

Worker Learning Pathways in the time of COVID

JVS Digital Divide Forum

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The Project on Workforce at Harvard

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HARVARD Kennedy School

MALCOLM WIENER CENTER
for Social Policy



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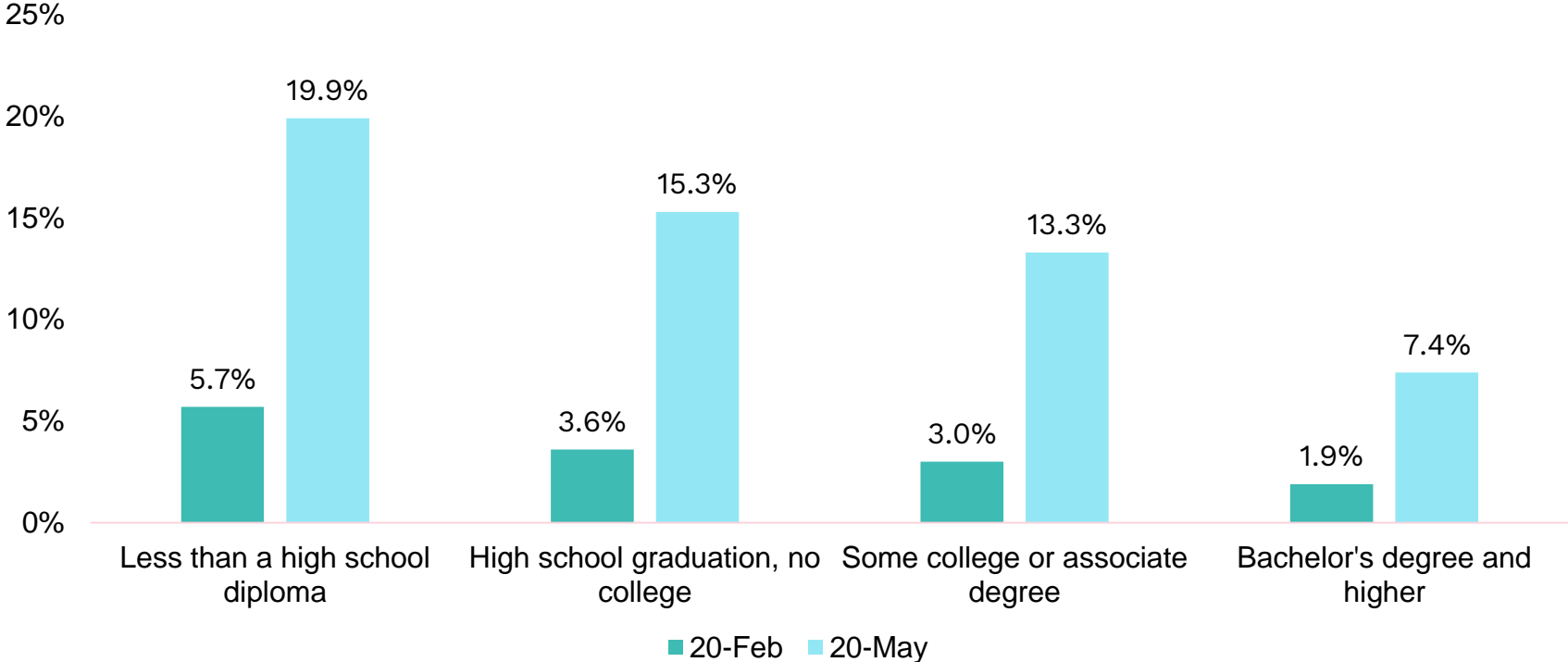
Managing the Future of Work



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The impact of the current crisis is not equally distributed

