



# Beyond Skills

How Social Capital Creates  
Economic Opportunity

MAY 2021

**SKILLUP**

**Climb Hire**



**common**  
GROUP

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# Preface

## Dear Friends,

[SkillUp](#), a coalition of 60+ partners, is working to help 40 million workers impacted by COVID-19 access training and hiring support for in-demand jobs. At the heart of this effort are partnerships with exceptional training and education organizations like Climb Hire, an innovative workforce development provider with students in the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, Denver, and Minneapolis. SkillUp partners with organizations like Climb Hire because our missions are in alignment: to give hardworking, ambitious people—who are too often overlooked and underappreciated—a chance to build a better life for themselves and their families.

Today, ability and ambition do not equal success for many hardworking people in the United States of America. The social and communal structures that underlie our society, which are rooted in systemic inequality, fail to give qualified candidates a chance. This paper, a collaboration between Climb Hire and SkillUp, casts a stark spotlight on the barriers and opportunities that we need to address, as employers, operators, and citizens, to redress this injustice.

At its core, this is a story about how “know-who”—relationships that can be leveraged into recommendations, referrals, and meaningful work experience—is the missing ingredient for workforce training and development in the United States. Climb Hire’s combination of “know-how” (technical skills and signals), “know-who” (social capital and networking skills), and community (built around alums, peers, staff, and employers) has propelled the organization’s rapid growth and early success. Combined, these elements offer a powerful solution to the bedeviling problem of how we can best support motivated people to access better careers.

SkillUp is proud to walk this path with Climb Hire. Social capital-driven models need to be understood, embraced, and scaled to offer tens and hundreds of thousands, millions even, of hardworking people in the United States true economic opportunity. Our mission, shared with Climb Hire and every one of our partners, is to make this economic opportunity a reality.

To get there, SkillUp is working with providers like Climb Hire to help opportunity seekers find and enroll in high quality training programs, to offer access to the [SkillUp Together Fund](#), and to connect programs with employers hiring at scale. This work is designed to coalesce into another, more powerful and longer-term transformation, one that changes the narrative of the paths to success in the United States, and opens up pathways to a better life to millions of opportunity seekers.

Only by changing the narrative about how to access economic opportunity in the United States—and who can do so—can we begin to change the shape of the otherwise inexorable “K-shaped” economic recovery. Only then will we begin to peel away the entrenched layers of multigenerational poverty and systemic inequity in this country. Only then will we go beyond the rhetoric, and give all candidates—traditional and nontraditional—a chance to build a better life for themselves and their families.

Our sincere thanks for your support, and we hope you enjoy the read!

**Steven Lee**

Executive Director, SkillUp

# Introduction

## Meet Two Climbers



**Lucy Sithole, Climber**

Lucy Sithole valued hard work, learning, and community. Originally from Zimbabwe, she moved to North Dakota in 2008 to enroll in an undergraduate degree program, but her studies were disrupted when her family's business collapsed with the economic crisis in their home country. "I had to come up with a plan fast," Lucy said, "because I had no way to survive."

Lucy got creative: she worked multiple jobs in the healthcare industry to support herself and her community. Disheartened by the lack of qualified healthcare workers in North Dakota, she even launched her own consulting business to connect qualified staff with rural healthcare facilities in need. But it wasn't enough to make ends meet.

Yrel Macahilas did everything right to pursue a career: he went to college, lived at home to save money, and got a minimum-wage job at Burlington Coat Factory to help his mom with household expenses. Despite a three-hour daily commute, he persevered for four years and graduated with a degree in computer science.

"I thought," he writes, "that grit was supposed to get me to the other side of opportunity." But applications weren't yielding jobs. "My school loans were piling up and my retail job wasn't paying the bills. I kept hearing from employers that I wasn't qualified because I lacked experience. I wondered, 'How does anyone get experience when no one will take that initial risk and give you experience?' Six long years later, I was still working at Burlington."



**Yrel Macahilas, Climber**



Yrel and Lucy's stories—far from unique in the United States' labor market—speak loudly to a troubling trend: people from working class or nontraditional backgrounds have trouble breaking into middle-wage jobs.

The assumption underlying this phenomenon is that of a “skills gap,” that low-wage workers aren't ready for—or even capable of—higher-wage jobs. And yet, as Yrel's and Lucy's stories vividly demonstrate, there is, in fact, plenty of qualified, determined, ambitious talent out there, but many skilled workers simply don't have a route to break into new roles. This is not a “skills gap” problem. It's a reflection of systemic inequality, of unequal distribution of resources and opportunities, of the racial wealth gap, and of the outsize advantage conferred by knowing the right people and building the right networks.

