



# JOBS FOR ALL

Employment Social Enterprise and  
Economic Mobility in the United States



Business for Impact

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY McDonough School of Business

**JUST RESULTS**<sup>NB</sup>  
nuts and bolts for the new economy

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## Introduction

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This report, *Jobs for All: The State of Employment Social Enterprise & Economic Mobility in the United States*, explores how employment social enterprises (ESEs) contribute to economic mobility for people who have largely been excluded from the U.S. workforce. Our research focuses on ESEs as a demand-driven approach to employment with the potential to address some of America’s most persistent and structural employment barriers. In this research we consider six key population groups often excluded from employment opportunities, including people with intellectual, emotional, and physical (IEP) disabilities; people who are formerly incarcerated; immigrants or refugees; veterans; people from low-income backgrounds, and opportunity youth.

In the report, we identify four distinct models of employment social enterprises (ESEs); two traditionally associated with the ESE field and two new models. Together, the four models demonstrate the full range of revenue-generating approaches to employing often excluded populations. We examine the effectiveness of ESEs in terms of social impact and financial sustainability, demonstrated by participant outcomes and the organization’s bottom line. We also explore the intersection of social enterprise and select government workforce, education, and training programs, and conclude with recommendations for key stakeholder groups including policymakers, corporate executives, donors, and ESE leaders.

### What is an Employment Social Enterprise?

*Employment social enterprises* are a type of *social enterprise* that focuses specifically on addressing employment-related challenges. There are many definitions for both concepts; after a careful review of the literature and ground-truthing with practitioners in the United States, the Georgetown Business for Impact team homed in on the following definitions used in this report.

*Social enterprise*: a private revenue-generating entity that holds as its primary purpose a mission to create positive societal impact and uses market-driven solutions to do so. Social enterprises may be non-profit or for-profit; they may be a stand-alone entity or a program or department of a larger entity.

*Employment social enterprise (ESE)*: a type of social enterprise that specifically focuses on addressing employment challenges. They typically employ people facing barriers to entry into the labor market, allowing them to gain job experience while earning an income. These jobs may be temporary, transitional, or permanent. ESEs also typically provide additional social support that people need to be successful in their jobs.

Employment Social Enterprises (ESEs) span a range of sizes, markets, and industries, and produce a multitude of services and products. Some are lean start-ups operating on modest revenues with a limited number of employees, while others are large national conglomerates with annual budgets in the millions. Just as some definitions of social enterprise are overly narrow and may limit the growth of promising start-ups, an overly narrow definition of employment social enterprise risks limiting innovation in this fast-growing, dynamic field. Therefore, we have purposely adopted the broad definition of employment social enterprise presented above. Our definition is similar to, but a bit broader than, that of REDF, a leading funder and intermediary in the field: “...mission-driven, revenue-generating businesses that employ, empower, and invest in the potential of people.” (REDF 2020).

Perhaps the most important thing to understand about employment social enterprises is what they *are not*: traditional workforce development programs focused on education and training. ESEs *are not*

government programs - although some government programs partner with ESEs by funding their activities, buying products from them, or hiring them as contractors. However, based on their successful track record of transitioning people into employment, it is possible that soon we could see significantly more public procurement directed towards ESEs.

Employment social enterprises (ESEs) are different from traditional education and training programs because they offer market-based solutions to employment challenges. Unlike traditional workforce development programs and government-operated social service programs, employment social enterprises aim to recover their costs. Some even generate a significant surplus, although as a rule the surplus is only enough to fund the enterprise activity, i.e., it may contribute to, but rarely underwrites entirely, additional support services. The “business model” or formula by which the ESE achieves a return on investment varies, as does the “business case” or reason why a conventional business should invest in partnerships with ESEs. Most ESEs are relatively small operations; one study estimated ESEs generate median earned revenues of \$470,000 (REDF Landscape Analysis). Many serve less than fifty employees annually.

What exactly do ESEs do? Most often, they directly employ people facing barriers to find and get a job, allowing them to gain work experience while earning an income. These jobs may be temporary, transitional<sup>1</sup> or permanent. ESEs also typically provide or connect people with the additional support that they need to be successful in their jobs. These range from the minimal (think, “surgical and precise”) to the holistic (think, “wrap-around”), depending on the model. Support may include services such as financial literacy training, housing support or counseling to help people overcome trauma so they can find and succeed in lasting, competitive jobs. This combination of transitional employment and specialized support has been shown to help vulnerable individuals stabilize their lives, build skills, and develop a work history (Mathematica 2015, Maxwell and Rotz 2015, REDF 2015, Rotz et al 2015, REDF 2020).

While ESEs serve a range of people that face barriers to employment, we chose to focus this report on enterprises that serve six groups that comprise a large portion of the U.S. population who want to work and achieve upward economic mobility, but for a variety of structural reasons are not participating in the labor force (Table 1.) We estimate the number of people excluded from employment across these six groups range from about 25 to 37 million, recognizing that some of the groups overlap. Post-COVID, we estimate the number could go up to 52-61 million.<sup>2</sup> The table below represents the raw data used in the model and comes from a variety of sources, and to our knowledge had not previously been compiled.

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<sup>1</sup> In the employment social enterprise, social services and workforce fields, temporary jobs designed to serve as stepping stones into permanent employment are often referred to as transitional employment.

<sup>2</sup> This is calculated by identifying the difference between the average (higher) unemployment and (lower) labor force participation rates in the United States for these vulnerable groups and weighting the “surplus unemployment” by the amount each group represents of the total workforce. Recognizing that many individuals fall into more than one of the six population groups, we made reasonable high and low assumptions of possible overlap to estimate the number of people in each group, concluding with an approximate number of those employed, unemployed and not participating. All assumptions and the exact calculations are detailed in the Appendix.

## 1. Employment Social Enterprise Target Populations (BFI 2021)

Population	Size (million)	Unemployment (%)	Unemployed (million)	Labor force participation (%)
People with disabilities	61.0 <sup>a</sup>	8.0 <sup>f</sup>	4.9 <sup>f</sup>	21 <sup>n</sup>
Youth*	47.1 <sup>b</sup>	8.1 <sup>g</sup>	1.5 <sup>k</sup>	62 <sup>o</sup>
Formerly incarcerated	5.0 <sup>c</sup>	27.3 <sup>h</sup>	1.4 <sup>h</sup>	NA
Immigrants, refugees	44.4 <sup>d</sup>	3.1 <sup>i</sup>	0.9 <sup>l</sup>	66 <sup>p</sup>
Veterans	18.9 <sup>e</sup>	3.2 <sup>j</sup>	0.3 <sup>m</sup>	49 <sup>q</sup>
Low-income	18.7 <sup>r</sup>	11.8 <sup>s</sup>	0.8 <sup>t</sup>	39 <sup>u</sup>

\* These numbers are for all youth, ages 16-24. Opportunity Youth are the subset who are neither in school nor working, estimated to be 4.6 million (Aspen Institute 2019).

(a) CDC 2018 (b) Statista 2018 (c) PPI 2018 (d) PEW 2017 (e) Statista 2019a (f) BLS 2019a (g) Statista 2019 (h) PPI 2018 (i) BLS 2019 (j) VETS 2019 (k) BLS 2019 (l) BLS 2019 (m) VETS 2019 (n) BLS 2019 (o) BLS 2019 (p) BLS 2019 (q) BLS 2018 (r) Census 2019 (s) BLS 2018 (t) BLS2018 (u) BLS 2018 & Census 2019.

Our research revealed four different models of ESEs in operation in the United States today: *General, Targeted, Connector, and Corporate*. General ESEs work with multiple disenfranchised populations through a variety of programs and services, and typically receive significant funding from philanthropic and government grants. Targeted ESEs focus on specific (or “targeted”) population groups, offer more tailored services, and tend to generate a higher percentage of earned revenue than General ESEs. Connector ESEs place people in jobs. Successful connectors respond to employer demand for skills by offering tailored training, language education and other services. Finally, Corporate ESEs are programs or units embedded within larger companies that employ people from one of the six population groups profiled in this report. Corporate ESE programs involve more than a traditional human resources function, by explicitly ensuring that employees have access to tailored support services. In the Employment Social Enterprise (ESE) Models section of this report we present more detailed descriptions and a case study example for each model, followed by examples of high-performing organizations that represent each model.

We found evidence corresponding to the ability of all four models to successfully deliver positive economic and social impact at the individual participant level, while recovering all or most of their direct program costs. To measure this, we identified four indicators common across all four ESE models: 1) sustained employment, 2) increase in income, 3) number of individuals served, and 4) financial sustainability. Some ESEs also use qualitative indicators to measure changes in behavior, such as the ability of an employee to resolve conflicts without violence; or attitudes towards the future – such as hope.

In all cases, ESEs are uniquely positioned to provide sustainable, high-impact services to vulnerable populations that have traditionally been hard to reach. Their cost-recovery model, combined with the evidence that these programs achieve impact, means that if ESE benefits and costs per participant are put side-by-side with those of a government program they will outperform them every time. Today it is critical to note, given the COVID-19 generated economic crisis in the United States, that ESEs represent a proven and financially viable model to get all sorts of people working.



## How This Report is Structured

*Jobs for All* is structured in six parts. *Part 1* contains important background on the state of economic mobility in the United States, and provides additional context considering the economic, health and racial justice crises that emerged during 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial reckoning catalyzed by the Black Lives Matter movement. *Part 2* outlines key barriers to employment for the six population groups profiled in this study. *Part 3* discusses the broader workforce development system - especially how government programs and legislation intersect with ESE approaches. *Part 4* contains our key findings, including descriptions of the four ESE models accompanied by case study examples for each type. *Part 5* outlines ESE impact measurement approaches. *Part 6* offers a set of recommendations and a call to action for policy makers and government leaders; corporate executives; donors, and leaders in the ESE field.

Research for this report was conducted by Business for Impact (BFI) at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business with financial support from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation over a two-year period between 2018 to 2020. To produce the report, Business for Impact worked with Just Results, a social enterprise that specializes in inclusive economic growth, and more than a dozen Georgetown graduate and undergraduate student researchers. The research team reviewed the literature on social enterprise; built a database of more than 500 organizations across the United States; interviewed more than 50 experts and implemented a targeted survey to obtain financial and employment data from ESEs.<sup>3</sup> Additional research was conducted during the summer of 2020 to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic recession in the United States on ESEs and the populations they serve.

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<sup>3</sup> The full research methodology is available in the Appendix.



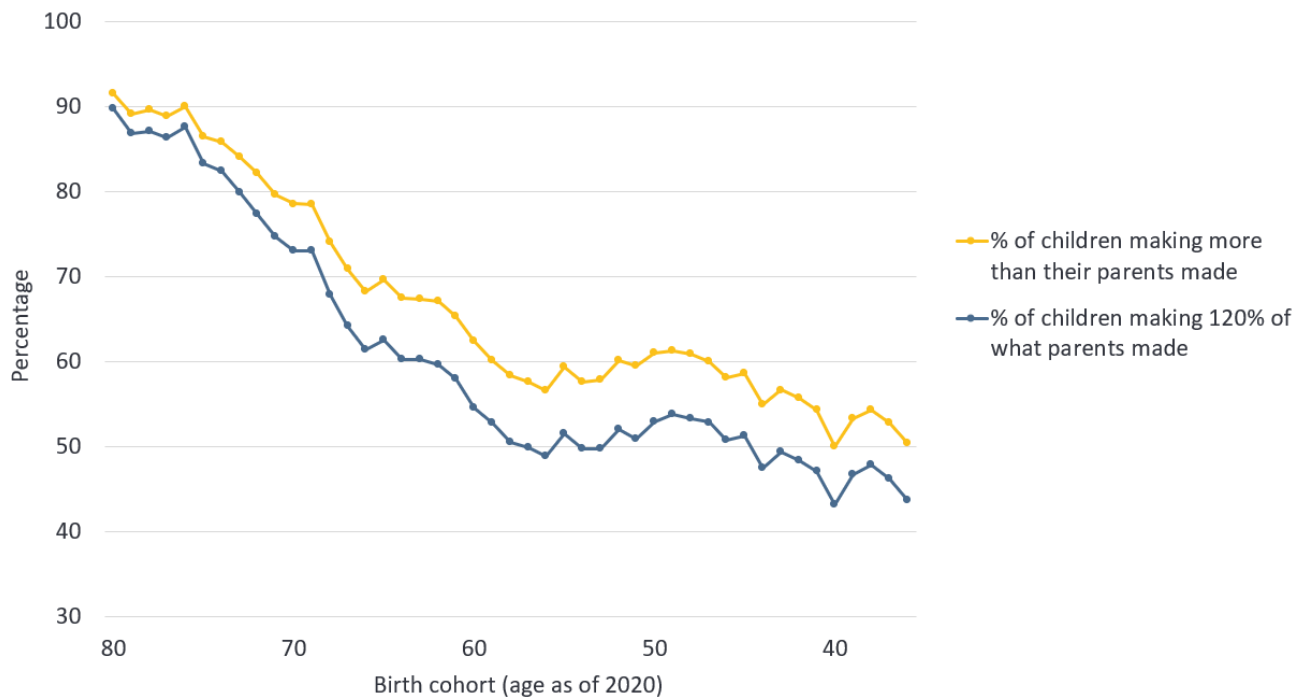
THIS MOMENT  
IS URGENT

**PART 1: BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH CONTEXT**

# 1. Background and Research Context

## Economic Mobility in the United States

“The American Dream” holds the promise that all people, regardless of where they begin, can build better lives than their parents through hard work and perseverance. For several decades however, fewer, and fewer children are surpassing their parents’ income levels (Figure 2), while wealth has become increasingly concentrated in the hands of a smaller percentage of Americans (Chetty 2016). Only 7% of children born in the poorest 20% of the U.S. population make it to the top 20%, a significantly lower rate than in other developed countries (Chetty 2016). This long-term decline in intergenerational economic mobility, defined as the ability of one generation to earn more than the one that came before, has led many to question whether social and economic progress are still possible in modern-day America. Evidence shows that while faith in the power of the individual to rise above social and economic challenges continues to run strong, millions of Americans are experiencing overwhelming obstacles to merely get by (Pew 2014, BLS 2020).



## 2. Average Rate of Intergenerational Mobility in the United States (Chetty 2016)

While the overall decline in economic mobility is a major concern, the unfortunate truth is that *for many Americans, the American dream has never been within reach* as structural barriers related to race, disability and other factors have limited their economic opportunities. For Black Americans and other minorities, upward mobility is much lower than their peers of other races and ethnicities who grew up with the same income levels (Chetty 2018). In addition to structural racism, there are class barriers: children born to wealthier families, and particularly wealthier families who are White or Asian, are more likely to achieve middle or upper-class incomes than equally talented children from low-income families (Carnevale et al 2019). Such inequality has been identified as a leading factor in decreasing economic

mobility.<sup>4</sup> There is also evidence that this inequality is a leading factor in depressing national economic growth and output; the more unequal our society the more overall growth is impeded (Cingano 2014; Brunori 2013). Income disparity has been a persistent feature of the American economic landscape over many decades, widening in good economic times as well as tough ones. Progress appears even more elusive now, considering the harsh economic conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated recession.

Prior to March 2020 the United States economy was growing and many businesses were flourishing. There was a shortage of labor and companies were struggling to find people to hire. However, community lockdowns, enforced business closures and other social distancing measures associated with COVID-19 caused widespread job losses and business failure. Employment declined by as much as 20% between January and mid-April 2020. Low-income workers were the most severely affected, with their employment rates for the same period dropping by over 30%.<sup>5</sup> COVID-19 also affected educational enrollment rates, likely due to a combination of financial difficulties and the reluctance of students to pay full tuition for online instruction. Community colleges experienced the greatest losses, with an enrollment decline nearly nine times their pre-pandemic loss rate (NSCR 2020).<sup>6</sup>

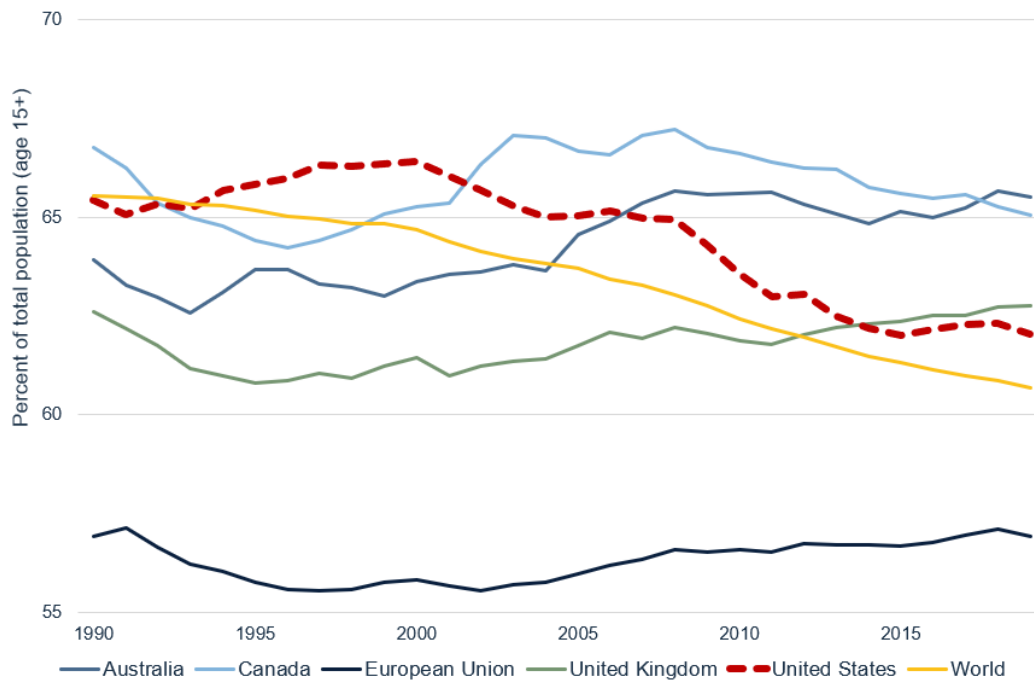
As intergenerational economic mobility has declined, labor force participation has also fallen significantly over the past two decades (BLS 2020). When workers get so discouraged that they stop looking for a job, they are no longer recorded in the unemployment statistics (Figure 3). It is predicted that the negative economic impact of the pandemic will produce an even more dramatic reduction in labor force participation, precisely because the job market will become more competitive and the most vulnerable individuals will be competing against people with more education and experience, even for low wage jobs (Groshen 2020; Maroto 2020).

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<sup>4</sup> Economic mobility can be defined in two ways – absolute economic mobility and relative economic mobility. A society is defined as having high absolute mobility if economic growth raises the entire population’s standard of living from generation to generation – adults have a higher income than their parents at the same age. Relative economic mobility refers to the extent to which individuals do better than their peers as compared to how their parents did relative to *their* own peers. By either measure, economic mobility has gone down in the United States over time, with greater and lesser impact based on race, geography, and initial income levels.

<sup>5</sup> Opportunity Insights. “Economic Tracker,” <https://www.tracktherecovery.org/>

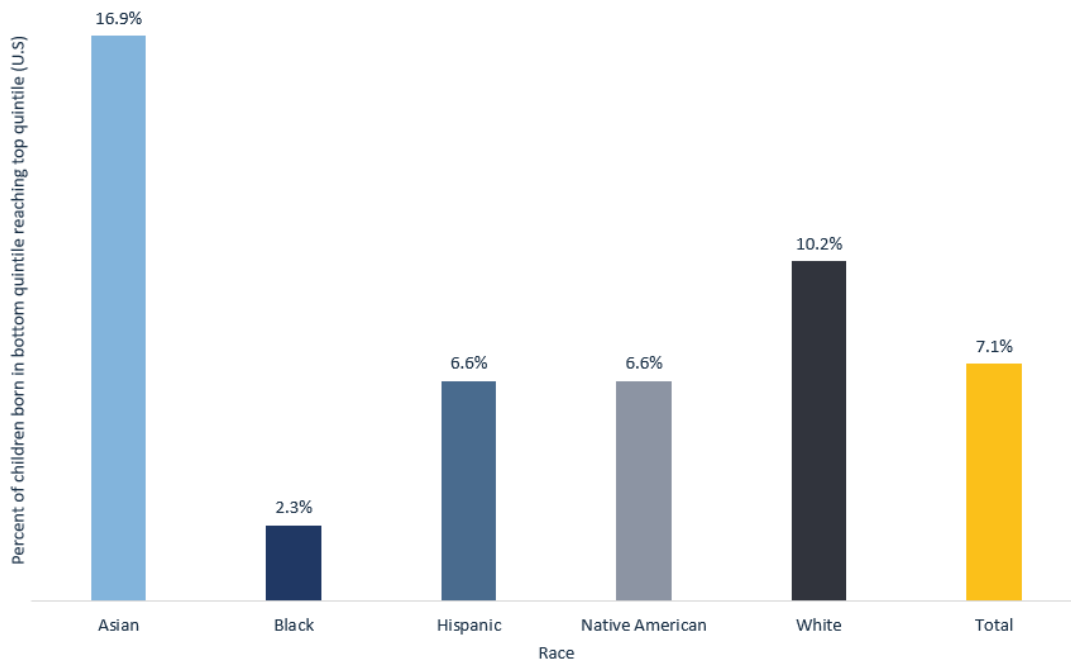
<sup>6</sup> Undergraduate enrollment is down 4.0% compared to the same time last year, while graduate enrollment is up 2.7%, as of September 24. As a result, overall college enrollment is down 3.0% (NSCR 2020).



