



# Request for Partners

## Join the Skills Network



SKILLS FOR  
AMERICA'S  
FUTURE

Issued On: October 20, 2021

**Deadline for Response Submissions: December 10, 2021  
by 5pm CT**

To Learn More about Skills and this RFP, [please join](#) one of two informational webinars:

Info Session 1: **November 10, 2021 at 2:00 – 3:00 PM CT**

Info Session 2: **November 19, 2021 at 1:00 – 2:00 PM CT**

*The Skills for America's Future Initiative is operated by:*



SKILLS FOR  
CHICAGOLAND'S  
FUTURE

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## Executive Summary

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Annually, the United States spends \$41 billion on workforce development, yet marginalized populations, primarily low-moderate income and/or Black and Latinx communities, experience unemployment rates well above national averages.

With over 13,000 formerly unemployed and underemployed job seekers connected to employment in two sites since 2012, Skills for America's Future (Skills) has been able to unlock the key to economic mobility by connecting unemployed individuals with companies in need of hiring them, leveraging its robust network of local and national hiring partners.

After proven results in Chicago and Rhode Island, Skills plans to expand its model to 25 sites over the next 10 years, placing over 500,000 individuals into jobs with 25% of Fortune 500 companies, as well as other national and local employers.

Skills is seeking to partner with local not-for-profit organizations who work closely with employers and are looking to enhance their workforce development function with a jobs-first model. **In 2022-2023, Skills plans to explore a partnership with and offer planning grants to up to four nonprofit organizations in new locations across the country** interested in adding, growing, or enhancing their employer-led, data-driven workforce approach through consultative services, staff training, and national employer introductions. Locations/sites are defined as cities, regions, or states.

What follows is a Request for Partners (RFP) that includes more information about partnering with Skills, details on the RFP process, and questions for interested organizations to answer to learn more about bringing Skills' impact to your area and eligibility for a \$25,000 planning grant.

Skills will conduct two informational webinars. Interested organizations only need to attend one webinar. [Click here](#) to RSVP.

**Informational Session 1: November 10, 2021 at 2:00 – 3:00 PM CT**

**Informational Session 2: November 19, 2021 at 1:00 – 2:00 PM CT**

**\*\*Attendance is not mandatory to submit an RFP, but applicants are highly encouraged to attend.**

## Submission and Partnership Timeline

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**Instructions on submitting proposals are contained in this document.**

All questions regarding this RFP should be directed to the following individual:

Dora Gonzalez, Senior Manager of National Partnerships  
Address: 191 North Wacker Drive, Suite 1150 Chicago, IL 60606  
Email: [dgonzalez@skillsforchicagoland.com](mailto:dgonzalez@skillsforchicagoland.com) Phone: 312-906-7267

### Intent to Submit

If your organization intends to submit an RFP, please [email Dora Gonzalez](#) by December 3rd at 5:00 PM CT indicating the name of your organization, location, and your intent to submit a proposal.

### Submission Deadline

Answers to proposal questions (Pages 9-11) must be completed and uploaded as one document by **5:00 PM CT on Friday, December 10th using this [link](#).**

Applicants may include additional attachments and documents to support your proposal, but each attachment must be cross-referenced to your answer to be considered.

### Selection Process

The timeline and selection process are as follows:

Date	Activity
October 18	RFP Issued
November 10 2:00-3:00 PM CT	<a href="#">Informational webinar 1</a>
November 19 1:00-2:00 PM CT	<a href="#">Informational webinar 2</a>
December 3	<a href="#">Intent to Submit RFP Application via email by 5:00pm CT</a>
December 10	RFP Responses uploaded <a href="#">here</a> by 5:00pm CT
Dec. 10 – February 2022	Partnership Exploration and Evaluation Period
Q1 2022	Agreement of Exploration signed; Planning grants issued

## **Informational Webinars**

Skills will conduct two informational webinars to provide an opportunity to learn more about Skills' approach to workforce, hear from leaders who have experienced the impact of the work, and provide an opportunity to ask questions. Interested organizations only need to attend one webinar.

**\*\*Attendance is not mandatory to submit an RFP, but applicants are highly encouraged to attend. [Click here](#) to RSVP.**

**Informational Session 1: November 10, 2021 at 2:00 – 3:00 PM CT**  
**Informational Session 2: November 19, 2021 at 1:00 – 2:00 PM CT**

## **Purpose of Request for Partners (RFP)**

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In August 2021, Skills publicly announced that over the next 10 years the organization plans to expand its model to 25 locations across the country and place over 500,000 individuals into jobs with 25% of Fortune 500 companies. With over 13,000 formerly unemployed and underemployed job seekers connected to employment in two sites, Skills for America's Future (Skills) is at a significant growth point.

