



Activating an untapped pool of talent

A Guide to STARs
for the Public Sector



Opportunity
@Work

STARs
SKILLED THROUGH
ALTERNATIVE ROUTES



An Executive Summary

Talented workers Skilled Through Alternative Routes (STARs)–instead of a bachelor’s degree–are critical contributors to your government’s workforce and region’s economy.

No matter the level, the government plays an integral role in workforce dynamics.

- As a large employer, your government provides significant employment opportunities in the local economy
- As a policy maker, you make critical decisions and investments that shape the local workforce and business climate
- As stewards of your local economy, you seek to drive policies to support economic development and a thriving workforce
- As critical providers of services, you need qualified staff to meet the needs of your constituents

Opportunity@Work has built a unique body of insight about a vast, overlooked, skilled population who are positioned for higher wage work, in your region, today. This guide provides key information about STARs, including:

- Defines STARs in relation to the U.S. labor force, elevating their skills and diversity
- Documents a severe loss of opportunities for STARs, despite their skills, over the past three decades
- Explains the detrimental effects of this loss on employers and workers
- Describes job pathways that support skill-building and economic mobility
- Identifies jobs, job pathways, and stakeholder actions that can make a difference



Three Insights form the basis for action on workforce for the Public Sector



Part 1:

The majority of the workforce are Skilled Through Alternative Routes (STARs)

STARs are critical to effective **public sector hiring and economic development** efforts

Part 2:

Skills-based job pathways are key to STAR mobility

Public sector **investments** in jobs, and pathways for workers to those jobs, strengthen local talent pipelines

Part 3:

STARs economic mobility varies by region

A focus on STAR mobility will benefit public sector **workforce development** efforts

Part 4: The public sector plays a catalytic role in the local labor market

The public sector can leverage their power and influence to **improve STAR mobility**

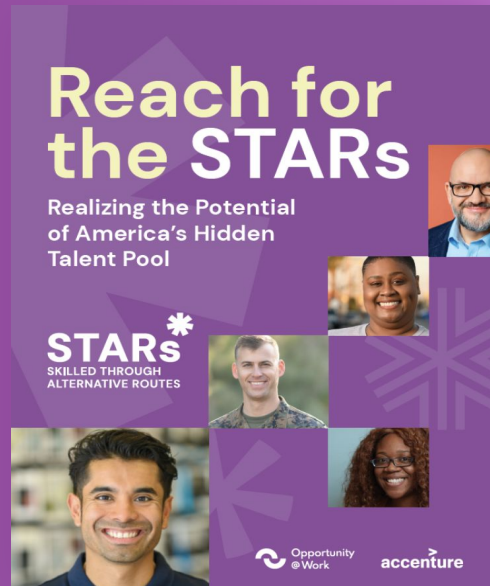


Part 1

STARs are the majority of the workforce

They are critical to effective public sector hiring and economic development efforts

There is a vast overlooked talent pool of 70+ million workers who are Skilled Through Alternative Routes (STARs). These are workers who have a high school diploma or equivalent and do not have a bachelor's degree but do have the skills to perform higher-wage work today.



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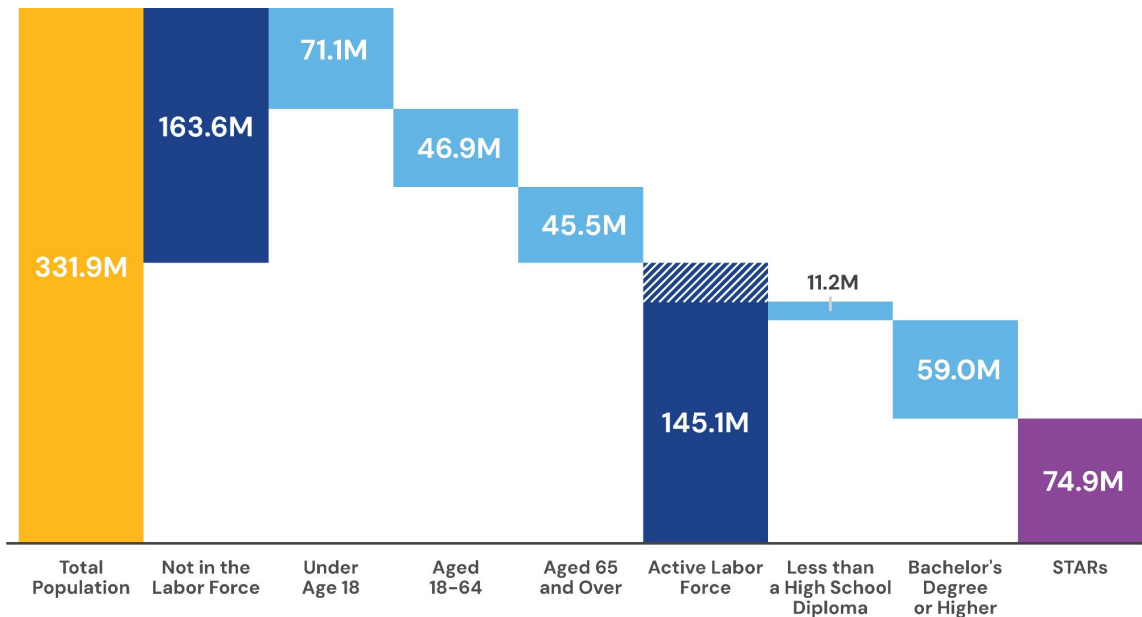
More than 70 million workers are STARs

Nationally and regionally, STARs make up more than half the workforce

STARs are:

- Active in the labor force
- Aged 25 or older
- Have a high school diploma or equivalent
- Do not have a bachelor's degree

They have developed their skills through alternative routes such as community college, partial college, apprenticeships, bootcamps, and most commonly, through on-the-job experience.



STARs reflect the full diversity of the US workforce

Exclusion of STARs affects all demographics with disparate impacts on workers of color



STARs have transferable skills

When we look at the skills for common low- and middle-wage jobs, we see significant overlap

Here we see two common roles with their 10 most important skills. There is significant skills overlap across two roles, but, the first is accessible to STARs, while the second is less so.

About 96,000 STARs made this job transition in the 5-year period from 2017 to 2021, proving it is a feasible transition.

We have identified hundreds of other such job pairings.

Want to know more?

Check out our resource: [Low Wage does not equal low skill.](#)



Nationally, more than 30 million STARs are ready for higher-wage work – today

How much overlooked potential exists in your region?

When we analyze the skills overlaps across jobs, we can identify STARs' potential transitions from their current job to a higher paying one.

- **3M Shining STARs** are in high wage roles today
- **33M Rising STARs** are in jobs with skills that position them for jobs in a higher wage category
- **39M Forming STARs** are in jobs with skills with a smaller wage gain

Want to know more?

Check out our resource:

[STAR Trajectories to higher wage.](#)



3M

Shining STARs
STARs who are in
high-wage roles today

Ready for higher
wage work today!



33M

Rising STARs
STARs who have multiple
mobility pathways into
significantly higher-paying
occupations



39M

Forming STARs
STARs who have skills to see
smaller wage gains through
more limited employment
pathways

These insights are important to the Public Sector

STARs are critical to effective public sector hiring and economic development efforts

At half the workforce, STARs are the largest single group in the labor market and critical to:

- **The delivery of public services.** The public sector delivers services to constituents and economic security to its workers. Currently, a severe hiring crunch threatens the ability of the public sector to fulfill its promises of delivering goods and services. Without intentional inclusion of STARs in the public sector workforce, there are simply not enough workers to fill in-demand roles.
- **The health of the local labor market.** STARs fill high-volume in-demand roles in the both the public and private sector. Common roles such as administrative assistants, HR specialists, and computer scientists are important to both sectors and create mobility opportunities for STARs. Inclusive hiring of STARs in the public sector helps ensure a healthy talent pool in the local labor market for both the private and public sector.
- **A thriving local economy.** STARs are also half of the local customer base, consuming goods and services and paying taxes. When they have good jobs and disposable income, the local economy can flourish. Opening up the local labor market to STARs will support a healthy local economy for all.



Next steps to drive action on your public sector workforce efforts

How to take action

Step 1: Explore the data about STARS in your region. Use [Stellarsight](#) to investigate:

- How many STARS are in your geographic area?
- How many are Shining, Rising, and Forming STARS?
- What areas do they live in?
- What are their demographic characteristics?
- Other?

Consider whether you're considering STARS in your current talent and/or workforce development strategies.

