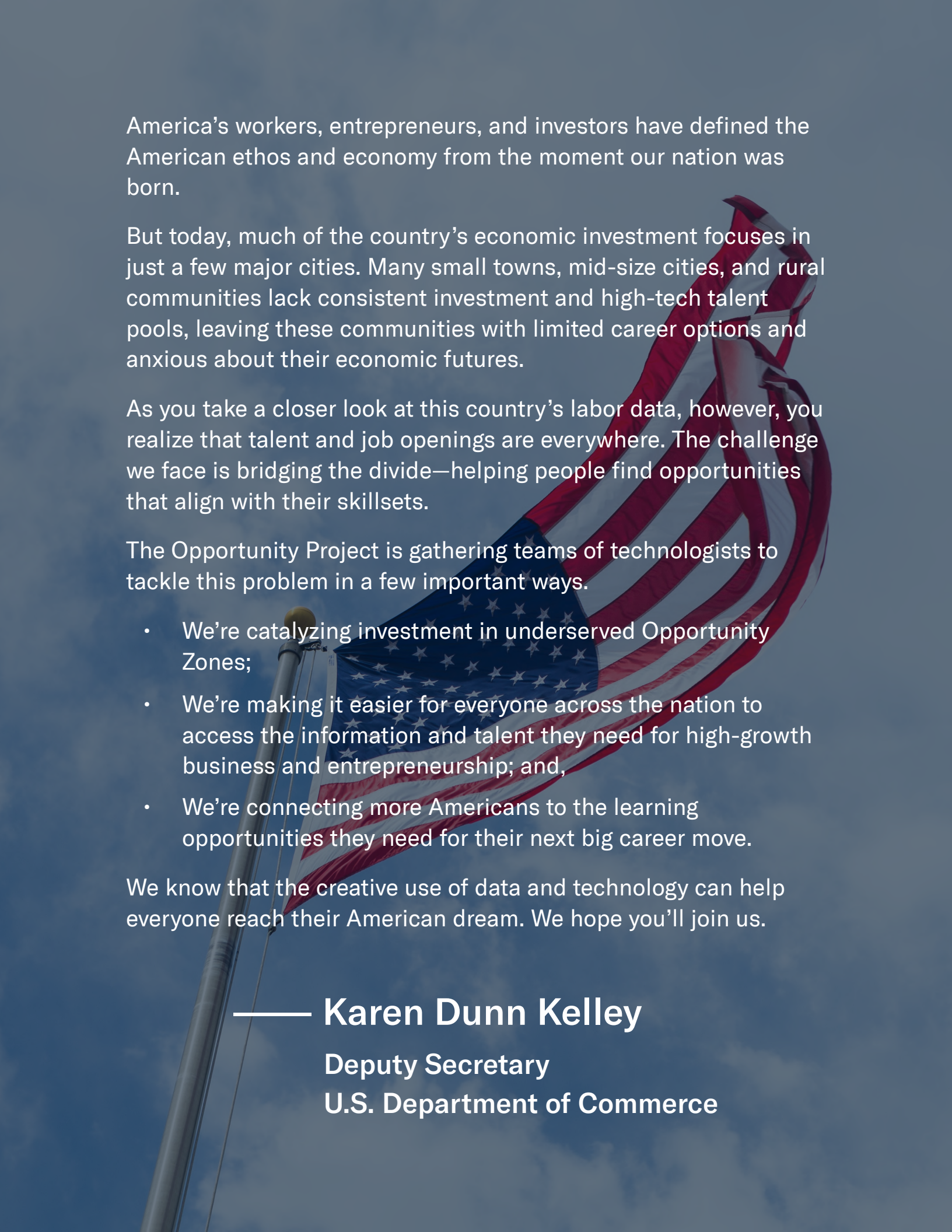
THE OPPORTUNITY PROJECT

2019 Workforce Cohort

Problem Statements

CENSUS OPEN INNOVATION LABS

U.S. Census Bureau



America's workers, entrepreneurs, and investors have defined the American ethos and economy from the moment our nation was born.