### 3. Labor Market Participation in United States Compared to Other Countries (World Bank 2019)

#### Race and Economic Mobility

While declining intergenerational mobility is a universal trend in the United States, it has affected people of some races and ethnicities more than others. For children born of parents in the poorest quintile, vast disparities exist according to race, with only 2.3% of Black children making it to the top income quintile compared to 16.9% of Asian children and 10.2% of White children (Figure 4). Even for children born in the highest quintile, outcomes vary significantly by race, with only 18% of Black children staying in the top quintile compared to around 40% of their Asian and White peers. Twice as many Black children from top quintile families fall to the bottom two quintiles compared to their Asian and White peers. The “Black-Asian/White gap” in intergenerational mobility is attributable to differences in outcomes of Black men compared to their peers. Black women on average have the same outcomes as their peers of other races or ethnicities (Chetty 2016).



#### 4. Intergenerational Mobility of Children in the Bottom Quintile by Race (Chetty 2016)

Studies carried out based on new data sets disaggregated by Census tract, made available through Raj Chetty’s Opportunity Insights program, have established several important correlates of upward mobility – all of which are grounded in the neighborhoods in which children are raised (Chetty 2016). Here too, there is a clear link to structural inequality: a history of racist housing policies and segregation have left a legacy in which Black Americans have experienced less access to economic opportunity and key services such as affordable housing, education, and health care, resulting in worse economic outcomes (Hardy and Logan 2020). With persistent structural failures in the United States labor market and race being such a clear correlate of intergenerational economic mobility, the question is what would it take to achieve more equitable outcomes? And are there solutions that provide economic mobility for all?

Traditional approaches to human resources and workforce development have not addressed the structural injustices cited above. Support is needed for external partnerships, as well as internal corporate initiatives, that deliver inclusive employment with career growth. Research shows that diverse teams are good business. Companies that successfully address diversity and inclusion enjoy a competitive advantage in innovation and recruitment; more diverse companies are 15% to 35% more likely to financially outperform industry peers (Winterberg 2016).



IT'S TIME

TO INCLUDE

THE EXCLUDED

**2: POPULATION GROUPS EXPERIENCING  
BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT**

## 2. Population Groups Experiencing Barriers to Employment

In this research we consider six specific groups often excluded from employment opportunities, leading to lower economic mobility. They are *people with intellectual, emotional, and physical (IEP) disabilities; people who are formerly incarcerated; immigrants or refugees; veterans; people from low-income backgrounds, and opportunity youth* (Table 5). Interviews conducted with practitioners and findings from the literature review yielded a list of key barriers to employment experienced by people in these groups, shown in the table's third column.

### 5. Population Groups and Key Barriers to Employment (BFI 2021)

Population Group	Description	Key Barriers to Employment
People with disabilities	People with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activities, including intellectual, emotional, and physical disabilities. <sup>a</sup>	Bias on the part of employers against hiring people with disabilities. Also, the “benefits cliff” - public financial support ends if paid for work.
Opportunity youth	Young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither enrolled in school nor participating in the labor market. <sup>b</sup>	Lack of strong socio-emotional skills, lack of family support systems, low job availability.
Formerly incarcerated	Individuals with prior justice system involvement. <sup>c</sup>	Debt coming out of prison, stigma, employment restrictions, substance abuse, other health disorders.
Immigrants and refugees	Refugees have crossed an international border to find safety and are unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin due to fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. Immigrants are individuals lawfully admitted to a country as permanent residents. <sup>d</sup>	Social and economic isolation, challenges to access support services.
Veterans	Veterans have actively served in the military, naval, or air service and were discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable. <sup>e</sup>	Lack of educational and employment networks due to mobile lifestyle, difficult to navigate multiple public programs.
People from low-income backgrounds	Individuals from families with annual income below or at the established federal minimum income thresholds, or an individual whose family income is at or below 150% of the poverty line. <sup>f</sup>	Lack of employment history, racism, inconsistent housing, childcare, and transportation.

(a) ADA 1990. (b) White House Council for Community Solutions 2012. (c) Marshall Project 2015. (d) US Immigration and Nationality Act 1952, UNHCR Refugee Convention 1951. (e) Title 38 Code of Federal Regulations. (f) Federal Register 2010.

Barriers to employment may be linked to factors such as income, opportunities, and logistical constraints including lack of reliable transportation or childcare (Holland 2015). Other barriers are linked to structural injustice such as racism, outdated stigmas, and discrimination of all types. In many cases, inequality and structural racism lead to further unfortunate and unintended consequences, such as with formerly incarcerated populations, where nearly four times as many black men are incarcerated as their White and Hispanic counterparts with parents of the same income level. These barriers and their consequences, in turn, impact factors directly linked to long-term generational economic mobility such as a person's level



of education or ability to relocate to areas with greater job prospects (Bengali 2013). Individuals who experience multiple barriers are less likely to enter the workforce at all, and even if they do, they may still face difficulties obtaining well-paying jobs that in turn promote economic stability and intergenerational growth.

### **Characteristics of the Six Population Groups**

Below we provide context and further detail on the number of people in each group, their unemployment and labor force participation rates and the challenges they experience when trying to get or keep jobs. Where relevant, we briefly discuss intersections among groups studied and other groups such as Black Americans. Finally, we identify each group's unique workplace assets, describe how they are currently employed and outline the benefits – economic, social, or business – that could be achieved by increasing the number of people from this group in the workforce.

### **People with Disabilities**

More than 61 million persons with disabilities live in the United States, representing a huge source of potential labor. Yet even though the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has prohibited workplace discrimination against people with disabilities (PWDs) since 1990, the employment rate for PWDs has increased only 1% in three decades. And while the labor force participation rate for people with a disability aged 16 to 64 has risen in recent years, it is less than half of that for those without disabilities (ADA 2020, BLS 2020). Consider that in 2019, 19.3% of individuals with a disability were employed. In contrast, the employment-population ratio for individuals without a disability was 66.3% (BLS 2020). Those who find work often do so through vocational rehabilitation (VR) services, largely funded by state and federal government agencies (Desmond 2017). Moreover, 38% of employed people with disabilities are hired to work in 'sheltered workshops', which segregates them from mainstream workplaces and pays them low wages. Poverty among people with disabilities is not solely an issue of unemployment but of discriminatory wage structures and antiquated programs (Desmond 2017).<sup>7</sup>

Employment rates can vary significantly depending on the type of disability. For instance, individuals with visual and hearing disabilities have significantly higher rates of employment (45.4% and 53.6% respectively) compared to people with other kinds of disabilities, including ambulatory disabilities (25.1%), cognitive disabilities (28.6%) and self-care disabilities (16.2%) (DisabilityStatistics.org 2018). Employment rates are especially low for individuals with an intellectual or developmental disability (IDD), rather than a physical disability. From 1997 to 2008, the rate of children diagnosed with developmental disorders grew 17% overall, while the rate of autism diagnosis nearly *tripled* (289% growth rate). Approximately one in six children in the United States has a neurodevelopmental disorder and the rate of autism is estimated to be as high as 1 in 50 (Winterberg 2016). Among adults with autism, the non-participation rate in the workforce in 2016 was around 90%, the highest of any disability group (Winterberg 2016). People with disabilities were twice as likely as those without disabilities to have not completed high school (BLS 2020). Disability entitlements such as Social Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) have also been found to reduce engagement in the workforce because a certain amount of earned income renders the recipient ineligible for public benefits (REDF Workshop May 2019).

People with disabilities (PWDs) who have jobs tend to be employed in service occupations, production, transportation, and material moving occupations. With some notable exceptions – such as people with

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<sup>7</sup> Under the Federal Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Section 14(c), the productivity of a disabled employee is compared to that of a non-disabled worker and allows for the disabled employee to be paid at a rate commensurate with an "average" worker (Desmond 2017).

autism working in software development – PWDs are less likely to work in management, professional and related occupations than those without (BLS 2020).

Racial bias intensifies employment barriers for PWDs. Among persons with a disability, Blacks had higher unemployment rates in 2019 (11.8%) than Hispanics (8.6%), Asians (6.7%) and Whites (6.6%). COVID-19 has disproportionately affected the employment of people with disabilities, with a 20% reduction in the number of working age persons with disabilities who were employed between March and April 2020, compared to 14% of their peers without disabilities (Kessler Foundation 2020).

While PWDs face high employment barriers, when they do get hired, many of the benefits accrue to employers, not the employee. These include governmental financial incentives for the employer, improved corporate reputations and more inclusive work environments. With 15 million people of working age living with disabilities in the United States, embracing people with disabilities in the workplace will allow businesses to access to a new talent pool of more than 10.7 million people. An estimate by Accenture suggests that the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would get a boost of up to \$25 billion if just 1% more PWDs join the labor force (Accenture 2018).

### **Opportunity Youth**

4.6 million, or 1 in 9, young Americans between the ages of 16 and 24 are neither employed nor in school (Aspen 2020). Known as “opportunity youth” many have experienced homelessness, substance abuse or teen pregnancy, and have dropped out of the school system or been involved in the courts or foster systems. These experiences contribute to mental and physical conditions that limit a young person’s ability to re-engage in school and work (UPenn 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has hit youth particularly hard, as many of the service and hospitality jobs in which they typically work cannot be done remotely. Consequently, youth unemployment (ages 16-24) jumped from 8.4% in 2019 to over 25% as of May 2020 (Inanc 2020).

Opportunity youth have lower literacy rates, lower levels of educational attainment and high rates of unemployment (Burd-Sharps and Lewis 2018). By age 25, they are unlikely to be benefiting from full-time work or education or to have strong social support networks. By that age, more than half of the men will find themselves in prison, and nearly all the women will have started families while lacking the income to be self-sufficient (Burd-Sharps and Lewis 2018). Jobs that pay enough to support a family require some kind of post-high school training or credential, yet only 1% of youth who have been disconnected will ever earn an associate degree or higher, compared to 36% of the general population (Aspen 2019).

Research also shows that the costs to society of under-employment of opportunity youth are high. One estimate puts the personal and public costs of continued negative trajectories for opportunity youth at \$6.3 trillion dollars over their lifetimes (Aspen 2020). In terms of lost revenues and increased social services, it is estimated that the country would save \$93 billion annually (\$1.6 trillion over their lifetime) if it connected young people to careers (Opportunity Nation 2020). It is further estimated that taxpayers will save an estimated \$14,000 per year for each young adult helped out of homelessness, criminal activity, or job loss after pregnancy (UPenn 2020).

Evidence shows that when given the opportunity and support, many disconnected young adults demonstrate a remarkable ability to adopt positive behaviors, skills, and habits with corresponding financial results. “...those who have been working or in school as teens and young adults earn \$31,000 more per year and are 45% more likely to own a home, 42% more likely to be employed, and 52% more likely to report excellent or good health than those who had been disconnected as young people.” (SSRC

2018). When young adults are more stable, personally and economically, these benefits are also passed along to the next generation (UPenn 2019).

### **Immigrants and Refugees**

By the end of 2015, 65.3 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide, with about one-third of those, or 21.3 million people, categorized as refugees (Workbox 2017). With travel restrictions and immigration bans, the numbers are in flux, but as of 2017 there were over 40 million immigrants and refugees in the United States. Obstacles faced by refugees include undervaluation of their education<sup>8</sup>, skills and experience gained abroad, as well as their lack of English language skills, potential cultural differences, and even vilification of refugees as responsible for unemployment or depressed wages among U.S. citizens (Winterberg 2016; Ramirez 2018). Surprisingly, employment challenges appear to be greatest for high-skilled workers.<sup>9</sup>

Research suggests that diverse businesses are 35% more likely to financially outperform their industry medians. The benefits of hiring refugees include higher retention rates, high levels of commitment and hard work and specific skill sets, particularly from the highly educated (Hunt 2015; Kallick 2018). In industries where turnover is typically high, such as meat packing, refugees demonstrate as much as 73% higher retention rates than other employees (Kallick 2018). The difficult circumstances many refugees have experienced is thought to contribute to their commitment to excellent performance in the jobs they complete. *“They are willing to do whatever they can to maintain that job, whether that means working overtime, showing up early or staying late. They are helpful and courteous, and they have a strong work ethic simply because this is their chance to start over.”* (Ramirez 2018).

Immigrants and refugees bring new skill sets to the American labor force, including diverse language abilities, cultural attitudes, and technical skills. As with other populations, increased purchasing power by refugees boosts demand for goods and services — including food, shelter, teaching and translating — and can thus act as a fiscal stimulus. Most refugees end their reliance on welfare and begin paying taxes within their first year in the United States (Workbox 2017). Many social enterprises oriented to support this population explicitly seek to capitalize on individuals’ unique attributes with a global perspective.

### **People from Low-Income Backgrounds**

Children who grow up in poverty end up with poor educational and employment outcomes as adults. With 40% of American children living below the federal poverty level for at least one year before they turn 18 and 10.5% of American children in persistent poverty living below the federal poverty line for more than half of their childhood, growing up poor has a significant impact on many Americans.

The likelihood of poverty in adulthood goes up with the number of years spent poor as a child.<sup>10</sup> The lack of a traditional educational background or degree creates gaps in the many additional benefits of education and training, such as experience in a formal work environment, knowledge of expectations and building networks to learn about and interview for jobs. More than 92% of “never-poor” children

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<sup>8</sup> A study by the Migration Policy Institute found that nearly half (48%) of all immigrants that arrived between 2011 and 2015 had a college degree (MPI 2017).

<sup>9</sup> The unemployment rate differential for low-skilled workers is only 1.8%, while the differential for high-skilled workers is 32.8% (Winterberg 2016). The challenges also differ significantly for legal immigrants versus those with illegal or unresolved status.

<sup>10</sup> For those who spent 8 to 14 years in poverty as children, 46% were poor at age 20, and 40% were poor at age 25 (Ratcliffe 2015).

complete high school, while about 83% of “ever-poor” children do so with only 63.5% of those children who experienced persistent poverty completing high school (Ratcliffe 2015).

Employment social enterprises (ESEs) provide programs and opportunities that help people from low-income backgrounds bridge their work-experience gap. Some companies have adopted a human resource approach called “high road employment systems,” in which wage increases are coupled with additional interventions that improve workplace culture, job design, work processes, training, worker empowerment and quality control (Winterberg 2016).

However, many people from low-income backgrounds fall between the cracks when it comes to eligibility for corporate programs as they do not fit into another more specific target population group (such as veterans or the disabled). With the COVID-19 epidemic, millions more in the United States have become unemployed, and no group is suffering more than those from low-income backgrounds with employment decreasing by 30% between January and May of 2020 (Opportunity Insights Economic Tracker 2020).

### **Formerly Incarcerated**

More than 25% of formerly incarcerated individuals are unemployed today (PPI 2018). Research shows that joblessness is the single most important predictor of recidivism. At the national level, economists estimate that the gross national product is reduced annually by more than \$80 billion as a result of excluding formerly incarcerated job seekers from the workforce (ACLU 2017). Federal policies intended to get “tough on crime” as part of the War on Drugs in the 1970s and 1980s led to mass incarceration in the United States, further exacerbated by the 1994 Crime Bill, which gave states money to implement similar policies at the state level (Cullen 2018). The incarceration rate has increased 700% in the last 40 years, with 2.3 million Americans imprisoned and 70 million — one in three adults — having a criminal record (Vera 2013; ACLU 2017). As of 2018, Black Americans represented 33% of the sentenced prison population, nearly triple their 12% share of the United States adult population (Gramlich 2020). Ninety-five percent of those in state prisons will re-enter communities at some point and need to find work — some 650,000 prisoners are released each year and nearly 75% of formerly incarcerated individuals are still unemployed a year after release (ACLU 2017; Waldman 2015; Sentencing Project 2020).

Formerly incarcerated individuals, also referred to as returning citizens, face limited employment options due to the stigma associated with a criminal record, lack of education and work experience, substance abuse, physical or mental health problems and legal restrictions on certain types of employment such as those requiring contact with children or providing security services.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, basic transition challenges for this population can include getting a photo ID, a driver’s license, or a bank account if they have no history as an adult outside of prison. Meanwhile, employers may fear being held liable for “negligent hiring” practices if they knowingly hire an employee with a criminal background who subsequently engages in criminal activity. As a result, employers are more averse to hiring ex-offenders than any other disadvantaged group (REDF Workshop May 2019).

Employment rates among young male ex-offenders have been estimated at 20-35% lower than for young men overall. And a variety of studies designed to control for other characteristics that may affect both incarceration rates and employment history finds incarceration has significant negative effects on employment and earnings. Earnings losses have been estimated at 10-30%, and employment reductions have been estimated as high as 20-30% (Raphael 2008). COVID-19 has made reentry more difficult than ever because of widespread job losses — even as many offenders were released early due to the pandemic.

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<sup>11</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of this topic, leading references include “Why Are So Many Americans in Prison?” Steven Raphael and Michael Stoll, “Barriers to Reentry?” edited by Shawn Bushway, Michael Stoll, and David Weiman.

While formerly incarcerated citizens have historically been a challenging population for employers to support, change is currently underway. The recent passage of legislation such as the First Step Act (2018) and the Fair Chance Act (2019) is designed to reduce recidivism and barriers to employment through provisions such as “ban the box”. There have also been successes with employment programming that works. Programs should take place in community settings (as opposed to institutions), be intensive and at least six months long, use CBT techniques, match the learning styles of individual ex-offenders, include praise over punishments and include vocational training and job enhancing opportunities (Drake 2007).

As with other vulnerable groups, research shows that – with adequate supports in place – hiring people with prison records can be good business. Retention rates are higher, turnover is lower and employees with criminal records are more loyal. Given the costs associated with turnover and recruitment, researchers have found that “employees with a criminal background are in fact a better pool for employers.” (ACLU 2017).

### **Veterans**

More than 21 million Americans have served in the United States Armed Forces (Tennerson 2015). While veterans have traditionally had a stubbornly high unemployment rate, in recent years it has fallen to, or even below, the national average, ranging from 1.4% in Iowa to 6.5% in the District of Columbia (DOL 2018; Military Times 2019).<sup>12</sup> Several of the challenges faced by veterans are similar to those faced by other populations, such as difficulties finding affordable housing and transportation. However, the primary challenges include mental health-related barriers (such as PTSD) and related stigma, and difficulties translating their skills into a civilian lexicon or context (Van Slyke and Armstrong 2017). This is particularly applicable for veterans without college degrees, who nevertheless are highly skilled due to training they received during their service (Steinhauer 2020).

Compounding the difficulty veterans face in translating their skills, certification and licensing hurdles often require duplicative training at a cost. With regards to certification and licensing in particular, U.S. Representative Jeff Miller, chairman of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, stated, “Many use federal benefits to pay for civilian schooling in skills they’ve already mastered. We are literally wasting millions of tax dollars requiring someone to attend training they have already completed, which could be spent on more advanced qualification.” (Classy 2019).

The effects of unemployment among veterans extends far beyond a lack of income and the risk of poverty. Especially in cases of extended unemployment, a veteran’s health and emotional state can deteriorate, in the most serious cases leading to depression and suicide. The suicide rate for veterans is more than twice that of the national average (VA 2019). Veterans are among the most popular groups to receive corporate support, due in large measure to policy incentives and their higher skill levels (Van Slyke 2017). In addition, entrepreneurship may emerge as a viable path forward for some veterans. About 25% of military members transitioning to civilian life report that they are considering entrepreneurship (Tennerson 2015). Social Enterprises such as Leave no Veteran Behind and Rags of Honor are selling products, while others including Unite US, Rally Point, and Bunker Labs seek to build the entrepreneurship ecosystem. They include online platforms linking veterans with service providers and one another to promote information sharing, training opportunities, networking and co-working spaces and accelerators for veteran-owned businesses and new veteran entrepreneurs (Tennerson 2015).

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<sup>12</sup> Among 326,000 unemployed veterans in 2018, 60% were aged 45 and over; 35% were 25-44, and 6% were 18-24 (DOL 2018).

## **Summary**

Looking across the six population groups profiled in this report, our research estimates that anywhere from 25 to 37 million Americans have historically experienced, or are currently facing, structural barriers to getting jobs and achieving upward economic mobility. With the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this number could as much as double. In the next section we examine the public workforce development system to better understand where and how these issues have traditionally been addressed.



