



**SOUTH CAROLINA'S  
Coordinating Council for  
Workforce Development  
Annual Report**

**2025**



**FIND YOUR  
FUTURE**  
SOUTH CAROLINA



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A photograph of a swampy forest with large tree trunks and a teal square graphic. The image shows several large, textured tree trunks in the foreground, with their reflections visible in the water. The background is a dense forest of green foliage. A teal square is positioned on the right side of the image, partially overlapping the text.

# Letter From The Chair



## Letter from the Chair

As I reflect on the second year of my service as Chair of the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development, this year produced positive results for our workforce through the tireless efforts and dependable collaboration of our council membership and their staffs.

We saw the launch of the Find Your Future website in February. This multi-year process involved the participation of over 30 organizations, state agencies, and businesses to create a better way to inform all South Carolina residents of the opportunities available in their communities. Periodic updates continue as the website gradually evolves into the Find Your Future portal.

The Coordinating Council also produced baseline metrics in the inaugural Unified State Plan (USP). A yearlong process analyzed all measures and data to provide a true accounting of the workforce system. These baselines provide the foundation for tracking the impact of the actions taken by the Coordinating Council. It is hard to measure how far you have gone if you don't know where you started. Through this foundational effort the Coordinating Council has an excellent roadmap for moving forward.

This summer, we welcomed Dr. Rebecca Battle-Bryant as the first director of the Office of Statewide Workforce Development. Her efforts, and those of her staff, serve to create a customer-centric workforce development system that is accessible, effective, and easy to navigate. Her public and private sector experience makes her uniquely qualified for this position.

Lastly, I truly appreciate the tremendous work of our council committees. They are the backbone of our efforts to build a more accessible workforce system. A summary of each committee's efforts is located within this report, but no report can reflect the entire scope of exceptional teamwork and partnership contributed by every committee member.

As the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development nears its third year, I believe our diligent work and collaboration will continue accelerating improvements for South Carolina's workforce and employers.

**WILLIAM H. FLOYD, III**

Chair, Coordinating Council for Workforce Development  
Executive Director, South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce



## **Letter from the OSWD Director**

The past few months have been incredibly exciting as I've stepped into the role of Director of the Office of State Workforce Development. I've been greatly inspired by the cooperation, collaboration, and communication demonstrated not only among state agencies but also with our education and private industry partners through the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development (CCWD) and beyond.

The CCWD in South Carolina is deeply committed to addressing our state's workforce issues. This is a challenging goal due to many complexities, but with our collective energies and partnerships, it is indeed very possible to engage more South Carolinians in fulfilling careers and lives. The keyword I hear most often is "connections."

### **Building Intentional Bridges**

We must be more purposeful about connecting. We have been actively working to increase the opportunity to connect with the CCWD and their committees through intentional engagement and project work with one another, to increase building our relationships.

This commitment to connection delivered a significant win this year: the addition of five new business members to the CCWD table, representing a variety of industries and occupations for SC jobseekers. We warmly welcome Mandy Baltzegar, Jay Hamm, Jess Key, Tana Lee, and Barbara Livingston. Collectively, they represent manufacturing, construction, advanced energy/utilities, and healthcare. Their participation on committees will bring essential private-sector insights directly into our planning.

While a major project focuses on implementing a central portal for jobseekers and employers, the more we talk and listen, the more I realize the critical importance of human connection. Our young workers, despite being accustomed to technology, sometimes find it unfulfilling and are eager for face-to-face engagement with the workforce system. This presents numerous opportunities for us in how we approach recruiting our talent pipeline.

### **Internships: The Primary Vehicle for Engagement**

Another key strategy we are addressing involves internships. National and state data increasingly indicate that internships could be the primary vehicle to engage our K-12 and high school students, allowing them to explore the myriad career opportunities available. Young students actively seek internships that offer both work experience and skill acquisition. For 2026, a major initiative for the CCWD is to create a toolkit for greater consistency in



## **Letter from the OSWD Director Cont.**

how we utilize internships. This toolkit will provide our K-12 education partners with greater confidence in approaching and interacting with their local employers. This will foster greater opportunities to connect our students with SC employers and, hopefully, lead to their retention in the workforce upon graduation.

### **Elevating Local Brilliance**

Furthermore, I see a vital role for the CCWD in showcasing best practices in effective workforce strategies being demonstrated throughout our state. We have so many pockets of brilliance happening at the micro-level. We need to elevate what is working so that everyone can consider how these successful approaches might be adapted in their local areas and resources.

Our role is to offer resources, ideas, and inspiration to our dedicated and committed workforce partners throughout the state. Each local area is unique, and we aim to maximize the strengths of each community in addressing its specific workforce challenges, such as transportation, childcare, and housing. We are here to serve you and help each of you achieve your respective goals in employing more South Carolinians in meaningful careers.

### **Dr. Rebecca Battle-Bryant**

Director, Office of Statewide Workforce Development







## History

The South Carolina Coordinating Council for Workforce Development was formed in response to a need for improved coordination of efforts in workforce development. A brief history of its membership is below, with additional details in the appendices.

In 2016, the Coordinating Council was established by the General Assembly in Act 252 to “engage in discussions, collaboration and information sharing concerning the state’s ability to prepare and train workers to meet current and future workforce needs.”

Act 194 of 2022 merged the Coordinating Council with the Education and Economic Development Coordinating Council, adding responsibilities to the Coordinating Council that include oversight of the Education and Economic Development Act.

With the signature of Governor Henry McMaster, Act 67 of 2023, “The Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act,” ushered in a new era in South Carolina workforce development. Sponsors S.C. House Speaker G. Murrell Smith, Jr. and members of the South Carolina House Ad Hoc Committee on Economic Development and Utility Modernization wrote the act to address workforce systematically and improve the experience of businesses and individuals alike.

As stated in S.C. Code Section 41-30-110, the new laws seek to “coordinate, align, and enhance all publicly funded workforce development services and centralize oversight of the entities that provide these services to enhance accountability, enhance transparency, and promote a customer-centric workforce system.” The goal is to produce a workforce system that is “easy to access, highly effective, and simple to understand.”





# Roles and Responsibilities



# Coordinating Council for Workforce Development Chair and Vice Chair

## Coordinating Council for Workforce Development Chair

The Coordinating Council is chaired by the Executive Director of the Department of Employment and Workforce. The Chair, and their duties, are outlined in statute.

Duties include, but are not limited to the following:

- Monitor and audit the implementation of S.C. Code Section 41-30-110, et. seq.;
- Review accountability and performance measures;
- Annually report to the Governor and the General Assembly by December first of each fiscal year, on the following:
  - actions taken by the CCWD during the previous fiscal year;
  - engagement of the CCWD members to include attendance, participation, and compliance with the Unified State Plan (USP), and;
  - any recommendations for legislation.



### **WILLIAM H. FLOYD, III**

Executive Director,  
Department of Employment and Workforce

Began service: Oct. 1, 2023  
Term is contemporaneous with their respective  
state appointments or elected term, as applicable.

Lead staff: Nina Staggers



### Coordinating Council for Workforce Development Vice Chair

Each June the Executive Committee will vote on the Executive Committee member who will serve the one-year term as Vice Chair.

The Vice Chair's duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Preside at CCWD meetings in the absence of the Chair, and In case of illness or an emergency, may perform some duties of the chair.



#### **DR. TIM HARDEE**

President,  
State Technical College System

Began service: Oct. 1, 2023

Term is contemporaneous with their respective  
state appointments or elected term, as applicable.

Lead staff: Karmen Smith

## Office of the Statewide Workforce Development Director

The Office of Statewide Workforce Development (OSWD) Director is appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The process for selection of the OSWD Director and their duties are outlined in the statute. The OSWD Director will perform their duties under the direction of the CCWD Chair.[4]

The OSWD Director's duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Oversee and ensure implementation of Coordinating Council for Workforce Development responsibilities;
- Efficiently marshal public resources to optimally align, consolidate, streamline, and coordinate publicly funded workforce development efforts in SC;
- Provide centralized oversight of all publicly funded workforce development services in SC provided by state and local government agencies, nonprofit groups, and quasi-governmental groups that are appropriated state funds or are authorized to expend federal funds related to workforce development;
- Provide oversight of Regional Workforce Advisors;
- Monitor compliance of each state and local government agency, nonprofit group, and quasi-governmental group that is appropriated state funds or is authorized to expend federal funds related to workforce development and, when necessary, direct those entities to take any action necessary to comply with the responsibilities set forth in the Unified State Plan, and;
- Perform such other duties as may be assigned from time to time by the CCWD Chair.



### **DR. REBECCA BATTLE-BRYANT**

Director,  
Office of Statewide Workforce Development

Began service: May 2025



## Executive Committee

There are eight members serving on the CCWD Executive Committee. These members and their duties are outlined in statute.

The duties of the Executive Committee include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Reviewing and voting on recommendations made by the CCWD or Director of OSWD;
- Reviewing and approving any actions proposed to be undertaken by the CCWD including adoption or modification of the USP or any provision of the USP; and
- Recommending the appropriate actions necessary to accomplish the following:
  - Eliminate duplicative programs and workforce activities that do not further the USP,
  - Improve programs not meeting stated performance targets, and,
  - When necessary and to the extent not prohibited by law, recommend that entities discontinue programs that repeatedly do not meet targets or may no longer be needed.

Their term of office is outlined in the CCWD bylaws. Membership, term of office, and participation for Executive Committee members not previously shown (i.e., Chair, Vice Chair, and Director of the Office of Statewide Workforce Development), are on the next page.