But today, much of the country's economic investment focuses in just a few major cities. Many small towns, mid-size cities, and rural communities lack consistent investment and high-tech talent pools, leaving these communities with limited career options and anxious about their economic futures.

As you take a closer look at this country's labor data, however, you realize that talent and job openings are everywhere. The challenge we face is bridging the divide—helping people find opportunities that align with their skillsets.

The Opportunity Project is gathering teams of technologists to tackle this problem in a few important ways.

- We're catalyzing investment in underserved Opportunity Zones;
- We're making it easier for everyone across the nation to access the information and talent they need for high-growth business and entrepreneurship; and,
- We're connecting more Americans to the learning opportunities they need for their next big career move.

We know that the creative use of data and technology can help everyone reach their American dream. We hope you'll join us.

Karen Dunn Kelley

Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce

Workforce Sprint Problem Statements

Sprint Dates: June 25 - September 27

Catalyzing investment in Opportunity Zones

White House Council of Economic Advisors &
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Challenge: Create digital tools and resources to connect investors with community leaders, entrepreneurs, and workers of America's 8,764 Opportunity Zones.

Executive champion: Secretary Ben Carson & Executive Director Scott Turner

Background: The American dream is fading. Almost all children born in 1940 earned more than their parents, but the same was true for only half of children born in the 1980s. The decline in mobility is related to growing regional inequality. In a reversal of trends of the 20th century, regional income inequality has grown in the 2000s, making a person's place of birth an increasingly powerful predictor of their future income. The Opportunity Zone provision of the 2017 Tax Cut and Jobs Act created an incentive to invest in select low-income communities and is the core of a major effort to bring investment and opportunity to communities bypassed by recent economic growth. To promote equality of opportunity across the US, we need data and tools to connect investors to the Opportunity Zones where their dollars will do the most good. Private sector developers can use their talents to bring together multiple sources of public data, as well as private data, to create new data products that enable investment in overlooked places.

Why this problem matters: Opportunity Zones are a promising way to revitalize low-income communities and bring jobs to local residents. But this can only occur if investors match their capital with the right people and places. Many low-income communities selected to be Opportunity Zones have few resources to market themselves to investors. A community may have easy access to transportation infrastructure, low-cost real estate, a well-trained workforce, and natural resources, but lack the means to document these assets and bring them to the attention of investors. Investors, on the other hand, may tend to flock to the most well-known areas for promising investment projects and overlook communities with under-studied and under-appreciated potential.

Vision for sprint outcomes: Through better access to consolidated data, more investors, entrepreneurs, and community leaders will discover opportunities for economic development in overlooked Opportunity Zones.

Target audience/end user: Entrepreneurs, managers of Opportunity Zone funds, and community leaders in Opportunity Zones.

Potential open data sets:

- Opportunity Zone status and location (link, link)
- American Community Survey tract-level data on household characteristics (link)
- HUD data such as Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Qualified Census Tracts (link) and fair-market rent data (link)
- Treasury ZIP code statistics of income data, which could be mapped to census tracts (link)
- USDA/ERS county-level data on county type, remoteness, amenities, etc (link)
- USDA/ERS data on food access (link)
- DOE/EIA data on location of energy infrastructure -power lines, power plants, coal mines (link)
- DOT infrastructure spending (link)

Lead POC:

Jeremy Weber, Senior Economist, CEA
Cale Clingenpeel, Economist, CEA (cale.a.clingenpeel@cea.eop.gov)

Modernizing Talent Discovery for High Growth Entrepreneurship

U.S. Economic Development Administration

Challenge: Create digital tools or open sourced data to transform talent discovery, matching, and retention in mid-size cities across the country, to help them achieve innovation and regional economic growth.

