



SCHOOL OF
GOVERNMENT
ncIMPACT
Initiative

Employability Skills Gap: Addressing the needs of opportunity youth

Where Are The Workers Webinar Series

October 18, 2023

Agenda

“Where are the Workers?” Focus Groups overview

Introduction of Community Teams



The American Growth Project

Breakout Discussion #1



Implementation: Community Teams'
Presentation

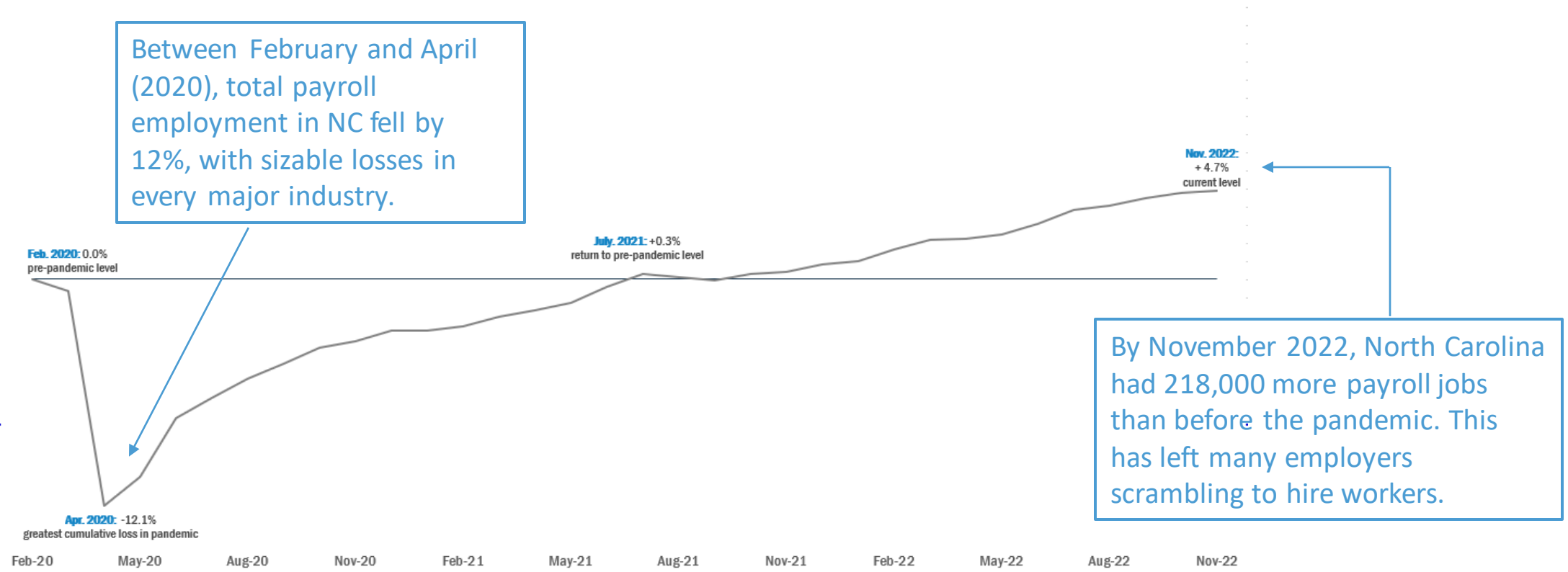
Breakout Discussion #2



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

 **UNC** | SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT
ncIMPACT Initiative

A rapidly changing picture prompting us to ask, “where are the workers?”

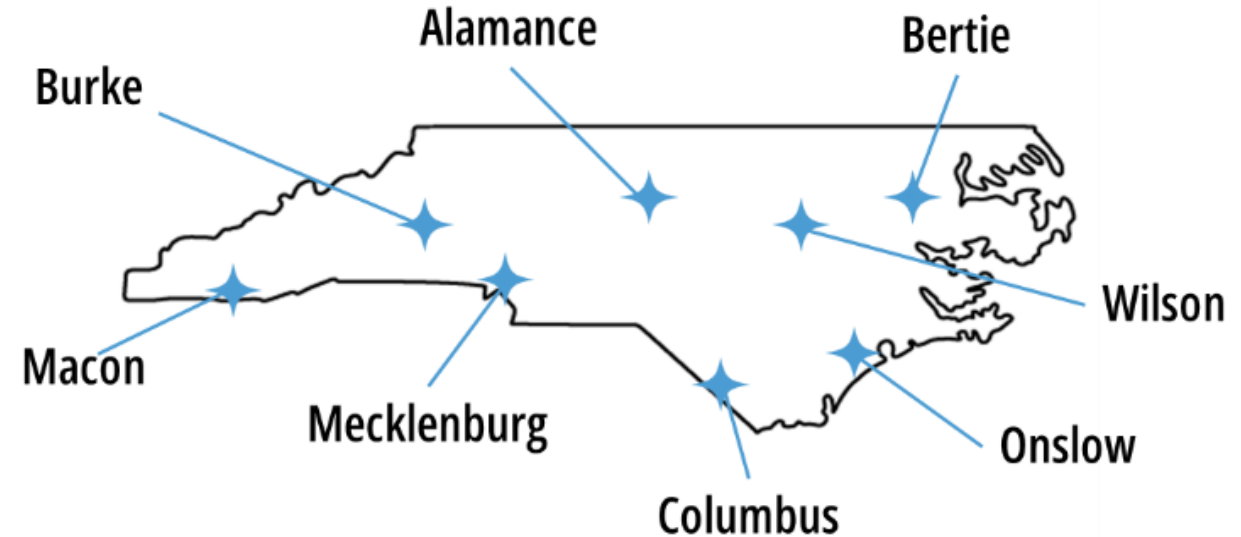


By November 2022, North Carolina had 218,000 more payroll jobs than before the pandemic. This has left many employers scrambling to hire workers.

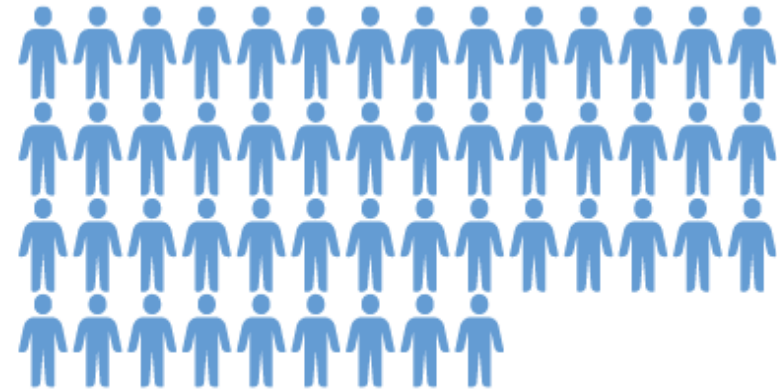
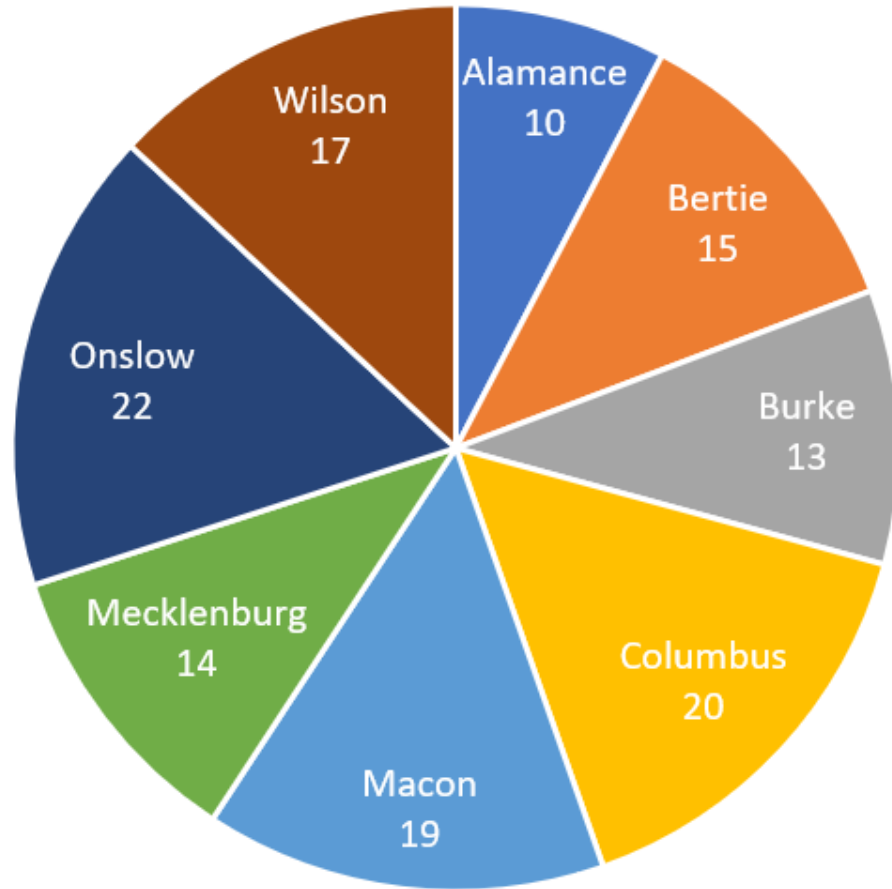
Source: NC Department of Commerce, Current Employment Statistics, Jan. 2020- Nov. 2022

Who We Talked To And How We Listened

- ncIMPACT and NCGrowth collaborated on a series of focus groups across all 8 of NC's prosperity zones
- Talked with employers, workforce support providers, and young adults about their experiences
- Focus group conversations were recorded and transcribed; thematic analysis is ongoing



Focus Group Participants



51%
WORKFORCE
SUPPORT
PROVIDERS



30%
EMPLOYERS



19%
YOUNG ADULTS

Perspectives from Employers – Acknowledging a Shift, Working to Adapt

“ Usually, employers are in positions of power. That dynamic has reversed these days, and **employers need to realize that the employees with their services are in demand, and they need to be adapted to them.** We need to make some kind of seismic shifts in our philosophy in order to accommodate that.