**HARRY M. LIGHTSEY III**

Secretary,  
Department of Commerce  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023  
Lead staff: Amy Thomson

**SHANE MASSEY**

Senator,  
SC Senate  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023  
Lead staff: Sam Orr

**L. JEFFREY PEREZ**

President and Executive Director,  
Commission on Higher Education  
Began Service: Sep. 1, 2024  
Lead staff: Corey Gheesling

**ELLEN WEAVER**

State Superintendent of Education  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023  
Lead staff: Ian Headley

**JAY WEST**

Former Member,  
SC House of Representatives  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023  
Lead staff: Erica Starnes



## Full Council

The full council includes 38 members from industry as well as education and workforce development agencies. Council duties include the following:

- Making recommendations to the General Assembly as needed to implement the provisions of the South Carolina Education and Workforce Act (Act 67 of 2023).
- Regularly meeting with industry associations to gain an understanding of their workforce needs and ideas;
- Facilitating and coordinating the development of the Unified State Plan (USP);
- Using data and analysis to create measurable, time-sensitive metrics for the USP in which all workforce pipeline stakeholders including, but not limited to, education and workforce councils, and partner representatives, participate. These measurable, time-sensitive metrics include, but are not limited, to:
  - Ten-year labor participation rate target; and
  - Ten-year target for the number of South Carolinians who possess a high-quality credential or post-secondary degree;
- Creating an education and workforce dashboard or other application to enable the public to monitor and track progress of the USP; and
- Annually review the USP and update as needed.

These members and their duties, and the ability of the Executive Committee to add other agencies or entities at any time, are outlined in statute. The applicable terms of office for non-Executive Committee members are outlined in CCWD bylaws.



# Education



## DR. DAVID COLE

President,  
Medical University of South Carolina  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023  
Lead staff: Dawn Hartsell



## DR. GALEN DEHAY

President,  
Tri-County Technical College  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023  
Lead staff: Dan Cooper



## DR. HARRISON GOODWIN

Superintendent,  
Kershaw County School District  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023



## ANN VANDERVLIT

Director,  
South Carolina First Steps  
Began Service: Dec. 1, 2024  
Lead staff: Karen Oliver



## DAVID VAUGHAN

Member,  
SC House of Representatives  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023



## DANA YOW

Executive Director,  
Education Oversight Committee  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023  
Lead staff: Dr. Rainey Knights



## REX RICE

Senator,  
SC Senate  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023



## HOLLIE HARRELL

Director,  
Anderson 1 & 2 Career and Technology Center  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023



## ANNA DUVALL

Student Transition Services Team Lead,  
Department of Education  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023



## DR. RICHARD COSENTINO

President,  
Lander University  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023  
Lead staff: Adam Taylor



# Workforce, Industry, and Other Appointees



## **DUANE PARRISH**

Executive Director,  
Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023  
Lead staff: Justin Hancock



## **BOB QUINN**

Executive Director,  
SC Research Authority  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023  
Lead staff: Laura Terry



## **FRANK RAINWATER**

Executive Director,  
Revenue and Fiscal Affairs  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023  
Lead staff: Chris Finney



## **HUGH E. WEATHERS**

Commissioner,  
Department of Agriculture  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023  
Lead staff: Aaron Wood



## **THOMAS FREELAND**

Chair,  
State Workforce Development Board  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023



## **EMILY FARR**

Executive Director,  
Labor, Licensing, and Regulation  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023  
Lead staff: Holly Beeson



## **ANDY CARR**

President/CEO,  
Manufacturing Extension Partnership  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023



## **ADRIENNE FAIRWELL**

President and CEO,  
SCETV & SC Public Radio



## **BRAD HUTTO**

Senator,  
SC Senate  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023  
Lead staff: Alisa Painter



## **RICHARD HUTTO**

Executive Director,  
Housing, Finance, and Development Authority  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023  
Lead staff: Lee Ann Watson



## **CRAIG JACOBS**

Chair,  
Upstate Workforce Development Board  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023



## **FELICIA JOHNSON**

Commissioner,  
Vocational Rehabilitation Department  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023  
Lead staff: Audrey Brown



## **TODD MCCAFFREY**

Secretary,  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023  
Lead staff: David Rozelle



## **CEZAR MCKNIGHT**

Former Member,  
SC House of Representatives  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023



## **MICHAEL MORRIS**

Head of Site Human Resources,  
ZF Transmissions  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023



## **W. HARTLEY POWELL**

Executive Director,  
Department of Revenue  
Began Service: Oct. 1, 2023  
Lead staff: Jonte Coldough

## Coordinating Council for Workforce Development Staff

The Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act states that agencies on the Coordinating Council shall provide staff for the Coordinating Council. The Coordinating Council for Workforce Development Executive Director identified three primary staff members to organize and facilitate the work of staff across the Coordinating Council agencies. Their offices are located at the Department of Employment and Workforce.

In addition, agencies on the Coordinating Council provide lead staff liaisons and other staff to complete the work for which the Coordinating Council is responsible.

Each member organization is asked to select a lead staff member to attend staff meetings on behalf of the leadership of their organization. These staff leads serve as the intermediary for all conversations about the work of the Coordinating Council and allow organizations to remain actively involved without adding undue work to leadership. This commitment to the process allows leadership to remain abreast of all work and shows the organization's commitment to workforce development in South Carolina. The lead staff selected by member organizations are included below the photo of the member on the previous pages.



**CHARLES L. APPLEBY IV**

Senior Advisor



**ROBERT DAVIS**

Project Manager



**JENNIFER JUDY**

Administrative Coordinator



A female scientist with dark hair tied back, wearing a white lab coat, safety glasses, and blue nitrile gloves, is focused on her work. She is using a pipette to transfer liquid into a multi-well plate. The background is a blurred laboratory setting with other equipment and people. The text "Council and System Actions" is overlaid in white on the bottom right of the image.

# Council and System Actions



## Projects Overview

The Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act tasks the Coordinating Council with numerous actions to improve the workforce system. Table 1 includes a brief sample of these projects and actions.





- 1** | Develop, and annually update, a Unified State Plan that includes measurable, time-sensitive metrics.
- 2** | Develop and implement a method for conducting an ongoing inventory of education and workforce programs.
- 3** | Create and maintain an education and workforce online portal with information, including, but not limited to:
  - 3 a** | Career pathways tool, educational program alignment toolkit, real-time labor market information, process and program mapping, workforce dictionary, an SC benefits calculator and an annual supply gap analysis, and.
- 4** | Implement studies, recommendations, and tools to address labor force participation barriers related to:
  - 4 a** | Government assistance ("cliff effect"), childcare, and transportation.
- 5** | Develop a model for measuring return on investment for education and workforce programs.
- 6** | Work with South Carolina Department of Veterans' Affairs on procedures that connect active-duty military spouses, family members, veterans, and military retirees to job opportunities and career support.

## Unified State Plan and Performance

The Unified State Plan (USP) provides a statewide approach for education and workforce development to streamline and unify efforts of entities involved throughout the state. It is the state's comprehensive strategic plan for education and workforce development.

As required in the Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act, the USP aims to reinforce the work currently performed by different state-funded entities to meet the needs of South Carolina employers and families. While individual agencies and organizations have their own plans, and some of which are required by federal law, a plan involving more than ten different agencies across education and workforce has not existed in some time, if ever, in South Carolina.

The Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act provides guidelines on what should be within the USP but does not limit the extent of the plan. The specific guidelines are in South Carolina Code Section 41-30-540.

The inaugural comprehensive Unified State Plan for Education and Workforce Development was presented to the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development on June 17, 2024, and received approval from the Executive Committee.

With the USP accepted by the Coordinating Council, the Metrics Baseline Committee was created to verify and establish baselines for all metrics accepted by the Coordinating Council. Below is a summary of that work.

For a complete copy of the Unified State Plan, see [FindYourFuture.sc.gov](https://FindYourFuture.sc.gov).

## Metrics

In June 2024, the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development voted to accept the first Unified State Plan (USP) for education and workforce development. With a direction established, baseline measurements or metrics were necessary to track changes. To address this need, the Research and Innovation Committee was created. This committee consisted of data and information experts from council organizations to guide the development process.



This committee was tasked with ensuring all USP metrics were trackable and then establishing a baseline measurement for all metrics. This extensive process lasted from June 2024 to June 2025 and culminated with the CCWD Executive Committee voting to accept and approve the baselines for all metrics.

## Awareness

### Services

- By 2040, increase the percentage of respondents who believe S.C. provides enough opportunities for job training and career advancement from 13% to 30%.

## Skills

### Services

- By 2030, increase the percentage of S.C. children ready for kindergarten to 75%.
- By 2030, increase the percentage of students at or above grade level in reading and math to 75%.

### Secondary Education

- By 2035, increase the percentage of graduating high school students who qualify as college or career-ready from 65.8% to 75% and those who qualify as college and career-ready from 29.4% to 40%.
- By 2040, increase the percentage of individuals employed or in higher education during the second quarter after receiving a high school diploma from 81.4% to 85%.

### Higher Education/Training

- By 2040, 75% of S.C. high school graduates will earn a short-term or academic credential issued by a post-secondary institution, with at least 60% qualifying as a High Value Credential as defined by the council.
- By 2035, increase the percentage of S.C. postsecondary students participating in a curricular or co-curricular work-based learning experience from 15.16% to 40%, with 65% of these experiences being curricular.
- By 2040, increase the percentage of S.C. residents employed during the second quarter after receiving a degree (or credential) from a S.C. post-secondary institution from 68.8% to 74%.

General: By summer 2027, find resources to fill in missing data gaps for individuals not shown in employment or education

## Obstacles

### Childcare

- By 2028, institute processes to collect data necessary to measure the supply and demand for childcare in S.C.

### Transportation

- By 2035, increase the number of contracts/agreements transit agencies maintain with employers to provide demand response services from 10 to 50.

# Awareness



## STRATEGIES

**1.1** Increase the understanding of top industries in South Carolina and career pathways for diverse occupations available to all students and their guardians, as well as individuals not in the labor force or underemployed.

## METRIC

By 2040, increase the percent of respondents who believe South Carolina provides enough opportunities for job training and career advancement to 30 percent.