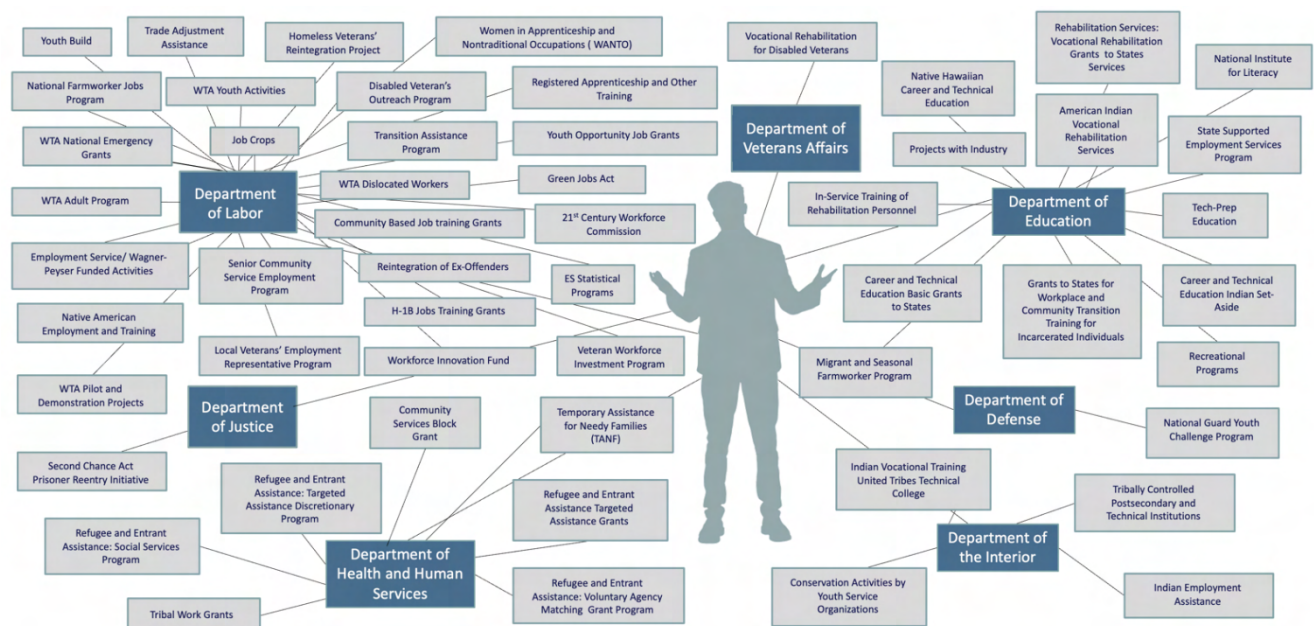
**TIME TO RETHINK**  
**A MAZE OF PUBLIC**  
**PROGRAMS**

**PART 3: THE U.S. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM**

### 3. The United States Workforce Development System

The workforce development system in the United States is complex, with a multitude of actors and funders. Typically, workforce development services, employment services, and social services have been provided by or supported by national, state, and local governments. The federal government has taken the lead by developing legislative frameworks and funding mechanisms, although some states such as Washington and California have also made their own significant investments in workforce development.

At the federal level of government more than 40 employment programs are spread across 14 agencies and cost \$17 billion annually (Figure 6). “Despite changes in the recent reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the system remains fragmented at the Federal level, perpetuating unnecessary bureaucracy and complicating State and local efforts to meet the needs of Americans” (DOL 2019).



**6. The United States Workforce Development System is Complex (adapted from CEL 2013)**

The U.S. workforce development system is the manifestation of three intertwined strands of policy:

1. Policies focused primarily on education and training;
2. Employment policies, including local economic development efforts and subsidized or transitional employment, and
3. Social support programs such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).

Each of these policy strands evolved separately as layers of legislation and regulation accumulated over time (Figure 7 below summarizes key legislative milestones since the 1930s). The result is a complicated maze of programs and initiatives that are fragmented, often inefficient, sometimes duplicative, and extremely difficult to navigate.



## 7. Key Legislation Underpinning Workforce Development, Employment, and Social Programs

Year	Title	Description
1933	Wagner-Peyser Act	Established and supported local job placement and training centers.
1935	Works Progress Administration	Focused on employing mostly unskilled laborers on massive public works (Camp David, Golden Gate Bridge).
1938	Fair Labor Standards Act	Established the minimum wage, “time-and-a-half” overtime pay and allows for a “training wage” under certain conditions.
1946	Employment Act	Introduced federal responsibility for unemployment insurance.
1973	Comprehensive Employment and Training Act	Provided block grants to state and local governments for public and private job training; supported a wide range of transitional employment programs with mixed results.
1982	Job Training and Partnership Act	First to focus on involvement of private employers.
1985	Food Stamp Act	Required states to implement job search, training, workfare, or other employment services. Updated and named the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in 2008.
1990	Americans with Disabilities Act	A comprehensive civil rights law committed to removing impediments.
1996	Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act	Replaced welfare with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Funding is conditional on states’ requirement of recipients to engage in work activities.
1998	Workforce Investment Act	Integrated services via one-stop-shops, and vouchers.
2002	Jobs for Veterans Act	Gave veterans priority in job training.
2014	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act	Targets those facing barriers, opportunity youth.
1998 2006 2018	Perkins Vocational-Technical Education Act	Introduced the “All Aspects of Industry” framework used by community colleges.

### Actors in the United States Workforce Development System

The public workforce development system was created nearly a century ago in response to widespread unemployment during the Great Depression. The system was designed to provide dignified work options for people unable to find jobs in the open labor market. Since then, the key actors (Table 8) that have traditionally dominated the United States workforce development system include *government agencies* at federal, state, and local levels spanning labor, education, commerce, and other sectors; *educational institutions* both public and private, including community colleges and universities; *employers* including commercial businesses and non-profits, and *intermediaries* which includes career and employment services.

## 8. Key Actors in the Workforce System

Type of actor	Names and roles
Government	Federal agencies include the Departments of Labor, Education, Commerce, Veteran’s Affairs and Health and Human Services, and to a lesser degree Housing and Urban Development, the Small Business Administration, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of Energy, and the Department of Agriculture. State and local level agencies, with state Workforce Boards mandated to coordinate across the system (Bauman 2018).
Education	Higher education institutions include Colleges, Universities and Community Colleges, which are publicly funded professional schools that often respond to local employer needs. K-12 educational institutions include public, private, and parochial schools.
Employers	“Employers” includes all non-governmental entities that employ people which range from large multinational companies to “mom-and-pop” businesses and nonprofit organizations. Large employers invest heavily in skills upgrading more than half of the \$1.1 trillion market for post-secondary education and training is attributed to employer-provided formal and informal training (Carnevale 2015).
Intermediaries	Intermediaries help job seekers find employment, support employers to recruit workers and provide other services. This includes public employment offices, career service centers in schools, executive talent agencies and Connector ESEs. Services may be embedded in non-profit organizations, educational institutions or offered by private nonprofit or for-profit organizations. A significant number have established partnerships with, or work as, service providers to corporate employers.

### Where do Employment Social Enterprises fit in?

Currently, employment social enterprises (ESEs) sit outside mainstream employment and workforce development programs. These programs often exclude or overlook ESE approaches to employment and economic mobility; ESEs do not get the recognition that they deserve, and with no leading organization to promote them, ESEs are in large part disconnected from public programs and funding streams. When ESEs do access government funding, rigid definitions and burdensome administrative requirements often create obstacles to the implementation of their market-driven program models. For example, eligibility criteria for workforce programs can restrict an ESE’s ability to serve people of certain ages or require mandatory “stipends” that are out of line with a program’s lean cost structure.

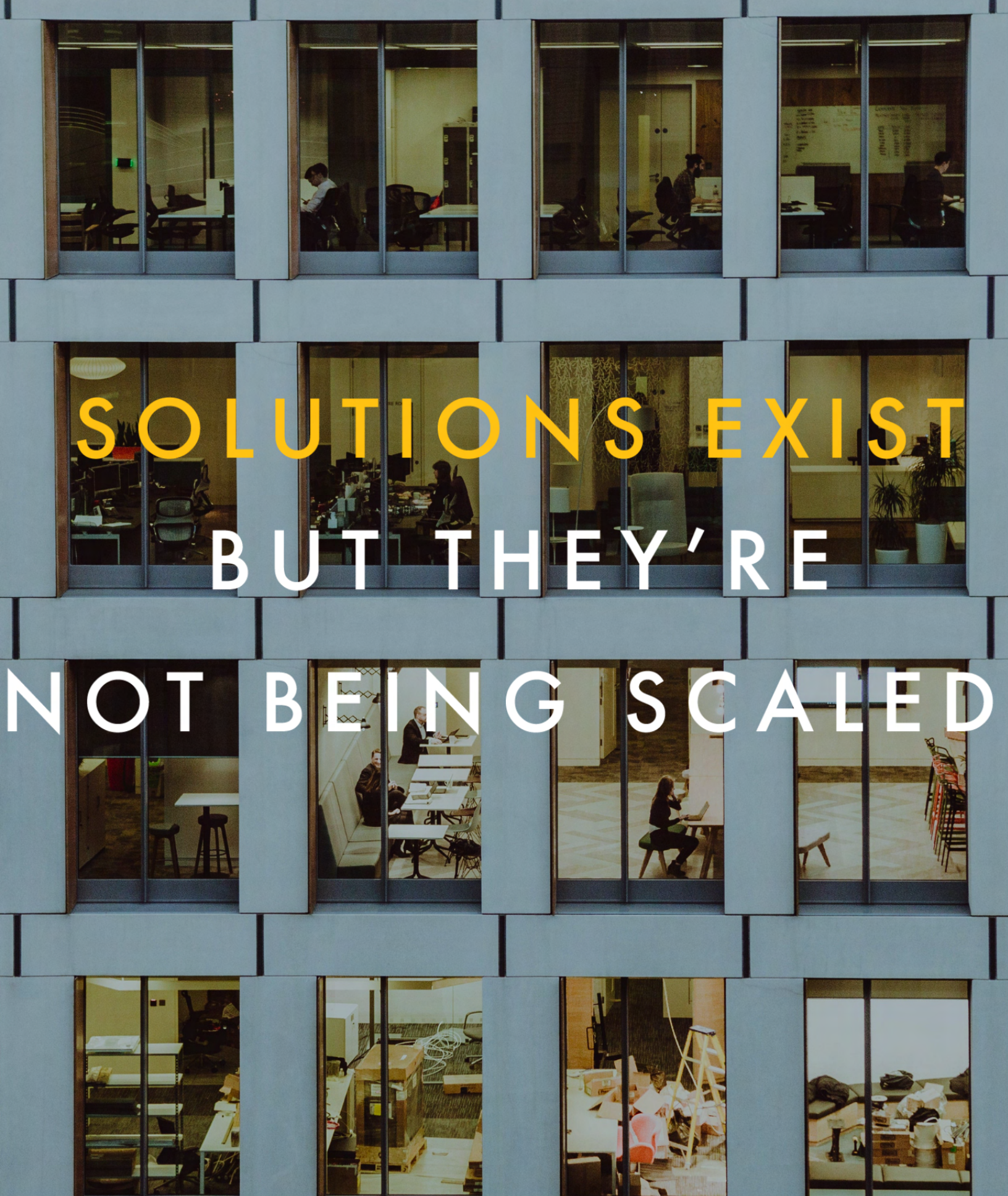
Critically important is the fact that ESEs typically offer paid employment through programs known as “transitional work.” Many people depend on public benefits for income support and access to social services such as health care. However, if they get paid to work, they risk losing those benefits – this is known as the “benefits cliff” and presents a huge barrier to ESEs and people who want to get working again. Further complicating partnerships with public sector programs and philanthropic funders is the fact that many ESEs are organized as for-profit businesses, so even though they generate positive social impact for their workers, their legal status impacts eligibility for funding and program participation.

ESEs are also largely disconnected from mainstream private employers. Most large corporations and “main street” businesses are not working with ESEs to fill their talent pipelines. As such, employers are missing an opportunity to tap into a pool of skilled, ready-to-work employees. Other untapped benefits include increasing product value with social impact purchasing and scaling operations by partnering with ESEs to provide supply chain services. These strategies would not only make business products more competitive in the market, but they would be cost-efficient and sustainable. In addition, meanwhile, ESEs and their transitioning employees would benefit from better access to large-scale labor markets.

The ESE model works and enjoys support from a wide array of funder types and across the political spectrum, including from REDF, Bank of America, and the Koch funded non-profit Stand Together. Nevertheless, ESEs, by and large, remain mainly outside the mainstream.

Clearly, better integration is needed throughout the system; a need that has only intensified in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying economic recession. Better integration would lead to closer connections between ESEs, their workers, and corporate and other long-term employment opportunities; changes in government policies to enable wider adoption of ESE approaches, and re-allocation of public and private resources allotted to training and education towards sustainable ESEs.

In the next section of the report, we present findings from the extensive research conducted on employment social enterprise types and effectiveness, beginning with a categorization of program models.



## **PART 4: EMPLOYMENT SOCIAL ENTERPRISE MODELS**

## 4. Employment Social Enterprise (ESE) Models

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Conventional wisdom has long held that the purpose of nonprofits was to make a difference, while the purpose of business was to make money. While there have always been examples of businesses who ‘give back’ to their communities through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, for many years social impact was considered as separate from the business model.

By 1990, the lines between social and business returns began to blur as social enterprises emerged into the mainstream. This movement was led by pioneering philanthropic foundations (including the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation and REDF) providing grants to nonprofit organizations that employed homeless and other vulnerable individuals, funding them as if they were taking an equity stake. This venture capital-style philanthropy, or “*venture philanthropy*”, helped catalyze the social enterprise movement across the United States as hundreds of new social enterprises started up while others expanded. Much of REDF’s investment has focused on social enterprises helping disenfranchised people get and keep jobs, though social enterprises can address any number of issues. Over the same period there has been a shift in how companies think about CSR, integrating it more closely with their business goals and competencies – from “shared value” to sustainable supply chains, to initiatives that promote workforce diversity, equity, and inclusion.

In the introduction to this report, we defined an employment social enterprise (ESE), a type of social enterprise, as a *private revenue-generating entity that uses market-driven solutions to solve employment problems*. Whether they operate as nonprofits, for-profits or revenue-generating hybrids, ESEs prepare people to work and either directly employ them or work closely with businesses and organizations to facilitate job placement. Many ESEs go beyond hiring to support “the whole person” by delivering evidence-based behavior change programs and providing access to services such as transportation, housing, childcare, and other support.<sup>13</sup> *To be an ESE, the enterprise must either hire directly or provide support services that facilitate employment*. Most do both, as the two sets of activities reinforce each other and together have been shown to lead to positive impacts such as increased incomes, job stability and long-term economic mobility. Many ESEs go beyond employing or placing individuals in jobs and focus on transforming the workforce ecosystem by improving linkages between actors.

It is worthwhile to clearly distinguish ESEs from government programs, especially workforce programs and social services, as they have similar goals. While there are many public workforce programs that provide training and job matching services, the majority do not have the two key traits of an employment social enterprise: they do not generate their own revenues and they do not offer the opportunity to learn while working (GAO 2018). While some social programs operated by the government do offer transitional employment, it tends to be quite limited in time and type of job (i.e., cleanup crews) or the transitional employment program may be contracted out to an ESE.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Employability is a combination of technical and social skills and competencies, and a reflection of direct and indirect barriers. Employability is linked to the individual, whereas job placement is an important outcome of workforce development programs, in particular the ability to support and place harder to serve populations. Some call for an index or other measure that distinguishes employability, or work readiness, from placement outcomes, acknowledging that even within one program there may be individuals at different ends of the employability spectrum (Holland 2020).

<sup>14</sup> What is interesting is that in cases when government programs do combine on-the-job learning with support services, they tend to receive positive evaluations. This is evidence of the mutually reinforcing nature of these two program features: work-based learning and tailored support.

## Four Employment Social Enterprise Models

Employment social enterprises (ESEs) operate across a spectrum of organizational forms that span the charitable to commercial spectrum. One early finding of our research is that the legal form chosen by an ESE (non-profit, for-profit, B-Corp, etc.) is less consequential than the program model. High-performing ESEs use the following four indicators to define success, representing a combination of social and business outcomes: (1) the number of individuals served; (2) whether participants remain employed; (3) whether participants are able to increase their income, and (4) the financial sustainability of the organization. We found almost no correlation between performance on these indicators and an ESE’s legal status (i.e., non-profit, for profit, or hybrid). Instead, aspects of the program model (i.e., theory of change, activities, and target group) were the determinants of performance.

Our research revealed four different models of ESEs in operation in the United States today: *General*, *Targeted*, *Connector* and *Corporate*. We identified these four ESE models based on their program approaches, drawing from a database that includes more than 500 organizations and companies compiled for this report. **General** ESEs work with multiple disenfranchised populations through a variety of programs and services, and typically receive significant funding from philanthropic and government grants. **Targeted** ESEs focus on specific (or “targeted”) population groups, offer more tailored services, and tend to generate more earned revenue than General ESEs. **Connector** ESEs place people in jobs. Successful connectors respond to employer demand for skills by offering tailored training, language education, and other complementary support services. Finally, **Corporate** ESEs are programs or units embedded within larger companies that employ people from one of the six population groups profiled in this report. Corporate ESE programs involve more than a traditional human resources function, by explicitly ensuring that employees have access to tailored support services (Figure 9). Each of the four models include ESEs that share a common set of features. Note that the models should be viewed as “archetypes” rather than as strict definitions with one-to-one correspondence in each feature.

	GENERAL Model 1	TARGETED Model 2	CONNECTOR Model 3	CORPORATE Model 4
 <b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Multiple target groups	One specific target group	Based on client need	Based on need for skills
 <b>TYPICAL FUNDING</b>	Philanthropy + government grants	Philanthropy and earned revenue mix	Mostly earned revenue	All earned revenue
 <b>DRIVERS</b>	Broader social impact, and many business activities	Deeper social impact, and tight business model	Bridge social needs, and corporate demand for diverse talent	Corporate demand for diverse talent
 <b>INDUSTRY EXAMPLES</b>	Catering, food service, and handmade goods	Software development, health services	Staffing, back-office services, and supply chain services	Staffing and supplier diversification

### 9. Four Employment Social Enterprise Models (Business for Impact 2021)

## What the Four ESE Models Have in Common

Two key programming tools are common across all four ESE models featured in this report: *paid employment* and *support services*.

The first is *paid employment for participants*. Transitional, paid work for individuals, is a central feature of most ESEs. There is growing body of evidence that demonstrates that transitional employment is an effective approach to promoting long-term economic mobility, an approach that can be scaled beyond ESEs and be utilized by both public and private workforce development programs. For instance, among publicly subsidized employment programs that provide transitional employment, evidence is emerging that shows the positive impact of transitional employment.<sup>15</sup> Evaluators consistently find that paid employment programs result in decreased family public benefit receipt, improved educational outcomes among the children of workers, increased educational completion, lowered criminal justice system involvement among both workers and their children, improved psychological well-being and reduced longer-term poverty (Gutta-Gupta et al 2016; Cummings et al 2020).

The second is *support services for employees*, directly or through partnerships. People with significant barriers to employment face impediments that can vary widely. They come to ESEs at different stages of life and work readiness, with varied skill sets and abilities to acquire, maintain and excel on the job. Effective programs may provide one or more additional interventions, or “stepping stones”, to be responsive to individual needs (Figure 10). It is important to note that most ESEs do not have the resources to provide a full suite of stepping stone support services. Typically, they focus on those that are most supportive of their target population while interfacing with the wider public social service system to facilitate access to services they themselves do not provide. The majority of ESEs effectively combine stepping stone services with paid employment.



### 10. Stepping Stones Help Workers Overcome Barriers to Economic Mobility

Below we discuss each of the ESE models in detail with a case study and examples.

<sup>15</sup> Some of these public employment programs work with ESEs as contractors, while others are implemented directly by public agencies, yet contain similar program features.

## Model One – General ESE

General ESEs work with multiple disenfranchised populations through a variety of programs and services, and typically receive significant funding from philanthropic and government grants. They tend to be larger organizations with a long history of working with vulnerable populations and their social enterprises have in some cases been spun off into independent entities. Many of these General ESEs were founded as community organizations, originally funded through grants, fundraising events, or membership fees. Evolving over time when funding was restricted or new models were needed, these organizations emerged to fill gaps in public and private social service provision to address the needs of many different target populations who face employment barriers.

Over the last two decades, **General** ESEs have evolved and diversified their funding sources; likewise, those that began by serving one particular population have tended to expand the range of people they serve. Some, seeing their income generating programs grow and thrive over the years, have adopted a market-driven focus for their organizations, often with strong financial results. Other **General** ESEs have

remained charitable organizations, continuing to raise funds primarily from grants and philanthropy. General ESEs, with their size and longevity, offer proof that ESE models are scalable and sustainable, even as they fall along a spectrum of financial approaches. On one end of the spectrum, there are organizations that choose not to focus on earned revenue (typically earning less than 30% of income this way) in order to maintain a focus on supporting the hardest to reach populations, and who continue to be successful with government grants and/or philanthropy. On the other end of the spectrum, we see General ESEs implementing market-driven business models with earned revenue targets above 60%. In all cases General ESEs remain highly committed to their social impact mission. Take for example, Humanim:

### Employment Social Enterprise

### Model 1 GENERAL



Philanthropy +  
government grants



Broader social impact,  
many business activities



Multiple target  
groups



Catering, food service,  
hand made goods

### General ESE Case Study - Humanim

*“Though we take many paths to meet our mission at Humanim, we are united and guided by Human Purpose, and we measure our success in Human Impact.” - Cindy Plavier-Truitt, Interim president, and CEO*

Humanim’s goal is to get more people employed and more communities thriving. Founded as a non-profit in 1971 to work with adults and children with developmental disabilities, Humanim has since expanded to serve formerly incarcerated individuals, and veterans. As the organization has grown, it has tackled bigger, riskier projects and provides more services to more people. Humanim’s social enterprises started with a single copy-shop employing people with disabilities. Today Humanim runs three social enterprises across a variety of sectors in East Baltimore (a fourth was recently transitioned to employee ownership), earning about \$9 million in revenue each year. Their investment in the local community, which incorporates a racial equity lens, is a defining feature.