- Employer, Columbus County

“ I think post-COVID, if you're not providing support or **flexibility** to your staff, you're probably struggling a little bit. That's what I look for in a job. And mobility within....

“ So, every position that we have has a **career development step plan.** So, it's like you'll start out as a trainee, within a year you'll be a telecommunicator one. The next year you'll be a telecommunicator two. There's a three, **and every year you get a raise.** We have a step plan for every program down to a maintenance worker.

- Employer, Onslow County

Growth and stability are two major factors within looking for a career. If you get a job and it's just a job, besides the money, what's the point in keeping working there?

-Young Adults, Burke County

Overview of Carolina Across 100



- 5-year pan-university effort to partner with communities in each of North Carolina's 100 counties
- Charged by UNC Chancellor Kevin Guskiewicz, coordinated by ncIMPACT Initiative and led by the Carolina Engagement Council
- Embodies this public university's mission to "enhance the quality of life for all people in the State."
- Builds and supports cross-sector collaborations in communities
- Addresses challenges created or exacerbated by COVID-19

Our State, Our Work



Connecting Young Adults With Their Future

Who are Opportunity Youth?

16 to 24-year-olds that are not in school or working

More likely than peers to be:

- In poverty
- Disabled
- Married and/or have children
- Living apart from both parents
- Living in institutionalized group quarters
- Homeless
- Uninsured



Diversity Across the State



37 counties across 13 teams

OSOW Team 1 – Achieve HIGHTS!

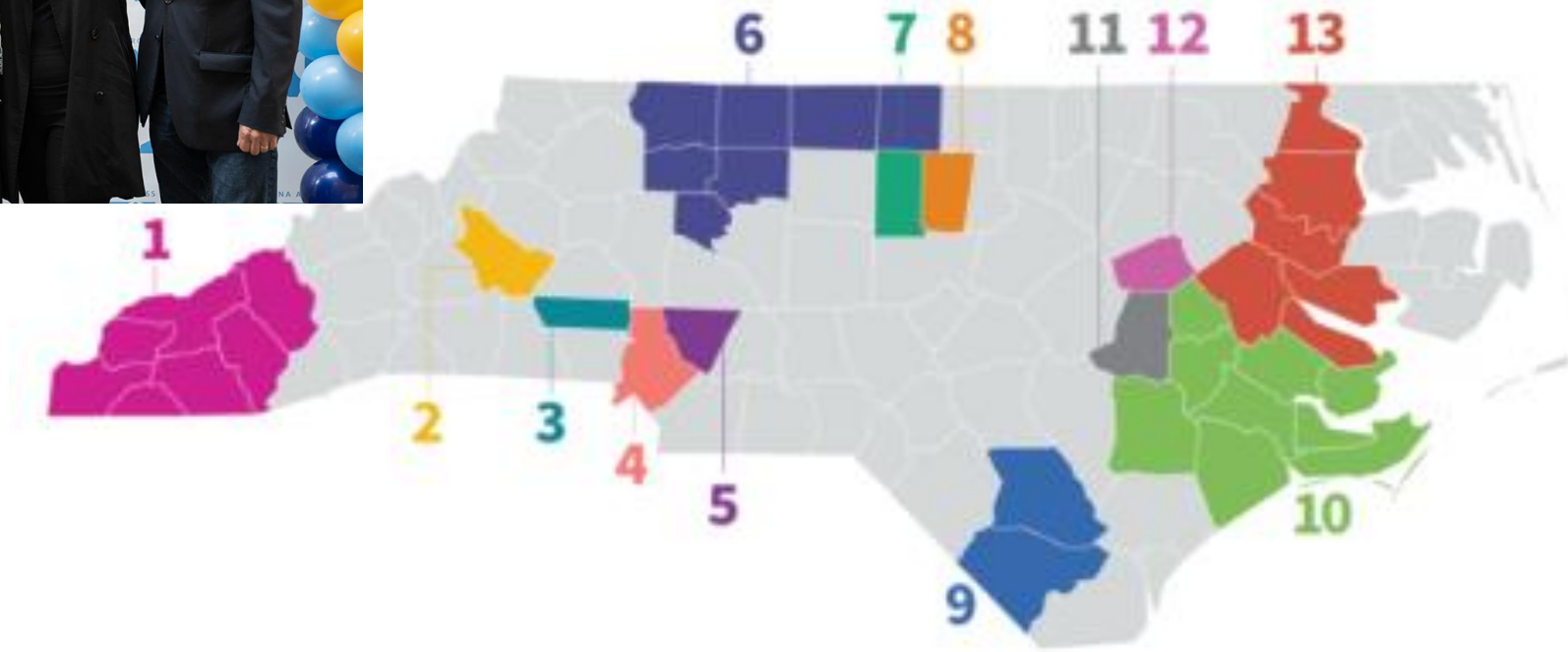


#CarolinaAcross100





OSOW Team 8 – Summer Careers Academy



OSOW Team 13 – Rivers East Youth Alliance





Skills in the Workforce: Why They Matter for Economies

Gerald D. Cohen
Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise

Why Study Skills?

Answer #1:

They matter for productivity and economic health

- Skills allow the economy to produce more with what it has
- More skilled workforces have a wider array of tools at their disposal
- Conversely, less skilled workforces struggle economically – workers can't find jobs that match their skillset, and employers can't find workers with the skills they need
- We're interested in how skills vary across our Extended Metropolitan Areas (EMAs)

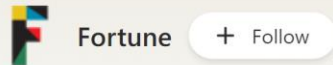
- Think of skills as the piece that allows an economy to utilize its resources
- More skills = more ways to transform economic resources into economic output

Why Study Skills?

Answer #2:

They're a major component of the current discussion around labor markets in 2023

- The idea of a skills gap has been present in the news – driven largely by new technological advancements that are reshaping work and what employers want
- The development of AI and other new technologies will mean that this continues to be the case – and may get worse as the pace of innovation quickens



Raleigh News & Observer · 4d

We need more skilled workers. Here's how we can train them.

The skills gap is so big that nearly half of workers will need to retrain this decade

Story by Jane Thier · May 1

Home // Radio // Radio Boston



47:16

Addressing the skill gap: Young professionals in Mass. are often overqualified for their jobs

OPINION:

May 03, 2023

By [WBUR Newsroom](#)

Nation is gasping for skilled workers

By Llewellyn King
Wednesday, May 3, 2023 | 2 a.m.

The US desperately needs skilled workers. But the community colleges that train them are woefully underfunded

By Alicia Wallace, CNN Business
Updated 1:46 PM EST, Fri February 11, 2022

euronews. · 5d · on MSN

Want to move to Japan? Applying for a visa just got easier for skilled workers



Studying Skills: Not Easy!

Why?

- Many different ways of thinking about skills (soft skills, digital skills, tech skills, etc.).
- Many different ways of interpreting the level of skills in the labor market.
- Difficult to directly measure the level of skills in the workforce.

- It makes sense that employers and economies want skilled workers. But what exactly does that mean?
- There are many possible answers – and skills are difficult to measure and research precisely for that reason.

American Growth Project

The American Growth Project seeks to measure and understand the drivers of regional economic activity.

We are analyzing the 150 largest Extended Metropolitan Areas (EMAs) in the United States.

- Why is the Triangle one of the fastest growing EMAs in the U.S. and Greensboro is one of the slowest?

Skills play an important role in this difference!

Our starting point is measuring **educational attainment as a proxy for skills**.