## Findings Summary

The council contracted with outside vendor, Research Associates Inc, to perform a survey of South Carolina residents, with the goal of understanding perceptions of industries and occupations within our state. The survey, performed from February to March 2025, aimed for 600 respondents matching South Carolina's geographic population distribution.

The survey reached 672 residents across all 12 workforce regions, with intentional oversampling of young adults, age 18 to 24, to ensure detailed insights from this key population. Respondents were asked about their familiarity with eight industry sectors, employment preferences, perceived challenges, and job-seeking behaviors. Data was also disaggregated by demographics, region, and employment status to support targeted analysis.

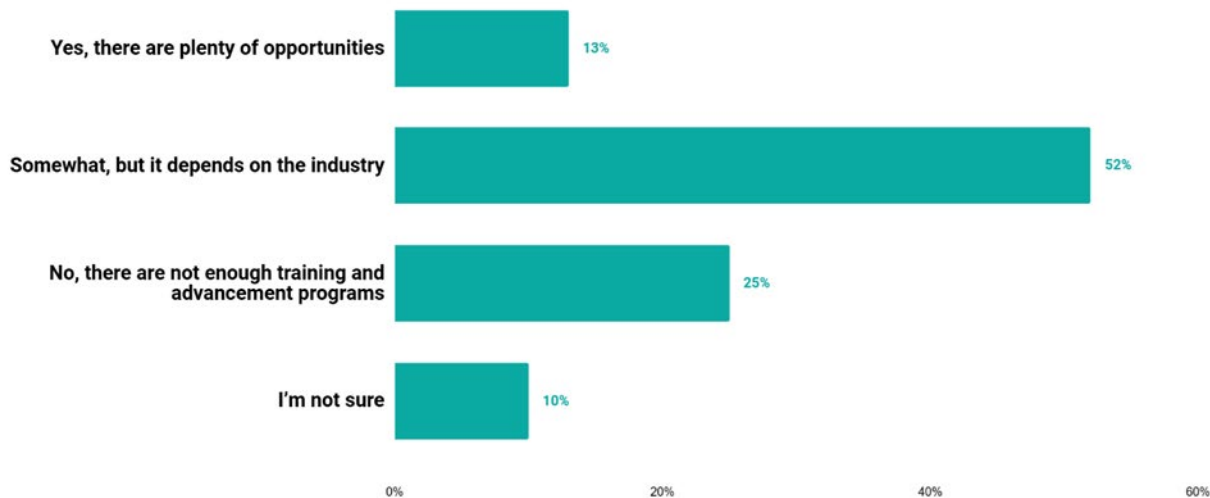
## Baseline

The report produced by the Research Associates Inc provides an in-depth analysis of the responses and trends within the data collected. Metadata was provided to the council so that analysis of the survey results can be performed by individual agencies.





## Opportunities for Job Training and Career Advancement in South Carolina



While the survey presents many significant data points that the council could try and affect, addressing public perceptions of industries or occupations is a difficult proposition. External factors can swing opinions regardless of marketing and education efforts. The question addressing the perception of opportunities for job training and career advancement in South Carolina lies firmly within the responsibilities and focus of this work.

These findings underscore the importance of expanding and better communicating job training and career advancement opportunities across the state:

- When asked whether South Carolina offers enough opportunities for job training and career advancement, most respondents expressed conditional or critical views — highlighting the need for more targeted and industry-specific efforts.
- The majority (52 percent) said that opportunities exist but depend heavily on the industry, suggesting uneven access across different sectors.
- Just 13 percent of respondents felt there are plenty of opportunities available, a small segment of the population with strong confidence in the state's training and education capabilities.
- In contrast, 25 percent reported that South Carolina does not offer enough programs, reflecting concern over gaps in workforce development and career mobility.

# Skills: Pre-K and K-12 Academic Readiness

## METRIC

By 2030, increase the percentage of South Carolina children ready for kindergarten to 75 percent.

## METRIC

By 2030, increase the percentage of students at or above grade level in reading and math to 75 percent.

These two metrics were not in the original USP and were added during the metric development process to recognize the development of a child through school and into the workforce. These two metrics serve as the foundation of future learning and training, requiring their inclusion in education and workforce discussions. The kindergarten readiness metric is tracked by South Carolina First Steps and the South Carolina Department of Education tracks the students on grade level in reading and math.

## College and Career Ready

## STRATEGIES

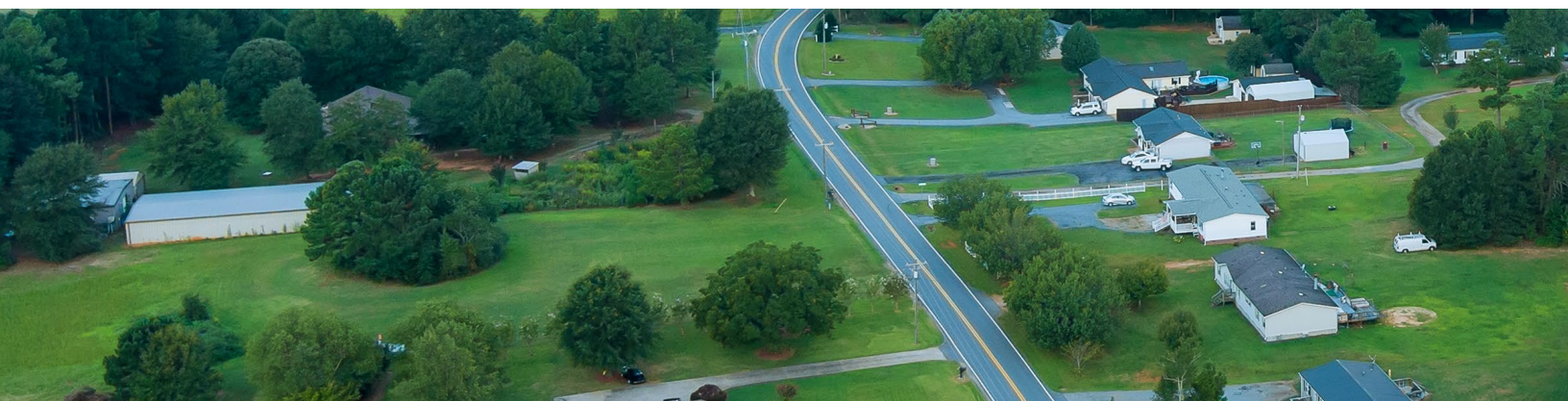
**2.1** Increase participation in work-based learning experiences for students at all levels and adults reentering the workforce.

## STRATEGIES

**2.2** Increase the percentage of the South Carolina labor force holding a high-value credential.

## METRIC

By 2035, increase the percentage of graduating high school students who qualify as college or career-ready from 65.8 percent to 75 percent and those who qualify as college and career-ready from 29.4 percent to 40 percent.





## Findings Summary

The College and Career Ready indicator used on the South Carolina School Report Cards measures the percentage of high school students who satisfy one or more of the college or career readiness goals listed below.

### College-Ready

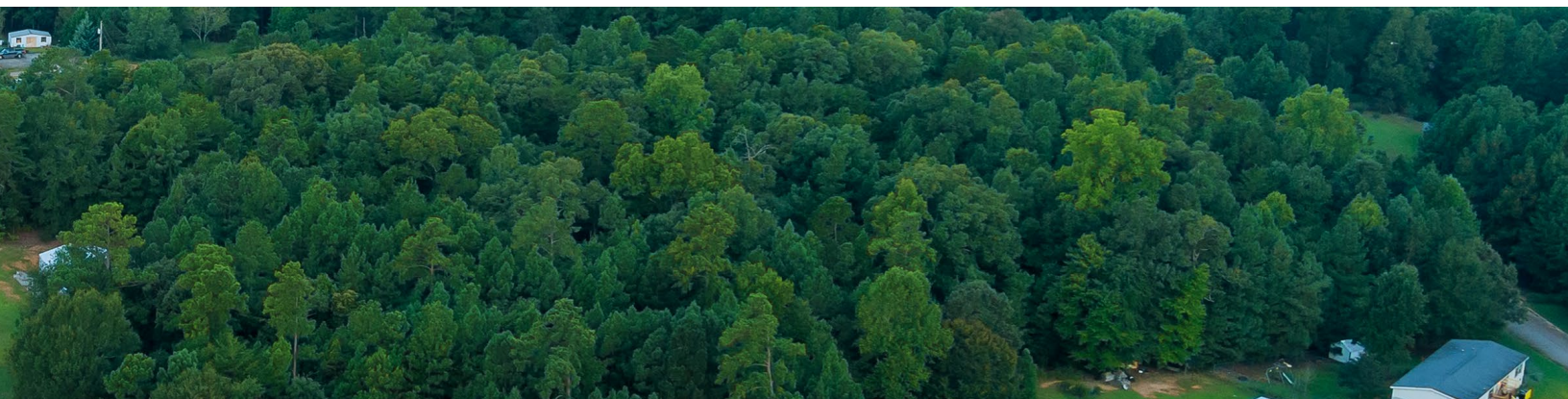
- Scores a composite of 20 or higher on the ACT.
- Scores a total of 1020 or higher on the SAT (SAT score will move to 1040 with concordance study)
- Scores a three or higher on an Advanced Placement (AP) exam.
- Scores a C or higher on any approved Cambridge International Exam
- Scores a four or higher on any International Baccalaureate (IB) higher learning (HL) exam.
- Completes at least six credit hours in approved dual enrollment courses with a grade of C or higher.

### Career-Ready

- CTE completer and earns a national industry credential or a state industry credential as determined by the EOC following the advice and guidance of technical advisory committees composed of educators and members of the business community.
- Earns a Silver, Gold, or Platinum National Career Readiness Certificate on the ACT WorkKeys exam or earns a Level 3 Credential or above on the WIN SC Career Ready Test (SCRT).
- Earns a scale score of 31 or higher on the ASVAB.
- Successfully completes a state-approved work-based learning exit evaluation from an employer.
- Is identified as a student with a disability who successfully completes the South Carolina High School Employability Credential.