Skills is utilizing this Request for Partners (RFP) to identify local not-for-profit organizations who work closely with employers and are looking to enhance their workforce development function with a demand-drive model focused on the hiring needs of employers. In 2022-2023, Skills plans to explore a partnership with and offer planning grants to up to four nonprofit organizations in new locations across the country interested in adding, growing, or enhancing their employer-led, data-driven workforce approach through consultative services, staff training, and national employer introductions. Locations/sites are defined as cities, regions, or states.

Skills seeks to enhance the national workforce system by partnering with nonprofits as local partners and champions that adopt the Skills model. While partners for the Skills model have historically been the local chamber of commerce or an economic development nonprofit, Skills seeks to identify local nonprofits with the strongest support and linkage to your local business community that can incubate the model.

**Selected nonprofits will be eligible to receive an initial \$25,000 planning grant.**



## About Skills and the Jobs-First Model

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### How Will the Skills Model Benefit Your City?

The Skills' jobs-first model has increased economic mobility for thousands of under and unemployed individuals. Bringing Skills to your city will:

1. Increase economic mobility for thousands of under and unemployed individuals;
2. Align employers' hiring needs with diverse, job-ready talent;
3. Provide data, expertise, and resources to implement a proven approach to workforce development; and
4. Provide access to a network of national employers already working with Skills

### Theory of Change

Annually, the United States spends \$41 billion on workforce development, yet marginalized populations, primarily low-moderate income and/or Black and Latinx communities, experience unemployment rates well above national averages. Flipping the traditional workforce model on its head, the Skills model starts by going directly to the job source--employers--and understanding their hiring needs, company culture, and long-term human resources goals. Skills fills available positions with unemployed individuals, serving as a connection, coach, and advocate. The Skills model connects unemployed individuals with companies in need of hiring them and serves as the last mile for the unemployed but the first mile for businesses.

### Background of the Model and Organization

Skills is a nonprofit guided by our north star of increasing economic mobility of under and unemployed by connecting them to quality jobs through our deep partnership and understanding of the unique human capital needs of our network of engaged employers. Skills is driven to meet the talent demands of businesses, and to be a catalyst for systemic change and innovation. By focusing on the hiring demand of employers, Skills has created a paradigm shift in the general supply-driven approach to workforce development. The impact of this demand-driven approach can be seen through both the employers' skilled and diverse workforce, and the economic mobility provided to job seekers who are no longer unemployed/underemployed.

Skills launched its first location in 2012 in [Chicago](#) and expanded to [Rhode Island](#) in 2016. To date, Skills has directly impacted the lives of 13,000+ job seekers who were connected to jobs and career pathways leveraging Skills' network of over 100 employer partners in diverse industries such as healthcare, financial services, retail, manufacturing, and hospitality. Additionally, Skills has an engaged [Board of Directors](#) at the C-Suite level and funding support from private donors and government.

In 2017, Skills commissioned New Growth Group – a third-party firm specializing in workforce development and evaluation – to determine the long-term impact of Skills' model on job seekers placed. The [study](#) found that candidates placed by Skills earned, on average, \$6,120 more

annually and achieved a 20% higher job retention rate at the one-year mark than individuals in a comparison group. Skills candidates' reliance on public assistance also decreased from 45% to 28% once they were provided access to employer-provided benefits. Overall, the study found that dollars invested in Skills earn a 251% return over a two-year period, highlighting Skills' capacity to generate positive outcomes for disadvantaged populations.

## Scope of Partnership

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Skills is seeking up to (4) four new nonprofits looking to add or enhance their jobs-first workforce approach in their community. Deploying a train-the-trainer model, Skills will provide the consultative and technical support required to deliver on hiring needs for employers and connect more job seekers to quality jobs. Specifically, Skills is looking to partner with organizations who would like to (a) embed the model into their current workforce initiatives, (b) build out a net new demand-driven workforce function within their existing organization, or (c) launch a new, jobs-first organization within the larger workforce ecosystem of a city or state. Intensive assessment, planning, training, and consultation will be conducted in the first phase of partnership with ongoing quality assurance, thought partnership, employer introductions, and support delivered as part of the Skills national network.