- Our 150 EMAs create almost 90% of U.S. Economic Activity.
- New York is our biggest EMA with almost 24 million people and \$2 trillion of GDP
- Wilmington, NC is our smallest EMA with a population of less than 300,000

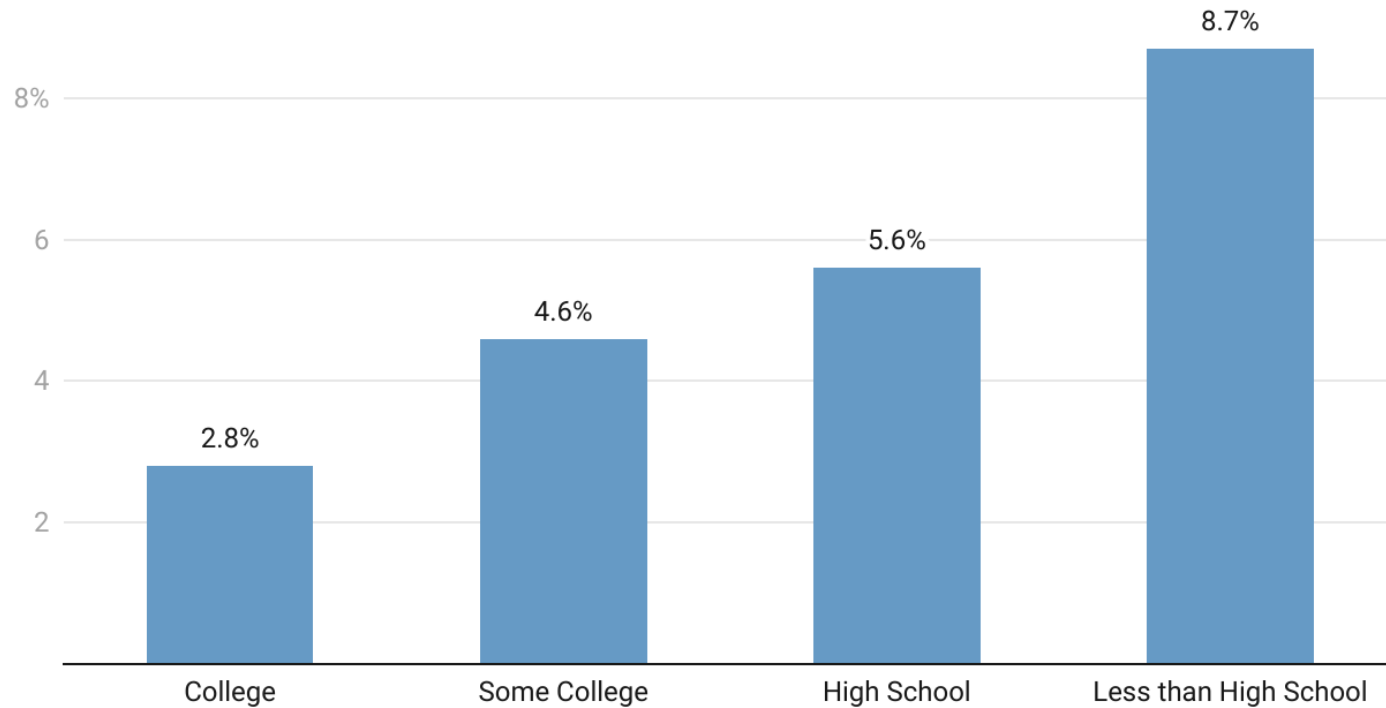
For more information see:

<https://kenaninstitute.unc.edu/ag/american-growth-project/>

Education is an Important Driver for Economic Growth

Unemployment Rate by Education

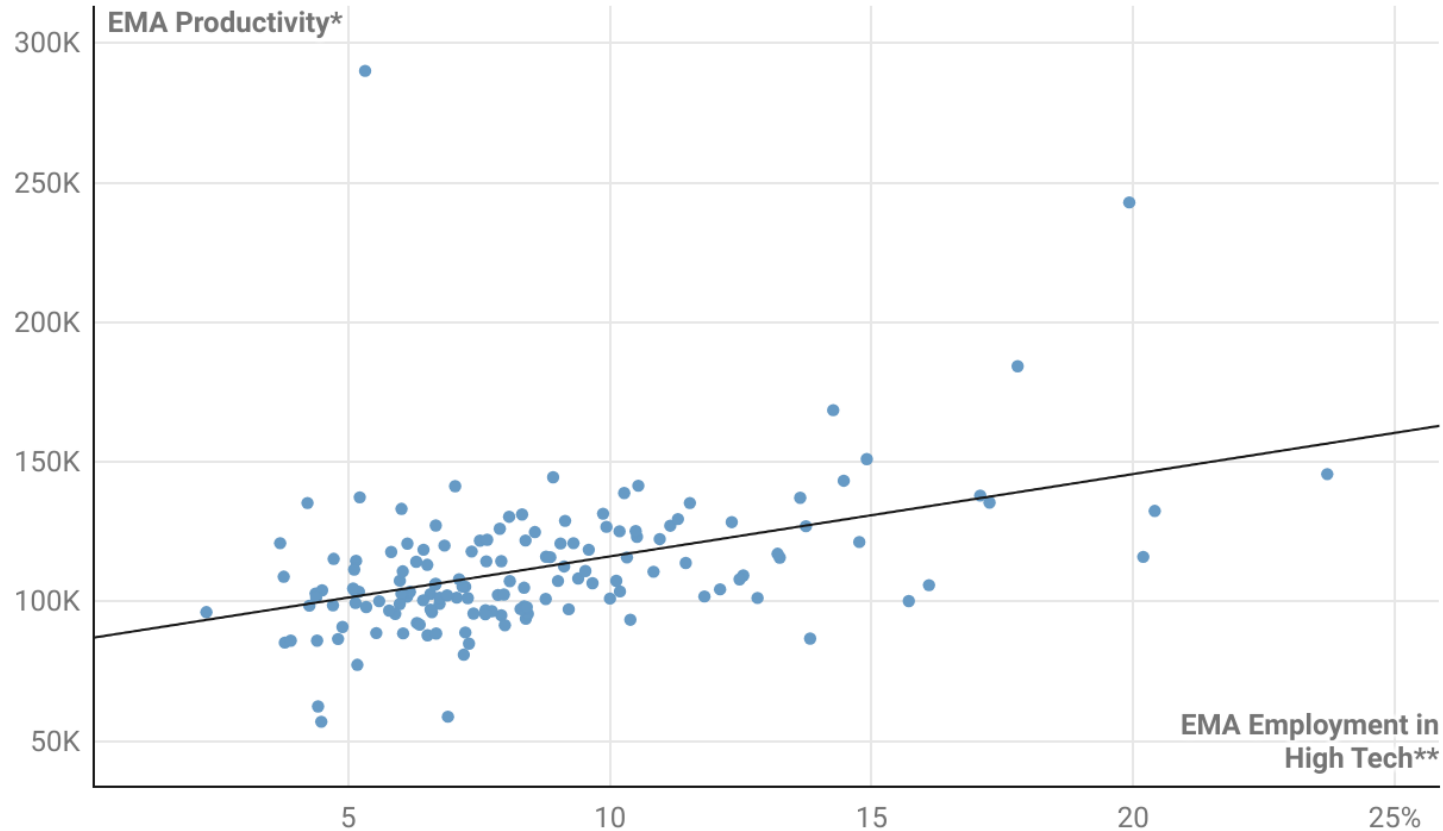
30-year average



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics • Created with Datawrapper

- Unemployment rate for those without a high school diploma is over 3 percentage points higher than graduates.
- Having additional training increases employability even more.