A high rating for this indicator means a majority of students at a school are meeting at least one of these college-ready or career-ready goals. A larger number of students who qualify as college and/or career ready signifies that more students are prepared to enter the next step in their career journey.

This data is collected by individual schools as well as school districts and is published annually on the South Carolina School Report Cards, with past years' data available from 2018. Students may be duplicated in some criteria.



### Baseline

The last four years of data from South Carolina School Report Cards shows the baseline for South Carolina Students in the graduation cohort (ninth graders four years prior):

Report Card Year	Percent of Students College Ready	Percent of Students Career Ready	Percent of Students College or Career Ready	Percent of Students College and Career Ready	Number of Students in Graduation Cohort
2021	34.1	55.7	61.1	28.7	57,040
2022	32	62.8	65.8	29	58,486
2023	32.6	61.4	64.7	29.4	59,488
2024	32.5	69.6	71.5	30.6	60,700
Average	32.8	62.4	65.8	29.4	58,929

A four-year moving average will be used to balance out abnormal years as well as account for any changes in the process for a student to become college and/or career-ready.

Using this four-year moving average, we find **65.8 percent** of students in the graduating cohort qualified as **college or career ready** and **29.4 percent** of students qualified as **college and career ready**. Reasonable growth, from year to year, can be found within both measurements.

## High Value Credentials

### STRATEGIES

**2.2** Increase the percentage of the South Carolina labor force holding a high-value credential.

### METRIC

By 2040, 75 percent of S.C. high school graduates will earn a short-term or academic credential issued by a post-secondary institution, with at least 60 percent qualifying as a High Value Credential as defined by the council.



## Findings Summary

The development of high-value credentials required the establishment of Priority Occupations by the council. **High-value credentials are credentials that lead to 62 of the 168 Priority Occupations that typically require some post-secondary credentials.**

For more details, see the Priority Occupations section of South Carolina's Unified State Plan for Education and Workforce Development.

With 62 occupations defined, a crosswalk provided by the National Center for Education Statistics was used to match all possible post-secondary programs, using six-digit Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes, with the occupational codes of the 62 post-secondary education priority occupations.

All post-secondary credentials, from non-degree, industry certificates to doctorate degrees, were included. This decision was made to account for the many different paths an individual can take to reach their career goals. Post-secondary education and industry training provide career development and increase an individual's access to multiple career opportunities, a change from the traditional 1:1 production model where students enroll in programs that only lead to jobs in specific industries or career paths.

A total of **243 post-secondary credentials** were identified as credentials that provide a path towards the 62 Priority Occupations that require a **post-secondary credential**.



## Baseline

Using the Commission on Higher Education (CHE) 2022-2023 Total Degrees Awarded data, we find that of the 59,956 credentials issued, approximately **34,205** or **57.05 percent** qualify as **High Value Credentials (HVC)** with a three-year moving average of 58.52 percent.

CIP (two-digit)	CIP Description (Example Career)	Credentials Awarded
1	Agricultural/animal/plant/veterinary science and related fields (Veterinarians)	106
3	Natural resources and conservation (Occupational Health and Safety Specialists)	167
4	Architecture and related services (Cost Estimators)	50
5	Area, ethnic, cultural, gender, and group studies (Market Research Analysts)	35
9	Communication, journalism, and related programs (Web Developers)	463
11	Computer and information sciences and support services (Computer Systems Analysts)	1,473
13	Education (Elementary School Teachers)	2,498
14	Engineering (Civil Engineers)	1,624
15	Engineering/engineering-related technologies/technicians (Management Analysts)	947
16	Foreign languages, literatures, and linguistics (Secondary School Teachers)	183
19	Family and consumer sciences/human sciences (Child, Family, and School Social Workers)	542
22	Legal professions and studies (Lawyers)	356
23	English language and literature/letters (Middle School Teachers)	415
26	Biological and biomedical sciences (Medical Assistants)	1,774
27	Mathematics and statistics (Financial and Investment Analysts)	277
29	Military technologies and applied sciences (Business Operations Specialists)	212
30	Multi/interdisciplinary studies (Human Resources Specialists)	147
31	Parks, recreation, leisure, fitness, and kinesiology (Middle School Teachers)	30

CIP (two-digit)	CIP Description (Example Career)	Credentials Awarded
38	Philosophy and religious studies (Clergy)	52
39	Theology and religious vocations (Clergy)	361
40	Physical sciences (Secondary School Teachers)	300
42	Psychology (Substance Abuse Counselors)	1,456
43	Homeland security, law enforcement, firefighting, and related (Firefighters)	962
44	Public administration and social service professions (Substance Abuse Counselors)	729
45	Social sciences (Social Workers)	52
46	Construction trades (Cost Estimators)	361
47	Mechanic and repair technologies/technicians (HVAC Mechanics)	300
50	Visual and performing arts (Graphic Designers)	1,456
51	Health professions and related programs (Dental Hygienists)	962
52	Business, management, marketing, and related support services (Accountants)	729
54	History (Secondary School Teachers)	415
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,774</b>

## Postsecondary Work-Based Learning

### STRATEGIES

**2.1** Increase participation in work-based learning experiences for students at all levels and adults reentering the workforce.

### METRIC

By 2035, increase the percentage of post-secondary students in South Carolina participating in a curricular or co-curricular work-based learning experience from 15.16 percent to 40 percent, with 65 percent of these experiences being curricular.



## Findings Summary

Post-secondary work-based learning (WBL) opportunities allow employers to connect directly to prospective employees while providing students with critical experience that helps them develop career-ready skills and knowledge that will shape their respective career pathways.

Students are allowed to apply what they have learned in school to current employers, experience market demands, and bring these valuable experiences back to institutions. Academic programs receive improved feedback loops, that will enable more prepared graduates, on the types of knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by employers to revise curricula.

Employers enjoy enhanced recruitment opportunities and access to emergent research expertise from closer relationships with post-secondary institutions. This type of valuable experiential learning cannot be simulated and affords South Carolina economic development activities a more robust, high-quality, and resilient workforce to offer prospective employers and contribute to retaining existing industries, which benefits all South Carolinians.

For this metric, the following definitions were used:

### Curricular Work-Based Learning:

Are high-impact experiences embedded in a course or program of study. Curricular WBL may be identified in course records and information systems as internships, travel, research, or associated activity offered by the offering institution. If not presently identified by an institution, curricular WBL would be classes where a work-based experience is a curricular requirement for passing the course or completing a program.

### Co-curricular Work Based Learning:

Are those WBL opportunities that exist outside of an academic course or program of study. Co-curricular WBL may include student-initiated efforts through institutional career offices to find work-based opportunities during enrollment.

## Baseline

To date, South Carolina has not systematically captured data points relating to WBL. In collaboration with the Commission on Higher Education (CHE), institutions are working to standardize these data collection methodologies, definitions, and practices. Council staff worked to engage public and independent post-secondary institutions to collect data on WBL experiences.

While the council and CHE provided the framework, institutions determined which data points were relevant to satisfy the data request. The council and CHE will continue to work towards more uniform reporting regarding WBL activities for future reporting

<b>Institutions Submitting</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>% of total South Carolina postsecondary enrollment (22/23)</b>	<b>53.74%</b>
<b>Enrollment from submitting institutions (22/23)</b>	<b>155,567</b>
<b>Students participating in Curricular WBL</b>	<b>23,591</b>
<b>% of Students from Submitting Institutions</b>	<b>15.16%</b>
<b>Students Participating in Co-curricular WBL</b>	<b>8,855</b>
<b>% of Students from Submitting Institutions</b>	<b>5.69%</b>

Through voluntarily provided data, information was collected from **27** institutions that cover roughly **54 percent** of all enrolled post-secondary students based on 2022-2023 enrollment.

## Use of Skills

### STRATEGIES

**2.3** Increase the percentage of individuals who, after attaining a credential in South Carolina, are employed in South Carolina, participating in a year of service in South Carolina, or enrolled in additional education.

#### METRIC

By 2040, increase the percentage of individuals employed or in higher education during the second quarter after receiving a high school diploma from 81.4 percent to 85 percent.

#### METRIC

By 2040, increase the percentage of S.C. residents employed during the second quarter after receiving a degree (or credential) from a S.C. post-secondary institution from 68.8 percent to 74 percent.



## Findings Summary

The council executed its first voluntary multi-agency data request in April 2025. This request involved the Department of Employment and Workforce, State Department of Education, the State Technical College System, Commission on Higher Education, Education Oversight Committee, and the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation. This request was executed by Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office.

The results of this request were provided in an aggregate and de-identified format, protecting all personal or private information involved in the product.

## Baseline

### High School Graduate Outcomes

Year of SC Graduation	SC High School Graduates	Any SC Enrollment or Employment	% Any SC Enrollment or Employment	Not Enrolled or Employed in the 2nd Quarter	% Not Enrolled or Employed in the 2nd Quarter
2014	39,696	32,482	81.83%	7,214	18.17%
2015	43,218	35,220	81.49%	7,998	18.51%
2016	44,644	36,100	80.86%	8,544	19.14%
2017	45,953	37,672	81.98%	8,281	18.02%
2018	47,908	39,323	82.08%	8,585	17.92%
2019	48,331	39,619	81.97%	8,712	18.03%
2020	48,288	38,890	80.54%	9,398	19.46%
2021	47,852	38,824	81.13%	9,028	18.87%
2022	48,766	<u>39,365</u>	<u>80.72%</u>	<u>9,401</u>	<u>19.28%</u>

Roughly one in five high school graduates does not appear in the wage records or post-secondary enrollment records after two quarters or six months. While this is a significant number, this missing population will likely be reduced with additional data.