One of Humanim’s social enterprises is iScan, which provides a great example of Humanim’s successful approach. iScan provides scanning, indexing, processing and digital imaging technology services to government and private sector clients. iScan launched as an unlikely underdog working double time to earn their spot in the Maryland government vendors’ market.

*“To help us acquire, inspect, process and post nearly 162,000,000 images from the State’s land records, we brought on nearly every scanning vendor in Maryland– iScan, a Humanim Social Enterprise, among*



*them. Over the past four years, the private-sector vendors have not been able to compete with iScan in terms of quality and quantity of work completed, or in terms of professionalism, technical competence, or price. It is a testament to the iScan team's quality of service that as we enter Phase II, iScan is the only outside vendor we're moving forward with."* -Kevin J. Swanson Director of Digital Acquisition, Maryland State Archives (Humanim (a) 2019).

iScan currently employs more than 40 people with barriers to employment and is 100% sustained by earned income through contracts with clients nationwide. In 2018, the company landed a large-scale contract with a West Coast-based energy company to scan approximately one million industrial X-Rays and launched a new service line. In 2019 iScan secured more contracts, including projects to scan over two million medical claims, as well as original copies of Maryland City and county birth certificates dating back to 1925 (Humanim (b) 2019).

Humanim's ESEs generate skilled jobs and provide on-the-job training that is paid and provides full benefits. Benefits are critical to keep people on the job, if they fear they will lose disability payments, or fear losing a job when they need to take time off for health care—and many people come out of prison in poor health—they will often choose not to work to keep their benefits. At the same time case management services help ESE employees build stability in their skills, finances, health, employment, and quality of life.

Humanim also leverages its experience to promote change in the workforce development system. It has formed strategic partnerships with public, private, and nonprofit organizations to provide opportunities for career growth and higher incomes for its employees by promoting local hiring, as well as reforming rules governing public procurement, purchasing, and large-scale contracts. For instance, Humanim was influential in changing Maryland procurement laws to enable individuals with disabilities to receive on-the-job training and employment through state contracts (Humanim (a) 2019).

Like all ESEs, Humanim must balance its social impact mission with the goal of earning revenue. Humanim's funding sources include a diverse mix of philanthropic grants, individual gifts, and earned income generated through fees for services. As Humanim's CBO Cindy Plavier-Truitt explained, opening smaller startup businesses as part of a large organization is not always smooth as there can be financial and cultural mismatches between parent and start-up ESE. On the other hand, reliance on grants and philanthropic funding can also be risky, especially in tough economic times when charitable contributions decrease.

Below are further examples of organizations that fit the General ESE model.

**The Chicago Lighthouse**, founded in 1906, originally served blind and vision impaired Chicago residents through training and production of clocks for institutions. They have since diversified their earned revenue streams and services, now training veterans and people with a range of disabilities in customer service for telecommunications and collections and order entry in their own customer call center.

**Goodwill's Training and Work Opportunities Initiative** is one of many entrepreneurial programs that have emerged out of the large, decentralized non-profit that is Goodwill Industries. Capitalizing on a nearly 100-year history of providing services to low-income individuals and those experiencing homelessness, Goodwill has expanded from its original thrift store model into a variety of other social enterprises. Goodwill's independently run network of locations cover their own costs and provide services to a range of job seekers and private employers. The original set of services was developed to support those experiencing homelessness, with revenue generated from the sale of donated items. Today that has

expanded, with, for example *Goodwill Silicon Valley* running several multi-million-dollar businesses. **TROSA**, founded in 1994 in Durham, North Carolina, supports individuals with substance abuse disorders—including veterans, people from low-income backgrounds, mental illness, and formerly incarcerated—through a phased approach to recovery and skills building. TROSA runs social enterprises in moving and storage, lawn care, a thrift store, and Christmas tree sales. The earned revenue from these social enterprises provides about 50% of total organizational costs.

**The Viscardi Center**, founded in 1952, is a network of non-profit organizations with 400 employees providing services that educate, employ, and empower people with disabilities through education, school-to-work transition services, vocational training, career counseling and placement, and workforce diversification. They provide these services for individuals and businesses.

**The Other Side Academy** runs two-year behavior change and life-skills residential programs in Utah and Colorado where students learn vocational, prosocial, and life skills so they can succeed on “the other side” of addiction and criminal behavior. The programs are available to anyone ready to overcome their barriers, including but not limited to those struggling with substance abuse, previous incarceration, and other challenges. The Other Side Academy operates a moving company to provide on-the-job training, as well as other services including vocational training, education, peer counseling and mentoring, leadership training and transitional services.

**YouthBuild** began in 1978 in New York City by training and employing youth to build and refurbish buildings. YouthBuild trains young people from low-income backgrounds in construction skills and hires them to build affordable housing and other community assets such as schools, playgrounds, and community centers. In 1992, YouthBuild gained a federal funding stream, originally through the Department of Housing and Urban Development, but is now funded primarily by the Department of Labor and provides an example of how federal funding can help ESEs scale nationally. YouthBuild is headquartered in Somerville, MA and operates 252 locations in 46 states. Today YouthBuild operates charter schools, connects youth to employers and work in over a dozen countries internationally; for example, in South Africa they train youth for jobs in the hospitality sector, in partnership with Marriott.

### Model Two – Targeted ESE

The Targeted ESE differs from the General ESE in two keyways: First, targeted ESEs focus on a narrower, or “targeted” set of participants, and second, the business model emphasizes earned revenue. As a result, Targeted ESEs are often able to carve out a niche brand identity. Frequently newer, smaller, and more commercially or market-driven, the Targeted ESE is deeply committed to a theory of change that links to its business model and target population.



Targeted ESEs work with different combinations of funding streams, with many, like Vehicles for Change, averaging about half earned revenue and half government grants and donations. Others, like ROCA, prefer not to focus on earned revenue as a core goal. Many of these organizations are small but extremely effective, and they intend to stay that way as it is the targeting, they do that allows them to have high achievement rates. As with other types of start-ups, many Targeted ESEs have significant potential to grow and scale to new locations, using their proven model. This laser-like focus is exemplified here by Vehicles for Change:

### **Targeted ESE Case Study - Vehicles for Change (VfC)**

*"We provide access to life itself." - Martin Schwartz, President*

Vehicles for Change (VfC) started as a Corporate Social Responsibility program of Precision CertiPro, an auto parts dealer interested in increasing brand recognition while giving back to the community. They initially had one goal: to provide cars at a low price to low-income families to increase access to employment and services. From here, the business model took shape: low-priced cars come in through donations, cars in good shape are tuned up and go to families in need for a reduced price of \$900, with a 6-month warranty and lifetime repairs at cost. While high end cars are sold, becoming a key source of earned revenue for the organization through VfC's first social enterprise, Freedom Wheels.<sup>16</sup>

Lack of access to transportation is one of the leading barriers to employment for low-income families, and demand for VfC cars is high. Recipients must be recommended by a partner agency who can vouch for the recipient's need and commitment. VfC finds that individual incomes can increase by as much as 70%, in the first 12 months, after they purchase their car. But the benefits are far more than economic, as kids and other family members expand opportunities for learning and afterschool activities. The program has awarded over 6,900 cars to low-income families.

Used car donations meant there were cars to check, repair and certify. VfC did 60% of this repair work in-house, while outsourcing the rest to local garages at a discount. Local repair shops were more than willing to support the program, but they struggled with a serious lack of qualified technicians. They told Vehicle for Change they would fix their cars, if VfC could find them technicians to hire. To fill this need for qualified auto technicians Full Circle Auto Repair and Training Center was born. Full Circle works primarily with men recently released from Maryland prisons, training them to be qualified auto mechanics with six of the most in-demand nationally recognized Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certifications.

VfC targets formerly incarcerated men and women to be mechanics, new trainees need experience through basic auto repair classes offered in Maryland prisons. Focusing on the formerly incarcerated provides an enormous return on investment for engaging people reentering life outside. "It costs the State of Maryland \$42k a year to keep someone incarcerated. If this program, at \$18k, keeps someone out of prison that is an immediate return, and that is just for one year. Over 10 years in prison [the state will have saved] that's almost half a million dollars per person."

However, Vehicles for Change faces a challenge that is more than just skills: "Most guys coming out of prison could not find a job even though they were trained, because they had a criminal background and no job experience. Sounds strange but they were struggling to find a job in a field that desperately needed people". VfC needed to build bridges with local employers to convince them to give these newly trained experts a chance. By training and working in a public garage, VfC interns (they are paid \$9/hr. during training) gain experience in customer service, something most training programs do not provide. After training, VfC works with auto dealers and repair shops to place trainees. "We have a 100% placement rate. Initially we had to do outreach, as there was resistance to hiring folks coming out of prison...but now we have employers coming to us all of the time with more requests for technicians than we can fill."

Nationally, 44% of prisoners are back in prison within one year of their release. At Vehicles for Change the recidivism rate is less than 2%. VfC sees their role as readying people for a middle-class career, not just a job. It is not unusual for new graduates of the program to go from an annual starting salary of \$35k to

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<sup>16</sup> <https://freedomwheels.org/>

upwards of \$80k in 2-3 years. “Most individuals returning from prison don’t want to go back. But finding employment that pays a living wage is almost impossible leaving little opportunities and many return to the only life they knew. VFC provides the opportunity they so desperately want. Once they secure that first job, they are off and running, getting back with their children, getting married and buying homes. They literally have access to life.”

An important success factor for Vfc’s social impact is the selection process of both car recipients and trainees—ensuring that when people get an opportunity through these programs, they are committed to being successful. In the first case, the car is often the last puzzle piece to getting a job after an individual has the required skills and dedication. Without those other pieces, the car will not make the difference, but for the person receiving the car it will lead directly to an improvement in their life. Similarly, Vfc works hard to place trainees where they will best fit as employees. The ASE certification program is an enormous selling point and, from an automotive standpoint, makes it clear what trainees will learn and why they need to dedicate themselves to the process for four months. Finally, their efforts lead directly to good jobs in a growing industry with good pay and career prospects.

Organizations need multiple revenue streams to create new opportunities— and it helps to have the kind of board of directors that can handle entrepreneurial risk taking. As a 503(c) non-profit Vfc says “There is nothing wrong with writing grant after grant if people are giving away money, but you need a way to self-sustain the organization and not be reliant on grant funding alone. Nonprofit doesn’t mean you can’t make a profit; it just means you can’t take it home.” Vfc has \$4.5 Million in annual revenue, of which 59% is earned through commercial means (41% from car sales, 18% from repair and training services) and 41% from state grants. “The real importance of starting a social enterprise is that it gives you financial freedom – we are always thinking about how we will generate our own revenue.”

The impacts of COVID-19 on the business were initially painful. Pre-COVID, monthly car donations averaged 180-200, while in April of 2020, there were 75. Their planned expansion to locations in Prince George’s County and the Eastern Shore of Maryland was initially put on hold. Although car donations have not returned to pre-COVID levels, Vfc has seen an increase to 150 per month as of August 2020. The expansion to Prince George’s County and the Eastern Shore of Maryland are back in progress. Garages and dealerships have returned to “normal” business and have begun to hire Vfc interns. Vfc is on a mission to raise \$20 million and launch 9 new locations in the next 3 years. Cars will always be needed for life in the United States, and shops will always require trained technicians to make repairs.

Below are further examples of organizations that fit the Targeted ESE model.

**AnnieCannons** is a cutting-edge Targeted ESE providing training in software development to survivors of human trafficking and gender-based violence. They capitalize on the high-income potential in the technology sector and see themselves as a start-up business, like others in the tech field. Based in California.

**Cara** started nearly 30 years ago with the founder driving from shelter to shelter helping the homeless find jobs. In 2005, Cara became an early example of a Model 2 ESE when it opened its first social enterprise and today Cara runs two ESEs serving 600+ people per year in Chicago.

**Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)** started off in the 1970s as a project of the Department of Justice to see whether employment programming could reduce recidivism. In the 1990s, CEO was spun off into a non-profit and became a pioneering ESE, providing vocational training and transitional work to the formerly incarcerated. CEO was originally based only in New York, but its great success has now allowed it to scale to 30 cities in 11 states.

**Chrysalis** is very similar to Cara and served as an inspiration for the development of Cara's ESEs. Chrysalis works with individuals facing significant barriers to employment, including those experiencing homelessness, those that have been involved with the criminal justice system, or those that have not participated in the workforce for a long time. Chrysalis supports them through training, case management, and transitional employment to reintegrate into the workforce. People come voluntarily, mostly through word of mouth, and participate in an initial orientation before going through a 10+ day training program and participating in transitional employment at Chrysalis' ESE. In 2019, Chrysalis served over 7,800 people, 2,500 of which found outside employment, and another 1,500 of which were employed by Chrysalis' social enterprises. Based in Los Angeles, CA.

**Dave's Killer Bread** is an exemplary Oregon based Model 2 ESE, as a family bakery that developed a social impact focus after their personal experience welcoming a son back after 15 years in prison. Today, they hire people with criminal backgrounds and started a foundation to help reverse the stigma against hiring formerly incarcerated people.

**Delancey Street** teaches the formerly incarcerated and people recovering from substance abuse to be teachers, general contractors, and truck drivers. Some Delancey Street graduates remain as employees, but the majority go to work in the community, with 100% of graduates placed in jobs. Based in San Francisco, CA.

**DC Central Kitchen** is globally recognized and widely replicated as the model of the business-driven "social enterprise". Founded in 1996, in Washington, DC by a young nightclub manager named Robert Egger, DC Central Kitchen creates economic opportunities for adults who face barriers to employment, such as formerly incarcerated individuals, through culinary job training. Dozens of graduates are hired to prepare the 3 million meals they provide for homeless shelters, schools, and nonprofits each year. "We are in business to put ourselves out of business, the point is to get people to where they no longer need our help." said CEO Mike Curtin.

**Firebrand Artisan Breads** is a mission-based and public service-oriented company founded in 2008 in West Oakland, CA. They sell their hearth breads wholesale to grocery stores including Whole Foods and over 200 recurring clients. They hire formerly incarcerated or those experiencing homelessness and donate approximately 250K worth of products every year to homeless shelters, at-risk youth groups, women's shelters and more.

**HopeWorks** was organized in 1999 by members of three churches in North Camden, NJ with the goal of offering training to high school dropouts. It is an example of a Targeted ESE that is deeply committed to its theory of change. At the beginning of the program there were successful youth, but many more dropped out, did not complete the training or were not successful in internships. Thus, HopeWorks transformed to become a certified Sanctuary organization to better address unresolved traumatic issues in youth lives so they can take full advantage of opportunities in their lives.

**Juma Ventures** is a great example of a Model 2 ESE that has scaled up its operation. Juma Ventures runs a social enterprise selling concessions at sports and entertainment venues across the country, employing youth from underserved communities. Juma Ventures has 20+ social enterprise operations serving nearly 1,000 low-income youth annually in six cities — Atlanta, Houston, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Jose, and Seattle

**The Knowledge House** is a social change organization located in Bronx, NY. The Knowledge House serves at-risk young adults, 16-24 years of age, with tech-entrepreneurship training, job readiness and career support so that they may develop professionally and launch careers or ventures to uplift their communities. The knowledge House has served 1,750+ youth & young adults to date, has an 85% graduation rate across programs and 3 out of 4 of graduates secured employment.

**More Than Words** is a nonprofit social enterprise in Boston, MA that operates both a retail storefront and an e-commerce bookstore since 2004. It employs youth who are in the foster care system, court involved, homeless or out of school in the book warehouse and empowers them to take charge of their lives by taking charge of a business, with a special emphasis on reconnecting youth to education by supporting GED attainment, enrollment in community college, and identification of long-term career goals. They also work a second paying “YOU” job, attend workshops and site visits and receiving focused support to ensure they persist in school and map plans for their future. 93% of More than Words graduates are on track to earn a High School Diploma or equivalent, and 83% are working.

**New Moms** provides job training and employment in candle-making for young mothers. They address the whole mental paradigm of women during a narrow window of opportunity for critical brain development that they have identified, shortly after the baby is born, when women’s provider instinct brings a strong motivation for new beginnings. New Moms is based in Chicago.

**Pioneer Human Services** is a nonprofit social enterprise in Washington state that serves formerly incarcerated individuals, and those in recovery, who need treatment, housing, job skills training and employment by providing on-the-job training and work experience. Since opening as a single halfway house in November 1963, Pioneer Human Services has expanded to nearly 60 programs across the State. Their manufacturing enterprise, Pioneer Industries manufactures for the aerospace and commercial industries. They hire qualified graduates from the job readiness training course and occupational training programs. Moreover, Pioneer Human Services employer outreach specialists call on employers to consider hiring some of their skilled graduates. Over 62% of the employees in the three manufacturing plants have a criminal history or are in recovery.

**ROCA**, working in Maryland and Massachusetts, is one of the earliest grantees of the venture philanthropy pioneer the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation. ROCA works with young males with a history of violence and gang activity. ROCA has been a pioneer in using cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) to help their participants overcome past experiences. Traditionally, psychological treatments took years of therapy to identify and address the underlying problems. By identifying and actively avoiding “cognitive distortions” (thought patterns that tend to cause distress), people learn to break feedback loops leading to negative emotions. ROCA has been vocal about the dangers of overemphasizing earned revenues, given the needs of its target population. Managers stated that while their transitional employment program covers some of its costs, additional services are likely to always require outside funding.

**CREDMADE**, in 2016, Arne Duncan founded Chicago CRED in partnership with Emerson Collective. On the workforce development front, CRED has tutored and supported over 100 new high school graduates and 250 work placements. The Chicago CRED team realized there was a need for more high-paying jobs that matched the skills of CRED graduates, so one of the team members, Rahul Pasarnikar, launched CREDMADE, a contract packaging company located on the city’s South Side with a social mission to end the cycle of poverty, crime, and violence in Chicago. It offers services such as high-speed packaging, custom hand packing, warehousing, and fulfillment. The company focuses on dry goods, snacks, and confections.

### **Model Three – Connector ESE**

Connector ESEs place people in jobs. They provide a bridge between potential employees who face barriers to finding employment and businesses that need people or want to practice more inclusive hiring or purchasing. What distinguishes “Connector” ESEs from the others is the role they play in connecting labor supply and demand, whether by helping opportunity youth find jobs, linking people with disabilities to employment opportunities, supporting immigrants in English-speaking workplaces, or delivering

psychosocial counseling to employees who have suffered traumatic events. Connector ESEs respond to employer needs for new sources of talent and a more diversified workforce.


## Employment Social Enterprise

## Model 3 CONNECTOR

 Mostly earned revenue

 Bridge social needs and corporate demand for diverse talent

 Based on client need

 Staffing, back-office services, and supply chain services

Many connector ESEs effectively provide larger employers with a robust talent pipeline and sustainable supply chain solutions so that people facing barriers can be hired at scale. In addition to individual initiatives, Connector ESEs also serve as platforms for collaboration across public service providers, ESEs, and employers. One example is the Western Mass Employment Collaborative that partners with employment service providers, state

government agencies, workforce development entities, and employers to help individuals with disabilities find employment opportunities. The case study below focuses on an established Connector ESE - Year Up.

### Connector ESE Case Study - Year Up

The mission of the organization, founded in 2000 by Gerald Chertavian, is to close the Opportunity Gap in the United States. Year Up prepares “Opportunity Youth,” young people between the ages of 18 and 26 with a high school degree or equivalent who are out of work and out of school, to join the workforce. Year Up’s youth population often intersects with other population groups profiled in this report, such as youth who have been formerly incarcerated, low-income backgrounds, veterans, and immigrants. Year Up estimated prior to COVID-19 that there were 5 million such young people and 12 million open jobs. They have served over 29,000 young adults so far—“not enough!” Chertavian says—and they are growing fast.

Year Up’s model was inspired by Chertavian’s experience with an urban Big Brother program where he saw the difference that a caring adult, a trusting environment, and a tangible opportunity can make in a person’s life. Changing the narrative for young people is critical—the program has high expectations of participants, and they provide the high support needed to succeed.

Participants in Year Up programs, operating in 35 campuses nationwide, learn in-demand technical and professional skills, are connected to employers for internships, and earn college credits via agreements with local college partners. In addition to training and job placement, the program offers counseling services and mentorship opportunities. On the flip side, the program meets employer needs for skilled and motivated entry-level workers. Demand for workers with some postsecondary education but less than a four-year degree is growing in many technical fields. By expanding investments in postsecondary education for low-income young adults, Year Up believes that opportunities can expand in tandem with skill development, and this fosters economic growth. And they are having impact—90% of Year Up graduates are employed and/or enrolled in postsecondary education within four months of completing the program, earning average starting salaries of \$42,000 (Year Up 2020).