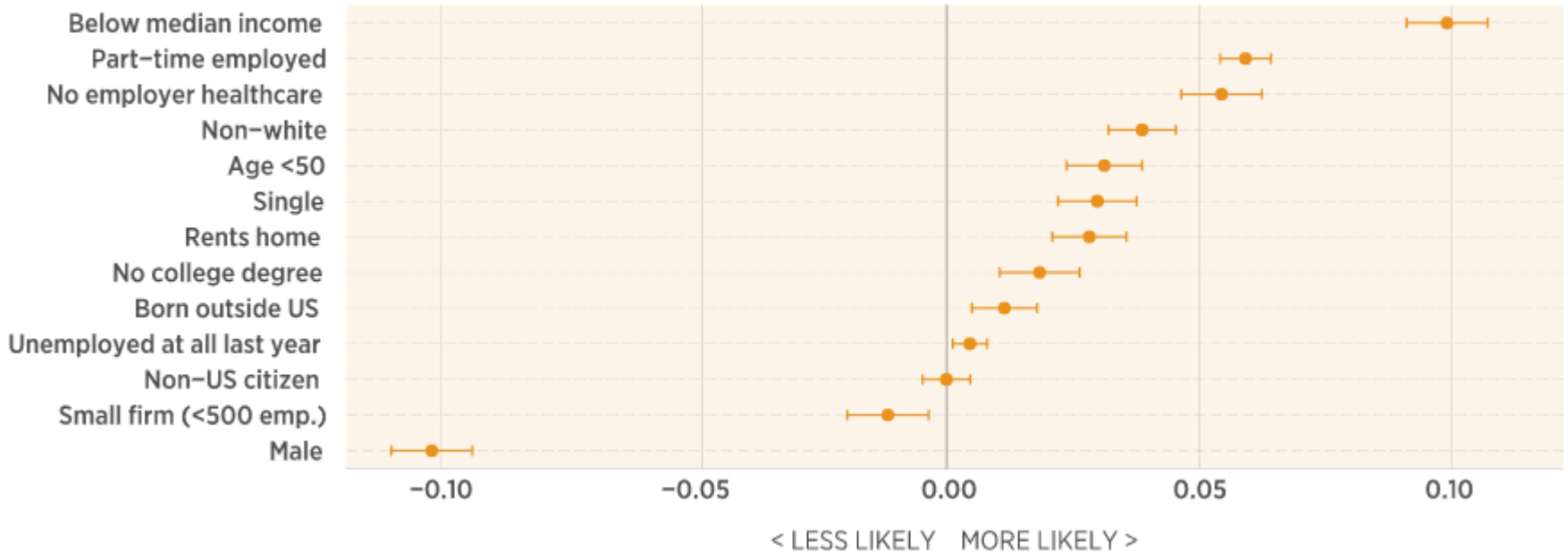
Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

... with disproportionate effects across race, socioeconomic status

Characteristics of Those Who Generally Work Closely Together



Source: Mongey & Neiman 2020

These trends exacerbate the implications of the digital divide.



Access

18 million

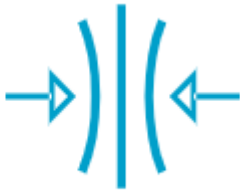
households do not have
broadband internet