The brutal truth is that, all too often, the professional workforce is not representative of the communities who use its products and services, or of the United States of America writ large. Widening [racial resource gaps](#)—the

**80%**

of Climbers have secured middle class jobs and have doubled or tripled their income – from 24k to 66k on average

The average white family has

**8x**

the wealth of  
the average  
Black family

**5x**

the wealth of  
the average  
Hispanic family

average white family has **eight times** the wealth of the average Black family, and five times the wealth of the average Hispanic family—translate to reduced access to high-quality education and life-enriching extracurricular activities. And it's just such programs—borne out of family, school, and community—that produce the lifelong professional networks, connections to influential people, and fluency within certain sectors of society (e.g., an often opaque white-collar world) that leads to success for some while others are held back

Without those connections, it is immensely challenging to break into a living-wage career that offers opportunities for advancement. It is worth emphasizing that, as Yrel and Lucy's stories attest, there are hardworking, ambitious, community-driven people who want to build a better life for themselves and their families. But the system is stacked against them. To create systems-level change, it's imperative to address the inequity at multiple levels and create clear pathways for personal and professional development for all.

For decades, the middle class has secured jobs by combining “know-how”—skills, competencies, and mindsets—with “know-who”—relationships that can be leveraged into recommendations, referrals, and meaningful work experience. Expensive four-year liberal arts degrees demonstrate the extent to which peers, alumni, professors, advisors, and career services officers create economic opportunity for students. They broker introductions, demystify and advise on the job search process, and share knowledge from similar experiences in their own career trajectories.

But as the workforce in the United States continues to specialize, and narrows the skills and competencies required to succeed in any particular role, more and more employers are realizing that for entry-level positions, four-year degrees are poor predictors of professional potential.

Worse yet, despite the high price tag of a college education, the combination of “know-how” and “know-who” may not offer a clear path to high-quality jobs for students from the

working class or nontraditional backgrounds. Systemic inequities often place insurmountable barriers in the way of ambitious, motivated young people, with or without a college degree, whose household wealth, language, or race is marginalized.

We need affordable, accessible mechanisms for opportunity seekers with and without degrees to access both “know-how” and “know-who.” To succeed, these programs have to foster the same kind of relationships as their more expensive four-year counterparts, while building skills signals that employers trust. These pathways also need to build a “self-signal”: the feeling that “I am more capable than I thought I was,” the crucial confidence to take on a new career.

Climb Hire, an innovative workforce development program based in the Bay Area, brings together all three of these ingredients: skill building (know-how), community building (know-who), and confidence building. The program works with employers and working adults from nontraditional career trajectories (“Climbers”) to deliver professional and technical skills training, social capital networking, and community building, all with the objective of helping Climbers access [“new-collar” jobs](#) in technology and adjacent industries.

Over the course of more than 225 hours of rigorous preparation, diverse and determined working adults are supported in their journeys to middle-wage jobs through technical training, near-peer support, and frequent networking with professionals and potential employers. A dedicated employer partnerships team supports



**Sarika,  
Climber**

both employers and Climbers through the recruiting process, ensuring candidates are appropriately matched with potential roles and employers and supported through the interview process.

But, as in all things, the proof is in the results. For Yrel, Climb Hire led to a full-time job as a project manager at technology consulting firm, Arkus. Just as importantly, the program brought him a renewed sense of self-confidence, the opportunity to give back to other Climbers through the near-peer fellowship program, and a promotion after his first year.

For Lucy, the program helped her land a role in the Salesforce team at TPG, a global investment firm managing over 79 billion dollars in assets. In her words, getting that offer “was, for me, the ultimate realization of the fruit of the hard work, community strength, and generosity that this program has provided me with.”

The Climbers celebrated in this report, and so many more like them, are the reason that both Climb Hire and SkillUp exist. We hope that this report, a joint project between Climb Hire and SkillUp, and developed in collaboration with Common Group, helps education, workforce, and philanthropic communities apply Climb Hire’s learning to their own practices. In particular, this report is designed to emphasize why social capital is a key ingredient for economic mobility, and how this approach can be embedded in programs across the U.S and beyond.