About 60% of Year Up’s overall operating revenue is borne by employers who gain access to a diverse pipeline of career-ready talent that adds value to their organization. Partners make a strategic investment in Year Up commensurate with entry-level talent costs—around \$27,500 per intern. Thus, initiatives to expand Year Up delivery with taxpayer or philanthropic funds could reasonably expect substantial co-funding by local employers.

A randomized controlled trial showed that on average, Year Up participants earned \$7,100 from their Year Up stipend during the program, netting about \$1,800 more in earnings than the control group during the year. The post-program earnings gains are significant; Year Up earnings impacts are the largest reported to date for workforce programs tested using a randomized control trial design, with treatment group members earning 40% higher than control group members two full years after graduation (Fein, D. and Hamadyk, J. 2018).

Year Up is committed to effective impact measurement. Randomized controlled trials conducted at eight Year Up sites found that the program has substantial effects on earnings, generalized across diverse settings and subpopulations. The findings provide a convincing response to concerns that what works in one setting may say little about what will work in others. Assessments of the potential societal benefits are considerable as well. One set of simulations for the general US population shows economic returns from averting disconnection of around \$600,000 per person (Belfield et al. 2012).

Below are further examples of organizations that fit the Connector ESE model.

**AbilityOne** is a national employment program that provides employment opportunities for people who are blind or who have other significant disabilities. It has been administered by the U.S. AbilityOne Commission, an independent federal agency since 1938. The Commission has designated National Industries for the Blind, SourceAmerica and the American Foundation for the Blind as the central nonprofit agencies facilitating the program. AbilityOne leverages a national network of more than 600 nonprofit agencies that employ more than 40,000 disabled people including approximately 3,000 veterans.

**Entrada ESL** is a perfect example of a Connector ESE that works with companies to bridge the employment gap. Employers face challenges retaining and engaging non-English speaking staff due to insufficient communication, while immigrants and refugees lack the time, funds, and resources to learn English independently. Entrada ESL's mobile, psychology-based language training platform allows front-line employees to learn English as they work to improve their career prospects while providing added value to employers. Entrada ESL works with client companies each bringing between 10-500 learners to the platform. In their most recent round of trials, 96% of people who started the program were still using it on day 100 (average for the language industry is 15%) and graduates are equipped to ask and answer questions in the past, present, and future tenses.

**First Step Staffing** is an alternative staffing agency founded in 2007 in Atlanta with the goal of helping individuals achieve the first step towards economic self-sufficiency. This ESE places people into temporary and temp-to-hire positions with several local businesses and social benefit programs; including people coming out of homelessness, veterans, and previously incarcerated citizens. First Step Staffing also offers support such as job coaching and transportation to help individuals get and retain jobs. It is the largest non-profit staffing agency for those experiencing homelessness in the United States, connecting thousands to employment each year.

**Goodwill Temp Agencies** is an example of a Connector ESE that grew out of a General ESE, the nationally decentralized Goodwill Industries. *Goodwill North Florida* has established a temp agency that places homeless and formerly incarcerated individuals with local employers. The temp agency covers its own costs and the director, who came from the private sector, has been working to share the systems she has developed with interested Goodwill offices throughout the country (Goodwill 2020).



**Greyston Bakery Corporate Placement Division**, in Yonkers, New York, has grown from a bakery with a long time “no questions asked” hiring policy into an ESE providing multiple services. Now they have added a consulting service to spread their inclusive hiring model.

**National Disability Institute (NDI)** is the first national organization exclusively focused on the financial viability and well-being of people with disabilities. NDI embraces a unique and evolving approach to change behavior and policy at local, state, and national level. National Disability Institute offers technical assistance to the public workforce system in all 50 states and U.S. territories through several collaborative projects to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in workforce services.

**National Organization on Disability (NOD)** is a pioneering example of a Connector ESE for people with disabilities. In partnership with Lowes, 450 workers with disabilities have been hired through NOD and they now work with many other companies including Toys R Us, Starbucks, Kroeger, Giant Eagle, REI, and Footlocker. Today they are expanding into campus recruiting, through their “Campus to Career” program and continuing to build “Bridges to Business” for people with disabilities.

**Project Return**, founded in 1979 by two visionary leaders in Nashville, TN, is dedicated to the successful re-entry of people who return to their community after incarceration by providing the resources and services needed to gain employment and build full and free lives. Project Return Opportunities for Employment (PROe) bridges the gap between incarceration and employment running a temporary recruitment service. Over 80% of PROe’s participants succeed in getting employment. In fact, out of 694 people who started with Project Return in 2019, 578 have found employment. This is the opposite of the norm, in which up to 70% of people are unemployed during the first year after their incarceration.

**Source America** is headquartered in Vienna; VA is one of AbilityOne’s designated central nonprofit agencies. As a central connector agency, Source America supports nonprofit agencies in growing their businesses and creating employment opportunities for people with disabilities through increased access to new customers. It provides nonprofit agencies with the tools and guidance to strengthen their business, grow capabilities for people with disabilities and deliver for customers. There are nearly 85,000 people with disabilities employed throughout the SourceAmerica/AbilityOne network.

**Viability:** A non-profit working with Walgreens, Sephora, PetCo, Archer Daniels Midland, Pactiv (Part of Reynolds) and Proctor and Gamble, Viability trains persons with disabilities prior to their placement in jobs. This Connector ESE is part of a “collaborative” established in Western Massachusetts to bring together public service agencies, employers, and social enterprises. Members of the collaborative meet weekly and exchange notes on available jobs, skill needs and the talent pipeline.

**Mile High Workshop:** began as a program of Mile High Ministries, which functioned as an "incubator" for a variety of in-house employment social enterprises. Originally conceived by Andy Magel in 2014 and located in Denver, Colorado, Mile High Workshop progressed from launching social enterprises to partnering with businesses engaging in social procurement to employ men and women rebuilding from incarceration, addiction and/or homelessness. The shop is an ESE that scaled its operations by training and providing employment services that easily integrate in the supply chain. It provides manufacturing services to its business partners in the areas of sewing, woodworking, laser engraving/cutting, and hand assembly. They create retail packaging for Charlotte's Web Hemp; sew and stuff pillows for Infinite Moon and recycle marketing banners into bags for companies like Vans, Adobe, and Adidas. Due to the diversity of its services and clients, Mile High Workshop can train its employees in a multitude of skills, making them highly competitive candidates for the labor market.

## Model Four – Corporate ESEs

The Corporate ESE model includes employment social enterprises embedded in larger for-profit companies, as well as stand-alone programs created by - and receiving direct financial support from - large employers. Corporate ESE programs involve more than a traditional human resource function, by explicitly ensuring that employees have access to tailored services. Programs classified as Corporate ESEs do not just hire people from vulnerable populations; they provide support to ensure they succeed.

Employment  
Social Enterprise

Model 4  
CORPORATE



All earned revenue



Corporate demand  
for diverse talent



Based on need  
for skills



Staffing and supplier  
diversification

Taking a historical perspective, we can trace the evolution of corporate philanthropy typified by support for the arts, into corporate social responsibility - often associated with supporting local communities, into shared value which is a merging of social responsibility programs with the business's core competency to achieve greater scale, impact, and financial viability. Today this narrative is evolving further as more companies establish internal social enterprise functions.

Traditional corporate philanthropy in the 1990s and early 2000s was dominated by “diffuse and unfocused” approaches, such as Philip Morris’ \$75 million charitable donations in 1999 supported by a \$100 million campaign to publicize them (Porter 2002). Citi Foundation’s early support for microfinance, and their more recent Pathways to Progress initiative illustrate more focused approaches—the latter channeled \$100 million to organizations providing 500,000 youth with on-ramps to career pathways from 2017-2020 (Citi Group 2020).

Corporate inclusive hiring initiatives, including targets for specific underrepresented populations or removing features on job application that might be inequitable barriers, originated during the Civil Rights movement and soon expanded in scope. The Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), the Jobs for Veterans Act (2002) and a recent wave of legislation to address issues related to hiring the formerly incarcerated has increased awareness and created the expectation that employers should be doing something. Among the most common inclusive hiring initiatives in the corporate world today are those that focus on people with disabilities and veterans. Grant Thornton’s “Veterans at Grant Thornton & Allies” and “Diverse Abilities at Grant Thornton & Allies” initiatives provide typical examples of such inclusive hiring endeavors.

The Corporate ESE examples highlighted below demonstrate how companies of all shapes and sizes have successfully integrated employment social enterprise activities into their business models. Given the current social climate, this model is likely to see significant expansion as more companies recognize the need to ensure they are using inclusive hiring practices. Now is clearly the time to leverage employer commitments to diversity hiring, as human resource teams are encouraged to innovate and partner to achieve diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) goals. Companies also benefit from creating or supporting ESEs as strong, diverse teams have higher productivity and lower turnover. In addition to the obvious contribution through hiring, large employer participation holds the potential to catalyze innovation and increase awareness of the role of ESEs in addressing systemic employment challenges.

### **Corporate ESE Case Study – Salesforce/Vetforce**

*“Ethos is hard to teach—and vets bring to the workforce tremendous integrity, grit, judgment and leadership. All values that make Salesforce employees successful.” - Sam Allen, COO, Corporate Marketing at Salesforce, US Marine Corps Veteran (Trailhead 2020)*

Salesforce is a global leader in Customer Relationship Management (CRM)—a subscription-based cloud computing service. In 2014 Salesforce founded Vetforce to build their internal pipeline of Salesforce specialists by providing technical training to veterans, military service members and their spouses. Vetforce uses a learn, earn, and connect framework that is aimed at helping veterans obtain everything they need to be employed. Moreover, it provides a continued network of graduates and professionals in the Salesforce ecosystem they can stay connected to throughout their careers. Salesforce-Vetforce is a classic example of a corporate social enterprise supporting a population facing barriers to employment through funding, training, and jobs.

To date the Vetforce program is one third of the way to its goal of training 35,000 military, veterans, and their spouses in Salesforce skills by 2021. What is more, in 2019 Salesforce signed the White House Pledge to America's Workers, committing to training 500,000 Americans in the skills they need to get jobs in the next five years. To expand the employment opportunities for Vetforce graduates and accelerate the hiring of veterans and military spouses for the Salesforce ecosystem, Salesforce has since started the Vetforce Alliance, a consortium of 25 companies including Accenture, Prudential, RoyCon Technologies, and Deloitte. Members of the alliance commit to recruit Vetforce graduates, conduct job interviews for all military participants who complete the Salesforce Vetforce program and/or offer upskilling opportunities to veterans or military spouse employees through the Vetforce Program.

“Veterans make great employees,” said retired Army Maj. Gen. George Franz, who is now the Managing Director and Defense Cybersecurity Lead for Accenture Federal Services. “Transitioning veterans have an incredible work ethic and an innate desire to work together to accomplish a mission. Teaching them the new technical skills they need to be an asset to our company is essentially a win-win. In reality, they never stop serving; they’re just contributing in a different way (Howe 2019).”

One of the first corporate partners in the Alliance is Simplus, a Salesforce consulting company. “So much has changed for me since I began my journey at Simplus...I became 3X Salesforce certified, was promoted after six months, and now helped lead the Veteran Initiative and partnership with Salesforce Military. I’ve now been chosen by Salesforce Military to receive a full sponsorship to Dreamforce ’19 [the largest software conference in the world]. I plan on using this trip to strategically strengthen the Simplus/Salesforce Military partnership as well as give back to the Salesforce ecosystem in any way I can (Simplus 2019).”

A major success factor identified by Salesforce is the preparation of a highly qualified management team for the Vetforce program, to oversee case management, program management, planning, and mentoring. This comes with its own challenges. Many vets bring management experience from the military but need to adjust their approaches to the civilian setting where there is much less uniformity in backgrounds and credentials. Salesforce promotes the use of equity, as opposed to an equality lens in training—recognizing the unique aspects of each individual and orienting training and employment opportunities to their strengths.

As a customer relationship management (CRM) company, Salesforce is able to fund Vetforce internally and through partnerships with other corporate actors. Their main revenue generator is a subscription-based cloud service sold in America, Europe, and the Asia Pacific. 92% of revenues come from CRM

services, with the remaining in professional services and fees associated with consulting, implementation services and training. In 2017 the company generated \$8.39 billion in revenues (Cuofano 2018).

Bank of America (a sponsor of this report) offers an example of an Embedded ESE that focuses on a different population group: Persons with disabilities.

**Bank of America Support Services** has been a pioneer among corporate ESEs. Founded in 1990 and now in its 30th year, Bank of America's Support Services division is an in-house operations support and fulfillment group staffed by over 300 individuals with varying levels of developmental disabilities. Employees earn competitive wages and full benefits. Since it was founded, under the leadership of BofA Vice Chairman, Anne Finucane, Support Services has expanded from a small shop focused primarily on making t-shirts and posters to a full corporate division based in four cities (Newark, Delaware; Boston, Massachusetts; Belfast, Maine, and Dallas, Texas). Through their work in Support Services, many employees have become financially independent, been promoted and some have transitioned to other roles within Bank of America (BOA).

*"The quality of work that goes out the door sets us apart from everyone else." - Mark Feinour, Executive Director of BofA Support Services*

Today, Support Services staff play a vital role in the day-to-day operations of BOA, including order fulfillment, graphic arts/printing, and inventory management. As Executive Director Mark Feinour said, "when we started Support Services, we did it because it was the right thing to do for our community. But as we grew, we began to run Support Services as an actual business unit, focused on efficiency and productivity. Because we are so productive, we are now competitive with third party providers despite our higher costs. Our team excels at attention detail, providing significant intangible benefits compared to competitors, catching mistakes which otherwise may have slipped by."

BofA Support Services is an early model for other corporate ESEs to emulate, demonstrating the financial and intangible benefits of inclusive hiring for people with barriers to employment. An integral part of Support Services model has been partnerships with ESEs who provide a talent pipeline and act as a liaison between BofA and the families of employees to ensure they receive the necessary support outside the workplace. Support Services shares their experience with other companies who want to start similar programs by providing trainings and insight on best practices. As Mark Feinour says, "We tell them to steal shamelessly from us."

Below are further examples that represent the Corporate ESE model.

**Johnson & Johnson's Bridge to Employment.** Run by FHI 360, Bridge to Employment is one of Johnson & Johnson's signature initiatives. Launched in New Brunswick, New Jersey in 1992, BTE is a youth development program that has reached at-risk students in more than 80 communities in 19 countries around the world. In each community, the program serves 35 to 50 students in their last three years of secondary school and offers progressively intensive program activities that combines academic preparedness with career readiness in Johnson & Johnson and partner business locations. Starting locally, Bridge to Employment has been able to scale internationally across locations where J&J and their partners operate.

**JP Morgan Chase** has announced that 10% of their hires in 2018, or 2,100 people, had criminal records, while other corporations such as Koch Industries, McDonalds, Target, and Delta have committed to "ban the box" rule changes and post-incarceration "blank slates" policies (Forbes 2019).

**Nehemiah Manufacturing Co.**, a for-profit manufacturer that has been in business since 2009, is an example of a model 4 ESE that focuses specifically on hiring people experiencing barriers to employment. Since its inception, Nehemiah has practiced what they call second chance hiring of hard-to-hire and formerly incarcerated individuals and provides a social support team to help their employees succeed. Located in Cincinnati, OH, more than 80% of the company's workforce are second-chance employees.

**Slack Technologies**, a communication platform software developer, launched their **Next Chapter** program in 2019 in partnership with the social enterprise, Last Mile, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and John Legend's Organization FREEAMERICA. This consortium is developing a blueprint to provide formerly incarcerated people with the opportunity to start careers in technology. Participants are hired as full-time Slack employees and the program pilot is preparing to scale.

**Target** corporation partners with Twin Cities RISE (TCR) in Minneapolis, St. Paul to help people from low-income backgrounds get the training necessary to receive full time employment at Target Service Centers, providing participants with one-on-one support through their first year of employment.

**Televerde** helps B2B companies, including SAP and Adobe, to generate sales leads and for the last 25 years has been working with incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women through partnerships with the State Corrections departments in Arizona, Indiana, and Florida. Televerde employs over 3,000 incarcerated women through this program, providing education, work-based learning, training in sales and marketing, business, IT, and in-demand marketing technologies such as Salesforce. 25% of graduates continue to work for Televerde after being released from prison and recidivism of Televerde graduates is 91% lower than the national rates for females released from state prison.

**Walgreens Company**, founded in 1909, launched its Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative (REDI) in 2012 to recruit, train and hire people with disabilities to work in Walgreens's retail pharmacies. In 2014 the company became *Walgreens Boots Alliance*, which expanded REDI—by 2018 REDI partnerships with publicly funded community providers helped the program expand to more than 220 stores in 34 states, benefitting more than 1,600 people.

### **Other Corporate Initiatives that Promote Inclusive Hiring**

In addition to programs that are embedded within a specific business, there are also initiatives that operate across companies, providing platforms for corporate and philanthropic collaboration, actively working to reduce barriers to employment for vulnerable populations:

**Delivering Jobs** is a partnership led by Autism Speaks, Best Buddies International and Special Olympics with 5,000 corporate members such as SunTrust Bank and Bloomingdales. The goal is to create pathways to one million employment and leadership opportunities for people with IEP disabilities by 2025 (Autism Speaks 2020).

**The Valuable 500**, as of 2020, is halfway to their goal of recruiting 500 national and multinational corporations, including Accenture, Adobe, IBM and Mastercard, to promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

**Bloomberg** has been piloting apprenticeship programs around the country, in partnership with local employment social enterprises such as Career Wise Colorado, YouthForce NOLA, and Delaware Pathways (Bloomberg 2020).

**The 100,000 Opportunities Initiative** is a coalition of more than 50 companies, including Chipotle, FedEx, Starbucks, and Target, and more than 300 community organizations – is activating community-to-

corporate talent pipelines. They have already exceeded their original hiring goal by 200% and set a new goal of hiring 1 million opportunity youth by 2021 (100k 2020).

**The Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF)** sponsor **Onward to Opportunity**, bringing together 130 corporate partners such as Accenture, Amazon, Hewlett-Packard, Marriott, Oracle, and Starbucks, to train, hire and mentor veterans with the support of a transition specialist from Hire Heroes USA (HHUSA). IVMF also sponsors the **Coalition for Veteran Owned Business**, providing growth opportunities for 2.5 million veteran and military spouse-owned businesses, through supply chain linkages with partners including American Express, Bank of America, Blackstone, BP America, Enterprise Holdings, Fiserv, Fleishman Hillard, Johnson & Johnson, JPMorgan Chase & Co., KKR, Lockheed Martin, SunTrust Banks, USAA, US Small Business Administration (SBA), US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Verizon, Walmart, Walt Disney and Wyndham.

**The Tent Foundation** is leading the field in revising employers' outlook on the potential benefits of immigrant and refugee workers. The Tent Partnership for Refugees (founded in 2016) supports corporate partners including Airbnb, KPMG, LinkedIn, MasterCard, Twitter, and Western Union to identify ways to engage immigrants and refugees, as well as highlighting the market potential in consumer demand for brands that support refugees (Erdem 2019).

A photograph of a person walking past a closed storefront in the snow. The person is wearing a teal jacket, dark pants, and a backpack. The storefront has a yellow roll-up door and a sign for 'Body Oils'. The text 'MAKING THE AMERICAN DREAM HAPPEN' is overlaid on the image in white and yellow letters.

MAKING  
THE  
AMERICAN  
DREAM HAPPEN

**PART 5: MEASURING IMPACT**

## 5. Measuring Impact

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We asked ESE leaders how they measure success and identified four indicators that are nearly universal across all four models featured in this study. High-performing ESEs define success by tracking whether the individuals they have served have remained employed and been able to increase their income. They also measure outreach (i.e., the number of people they served) and financial sustainability (at a minimum, revenues and percent of costs covered). Expressed as indicators these are:

- 1) Sustained employment,
- 2) Increase in individual income,
- 3) Number of individuals served, and
- 4) Financial sustainability of the organization.

While most ESEs also track additional measures at the individual, organizational and workforce system levels, it is these four measures that are central to the mission of an ESE. Detail on each is provided below.

### **Sustained Employment**

Sustained employment is the most common measure of success used by ESEs and funders alike. Typically defined as employment maintained over time, often one year but not for less than 90 calendar days following the employment start or services received. Evidence suggests that ESE programs have been successful in having workers gain experience, with sustained employment and greater self-sufficiency (Mathematica 2015). One outcomes study indicated that a year after their ESE jobs began, 51% of social enterprise workers were employed, representing a 33-percentage point increase in employment (Rotz et al 2015). In addition, social enterprise workers were 36% more likely to be employed one year after starting the social enterprise job than before starting it (Maxwell & Rotz 2015). The data from an in-depth survey of high-performing ESEs conducted by our team is consistent with those results as 50% of the surveyed ESEs estimated that one year after completing the ESE program, over 75% of the participants were employed. Looking at public employment programs, a review conducted by MDRC in 2020<sup>17</sup> analyzed a sample of 13 federal government transitional jobs programs. Twelve of the 13 programs evaluated improved employment in the year after study enrollment, and in many cases the impacts were quite large (Cummings et al 2020).