Step 2: Examine the degree requirements in your local labor market.

- Identify which roles currently require degrees and where there is opportunity to remove them.
- Look to see what is happening both locally and at the state level to remove employment barriers to STARS.

Explore where you could make adjustments to be more inclusive of STARS.

To learn more about Stellarsight and how to get started, see [STARS in your workforce with Stellarsight](#)

Next steps to drive action on your public sector workforce efforts *(continued)*

How to take action

Step 3: Get started to hire STARs in the public sector.

- Develop a hiring/talent plan that creates a more inclusive local labor market in the public sector by hiring STARs.
- Identify ways to develop and grow talent within the public sector workforce.

Share your plan with others and learn what's needed to make STARs a part of your workforce strategy.



STARs Public Sector Hub

Get access to the resources, relationships and know-how needed to advance your skills-based journey to tap into STARs.

EXPLORE



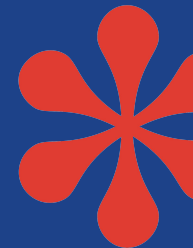


Learn more about STARs and teach others:

Read more about the workforce, their skills and their diversity in [Reach for the STARs](#)

Watch our videos about:

- [STARs and their skills](#)
- [What employers should know about STARs](#)
- [A STAR's Story](#)



Extra Credit: Low wage does not equal low skill

It is a common assumption that low-wage jobs require few skills. Our analysis shows this is not true.

Opportunity@Work analyzed the skills needed for every job in the labor market. When we compared the skill sets for jobs across wage categories we saw that many low-wage jobs require skills that are similar to middle-wage jobs and even high-wage jobs.

To confirm that these skills were, in fact, transferable, we also analyzed job transitions of workers over a 10-year period. We observed that workers regularly move between jobs with similar skills. We identified hundreds of job pairings across wage categories with similar skills and regular transitions.

Further, our analysis shows that many low-wage jobs require key foundational skills critical to 21st century jobs, such as service orientation, social perceptiveness, active listening, time management, and interpersonal communication. These are skills that employers often cite as missing in their search for talent at many wage-levels.

To summarize:

- Many low-wage jobs have skill sets highly similar to higher-wage jobs.
- Workers have achieved transitions across these similarly skilled jobs.
- The skills attributed to low-wage jobs are highly ranked by employers.

This suggests the pay does not accurately reflect the value of these skills.

Extra Credit: STAR trajectories to higher wages

Understand Forming, Rising, and Shining STARs

One meaningful way to understand the skills STARs bring to the workforce is to segment the population by their readiness for higher wage work.

Using data from the U.S. Census in the Current Population Survey (CPS) we assessed the opportunity for STARs to make job transitions from their current jobs. With data on the skill similarity and job transitions we determined the jobs they could reasonably transition to. We segmented STARs based on their potential to change wage categories.

Our findings:

- **3M Shining STARs** are already in high wage jobs, i.e. jobs that pay over two times the median wage for their area. **Shining STARs serve as a proofpoint for STAR potential.**
- **33M Rising STARs** are in jobs that position them to make a skills-based transition to a job that changes their labor category (from low- to middle-wage or from middle- to high-wage) based on wages in their area. **Rising STARs are ready for higher wage work today.**
- **39M Forming STARs** are in jobs that position them for skills-based transitions that do not offer sufficient wage gain to change wage categories. **Forming STARs will benefit most from skilling investments.**

For more on the segmentation and the potential job transitions, see [Reach for the STARs](#), pages 19 – 30

Barbara

Family Support Specialist

Barbara worked in an administrative role in local government for 12 years. She gained her experience in family support through volunteering and eventually moved to the nonprofit sector to pursue her career goals.

"Although I do not have a degree in psychology or a degree in social work, my life experience provides me with an expertise that is complementary to what service providers do, but it's because I connect so strongly with family experience and with parent experience based on my own experience with the experiences of the hundreds and thousands of families that I have interacted with throughout my 30-year career."

LEARN MORE ABOUT BARBARA



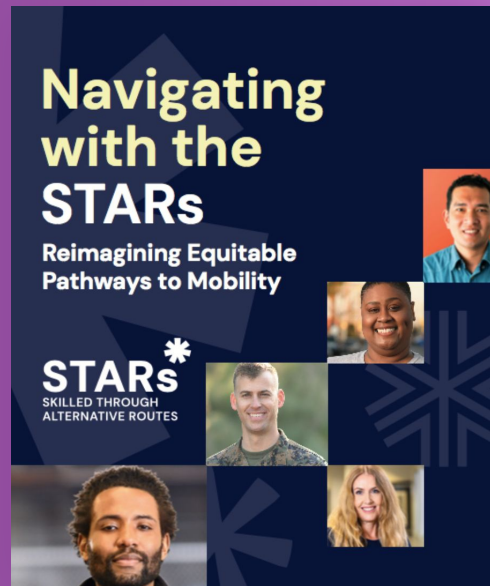
Part 2

Skills-based pathways are key to STAR mobility

Public sector investments in job pathways strengthen local talent pipelines

Our second report demonstrates that in our current labor market, many workers build increasingly broad skill sets, only to experience stagnant, or even worse, downward wage trajectories. These trends undermine our American Dream, which rests on the belief that workers will experience upward mobility as they work hard and develop skills.

We make the case for an agile workforce ecosystem with clear pathways that allow workers to leverage their skills and learning towards higher value work, so that they can meet workforce needs and experience upward mobility. This report offers a roadmap to build a stronger labor market for STARs.



DOWNLOAD

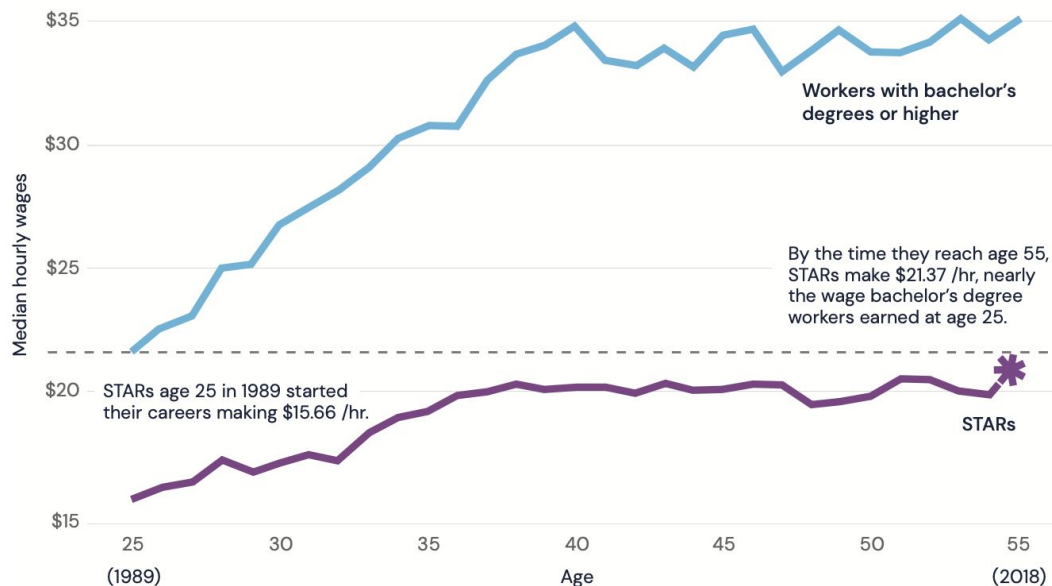
Few STARs achieve mobility even with skills for higher wage work

It takes 30 years for a STAR to reach the wages of a new college graduate

There has always been a wage gap between STARs and workers with degrees but this gap has widened over the past 30 years. STARs today never catch up to their degreed counterparts, making this the first generation that does not do better than their parents.

We are effectively equating four years of education with 30 years of work and lived experience.

Progressive career wages from age 25 to 55



When STARs experience mobility, it is on skills-based job pathways like this one

Origin Job:

An occupation paying low wages, but which requires skills that are transferable to higher-wage work.



Cashier

Gateway Job:

A job paying above median wage with a skills profile that enables transitions to a higher-wage job.



Customer
Service Rep

Destination Jobs:

An occupation paying above median wages which is accessible from lower wages.