Skills

32 million

adults cannot use a computer
effectively

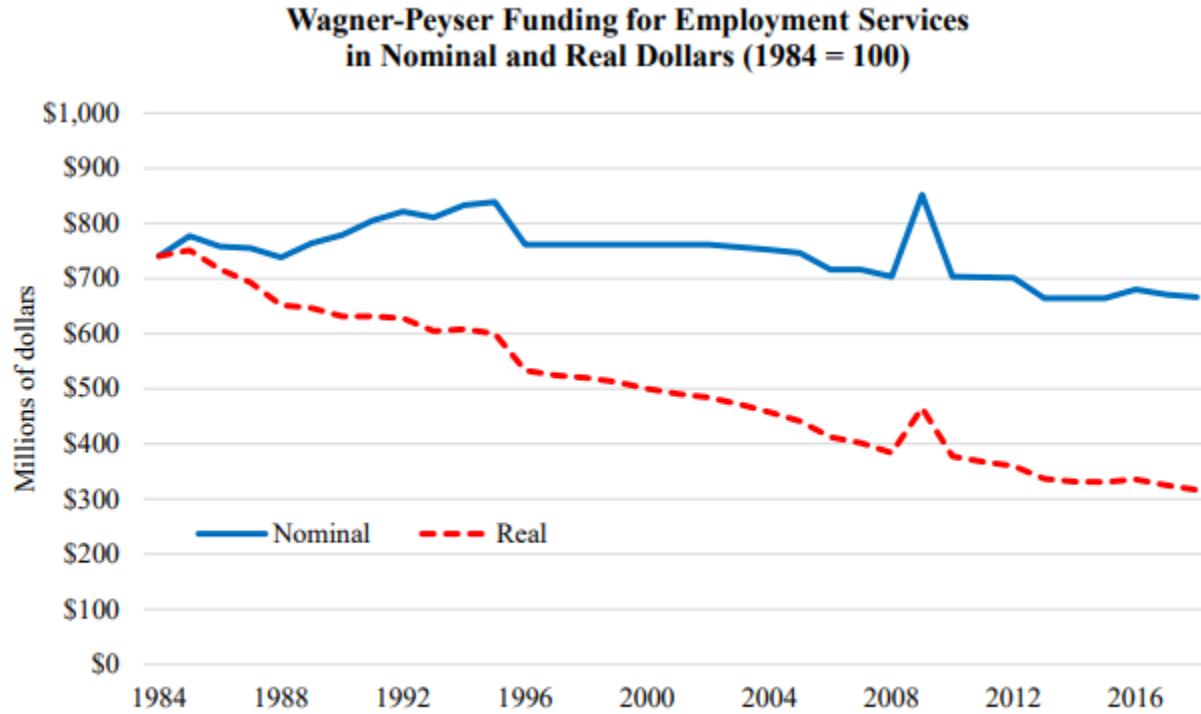


Resilience

1/2

of Americans aren't comfortable
using technology to learn

We entered the crisis with declining federal investment in training & job search assistance.



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.

Source: Wandner 2018

How can we convert this moment into an opportunity?

The New York Times

Opinion

Use the Coronavirus Shutdown to Train Workers

We can use this stoppage in the economy to upgrade our nation's productivity.

“The internet has so many different options for learning, but it's hard to know where to start or how to spend my time if I want to get a better job.”

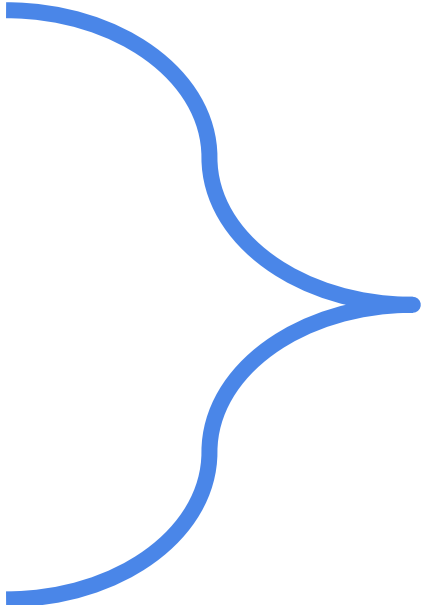
Existing offerings are overwhelming and difficult to navigate; and typically target the top half of the labor market

- Significant information required to sign up (intimidating)
- Many prerequisite questions about education and skills
- Not mobile-friendly
- Training programs with costs

1) In the uncertainty of crisis, some skills are still “safe bets”

Top “baseline” skills sought by employers:

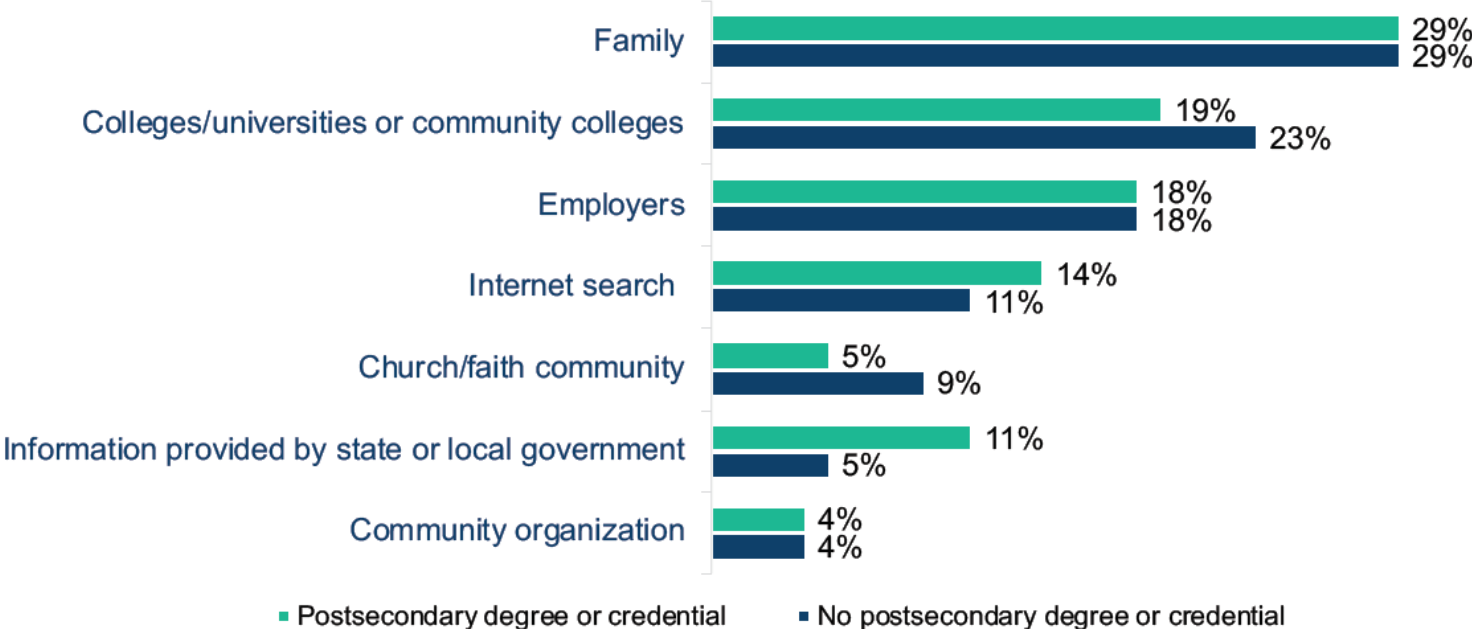
1. Communication skills
2. Organizational skills
3. Writing
4. Customer Service
5. Microsoft Excel
6. Word & Office
7. Problem Solving
8. Planning
9. Comp Skills & Typing
10. Research