**Celeste,  
Climber**



**Gracie,  
Climber**

# Defining Climbers and Meeting Their Needs



**Jesenia, Climber**

*Jesenia was feeling defeated. She'd dropped out of high school because of a lack of support from parents, teachers, and administrators and had had her first child at 16 years old. She had worked at In-N-Out Burger and taken courses at community college. Despite the many hurdles she encountered, and with a third baby on the way, Jesenia had transferred to a four-year institution and completed her degree. But when she graduated, she realized that she had very little idea how to go about finding a higher-paying job: no leads, no connections, and no experience in the fields in which she was interested. Jesenia found Climb Hire through a post on an online job board.*

*Climb Hire met her where she was as a working mother: it offered flexibility, evening classes, the promise of an in-demand credential, and a pathway to professional success. Today, Jesenia is the executive assistant for a vice chancellor at UCSF, earning a middle-class salary and building new skills and relationships. She also serves as a Climb Hire fellow, paying it forward to the next set of Climbers by teaching, mentoring, and coaching them as they navigate new skills and new careers. And best of all, Jesenia has joined the Climb Hire board, to help steward the future of the organization.*

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In recent months, the themes of diversity, equity, and belonging have reverberated in nearly every boardroom as companies strive to create work environments where members of all communities can thrive. But too often, these conversations have failed to interrogate why so few people of color or non-traditionally educated candidates are welcomed into these spaces in

the first place, and what can be done to make change.

To create intentionally inclusive environments in companies across the United States, and to enable the success of programs like Climb Hire, it is essential to hear the stories and meet the needs of those who have been left



out. These individuals are at the core of Climb Hire's mission. In this section, key findings on the needs of both Climbers as a whole and key subgroups in which Climb Hire is particularly invested are shared.

So what is it that Climbers are looking for when they join the program? And what do they need? When people arrive at programs like Climb Hire, Climbers are frequently motivated by the desire for a better job, better pay, and a better life. Climbers also arrive having been held back—not by a lack of skills, but by gaps in information, opportunity, and networks. These barriers often prevent talented people from getting a first round interview with hiring managers, let alone successfully navigating recruitment processes.

In addition to desiring a better job, better pay, and a better life, Climbers report a need for *community and belonging*. Overcoming systemic challenges—including failed support systems, racial discrimination, low-quality jobs, generational poverty, abuse, and addiction—takes immense effort and is much easier to do alongside others. Climb Hire helps participants to access job opportunities, and offers the



**Khalil,  
Climber**

“

When no one wants to give you a chance it's hard to see yourself as an employable person. Now that you have a group of people behind you saying you can do it, you believe you can do it.

chance for participants to build the confidence that they deserve to be there. At Climb Hire, this confidence is known as a “self-signal.”

Of course, not all Climbers have the same needs, and there is nuance in every person's story. To illuminate the opportunities to better serve specific needs, included below is a deeper look at three critical subgroups: parents, immigrants, and people from communities of color.

## Parents

Climbers who are parents or caregivers are very often seeking an opportunity to provide more income for their families. They face high childcare and healthcare costs; in California, for example, the living wage for a single parent of two children is [nearly three times](#) that of a person without children. As almost any parent will tell you, their children come first. Programs need to accommodate parents' needs for a flexible schedule, and for the changes in responsibilities that come up in the course of parenthood.

Climb Hire has found that both program services and future job opportunities have to embrace Climbers' children as an integral component of the process. Together, Climb Hire and SkillUp are exploring joint ways of creating parent-focused marketing so that more parents know they are welcome in communities like Climb Hire.

Meaningful support for parents also has to be offered on a continuous basis, from both program staff and fellow Climbers. For this reason, Climb Hire is exploring the creation of affinity groups for parents specifically, and an updated set of guidelines for dealing with absences and missed coursework caused by parental responsibilities.

## Communities of Color

Workers from communities of color have faced systemic inequality and discrimination for decades. Having been underserved by educational and social systems, these individuals frequently arrive at Climb Hire seeking mentors and communities who believe in their potential and can help them break into new industries. As one Climber put it:

“

*There is a lot of bad stuff that goes on around where I live, a lot of stuff to really keep you down. For the last few years I have been hoping for an opportunity like this, because I am trying to get into a career that is not for people who are like me, or for people who have been through the same situation as me. Growing up, every teacher was really nonchalant about me and didn't really care. Because of that I have always felt like I don't need anybody's help. But Climb Hire is really showing me how to open up, how to learn from other people, and that it is not just me going through this alone.*

**87%**

of Climb Hire alumni remain engaged as fellows, event attendees, or sources of referrals for current students

Recognizing this need for mentors and community, Climb Hire has designed affinity groups to build positive support systems for Climbers from communities of color—making sure every Climber knows the community cares about them and their success. In addition to affinity groups, Climb Hire also dedicates time to talking openly about race in technology and the workplace.

