



National Nonprofit Digital Promise Partners with U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation to Promote Equity-Driven Learning and Employment Records

Funded by Walmart, This Project Aims to Center the User Experience and Mitigate Racial Bias for New Technology to Track Learner Skills

MAY 24, 2021 | Washington, D.C. - [Digital Promise](#), a national education nonprofit dedicated to closing the digital skills gap and promoting equity in postsecondary education and training, is teaming up with workers in frontline sectors along with leaders in higher education, business, and technology to co-design and communicate the value of [Learning and Employment Records](#) (LERs). LERs are digital records of an individual's skills, credentials, diplomas, and employment history that have the potential to strengthen or reinvent resumes by including verifiable data about achievements in real time.

LERs have the potential to better connect workers to available jobs in today's changing economy. They could be used to increase people's agency in tracking and sharing their skills with employers. But like many new technologies, LERs also pose a threat to equity. If designed without the inclusion of individuals who are often marginalized in the workforce—particularly entry-level Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), they could reflect and reproduce existing biases in the talent pipeline. The goal of this project is to garner greater awareness of how to center the user experience and mitigate racial bias in LER design and implementation.

"We want to make sure that people who are historically left out of opportunities know about this technology, understand the value of it, and can use it to better navigate education and workforce systems," said Jean-Claude Brizard, president and CEO of Digital Promise. "When the needs of those who are most marginalized are centered in the design, the resulting solutions benefit everyone."

There is a growing need to address systemic inequities in hiring and promotional practices across industries. For example, retail is the second largest industry for Black employment in the United States. Black workers make up [11 percent](#) of the retail labor force, but just 6 percent of managers. National retailers like Walmart are exploring ways to improve hiring and training practices for workers, and LERs could be used to support this shift. This project will focus on workers who stand to gain the most from a stronger skills-based hiring system, prioritizing

BIPOC workers in frontline sectors, such as retail, restaurants, and hospitality and tourism.

"Equity must be front and center as tools are developed to support the workforce of the future," said Gayatri Agnew, senior director of opportunity for Walmart. "Digital Promise is leading this effort and engaging partners to ensure that tech-based solutions like LERs meet the needs of BIPOC workers at every stage of their careers."

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's [T3 Innovation Network](#), consists of more than 500 organizations exploring the emerging technologies and standards in the talent marketplace to create more equitable and effective learning and career pathways. The T3 Network is supporting the scalable, pilot testing of 27 LER pilot teams and more than 50 organizations nationwide conducting pilots and engaging in the [LER Resource Hub](#). Digital Promise will collaborate with LER pilot projects to create design principles and use cases based on the lived experiences, interests, and challenges of BIPOC frontline workers. The results will be widely shared to communicate the value of LERs as a tool for greater equity.

"The T3 Innovation Network is working with stakeholders to support the digital transformation of the talent marketplace where all learning counts, skills become like currency, and workers and learners are empowered with data," said Jason Tyszko, vice president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. "LERs provide a unique opportunity to test how this new data infrastructure can help produce better learning and employment outcomes for individuals, but it must be done with their direct input and support."

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About Digital Promise

Digital Promise is a nonprofit organization that builds powerful networks and takes on grand challenges by working at the intersection of researchers, entrepreneurs, and educators. Our vision is that all people, at every stage of their lives, have access to learning experiences that help them acquire the knowledge and skills they need to thrive and continuously learn in an ever-changing world. For more information, visit the [Digital Promise website](#) and follow [@digitalpromise](#) for updates.

About the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation is dedicated to strengthening America's long-term competitiveness. We educate the public on the conditions necessary for business and communities to thrive, how business positively impacts communities, and emerging issues and creative solutions that will shape the future.

About Philanthropy at Walmart

Walmart.org represents the philanthropic efforts of Walmart and the Walmart Foundation. By focusing where the business has unique strengths, Walmart.org works to tackle key social and environmental issues and collaborate with others to spark long-lasting systemic change. Walmart has stores in 26 countries, employs more than 2.2 million associates and does business with thousands of suppliers who, in turn, employ millions of people. Walmart.org is helping people live better by supporting programs to accelerate upward job mobility for frontline workers, advance equity, address hunger, build inclusive economic opportunity for people in supply chains, protect and restore nature, reduce waste and emissions, and build strong communities where Walmart operates. To learn more, visit www.walmart.org or connect on Twitter [@Walmartorg](https://twitter.com/Walmartorg).