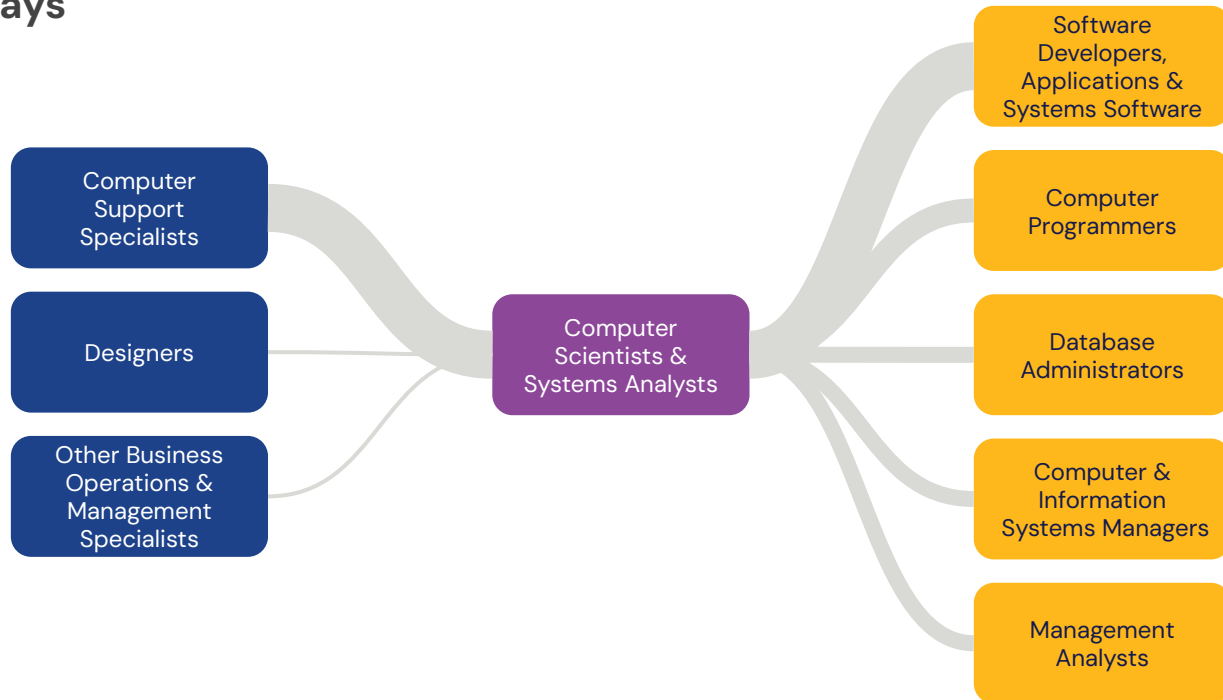
General and
Operations Managers

This pathway is a common one in public and private sector jobs.

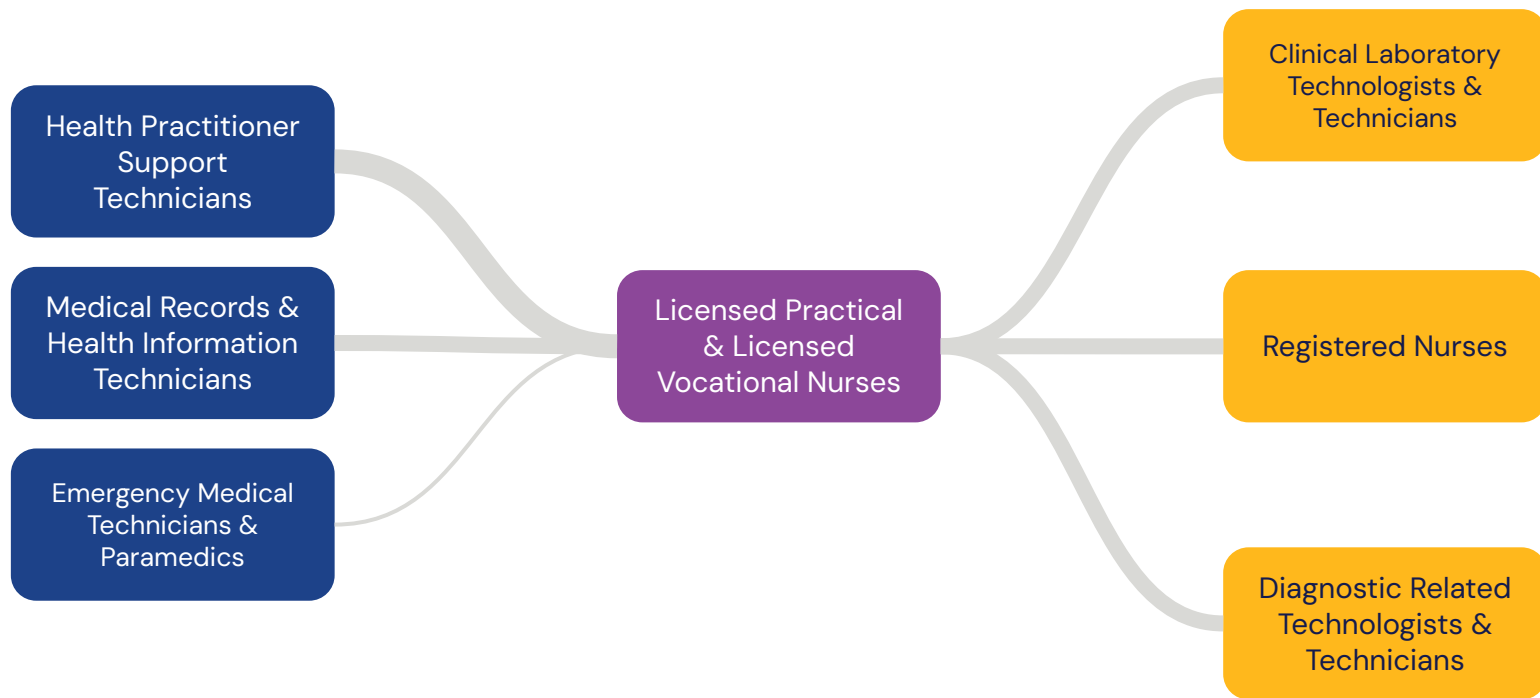
Want to know more about Origin, Gateway, and Destination jobs? Check out our [extra credit resource](#).

STARs leverage their skills to move from job to job on job pathways that are essential to the local economy