Climb Hire staff share from their personal experience and are bringing more volunteers of color to networking events to do the same. This open dialogue helps Climbers from communities of color prepare for a lack of representation in the technology industry and is essential to ensuring that Climbers of all backgrounds can see themselves in new industries, know that they are not alone, and gain the confidence that they need to break in.

## Immigrants

Foreign-born workers for whom English is a second language are often confronted with stigmas about race, language, and culture. These stigmas are compounded by the fact that they often bring skills or credentials from their home country that are not recognized or valued in the United States.

With this in mind, workers who have immigrated to the United States often seek mentors who believe in their potential, value their background and experience, and honor their culture. Again, affinity groups and near-peer mentors can play a role in helping them develop their “self-signal.”

But, to truly break down barriers to middle wage employment for immigrants and other subgroups, Climb Hire must also work with employers, educating them about the impact of certain policies like bachelor’s requirements, identifying potential blindspots or biases in their hiring process, or simply coordinating between hiring managers and candidates.

As we strive together for a more representative workforce, the onus is not just on workers or programs like Climb Hire, but also employers, to serve the goal of a more equitable and inclusive economy.



**Abdul,  
Climber**

*Abdul, a Climb Hire graduate and alumnus, is eloquent, soft spoken, thoughtful, and good at his job. One would never know that seven years ago, he did not speak a word of English. Abdul lived in a country with a violent and unstable government, and starting work at the age of 13 was not enough to offset the necessities for his family.*

*Moving from Afghanistan to the United States, Abdul worked three jobs supporting himself and his family, who were still in his home country. After an associate’s degree in business, he applied for over 100 jobs and not one employer responded to his cold outreach or applications. Then, Abdul found Climb Hire. He excelled in the program and secured a job as a systems analyst at Gusto, a fast-growing, prestigious Silicon Valley tech company.*

# Working with Employers

Successful career training and education programs are measured by their placement and retention rates. Climb Hire performs well on each, placing 80% of program completers into roles within six months, and, at the time of writing, helping employer partners achieve a 100% retention rate over a two-year period.

A number of strategies support Climb Hire's success in this arena. First, Climb Hire works directly with employers to design curricula that reflect their specific needs, such as a custom soft-skills curriculum for the mortgage technology company Better.com.

More than

**80%**

of Climb Hire alumni remain engaged as fellows, event attendees, or sources of referrals for current students

Second, Climb Hire has a dedicated partnership management team focused on both finding new employers and providing support to job seekers as they go through the recruitment process. Both techniques are essential components of Climb Hire's model and have been widely adopted in the alternative workforce program space. But Climb Hire's employer work goes further than this, specifically by focusing on *changing hiring culture* with employer partners.

## Helping Employers Find Overlooked Talent

In their work helping Climbers secure jobs, the Climb Hire team found that, too often, hiring managers overlook talented people because of the belief that past experience is the primary determinant of future success. When employers are looking for new sources of diverse or overlooked talent, this focus on past experience presents a barrier that disadvantages both Climbers and employers.

To counter this, Climb Hire is working to shift hiring culture by helping employers remove questions from their hiring process that require prior corporate experience, such as scenario-based questioning. For entry-level roles, Climb Hire has found that most hiring managers are



looking for grit, motivation, drive, and aptitude more than direct experience of the role. By avoiding questions that can trip up a well-qualified and highly-motivated candidate due to a lack of prior experience or cultural capital, employers gain access to a larger pool of talent, and Climbers are given a fair shot.

In one recent example, a Climber was rejected from a role after several strong interviews because of a take-home assessment that required previous corporate experience to know what to prioritize between a client call and an urgent manager request. In the place of this kind of question, Climb Hire recommends employers use questions that ask how an applicant would problem-solve a future scenario on the job, like “Explain how you would solve this problem in the future and why?” This is different from asking “How have you solved problems in past

professional experiences?” because it recognizes that Climbers may not have had a precisely similar professional experience in the past, but can still be capable of tackling the problem effectively.

