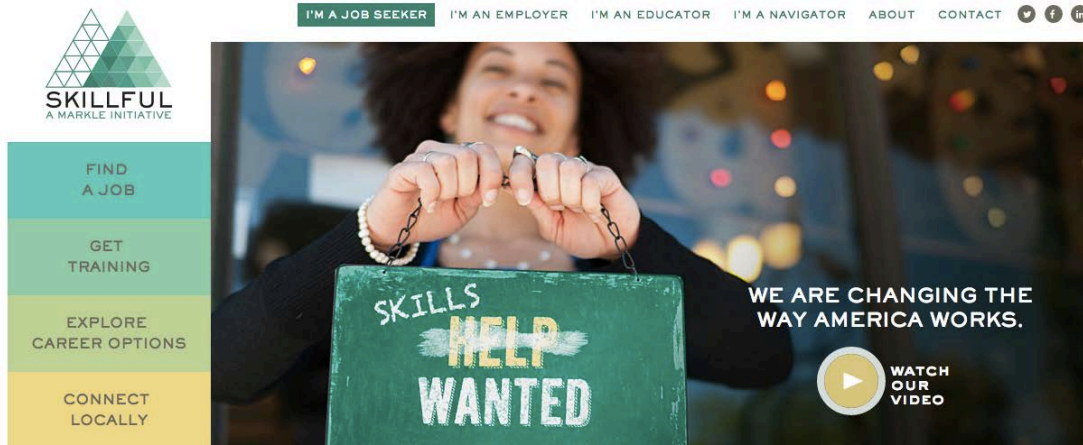
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Skillful Goes Live in Greater Phoenix: Markle, LinkedIn, ASU, City and Local and Partners Expand Opportunities for Job Seekers without College Degrees

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

Phoenix, AZ – Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton joined Markle Foundation CEO and President Zoë Baird, LinkedIn Vice President of Product Management and Co-Founder Allen Blue, Maricopa County Supervisor Steve Gallardo and Arizona State University officials today as [Skillful](#), went live in greater Phoenix and Maricopa County.

Employers and educators including Arizona Public Service, Affinity Technology, and Maricopa Community College District joined with job seekers from across the Phoenix region 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 digital 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.

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 is geared toward middle-skill job seekers: individuals with at least a high school diploma, but not a four-year degree. Over 30 percent of the job openings in the Phoenix area are geared toward middle-skilled workers. These are good jobs that pay well, with many of them offering a median salary above \$60,000 a year. On Skillful, job seekers will be able to explore salaries and job openings by sector, and find trainings directly linked to specific job paths.

“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**. “71 percent of Phoenix area residents 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.”

Skillful unites the combined efforts of national partners like LinkedIn, edX and Arizona State University, and local partners including the city of Phoenix, Arizona Manufacturing Partnership, Arizona Technology Council, Arizona Commerce Authority, and anchor navigators Maricopa Community College District, Goodwill of Central Arizona and ARIZONA@WORK to expand paths for job seekers to advance their careers.

“As Phoenix continues to look for ways to stay competitive, Skillful will help those in our workforce gain the skills they need to get ahead,” said **Mayor Greg Stanton**. “We are honored to be one of the first cities in the nation to go live with Skillful, which shows our commitment to skills-based training and hiring.”

“Skillful chose Phoenix and Maricopa County because of the opportunities our community has to offer,” said **Maricopa County Supervisor Steve Gallardo**. “We have thriving businesses and a workforce that is eager to take advantage of openings in growing industries. Skillful will be able to connect individuals with good paying positions that will benefit our economy.”

The city of Phoenix and the state of Colorado are the first locations to go live with Skillful. 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. Additionally, ASU has been a thought leader in creating the Skillful partnership.

"Arizona State University is committed to building lifelong learning pathways with a variety of on-ramps and off-ramps into post-secondary education," said **ASU President Michael Crow**. "Our education technology experts at EdPlus helped design and build the Skillful platform because it will offer Phoenix and Maricopa County residents access to the learning opportunities they need to develop a career path."

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. Businesses in Phoenix now will have with direct access to the skilled employees they need to fill their open positions.

Employers across the region are already on board including Affinity Technology, Arizona Public Service, Axosoft, Ipro Tech, Make-A-Wish Foundation, Nichols Precision, Outlook Advisors, and Pinnacle Transplant Technologies.

“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 **Russ Yelton, CEO of Pinnacle Transplant Technologies**. “Skillful will allow us to better describe the specific skills required of potential employees. This means we’ll take less time to fill a job and have happier, more productive workers which benefits us all.”

Skillful will concentrate opportunities on some of the largest industries in the greater Phoenix area and in Maricopa County starting in advanced manufacturing and information technology.

“IT is a continually-evolving sector. Skillful will help our business find better talent by focusing our recruitment efforts on skills needed to accomplish the job,” said **Dave Sloan, President of Affinity Technology**. “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.”

“We applaud the Markle Foundation in bringing Skillful to Phoenix. Skillful provides an opportunity for Innovate+Educate to continue our work to advance skills based hiring,” said **Jamai Blivin, CEO of Innovate+Educate**. “The Markle Foundation has been incredibly thoughtful and diligent in architecting and designing Skillful, and we look forward to working with the many leaders in Phoenix to expand access and new opportunities to education, skills training and employment via Skillful.”

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. Randall Kimmens, Ed.D, Associate Vice Chancellor, Workforce Development, Maricopa Community Colleges**. “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 is using advanced statistical modeling to reach middle-skill job seekers in their communities through experienced advisors and career coaches based in local non-profits. Skillful users will be able to draw on these set of coaches – called navigators – through organizations like Goodwill of Central Arizona and ARIZONA@WORK. These expert navigators also will be able to use the tools and resources from Skillful to better serve their population.

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.

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 www.facebook.com/JoinSkillful and on Twitter @JoinSkillful.

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