Retail Opportunity Network Members
Advancing Retail Workers, Creating Real Opportunity

1 in 4
AMERICAN JOBS ARE SUPPORTED BY RETAIL

PWC, The Economic Impact of the U.S. Retail Industry, 2014.

The Retail Opportunity Network is a collection of over 60 organizations working collaboratively to drive system change for the U.S. retail sector by developing ways to make it easier for frontline retail workers to advance in their careers. Hope Street Group manages the Retail Opportunity Network.

Through in-person convenings, webinars and an online portal, we:

- SHARE BEST PRACTICES
- LEVERAGE MEMBERS' WORK
- DRIVE MEANINGFUL COLLABORATION

RETAIL OPPORTUNITY NETWORK

SYNC OUR SIGNALS℠

Members of the Retail Opportunity Network

Achieving the Dream
Building a stronger pathway to middle-skill retail careers through the collection of best practices in educational curricula, employer collaboration and certifications.

ACT Foundation
Building a retail sector competency model including credentials and career maps that will lead to partnership plans and a Hire For Competency Retail Services Summit.

American Enterprise Institute
Organizing working groups through the Human Dignity Project and publishing a series of papers on successful workforce training programs, which will include how such programs are designed and the role of government and civil society in them.

Aspen Institute
Connecting disconnected youth in five communities with entry-level jobs through the 100K Opportunity Initiative, helping six local partner organizations explore different approaches to enhance job quality and improve mobility for retail workers through the Reimagine Retail Project, and expanding on a completed employer playbook highlighting worker training and advancement best practices by identifying existing support or deploying new tools through direct employer engagement.

Center for the Future of Arizona
Strengthening the Maricopa Co. retail workforce system through the RetailWorks AZ Initiative by conducting a sector landscape analysis, partnering with employers and community partners to develop innovative approaches to make it easier and faster for frontline entry-level retail workers to move up the career ladder, and building a pipeline of skilled talent for adjacent sectors.

Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership
Creating a retail sector center in Chicago, building the capacity of 10 national Workforce Development Boards, providing specialized skills training and retail sector credentialing, advancing frontline workers along career pathways, and improving the perception of retail.

Chicagoland Workforce Funder Alliance
Piloting programs that partner entry-level retail employers with service providers to support employees' career pathways and engaging retailers to explore best practice approaches to employee scheduling.

Chicanos Por La Causa
Providing Maricopa County residents with opportunities for advancement in the retail sector through a new training program and working closely with community partners including local nonprofits, community colleges and WIBs to offer wraparound services including healthcare and transportation.

Code for America
Seeking government partners (through its Workforce Development Team) at the regional and state levels to help explore the role government might play in improving access to jobs that pay enough to live on. The project will include site visits with government partners to help identify opportunities where technology can improve outcomes for job seekers.

Corporation for a Skilled Workforce

Working with the Aspen Institute and several communities to develop system change strategies that improve job quality, employee engagement and worker advancement.

Council for Adult and Experiential Learning

Conducting an inventory of Retail Opportunity grantees to identify future investments for the Walmart Foundation to consider, developing practical tools that build on existing competency mapping research within the Retail Opportunity Network, and developing recommendations for operationalizing tools and resources locally.

Credential Engine

Working with stakeholders to identify and publish data about credentials relevant to both the retail and hospitality industries with the eventual goal of developing career pathway tools for both frontline workers and employers.

Digital Promise

Conducting a landscape analysis of existing data standards that influence the workforce development system, collecting case studies of successful examples of data interoperability, and ultimately convening key advisors to develop recommendations for future efforts that lead to the creation of a data-driven learning ecosystem.

Dress for Success

Implementing the Retail Jobs Trajectory Program (RJT), a training program focused on empowering entry-level female workers in 20 states to advance in the retail industry or into an adjacent sector by providing soft and hard skills training and credentialing that enhances their mobility, portability and self-confidence.

Drucker Institute

Laying the foundation for a system of lifelong learning in the city of South Bend, IN, with the goal of making a set of robust knowledge- and skill-building tools available to users from all backgrounds, of all ages and with varying learning needs.

edX

Supporting a new edX MicroBachelors program to transform higher education by lowering the time and cost of college through career-relevant, industry-endorsed, modular online courses.

Employment Technology Fund

Investing in early-stage entities that use technology to train, upskill and provide employment access to low-income/low-skill adults and serving as a catalyst for attracting additional investment to these enterprises and sharing best practices.

FHI 360

Piloting an education and marketing initiative among frontline retail workers and employers in Baltimore and Chicago to increase understanding of the value of retail work experience and skills.

FSG

Researching employer strategies to support the retention and advancement of entry-level employees, facilitating employer Innovation Labs to improve retention and advancement for opportunity youth and other populations facing barriers, and increasing knowledge built on completed research about both the importance of investing in evidence-based advancement practices for frontline women, and approaches to help improve outcomes for those employees.

Generation

Upskilling entry-level retail workers in Dallas and Jacksonville to be successful in advanced/managerial roles through the Generation Initiative.

Members of the Retail Opportunity Network *(continued)*

Goodwill Industries International
Improving advancement opportunities and support of retail workers through GoodPaths, a training, tracking and resource application for career navigators created in partnership with Hope Street Group.

Hope Street Group
Managing the Retail Opportunity Network and leveraging the collective expertise, skills and reach of the network to amplify the role of retail as opportunity and drive system change within the retail sector.

IDEAS 42
Investigating and identifying behavioral barriers impeding the measurement of workforce development program effectiveness.

Innovate & Educate
Partnering with Dallas employers and Workforce Solutions through the Earn Dallas Program to identify and elevate skills of frontline retail workers and job seekers and provide access to training to increase opportunities for job placement and advancement.

