

PRESS RELEASE

## Free Soft Skills Program Gets Walmart's Support

Richmond, CA, February 3, 2021 - **The Essential Skills Program will offer free and openly accessible online soft skills training to serve those who need it most. Through online video lessons, anyone can learn the ten soft skills ranked highest in importance by employers. The program's mission is to remove barriers to access and help build an empowered, educated workforce.**

Changes in global economies, heightened by the pandemic, have drastically altered the workplace. Individuals must quickly adapt to find new employment or transition to remote work. Soft skills training programs with measurable outcomes designed to serve broad populations are needed now more than ever.

The Essential Skills Program (ESP) creates soft skills training lessons that are openly accessible online and free for adult learners, job seekers, and employees, thereby contributing to the economic health of communities.

The founding team behind ESP has already scaled the New World of Work soft skills program across the 115 California Community Colleges system and is now, as a newly established and independent organization, receiving funding through Walmart.org for the development of ten soft skills training lessons. The training will consist of three parts:

1. Online video lessons to teach the ten soft skills ranked highest in importance by employers.
2. Self-reflection study guides to help learners integrate the material and create behavior change.
3. Multiple choice assessment exams to test learners' understanding of the lesson concepts, which will result in the awarding of digital badge credentials.

"The funding through Walmart.org allows us to produce the most comprehensive, free training resources available, empowering those who need it most. We offer openly accessible video lessons to teach the relevant skills and help our learners find a job or advance professionally," said Rajinder Gill, CEO and Co-Founder of the Essential Skills Program.

In the second development stage, digital badge certifications will enable learners to verify their skills training on the job market. The ESP Team is actively seeking funding for digital badge development. ESP's badges will contain metadata with links to the Emsi labor market library. This creates instantaneous value for learners but also for employers who will be seeking out potential employees.

ESP's free soft skills training will be released to the public by the fall of 2021 after ten months of content creation and extensive testing with ESP's pilot partners. Organizations interested in learning more about becoming pilot partners are welcome to get in touch with ESP.

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### **Further Information**

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Essential Skills Program: [www.essential-skills.org](http://www.essential-skills.org)

Relevant hashtags: #softskills, #softskillstraining, #upskilling, #reskilling, #walmartgiving

### **About the Essentials Skills Program**

To be successful at work we need soft skills, but learning and using them effectively to get hired or promoted is a real challenge! The Essential Skills Program team has spent the past decade leading a successful training where learners earn digital badge certifications employers actually value. Skills lessons are free, easy to use, and are valuable in any type of job. Our learners are empowered with a new sense of confidence, knowing they have the skills to thrive and not just survive in the workplace, plus the digital badge credentials to prove it. To learn more, visit [www.essential-skills.org](http://www.essential-skills.org)

### **About Philanthropy at Walmart**

Walmart.org represents the philanthropic efforts of Walmart and the Walmart Foundation. By leaning in where our business has unique strengths, we work to tackle key social issues and collaborate with others to spark long-lasting systemic change. Walmart has stores in 27 countries, employing more than 2 million associates and doing business with thousands of suppliers who, in turn, employ millions of people. Walmart.org is helping people live better by supporting programs that work to accelerate upward job mobility for frontline workers, address hunger and make healthier, more sustainably-grown food a reality, and build strong communities where Walmart operates. To learn more, visit <http://www.walmart.org> or find them on Twitter @walmartorg.