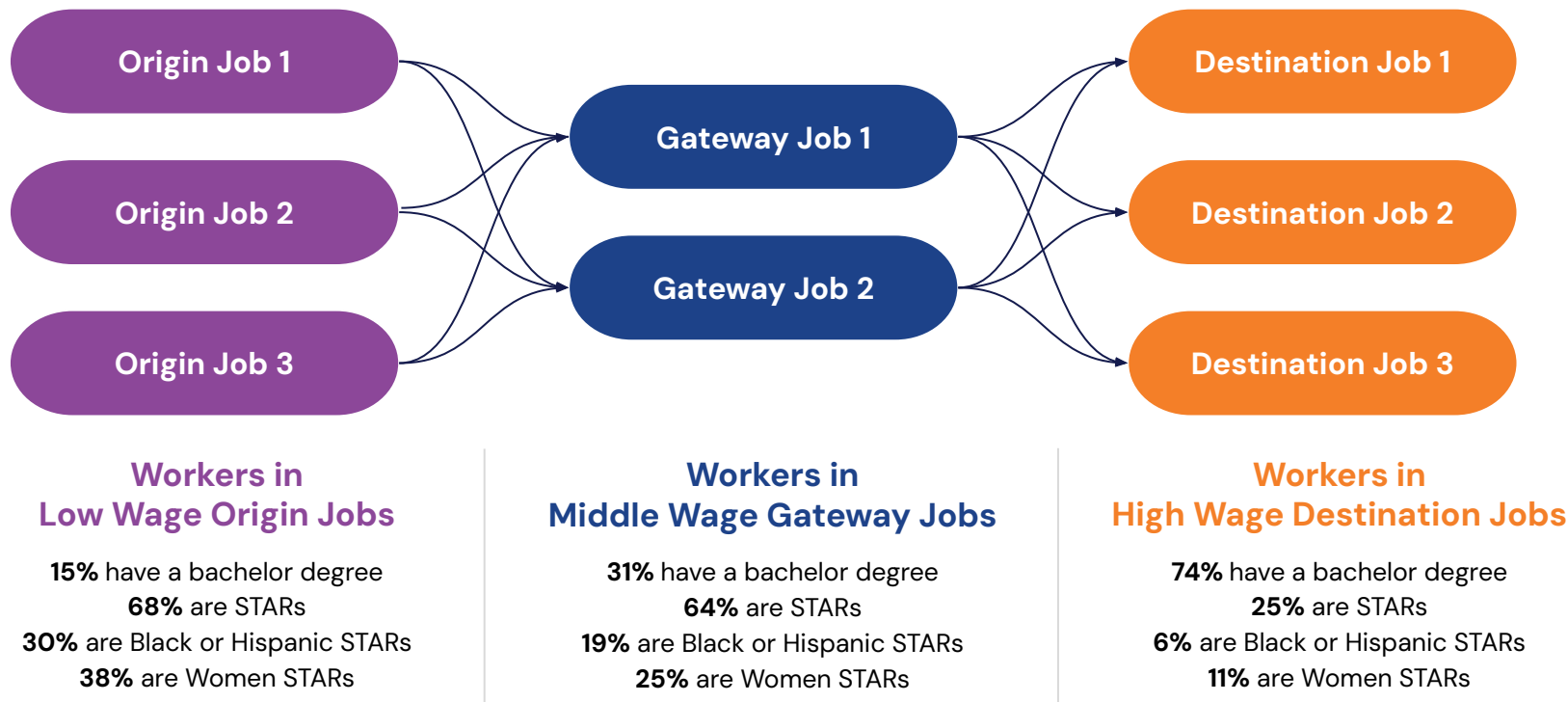
Like IT Pathways



And Healthcare Pathways



These pathways are often blocked for STARs, especially for Hispanics, Blacks, and women



To improve inequities in the labor market, surfacing skills based pathways in your region is critical

Public sector investments in job pathways strengthen local talent pipelines and promote equity

STARs are not achieving the mobility they should given the skills they have. Overlooking talent has costs. Employers – both public and private – struggle to fill in-demand roles, while workers experience professional and wage stagnation. These pathways present an opportunity to strengthen local talent pipelines. The public sector can lead by example and encourage others to remove degree requirements, reimagine roles, expand sourcing, create more on-the-job learning experiences and make other investment in broadening job pathways. The benefits are clear.

- **Fill in-demand roles in the local economy.** When STARs experience more mobility on job pathways, there will be more skilled workers to fill in-demand roles across the labor market.
- **Improve worker mobility and address inequities in the local labor market.** Expanding job pathways for STARs improves economic mobility for over half the workforce. As localities strive to achieve prosperity for all community members, they can leverage these pathways for more equitable employment outcomes.
- **Fulfill the promise of Federal investments.** The American Rescue Plan, CHIPS and Science Act, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and the Inflation Reduction Act provide vital funds for the services and infrastructure needed to build the economy of the future. Meeting the mandates of these ambitious programs cannot be met solely by college graduates. Instead, it will require innovative thinking at the local level about job pathways in advanced manufacturing, IT, green jobs, and healthcare.

Next steps to drive action on your public sector workforce efforts

How to take action

Step 1: Explore the job pathways in your region.
Use Stellarsight to investigate:

- What are the open roles in your region?
- What skills do they require?
- What are the pathways into and out of these jobs?
- What are the demographics on these pathways?
- What roles do you see in both the public and private sectors?

Step 2: Identify high need opportunities and pathways to these jobs.

- Review what in-demand roles are currently open and identify whether they are origins, gateway or destination roles.
- Identify the pathway to gain skills to meet the expectations of in-demand roles.
- Begin to create a hiring strategy that moves workers through employment pathways with increased mobility.

Learn more about Stellarsight and how to get started, see [STARs in your workforce with Stellarsight](#)

Next steps to drive action on your public sector workforce efforts *(continued)*

How to take action

Step 3: Build a point of view about how STARs could fill critical in-demand jobs in your region.

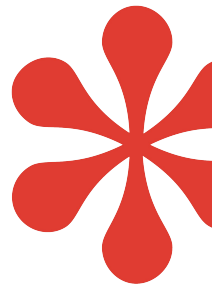
- Using the data and visuals in Stellarsight, build a short brief or deck that shows how STARs can play a role in filling critical talent gaps or emerging job pathways in your region.
- Share your asset with others to garner support for building talent strategies inclusive of STARs.



STARs Public Sector Hub

Get access to the resources, relationships and know-how needed to advance your skills-based journey to tap into STARs.

EXPLORE





Learn more about job pathways and teach others

Read our research:

- [Navigating with the STARs](#)

Watch our videos about:

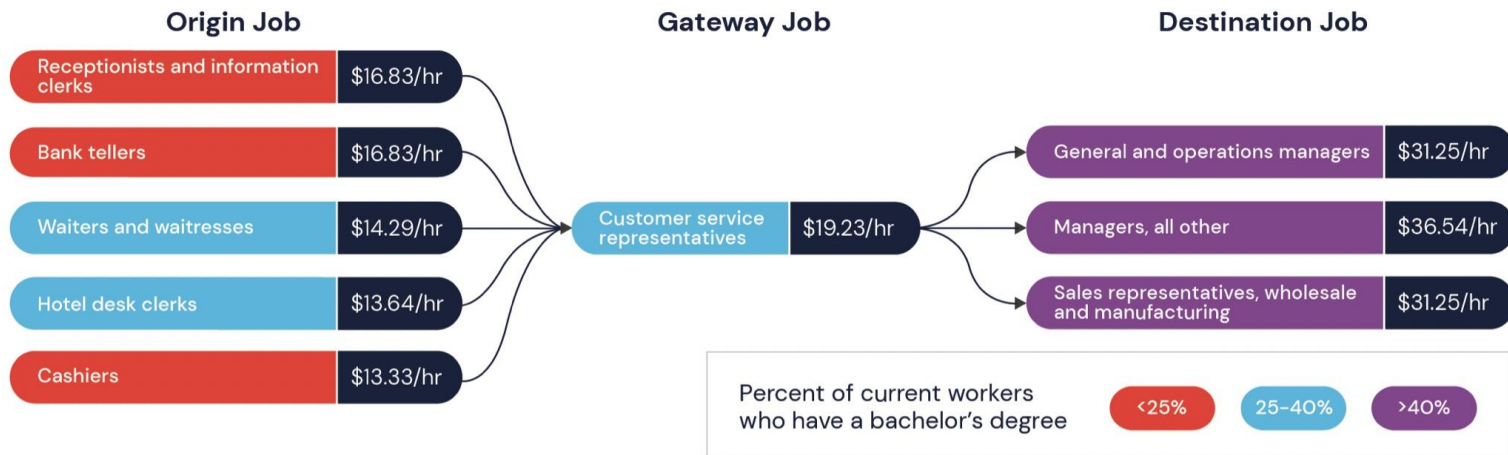
- [STARs travelling job pathways](#)
- [Jobs lost to STARs since 2000](#)



Extra Credit: Define Gateway & Destination Jobs

Destination jobs are higher-wage jobs that are accessible from multiple lower-wage occupations. We have identified **241 Destination jobs**.

Gateway jobs are a subset of Destination jobs that propel mobility on pathways because they are accessible from a number of similarly-skilled lower-wage occupations and offer valuable skills that then provide pathways into multiple higher-wage destination occupations. We have identified **51 Gateway jobs**. They include high volume roles such as administrative assistants, customer service representatives, and computer support specialists.



For a list of Gateway jobs and common transitions, see [Navigating with the STARs](#), pp. 32-37

Sheree

Technical Customer Engagement

Sheree worked for years in the mortgage industry but found the pathways to promotion closed to her because she lacked a degree. She sought a job in the public sector, where she hoped to find more mobility opportunities. Working for her local county social services department, she received training and professional development that facilitated five promotions over 14 years. She started as an eligibility support clerk and became an employment counselor. The 2020 downturn led to layoffs and Sheree now works in the nonprofit sector.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT SHEREE](#)



Part 3

STAR economic mobility varies by region

A focus on STAR mobility will benefit public sector workforce development efforts

Our third report, *Rise with the STARS*, expands on the first two reports to illustrate the impact of degree discrimination on employers and STARS nationally, regionally, and in the workplace. It identifies many of the lost opportunities and points to a better way forward.