So Is the Industry Mix

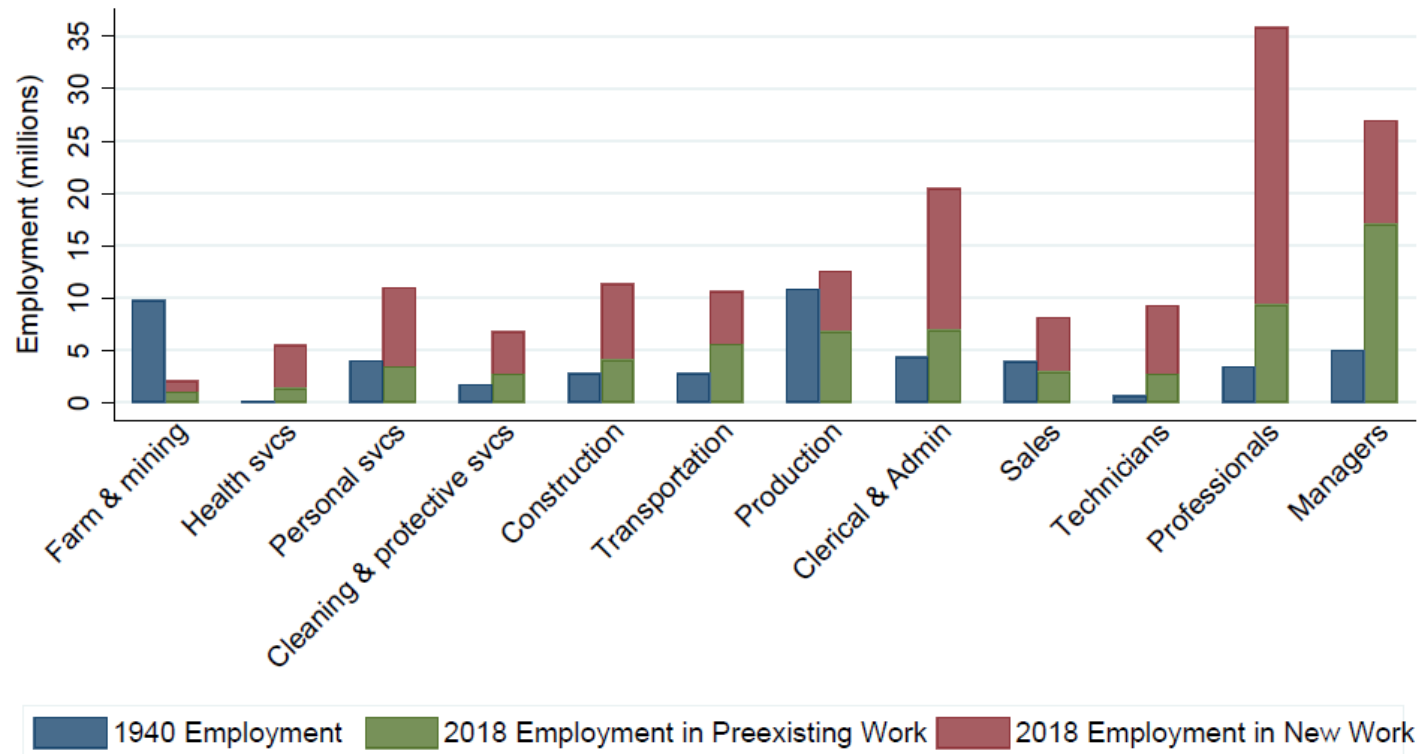


*Real GDP per employee **EMA employment share in high-tech industries

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bureau of Economic Analysis • Created with Datawrapper

- A one percentage-point increase in the share of tech workers leads to a \$3,000 increase in EMA productivity
- Our 150 EMAs average productivity is \$113,000.

Job Shift 1940 to 2018



- Skills and training allow workers to adapt to technological change such as AI.



Breakout Discussion #1

How can you and your organization create new, innovative programming that better serves the needs of Opportunity Youth than existing workforce training programming?

SUMMER CAREERS ACADEMY

**“Putting the EMPLOYER in the EMPLOYER-LED Youth
Apprenticeship Consortium”**

Shannon Braxton

CTE Director – Orange County Schools
Summer Careers Academy Steering Committee

Maryah Smith Overman

Assistant Dean of Building, Engineering, & Skilled Trades
Durham Technical Community College
Summer Careers Academy Steering Committee

Summer Careers Academy

What: The Summer Careers Academy is an eight-week career training model (established 2021) that connects residents, especially young adults (ages 16-24) who are underrepresented and underserved, with new skills and paid work experiences in compelling career pathways.

Who: The model is governed by a Steering Committee that operates according to the principles of Collective Impact and is made up of educators, employers, elected and senior government officials, and community activists.

How: The model is based on the successful employer-led Catawba Valley Community College Construction Careers Academy, which blends free in-classroom training and paid on-the-job work experience.

Summer Careers Academy Steering Committee



The Chamber
For a Greater Chapel Hill-Carrboro



APPRENTICESHIP NC



**Orange
County
Schools**
NORTH CAROLINA



**DURHAM
TECH**



**SUMMER
CAREERS
ACADEMY**

Summer Careers Academy

Commitment to Equity: The model is designed to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged in our community, including refugees, low-income students, and students of color in the following ways:

- 1) **Open to all** (no experience required)
- 2) Pays a competitive “Learning Wage” (\$12/hour) and completion bonus takes compensation to “**Living Wage**” (\$15.85/hour),
- 3) Participants receive complimentary equipment and **critical support services** (food, transportation, language, and career development services)
- 4) **Advocacy** for each Pre-Apprentice from a caring adult volunteer

Building Our Future

What: The inaugural program of the Summer Careers Academy is “Building Our Future,” a **Registered Youth Apprenticeship program** in the skilled construction trades (launched 2022).

How: This **eight-week summer career training program** offers youth and young adults (“Pre-Apprentices”), ages 16-24, with **free in-classroom training** and a **paid work experience**.

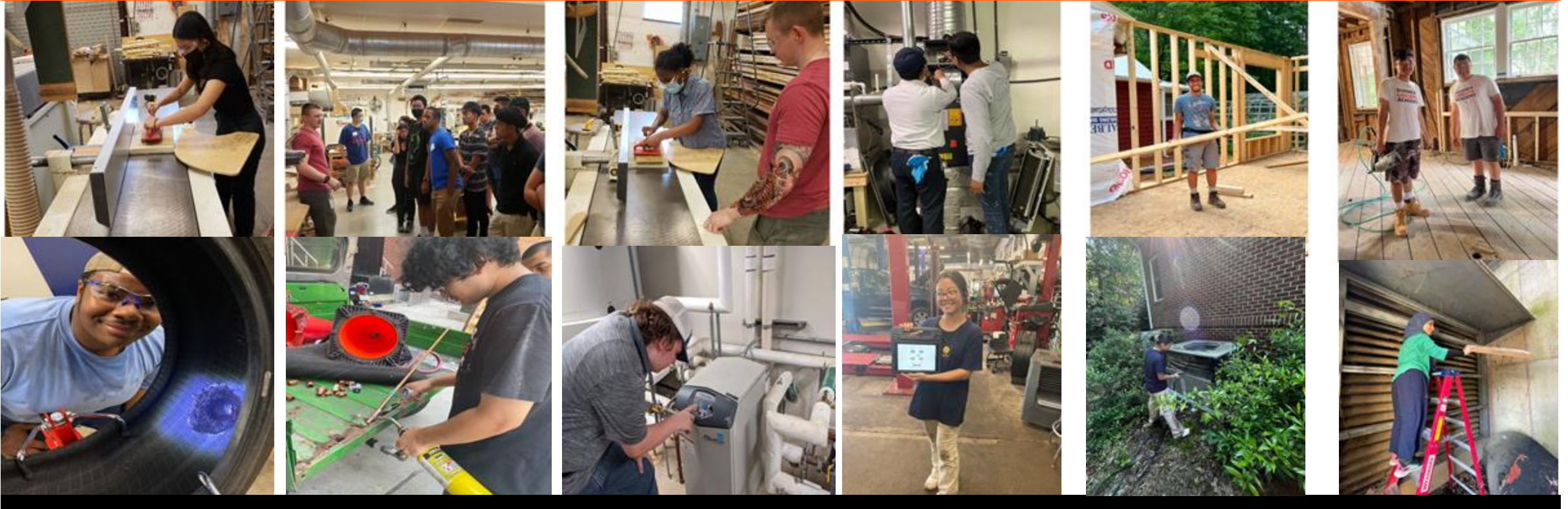
When: The program is managed by the Home Builders of Durham, Orange, and Chatham Counties and took place from **June - August, 2022**, and **June - August 2023**.

Careers: The training is focused on careers in the **skilled trades**, including carpentry, plumbing, electrical, masonry, and heating and air conditioning.

Cohort: The both cohorts included **15 Pre-Apprentices and nearly a dozen employers** representing small, mid-size, and large public and private enterprises with occupations spanning the skilled trades.

Founding Funding: The program was made possible through the generous support from the NC Education and Innovation Workforce Commission and Kenan Charitable Trust.

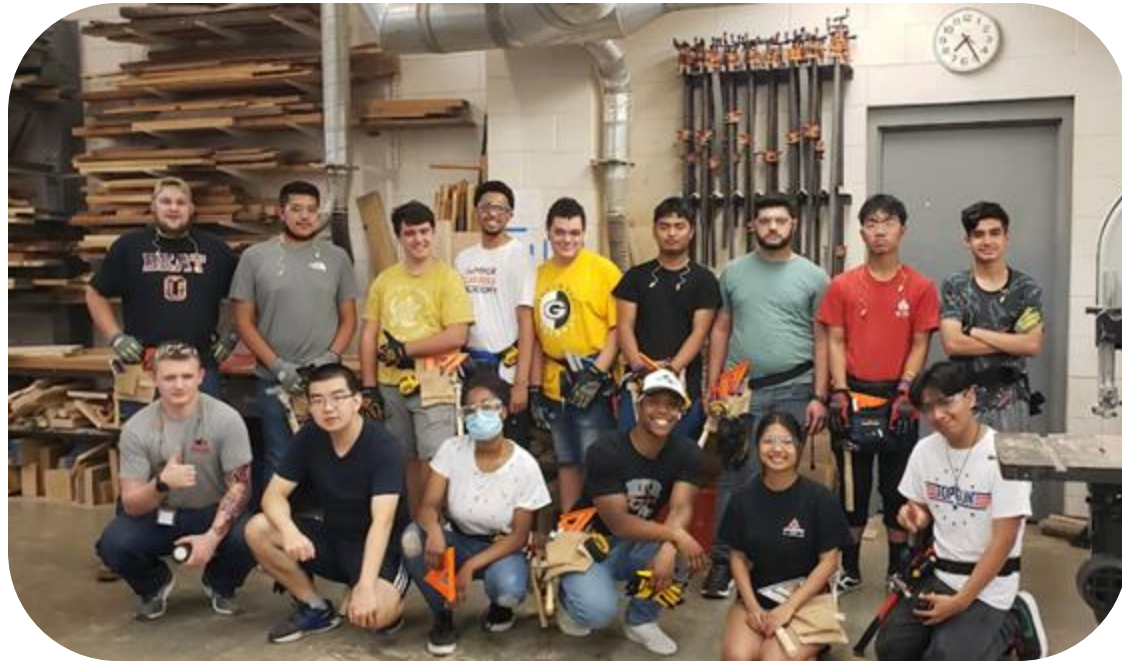
In-Classroom Training & Paid Work Experiences



Photos of Summer Careers Academy "Building Our Future" Pre-Apprentices doing in-classroom learning at Cedar Ridge High School and on-the-job paid work experiences throughout Orange County, NC (Summer 2022/2023)

The Inaugural Cohort

Pre-Apprentices



Employers





Graduates of the inaugural Summer Careers Academy “Building Our Future” skilled trades career training program at the Graduation Celebration on August 5, 2022 at Cedar Ridge High School in Orange County, NC.