### Planning Grant

Skills is offering \$25,000 initial planning grants for up to four organizations selected to explore a partnership in 2022-2023. Planning grants will be issued in Q1 of 2022 after an Agreement of Exploration is signed with each nonprofit. This initial seed funding will be used to compensate each organization for their time to explore and evaluate the feasibility of a potential partnership and to create a project plan and budget together.

Upon conclusion of a three-month period of exploration of partnership, Skills and the organization will determine whether to move forward with a formal partnership.

Partners who join the national Skills network receive the following value:

- A network of over 100 national employer partners in diverse industries
- Ability to short-cut learnings using Skills' data and experience
- Close the opportunity gap for underserved communities and dramatically increase placements for under and unemployed jobseekers
- Access to robust data, tracking and evaluation tools at a national and hyper-local level
- Join a network of Skills' sites with a similar mind-set and share best practices.

Partners will also receive the following services:

- White-glove, consultative services and thought partnership services to implement and drive a jobs-first approach in your city
- Staff training from Skills on the proven approach to business development, client

services, sourcing talent beyond the federal workforce system, building diverse talent pipelines, designing career pathways for employers, aligning community partnerships, data collection and more.

- Support with local fundraising efforts to launch and sustain the work overtime.

## Evaluation Criteria

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Skills evaluates new markets based on its ability to impact economic mobility for the under and unemployed and provide value add to a nonprofit partner and local workforce ecosystem. Some of the criteria by which Skills will evaluate the eligibility for the planning grant of a nonprofit includes:

- 1) **Alignment on Guiding Principles & Values:** Skills is seeking to partner with organizations aligned with similar values defined by our Guiding Principles (see Appendix)
- 2) **Unemployment:** Higher unemployment as compared to other cities or regions, particularly in Black and Latinx communities
- 3) **Employer Relationships:** Existing relationships with employers in the local market that a nonprofit is looking to deepen or expand
- 4) **Job Type/Industry Diversity:** A variety of job types in diverse industries which lend themselves to individuals with a high school degree and/or some college education
- 5) **Local Incubation Partner:** Skills seeks to partner with a strong local nonprofit with some level of engagement with the business community
- 6) **Local Champion:** Support from an influential business or community leader to bring the Skills' model to your location
- 7) **Local Funding Capacity:** With support from Skills, a nonprofit partner should be able to raise local funds to sustain and demonstrate support for the work overtime
- 8) **Data Driven & Informed:** Skills seeks to partner with an organization that uses data to drive their decision-making process

Note: Sites and nonprofits are not expected to possess all seven criteria listed above to be considered, but some demonstration of the criteria is important to determine ultimate success.



## RFP Questions and Responses

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### Section 1: Applicant & Organization Information

Please answer Sections 1-3 of the proposal questions (Pages 9-11) and upload as one document to this [link](#) by **5:00 PM CT on Friday, December 10th.**

Name of Organization	
Primary Address, City, State	
Website	
Primary Contact Name/Title (for follow up)	
Contact Email	
Contact Phone	
Name of CEO or Executive Director	
Other Key Leadership (Names/Titles) that would participate	
Number of Current Employees	
Years of Organization's Existence	
List of Board Members (Names/Titles/Organization)	
FY 2021 Organization Budget Size (Revenue + Expenses)	

Please List Organization's Top Five Current Funders	
Percent of Revenue Derived from Government Funding	
Percent of Revenue from Private Funding	

## Section 2: Location Demographics

Please fill out and upload the following table with your response questions to help us better understand the core demographic data in your location to the best of your knowledge.

Category	Data
<b>Population of Proposed Location</b> (city, state, or region)	
<b>Demographics</b> % Black % White % Hispanic / Latinx % Asian % Other	
<b>Median Household Income</b>	
<b>Average Poverty Rate</b> Total Poverty Rate Black Poverty Rate Hispanic/Latinx Poverty Rate	
<b>Current Unemployment Rate</b> Total Unemployment Rate Black Unemployment Rate Hispanic/Latinx Unemployment Rate Youth Unemployment Rate	
<b>Education Levels in Proposed Location</b> % High School % Some College % Bachelor's Degree % Graduate Degree % Associates Degree % Less than 9th Grade	

## RFP Questions and Responses

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### Section 3: Supporting Questions

Please answer the following questions and limit responses to no more than **four (4) pages long, double-spaced** in total. Applicants can submit any supporting documents in appendix to their application but all supporting documents must refer to specific questions in the RFP.

