

CareerSource North Central Florida Education and Industry Consortium QUARTERLY REPORT

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

Report quarter: Program Year 2026, Quarter 2 (October – December 2025)

Date of meeting: December 11, 2025

Report prepared by: Jessica McCrae

Local workforce development board contact: Christina Brown Date: 12/12/2025

B. ATTENDANCE

Name	Organization	Industry or Education Organization	Contact Information
Jonathan Leslie	Education and Industry Consortium (Interim Chair)	Workforce Development	jleslie@iwionline.org 352-225-3307
Shawn Holmgren	Columbia County Makerspace	Industry	columbiacountymakerspace@outlook.com 561-389-1490
Sara Maxwell	Ben E Keith Foods	Industry	smmaxwell@benekeith.com 352-372-3514
Ryan Wilder	NCCER	Industry	rwilder@nccer.org
Tracey Higdon	Florida Gateway College	Education	Tracey.higdon@fgc.edu 386-754-42225
Jessica Hurov	Alachua County Tourism and Economic Development	Industry	jhurov@alachuacounty.gov 352-374-5260
Dr. Brent Ferns	Santa Fe College	Education	Brent.fern@sfcollge.edu 352-395-5428
Charlie Turley (representin	Palms Medical Group	Industry	cturley@palmsmq.org 352-463-4501

Name	Organization	Industry or Education Organization	Contact Information
g Anita Rembert)			
Bailey McClellen (representing Sean McLendon)	Alachua County Economic Development Team	Industry	bmccllellen@alachuacounty.us 352-347-5204
Chris Mecusker (representing Mike Ripplinger)		Education	mecuskerc@union.k12.fl.us 352-448-5145
Nancy Holbrook (representing Lisa Anderson)	Santa Fe College, Career and Job Placement	Education	nancy.halbrook@sfcollge.edu (352) 395-5822
Phyllis Marty	CareerSource North Central Florida	Workforce Development	pmarty@careersourcencfl.com 352-955-2245
Diane Burke	CareerSource North Central Florida	Workforce Development	dburke@careersourcencfl.com 352-955-2245
Jessica McCrae	CareerSource North Central Florida	Workforce Development	jmccrae@careersourcencfl.com 352-955-2245
Alex Ganz	CareerSource North Central Florida	Workforce Development	aganz@careersourcencfl.com 520-344-0672
Michelle Guash	Scad Media	Media/Communications	
Elora Duong	Scad Media	Media/Communications	

B. SUMMARY REPORT

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

Consortium members reported continued strain on regional employers seeking to fill industrial and technical positions, with pre-apprenticeship pathways identified as a gap in

preparing job seekers for workplace expectations before entering formal apprenticeship structures. Shawn Holmgren noted that existing apprenticeship programs carry high costs and elevated failure rates, underscoring the need for stronger foundational training. On the education side, Shawn Holmgren and Tracey Higdon raised concerns that current college curricula, while broad, are not yet specialized enough to keep pace with rapidly evolving technology-driven roles or to attract new business investment to the region. Members also discussed the limits of currently available service data: CareerSource North Central Florida could not yet report utilization figures for its new community offices, which had not opened to the public, though soft-skills training completions through Metrix showed a 9% year-over-year enrollment increase.

2. Information on priority industry sectors and occupations for the local area.

The group identified several priority sectors for continued alignment between education and industry, including healthcare, medical administration, and nursing (highlighted by Charlie Turley on behalf of Palms Medical Group), as well as emerging fields such as solar photovoltaic installation and electronic systems technicians (proposed by Ryan Wilder). Nancy Holbrook noted opportunities to expand apprenticeship models beyond traditional trades into non-traditional areas such as bookkeeping and insurance. Jessica McCrae reviewed the Targeted Occupation List as the mechanism CareerSource uses to identify high-skill, high-wage occupations and to align apprenticeship development with current market demand.

3. Information on the status of existing talent pipelines for in-demand occupations.

Talent pipeline development remains an early-stage priority for the Consortium. Members discussed the need for a centralized, accessible hub for apprenticeship and workforce resources — Shawn Holmgren cited LakeCityHub.com as a model, and Alex Ganz suggested CareerSource could host a similar centralized resource on its own website to address the gap Jonathan Leslie flagged around low awareness of available opportunities among interns and job seekers. Dr. Brent Ferns and Alex Ganz highlighted mandatory internships at Santa Fe College as an existing pipeline element that has produced successful job placements. AI integration also emerged as a pipeline consideration, with Tracey Higdon reporting progress on an AI degree pathway at Florida Gateway College and members discussing how AI training could be incorporated across curricula, including support for learners with disabilities. Soft skills development was flagged for continued focus at the next meeting.