The Cohort 2 - Summer 2023

Pre-Apprentices



Employers





Graduates of the Cohort 2 Summer Careers Academy “Building Our Future” skilled trades career training program at the Graduation Celebration on August 11, 2023 at Sheraton Hotel, Chapel Hill, NC.

Employability Skills

NCCER

Widely-adopted curriculum:

- National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) Core curriculum: craft skills
- Prepares students for construction careers, including occupations in carpentry, plumbing, electrical, masonry, and HVAC-R repair.
- Modules: Basic Safety, Construction Math, Hand Tools, Power Tools, Construction Drawings/Blueprints, Material Handling, Basic Communication Skills, & Basic Employability Skills

Industry-recognized certificates and credentials:

- Construction Core high school credit and CTE Pre-Apprenticeship course credit
- NCCER Credentials
- OSHA-10 Safety Card
- First Aid/CPR certificates

Job Readiness Skills

- Career Interest Surveys
- Career Development Plan
- Eye Contact, Hand Shaking skills prior to Match Day Interviews
- Resume Writing
- Writings (Weekly Journal, Reflection Paper, Presentation, and Evaluation Forms)
- Time Management
- Communication Skills within class and on-the-job
- Active listening on the job
- Problem solving
- Financial Literacy



HIGHTS

HIGHTS, INC

WWW.HIGHTS.ORG

Helping

Inspire

Gifts of

Hope

Trust

& Service





EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS GAP EMPLOYER-YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Presented by

CAROLINE WILLIAMSON,
HIGHTS WORKFORCE AND EDUCATION DIRECTOR

&

DAWN GILCHRIST,
HIGHTS WORKFORCE CASE MANAGER

HIGHTS, INC.

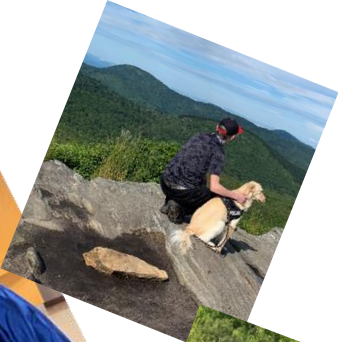
OUR STORY

Since 2008 HIGHTS has sponsored educational opportunities, recreational activities, job skills training, and community service projects for community partners, such as public schools, mental health agencies, church youth groups, and many other organizations.

Programs

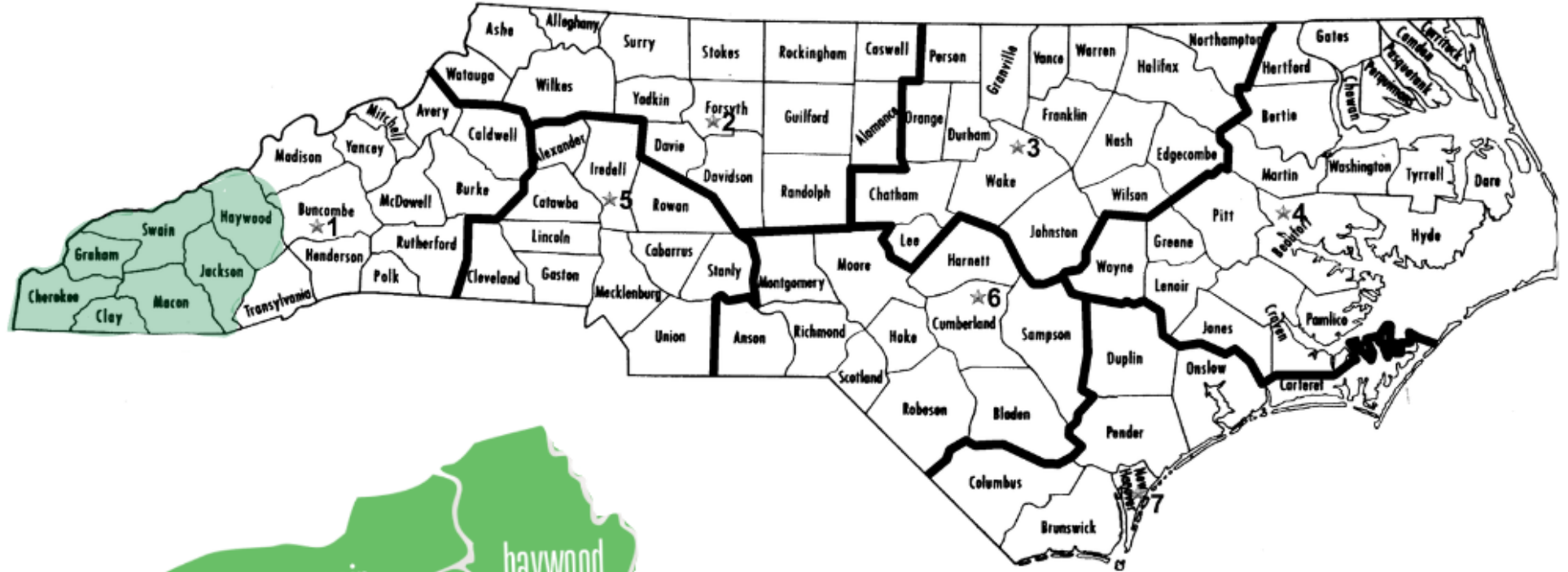
Serving Middle School to Young Adults aged 16-24.

- **Bee-Well Mentoring** • **Juvenile Justice**
- **Recreational Therapy** • **After School Programs**
- **Mediation** • **Restorative Justice**
- **Substance Use** • **Workforce Development**
- **Credential Attainment**
- **High School Equivalency Diploma**



HIGHTS, INC

SERVICE REGION



HIGHTS proudly serves the 7 most western North Carolina counties and the Qualla Boundary



HIGHTS, INC

MISSION

HIGHTS' mission is to transform youth in Western North Carolina by inspiring trust in their own abilities, connection to a caring community, and hope for a better future.



VISION

HIGHTS was founded in 2008 with a vision that all youth deserve an equitable opportunity to thrive.

WORKFORCE READINESS

Workforce Innovation &
Opportunity Act
(WIOA)



HIGHTS, INC.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION PROGRAM

HIGHTS' Workforce Development and Education Programs provide career exploration, job training, apprenticeships, paid work experiences, and support for completing a high school diploma, secondary education, and credentials.

Our programs empower youth to overcome barriers to their educational or vocational goals by providing financial assistance for fees, necessary school and work supplies, transportation, childcare, and more.

Our programs partner with Jackson, Macon, Swain, Haywood, Graham, Clay, and Cherokee County Public Schools, the Southwestern Workforce Board, NC Works Centers, Employers, and local community colleges to help participants achieve their educational and career goals.

WORKFORCE PREPAREDNESS PROJECT

Funded by
The Golden LEAF Foundation



SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM



WWW.HIGHTS.ORG/WORKFORCE



**CAREER
EXPLORATION**

INTERNSHIPS

SOFT SKILLS

“

I enjoyed the tours, places we visited, and learned things you can't learn anywhere else.

Overall, the biggest gain is the connections it helped me make.

I've learned behind the scenes in a law firm and this has helped me decide my plans for college.

THANK YOU FOR THIS!

-Cameron

”

Summer YOUTH

HIGHTS

WORKFORCE Partnerships





IMPACT

Employer Surveys indicated in Demand Jobs:

Healthcare, Construction, Automotive, and Technology

- 86,500 Job Vacancies Predicted by 2026
- 56 Participants Placed in Internships
- 52 Participants Supported in Credentialing
- 16 Participants Placed in Permanent Jobs this year
- 80 Graduated with a Secondary Diploma





OVERCOMING BARRIERS

RESOURCES TO SUCCESSFUL WEX:



Mileage Reimbursement



Mental Health Services



Social Services Resources



Uniforms/work clothing
provision



Frequent Contact and Check-ins



Transportation



Childcare resources and
exploration



Workforce Case Manager
troubleshooting support when issues
crop up



Building Relationships



Career COACH-Education guidance for
career advancement



EMPLOYABILITY SKILL TRAINING

Soft Skills-Power Skills

- Lunch And Learn Opportunities Facilitated by Community & University Professionals:

Financial Literacy

Workplace Dress and Etiquette

Resume Creation

Interview Skills

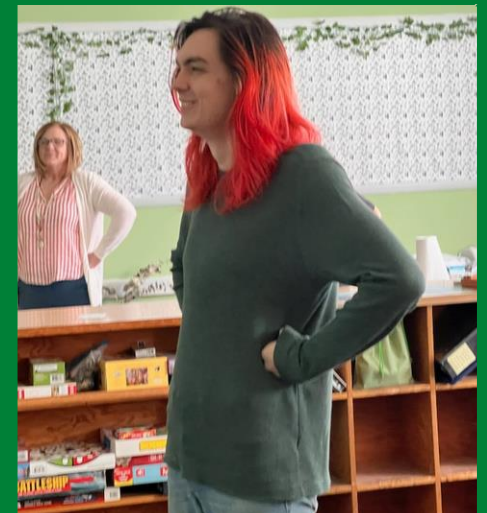
Conflict Resolution In Workplace

Skills to Succeed Academy

Online Modules

10-YEAR PLAN

- Paid Work-Based Learning Experience
Provides On-the-Job training with Academic Relevance





How Do Young Adults Want To Engage With Employers?