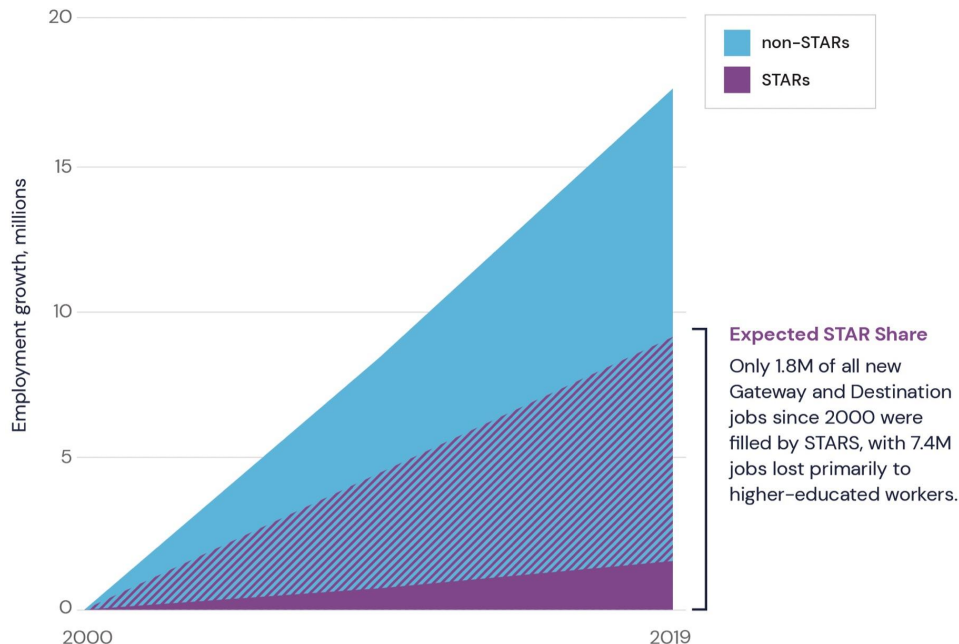
DOWNLOAD

Nationally, STARs lost access to nearly 7.5 million Gateway & Destination jobs since 2000

While STARs held 54% of Gateway and Destination jobs in 2000, they held only 46% of these occupations in 2019.

These shifts represent a steep drop in opportunity for STARs: since 2000, the U.S. labor market added 17.2 million Gateway and Destination jobs, but only 1.8 million (or 10%) of the workers who filled these roles were STARs.

Had employers filled these roles with STARs in the equal proportion to 2000, there would be 7.4 million more STARs in Gateway and Destination jobs today.



Note: Expected STAR employment change assumes that change in employment from 2000 to 2019 would have been equally distributed across STAR and non-STAR workers based on the proportion of workers within each job in 2000, respectively.

Source: Opportunity@Work analysis of the 2019 1-year American Community Survey and 2000 Decennial Census, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series.

Regionally, STARs have experienced these losses differently

The STAR Mobility Index (SMI) captures the variation in economic opportunity for STARs.

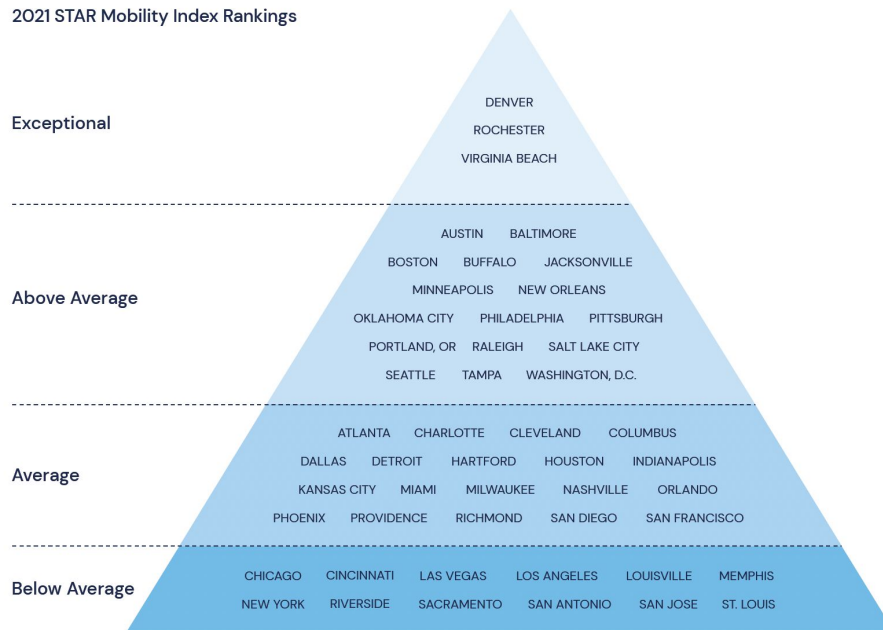
While STARs experience low mobility everywhere, some regions are doing better than others.

Our research shows that the difference in regional performance is not correlated with regional economic growth. Rather it is the result of choices in workforce development and hiring practices.

Want to know more?

Check out this [summary of the SMI](#).

2021 STAR Mobility Index Rankings



Note: Sorted alphabetically within major category. City names refer to broader Metropolitan Statistical Areas. For example, Denver is referring to the entire Denver–Aurora–Lakewood, CO MSA. Some regions of focus may be colloquially referenced differently than labeled by their MSA (e.g. Virginia Beach MSA is frequently referred to as "Hampton Roads"). See Data and Methods section for detailed methodology of STAR Mobility Index.

Source: Opportunity@Work analysis of the 2019 1-year American Community Survey and 2017 to 2021 Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series.

Bright spot: 30 occupations can turn the tide

The public sector can look at these jobs as a place to start when considering where to remove degree requirements

These 30 jobs are good jobs that have a history of creating mobility opportunities for STARs.

Together they account for close to half of all STAR displacement.

Intentional efforts to hire STARs into these roles can help reverse the losses of the last two decades.

- Misc. Managers
- Registered Nurses
- Computer Scientists
- Systems Analysts and Developers
- Customer Service Representatives
- First-line Supervisors of Sales Workers
- Misc. Business Operations and Management Specialists
- Financial Managers
- Teachers and Instructors, All other
- Computer and Information Systems Managers
- Chief Executives and Legislators
- Medical and Health Service Managers
- Real Estate Brokers and Sales Agents
- Computer Support Specialists
- Human Resources and Training Specialists
- Police Officers and Detectives
- Diagnostic Technicians
- Compliance Officers, Non-agricultural
- Designers
- Meeting and Convention Planners
- Sales Representatives
- Services Industrial Engineers
- Managers In Marketing and PR
- Purchasing Agents
- Office Clerks
- Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing
- Human Resources Managers
- Computer Programmers
- Accounting and Auditing Clerks
- First-line Supervisors of Administrative Support Workers
- Secretaries and Administrative Assistants



The workplace is critical to expanding opportunity for STARS

Hiring STARS is a critical step towards expanding the talent pool but it is only part of the solution. The workplace is where STARS have the chance to develop and leverage their skills for increased opportunities. To understand STARS experience in the workplace, Opportunity@Work conducted worker and manager surveys. We found the following:

Managers overestimate the prevalence of degrees.

- Managers who have degrees tend to assume others have them.
- Further, the more prevalent they believed degrees to be, the more they wanted their next hire to have a degree.

Workplace attitudes undermine STARS' sense of belonging as they progress in the workplace.

- Pay disparities signal that STARS are not valued.
- STARS report less encouragement on the job.
- STARS feel less connected to their colleagues.
- STARS see less investment in their professional development.

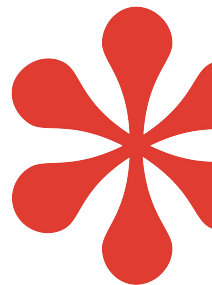
To learn more about STARS' experience in the workplace, see our [Spotlight on STARS in the workplace](#).

STARs have held many jobs in your region over time; let's make sure they still have access to those jobs

STAR mobility will benefit public sector workforce development efforts

National data show that STARs loss of mobility is happening everywhere. Regional variation proves that local action can make a significant difference. This research provides critical pieces of information to help start local action.