- 1. Please briefly share why you are interested in partnering with Skills? What are your organization's current priorities and how do you hope to achieve these by partnering with Skills?**
- 2. What is your organization's mission statement and theory of change? How would you describe your core values?**
- 3. How would you describe your organization's role in the local workforce ecosystem? Who are your core customers/clients?**
- 4. Who would be your biggest local champion (business leader or community leader) to help you bring the Skills' model to your city?**
- 5. Does your city currently have one or more employer-focused workforce entities? If so, please name the entity/entities.**
- 6. What are your most significant challenges as an organization when it comes to achieving your workforce goals today and, in the future (i.e., employer engagement, sourcing talent, securing diverse pipelines, establishing career pathways, capacity, retention rates, etc.)?**
- 7. What are the most pressing issues faced by employers and job seekers in the city you serve?**
- 8. Which industries does your organization primarily work with? What industries are you hoping to expand into?**

## Appendix

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1. National Employer Partners
2. About Skills' National Expansion
3. Skills by the Numbers
4. Skills' Structure and Governance Model
5. Skills' Guiding Principles
6. Voices of Impact
7. Skills in the News


## Appendix 1: National Employer Partners

Skills has a robust network of engaged national employer partners interested in expanding Skills' impact to more cities. Below is a sample of the national hiring partners Skills works with in Chicago and Rhode Island and testimony from some of their experience working with Skills.




## Appendix 1: National Partners (Continued)

<p><b>177</b></p> <p>All-Time Placements Since 2013</p>	<p><b>PARTNER SPOTLIGHT</b></p> <p><b>Long-Term Support</b></p> <p>Consistent financial support, funding for innovation, and leadership on SCF's Board</p>	
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	<p><b>"SCF's commitment to underserved communities and is a prime example of how the Skills model can help similar communities across the country. It also demonstrates how SCF partners with nonprofit organizations to leverage organizational expertise while not duplicating efforts."</b></p> <p>Karen Freeman-Wilson, President &amp; CEO of the Chicago Urban League</p>
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<p><b>166</b></p> <p>All-Time Placements Since 2014</p>	<p><b>PARTNER SPOTLIGHT</b></p> <p><b>Multi-Tier Engagement</b></p> <p>Support from CEO and CHRO down to the regional hiring managers, all committed to inclusivity</p>	
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	<p><b>"Skills is more than just a hiring partner; they are a resource we rely on as we work on local initiatives and strategic hiring priorities."</b></p> <p>Kathleen Wilson-Thompson, Executive Vice President and Global Chief Human Resources Officer, Walgreens Boots Alliance, Inc.</p>
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<p><b>57</b></p> <p>All-Time Placements Since 2018</p>	<p><b>PARTNER SPOTLIGHT</b></p> <p><b>Community Commitment</b></p> <p>Joint efforts to create positive change toward social equity in the communities AT&amp;T serves</p>	
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## Appendix 2: About Skills' National Expansion



### THE PROBLEM

Annually, the United States spends \$41 billion on workforce development, yet marginalized populations, primarily low-moderate income and/or black and brown communities, experience unemployment rates well above national averages.