Executive champion: Dennis Alvord, EDA Deputy Assistant Secretary for Regional Affairs

Background: Knowledge, technology, and innovation are the engines of our economy -- without them, regions and the economy as a whole would fail to grow. Over the last 20 years, economic and technological forces have shifted the American economic landscape from a manufacturing and agricultural economy to a knowledge-based economy, making knowledge even more important to the future of the workforce and economic growth. To drive business innovation and productive regional economies, communities across the U.S. need intellectual capital, but there is an increasing geographic divide in talent. Large cities like Boston, New York, and San Francisco have seen a decade of entrepreneurship growth and increasing capital investment, and boast a burgeoning entrepreneurial ecosystem of business incubators, accelerators, and high-growth companies. But mid-sized cities (with 250,000-1 million residents) across the U.S. are just starting to experience similar activity. In these places where talent pools are less concentrated and more nascent, discovering the right talent is a major barrier for high-growth companies looking to launch and scale. New companies and entrepreneurs often lack the resources, time, and knowledge in talent search to identify and recruit skilled workers.

Why this problem matters: To increase their capacity for innovation and growth, mid-size cities must find new ways to discover, match, and retain talent so that local companies can grow and contribute to a competitive regional economy. Investors, entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurial support organizations need tools that will help them to identify and match existing talent with high growth companies. This is critical to modernizing talent discovery and leveraging human capital for the knowledge-based economy of the future.

Vision for sprint outcomes: user friendly digital tools or datasets that community leaders can leverage to discover talent and connect people with economic opportunities by geographic region.

Target audience/end user: Entrepreneurs, entrepreneur support organizations (ESOs), incubators, accelerators, seed funds, state and local leaders, and growth companies in rural and mid-sized cities where talent pools are less concentrated or nascent.

Potential open data sets:

- Employment Data from Census by Geography: Industry and Occupation, Employers (public and private), Commuting, Labor Force Statistics, Work from Home (link)
- Occupational Employment Statistics from DOL: Occupation profiles, metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas, industry-specific (link)
- Potentially Department of Education: Students enrolled, degrees and awards earned, dollars expended, staff employed (link)
- Regional Innovation Strategies, i6 Challenge Awards (link)
- Regional Innovation Strategies, Seed Fund Support Awards (link)
- Cluster Mapping Tool (link)
- StatsAmerica (link)

Lead POCs:

Emily Miller, Policy Advisor, Office of Innovation & Entrepreneurship (emiller@eda.gov)
Craig Buerstatte, Acting Director, Office of Innovation & Entrepreneurship (cbuerstatte@eda.gov)

Resources to Unleash American Entrepreneurship

White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP)

Challenge: Develop tools to empower entrepreneurs and innovation ecosystem builders to find and navigate the variety of resources available across the federal government.

Executive champion: Michael Kratsios, Deputy Assistant to the President for Technology Policy

Background: Entrepreneurs create the companies that make up the industries of the future, and these companies will in turn recruit and train the workforce of the future. Young businesses create nearly all net new jobs in America, and contribute to 20% of gross job creation. Science and technology are the foundation for many high-growth startups, but companies with capital-intensive research and development (R&D) products also face some of the greatest challenges. For America to maintain its position as the leader of global innovation, it is imperative that we empower entrepreneurs with the support to translate research discovery into the new products and services in the marketplace that will make meaningful impact.

Why this problem matters: Entrepreneurs need flexible tools that allow them to access the right resources at the right time. Yet information about government investment in intellectual property, expertise, equipment and facilities, and publicly-available resources to support entrepreneurs is spread across government agencies and websites. Entrepreneurs unfamiliar with government may lack knowledge about these resources and have difficulty navigating and finding them, posing significant barriers to entry and keeping the best minds and ideas from reaching their full potential. Additionally, resources and access to capital are not reaching all Americans evenly. The best ideas can come from anywhere, but 80% of all venture capital (VC) investment has been concentrated in just three states, and in 2016, only 1% of VC dollars went to African-American and Latino founders, and less than 2% went to female founders. Ensuring that access to resources and capital are not relegated to a few regions but to all Americans is critical to creating a robust and dynamic workforce and inclusive growth, and ensuring the benefits of entrepreneurship not only accrue nationwide, not just in America's largest cities.

Vision for sprint outcomes: Entrepreneurs are able to easily find and access opportunities for funding, expertise, equipment and facilities, and other resources, resulting in more and more inclusive R&D entrepreneurship.