- **30 jobs of focus.** We know the jobs that contribute the most to STARs loss of mobility and many of them are common public sector jobs. These represent a good place to focus efforts as local leaders consider how to expand job pathways.
- **Benchmarking efforts.** The STAR Mobility Index provides baseline information about where mobility is better for STARs. Local leaders can use this index to understand the current state for STARs, motivate action, strategize what is needed for progress, and benchmark their progress. The Public Sector Hub offers an opportunity to track and benchmark progress with other communities.
- **Workplace culture.** This work shows the importance of building a workplace culture that values STARs, supports them, and offers equitable opportunities for professional development



Next steps to drive action on your public sector workforce efforts

How to take action

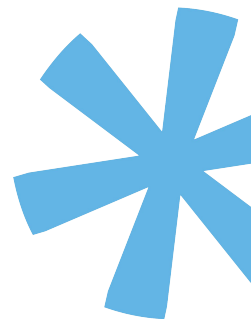
Step 1: Explore the promising job pathways in your region. Use Stellarsight to investigate:

- What are the most in demand roles in your market?
- Are they among the top 30 jobs of focus?
- Who are the largest employers for these roles?
- Who could you bring to the table to discuss a collaborative approach to strengthening pathways?

Step 2: Implement hiring benchmarks.

- Determine pathways in both the private and public sectors that can be filled by STARs.
- Establish hiring goals to be filled by STARs.
- Implement novel programs, such as early career, apprenticeships, or internal skill-share opportunities, that appeal to STARs.

Learn more about Stellarsight and how to get started, see [STARs in your workforce with Stellarsight](#)



Next steps to drive action on your public sector workforce efforts *(continued)*

How to take action

Step 3: Create a workforce culture inclusive of STARs.

- Focus on creating a workplace that is welcoming and supportive to STARs by getting input from STARs.
- Explore venues and programming that enable STARs to engage with other STARs, like a STAR Employee Resource Group.
- Consider implementing a pulse survey for all employees (or augmenting an existing one) to get ongoing feedback from employees on inclusive workforce activities.



STARs Public Sector Hub

Get access to the resources, relationships and know-how needed to advance your skills-based journey to tap into STARs.

EXPLORE



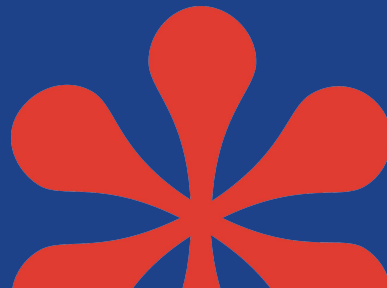


Learn more about regional variation

Read our research:

- [Rise with the STARs](#)
- [Spotlight on STARs in the Workplace](#)

Explore the data about your region on [Stellarsight](#)



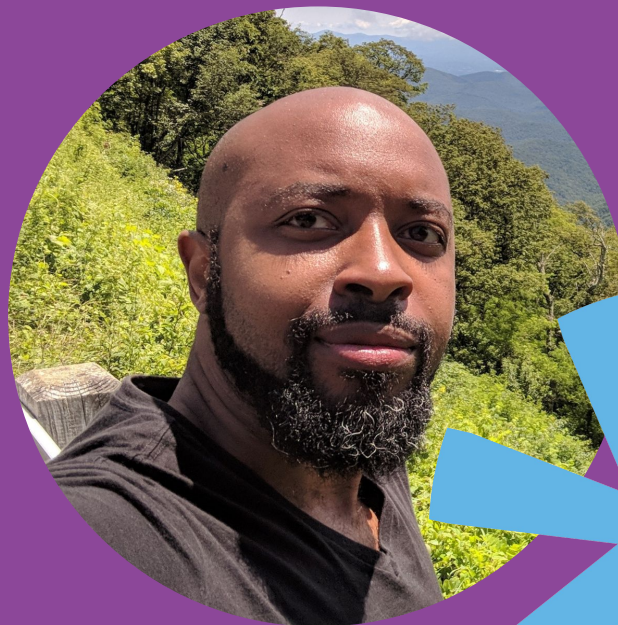
Thaddaeus

Tech Support Specialist

Thaddaeus works in the IT department at a public university. When he started there, he had no formal IT training. He developed all his skills over a series of jobs where he leveraged his affinity for computers into office-oriented technical work. He taught himself video editing, audio editing, and even to work with some operating systems. He also worked as a medical transcriptionist and a freelance designer.

"A throughline to everything has been, just working within tech, working in IT. I have always sort of gravitated towards computer work and computer repair and stuff like that."

LEARN MORE ABOUT THADDAEUS



Extra credit: Calculating the STAR Mobility Index

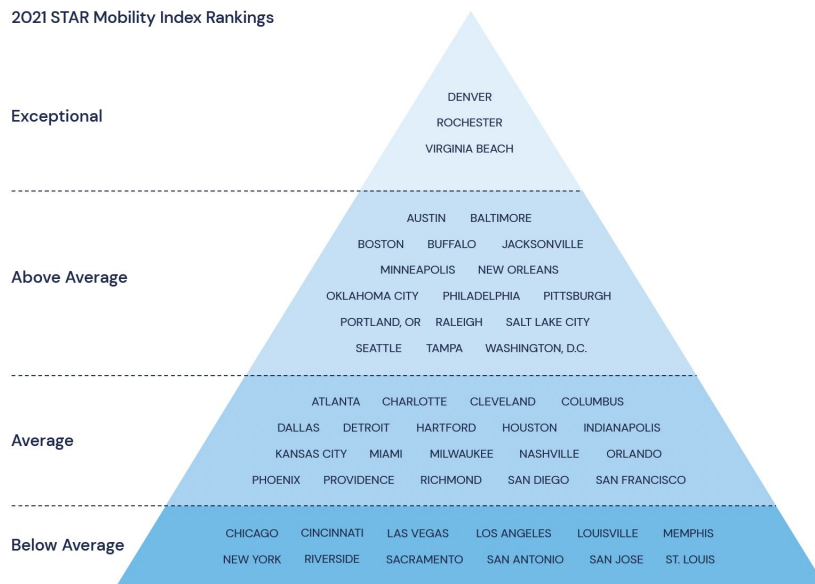
The STAR Mobility Index captures the variation in economic opportunity for STARs by comparing three key variables associated with their economic well-being.

Economic Mobility: The extent that STARs have been able to transition into higher wage occupations over the past five years.

Economic Equity: The average wage penalty faced by STAR workers compared to workers with a bachelor's degree in the same occupations.

Economic Security: The percentage of employed STARs within a metro area who work in occupations that pay above the median wage.

2021 STAR Mobility Index Rankings



For more detail, see [Rise with the STARs](#), pages 15 – 17. Also read about Denver's efforts to increase STAR mobility on p. 18

Note: Sorted alphabetically within major category. City names refer to broader Metropolitan Statistical Areas. For example, Denver is referring to the entire Denver–Aurora–Lakewood, CO MSA. Some regions of focus may be colloquially referenced differently than labeled by their MSA (e.g. Virginia Beach MSA is frequently referred to as “Hampton Roads”). See Data and Methods section for detailed methodology of STAR Mobility Index.
Source: Opportunity@Work analysis of the 2019 1-year American Community Survey and 2017 to 2021 Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series.

► Go back to [Regional Summary](#)

Part 4

The public sector plays a catalytic role

As a key stakeholder in the local economy, the public sector has a critical role to play

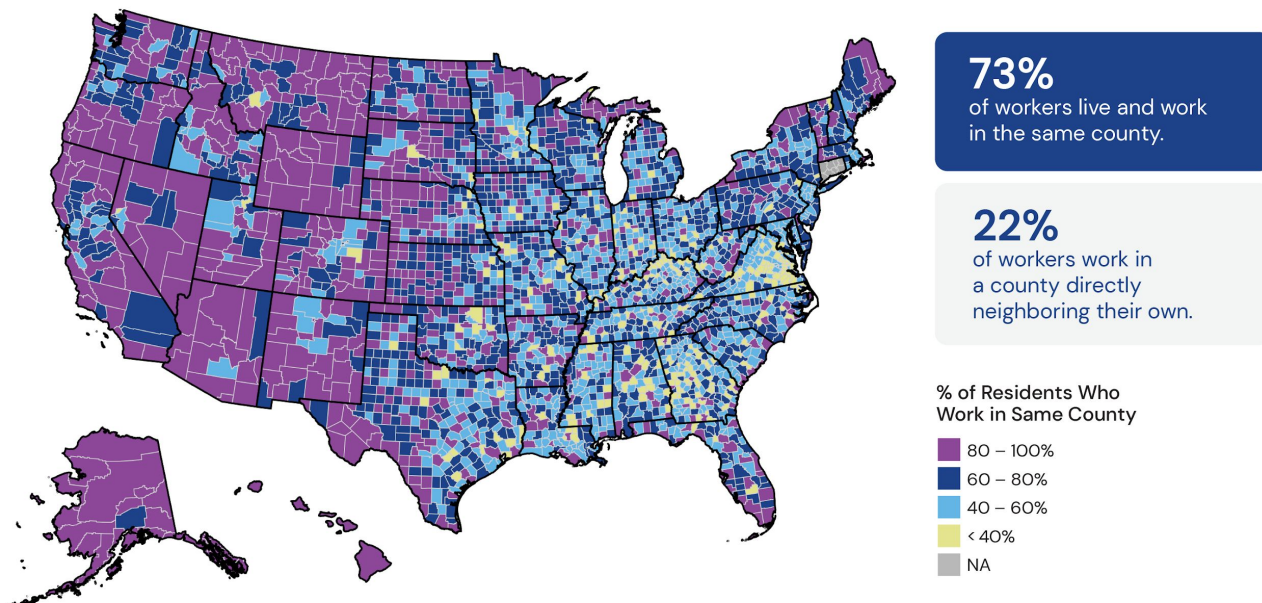
Our most recent report, *Look to the STARs: Activating Talent in a Regional Labor Market*, demonstrates the roles that employers, in the public and private sector can play to bolster their regional workforce and create a healthy labor market that supports both STAR mobility and employer talent needs. It also explores how large stakeholders, like the public sector, can play by leveraging their power and influence to improve STAR mobility at the local level.