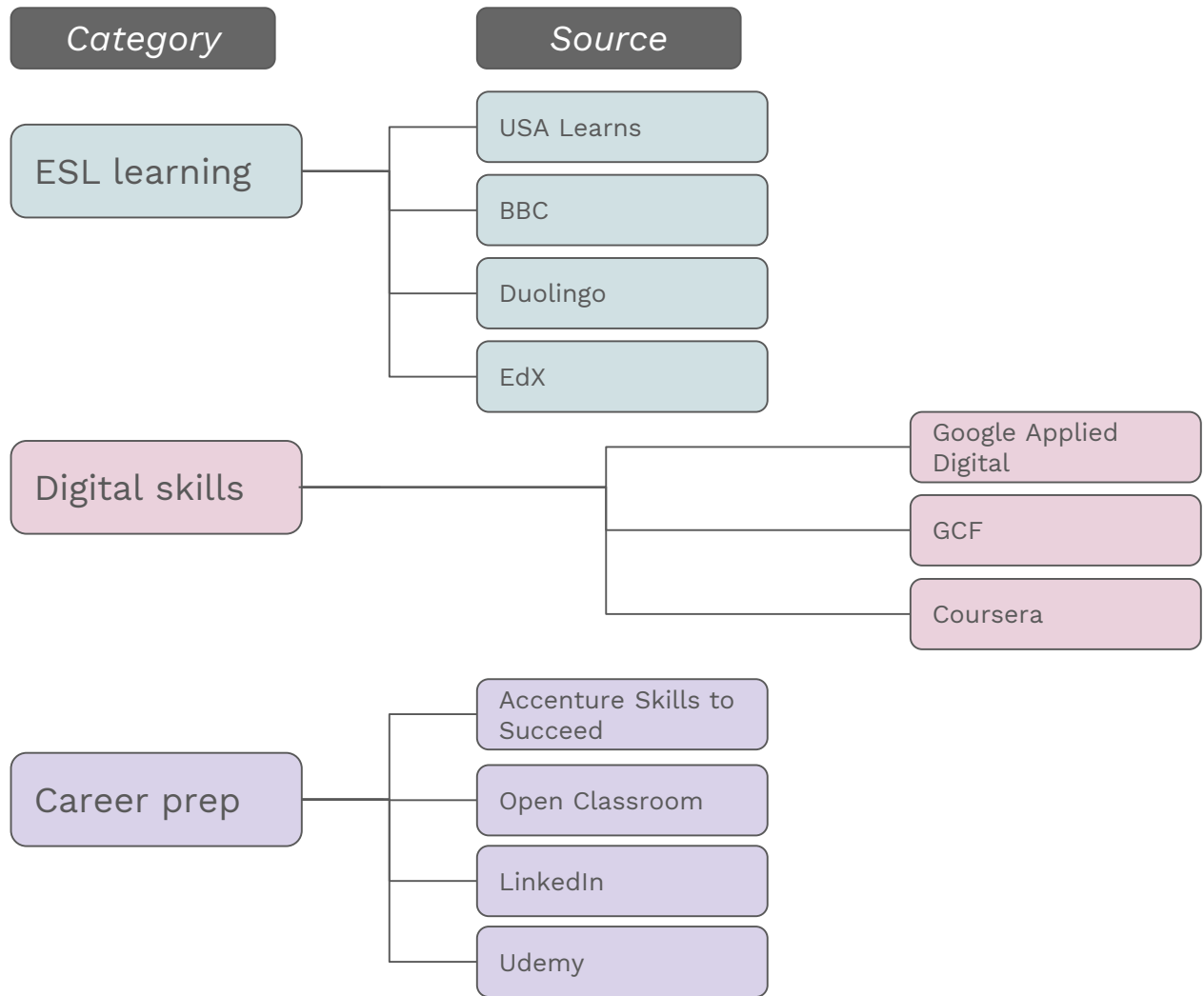
Skills consistently requested in job ads across broad swaths of industries and occupations

2) Credibility and trust matters

When it comes to getting more education or training, please rank how valuable advice from each of the following would be for you personally, where a rank of 1 is “most valuable” and a rank of 7 is “least valuable.”



Ex: Trusted Source Examples



3) Provide curation and pathways – prioritize ease of navigation

Our platform

What do you want to learn?



Career and Job Search

Prepare for your next step with job hunting strategies, resume writing, interview practice, and business etiquette training.



Going Digital at Home and Work

Practice using computer tools every day and build skills used at many jobs.



Learning English for Work

For English Language Learners. Sharpen your English language speaking and reading, with a focus on professional vocabulary and style.