### CURRENT "SUPPLY FOCUSED" SYSTEM

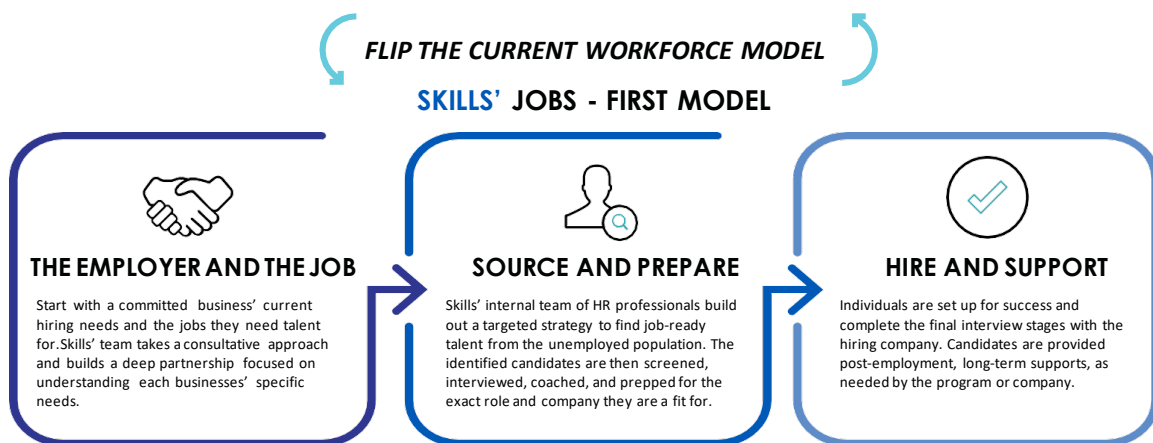


The prevailing "train and pray" model, funded by public dollars, fails to effectively remedy this disconnect between job seekers and employers, leaving job seekers without a link to real jobs post-training, with no improvement on earnings. Research shows that the training offered by traditional programs does not improve employment or earnings, and that only a small percentage of enrollees in training found jobs that were directly related to their training.

### THE SOLUTION

Flipping the traditional workforce model on its head, Skills starts by going directly to the job source--employers--and understanding their hiring needs, company culture, and long-term human resources goals. Skills fills available positions with unemployed individuals, serving as a connection, coach, and advocate. The Skills model connects unemployed individuals with companies in need of hiring them and serves as the last mile for the unemployed but the first mile for businesses.

The expansion of the Skills model will positively disrupt the national workforce landscape by proving the efficacy of a jobs-first approach that helps employers connect with eligible job seekers faster, and eliminates the access gap for the countless unemployed across the country struggling to find work.



## Appendix 2: About Skills' National Expansion (Continued)

### VISION FOR SCALE

Skills plans to replicate our model in new locations, placing low-income individuals into meaningful employment, resulting in new income, and increased economic mobility for thousands of individuals. Skills plans to launch 25 sites in the next ten years, placing 500,000 unemployed individuals into jobs across the country. Skills will strategically choose which sites to expand into using our set of selection criteria and engagement approach. We will provide staff resources to launch each site and partner with key stakeholders to adapt to the local needs and culture of each workforce ecosystem.

### IMPACT OF THE WORK



The Skills model has proven successful in two vastly different geographies. In both Chicago and Rhode Island, Skills places hundreds of unemployed individuals into jobs each month. In 2017, New Growth Group – a third-party firm specializing in workforce development and evaluation – determined the long-term impact of Skills' model on job seekers placed:

**\$6,120/YR**  
MORE EARNED BY  
SKILLS PLACEMENT

**20%**  
HIGHER RETENTION  
RATE AT 1 YEAR THAN  
COMPARISON GROUP

**251%**  
YEAR 2 RETURN ON  
INVESTMENT

### WHY SKILLS, WHY NOW

To date, Skills has all the necessary components in place to launch the model into new sites.



### NATIONAL HIRING PARTNERS

Alliance Ground International  
Amazon  
AT&T  
Athletico  
Bank of America  
Blue Cross and Blue Shield  
BMO Harris Bank  
CDW  
Cintas  
CVS Health  
Discover Financial Services  
Domino's  
Dunkin'  
Gap  
HMS Host  
The Home Depot  
Honeywell  
Hudson Group  
Hyatt Hotels Corp.  
JPMorgan Chase  
Levy Restaurants  
Lowe's  
Massage Envy  
McDonald's  
Motive/Lyft  
PeopleScout  
SmashHotels  
SportClips  
SSP America  
Swissport  
Total Airport Services  
Ulta Beauty  
United Way  
UPS  
Walgreens  
Walmart  
Waste Management  
Wintrust Financial

