

# Merit America: Closing the Skills Gap at Scale

“Merit America helped me change my life, with relentless support and dedication to my success. I used to have a job — now I have a career.”

- YVES, MERIT AMERICA GRADUATE

Click [here](#) to watch a video about Yves' story created with our partners at Google.



## The Challenge

Millions of Americans are underemployed, while employers are struggling to find talent with the skills they need. One of the greatest challenges facing our economy is closing this skills gap at scale.

**50M**

Americans have filed for unemployment claims, the vast majority low-wage workers

**80K**

Jobs recovered by workers with a high school diploma or less between 2010 and 2016 out of the 5.6M lost

**5.6M**

Jobs lost by workers with a high school diploma or less in the 2008 recession (out of 7.2M total jobs lost)

**\$29K**

Median earnings for HS graduates without further education (vs. \$52K median earnings for Americans with bachelor's degrees)

## Our Solution

Merit America envisions a world in which anyone can advance their life based on merit, not money. We provide a path to skilled careers for talented low-wage workers without college degrees. Our programs are fast, flexible, and designed to work for working adults, so they can keep their day jobs while they learn. In three years, we've become a leading provider in our space, and are on track to serve 1,000+ learners this year.



### IN-DEMAND CAREERS

We partner with major employers and use labor market data to provide the specific competencies required for skilled roles in high-demand fields such as IT, data science, and project management.



### BLENDED LEARNING

We operate learning programs that teach technical and professional skills through a mix of online learning, synchronous coaching, and peer support— creating the most effective, accessible, and scalable model in the field.



### WORKING ADULTS

Through direct outreach and partnerships with employers and community organizations, we recruit working adults without college degrees with potential to succeed in our program and the careers that follow.

### The New York Times

“It’s [the American dream stuff](#) that didn’t seem feasible for me until now.”

### THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

“How to Make a Career [Pandemic-Proof](#)”

### The New York Times

“The [hybrid future](#) of training programs for the disadvantaged.”

# Initial Progress and Results

Our early work has been funded by Schmidt Futures, Walmart Foundation, Google.org, the Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation, Blue Meridian Partners, and several other leading funders. Our initial employer partners include JPMorgan Chase, Amazon, Infosys, and more.

Learners in our cohorts across the country have earned industry-recognized credentials, built critical in-demand job skills, and received support in finding new careers.

**80%**

underrepresented racial minorities

**79%**

work during the program

**9.4**

average program rating on a 10-point scale

**64%**

of job-seeking graduates secure a new role within 6 months of graduation

**82%**

graduate with skills & credentials in 4 months

**\$22K**

average wage gain (to an average post-program salary of \$47K)

## What's Next

Three years ago, we were a team of two with a \$250,000 grant. Today, we're a team of 40+ with over \$20M raised. We're scaling to become the leading provider of accessible pathways to sustainable careers for low-income working Americans, while partnering with local governments, community colleges, and workforce organizations to power their programs with our model.

### Current Tracks and Markets:

**IT:** Dallas, DC, NYC, Atlanta

**Java:** Dallas, DC, NYC, Atlanta, Charlotte, Chicago

**Customer Success:** NYC, Charlotte, Oakland, Irvine

**Sales / Project Mgmt:** NYC, Charlotte, Oakland, Irvine

### Growth Projections and Cost Breakdown:



## Leadership

Merit America is dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our executive leadership is 40% people of color, 80% women, and 20% LGBT, and our broader organization is 70%+ underrepresented minorities and first gen college students.

### Cofounders and Co-CEOs



**Rebecca Taber**

- Former Coursera Director
- Education Advisor to Governor Markell
- McKinsey consultant
- Yale BA, Stanford MBA



**Connor Diemand-Yauman**

- Co-founder of Philanthropy U
- Conceptualized and launched Coursera's B2B business
- Princeton BA
- Stanford lecturer

## Philanthropic Verticals

We're excited to partner with the philanthropic community to fund our work in the following areas:

**Geographic expansion:** bringing Merit America's work to a new region, typically requiring a minimum sponsorship of 100 learners at ~\$7,000/learner. Note: our decision to enter new markets will depend on an analysis of the geography's unique talent supply and labor demand.

**Track expansion:** launching a new track in a high-demand field. New track development begins at \$250,000, or minimum sponsorship of 100 learners at ~\$7,000/learner.

**Technology enablement:** building our technology stack and data infrastructure, improving the on-platform experience of our learners, impact measurement, and B2B product offerings. We are seeking approximately \$1.2M in grant funding for technology innovation in 2021.

**Growth capital:** unrestricted funding to support our pathway to scale.

To learn more, visit [meritamerica.org](https://meritamerica.org) or email [info@meritamerica.org](mailto:info@meritamerica.org).