61 % Are Interested in an Internship

Communication with Employers:

80% Prefer To Text

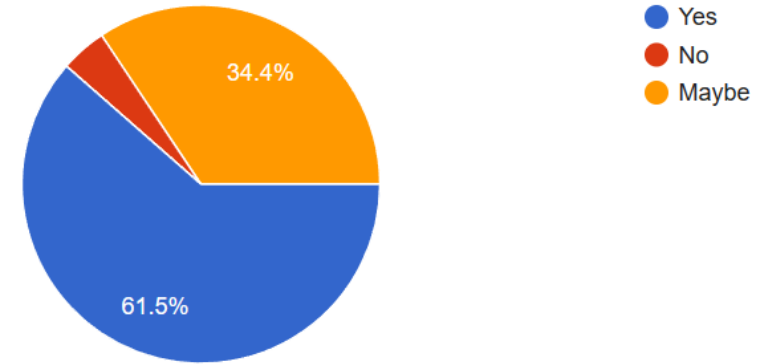
71% Prefer To Email

70% Prefer To Phone

Only 29% are comfortable with Online or Paper applications

If an opportunity presents itself, would you be interested in an internship or an apprenticeship with a local employer?

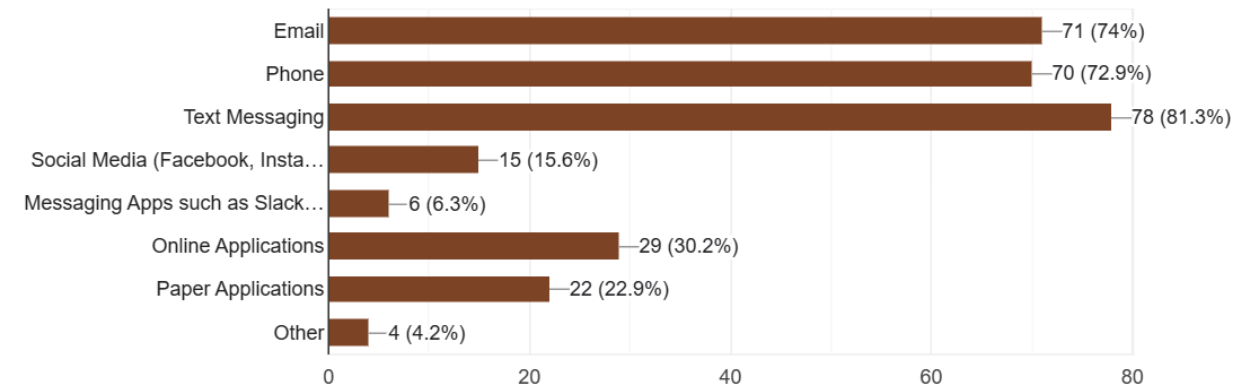
96 responses



In an ideal world, what ways would you prefer to communicate with employers? Check all that apply.



96 responses





ENGAGING EMPLOYERS

- Employer Recognition Event
- Annual Career Fair with 8 high schools attending
 - Soft skill workshops in morning
 - Network with employers in Afternoon
- Employer Advisory Committee
- Community Events
- Chamber of Commerce Presentations
- Community College Presentations





SUPPORTING EMPLOYERS



& INTERNS

- Paid Work Based Learning
- Employer Surveys
- Pre- and Post-Participant Surveys
- Ongoing Case Management- Site Visits
- Apprenticeships NCCC
- Youth 10-YEAR PLAN
- Employer Handbook-Worksite Agreements
- Manpower Temp Agency as fiscal agent/direct deposit/taxes, workman's comp. insurance





EMPLOYER-YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

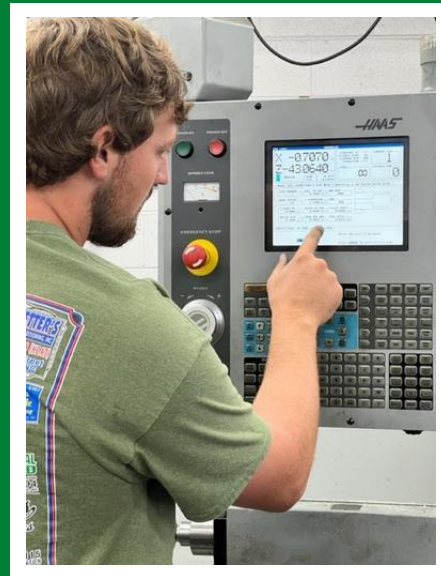
EMPLOYER Testimonials
YOUTH AT WORK!

“ She is simply AMAZING!!!!!! ”

“ Gabriela used her bi-lingual skills to assist our attorneys at court, and to prepare documents that we could provide to our Spanish speaking community. We are very grateful. It's a 5. ”

“ Louden is a very self-motivated young man, he keeps engaged with whatever is needed around the shop. I'm very glad we have had this opportunity to work together. ”

“ The Pharmaceutical experience has been a good one for all involved. It's a job where you have to think quick and be incredibly accurate and efficient at the same time, so I definitely believe she has those traits to pursue this career. ”



Engineer and Fabrication
Assistant



Physical Therapist
Assistant



Pharmacy Technician



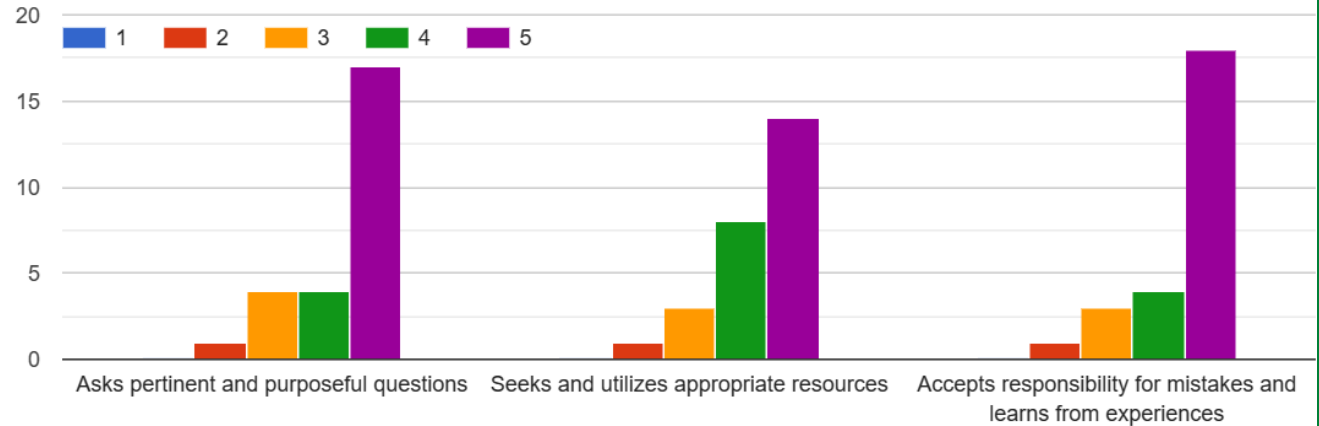
EMPLOYER FEEDBACK



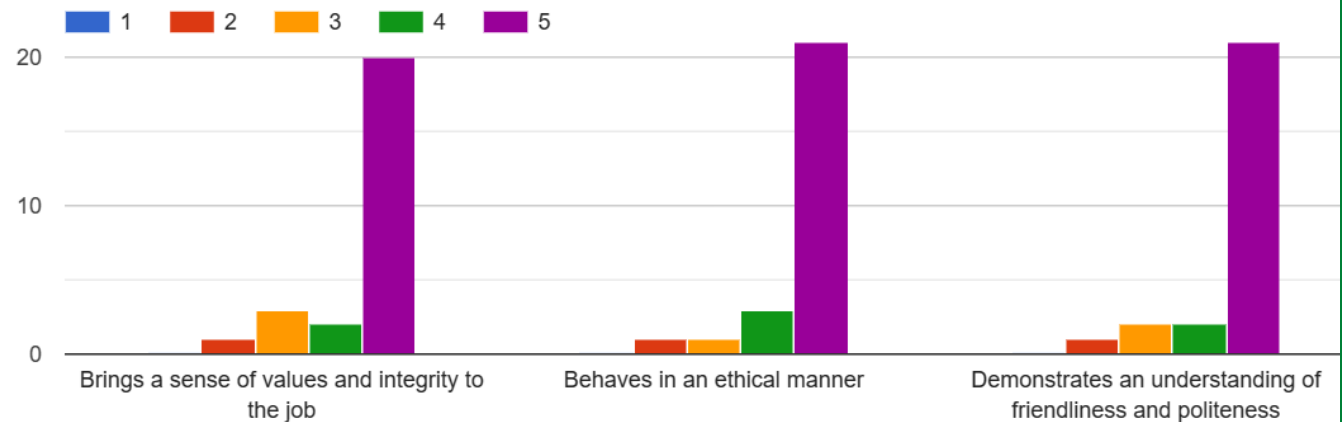
Employer surveys allow HIGHTS to evaluate employer feedback as well as participants' work performance and attitudes by evaluating the criteria below:

- Motivation to Learn
- Reading/Writing/Computation Skills
- Listening and Oral Communication Skills
- Creative Thinking & Problem-Solving Skills
- Professional and Career Development Skills
- Interpersonal and Teamwork Skills
- Organizational Effectiveness Skills
- Basic Work Habits
- Character Attributes

Motivation to Learn



Character Attributes



**CAREER
MENTORING**

**Community
Members and
Employers provide
an important role**



“

“I was able to learn about and experience the workforce while doing something I was interested in!” - Hunter

Hunter is one of the four HIGHTS-Haywood County Schools Summer Interns who secured a job. Kim’s Pharmacy offered Hunter a job after his internship. He will continue his career goal in chemistry.

”

TESTIMONIAL

HUNTER

IMPACT: SUCCESS STORIES

Jacob transitioned from our WEX to our first apprenticeship with support from NCCC, SCC, and AES. All of his books, course fees and weekly salary will be paid through this apprenticeship. The apprenticeship will also pay for his automotive tools needed for his SCC classes.

One intern who worked in fast food for six years is absolutely loving helping the very elderly and very young at her new work experience at Salvation Army

A 17-year-old parent was able to learn soft job skills from her work experience which earned her a permanent job at Drake Software.



Congratulations, Gabe!

Gabe completed his high school equivalency diploma and landed a job in security at Angel Medical Center with HIGHTS' support. Due to his accomplishments, Gabe reached his goal to purchase his first car a "Crown Vic".



Congratulations Gabe and keep up the INCREDIBLE work!



HIGHTS

Helping Inspire Gifts of Hope,
Trust, and Service

THANK
YOU

Learn More:



www.HIGHTS.org



Employability Skills Gap: Addressing the needs of Opportunity Youth



Laurie Weston, Rivers East Workforce Development Board
Brandi Bragg, NENC Career Pathways

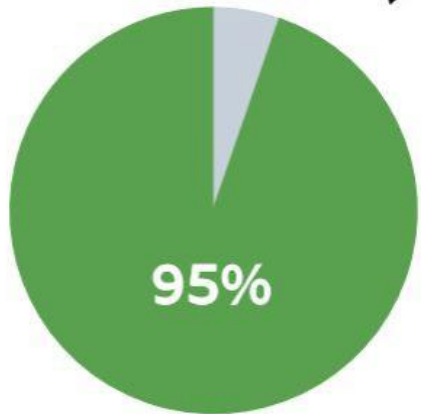
Team 13: Rivers East Youth Alliance (REYAL)

86% of businesses in All Industries tried to hire employees over the past year.