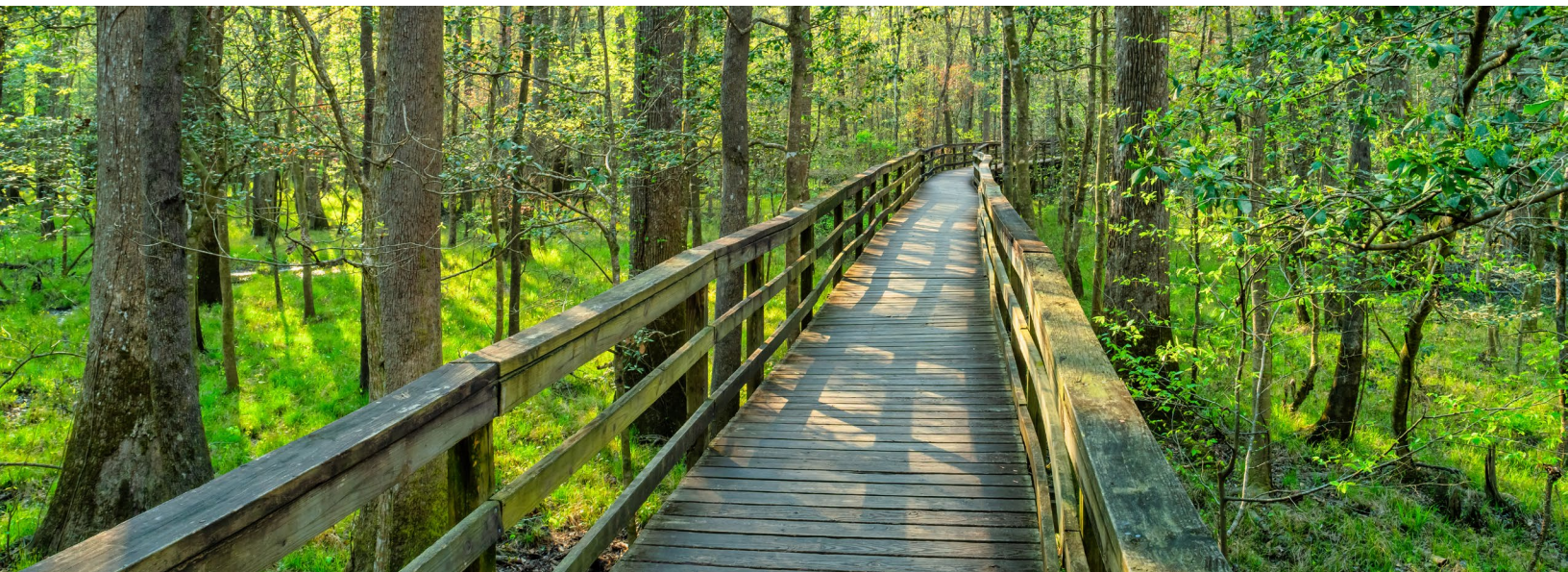
The flat enrollment or employment results do support the need to further engage high school students to ensure that some plan after high school graduation exists. While two quarters is by no means a guarantee of long-term workforce inactivity, it may indicate that consistent workforce participation could be at risk.

### Post-secondary Graduate Outcomes

Year of SC Graduation	Total College Graduate	SC Resident Public School Graduates (%)	Any Employment In 2nd Quarter	Not SC Public School Graduates (%)	Any Employment In 2nd Quarter
2014	31,420	32.79%	69.72%	67.21%	46.73%
2015	31,598	35.03%	70.78%	64.97%	43.26%
2016	31,795	37.67%	69.79%	62.33%	40.78%
2017	31,645	38.18%	69.37%	61.82%	38.19%
2018	31,762	39.91%	69.53%	60.09%	35.21%
2019	31,775	41.36%	68.07%	58.64%	32.92%
2020	31,774	42.16%	67.70%	57.84%	29.75%
2021	31,242	41.76%	66.97%	58.24%	29.38%
2022	31,575	42.19%	67.15%	57.81%	27.18%

The post-secondary results show a shifting landscape of South Carolina's college graduates. Over the last nine years, in-state students have been completing college in gradually increasing numbers, while the number of out-of-state students graduating has decreased.

We find nonresident students are leaving the state, after completing their education, in increasingly greater numbers. Even with the growing number of resident graduates, the total new labor market entrants in South Carolina have decreased from roughly 17,000 in 2014 to around 13,900 in 2022.





# Obstacles: Transportation



## STRATEGIES

**3.3** Increase the number of transit options for individuals without vehicles to get to work.

## METRIC

By 2035, increase the number of contracts/agreements transit agencies maintain with employers to provide demand response services from 10 to 50.

## Findings Summary

The council staff engaged with the Transportation Association of South Carolina (TASC) membership to gather baseline data from, and a better understanding of, South Carolina's workforce transit options. All transit organizations were asked to answer the following questions:

- Number of demand response services running in your area
  - Break out the type of response (ex., vanpool, full bus, etc.)
- Number of Employers with contracts
- Average number of riders in a period (month, week, year)
  - Average number of miles driven in a period

There are several potential data points that could be used to track and improve access to transportation for South Carolina workers. Fixed routes and commuter routes across the state are used by 60-70 percent of transit riders. Many fixed routes drop employees off at the front doors of industry, hospitals, Federally Qualified Health Centers, technical colleges, universities, hospitality, retail and many more businesses. This makes many fixed or commuter routes a form of "workforce transit" which adds great value to maintaining workforce participation in South Carolina.



Current access to services provides workers approximately 7 million workforce transit trips, 3.5 million each way to and from work. All of this is accomplished with per capita transit investment of \$1.08 per person in South Carolina, below our surrounding states of Georgia (\$2.16) and North Carolina (\$7.00).

Ultimately, direct engagement with employers through contracts was decided as the measure to simplify measurement and promote employers actively participating in transit options.

**Baseline**

A total of eight transit organizations responded, covering a footprint of 63 percent of all workers in South Carolina.

Fixed Routes	82
Demand Response Routes	31
Employer Contracts	10
Estimated Monthly Miles Driven	More than 650,000

A total of ten contracts existed between transit organizations and employers, with one additional acknowledged contract between a private sector provider and an employer. The conclusion from this sample is that demand response services with employers is an untapped opportunity in South Carolina.

The primary example of a successful “demand response” relationship is Harbor Freight in Dillon County with Pee Dee RTA. Pee Dee RTA now runs multiple full bus routes for first and second shift workers seven days per week, a process that has grown over multiple years. Success can be attributed to:

- 1 Harbor Freight invested financially and institutionally in this program. Buy-in can be found in all levels of leadership, with many managers involved in the program themselves.
- 2 “Lunch and Learn” programs were hosted to educate Harbor Freight Employees on the financial and personal benefits of the program.
- 3 Further financial investment by Harbor Freight and Pee Dee RTA was undertaken as employee demand grew, to ensure capacity was available.



# Childcare

## STRATEGIES

**3.1** Increase the number of available childcare options for guardians entering the workforce or obtaining education.

## METRIC

By 2028, institute processes to collect data necessary to measure the supply and demand for childcare in S.C.

### Findings Summary

With more than 50 percent of United States households currently considered dual-income, childcare access represents possibly the most critical resource to the working family. At the same time, data to inform policymakers on the availability and usage of childcare in South Carolina is very limited and infrequently obtained. To establish what metrics are trackable in the childcare space, council staff worked with South Carolina First Steps, the South Carolina Department of Social Services, and South Carolina Child Care Resource & Referral.

### Baseline

#### South Carolina Regulated Childcare Data

Childcare Capacity (Source: SC Endeavors via SCDSS)		
Type	Available Capacity	Facilities
Childcare Center	201,352	1,570
Group childcare Home	668	56
Family childcare Home	4,444	767



Childcare Enrollment (Model based on available data)				
Age Group	Teachers	Enrollment	Number Likely Needing Childcare	Potential % Enrolled
Birth-One	4,809	6,110	22,866	26.7%
One-Two	5,872	11,414	28,583	39.9%
Two-Three	6,255	16,174	28,583	56.6%
Three-Four	5,962	21,196	38,301	55.3%
Four-Five	4,326	18,979	38,301	49.6%

Public School Enrollment (Source: SC Dept. of Education) Note: Not included in metric measurement but impacts demand.		
Public School (23/24)	Teachers	Enrollment
Prekindergarten (Age three to four years)	1,173	26,926
Kindergarten (Age five to six years)	2,491	54,278

A baseline was developed by modeling voluntarily submitted data, using numerous assumptions, to provide insight into what the South Carolina childcare space may look like. While imperfect, this model provides a first insight into the childcare system and illustrates the need for appropriate data collection to provide a more accurate depiction.







# Inventory of Programs and Portal



## Inventory of Programs

The Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act, enacted in May 2023, required not only the creation of an inventory across all agencies and organizations but also the inclusion of this resource in a central Education and Workforce Website and Portal. Sponsors of the Act described it as a means to, among other things, “remedy the current challenge of navigating the complex, confusing and tangled web of services offered across numerous agencies and programs.”

This central source for information about education and workforce programs (i.e., menu of services) has numerous potential benefits, including, but not limited to, allowing:

- employers to search for services to assist their hiring, retention, etc.;
- individuals to search for services to assist in obtaining education, training, and employment;
- agencies and organizations to avoid duplication in their services and initiatives; and
- employers, individuals, agencies, and organizations to understand who to contact in different areas for different services.

The long-term goal is for users (e.g., employer, individual, agency, etc.) to access a list of contact information for services and service providers that can be filtered by various criteria (e.g., county, topic, agency or organization offering the service).

This menu will allow employers and individuals to find services needed, as well as assist agencies that seek to partner with others who are performing similar services, instead of duplicating efforts of another entity. Also, the menu will allow policymakers at the state and local levels to determine potential gaps in services available within the state or within a particular area of the state.