In addition, Climb Hire’s partnerships team works with cohorts of hiring managers to challenge assumptions and implicit bias in the hiring process, not through unconscious bias workshops or internal professional development programs, but by giving hiring managers real, authentic interactions with nontraditional talent through networking events and temporary roles so the employers can see their strengths firsthand. This helps to shift mindsets about the capabilities of nontraditional workers and, critically, builds relationships between participants and potential hiring managers, resulting in social capital.



**Sisanda,  
Climber**

*Sisanda is a Climber raised in South Africa. After working as an au pair making less than minimum wage, she went on to work two jobs just to secure a living wage. Today, Sisanda works for Common Group as a program associate, earning five times her salary as an au pair. Through authentic interactions during networking events, Sisanda was able to demonstrate to Common Group her outstanding social skills and personal motivation, essential ingredients to success in the role.*

# Building an Effective Social Capital Program

Climb Hire's unique combination of community building, confidence developing, and curricular innovation emerged from a growing awareness that who you know matters just as much as what you know.

Skills may qualify you to break into an industry, but without relationships—without that crucial social capital—it's nearly impossible to do so. Climb Hire's founder, Nitzan Pelman, learned this in the role of an entrepreneur in residence at LinkedIn. While she was there, the company put a referral button on its platform and found that applicants were nine times more likely to secure a job through a referral than without one. This experience moved Nitzan to establish Climb Hire with a core focus on social capital.

Supporting Climbers to develop social capital is about building relationships with people that may refer them in the future. But this isn't as simple as putting Climbers and professionals together in a Zoom room. Before getting involved with Climb Hire, many Climbers do not have positive, meaningful professional relationships with white-collar professionals. As one Climber put it: "When I used to see white educated people, I'd run the other way. I didn't think I was allowed to talk to those people."

For this reason, Climb Hire has developed a range of interventions to boost participants' confidence, networking skills, and network strength. At the core of the approach are Climb Hire networking events, where volunteers can meet Climbers for specific networking events or professional development skill events, like focusing on interview question prep or resume review. This range of events enables conversations over a five-month period with people outside their existing social networks, providing the opportunity to get comfortable with having deeper-level conversations with white-collar professionals.

Climb Hire has had great success getting Climbers into roles they're qualified for

**100%**

retention for  
Climbers  
hired

**100%**

conversion  
from contract  
to hire

After months of hosting these social capital events, Climb Hire has noticed something interesting: the benefit of building social capital is not just for the Climbers, but for the volunteers as well. Many volunteer professionals want to expand their own networks, and meeting the Climbers opens up their world too. Ultimately this leads to job opportunities, as people get to build deep connections across social and economic lines, truly opening doors for all involved.

### The Power of the Near-Peer Relationship

In Climb Hire's model, social capital isn't built solely or even primarily with professionals already in tech. Climb Hire is designed to create social capital between Climbers as well, through near-peer relationships with program fellows.

Climb Hire recruits near-peers from previous cohorts of Climbers to become fellows. The primary role of fellows is to support the

instructional process, helping Climbers as mentors and role models while leading group reflections, discussion pods, accountability partnerships, and coaching. Each fellow leads a small group of current Climbers, which allows for direct instruction and intimate, personal connections. Post-program supports sustain a thriving network even after a module ends; 87% of alumni remain engaged as fellows, event attendees, or sources of referrals for current students.

When Climbers join Climb Hire they learn the mantras of the organization: "this isn't a class, it's a community", and, "we rise together." This shared identity and community spirit means social capital is built on strong foundations among Climbers, as well as with professionals already in their careers.

Together, these approaches represent the core ethos for Climb Hire: when you succeed, you pull others up with you.



**Nitzan Pelman, Climb Hire  
Founder & CEO**

*"We want to deliver on our promise of a middle-class job for the Climbers we know and the ones we don't yet. Our program has seen such success: we're placing 80% of Climbers in jobs within six months, all of whom have remained in those roles, and alumni are reaching back to pull up the next Climbers. Almost all program alumni participate in the community as fellows, volunteers, and advisors.*

*This shows we have the right ingredients: now we need to make the necessary investments to reach more Climbers. Over the course of the next three to five years, we hope to put 5,000 smart, ambitious, hardworking people on a path to economic mobility and security."*

# Mobilizing for Scale

Virtually every social leader has been asked, “How can we reach more people?” The question is ubiquitous, but the answer is often unexpectedly complex. All social impact organizations wrestle with how they will scale.