DOWNLOAD

Labor markets are local

Workers experience the labor market in a local context. This remains true, even as work has evolved to include more remote options. Only 20% of workers hold remote jobs and, among workers who work outside the home, 76% of workers have a commute of less than 30 minutes. Hiring is a local endeavor; therefore, a sustainable talent strategy relies on a healthy local labor market.



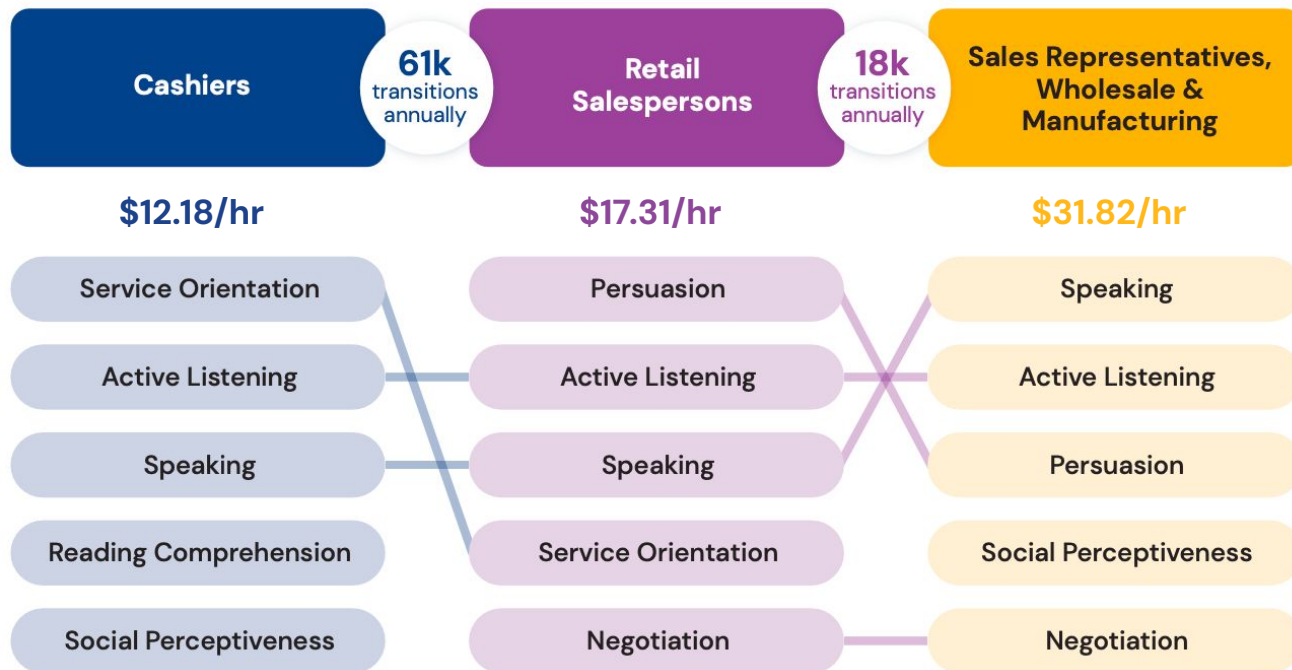
Source: Opportunity@Work analysis of the 2016–2020 5-Year ACS Commuting Flows, Table 1. Each polygon represents one of the 3,143 counties in the United States. Counties are color-coded based on the percent of county residents who are 25 years or older and active in the labor force who work in the same county. As of 2022, Connecticut began reporting data according to nine “planning regions” rather than its eight counties; these eight counties are gray to represent the missing data, although 69% of Connecticut residents work in the same planning region as the one in which they live.

As an employer, the government is a producer of talent

Public sector jobs provide STARs learning opportunities on skills-based job pathways.

Employers are producers of talent who provide STARs learning opportunities on skills-based job pathways.

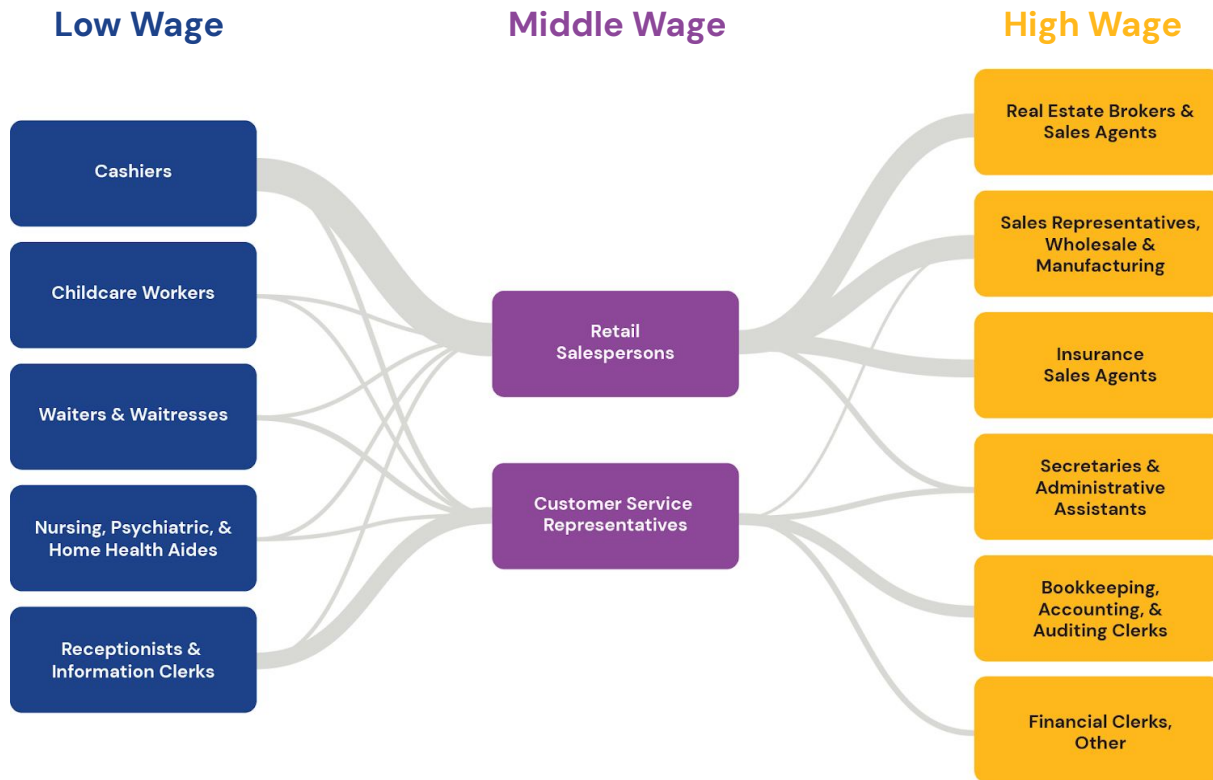
They play a key role in building in-demand skills for workers in their local labor market.



The public sector is also a consumer of talent

They share talent with the private sector

As STARs move across jobs, they also move across sectors. As the public sector hires workers to fill in-demand roles, they compete for, and share talent with, private sector employers on the same skills-based pathways.



