Our mission at Opportunity@Work is to rewire the U.S. labor market so that all individuals Skilled Through Alternative Routes (STARs) can work, learn, and earn to their full potential.
About Us

Our History

Opportunity@Work was founded in 2015, in part to support and grow TechHire, a White House initiative launched by our co-founder Byron Auguste to connect overlooked communities with technology job openings. We were originally “incubated” as a “civic enterprise” within New America, a think tank dedicated to bringing new ideas and voices into America’s public discourse.

In 2017, Opportunity@Work became an independent 501(c)(3) with two ambitious goals: (1) Develop and test platforms to provide tech-enabled solutions to solve the opportunity gap; and (2) Rally public, private, and nonprofit partners to rewire the labor market so that everyone can contribute their skills, talent, and energy in pursuit of a better life.

Recognizing the learning needed to solve this problem “at scale” Opportunity@Work has actively led several initiatives and betas to expand access to career opportunities for overlooked individuals.

Our Vision

In the next decade, Opportunity@Work aims to enable at least 1 million working adults in America to translate their learning into earning — generating a $20 billion boost in annual earnings.

Our Beliefs

• We believe in the potential of all people to learn and contribute their talents in our dynamic economy.

• We believe a labor market that is rewired for inclusion creates prosperity for individuals, businesses, and society.

• We believe technology can be used as a powerful tool to drive positive change.

• We believe no one institution alone can create an inclusive labor market.

STARs

Individuals Skilled Through Alternative Routes have gained valuable skills on the job, in the military, through training programs, or at community colleges, for example. They are among our country’s greatest under-valued resources – the invisible casualties of America’s broken labor market, where low-wage work is often equated with low-skill work and the lack of a degree is presumed to be synonymous with a lack of skills.

STARs reflect our country’s racial and regional diversity. They hail from cities, suburbs and small towns across America. STARs fill myriad jobs in our economy from drivers to warehouse packers; retail clerks to caregivers; medical technicians to software developers and more. They are entrepreneurs, enlisted veterans, and include people of all ages and at all life stages, from 20-year-olds just starting their careers to workers with 20 years of on-the-job experience.
What is the Problem?

The reported “Skills Gap” is part of a much larger problem, what we call the Opportunity Gap – the loss of income and career opportunity due to unfair barriers that prevent workers in America from translating their learning into earning.

The Labor Market has an Opportunity Gap

How Big is the Problem?

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are 120 million individuals in the U.S. labor market who have graduated from high school but do not have a four-year college degree.¹ That’s more than 60% of U.S. working age adults.

Who is Most Affected?

Adding a four-year degree requirement automatically screens out 76% of African Americans, 81% of Americans in rural communities, and 83% of LatinX workers.²

Four-Year Degree Requirements
Automatically Screen Out:

- 76% African Americans
- 83% Latinx
- 81% Rural Americans


Our Experts

**Byron Auguste**  
**CEO & Co-Founder**

Byron Auguste is CEO and co-founder of Opportunity@Work, a social enterprise based in Washington, D.C., which aims to rewire the U.S. labor market in ways that enable more Americans to achieve upward mobility in the job market and workplace. Byron was inspired by a diverse set of experiences to conceive and co-found Opportunity@Work in 2015.

---

**Karan Chopra**  
**Executive Vice President & Co-Founder**

Karan provides leadership on strategic direction and execution of Opportunity@Work’s priorities. He co-founded Opportunity@Work because he believes meaningful work is not just a matter of economic well-being but of individual dignity. He has seen many others with talents but without opportunities realize their true potential and believes that in order to have an impact, we need better systems, not just great initiatives.

---

**Yolanda Townsend**  
**Chief Operating Officer & General Counsel**

Yolanda is a results driven member of the executive team. As General Counsel and Senior Vice President, she is charged with leading resource mobilization, key legal and business strategies, and Internal Operations at Opportunity@Work. She is also the head of the TechHire team that supports the creation of employment pathways for the more than 80 million workers in this country who don’t have a four-year college degree but who are Skilled Through Alternative Routes (STARs).

---

**Komal Kirtikar**  
**Senior Vice President & Head of Marketplace**

Komal is responsible for driving strategy and operations of our Opportunity Marketplace for employers and providers to enable overlooked talent to be hired into career path jobs. In this role, Komal leads operations that cover the planning, testing, seeding, and scaling of our Opportunity Marketplace, including customer acquisition and delivery.
Papia Debroy  
**Vice President of Insights**

Papia oversees our research and data insights work to assist private, public and social sector leaders to act to improve the economic opportunity for Skilled Through Alternative Routes (STARs). Prior to joining Opportunity@Work, Papia served as a Research Director at CEB, a member based advisory organization serving more than 80% of the Fortune 1000.

Shad Ahmed  
**Senior Vice President & Chief Partnerships Officer**

Shad Ahmed leads Opportunity@Work's Partnerships & Alliances team, which includes the STARs Insights Initiative and our collaborations with leading companies and workforce development organizations. He was previously Vice President of Growth & Business Operations at Medallia, where he designed, launched and led several teams as the software company tripled in size. Prior to Medallia, Shad was an Associate Partner at McKinsey&Company, where he specialized in strategy and organizational work and focused on public-private partnerships in education, labor market and economic development with clients across the private, social and public sectors. Originally from Texas, Shad currently lives in San Francisco with his wife and 2 young children.

Will Villota  
**Director of Communications & External Affairs**

Will joins Opportunity@Work after a decade leading brand and digital marketing campaigns for nonprofits in global conservation, renewable energy, and gun violence prevention. Most recently, as Vice President of Brand Marketing at Conservation International, Will championed creation of two pioneering virtual reality experiences and expanded the brand’s award-winning Nature is Speaking campaign into Asia and Latin America.
Our Movement

Our Supporters

Chan Zuckerberg Initiative
Cognizant U.S. Foundation
Google.org
Hewlett Foundation
Lumina Foundation
The James Irvine Foundation
THE MICHELSON 20MM FOUNDATION
THOMSON REUTERS FOUNDATION
Walmart

Our Partners

REWORK AMERICA TASKFORCE
Retail Opportunity Network
NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION
GRADS of LIFE .org
Contact Us

Please Visit www.OpportunityatWork.org to learn more about our work

For Media Inquiries, please contact:
Cheston McGuire, Senior Communications Manager
Cheston@opportunityatwork.org
202-596-7869