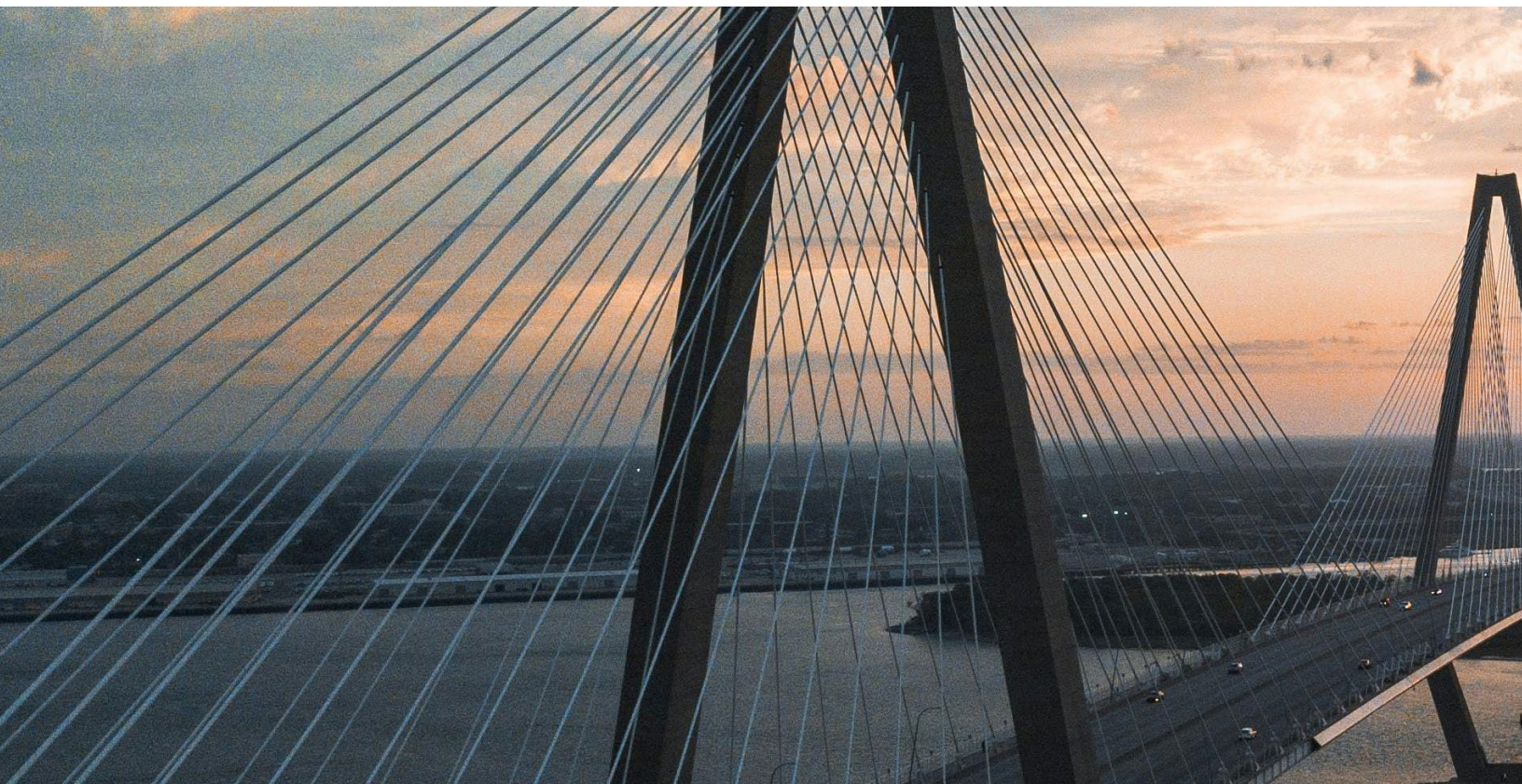
The coordinating council investigated several options for how to provide this menu of services prior to creation of the central education and workforce portal, and determined that the portal was the most efficient manner to provide the menu of services in a way that satisfies users (the number one priority voiced during focus groups was information remaining current). The goal of the portal is to allow each agency/organization to log in and update its information as changes occur. Therefore, the coordinating council will include requirements related to this tool in the Request for Proposals for the portal.

## Find Your Future Website and Web Portal

The Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act requires creating and maintaining an Education and Workforce Portal to provide South Carolinians with information critical to their lifelong educational journey. [S.C. Code Section 41-30-540(B)(7)].

A portal requires a user to log in with a username and password to obtain personalized information and recommendations. While this functionality is ideal for many individuals throughout the state, the CCWD understands some in the state want to access information without entering a username/password or any other personal information. Since the CCWD seeks to provide information to all individuals, it has created a website (where no login is required) and is in the process of creating the portal.

In 2025, the Find Your Future initiative moved from vision to pilots to the start of a scalable, statewide infrastructure that will give businesses, educators, and jobseekers a single point of access to the resources they need to grow South Carolina's economy.





## Find Your Future Website (FindYourFuture.sc.gov)

In February 2025, the Portal Steering Committee (PSC) and Communications Committee oversaw the successful launch of FindYourFuture.sc.gov — a statewide website consolidating education, training, and employment resources from multiple agencies. The site serves as a “front door” for South Carolinians seeking workforce and education information, with intuitive navigation and cross-agency branding.

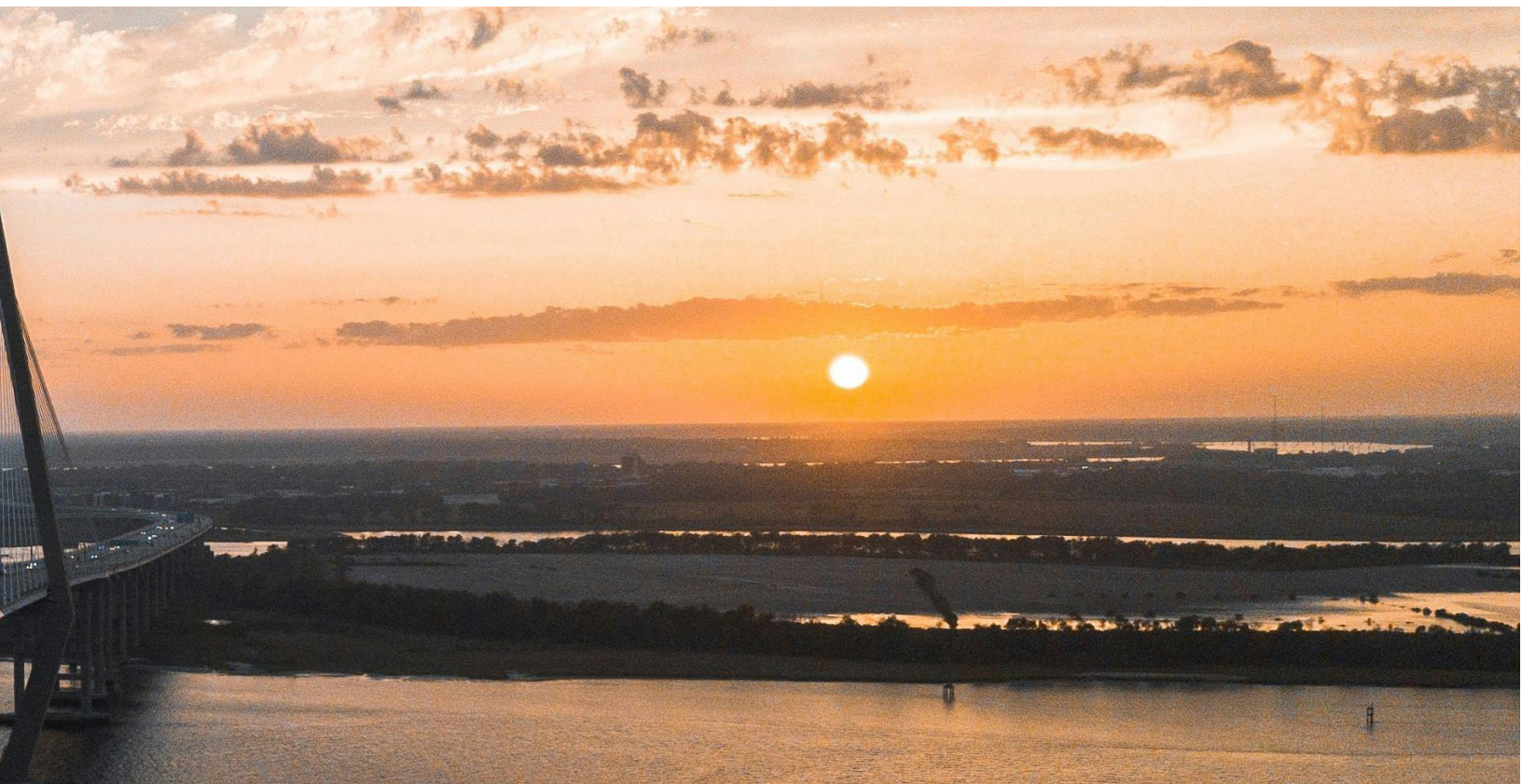
Following the launch, the PSC implemented a regular update and review process to ensure the site remains relevant and accurate. Updates made since launch of the site include:

- Expansion of user groups to include veterans, employers, jobseekers, educators, students, and parents;
- Creation of new dashboards and tools such as the Education Matchmaker, Benefits Calculator, and Priority Occupations Dashboard; and
- Establishment of a public and partner survey system allowing individuals and agencies to propose new content and updates.

Starting in 2026, the CCWD plans to expand beyond links to include content, videos, dashboards, and interactive maps that pull in real-time data while still crediting original agencies.

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<sup>1</sup> In prior Annual Reports the website was referenced as an “Interim Hub.” To create consistent terminology, the CCWD is now referring to the website as the Find Your Future Website and the portal as the Find Your Future Portal.





## Find Your Future Portal

The Find Your Future Portal will be a personalized platform that requires a login and is distinct from the website. Major milestones in 2025 included completion of the Gartner Consulting Feasibility Study, Portal Experiment #1 with FutureFit AI, and the start of Portal Experiment #2 with Google.