### **Increased Income**

For ESE workers who remain employed for substantial periods of time, income gains can be significant. One study tracked income levels for social enterprise workers one year after their jobs began, where a year after program completion, average income increased from \$216 to \$777 and total monthly income was 91% higher (from \$653 to \$1,246). In addition, the provision of post-employment support was associated with increases in total monthly income (Mathematica 2015). REDF analyzed ESE participant wages on a long-term basis, and the results showed that 2 to 8 years after ESE employment, wages continue to trend upward (REDF 2018). The study showed that while transitional employees started at the bottom 25th percentile of the wage bracket, over time these cohorts approached the median wage (50th percentile) of California wage-earning populations (effectively doubling their wages).<sup>18</sup> Government

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<sup>17</sup> Cummings, Danielle, and Dan Bloom. 2020. Can Subsidized Employment Programs Help Disadvantaged Job Seekers? A Synthesis of Findings from Evaluations of 13 Programs. OPRE Report 2020-23. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

<sup>18</sup> Caveat: REDF could not establish a causal link since there was no control group. Also, data is from experiences in only one state.



programs that include transitional employment, some of which work with ESEs as contractors, have also shown significantly increased earnings beyond the first year (Cummings et al 2020). Of the 13 public programs that were studied, 10 programs demonstrated increased earnings in the first year of the follow-up period and 5 increased earnings in the second year of the follow-up period.

### **Number of Individuals Served**

There is not an exact figure available for the total number of individuals served by ESEs in the United States, and the number of participants served per each ESE or public transitional jobs program varies widely depending on the model or program. REDF estimates that, nationwide, ESEs generate over \$1 billion in earned revenue and employ 56,000 people each year (Simoneaux 2019). Data collected through the survey for this report shows that some ESEs employ less than ten people while one employs more than 24,000. For government-run transitional employment programs, unpublished work by the Georgetown Center on Poverty & Inequality, based on 22 program evaluations, shows the average number of program participants as 2,514, with programs ranging widely in size between 125 to over 25,000 participants. However, these numbers only capture a portion of the ESEs operating in the United States and a rough estimation shows that even the broad spectrum of ESEs currently in operation have capacity to cover no more than 10% of people excluded from work, based on the six target populations covered in this report.

### **Financial Viability and Sustainability**

Employment social enterprises operate across a range of sectors and industries. Business activities include the production and sales of education and training services; retail or thrift shops selling donated or sustainably produced goods; consulting services; food services and catering; arts ventures; consumer goods; environmental services; cleaning and maintenance, and office administration (Social Enterprise Alliance 2015; Simoneaux 2019). Social Enterprises are also becoming more active in new opportunities in the technology sector, through direct provision of IT services, such as coding and call centers, and use of IT to deliver other services.

While all ESEs engage in some type of activity that earns revenue, the extent to which these revenues cover costs varies. Social enterprise experts agree that while the basic transitional employment costs can be covered by earned revenue, additional wrap-around services such as counseling, behavioral coaching, and other supports often require philanthropic or public subsidy. Based on our survey research, ESEs previous year revenues ranged from \$300,000 to approximately \$20 million.<sup>19</sup> All of the high-performing ESEs surveyed finance operations at least partially through revenues. Many ESEs profiled in this report earned revenues that account for 50% to 75% of total revenues; several ESEs earned revenues accounted for 76% to 100% of all revenues - as is the case for Silicon Valley Goodwill. Some of the ESEs profiled in this report operate as traditional commercial businesses: Dave's Killer Bread is a for profit business based in Oregon with a commitment to "second chances" and more than one-third of the company's employees are formerly incarcerated. The company was so successful that during 2015 it was acquired by a bigger company for a total of \$275 million.

When ESEs provide services that require a financial subsidy, public value is created. Studies show that for each dollar spent by social enterprises there is a \$1.34-\$2.23 return on investment at the societal level—due in part to reduced government spending (Mathematica 2015). One estimate shows taxpayers gaining \$13,250 from each social enterprise job created, and most of these gains come from reductions in criminal

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<sup>19</sup> We selected a group of high-performing ESEs and asked them to participate in a survey in order to obtain financial and employment data.

activity (\$10,126) (Maxwell & Rotz 2015). Quality of life benefits are also generated by ESEs, such as improved health and decreased substance abuse, which further reduce public costs.

### **Other Measures of Impact**

Considering the vast array of business models, industries and target populations served, many ESEs employ additional measures to track effectiveness which extend beyond the four indicators explored above. These indicators include more granular measures of income; proxies for well-being such as housing or health care access, and measures of skills development and attitudinal shifts.

- Hourly wage growth. AnnieCannons tracks monthly income and average hourly wage growth over time in conjunction with participant satisfaction and overall sense of economic security. This allows them to track progress by a measure directly linked to participants' skill development, and individual work schedules and earning goals.
- Behavior change progress. ROCA tracks behavior change progress during the first eighteen months of an employee's program cycle, rather than only focusing on end employment outcomes.
- Attitude shifts. The Women's Bean Project has developed a scale to measure levels of hope and other attitudes among its employees.
- Housing and other non-workplace factors. Cara tracks factors such as housing stability, which gives insights into challenges employees are facing outside of work that can impact job performance and stamina. Vehicles for Change measures progress on overcoming challenges outside of the workplace such as reliable transportation, that are not directly related to getting hired but essential for continued employment in the United States.
- Skills acquisition. New Moms supports young women experiencing poverty and focuses on developing the ability to be aware of key challenges and how to mitigate them. New Moms believes that soft skills are important on the job, but also outside of the workplace.
- Recidivism. The Other Side Academy, an ESE that works with opportunity youth -including formerly incarcerated young people- uses a wide range of measures to assess effectiveness, including recidivism, housing stability, behavioral change, and others.
- Mental, physical, and emotional health. Dog Tag Bakery, which runs a five-month fellowship program for veterans with service-connected disabilities, military spouses, and caregivers, considers a variety of indicators, including mental and emotional health indicators, to track progress and evaluate impact. Dog Tag uses certain well-being outcomes to assess sense of purpose, genuine relationships, personal growth, and self-acceptance.

It is important to note that ESE employees and program participants can experience negative as well as positive changes as a result of their employment. While employees achieve measurable progress in gaining skills, earning more income and other benefits associated with employment, work can also add additional stress. For some, this results in increased hopelessness or negativity. One study of ESE workers found that many reported a decline in health and fewer reported feeling optimistic about the future after one year of employment (Mathematica 2015). However, the provision of additional support can mitigate these negative effects. Employees receiving pre- or post-employment support (or both) were associated with an increase in the likelihood of housing stability, increase in total monthly income, and a medium to large decrease in the depression index one year after the SE job began (Mathematica 2015). Table 11 below summarizes key evidence of ESE impact.

## 11. Findings on ESE Impact

Impact	Findings
Sustained employment	<p>A survey of 14 high-performing ESEs conducted for this report were asked the same question about sustained employment. All respondents reported that more than 50% of workers were still employed after one year, and half reported that more than 75% were still employed after one year (Business for Impact 2020).</p> <p>Findings from a study of 8 ESEs indicate that 51% of ESE workers were employed after one year of entering the program, representing a 33-percentage point increase in employment (Rotz et al 2015).</p> <p>A study of 13 federal government transitional jobs programs shows that 12 of the 13 evaluated improved employment in the year after enrollment, in some cases by a very large amount (Cummings et al 2020).</p>
Economic mobility	<p>An outcomes study tracked income levels for ESE workers and found that one year after completion, total monthly incomes increased by 91% on average (Mathematica 2015).</p> <p>REDF analyzed ESE participant wages for several of ESEs in California on a long-term basis and showed that 2 to 8 years after ESE employment, wages continue to trend upward with workers moving from the bottom 25th percentile of the wage bracket to the 50th percentile (REDF 2018).</p> <p>The same study of 13 federal government transitional jobs programs, mentioned above, shows significantly increased earnings over the next two years after graduating the program (Cummings et al 2020).</p>
Reduced recidivism	<p>While no systematic study has been done, research for this report found that ESEs which serve the formerly incarcerated have far lower recidivism rates than their state average (Business for Impact 2020):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CEO (nationally in 11 states) reports 26% recidivism compared to the national rate of 43% (CEO 2016).</li> <li>● Homeboy Industries (Los Angeles) reports a 30% recidivism rate compared to the state average of 70% (Business for Impact interview 2020).</li> <li>● RecycleForce (Indiana) reports 26% recidivism compared to 54% statewide (SEA 2018).</li> <li>● ROCA (Massachusetts) reports a 33% recidivism rate compared to a state average of 56% in Massachusetts, despite working only with the highest risk youth (ROCA 2019).</li> <li>● TROSA (North Carolina) reports only 5% of graduates have a new conviction compared to a state recidivism rate of 40% (Business for Impact interview 2020).</li> </ul>

### Measuring Impact at Scale

Employment social enterprises (ESEs) deliver economic security and mobility for individual participants, and a significant rate of return to society at large. The challenge for the ESE movement is achieving impact at scale. Based on our estimates, 25 to 37 million people across the six population groups profiled in this study could benefit from ESE employment. Yet only a fraction – approximately 10% currently have access to ESE job opportunities. The small scale of most ESEs presents limitations to achieving results for the millions of potentially employable people who face barriers to work, even in the best economic times.

There are, however, promising developments in the field, including specialization and innovation by Targeted ESEs; increased hiring by Corporate ESEs at national and global scales, and more effective collaboration across sectors facilitated by Connector ESEs. Finally, the size and outreach achieved by some pioneering General ESEs, such as Goodwill and Youth Build, counter the notion that ESEs can only operate at a small scale. The challenge for the field is how to expand access to ESE jobs and services— whether with General, Targeted, Connector or Corporate models – so that a higher percentage of the people represented in the population groups profiled in this report can achieve upward economic mobility.

Other areas related to economic impact for people who face barriers to employment require further research, especially for those who are working in an ESE or through a transitional work program. An important measure for some ESEs might be the number of permanent jobs created. Many ESEs, such as Humanim in Baltimore, not only have transitional work programs, but also create a significant number of permanent jobs through their social enterprises. Another area for research might be the impact of ESEs on labor productivity. It has been noted by many economists that an important part of total factor productivity is not only improving technology and industrial processes, but also skills and work experience (Carnevale and Desrochers 2002; Helland and Tabarrok 2019), meaning that ESEs may contribute to improving productivity by providing their participants with work experience and increased technical and soft skills. In the next section we offer recommendations for systemic interventions that can advance the ESE field and contribute to greater economic mobility for all.

# EMPLOYERS AND FUNDERS: TIME FOR ACTION



**PART 6: RECOMMENDATIONS**

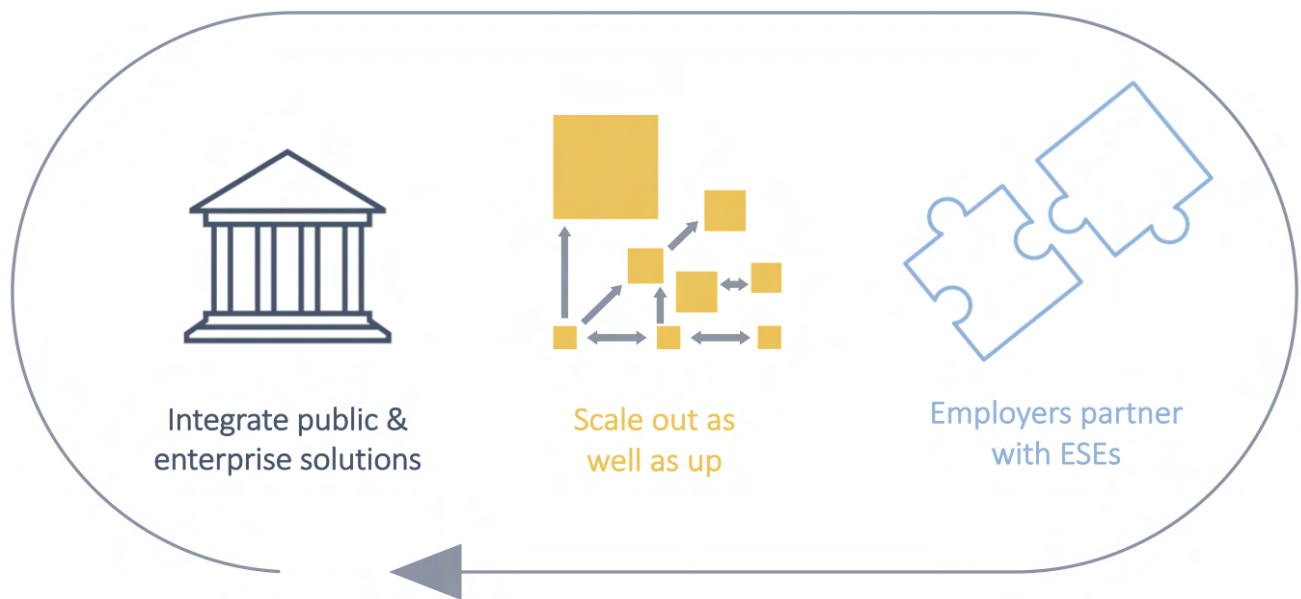
## 6. Recommendations

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The American dream is fading, and millions of people are excluded from the workplace. Our research identified approximately 27 to 35 million individuals who want to work but face structural barriers to getting hired, whether due to disabilities, because they come from low-income backgrounds, are immigrants, refugees, veterans, returning from incarceration or some combination of factors. Traditional approaches to education and training have not addressed these structural issues, and there is concern that a post-COVID recession will cut off even more people from economic opportunity.

On the other hand, there is hope. Employment social enterprises (ESEs) offer a proven model of intervention that helps individuals attain upward economic mobility while covering a high percentage of program costs with earned revenues and contributing to economic competitiveness. During periods of high economic growth, ESEs were effective at addressing the employment needs of the hardest-to-reach and hardest-to-serve populations, those facing a broad set of barriers beyond skill needs.

Our review of the evidence showed that ESEs can and do facilitate upward economic mobility for population groups with employment obstacles. However, the gap between the number of workers currently being reached by ESEs and the millions of potentially employable people profiled in this report is vast. While there are notable examples of start-up ESEs that have achieved national scale –Year Up, Goodwill and Youth Build, to name a few – most ESEs are relatively small in size and regional in focus.



**12. Systemic Change is Needed to Achieve Economic Mobility for All**

How can we better support ESEs to contribute to economic mobility for excluded populations at scale? We know ESEs can generate economic mobility for individual workers, and they offer financially sustainable and cost-effective models to do so. We propose that ESEs are worthy of greater investment and expansion to address the tough economic times our country is facing. In this final section of the report, we present four research-grounded recommendations that serve as a call to action for employers, government policymakers, funders, and leaders in the ESE field. These are: (1) integrate public and enterprise solutions; (2) support ESEs to scale out as well as up; (3) create corporate employer-ESE partnerships, and (4) advocate for a systems approach to workforce inclusion, putting ESEs at the center (depicted in Figure 12 above).

### **Integrate Public Policy and Enterprise Solutions**

Because of the way the legislation has evolved, public funding for employment programs is increasingly tied to specific populations, such as people with disabilities, veterans and more recently youth. In addition, overly specific eligibility criteria (such as age limits for participants) and program requirements (such as mandatory stipends or non-profit status of the implementing organization) tend to discourage the type of innovations ESEs commonly use. Ironically, these rigid definitions limit the ability of all programs – traditional or ESE – to serve the people who most need their support.

Two ESE program innovations that are driving employment outcomes across different population groups yet are significantly hindered by public policies that discourage these practices, are *transitional employment* and *earning an income for people receiving public benefits*.

- ESEs seeking to offer vulnerable populations on-the-job learning experiences find themselves navigating ill-defined legal territory to identify work-around solutions, including offering stipends, “training wages” or hiring through temporary staffing agencies. Transitional employment - the process of easing individuals into the workforce through jobs with fewer hours, additional training, and on-site support, as well as subsidized wages, was originally developed as a strategy to increase workforce participation of people with disabilities.<sup>20</sup> Decades later, we see employment social enterprises all over the country that have nimbly adopted this model for populations facing a variety of barriers to employment (Corinth 2017). However, labor regulations hinder ESEs from bringing people into transitional employment – obligating them to find workarounds instead of hiring vulnerable individuals directly.
- In addition, there are regulatory barriers and red tape that vulnerable individuals face if they want to transition from receiving benefits to earning an income. A key part of transitional employment is that it is paid, which both values the worker and provides practice for successful behaviors the employee will need to master to move into full-time employment. However, by engaging in paid employment, many people risk losing public benefits such as health care for their family or housing subsidies, benefits more valuable than a transitional employment wage. Referred to as the “benefits cliff,” it is a strong disincentive to joining transitional employment programs even for people who want to work.

To change this unproductive dynamic, public policies and programs should explicitly encourage and support ESEs to offer transitional employment programs. These policies should encourage ESEs to design programs in a way that allows benefits flexibility during temporary employment, and in longer-term jobs encourages gradual adjustments rather than one-time yes-no benefit allocations. More broadly, policies

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<sup>20</sup> This innovation was shown to have a positive cost-benefit relationship and was approved for continuation as part of the social security disability benefits program (Mathematica 1990).

need to be rethought so that public support provides a platform for flexible, market-driven ESE models and approaches that have been shown to work, such as the four models presented in this paper. For example, rather than using rigid demographic criteria, ESEs could qualify for funding based on key criteria for organizational and program effectiveness. This would allow ESEs to prioritize the flexibility and innovation necessary for lasting change as well as allow public funding streams to prioritize outcomes rather than trying to direct spending or control leakage.

The current economic contraction caused by COVID-19 could lead to unemployment numbers for people facing barriers nearly double pre-COVID numbers. Such widespread need will require open-ended policies that are less constricted by earmarks and special interests. A blueprint for policy action would include support for a clear regulatory framework allowing transitional employment and on-the-job learning that avoids the benefits cliff. This framework would empower all types of ESEs to offer innovative programs that combine paid work with support services at different stages of the transition into full-time employment.

### **Support ESEs to Scale Up and Out**

Patience will be needed when supporting ESEs to scale up. Many will first need to scale “out,” meaning develop partnerships with larger organizations to expand their reach. A basic, but critical concept often overlooked by funders is that an ESE is a business. A small ESE on every street corner (i.e., the bakery or coffee shop model) could potentially deliver more impact than a dozen national ESE conglomerates. Funding and revenue streams must align with business models to ensure ESEs remain competitive while allowing them to achieve impact. Funders and regulators should consider encouraging industry support for ESEs and the development of industry-specific benchmarks for competitiveness, which could include advancing social procurement in the private and public sector. Social enterprises we spoke to, with a successful track record in scaling, all developed specific measures related to financial viability (i.e., the international standard ratio used to measure portfolio-at-risk, and the accepted minimum number of 2,000 clients needed to sustain a microfinance branch operation.) Field-building efforts to date have been nascent and do not yet provide the kind of specialized knowledge that can help ESEs learn from others in their field, whether social or traditional enterprises.

To support scaling out and up, we must help ESEs to have better connections with employers and funders. Expanded pools of capital will be required from both public and private sources. Yet no ESE funding source is perfect. Consider that:

- Public funding streams can distort the mission of ESEs by requiring them, for example, to offer stipends to recipients of federal grants (instead of wages), inflating costs and decreasing sustainability, and public funding can often only go to nonprofits whereas many effective ESEs operate as for-profit businesses.
- Philanthropic funders favor nonprofit ESEs; for profit ESEs face difficulties qualifying for grants.
- Impact investors are wary of ESEs’ small size and often unproven financial track record. As a result, they are more likely to offer debt than patient capital.
- Revenues, while an important source of ESE funding, generally do not cover all services.

Opportunities for financing innovations in the field include a matching grants program offering government funds to complement corporate grants to ESEs, or the development of a blended finance capital facility for ESEs. Some groups such as NESst have been financing ESEs with loans and equity investments in the same way that early impact funds invested in microfinance institutions. “ESEs are businesses,” says Nicole Etchart, NESst CEO, “and you have to treat them that way.”



To attract impact investment at scale, ESE leaders will need to “agree to agree” on some simple metrics to make the value proposition clear to funders, and to the public. For example, all ESEs could report on transparent, relatively standardized outcome indicators (such as those covered in the impact section of this report) regardless of the employment challenge being addressed or target population group. This transparency and clarity would support greater awareness of ESE models and their shared success features.

Funding single ESEs to scale up is only part of the solution to the challenge of achieving national impact. Here philanthropic funders are uniquely positioned to take the long view. In addition to providing program funding where it is needed, foundations should support the capacity of ESE coalitions to advocate for policy reform and to build partnerships with companies that can provide permanent employment for transitional ESE employees.

### **Build Corporate Employer - ESE Partnerships**

Today, in any sector that can expect growth or even stable employment post-COVID, there is a giant leadership opportunity for the taking: that of contributing to an equitable, inclusive return to work for millions of people who have been excluded from the labor force, whether recently due to the crisis or because of long-term, pervasive discrimination.