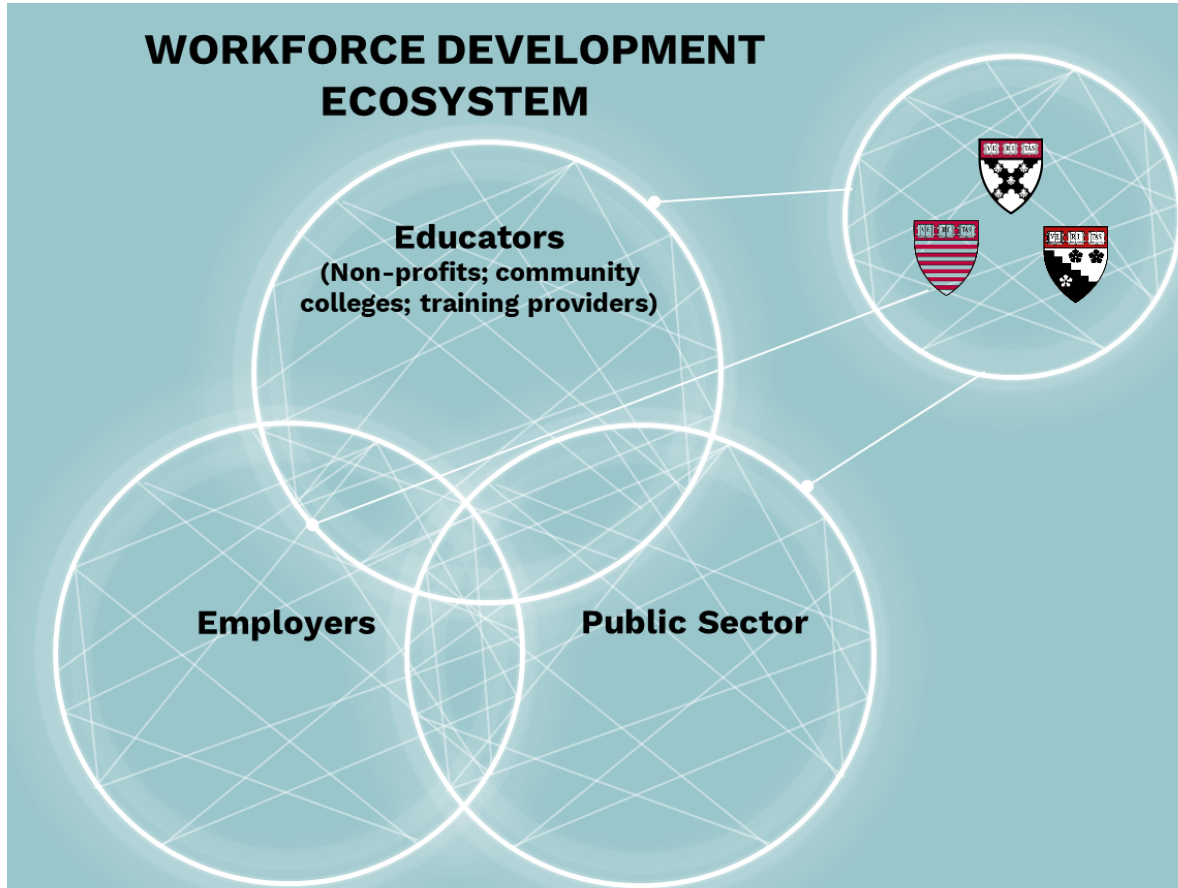
4) Curating “good” digital content (our rubric)

- 1) Cost
- 2) Digestibility
- 3) Interactiveness
- 4) Ease of Use
- 5) Reputable Source
- 6) Platform Adaptability
- 7) Language Adaptability

5) Effectively segment needs and complement with personalized support

- After the last Recession, 82% of states reported increasing automation of employment assistance.
- Most respondents stated they could **serve more customers**
- However, responses on **service quality** were mixed:
 - More technically savvy “customers” can do well with self-service
 - Those without digital skills feel alienated by lack of staff support

6) Work alongside partners!



The Project on Workforce at Harvard



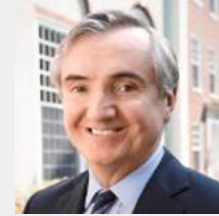
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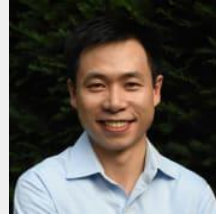
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The Project on Workforce is a **cross-disciplinary, collaborative** project between the Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School, the Harvard Business School Managing the Future of Work Project, and the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Our mission is to chart the course for a postsecondary system of the future that **creates more & better pathways to economic mobility**; and, to **catalyze action across leaders in business, education and policy** to collectively address America's shared skills & employment needs.

THANK YOU

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