STARs in Maryland
Data on workers Skilled Through Alternative Routes (STARs)
Who are workers Skilled Through Alternative Routes (STARs)?

STARs have developed their skills through “alternative” non-degreed routes such as community college, work experience, military service, employer-supported training, and opportunity on-ramps training.

71 Million STARs across the US

STARs are located in all regions across the country, including both urban and rural areas (66% of rural workers are STARs)

STARs have a similar gender distribution as the active population of workers in the U.S. although many STARs-pathways have distinct (or skewed) gender distributions

STARs are a large share of many affinity groups: veterans, returning citizens, Opportunity Youth, returning caregivers, workers vulnerable to automation, etc. (66% of veterans are STARs)

STARs are disproportionately people of color. 62% of African Americans, 55% of LatinX, and 49% of Non-Hispanic Whites are STARs

Source: "Reach for the STARs: The Potential of America’s Untapped Talent Pool" Published by Opportunity@Work and Accenture, March 2020
Inequality of wages between college educated workers and STARs increased significantly in past generation

Medians hourly wages, 2019 dollars

STARs made 79.5 million job transitions from 2010–2019. Only 39% led to an increase in wages of 10% or more. 23% were lateral moves, and 37% led to lower wages.

Source: Blair, Debroy, Heck (2020); Opportunity@Work. “Navigating with the STARs,” (November 2020).
STARs in Maryland

STARs are workers who do not have a bachelor’s degree, but do hold a high school diploma. They have gained skills through work, but also through training programs & community college.

1.4 million STARs in Maryland

This is 47% of the workforce, a roughly equal proportion of the workforce holds a BA.

Source: Opportunity@Work calculations from the 2019 1-year American Community Survey, Integrated Public Use Microdata Sample.

STARs are critical for an equitable workforce in Maryland:

- Black STARs make up a significant percent of the workforce:
  - 17% of Maryland’s workforce are Black STARs

- The majority of workers of color are STARs:
  - 58% of Black workers are STARs
  - 46% of Hispanic workers are STARs
Maryland STARs have the skills for in-demand roles, but may be locked out due to degree requirements.

**Shining STARs**
- are in high wage roles today
- 80K Workers

**Rising STARs**
- have the skills for significantly higher wage work (50% on average), based on their current role
- 640K Workers

**Forming STARs**
- do not yet have the skills for significantly higher wage work, based on their current role
- 532 Workers

Source: Opportunity@Work calculations from the 2019 1-year American Community Survey, Integrated Public Use Microdata Sample.