



PGA WORKS programs inspire and engage talent from diverse backgrounds to pursue key employment positions across the golf industry.

PHOTOS: PGA OF AMERICA

## Growing Participation in Golf through Workforce Diversification

For decades, efforts to grow the game of golf have fallen short of making a significant impact in underrepresented communities. Initial efforts made by the PGA of America were primarily focused on creating monthly, nationwide promotions designed to attract newcomers to PGA Professional-affiliated facilities, such as PGA Family Golf Month. While these programs were worthwhile in terms of

giving consumers a taste of golf, something was missing. Namely, an ability to track these consumers and actively bridge them into the game.

“For many years, improving diversity in golf has been focused on player development programs,” said Sandy Cross, PGA of America Chief People Officer. “That wasn’t enough. The best path to improving diversity is to evolve the industry’s workforce by raising awareness of the many careers available through programming specifically designed for that purpose. These kinds of programs — inclusive high school and collegiate tournaments, career exploration events, fellowships and scholarships — have to be cultivated and widely promoted.”

There are two million jobs in golf in the United States, and it is an \$84 billion industry. Still, it is unlikely that an industry with little existing diversity could attract a meaningful number of consumers from a diverse background.

### Seeing is Believing

It is often said, “If you can see it, you can be it,” and conversely, “If you *can't* see it, you *can't* be it.” One step to allow diverse audiences to see themselves thriving in golf is for leaders in the industry to engage in strategic partnerships and to create workforce diversification programs.

One program, PGA WORKS, has shown early success since its inception in 2017, with five former PGA WORKS Fellows already gaining employment in the industry.

“Before working in the PGA WORKS Fellowship, I didn’t even know what the PGA of America was,” said Jessica Asbury, former PGA WORKS Fellow and now the PGA REACH Coordinator in the Carolinas PGA Section. “After going through the program and experiencing it, the golf industry is something I want to be in for the rest of my life.”

Another entity in golf that is driving diversification in the industry through internship programming is the American Junior Golf Association (AJGA). They serve as host to 100 interns annually who travel the country working at AJGA golf events, which provides a glimpse into golf tournament management.

Another approach? Design resources for companies and media outlets that better



JOPWELL PGA COLLECTION

The Jopwell PGA Collection Vol.1 authentically presents diverse individuals working in golf.

represent today’s consumers on their promotional materials. For instance, the PGA of America partnered with Jopwell, a career advancement platform for students and professionals that assists companies with diversity recruitment, to create “Golf: The Jopwell PGA Collection, Vol. 1.” This album of free-to-download authentic representative stock photos of diverse individuals working in golf is designed to increase the number of visual representations of Black, Latinx, and Native Americans in the sport. Further, it aspires to fill the glaring void of racial and ethnic diversity in golf stock photography.

“We dream of the golf industry becoming exclusively inclusive. In order for that dream to become a reality, we must expand the dimensions of diversity represented in the industry’s workforce,” said Cross. “It is critical for people to see others from similar backgrounds and experiences working in the sport, if they’re going to consider the game as either a career or a leisure activity.” ■

To learn more about PGA WORKS and get a glimpse into what careers in golf can provide, follow @PGAWORKS on Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Facebook.

If you’re interested in exploring opportunities within the PGA of America, visit [careers.pgahq.com](https://careers.pgahq.com).



### 3 WAYS TO INCREASE DIVERSITY IN GOLF CAREERS

- **Create fan-friendly, high visibility events.** The PGA WORKS Collegiate Championship and PGA WORKS Career Expo showcases 200 student-athletes annually from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other minority-serving institutions who compete in the most culturally significant championship in collegiate golf. Students explore internship and entry-level employment opportunities with the golf industry’s leading employers.

- **Create real-world professional opportunities for underrepresented demographics.** The PGA WORKS Fellowship offers year-long, full-time, entry-level employment for post-graduates to garner first-hand experience in PGA Section foundation operations and administration. PGA WORKS Beyond the Green offers high school and college-age students career exploration events held onsite at PGA of America Major Championships.

- **Designate resources to support the next generation of golfers and golf industry professionals.** PGA WORKS Golf Management University Program Scholarships are designed to support individuals who are pursuing a PGA Professional Golf Management Degree and their dream of becoming a PGA of America Member.