The public and private sector have a collective interest in these skills-based job pathways

Employers share talent developed on these pathways across businesses and industries.

For example, in Atlanta, Georgia, multiple public sector and enterprise employers in retail, healthcare, and finance hire and develop talent on this sales pathway.

Low Wage

Cashiers
Childcare Workers
Waiters & Waitresses
Nursing & Home Health Aides
Receptionists & Information Clerks



Wellstar Health System
Emory Healthcare
Piedmont Healthcare
Marriott International
Lowe's
PruittHealth
Goodwill
The Home Depot
Applebee's
Sprouts Farmers Market

Middle Wage

Retail Salespersons
Customer Service Representatives



Lowe's
TJX
Macy's
Dollar General
T-Mobile US
T-Roc
Goodwill
Walgreens Boots Alliance
Sherwin-Williams
Dick's Sporting Goods

High Wage

Real Estate Brokers & Sales Agents
Sales Representatives
Insurance Sales Agents
Secretaries & Administrative Assistants
Bookkeeping & Accounting Clerks
Financial Clerks



State Farm Assurance
Wellstar Health System
Emory Healthcare
Northside Hospital
Piedmont Healthcare
Crye-Leike
Allstate
State of Georgia
1st Class Real Estate

The public sector has a catalytic role to play in meeting this collective interest

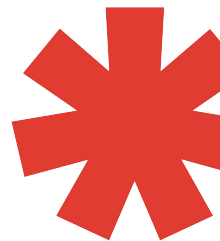
The public sector has a unique role in their local economies. In addition to their policy-setting role, their relationships with employees, suppliers, contractors, and their constituents give them significant influence over the conditions affecting local workers and businesses. They can leverage this power and influence to:

- **Convene local stakeholders to focus on collective goals.** Local leaders can bring together large and small businesses as well as other workforce stakeholders to coordinate a regional workforce strategy.
- **Set wages and standards.** When public sector employers define wages and job requirements, they influence job requirements and norms among their contractors and vendors.
- **Make investments in local capacity.** The public sector makes critical decisions about the use of public resources to strengthen local education, workforce development, and infrastructure.
- **Influence broader regional and national investments.** In the past few years, the federal government has made unprecedented investments in regional development, creating new jobs and a pressing need for skilling. Local governments must make critical spending and investment decisions about these funds.
- **Lead by example.** Increasingly, federal and state government leaders have been advocating for policies that remove barriers to workers, like degree requirements. As an employer as well, the government can show what being an employer of choice means.



Three unique ways the public sector can improve economic opportunities

The public sector is in a unique position to catalyze action in its community



The public sector has a unique role to play in economic and workforce development efforts.

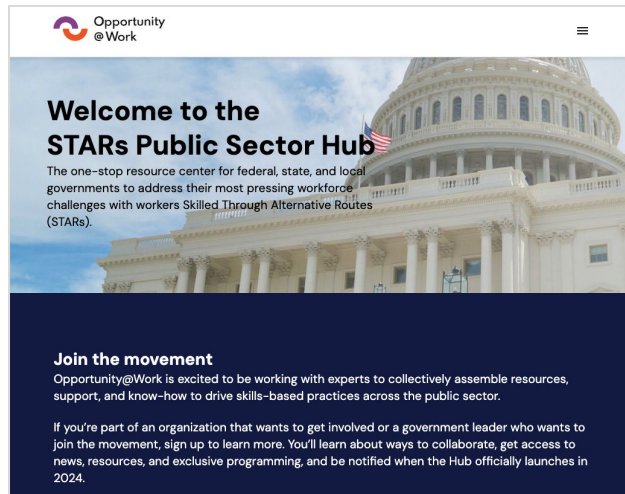
- **Model skills-based hiring policies.** As the largest employer in the country, the public sector can model skills-based hiring policies and practices to demonstrate their benefits to the private sector.
- **Pursue policies to open jobs to STARs.** Many states have taken action to remove degree requirements through legislative action or executive order. This is a strong start, but only the first step. The public sector must move from announcement to an implementation plan.
- **Leverage convening power.** The public sector can bring key actors to the table to explore opportunities for collaboration and collective action. This may include large and small employers as well as educational and training organizations, local service providers.



Next steps to drive action on your public sector workforce efforts

How to take action

Stay up-to-date with all things STARs in the public sector by joining the STARs Public Sector Hub. As a member you'll get access to:



ANALYTICS & INSIGHTS

Trusted data about the workforce, local employer demand and needed skills to identify unique opportunities for employers to leverage STARs

NARRATIVE DESIGN

Proven, effective messaging based on research and testing that is tailored to each region

RESEARCH & RESOURCES

Research that results in the design and delivery of trusted resources, like playbooks, case studies, tools, templates, and products

COMMUNITY

Participatory and collaborative engagement of government leaders to learn from one-another, crowdsource ideas, and build shared solutions

Sign-up: <https://opportunityatwork.org/stars-policy-project/public-sector-hub/>



Learn more about what the public sector can do

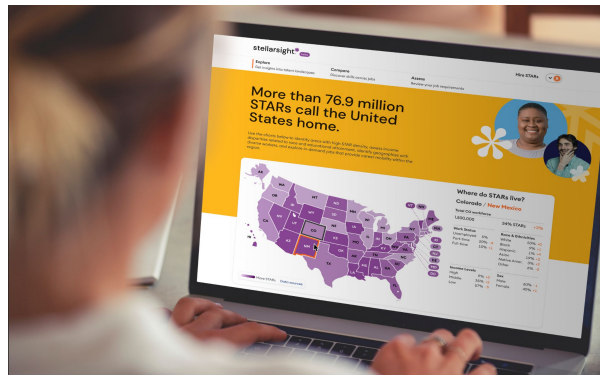
Read our research:
[Look to the STARs](#)

Explore and join the
[STARs Public Sector Hub](#)



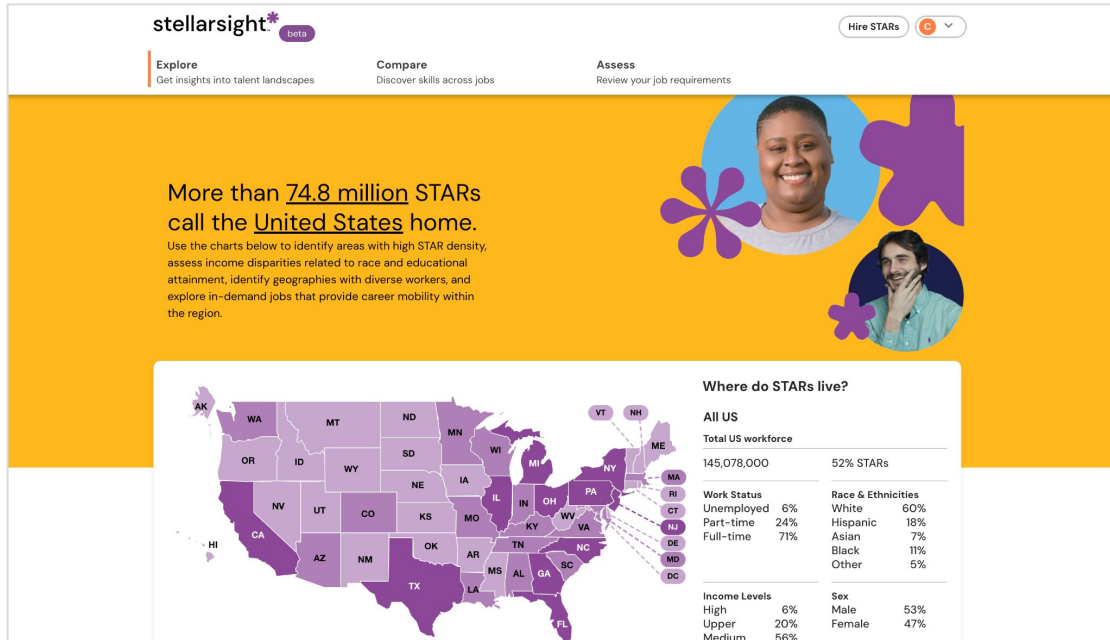
Start learning about STARs in your workforce with Stellarsight

Stellarsight is an interactive digital dashboard that synthesizes the latest national labor market data and STARs data into intuitive visualizations, all in one place.



Understand who STARs are, where they live and work, and what skills they have within your workforce.

Get started by creating a free account at stellarsight.org.



▶ Resume your learning journey. Go back to [Next Steps to Drive Action](#)