As a reminder, the portal will include, among many other resources, the following:

- Educational Program Alignment Toolkit that serves as an infrastructure of resources to enable the K-12, technical college, and higher education systems to individually and collectively ensure their respective educational curriculum, initiatives, and programming match workforce needs;
- Career Pathways Tool that uses applicable occupational data, educational programming, workforce needs, salary information, job market analyses, in-demand occupations, and other information to provide students, parents of students, jobseekers, educators, and counselors with useful information about potential career pathways and the various routes to meaningful employment;
- A comprehensive inventory of all statewide education and workforce programs; and
- The development of a reliable and replicable model for measuring returns on public investment in individual education and workforce programs, including a set of common measures used in a performance accountability system.

### Portal Feasibility Study and General Assembly Funding

The Portal Steering Committee worked closely with Gartner Consulting to complete a feasibility study that confirmed both the technical and operational readiness for a statewide Education and Workforce Portal. The study's findings validated the need for a centralized, personalized system integrating education, workforce, and employer data. Based on the CCWD's recommendations, the General Assembly approved funding for portal development in June 2025.

### Portal Experiment #1 – FutureFit AI

In February 2025, the CCWD launched the Future Finder experiment with FutureFit AI to explore what a modern, AI-powered statewide workforce portal could look like in practice. The AI-driven tool personalized each user's experience based on their work history, education, interests, and goals. Over a 12-month period, the project gave thousands of South Carolinians hands-on access to a live portal while also generating critical lessons for agency leaders, policymakers, and state partners.

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<sup>2</sup>In the 2024 Annual Report, this was referenced as the "Personalization Pilot."

Unlike traditional feasibility studies or requirements-gathering exercises, this project showed the power of practical experimentation. By standing up a live system, the state was able to test ideas quickly, see what worked, and capture real-world feedback from jobseekers, students, employers, and agency partners. The result was accelerated learning that would have taken years through paper-based planning alone.

The experiment proved that:

- **Modern technology can transform experiences.** Users reported satisfaction scores and engaged at levels far above legacy systems, with many preferring (and trusting) the portal even over national platforms like LinkedIn and Indeed.
- **Integration makes a single front door possible.** The project successfully tied together state systems, higher education, and wraparound resources, while demonstrating how AI personalization can route individuals to the right next step.
- **Engagement depends on outreach.** More than two-thirds of users were reached via digital marketing, showing the importance of proactive outreach for adoption. The user base was broadly representative across geography, education, and other demographics.
- **SaaS can enable fast, efficient value.** Partnering with a SaaS technology provider enabled the state to launch quickly and maintain the solution with little staff capacity or technical expertise required. Rapid iteration cycles produced tangible improvements.

The experiment concluded in October 2025. A copy of the final report from the FutureFit AI team is included as Appendix A.

## Recognition

The Find Your Future Website and Future Finder experiment were recognized as a Runner-Up for the State Innovation Award by the South Carolina Information Technology Directors Association, honoring its innovative, citizen-centered approach to technology integration and cross-agency collaboration.

## Portal Experiment #2 – Google

Building on the lessons from Experiment #1, the CCWD was approached by Google to partner on a prototype. One of Google's Rapid Innovation Teams is currently working with the Portal Steering Committee and other CCWD partners to create the prototype.



## Next Steps

Next steps for the Find Your Future Website and Find Your Future Portal are as follows:

- Continue content and feature build-out on FindYourFuture.sc.gov.
- Review Google prototype outcomes to inform Find Your Future Portal design.
- Incorporate lessons from feasibility study, experiments, and additional survey to employers into the request for proposal for the Find Your Future Portal.
- Obtain a consultant to assist in drafting the request for proposal and program assurance for the Find Your Future Portal.
- Proceed with issuance of a request for proposal and award a vendor the contract to create the Find Your Future Portal.
- Maintain employer engagement to ensure the Find Your Future Portal tools meet industry needs.





# Committee Updates





## Communications Committee

The Communications Committee began the year with a focus on the launch of the Find Your Future website. Working closely with the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW), the committee reviewed the website and provided feedback to the DEW Communication Division. The support of Find Your Future ramped up with the launch of the website, and a multi-agency coordinated effort was executed to share and promote the launch press release through a multitude of communications channels.

Assistance was provided with the launch of the Find Your Future social media accounts. Committee members were encouraged to send any content from their organization that they felt may be relevant to the brand.

The committee discussed and created basic parameters for the development of an Events Calendar on the Find Your Future website.

Members of the Communications Committee are listed below.

- S.C. Department of Agriculture - **Eva Moore**
- S.C. Department of Commerce - **Kelly Coakley**
- S.C. Education Oversight Committee - **Tenell Felder**
- S.C. Department of Education - **Nicole Arndt**
- S.C. Education Television Network - **Landon Masters**
- S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce - **Dorothy Weaver**
- S.C. First Steps to School Readiness - **Beth Moore**
- S.C. Commission on Higher Education - **Mark Swart**
- S.C. Housing, Finance, and Development Authority - **Matthew McColl**
- K-12 Career and Technical Education - **Chris Dinkins**
- S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation - **Vacant**
- Lander University - **Madison Herig**
- Manufacturing Extension Partnership - **Channing Childers**
- Medical University of South Carolina - **Vacant**
- S.C. Research Authority - **Adrienne Grimes**
- S.C. Department of Revenue - **Emily Purcell**
- State Technical College System - **Melissa Morris**
- S.C. Department of Veterans' Affairs - **Kiana Miller**
- S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department - **Rita Rhett**
- State Workforce Development Board - **Marlena Isaac**
- ZF Group - **Michael Morris**



# Research and Innovation Committee

The Research and Innovation Committee was established during the June 2024 council meeting. This committee was tasked with creating baselines for all metrics within the Unified State Plan and ensuring that measurements can be made consistently, correctly, and can be tracked going forward.

The first meeting of the Research and Innovation Committee was held on August 20, 2024, to discuss the development of baselines for all metrics within the Unified State Plan and the potential process for that development. Data and legal representatives attended from S.C. Commission on Higher Education (CHE); S. C. Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW); S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (LLR); S.C. Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office (RFA); S.C. Department of Education (SCDE); and S.C. Technical College System.

Work was segmented into two phases. The first phase focused on longitudinal data and the awareness survey, while phase two concentrated on education and childcare.



Phase 1

Use of Skills

Transportation

Awareness

Phase 2

College and Career Ready

Childcare

Post-secondary Work Based Learning

Meetings were held every two weeks to keep the committee informed of actions and receive consistent feedback. Major successes included:

- The first multi-agency data sharing agreement for education and workforce in November 2024.
- Update of council bylaws to handle data requests in December 2024.
- The first council data request submitted and approved in March 2025.
- The first collection of post-secondary work-based learning data in April 2025.
- The first workforce survey of South Carolina residents in May 2025.
- The first publication of South Carolina secondary and post-secondary workforce outcomes in June 2025.

These benchmarks, among others, showed the diligence of the committee and the commitment to providing useful data for council decision-making. Upon the completion of the metrics work, the committee, then known as the Metrics Baseline Committee, was renamed the “Research and Innovation Committee.” This new name represents the collaborative work and ambitious mission of the committee going forward. Answering the important education and workforce questions of the council while providing new and innovative information to guide policymakers within the state.

The committee now meets monthly to accommodate staff from council organizations.

### **Membership**

- Chair - **Dana Yow**, Director – Education Oversight Committee
- Staff Lead – **Dr. Matthew Lavery** – Education Oversight Committee
- **Moses Brown** – State Technical College System
- **Brandon Wilkerson** – S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce
- **Dr. Erica Von Nessen** – S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce
- **Dr. Christopher Robinson** – S.C. Commission on Higher Education
- **Chris Finney** – S.C. Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office
- **Dwane Sims** – S.C. Department of Veterans' Affairs
- **Mariana Manic** – S.C. Commission on Higher Education
- **Dr. Bryan Grady** – S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce
- **Andrew Coleman** – S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation
- **Daniel Tompkins** – S.C. Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office
- **Van Holden** – S.C. Department of Education
- **Matt Faile** – S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

## Veterans Committee

The first meeting between the CCWD Chairman and the SCDVA Secretary occurred on January 6, 2025, with a kick-off meeting on March 5, 2025, and generally a monthly cadence thereafter.

The purpose of the CCWD Veterans Committee is to coordinate with SCDVA to develop and implement procedures that connect active-duty military, spouses, family members, veterans, and military retirees to job opportunities and career support.

This committee is a collaborative effort, where all agency members are on an equal footing.

The CCWD Veterans committee work is well-positioned to align with the Unified State Plan (USP) and meet these overall objectives:

- Engage with and coordinate veteran initiatives/programs across agencies;
- Amplify the reach and impact of current initiatives; and
- Generate ideas for new initiatives and obtain CCWD Executive Committee approval.

The CCWD Veterans Committee is led by the Committee Chair, Secretary Todd McCaffrey, and Committee Staff Leads, David Rozelle and Daniel Wrightsman.

The SCDVA FY25-26 Action Plan Summary consists of five focus areas, with **Focus Area 4** being to assist transitioning veterans. The intent is to make South Carolina the destination of choice for transitioning service members.

**The committee objectives are driven by four focus areas within the overall Focus Area 4.**

**1**

**Focus Area 4.1.** Gain full visibility of the transitioning service member population.

**2**

**Focus Area 4.2.** Increase the number of veterans in the South Carolina workforce.

**3**

**Focus Area 4.3.** Optimize the employment of veterans to maximize benefits to veterans and the economy.

**4**

**Focus Area 4.4.** Increase veteran participation in entrepreneurial initiatives.



Each focus area contains additional points that must be addressed. Four working groups were formed during the April 2, 2025, monthly meeting to address Focus Areas 4.1 through 4.4, and initial recommendations and feedback were provided at the May 7, 2025, monthly meeting. The working groups continue to meet monthly to provide updates to the entire CCWD Veterans Committee.