Why should employers step up? We argue that the four models presented in this report, adequately recognized, and supported by government policies, offer a unique, cost-effective opportunity for American employers, large and small, to access ready talent and become more supportive workplaces in the process. As discussed earlier, diverse teams are good business. For companies with workers in need of special support services, evidence gathered through this research shows that a well-designed program can pay for itself, through lower turnover. Inclusive hiring can be the norm for Fortune 500 and other companies, rather than the exception that it is today.

Large employers have the power to generate ripple effects in their supply chains and through investment decisions. To invest in greater productivity and greater inclusion, business leaders can launch “embedded” Corporate ESE programs, learning from trendsetters like Walgreens, Salesforce, Bank of America, and other Corporate ESE programs profiled in this report. Business leaders can also establish partnerships with Connector ESEs and work directly with General and Targeted ESEs to expand their talent pipelines or scale their operations and increase the value of their products in a cost-efficient manner by purchasing from ESEs.

Moving from ad-hoc partnerships toward a more systematic approach to creating ESE to employer pipelines is key to expanding the impact of ESEs at scale. Corporate initiatives such as The Valuable 500, The 100,000 Opportunities Initiative and others mentioned in this report are a starting point. ESEs and organizations advocating for them, such as REDF and Social Enterprise Alliance should work with these initiatives and with employers to establish more formal pipelines between ESEs and employers for all people facing barriers to employment. One potentially valuable approach would be the creation of a platform, such as LaborX, to provide easy job matching between ESE beneficiaries and employers.<sup>21</sup>

Beyond direct hiring and direct partnerships with ESEs, corporations can deploy philanthropy to support the growing ESE movement, and large employers can leverage their lobbying expertise and connections to promote policy reforms that enable better alignment between government workforce programs and ESE approaches.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://laborx.co/>

### Take a Systems View with ESEs at the Center

Economic mobility is a process, not an end state. For many Americans, achieving economic mobility involves progress along multiple dimensions, over generations. When addressing these employment and inclusion barriers we propose that policy makers, corporate executives and ESE leaders adopt a systems perspective that puts ESEs at the center of the solution along with the other key stakeholders – employers and service providers. Our proposed systems view puts employment first and differs from a traditional workforce development approach which puts skills development first. Table 12 below contrasts the current view of workforce development with a more ESE centric systems view.

### 12. Moving Toward a Systems View of Workforce Development

Current Workforce Development View	ESE Systems View
Give unemployed people skills and training for a job.	Offer work experience, training, and skills to succeed in multiple jobs over time.
Short-term hiring placement.	Track long term upward economic mobility.
Jump from unemployed to employed.	Go from unemployed to transitional employment to long-term employment.
Ignore or discount barriers outside of work that prevent long term employment success.	Remove barriers by providing stepping stones to success.
Only donate to or provide public funds to nonprofit ESEs.	Allow funding to flow to successful ESEs regardless of for-profit, hybrid and nonprofit legal status.
Keep funding and operating public programs in isolated silos.	Pool funding from public and private sources to support ESEs of all types.
Grow job opportunities only by scaling up individual ESEs.	Grow job opportunities for all by connecting ESEs with large companies and public programs.
Every organization wants to tell its story.	Tell the collective story of ESEs in service of a measurable objective.

Taking a systems view of economic mobility means getting all players – policy leaders, corporate executives, funders and especially the ESEs themselves, to work collectively toward long term wins. The first step should be to convene cross-sector actors from workforce development, economic mobility, and employment social enterprises. With the help of a facilitator, these three groups can develop a shared vision for success, and common frameworks for coordinating action. The need to do this is greater than ever given the COVID-19 pandemic and economic recession in the U.S. Leaders like REDF are contributing to the field by funding and expanding the pool of capital available to ESEs. REDF is now part of a coalition advocating for policy reform to better coordinate government workforce programs with the growing ESE field. REDF’s **National Policy Recommendations** offer promising bipartisan solutions. To do so, public, private, and nonprofit leaders need to come together to collectively advocate for policy reform and drive systemic change.

A critical first task will be to build better functioning partnerships between these key actors:

- Government workforce development programs and ESEs
- Corporate employers and ESEs
- Funders and impact investors and ESEs
- ESE peer networks

Greater economic mobility for more people will be achieved when different parts of the system are working together to enable ESEs to be a key piece of the overall solution. How will we know when we have arrived?

- ESEs will be “on every corner” – i.e., visible to the public, recognized in every state, selling goods and services in all sectors, and partnering with small, medium, and large employers.
- Government agencies will share a clear yet flexible definition for employment social enterprise.
- There will be no penalties for offering transitional employment and adopting market-driven approaches.
- Employers of all shapes and sizes will be partnering with and supporting successful ESEs.
- Employers will recognize the economic advantages of engaging in social procurement.
- The funding landscape will have grown significantly. ESEs will have a variety of options for accessing capital.

When these things happen, we will be moving towards a system that offers jobs for *all*.

# Appendix: Research Methodology

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## Objectives

Research for *Jobs for All: The State of Employment Social Enterprise & Economic Mobility in the United States* was conducted by Business for Impact at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business with financial support through an educational gift to the University from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation. The research was led by Just Results, a social enterprise that specializes in inclusive economic growth, and supported by more than a dozen Georgetown graduate and undergraduate student researchers over a two-year period.

The goal of this study was to explore the growing field of employment social enterprises (ESEs) and understand the field's contribution to economic mobility for populations that face significant barriers to employment. The research team set out to understand what was working, what was not working, and what more could be done to connect vulnerable populations with jobs and achieve upward economic mobility.

The research focused on the intersection of three complex fields: 1) workforce development, which over the years has been viewed as a subset of education and training; 2) employment social enterprise (ESE), which includes mission-driven nonprofit and for-profit businesses that provide real paying jobs, including transitional work and specialized services to help employees stabilize their lives, build skills, and develop a work history, and 3) economic mobility, the ability of an individual or household to improve its economic status over time, often measured as intergenerational mobility – the ability of individuals to earn more than their parents. Figure A1 below shows the broad research questions (detailed research questions are presented later in Figure A6).



- How do ESEs contribute to economic mobility for populations that face barriers to employment?
- What works and what more can be done to connect vulnerable populations with jobs?
- What role should the corporate sector play?
- How have federal and state policies linked to employment and workforce development enabled or challenged ESEs?
- How can actors in the system partner to provide employment pathways to economic mobility?

## A1. Research at the Intersection of Multiple Fields

### Research Approach

The research team identified and examined ESEs that employ six population groups facing significant barriers to employment: Persons with disabilities, veterans; immigrants and refugees; low-income, and formerly incarcerated individuals. All aspects of ESEs were examined, including legal forms – which span the spectrum from small nonprofit start-ups to hybrid social enterprises, to global corporations practicing inclusive hiring. The team also examined funding sources – from philanthropic and government grants and contracts to earned revenue – and explored how ESEs interface with government agencies at the

federal, state, and local levels. Research steps included conducting a literature review of employment social enterprises; creating and analyzing a database of more than 500 ESE organizations in the United States; interviewing more than 50 experts and practitioners, and distributing a targeted survey to obtain financial and employment data from ESEs.

We knew we needed to focus if we were to bring credible new insights to the table, yet we felt that one of our contributions was precisely the broad-ranging nature of the research. The team ended up combining high-level exploratory research (expert interviews, literature reviews, attendance at conferences, analysis of economic trends) with a focused deep dive in two areas: the programmatic models and outcomes of employment social enterprises (ESEs), and what corporate employers are doing in the field of inclusive hiring. Important to note, and one of the distinguishing features of this study, is that our definition of ESEs is broader than that used by some of the leading actors of the field.

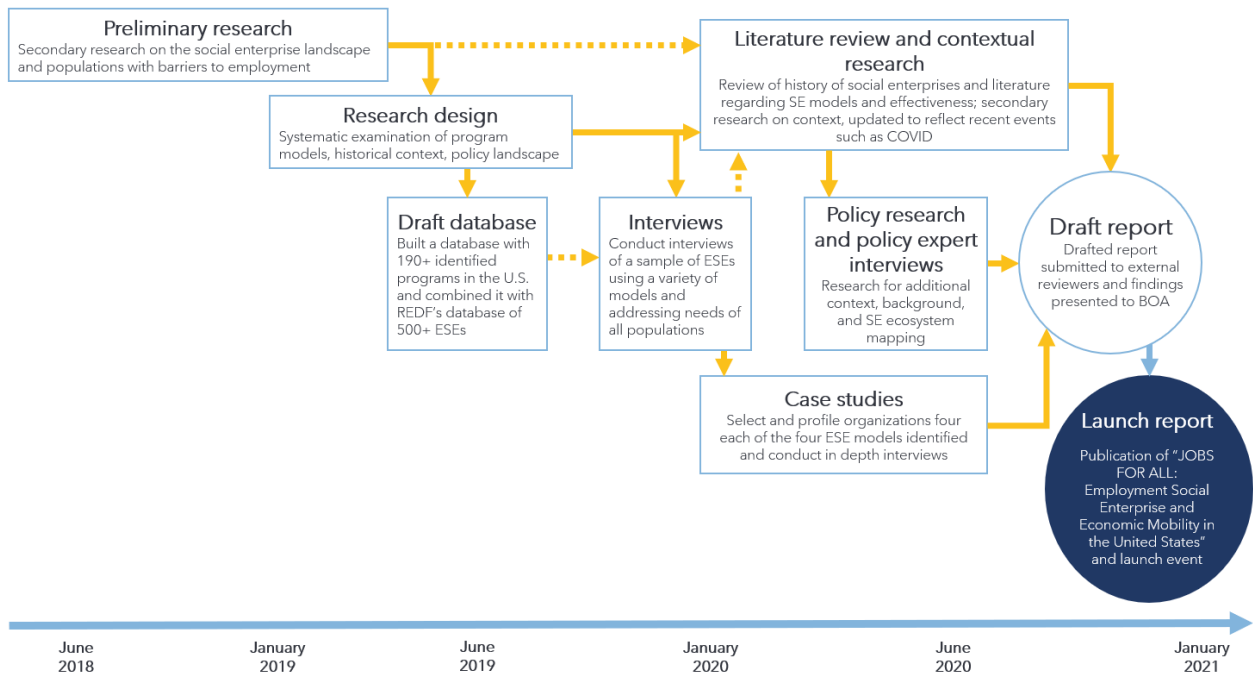
This was intentional and meant to push the boundaries on how people are thinking about what is possible. First, we found that employment social enterprises come in all shapes, sizes, locations, and methods. For-profit or non-profit status has less to do with financial viability than was once thought, and nearly all ESEs incorporate a range of funding sources that include grants, philanthropy and earned revenue. Nearly all ESEs seek to establish formal pipeline partnerships with corporations, even at a small scale, to build relationships that allow for rapid employment of their program participants. Second, most actors in the social enterprise space lament the lack of connection to, or participation of, corporate employers in their activities. We concluded that if we wanted corporations to connect to social enterprises and invest in vulnerable populations as part of their talent pipeline, we needed to bring them into the fold.

While public workforce development programs (like community colleges, government workforce agencies or socially funded transitional jobs programs) are not the focus of the report, we also considered these actors, characterizing their evolution and contributions to the field. Despite their many flaws, public agencies have served to incubate some of the most effective program models, and today they remain an important funding source for private social enterprises. The research team found that the historical perspective, especially evaluations of what has and has not worked in the past and why the system is structured the way it is, provided our team with a “reality check” when it was time to develop actionable recommendations.

Our findings reveal four different models of ESEs in operation in the United States today and show how these models facilitate upward economic mobility for their employees. However, the small scale of most ESEs presents limitations to achieving results for the millions of potentially employable people in America who face barriers to getting and keeping good jobs. This limitation of scale is compounded by the negative economic and employment impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. We conclude that systemic interventions are needed to more closely connect ESE workers with corporate and other long-term employment opportunities. We suggest policy reform to better connect ESEs with public resources and networks to help bring successful models to scale, and therefore put many more workers into jobs and on upward economic trajectories.

## **Research Activities**

The Georgetown Business for Impact research team was led by Just Results, a social enterprise that specializes in inclusive economic growth, and included 12 Georgetown students over two academic years (AY19+AY20). Figure A2 below summarizes the main elements of the research, and the narrative below provides detail on a few of the more original and in-depth undertakings.



Preliminary research was carried out to define a perimeter of the inquiry, understand the field, and help narrow the focus of the project. Based on this, the team identified initial research questions. The team identified six population groups facing significant barriers to employment: Persons with disabilities, veterans; immigrants and refugees; low-income, and formerly incarcerated individuals. This phase also included a process of estimating the number of social enterprises in the United States.

We estimated the scale of social enterprises in the United States, by accumulating the statistics from diverse sources. The information of the number of registered LLCs has not been released officially. One estimate suggests that the number of LLCs in 2015 was 1,775,148 (Shultz 2016). Based on survey research that finds about half of the for-profit organizations are social enterprises, we calculate that the number of social enterprises in LLCs were about half that number, or 887,574. According to the National Centre for Charitable Statistics (NCC) there were 1.6 million nonprofits with 501(c) 3 legal status in 2015, but only about 314,744 earned commercial income (McKeever 2018). According to InterSector Partners, a Low Profit Limited Liability Company (L3C), reports that, as of March 14, 2019, there were a total of 1,651 active L3Cs registered in 9 states and 2 Indian Nations (InterSector 2019).

The number of benefit corporations is based on the information provided by benefitcorp.net in states with laws supporting benefit corporations. We list the number of Benefit Corporations in each state of America and calculate the total number as 1,605, shown in Table A3. In terms of B Corps certified by B Lab, there were 2,933 by August 2019 (B Corporation 2018).

**A3. Benefit Corporations across America**

State	# of B-Corps	State	# of B-Corps
Alabama	0	Nebraska	2
Alaska	1	Nevada	214
Arizona	6	New Hampshire	38
Arkansas	9	New Jersey	13
California	327	New Mexico	1

Colorado	143	New York	89
Connecticut	48	North Carolina	5
Delaware	23	North Dakota	0
Florida	27	Ohio	4
Georgia	7	Oklahoma	1
Hawaii	16	Oregon	188
Idaho	7	Pennsylvania	60
Illinois	46	Rhode Island	7
Indiana	2	South Carolina	3
Iowa	1	South Dakota	1
Kansas	1	Tennessee	7
Kentucky	0	Texas	11
Louisiana	8	Utah	21
Maine	1	Vermont	16
Maryland	69	Virginia	53
Massachusetts	75	Washington	10
Michigan	2	West Virginia	0
Minnesota	30	Wisconsin	2
Mississippi	0	Wyoming	0
Missouri	0	District of Columbia	8
Montana	2	Total	1,605

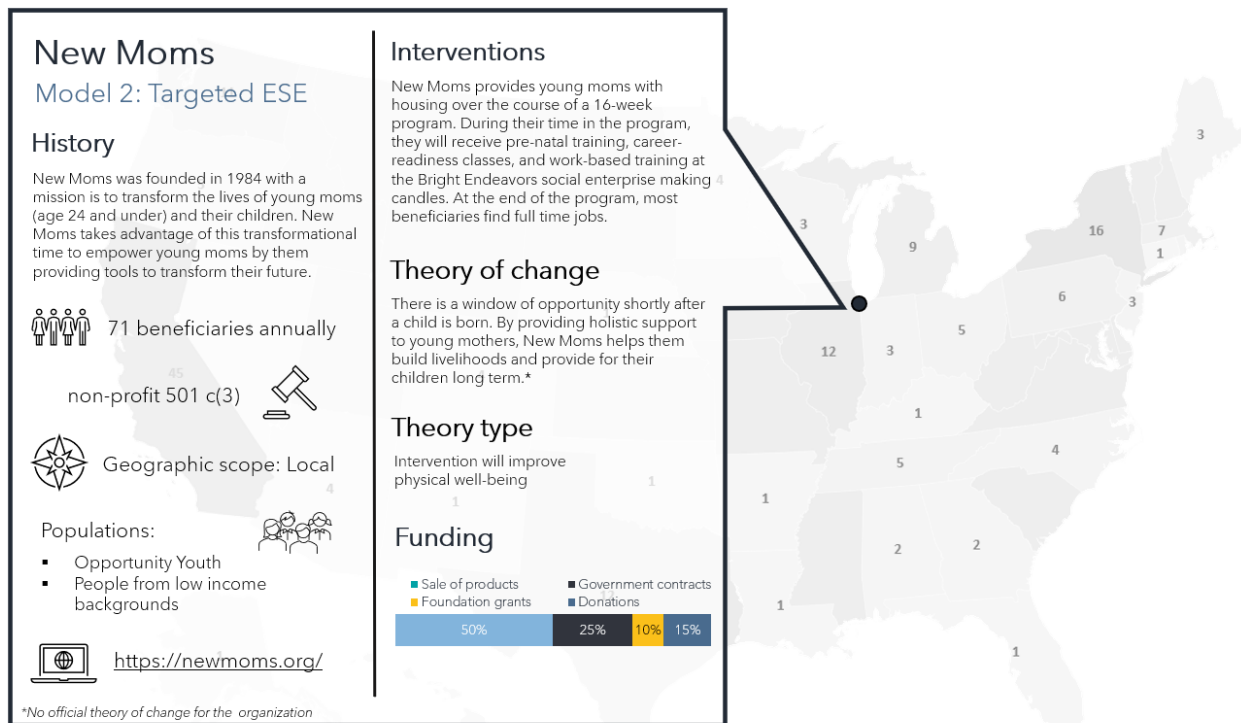
There were estimated to be 2,112 BLLCs, which are not recognized in every state, in 2016. In 2015, there were an estimated 64,017 U.S. cooperatives (Cooperatives 2012). Based on these estimates we came up with estimates of the scale and scope of social enterprise in the United States. represented in Table A4.

#### A4. The Scale and Scope of Social Enterprises in the United States

Categories of social enterprises		Number	Year	Proportion
Socially responsible companies	Organizations registered as limited liability companies (LLCs), with socially responsible programs or social enterprise branches	887,574	2015	70%
Enterprising nonprofits	Organizations registered as 501(c)3 legal status, with programs or branches earning commercial income	314,744	2015	24%
SEs with hybrid legal status	Low-profit limited liability companies (L3Cs)	1,651	2019	6%
	Benefit Corporations	1,605	2018	
	B Corps (certified by B Lab)	2,933	2019	
	Benefit limited liability companies (BLLCs)	2,112	2016	
	Co-operatives	64,017	2015	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,274,636</b>		<b>100%</b>

Out of this number, employment social enterprises (ESEs) – those social enterprises which provide paying jobs, including transitional work, and specialized services to help employees stabilize their lives, build skills, and develop a work history – are estimated to make up a relatively small subset. Unfortunately, precise estimates of the number of ESEs and relevant corporate programs are hard to come by so we decided to develop a database of all ESEs which we could identify in the United States, starting with membership lists from REDF, the Social Enterprise Alliance, and Skoll, along with relevant information on their target populations, interventions, etc. More than 190 U.S.-based intervention programs were identified and documented by the research team. This was combined with REDF’s database of 500 social

enterprises. We continued to add to the list throughout the course of our research, based on secondary sources identified through desk research, interviews with practitioners and experts and news articles. For each program we identified the legal status, subcategory (according to the organizational spectrum) and sector in which the social enterprise organization or program works. We also noted programs' geographic scope (including rural/urban focus) and target population groups. While this database in its current form is for internal research purposes, we envision potentially transforming it to an interactive tool for ESEs, funders, policymakers, and researchers in the future.



### A5. Example of Information Collected in Our ESE Database

Our research design built on initial research and included four main elements including, 1) the creation of the ESE database just described as well as a database of 35+ relevant corporate programs, 2) a literature review of relevant research in our three intersecting fields of workforce development, ESEs, and economic mobility, 3) conducting interviews with ESEs, corporate programs and relevant ecosystem actors and experts in the field, 4) analysis of relevant policies, laws, and regulations.

The corporate database was built to better understand what large corporate employers are doing. The corporate database categorized initiatives and programs related to inclusive hiring and workforce development for vulnerable populations by intervention type, target population and scope. Based on information collected we were able to identify programs across a range of industries and target populations as well as key gaps in corporate activity. Among the criteria used to filter programs were employers' scores on a variety of indexes including CSR Hub, Disability Inclusion Index, Universum's Diversity and Inclusion Index, Thompson Reuters Diversity, and Inclusion Index, 100 Best Corporate Citizens Report and RepTrak.