Instituto Del Progreso Latino
Developing an open-source curriculum targeting low-skill incumbent retail workers to gain basic skills and earn entry-level retail credentials.

International Society for Technology in Education
Collaborating with Hope Street Group to develop RON's capacity around digital tools to support members' work and improve the lives of the people they serve. Work will be focused on three resources: a framework to guide the adoption and development of digital tools, an online course to support professional development, and media resources.

Jobs for the Future
Supporting training, credentialing and job placement of low- to middle-skill women and underrepresented TDL workers in 10 TDL occupational training programs in 10 regions, identifying effective retail sector work-based learning strategies and recommendations for implementation, and hosting the Center for Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning to centralize national resources, best practices, and technical assistance to underpin the development of successful apprenticeship and other work-based learning strategies.

League for Innovation in the Community College
Working with 12 community colleges in partnership with regional employers to scale the Western Association of Food Chains' Retail Management Certificate.

Literacy, Language, and Technology Research Group (LLTR) at Portland State University with EdTech Center @ World Education
Creating and implementing a multi-phased study that will identify the constellation of factors that motivate and incentivize lower-skilled workers to engage in learning activities that support development of 21st century skills, specific workplace skills, and adult basic skills (including English language and literacy).

Living Cities/Beyond Jobs
Creating a U.S. proof of concept and plan for extending publicly run state job-boards into public markets for hourly work.

Members of the Retail Opportunity Network *(continued)*

MDRC
Identifying the most promising training programs for helping workers in retail, logistics and customer service achieve upward mobility through an in-depth analysis of workforce development programs operated by community-based nonprofit organizations.

National Able Network
Providing occupational training and employment resources to 1,000 job seekers in middle-skill jobs in retail, manufacturing and logistics in the greater Chicago and Indianapolis regions.

National Association of Workforce Boards
Promoting lessons learned through the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership and its 10 workforce board sub-grantees across the country and providing a national platform to increase awareness of the opportunities that exist within the retail sector.

National Fund for Workforce Solutions
Improving attractiveness of frontline retail jobs by organizing employer-led retail industry partnerships and encouraging employers to incorporate business practices that would increase retention and help advance frontline workers.

National Immigration Forum
Creating and implementing a scalable, sector-wide Contextualized English Language (CEL) learning program that blends online and offline teaching for limited English proficient retail workers, including linking advancement opportunities to the ESL training program.

National Governors Association
Organizing a collaborative consortium of states committed to better understanding the new challenges in offering services to the on-demand workforce and pursuing opportunities for bold actions to support them.

National Retail Federation Foundation
Ensuring the Retail Industry Fundamentals credential accurately prepares entry-level retail workers for a pathway in retail, including integrating the credential with major talent platforms and corporate processes, and updating two existing retail training courses and credentials: Customer Service and Sales and Advanced Customer Service and Sales.

National Skills Coalition
Supporting innovative public-private partnerships and frameworks for effective adult education and upskilling.

New Profit
Launching the Power Skills XPRIZE, which incentivizes teams of innovators to create technologies or other training approaches to help frontline workers develop the soft skills most important to workplace success.

Opportunity@Work
Facilitating the building of TechHire.Careers, an inclusive-hiring platform to enable businesses to cost-effectively fill entry-level tech positions, while giving candidates with non-traditional backgrounds a shot at a better life.

Opportunity Nation
Researching the impact of the retail sector on career and education pathways, analyzing the skills and experience that typically help retail workers advance within the industry, engaging a set of champions around this conversation, and highlighting Opportunity Leaders with a retail pathways story.

Members of the Retail Opportunity Network *(continued)*

San Diego Workforce Partnership

Equipping retail employees with the technology-based skills, competencies and experiences to thrive and advance in the 21st century retail environment by offering customized training, hosting retail-focused job fairs, and convening employers with the Retail Advisory Council.

Southern New Hampshire University

Establishing upskilling metrics by identifying the workforce-relevant outcomes of a competency-based degree program targeted to working adults.

Southern Rural Development Center

Launching the Strengthening Retail in Rural America Initiative to develop, refine and pilot a process to help rural communities strengthen the important retail sector.

The Graduate! Network

Collecting stakeholder input from 4 selected sites to convey a data-backed vision of the education and skills necessary for successful employment in the evolving retail landscape, illustrate the current and future value of investment in training and learning, and motivate action.

Urban Institute

Conducting a new research project to add to retail employers' and the workforce development field's understanding of frontline retail workers, how they advance, and advancement strategies being implemented by employers.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

Creating the Job Data Exchange (JDX) to help employers and their human resources technology partners more clearly communicate hiring requirements in a rapidly changing talent marketplace. JDX seeks to link the data employers produce to credentialing data systems and learner record systems, allowing job seekers to match their skills to available positions.

Workforce Solutions Greater Dallas

Launching RetailPay$, an incumbent retail/service sector strategy enabling workers to access trainings that meet their needs so that they can advance in their careers.

World Education

Advising developers, conducting field testing, and identifying and disseminating best practices for how particular technology tools supported by the Employment Technology Fund advance economic mobility for lower-skilled, low wage workers.

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Support for the Retail Opportunity Network is provided by Walmart Giving.

About SYNC OUR SIGNALS℠

The Retail Opportunity Network is an industry program under Hope Street Group's flagship initiative, Sync Our Signals, which works to strengthen America's workforce by improving the signaling between employers, training providers, educators and individuals on the competencies and skills required for success in a given career path.

To learn more, visit retailopportunitynetwork.com and join the conversation on social media using hashtag #RetailOpportunity.