### THE POWER OF YOUR INVESTMENT

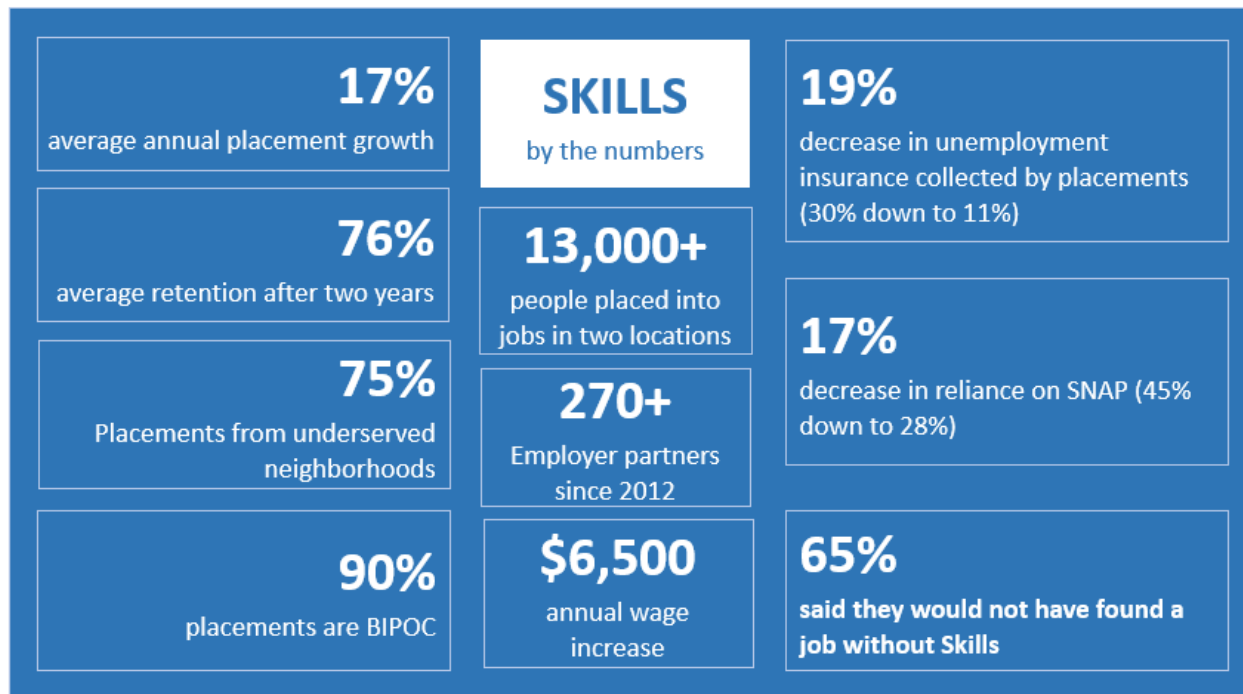
Bringing the Skills' jobs-first model to your city will:

- Increase economic mobility for thousands of unemployed individuals in underserved neighborhoods
- Align employers' hiring needs with diverse, job-ready talent
- Provide data, expertise, and resources to implement a jobs-first approach
- Provide access to a network of national employers already working with Skills

**On behalf of the millions of unemployed who do not have the network needed to find employment, please join hands with us to transform their lives.**

### Appendix 3: Skills by the Numbers

Cumulative data over nine years coupled with an independent evaluation by New Growth Group shows the impact of the Skills model on job seekers.



## **Appendix 4: Skills Structure and Governance Model**

**Skills for Chicagoland's Future** was launched in 2012 as a 501(c)3 public-private partnership to increase economic mobility for the under and unemployed through a demand-driven workforce solution. Skills for Chicagoland's Future is governed by a fully private-sector, C-Suite Board of Directors.

**Skills for Rhode Island's Future** is an independent 501(C)3 that was launched as the second affiliate site in 2016. Skills for Rhode Island's Future has its own Board of Directors and Executive Director.

**Skills for America's Future (SAF)** is a 501(c)3 that is designed to serve as the national arm and central point to expand its demand-driven model nationally. Currently, SAF, or "Skills," refers to the umbrella of organizations in Chicago and Rhode Island, as well as the inclusion of all future expansion sites. Today, national expansion of the Skills' model is operated and governed by Skills for Chicagoland's Future, with consultation from Skills for Rhode Island's Future. A National Expansion Committee exists and reports to Chicago's Board of Directors. Once a critical mass of national sites is launched, the goal is to have all governance and oversight of national efforts be transitioned from Chicago to SAF.

### **National Expansion Committee**

National expansion of the Skills model is governed by a designated National Expansion Committee with representation from diverse locations and industries.

- Dennis Berger, Chief Culture Officer, Suffolk Construction, Committee Chair
- Heidi Capozzi, Global Chief People Officer, McDonald's
- Scott Jensen, CEO and VP of External Affairs, Research Improving People's Lives
- Jeff Lackey, VP of Talent, CVS Health and Skills for Rhode Island's Future Board Member
- Joe Pomerence, Managing Partner, AM Ventures
- Whitney Smith, Head of Regional Philanthropy North America, JPMorgan Chase
- Keith Wyche, Vice President, Community Engagement & Support, Walmart
- Marie Trzupek Lynch, President & CEO, Skills for Chicagoland's Future, Ex-Officio Member

## **Appendix 5: Skills' Guiding Principles**

With national expansion, we seek local champions that share these values in the cities we scale in and will bring Skills' guiding principles to each location we replicate in:

**Enthusiasm for the Mission** - We are individually and collectively motivated and energized by our deep passion for putting unemployed individuals into jobs through a model that embraces our employers and our job seekers.

