

CareerSource North Central Florida EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY CONSORTIUM QUARTERLY REPORT

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

Report quarter: _PY 26 – 1st Quarter_____

Date of meeting: _____ 9/24/2025 _____

Report prepared by: _____ Jessica McCrae _____

Local workforce development board contact: Christina Brown **Date:** 9/25/2025

B. ATTENDANCE

Name	Organization	Industry or Education Organization	Contact Information
Brent Ferns - Interim Chair (Virtual Attendance)	Santa Fe College	Education	Brent.ferns@sfcollge.edu 352-395-5428
Anita Rembert (Virtual Attendance)	Trenton Medical Center, dba Palms Medical Group	Healthcare Industry	arembert@palmsmg.org 352-463-4501
Laura Guyer (Virtual Attendance)	UF Dept. of Community Health and Family Medicine	Education/Healthcare	lkgyer@ufl.edu 352-332-0523
Sean Mclendon (Virtual Attendance)	Alachua County Economic Development	Economic Development	smclendon@alachuacounty.us 352-347-5204
Sara Maxwell (Virtual Attendance)	Ben E Keith Foods	Transportation and Logistics	smaxwell@benekeith.com 352-372-3514
Shawn Holmgren (Virtual Attendance)	Columbia County Makerspace, Inc.	Information Technology	columbiacountymakerspace@outlook.com 561-389-1490
Jonathan Leslie (Virtual Attendance)	Project Youth Build	Youth Education	jleslie@jwionline.org 352-225-3307

Tracey Higdon (Virtual Attendance)	Florida Gateway College	Education	Tracey.higdon@fgc.edu 386-754-42225
Emily Mecusker – Representing Mike Ripplinger (Virtual Attendance)	Union County School Board	Education	mecuskere@union.k12.fl.us 352-448-5051
Cathy Tyler – Representing Ryan Wilder (Virtual Attendance)	NCCER	Construction	ctyler@nccer.org 386-518-6500
Shannon Ritter – Guest (Virtual Attendance)	Alachua County School Board	Education	ritterss@alachuaschools.net 352-955-6849
Stew Lilker (Virtual Attendance)	Columbia County Observer	Public Attendee	
Alex Ganz (Virtual Attendance)	Scad Media/CareerSource NCFL	LWDB	aganz@careersourcencfl.com 520-344-0672
Bethany Gaffey (Virtual Attendance)	Scad Media/CareerSource NCFL	LWDB	
Elora Duong (Virtual Attendance)	Scad Media/CareerSource NCFL	LWDB	
Christina Brown (In Person)	CareerSource NCFL	LWDB	cbrown@careersourcencfl.com 352-955-2245
Diane Burke (In Person)	CareerSource NCFL	LWDB	dburke@careersourcencfl.com 352-955-2245
Phyllis Marty (Virtual Attendance)	CareerSource NCFL	LWDB	pmarty@careersourcencfl.com 352-955-2245
Jason Buss (In Person)	CareerSource NCFL	LWDB	jbuss@careersourcencfl.com 352-955-2245
Karen Davis (Virtual Attendance)	CareerSource NCFL	LWDB	kldavis@careersourcencfl.com 352-955-2245

Jessica McCrae (In Person)	CareerSource NCFL	LWDB	jmccrae@careersourcencfl.com 352-955-2245

B. SUMMARY REPORT

1. Summary analysis of the local labor market based on the industry representative needs and education offerings. (Provide summary)

The local labor market is experiencing notable shifts due to technological advancements and evolving workforce expectations. Employers emphasized a growing demand for workers skilled in artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, drones, and advanced technical fields, alongside the continued importance of soft skills such as communication, adaptability, and problem-solving.

Education partners are responding by expanding Career and Technical Education (CTE) and trade programs, including dual enrollment and apprenticeship models. However, gaps remain in staffing for specialized programs (e.g., HVAC, healthcare, construction management), as well as in foundational career education at the elementary level to build long-term pipelines in coding and programming. The alignment between education and employer needs is improving but still challenged by limited instructor availability and the need to integrate emerging technologies into curricula.

2. Information on priority industry sectors and occupations for the local area. (Provide summary)

Priority industry sectors highlighted in the meeting include:

- **Technology and Advanced Manufacturing** – with emphasis on drones, robotics, and AI integration.
- **Healthcare** – continued demand, though employment outcomes don't always align with enrollment levels.
- **Construction and Skilled Trades** – HVAC, construction management, and diesel mechanics were specifically mentioned as in-demand occupations.
- **Distribution and Logistics** – evidenced by the new distribution center requiring approximately 150 new hires.

These sectors are seen as critical to regional growth, reflecting both immediate hiring needs (logistics, healthcare) and long-term workforce preparation (AI, trades, CTE).

3. Information on the status of existing talent pipelines for in-demand occupations. (Provide summary)

The talent pipeline is developing but faces challenges:

- **Trade programs (e.g., diesel mechanics)** show strong success and interest, with students progressing toward certifications and career advancement.
- **Apprenticeship programs** are recognized as effective pipelines, though expansion and stronger partnerships are needed to meet industry demand.
- **Healthcare pipelines** face misalignment, as increased enrollment does not guarantee placements, signaling a need for better integration of skills and employer requirements.
- **CTE programs** provide valuable pathways, but staffing shortages and limited capacity hinder their ability to fully meet demand, particularly in HVAC and other technical fields.

- **Early career education remains underdeveloped, limiting the future supply of candidates with foundational digital and technical skills.**

Overall, while pipelines exist and show promise, sustained collaboration, creative instructor recruitment, and stronger alignment between education and industry are essential to strengthen talent flow into priority occupations.