Target audience/end user: Individuals starting or scaling high-growth, science and technology-based companies -- at any stage of their entrepreneurial journey (early stage, scale up or commercialization); innovation ecosystem builders , including entrepreneur support organizations (ESOs), incubators, accelerators, seed funds, and state and local economic development leaders.

Potential open data sets:

- SBIR.gov (link)
- FLCBusiness (link)
- DOE Lab Partnering Service (link)
- SBA Datasets (link)
    - Especially Regional Innovation Clusters, Small Business Development Center, Women's Business Center, Veteran's Business Outreach Center, Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (link)
- Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) (link)
- Manufacturing USA Institutes (link)
- DoD and VA inventions (link)
- Regional Innovation Strategies, i6 awards (link)
- Regional Innovation Strategies, Seed Fund Support awards (link)
- National Science Foundation awards (link)
    - Industry-University Cooperative Research Centers (I/UCRC) Program awards (link)
    - Advanced Technological Education (ATE) awards (link)
    - I-Corps awards data (link)
- National Institutes of Health awards data (link)
    - STTR Regional Technology Transfer Accelerator Hubs (link)
    - NIH Centers for Accelerated Innovations and Research Evaluation and Commercialization Hubs (REACH) (link)
- Opportunity Zones (link)
- Census Business Builder (link)

Lead POCs:

Helena Fu, White House Leadership Development Fellow, OSTP (helena.w.fu@ostp.eop.gov)
Jennifer Shieh, Assistant Director for Entrepreneurship, OSTP (jennifer.c.shieh@ostp.eop.gov)

Helping the American Workforce Leverage Multiple Pathways for Career Growth

U.S. Department of Education

Challenge: Create digital tools that help American workers to consider and take advantage of the multiple pathways available to find or advance in careers. Tools could 1) make multiple pathways to career success more attractive by helping people envision them as exciting and prestigious, and/or 2) help to make data on these opportunities user friendly and discoverable by American workers.

Executive Champion: Diane Jones, Principle Deputy Under Secretary and Acting Under Secretary for Postsecondary Education

Background: To many Americans, earning a 4-year university degree is held up as the most attractive, prestigious or only path toward a successful career. Yet, educational institutions, companies, unions, and other entities are increasingly creating multiple, alternative pathways to careers, including apprenticeships, secondary career and technical education programs, community college degree and certificate programs, boot camps, industry certificates, combinations of the above, and new programs that have not yet been invented. These programs unfairly lack the prestige of a college degree, when they often could link to a college degree, possibly paid for by an employer. This is in part because for the past several decades, American higher education and workforce development has focused on encouraging high school students to attend college after graduation. In contrast, in countries like Germany and Switzerland, career and technical education, including apprenticeships, is highly prestigious in society and culture. While college can be very beneficial for many people, it ignores a large swath of Americans who don't necessarily want to attend college right after school, don't want to accrue tens of thousands of dollars in student loan debt, or who simply want to enter the workforce immediately after graduation. To realize the true potential of the American workforce, students need to be fully aware of all pathways to careers. Educational institutions, companies, unions, and other organizations need to market them as attractive, prestigious, and cost-effective career paths for young people. In short, multiple pathways need to be easier to find.

Why this problem matters: The American workforce is missing out on many potential educational options to launch or advance careers and develop talent. We need digital tools to help people understand and discover this increasingly important sector of both the economy and the education space. However, finding and assessing these programs isn't easy. People may not even know where to begin looking, and if they were to search online, data is scattered across websites and not easily discoverable. Some come from the private sector; others are

administered by state and local governments, companies, or federal government. As a result, American workers and employers are missing out on valuable opportunities that could help them to launch or advance successful careers.

Target audience/end user:

- Young people (ages 14-24) who are trying to determine the best career path or people seeking new careers or skills
- Veterans
- People returning from incarceration
- Local and state education and workforce development policymakers
- Community colleges and trade schools

Potential open data sets:

- Occupational Outlook Handbook (link)
- O*Net (link)
- Cyberseek (link)
- Apprenticeship Available Occupations (link)
- Employment Situation Summary (link)
- Apprenticeship Finder (link)

Lead POC:

Sariane Leigh, US Department of Education (sariane.leigh@ed.gov)