**Equity** - The collective identity of our people reflects and represents the communities we serve. We are committed to diversity, equity and inclusion and will engage our diverse range of stakeholders to positively impact economic mobility.

**Integrity** - We are driven by our personal ethics and our collective moral compass pointed towards always acting with integrity and requiring this of those around us.

**Change** - We are flexible individually and agile as an organization, driven by the evolving demands of our stakeholders.

**Intellectual Curiosity** - We are innovators, built on the foundation of curiosity about how to help others and are driven daily to continually evolve solutions that moves Skills forward.

**Impact** - We are focused on the goal of positively impacting economic mobility by using the Skills model to place unemployed people into jobs; the process drives the output – we celebrate results rather than tasks and are driven by our missteps to learn and grow.

**Data (approach / mindset)** - Everything we do is because of and supported by data - it drives and guides our decision-making process.



## Appendix 6: Voices of Impact

### INDIVIDUAL IMPACT

#### **Elvis Regaldo, 41 | Submarine Painter**

PLACED BY SRIF

Elvis immigrated to the United States because he wanted the American Dream, but after years of toiling away at a job with no long-term growth, he knew he needed to move on, but had nowhere to turn. Skills for Rhode Island's Future was the connection Elvis needed and provided him the opportunity to use his skills and get on a career path to support his family.

"SRIF brought back my American Dream and made it a reality."

**GENERAL DYNAMICS**  
Electric Boat



### INDIVIDUAL IMPACT

#### **Angel Lewis, 35 | Client Services Rep.**

PLACED BY SCF

After nearly 11 years working an overnight graveyard shift at a casino, Angel was ready for a career change. With a 10-year-old daughter at home, she was determined to find a full-time position that offered stability and day-time hours. After months of searching, Angel came in contact with a SCF recruiter, who helped her land a job with Bank of America. Angel now has a full-time role with growth potential, providing her work-life balance and the ability to spend more time with her family.

"Even with the right experience, it's hard to get into the right company. I love Skills because they really set the employee up for the employer."

**BANK OF AMERICA**



### INDIVIDUAL IMPACT

#### **Jackie Pinedo, 22 | Retail Sales Manager**

PLACED BY SCF

In 2018, after nearly a year of unemployment, Jackie came across Skills, who prepared and set her up for an interview with Ulta Beauty. Shortly after interviewing, Jackie was hired as a Beauty Advisor. Several months later, Jackie was promoted to Merchandising Coordinator. In 2019, she was promoted again to Retail Sales Manager. A full-time student at Chicago State University and soon-to-be married, Jackie is grateful to work at such a high-quality company that gives her the flexibility and opportunity to grow personally and professionally.

"I would tell anyone that I know that is looking for work to give Skills a look. Skills will be your light - they'll give you a chance when no one else will."

**ULTA**  
BEAUTY





## Appendix 6: Voices of Impact (Continued)

### THE VOICES OF THOSE IMPACTED BY SKILLS' JOBS-FIRST MODEL

**"I would definitely recommend Skills to my friends – the process is pretty seamless and very informative."** - Eddy R., Skills placement at Smashotels

**"I was very happy with Skills' hiring process. I've already recommended people to Skills because of how efficient and fast the hiring process was."** - Jenifer S., Skills placement at NorthShore University HealthSystem

*"I was very frustrated during my current job – after I quit, I was very unsure of my career goals." "I felt so much relief when I found the McDonald's/ Skills program. I was able to get my degree and start a career at the same time – I finally feel like I'm on the right track."* - Aijalon J., Skills Placement at McDonald's

**"The Skills recruiter was extremely insightful, and really calmed my nerves for the interview with Kin + Carta. I would definitely recommend Skills and their U2.0 program to a recent grad."** - Matthew L., placement at Kin + Carta

**"This program gives me a chance to make a better life for my family. I know I'll be successful if I do everything I have to. Skills gives you the tools to succeed, but you're the one who needs to put in the work. This opportunity will open up the world for me."** - Shanice Collins, Skills placement at Rush University Medical Center

**"After I was laid off, I never thought I'd find a good job again. Working with Skills was like having a barrier removed. It gave me the chance to work directly with someone who is committed to getting you a good job. You're not just a number, you're a person and they care about finding you the right fit."** - Monique E., Skills placement at Civic Consulting Alliance