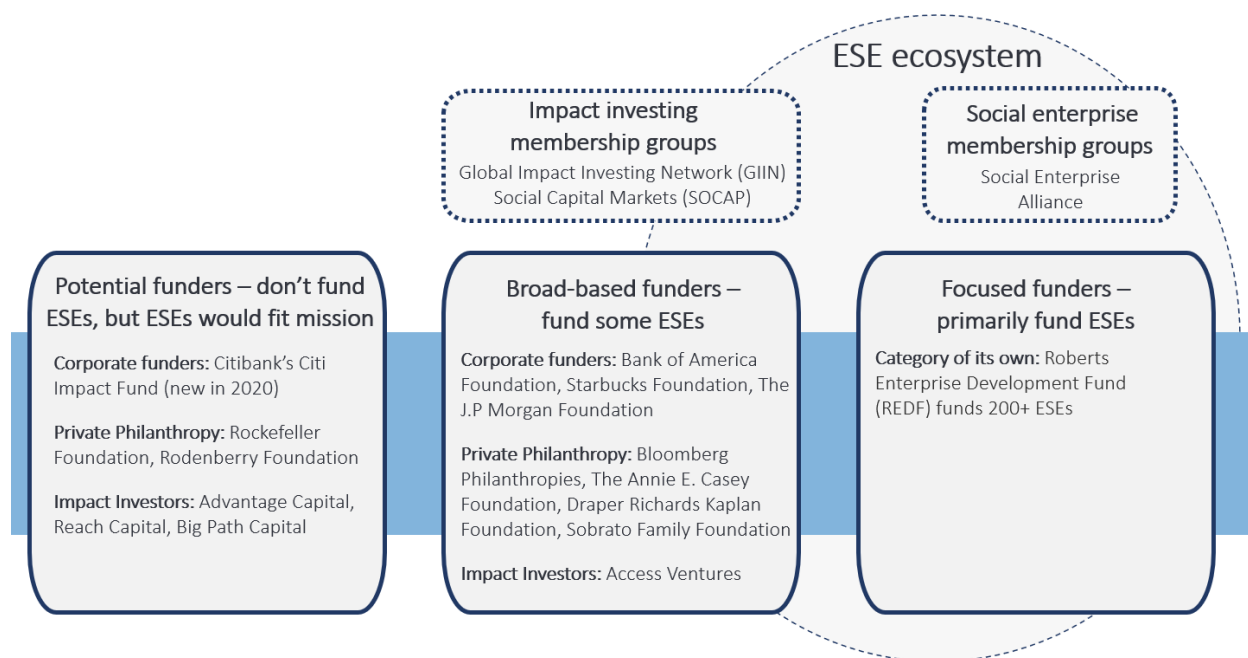
## A6. Data collection tools and approaches by detailed research question

Detailed Research Questions	Tool(s) used
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do employment social enterprises contribute to economic mobility in the United States?</li> <li>• Why or why not?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review on economic mobility</li> <li>• Quantification of social enterprises</li> <li>• Social enterprise database</li> <li>• Social enterprise survey</li> <li>• Literature review on history of policy</li> <li>• Evaluations of program results (10+)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the different ESE business models?</li> <li>• Which are successful and how is that measured?</li> <li>• Are different models needed for different populations?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with experts (20+)</li> <li>• Interviews with practitioners (50+)</li> <li>• Social enterprise database (500+)</li> <li>• Social enterprise survey (30+)</li> <li>• Case studies (6)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What needs to happen?</li> <li>• What role should the corporate sector play?</li> <li>• How have federal and state policies linked to employment and workforce development enabled or challenged ESEs?</li> <li>• How can actors in the system partner to provide employment pathways to economic mobility?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review on history of policy</li> <li>• Evaluations of program results (10+)</li> <li>• Corporate programs database (35+)</li> <li>• Interviews with experts (20+)</li> <li>• Interviews with practitioners (50+)</li> </ul>

Building from the two databases as well as recommendations from experts and practitioners about the most effective programs, we used a snowball method to get contact information and introductions and conducted in-depth interviews with 50+ employment social enterprises. Then, we selected a group of high-performing ESEs and asked them to participate in a survey to obtain financial and employment data. Using the survey results, we developed a matrix to track and visualize the relationship between two fundamental indicators we identified: organizational financial sustainability and individual economic mobility. These two simple measures are necessary, if not fully sufficient, to track organizational direction and impact, and they can be readily self-reported by ESEs<sup>22</sup>. Income measures can also be extrapolated over longer periods of time by utilizing state-level employment data (as was done by REDF in 2019). Our 50+ interviews with ESEs and corporate programs as well as our 30+ interviews with experts in the field provide the core of our primary data collection efforts, providing us with the information require to identify and portray the four main models of employment social enterprise active in the U.S. today, their target populations, interventions, challenges, and successes.

Analysis of relevant policies, laws, and regulations at the federal and state level and of the U.S. workforce development system and broader ecosystem within which ESEs function, complimented the information we received from ESEs and experts through the interview process and fed into our final conclusions and recommendations. During this stage we also conducted supplemental research on the impact of COVID-19, the recession, and racial justice movements and what they mean for ESEs and the broader system. As part of this final stage of research, we also collected information on current funders of ESEs as well as other potential funders which are well positioned to fund ESEs. We envision that this preliminary funder mapping exercise can, like the program database, eventually become the basis for online interactive tool for ESEs and other ecosystem actors.

<sup>22</sup> With a sufficiently large sample, and by including corporate ESEs, the matrix could serve to track important trends in the field, such as the four universal indicators discussed in the paper.



### A7. Funding Map

To obtain broad estimates of the number of people excluded from employment in each of the 6 groups of people that face barriers to employment, we used January 2020 national statistics for unemployment (3.6%) and labor force participation (63.4%) from BLS<sup>23</sup>. Our estimates are calculated as the difference between the average (higher) unemployment and (lower) labor force participation rates in the United States for these vulnerable groups compared to that of the averages for the United States and weighting the “surplus unemployment” by the amount each group represents of the total workforce.

### A8. Calculating the number of people excluded from employment due to barriers

Population	Total number (millions)	Unemployed in surplus of average rate (millions)	Not participating in Labor force compared to average (millions)	Excluded from employment (compared to national average)
People with disabilities	61	2.68	25.86	28.55
Youth*	47.12	0.83	0.66	1.49
Formerly incarcerated people	5	1.19	N/A	1.19
Immigrants and refugees	44.4	-0.14	-1.15	-1.30
Veterans	18.9	-0.04	2.72	2.68
Low-income background	18.66	0.54	4.55	5.09

\* These numbers are for all youth, ages 16-24. Opportunity Youth are the subset who are neither in school nor working, estimated to be 4.6 million (Aspen Institute 2019).

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/charts/employment-situation/civilian-unemployment-rate.htm>  
<https://www.bls.gov/charts/employment-situation/civilian-labor-force-participation-rate.htm>

Many individuals fall into more than one of the six population groups, but unfortunately the data on overlap between these population groups is not available. However, we can still come up with a reasonable, though broad, estimate by making assumptions about overlap at each end of the spectrum. This is based on a maximum assumption that there is 1/5th overlap between people with disabilities and other groups and a minimum assumption that in addition to that, half of formerly incarcerated people are also opportunity youth, and half of formerly incarcerated people and immigrants and refugees are also people from low-income backgrounds. These are obviously speculative, but reasonable, assumptions which provide a very rough estimate of the number of people excluded from work due to barriers to employment. This gives us our estimate that the number of people excluded from employment across these six groups ranges from about 25 to 37 million.

These numbers were calculated based on data preceding the COVID-19 pandemic. Though reliable numbers on the effects of COVID-19 on unemployment and labor force participation rate are not yet available across the 6 population groups, we can make some estimates based on the available data with fairly strong confidence. Given that most members of the 6 population groups who are/were employed fall into the low-income category which was hit most hard by COVID-19, it is safe to estimate that their reduction in employment will at least match the 19%-20% reduction in employment which has been experienced by low-income people in the United States.<sup>24</sup>

#### A9. Estimating the effects of COVID-19

Population	Pre-COVID Employed	Additional estimated unemployed post-COVID	Total unemployed post-COVID	Excluded from work pre-COVID	Excluded from work post-COVID
People with disabilities	56.1	11.2	16.1	28.6	42.0
Youth*	17.0	3.4	4.9	1.5	5.6
Formerly incarcerated people	3.6	0.7	2.1	1.2	2.1
Immigrants and refugees	27.8	5.6	6.5	-1.3	5.3
Veterans	9.9	2.0	2.3	2.7	5.0
Low-income background	5.8	1.2	1.9	5.1	6.5

\* These numbers are for all youth, ages 16-24. Opportunity Youth are the subset who are neither in school nor working, estimated to be 4.6 million (Aspen Institute 2019).

Figure A9 displays the effects on each population group assuming a 20% reduction in employment. Using the same assumptions as previously to account for overlap between groups, we can come an estimated total post-COVID number for people excluded from employment of between 52-61 million.

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.tracktherecovery.org/>

## A10. Estimates of those excluded from employment by ethnicity and race

	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
People with disabilities <sup>a</sup>	74%	13%	3%	11%
Youth* <sup>b</sup>	63%	13%	5%	20%
Formerly incarcerated people <sup>c</sup>	39%	40%	2%	19%
Immigrants and refugees <sup>d</sup>	19%	10%	27%	44%
Veterans <sup>e</sup>	80%	12%	2%	7%
Low-income background <sup>f</sup>	54%	17%	4%	25%
Pre-COVID excluded from work – Low-end estimate (millions)	20.74	4.34	1.51	4.84
Pre-COVID excluded from work – High-end estimate (millions)	23.67	4.95	1.72	5.53
Post-COVID excluded from work – Low-end estimate (millions)	34.57	7.23	2.52	8.08
Post-COVID excluded from work – High-end estimate (millions)	40.60	8.49	2.96	9.49

Estimates calculated from the following sources: (a) BLS 2020 (b) BLS 2020 (c) PPI 2020 (d) MPI 2020 (e) BLS 2020 (f) BLS 2020

\* These numbers are for all youth, ages 16-24. Opportunity Youth are the subset who are neither in school nor working, estimated to be 4.6 million (Aspen Institute 2019).

Data on racial and ethnic breakdowns is better for some of the 6 populations groups than others. To remain consistent and still come up with broad estimates for how many are excluded from employment by race and ethnicity, we made estimates based on the breakdown for the total population of the 6 groups. Based on these percentages and using the same approach to calculate low-end and high-end estimates as above, we came up with estimates shown in Figure A10.

## A11. Definitions

Terms	Definitions	References
Social Enterprise	1) A social enterprise is a private revenue-generating entity that holds as its primary purpose a mission to give back to society and uses market-driven solutions to do so. Social enterprises may be non-profit or for-profit; they may be a stand-alone entity or a program or department of a larger entity.	“Jobs for All: The State of Employment Social Enterprise and Economic Mobility in the United States”
	2) At its heart, a social enterprise is a business where a social or environmental mission is the primary function. Social enterprises are transparent about and accountable to their mission. They aim to generate most of their operating income through trade. Sales revenue is one of the ways of differentiating social enterprises from nonprofit and voluntary sector organizations that are not focused on trade as a mean to deliver their mission. Additionally, many social enterprises do not generate the majority of their operating income through sales during the start-up period of their organization. However, once a social enterprise has been operating beyond the start-up period of 2-3 years, they typically generate most of their operating revenue through trade and look primarily to sales to resource their core services. Social enterprises reinvest most of their surpluses in pursuit of their mission, instead of simply investing a discretionary portion of their surplus as part of corporate strategy.	“Understanding Social Enterprise.” Social Enterprise World Forum, SEWF, 37e2a288-bcae-4fcf-97bf-9532d2259336.filesusr.com/ugd/76ab31_fa8e2b87ade946eeb6bd a12c652fe8e4.pdf.

<p>3) Social enterprises are businesses that trade to tackle the challenges we face in society. They make their money selling goods and services in markets using their business and their profits to improve society and protect the planet. They work across a wide range of areas: creating jobs and new opportunities, supporting the most vulnerable in society, improving our environment, and delivering high quality public services. Social Enterprise UK defines social enterprises as businesses that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- have a clear social or environmental mission that is set out in its governing documents.</li> <li>- are independent businesses and earn more than half of their income through trading (or are working towards this).</li> <li>- are controlled or owned in the interests of their social mission.</li> <li>- reinvest or give away at least half of their profits or surpluses towards their social purpose.</li> <li>- are transparent about how they operate and the impact that they have.</li> </ul>	<p>SocialEnt UK. "What Is It All about? ". " What Is It All about? " Social Enterprise UK, <a href="http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk/what-is-it-all-about/?su=t0">www.socialenterprise.org.uk/what-is-it-all-about/?su=t0</a>.</p>
<p>4) A social Enterprise is a business entity with a predominant social mission. The intentional purpose of the business is, on balance, making a social contribution, which influences all its decisions. The social outcome is clear. For instance, in REDF's case, it is jobs for people who face significant barriers to work. For others, it may be delivery of goods and services to people or communities where the market has failed. Lastly, earnings are primarily (i.e., more than half) spent to achieve the social purpose.</p>	<p>"The What, Why, and How of Social Enterprise." REDF, 28 Aug. 2019, <a href="http://redf.org/latest/the-what-why-and-how-of-social-enterprise-carla-javits-president-and-ceo-redf/">redf.org/latest/the-what-why-and-how-of-social-enterprise-carla-javits-president-and-ceo-redf/</a>.</p>
<p>5) A Social Enterprise is an Organization that addresses a basic unmet need or solves a social or environmental problem through a market-driven approach.</p>	<p>"What Is a Social Enterprise?" Social Enterprise Alliance, 11 June 2019, <a href="http://socialenterprise.us/about/social-enterprise/">socialenterprise.us/about/social-enterprise/</a>.</p>
<p>6) Social enterprises are a powerful engine for economic and social development. They respond directly to social needs through their products and services or through the number of disadvantaged people they employ. This distinguishes them from "socially responsible enterprises", which indirectly create positive social change through the practice of corporate social responsibility. In addition, social enterprises use earned income strategies to achieve a double or triple bottom line, either on their own (as a social sector enterprise, in the private or non-profit sector), or as a portion of a not-for-profit organization's mixed revenue stream that also includes charitable contributions and public sector grants. This differentiates them from traditional not-for-profit organizations, which rely primarily on</p>	<p>"Social Enterprise: A Powerful Engine for Economic and Social Development." Community Wealth Organization, Social Enterprise Alliance, <a href="http://communitywealth.org/sites/clone.communitywealth.org/files/downloads/paper-sea10.pdf">communitywealth.org/sites/clone.communitywealth.org/files/downloads/paper-sea10.pdf</a>.</p>

	<p>philanthropic and government support. Social enterprise is also distinct from social entrepreneurship, which includes actors as diverse as B Corp. companies, socially responsible investors, "for-profit" companies, fourth sector organizations, the CSR efforts of large companies, "social innovators" and others. All these types of enterprises address social needs in a variety of ways, but unless they directly address social needs through their products or services or through the number of disadvantaged people they employ, they are not considered social enterprises.</p>	
	<p>7) One model of the social enterprise highlights prosocial motives that drive the primary mission and emphasizes social outcomes at the expense of a surplus that may be reinvested in the enterprise as a business thus assuring its sustainability. An alternative model of social enterprise is a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximize profit for shareholders and owners.</p>	<p>Chell, Elizabeth. "Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship: Towards a Convergent Theory of the Entrepreneurial Process." <i>International Small Business Journal</i>, vol. 25, no. 1, Feb. 2007, pp. 5–26, doi:10.1177/0266242607071779.</p>
	<p>8) Social enterprises are classic examples of hybrid organizations that pursue the dual mission of achieving both financial sustainability and social purpose and, therefore, do not fit neatly into the conventional categories of private, public or nonprofit organizations.</p>	<p>Doherty, Bob &amp; Haugh, Helen &amp; Lyon, Fergus. (2014). <i>Social Enterprises as Hybrid Organizations: A Review and Research Agenda</i>. <i>International Journal of Management Reviews</i>. 16. 10.1111/ijmr.12028.</p>
	<p>9) Social enterprises are income-generating businesses with a touch of originality. Whether managed by a non-profit organization or a for-profit enterprise, a social enterprise has two objectives: to achieve social, cultural, economic and/or environmental results for the community and to generate income. At first glance, many social enterprises resemble, and even function as, traditional businesses. But a closer look reveals the defining characteristics of social enterprise: the mission is central to the business, with revenue generation playing an important supporting role.</p>	<p>"What Is Social Enterprise?" BC Centre for Social Enterprise, 2 Mar. 2020, <a href="http://www.centreforsocialenterprise.com/what-is-social-enterprise/">www.centreforsocialenterprise.com/what-is-social-enterprise/</a>.</p>
	<p>10) According to Jyoti Sharma, the focus of social entrepreneurship should be not the "enterprise" but the beneficiary. Its design should flow from, and be anchored to, the needs and capacities of the beneficiaries. Profit-making should be secondary to making impact. Hence, charitable donations and nonprofit capability that can add value to the beneficiary should be a welcome part of the solutions set. The neoliberal idea of social entrepreneurship which focuses on market-based solutions and profit is threatening to crowd out more collaborative approaches. Despite the evidence against it, the</p>	<p>Sharma, Jyoti. "A Neoliberal Takeover of Social Entrepreneurship? (SSIR)." <i>Stanford Social Innovation Review: Informing and Inspiring Leaders of Social Change</i>, 19 Sept. 2016, <a href="http://ssir.org/articles/entry/a_neoliberal_takeover_of_social_entrepreneurship">ssir.org/articles/entry/a_neoliberal_takeover_of_social_entrepreneurship</a>.</p>

	<p>neoliberal model of social entrepreneurship continues to attract donors, universities, and young people interested in social change with its powerful blend of idealism and materialism. A commercial enterprise at scale needs layers for efficient management, controls, standardization, and constant growth—factors that may not allow for the most humane, responsive, and efficient solutions for those in need. By contrast, a social entrepreneur trying to solve a problem for a community with which he identifies will more likely create a solution that is innately self-reliant, rather than profit-focused."</p>	
Employment Social Enterprise	<p>1) An Employment social enterprise is a type of social enterprise that specifically focuses on addressing employment challenges. They typically employ people facing barriers to entry into the labor market, allowing them to gain job experience while earning an income. These jobs may be temporary, transitional, or permanent. ESEs also typically provide additional social support that people need to be successful in their jobs.</p>	<p>"Jobs for All: The State of Employment Social Enterprise and Economic Mobility in the United States"</p>
	<p>2) Employment Social Enterprises are mission-driven, revenue-generating businesses that employ, empower, and invest in the potential of people</p>	<p>What We Do." REDF, 14 Oct. 2020, redf.org/what-we-do/.</p>
	<p>3) Employment Social Enterprises (ESEs) are a subcategory of social enterprises. They are businesses that create training and employment opportunities for people facing systemic barriers to entry into the mainstream workforce market. They are started and run by both individual entrepreneurs and by non-profit organizations. ESEs provide supported training, employment, and wraparound support to employees, enabling them to obtain and maintain employment thus increasing employee's income, increasing attachment to the workforce market, improving health, increasing housing security, and keeping people out of the criminal justice system.</p>	<p>"Nbsp" Toronto Enterprise Fund, www.torontoenterprise fund.ca/about-tef/what-is-an-employment-social-enterprise.</p>
	<p>4) Employment-oriented social enterprises (known in the United States as "affirmative businesses") and in the UK under the name of "social firms") are created specifically to offer four things to people who are mentally, physically, economically, or educationally disadvantaged: Permanent jobs, competitive wages, career paths and ownership opportunities. The companies themselves are generally simple businesses whose social mission is workforce development, temporary work agencies, and career development.</p>	<p>"Social Enterprise: A Powerful Engine for Economic and Social Development." Community Wealth Organization, Social Enterprise Alliance, community-wealth.org/sites/clone.community-wealth.org/files/downloads/paper-sea10.pdf.</p>
Workforce Development	<p>1) Workforce development refers to a national, regional, provincial, or sectoral system that fulfils a dual function: enabling individuals to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes for gainful employment or improved work performance, and providing employers</p>	<p>Tan, Jee-Peng, Robert McGough, and Alexandria Valerio. Workforce Development in Developing Countries: A Framework for Benchmarking.</p>

	<p>with an effective means to communicate and meet their demand for skills.</p>	<p>Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, January 10, 2010.</p>
	<p>2) According to Jacobs and Hawley, "Workforce development is the integration of public and private sector policies and programs that offer individuals the opportunity to earn a sustainable livelihood through a coordinated investment in individual skill development and capacity building in schools, organizations, and communities, and support organizations to achieve exemplary goals, in line with the societal context.</p>	<p>Jacobs, Robert, PhD., et al. Emergence of Workforce Development: Definition, Conceptual Boundaries, and Implications.</p>
	<p>3) Workforce development has for years been treated as a "poor cousin" on the education side of the family. It was defined as training to produce more and better prepared workers. As a result, projects to improve the workforce tend to ignore the critical role played by employers. Since then, opinion leaders have lobbied for a broader vision. Best-practice countries demonstrate that as consumers of an education system's graduates, employers can get the skills they need if they are actively involved in a dialogue with educators. At the other end of the spectrum, workforce development shows up in economic development programs as a way to strengthen value chains, improve cluster performance, or enhance corporate productivity. Workforce development is now seen as more than just a program or initiative. It is a set of interconnected solutions to meet employment needs: it prepares workers for the skills required, emphasizes the value of workplace learning, and responds to employers' hiring demands from the outset. The goal is to place workers in jobs where there are opportunities for career development.</p>	<p>"FIELD Report No. 17: Skills for Jobs for Growth." FHI 360, Nov. 2013, <a href="http://www.fhi360.org/resource/field-report-no-17-skills-jobs-growth">www.fhi360.org/resource/field-report-no-17-skills-jobs-growth</a>.</p>



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