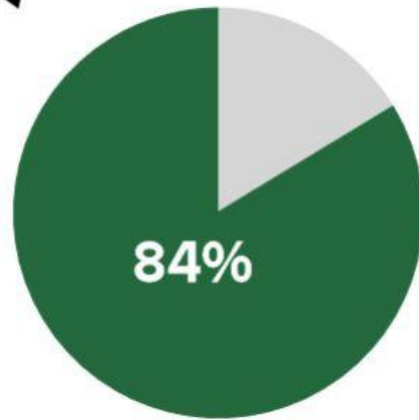
81%

had some difficulty hiring workers

69% claimed hiring has been more difficult than pre-pandemic conditions

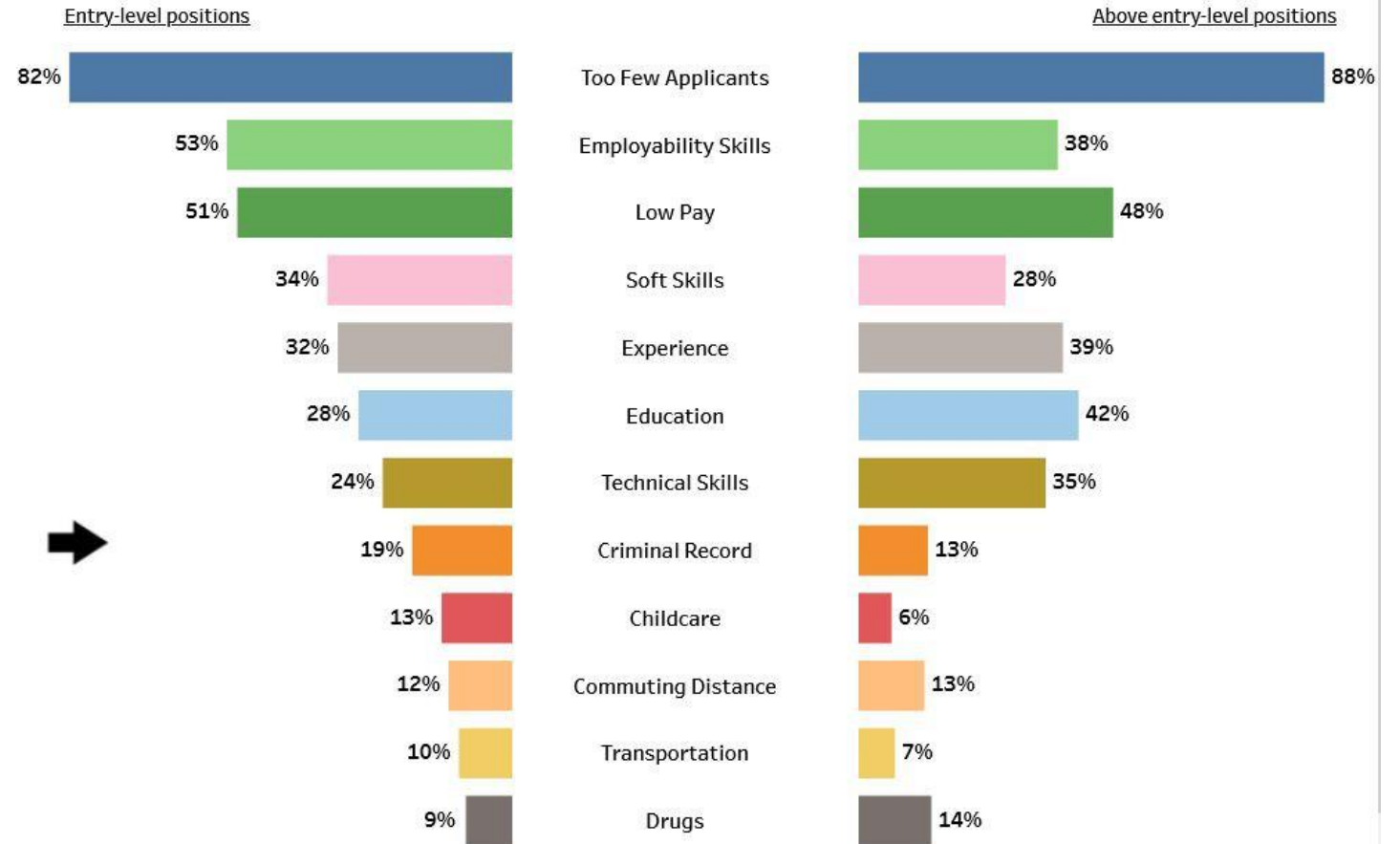


of those with difficulties were for Entry-Level positions



of those with difficulties were for Above Entry-Level positions

Reasons for hiring difficulties





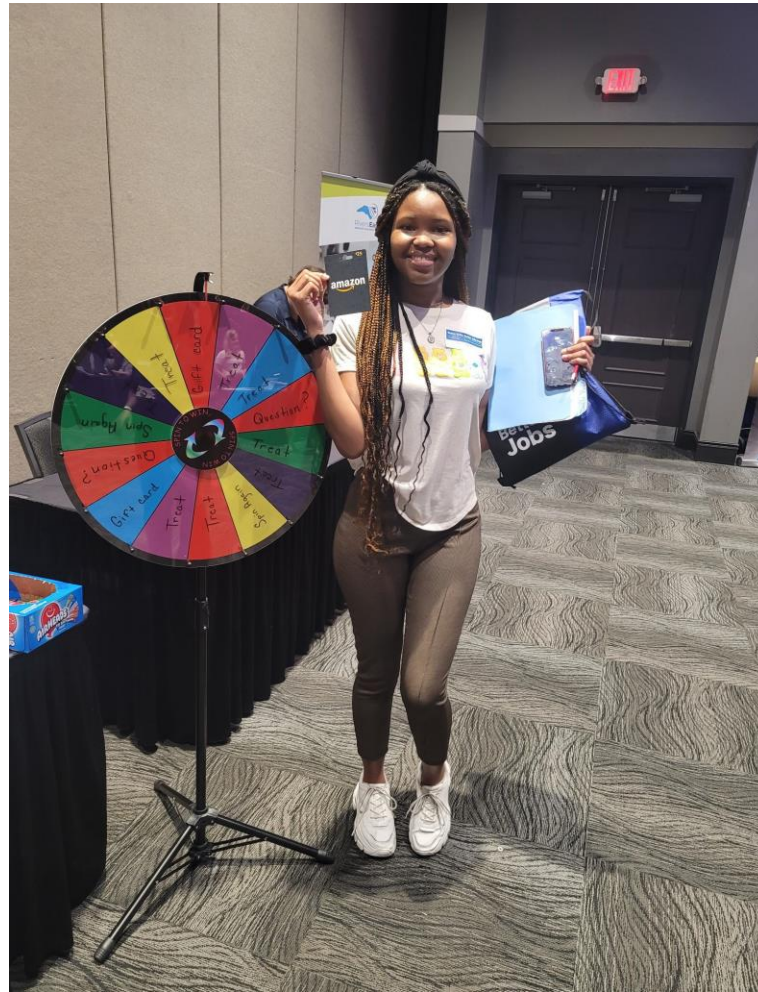
Services

- Career Guidance and Counseling
- Personal Career Advisor
- Individual Service Strategy (goals, objectives, strategies)
- Work Readiness activities and events
- Education and Training support
- Financial Literacy, Leadership, Entrepreneurship
- Paid Work Experience and On the Job Training
- Referrals to partner agencies
- Career Fairs
- Incentives
- Celebrate Success!
- Career Exploration



BETTER SKILLS, BETTER JOBS

Greenville - October 2023



Guidance and Direction for Jobseekers (GADJ)



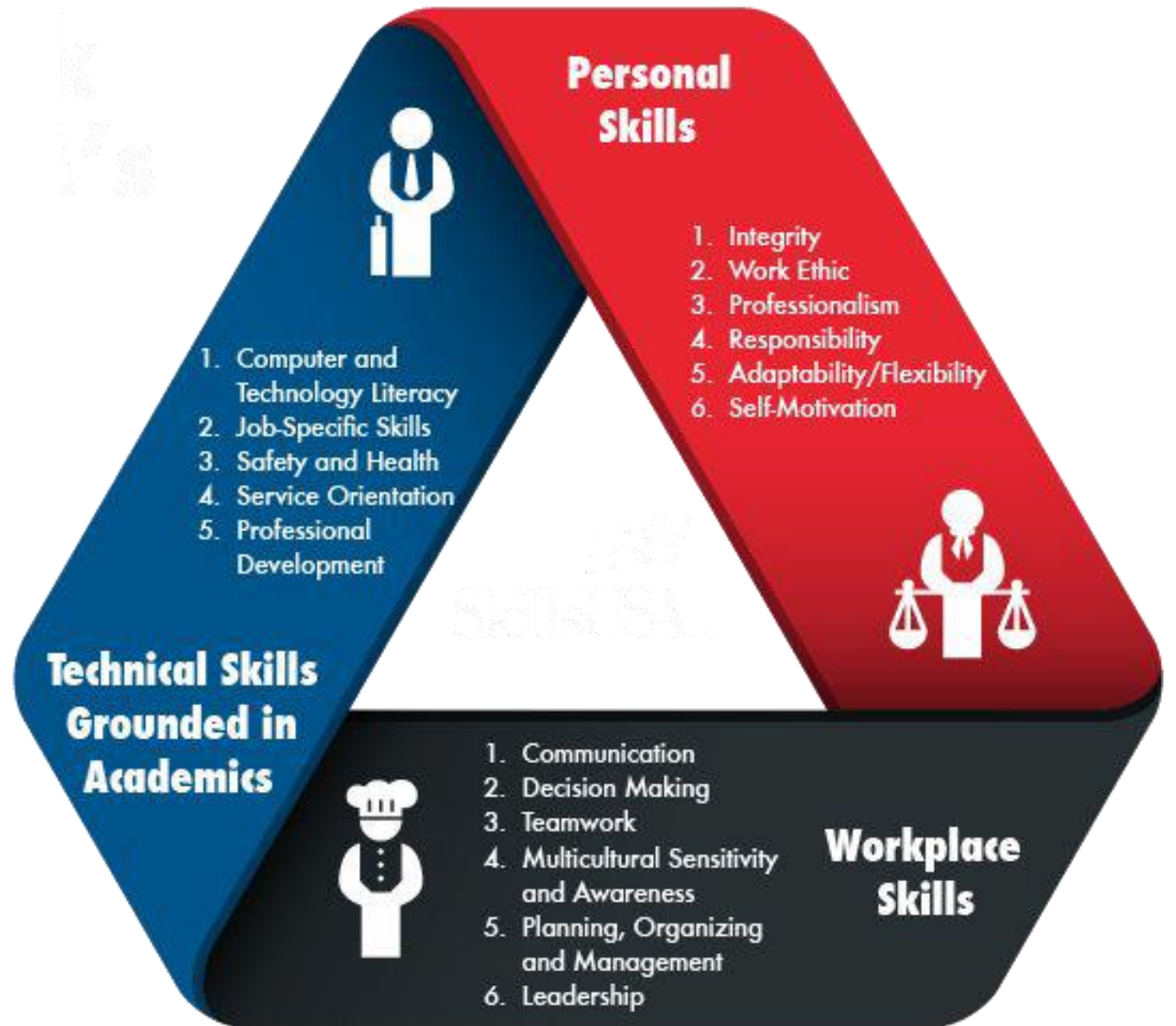
Exploring Options

Lesson Plan 2.4: Post-Secondary Vocabulary

*customized to the group







IMPACT - experiential activities that launch productive teams

“Minefield”

- Adaptability & Flexibility
- Communication
- Safety & Health



ALL ROADS LEAD TO SUCCESS!

The Pathway to Your Future

Getting started is easy and you can get started at ANY stage in life. Opportunities to grow and thrive in a career in Beaufort County are for an entire lifetime.



- Accounting I & Accounting II
- Principles of Business & Finance
- Drafting I and Drafting II
- Boat Building I & II
- Carpentry I, II, & III
- Core & Sustainable Construction
- Welding Tech I, II, III – w/ AWS certificate
- Internships
- Electrical Trades I & II
- Agricultural Mechanics I & II
- Workkeys (Career Readiness Certificate)
- Excel 2016 & Excel Expert 2016
- Master Office Specialist
- Autocad
- Revit
- NCCER Core
- NCCER Construction I & II
- NCCER Electrical Trades I & II
- NCCER Welding Level I & II
- OSHA 10 safety
- Preapprenticeships

ON RAMP 1



- Boat Building Diploma
- Industrial Technology
- Mechanical Design
- Mechanical Engineering
- Welding Technology

- Customized training projects
- Apprenticeship programs
- OSHA 10 safety training
- Yellow Belt (and other lean trainings)
- Problem Solving
- Math for measurement/industry
- Leadership/Management training

ON RAMP 2



- Industrial Technology (BS)
- Industrial Engineering Technology (BS)
- Engineering (BS)
- Industrial Distribution & Logistics (BS)
- Construction Management (BA, MS)
- Mechanical Design (BS)



WOOD WORKING



BEAR CREEK WOODWORKS
INTERMARKET TECHNOLOGY
RECYCLINGBIN.COM

BOAT BUILDING



CALDWELL MARINE DESIGNS
EGRET BOATS
PACIFIC SEACRAFT
PAIR CUSTOMS
PAMLICO YACHTWORKS
RADCLIFFE BOATWORKS
HYSUCAT

PLASTICS



SESAME TECHNOLOGIES
ITW MEDICAL

WELDING



CARVER MACHINE WORKS
COOL TOPS
GREGORY POOLE EQUIPMENT
OAK RIDGE INDUSTRIES

GET STARTED <



EXPLORE OCCUPATIONS

Web Developers

★★★★★ Associate's degree required

Web developers design and create websites. They are responsible for the website's design and technical aspects like its speed and the amount of traffic it can handle. They may also create content for the site.



\$71,246



Related Occupations

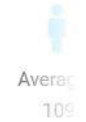
Search Occupations

Environmental Engineers

★★★★☆ Bachelor's degree required

Environmental engineers use the principles of biology, and chemistry to create solutions to environmental problems. They may also focus on global issues such as unsafe change, and environmental sustainability.

\$83,970



Related Occupations

THANK YOU!



Rivers East
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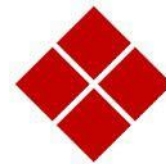
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ECU HEALTH



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Community
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Breakout Discussion #2

What ideas did you hear today that stood out to you, and how can you incorporate them into your own programming?



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Thank you

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