**"I was scared. As a new mom, I was worried about how I'd take care of my daughter. And then I met Chelsea at Skills, who gave me great tips and pointers to succeed in the interview. That helped boost my confidence. Now I have a great job with flexible scheduling and wonderful benefits to take care of my family. I would love to grow with AIM and see where I fit there long-term."** - Marquetta H., Skills placement at AIM SpecialtyHealth

**"I don't understand why I didn't go into manufacturing earlier. I'm having fun, I'm learning, growing and moving forward with Freedman Seating. The second half of my life now looks brighter. Don't let fear hold you back. In the end, you're going to end up miserable. Go for it and take the chance. The change will pay off in the end."** - Sheila G., Skills placement at Freedman Seating

**"What I like the most, is that I'm able to help others find jobs. I can give the same help that I needed."** - Gwendolyn T., Skills placement at PeopleScout

*"I was juggling two jobs, my schedule was all over the place. It was stressful and overwhelming, because I wasn't where I wanted to be. Now I'm on a stable career path with the opportunity to grow professionally. I don't think I would be where I am today had it not been for Skills."* - Laymondra B., Skills placement at Walgreens

**"I was working part-time and struggling to make ends meet on my salary. Skills was able to find me a full-time role that was perfect for my background and experience. I've been with Grainger for almost a year now and things are going great. I'm so grateful to Skills."** - Arturo G., Skills placement at Grainger

**"After finding out my previous employer was shutting down operations and I'd be losing my job, I was eager to find a new position as soon as possible. Skills was able to get me quickly placed into my new role. I love being able to work outside in such a unique job. I was impressed by Skills' organization and professionalism and how smooth the whole process was."** - Gavin F., Skills placement at Divvy

**"I was laid off from my previous job and was unemployed for a few months. The financial instability and uncertainty was overwhelming. I was down to just the bare necessities. I was so relieved when I found Skills. They were very responsive and worked hard to make me feel relaxed and prepared for my interview. I'm very grateful to Skills for all of their help."** - Leatrice S., Skills placement at United Airlines

**"After losing my job due to budget cuts, I spent months doing temp work while trying to find a permanent, stable position. I found Skills during my job search and their recruiters took the time to get to know me, making sure I was fully prepared. I really appreciated the level of individual attention I received. Getting my new job offer was a great feeling and a huge relief."** - Andrea T., Skills placement at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois

*"I've been an active Yelp user for years, but I never dreamed I could actually work there."* - Alex H., Skills placement at Yelp

**"Step IT Up America was a life changing experience, and I couldn't be more thankful to Skills for connecting me to this opportunity. I'm proud to blaze a path for other women in IT."** - Stephanie J., Skills placement at UST Global

**"When looking for a job, you have to stay positive - there is always another door that opens when one closes. Skills for Chicagoland's Future was the door that opened for me and led me to the career I was searching for!"** - Kenesha K., Skills placement at JPMorgan Chase

**After working with Skills, I got a job offer with Walgreens. When I got it, I felt a force come above and an intense happiness!** - Jacori Garrett, Skills placement at Walgreens

## Appendix 7: Skills in the News

Read more about Skills' impact in the following news articles:

### *National Expansion*

- [Chicago job-placement group raising \\$10 million to go national](#), *Chicago Sun-Times*, August 10, 2021

### *Launch of Skills for Chicagoland's Future*

- [Building a bridge of opportunity for jobless in Cook County](#), *Chicago Tribune*, March 25, 2013.

### *Skills for Rhode Island's Future*

- ["New initiative aims to find work for Rhode Island's jobless,"](#) *The Washington Times*, October 19, 2016.
- [America's Smallest State Is Punching Above Its Weight On Workforce Development](#), *Forbes*, February 26, 2021

### *Initiatives, programs, and evaluations*

- ["Nonprofit puts workers on track for higher earnings, job retention, report shows,"](#) *Chicago Tribune*, October 6, 2017
- [Program Aims to Help Young Adults Land in Medical Field](#), *NBC Chicago*, February 1, 2019
- [Amid Coronavirus Shutdown, Skills For Chicagoland's Future Helping People Find Jobs At Essential Businesses](#), *CBS Chicago*, April 9, 2020
- ['First responder' rescues the jobless from pandemic's despair](#), *Chicago Sun-Times*, November 2, 2020