



## What is Back to Work RI?

### **A new promise.**

Back to Work RI is a public-private partnership designed to train, support, and hire thousands of Rhode Islanders for good jobs with a pathway to a career. Back to Work RI isn't a goal, it's a promise. We already have commitments from more than a dozen corporate and community organizations. And we're just getting started.

### **A strategic vision.**

Our economy has been undergoing massive changes for decades. COVID-19 has only accelerated these trends. Back to Work RI recognizes that we can't go back to the old normal. Industries like brick-and-mortar retail and hospitality have been changed forever. Low-wage, gig economy jobs are going away— not only because of the pandemic, but because of automation and the transformation to a digital economy. Back to Work RI is the first program of its kind in the country—a direct response to the pandemic that's not focused on getting back to "normal," but instead creating a more equal and resilient economy that works for all Rhode Islanders. Through Back to Work RI, we'll give Rhode Islanders the skills they need for cutting-edge jobs of the future. And we're using the technology and innovation we've adopted during this pandemic to do it.

### **A new approach.**

For too long, job training programs have operated under a "train and pray" model—you train someone and then pray they get a job. Back to Work RI is a completely different model, building on the success of programs like Real Jobs Rhode Island. We're training Rhode Islanders for jobs that already exist—jobs that they will fill once they've completed their training. And every participating employer will sign a pledge to open opportunities to Rhode Islanders through the public-private partnership of Back to Work RI.

### **A breakdown of barriers.**

We know that barriers to employment and hiring have left many Rhode Islanders out of our economy. We know that people without a degree or credential beyond high school, those in recovery, working parents who took time off from their careers, and formerly incarcerated individuals have been struggling to get ahead for years. With Back to Work RI, we're offering real wraparound supports. It's not enough to just offer training. We'll remove obstacles to participation by providing childcare and transportation services. And our job coaches will help Rhode Islanders gain confidence through resume-building support, financial coaching and interview preparation.

### **A partnership.**

A program like this is only as strong as its partners. Amgen, Bank of America, Care New England, CVS Health, General Dynamics Electric Boat, IGT, Infosys, Laborers' International Union of North America, Lifespan, Raytheon Technologies, Microsoft, Salesforce, Service Employees International Union, and Twitter have all pledged to open opportunities to Rhode Islanders through the public-private partnership of Back to Work RI.

## How does it work?

### Connect.

Any Rhode Islander whose employment has been impacted by COVID-19 is eligible to participate in Back to Work RI. Back to Work RI brings together workforce training programs that are customized for real-time job opportunities in Rhode Island. Skills for RI's Future is the primary recruiting partner for Back to Work RI. Skills helps companies find diverse, non-traditional applicants. They work closely with hiring managers to determine what skills and competencies are needed for success, encouraging the use of skill-based hiring rather than limiting recruitment to applicants with a certain degree or credential.

Here are examples of pathways that have already been created through Back to Work RI:

- **Bank of America:** The Bank of America (BoA) pathway includes a mix of credit and non-credit bearing courses at CCRI which lead to an industry recognized credential – the Securities Industry Essentials (SIE) certification. Once a Back to Work RI participant completes foundational training/course work and passes the SIE certification exam they are well-positioned to secure employment with BoA this fall, particularly in entry-level customer service roles. The pathway continues, however, with advanced training, to prepare Back to Work RI/BoA team members to take a series of essential SIE licensing exams, required to move into higher-paying roles within BoA.
- **Salesforce:** The first pathway includes hiring Rhode Islanders into sales roles within Salesforce, where they would be fully introduced to Salesforce services/products while participating in a full suite of Salesforce trainings to earn a system administrator certification. The second involves deploying Salesforce's "Trailhead Academy" training model within local partner organizations, who would recruit jobseekers for a 12-week, paid training program. Each participant would complete a capstone project and then be deployed as contractors with companies to implement tech solutions.

### Train.

Training pathways have been developed in collaboration with employer partners. Training will always be free to participants. The training pathways are customized to meet the unique needs of the employer or industry and all will lead to employment.

### Support.

Every participant will have access to wraparound support services to help remove the most common barriers to skills attainment and employment. In developing training pathways, partners must identify and budget for support services including childcare subsidies, personal technology, uniforms or equipment, financial coaching and transportation solutions. Financial support services will be offered to all participants through a partnership with Operation HOPE. These will include personal financial services like debt management and reduction, tax credit utilization, budgeting, and other vital services. Back to Work RI is also partnering with the Skillful State Network to drastically enhance Rhode Island's job coaching capacity. Together with Skillful, Rhode Island will adopt the Governors Coaching Corps and Community of Practice training model, comprised of 30 of the most experienced job coaches in the state from DLT, higher education, K-12 and nonprofit partners. The Coaching Corps will be assigned to action teams to solve real-time workforce readiness challenges in the field, and they will be charged with scaling evidence-based coaching practices across agencies. No matter what pathway a Back to Work RI participant takes, they will be able to schedule one-on-one coaching with a skilled professional.

### Hire.

More than a dozen companies have pledged to work with the State to identify job openings, build specialized training pathways in collaboration with public partners, and provide opportunity for Rhode Islanders struggling to find work in our new economy.