For Climb Hire, relationships are the key to sustainable growth. The opportunity to effectively serve thousands more people will come not just from more Climbers gaining certifications, but also the development of a Climb Hire network that can match highly selective institutions like Ivy League colleges. This referral “flywheel”, through which past graduates refer future graduates into middle class professions and organizations, is at the heart of Climb Hire’s approach to scale.



**Nicole,  
Climber**

But, the relationships required for this flywheel to take effect take time to build, both among Climbers, and between Climbers and employers. To support Climb Hire’s path to scale, the organization is mobilizing new partnerships with employers, funders, institutions of higher education, and social service organizations which will strengthen the foundations of a nationwide social capital driven model.

## Launching New Certificates in Partnership with Employers

Climb Hire’s initial curricular offering focused on Salesforce. In this pathway, Climbers train to become certified Salesforce Administrators, a high-demand and well-paid career path. But a Salesforce credential or job isn’t for everyone. To expand access and adapt to diverse and evolving employer needs, Climb Hire has partnered with employers to add two new certification tracks - Google’s Project Management certificate and a soft skills curriculum developed in partnership with Better.com - with others on the horizon.

By doing so, Climb Hire is testing new employer-facing value propositions, while learning which programs resonate most with Climbers. Critically, this approach also expands the roles



and companies in which Climbers are working, broadening the reach of the Climb Hire network. Through creating a portfolio of certificates that differ in duration and cost, Climb Hire is expanding the signals that Climbers can send to both employers and each other.

## Expanding Geographically with Strong Local Partners

In order to reach more learners and employers, Climb Hire is also expanding to new regions. Climbers have been recruited in Los Angeles, Sacramento, and Minneapolis–St. Paul, adding to cohorts in Denver and the San Francisco Bay Area.

An expansion to five cities in this short period of time has in some ways been facilitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. An increased acceptance of remote learning, employment, and community building means programs can flourish even when staff isn't physically present. But career education and training require deep collaboration between organizations. Connections with employers are of course vital, but so are relationships with organizations offering social services like mental health support, rainy-day funds for emergency expenses, and legal advice. Working in collaboration with SkillUp, Climb Hire is developing relationships with local partners to secure access to these resources for its local Climbers.

One key partnership opportunity at the local level is with community colleges. This kind of partnership could bring Climb Hire's innovative social capital and technical curriculum to community college students while they work toward a two-year stackable Associate's degree.

Climb Hire plans to serve

**5,000**

Climbers in the next four years

## Diversifying Funding Sources

To reach its goal of serving 5,000 Climbers over the next three years, Climb Hire will need to steadily increase its operating budget, and no organization can achieve scale without diversified and sustainable funding streams. Accordingly, Climb Hire is increasingly braiding together a number of funding streams, including earned revenue from student ISAs and employer placement fees alongside growth capital from supportive philanthropies.

In the coming years, Climb Hire will position itself to receive a significant portion of its operating budget from student-focused bonds and “evergreen funds”, sometimes known as “pay-for-success” or social impact bonds. Climb Hire's partnership with the SkillUp Together Fund is just one example. These sources of revenue and others will be needed for Climb Hire to meet its anticipated operating budget of \$25 million by 2025. At the same time, Climber involvement in cohorts like the [SkillUp Together Fund](#) could become a mechanism to further expand the networks of both Climbers and graduates of other organizations, creating social capital across an entire generation of opportunity seekers.

# Building a Better Future Together

## Dear Friends,

Thank you for reading our report - we hope it was informative and inspiring. There is still work to be done. For years now, our society and our field have relied on outdated ideas about what allows access to economic opportunity and how people can escape multigenerational poverty. We strive hard at SkillUp and Climb Hire to examine more deeply what really works. Today, our conclusion is that social capital is a key ingredient for economic mobility, and we hope that education, workforce, and philanthropic communities can embed social capital and Climb Hire's learnings into their own practices.

Building these spaces and relationships is a difficult, complex project, and scaling them will take work. But that work is doable if we band together, and incredibly productive and rewarding when we succeed. Together, we can shift the narrative, and improve the economic opportunities available to millions living and working in the United States today.

Thank you for being fellow travelers on this journey.

## Nitzan & Steven



Dallas,  
Climber



Virginia,  
Climber

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