Milestones were developed to further address committee objectives and initiatives. A major milestone achieved was the launch of the SCDVA South Carolina Smart Start on October 4th and its connection to the Find Your Future South Carolina portal. SC Smart Start is the implementation of a Virtual Transition Assistance Program (VTAP) in support of Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve members' transitioning into the civilian sector of South Carolina.

- SCDVA Smart Start (<https://scsmartstart.sc.gov/>)
- Find Your Future South Carolina (<https://findyourfuture.sc.gov/>)

Another major accomplishment was SCDVA Transitions Servicemember Career Workshops conducted in October 2025.



## Membership

Representatives are from any CCWD member organization and SCDVA Workforce Development group that interacts with active-duty military spouses, family, veterans, and military retirees. Membership has expanded across federal, state, private, public, and community organizations.

- AnMed – [Kaye Brewer](#)
- Anderson District 1 and 2 Career and Technical Education – [Hollie Harrell](#), [Travis Guthrie](#)
- Central Carolina Technical College – [Ken Bernard](#), [Wesley C. Pelletier](#)
- Charleston Chamber of Commerce – [Darryl Brown](#)
- Columbia Chamber of Commerce – [Susan McPherson](#)
- S.C. Department of Administration – [Karen Wingo](#), [Stacy Lanham](#)
- S.C. Department of Agriculture – [Cristina Key](#), [Kyle Player](#)
- S.C. Department of Commerce – [Kim Mann](#)
- S.C. Department of Motor Vehicles – [Kevin Shwedo](#), [Steven Farrell](#)
- U.S. Department of Labor – [Brian Washington](#)
- S.C. Department of Revenue – [Jonte Colclough](#), [Sarah Todd](#), [Tara Bradshaw](#)
- Goodwill Upstate/Midlands – [Jason Jackson](#)
- Hilton Head and Bluffton Chamber of Commerce – [Tom Henz](#)
- Hire Our Heros USA – [Ross Dickman](#)
- S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation – [Susan Boone](#), [Theresa Brown](#)
- Lander University – [Brent Delgado](#), [Lloyd Willis](#), [McKenzie Stone](#)
- Midlands Technical College – [Jeremy Catoe](#)
- The Rez Rev, LLC – [Jaclyn Kohlhepp](#)
- S.C. Charter Public School District – [Perry Mills, Sr](#)
- S.C. Commission on Higher Education – [Alfie Mincy](#)
- S.C. Council on Competitiveness – [Susie Shannon](#), [Stephen Astemborski](#)
- S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce – [Marlin Bodison](#), [Nina Staggers](#), [Bryan Grady](#), [Pamela Jones](#), [Carol Hayman](#)
- S.C. Department of Veterans' Affairs - [Erika Jones](#), [Jade Berkley](#), [Jelani Edwards](#), [Paulette Dunn](#), [Steven Lowry](#)
- S.C. Education Television Network – [Thomas Mayer](#), [Dr. Stephanie Cook](#)
- S.C. House of Representatives – Representative [Doug Gilliam](#), Representative [Harriet Holman](#)
- S.C. Research Authority – [Mitch Smith](#), [Laura Terry](#)
- State Technical College System – [Jim Shrift](#), [Karmen Smith](#)
- U.S. Small Business Administration – [Frank Anderson](#)
- S.C. Emergency Medical Services Association – [Austin Mandeville](#)
- S.C. Hospital Association – [Lara Hewitt](#)
- State Workforce Development Board – [Thomas Freeland](#)
- Syracuse Institute for Veterans and Military Families – [Moniek James](#)
- Tri-County Technical College – [Travis Durham](#), [Dan Cooper](#)
- Upstate Warrior Solution – [Shannon Sports](#)
- Compensated Work Therapy – [Howard Wilkerson](#), [Lacresha Brumfield](#)

## Membership Cont.

Representatives are from any CCWD member organization and SCDVA Workforce Development group that interacts with active-duty military spouses, family, veterans, and military retirees. Membership has expanded across federal, state, private, public, and community organizations.

- U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs Readiness and Employment Program – Donna Glazer, Donta Trapps, Elizabeth McCallum
- University of South Carolina Darla Moore School of Business – Russell Klauman
- U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs Veterans Benefits Administration Outreach, Transition and Economic Development - Jon France
- Veterans Business Outreach Center at The Citadel – Christopher Williams
- S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department – Rita Rhett
- York Chamber of Commerce – Celeste Tiller
- ZF Group – Michael Morris

## Pathways and Alignment Committee

The Pathways and Alignment Committee held its first meeting and created two subcommittees; the Career Pathways Subcommittee and the Educational Alignment Subcommittee.

The Education Alignment Subcommittee is developing an Education Alignment Toolkit, which will act as an information hub for K-12, technical college, and higher education systems to align their curriculum with workforce needs. The introductory meeting was held on August 18, 2025.

The subcommittee's goal is to create an Education Alignment Toolkit, a new resource designed to provide educational partners with information on workforce needs, available resources for career clusters (especially priority occupations), curriculum frameworks, and the effectiveness of current educational pathways.

Work is focused on creating a standard of information requirements available to the education system to inform stakeholders of workforce needs in regions, state at large, and national trends.

There is a critical need for an industry/education communication cycle to regularly obtain feedback and counsel from employers and researchers that can be used in the creation and updating of curriculum, initiatives, and program offerings. (Ex: Regional Advisory Boards – representatives from the following groups represented in the region: K-12, State Technical College System, SC Area Health Education Consortium, industry, economic development groups, chambers, workforce development groups, trade associations, government leaders, etc.)



The Career Pathways Subcommittee has focused on reviewing the multitude of ways to visualize and communicate a career pathway within a given industry. With the majority of career pathway development done at the local or regional level, the subcommittee decided the best path forward is to develop a template of what a South Carolina career pathway could look like.

Career Pathways Subcommittee Members	
S.C. Area Health Education Consortium (SC-AHEC)	Ann LeFebvre (co-chair)
S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce	Robert Davis (co-chair)
Anderson Career and Technology Center	Travis Guthrie
S.C. Department of Education	Maria Swygert
S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce	Brandon Wilkerson
S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce	Bryan Grady
S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce	Brenda Gardner
S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce	Patricia Ferguson



Educational Alignment Subcommittee	
Coastal Carolina University	Matthew C. Tyler (co-chair)
S.C. Competes	Kim Christ (co-chair)
AINautics and STEM U	Chris Williams
Anderson Districts I & II Career and Technology Center	Abbie L. Piotrowsky
Augie Studio	JT White
Benedict College	Leon T. Geter
BMW	Paul Sinanian
BrightMa Farms	Harold Singletary
Cloud Range and IBM	Mike Killian
Medical University of South Carolina	LeeAnn Weaver-Hayes
S.C. Area Health Education Consortium	Jennifer Bailey
S.C. Chamber of Commerce	Cynthia Walters
Santee Cooper	Anna Strickland
S.C. Department of Education	Anna Duvall
S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce	Joni McDaniel
S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce	Shelby Reed
S.C. Hospital Association	Lara Hewitt
S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation	Bonita Watters
S.C. Public Charter School District	Perry Mills

Educational Alignment Subcommittee Cont.	
Talents Ascend	Robyn Grable
Trane	Beau Reynolds
USC Upstate Greenville	Carrie Silver
Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments	Sarah Smith

## Portal Steering Committee

The Portal Steering Committee (PSC) continued guiding both the public-facing website ([FindYourFuture.sc.gov](https://FindYourFuture.sc.gov)) and the forthcoming statewide Education and Workforce Portal.

Chaired by Dr. Richard Cosentino (President, Lander University) with staff lead Dr. Lloyd Willis, the PSC brings together representatives from K-12 and higher education, workforce agencies, economic development organizations, the legislature, and private industry to ensure the website and portal's resources reflect a broad cross-section of South Carolina's education and workforce ecosystem.

Major accomplishments and milestones for the PSC are described in detail under the Find Your Future Website and Web Portal section of the annual report.

### Membership

Members of the Portal Steering Committee are listed below.

- S.C. First Steps to School Readiness – Rachal Hatton
- S.C. Commission on Higher Education- Dr. Corey Gheesling
- State Technical College System- Karmen Smith
- Tri-County Technical College- Dr. Galen DeHay
- S.C. Education Oversight Committee- Dana Yow
- S.C. Department of Education- Maria Swygert and Ian Headley
- S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce- Nina Staggars
- S.C. Department of Veterans Affairs – Daniel Wrightsman
- S.C. Economic Developments Association- Ryan Coleman
- S.C. Department of Commerce- Kim Mann
- S.C. Senate- Sam Orr
- S.C. House of Representatives- Erica Starnes
- Manufacturing Extension Partnership- Andy Carr
- ZF Group- Michael Morris
- S.C. Department of Administration- Toya Wright
- S.C. Education Television Network– Dr. Salandra Brown





**Engagement**



## CCWD Executive Committee

The CCWD Executive Committee met five times since the publication of the 2024 CCWD Annual Report. Executive meetings are scheduled one month to three weeks before a quarterly meeting of the full CCWD. Special meetings may be called at the request of the chair.

### February 21, 2025 – CCWD Executive Committee Meeting

Charles Appleby presented information about the proposed committee's purpose, chairing, and membership. He mentioned how the career pathways tool and education alignment toolkits will work together. Mr. Appleby touched on the initiatives and consistency this committee could achieve.

Chairman Floyd prompted questions, concerns, and thoughts about the new committee. Ian Headley (SCDE) had a question about the education alignment toolkit. He suggested ideas about the chairing of the proposed committee. Chairman Floyd noted and encouraged the feedback and asked Charles to present the committee updates.

Charles Appleby thanked the project managers for their leadership of several projects. He then gave an overview of the Communications Committee and its initiatives with milestones. Mr. Appleby provided information about the Metrics Baseline/Data Committee, including membership, initiatives, and CCWD Bylaws – Data Requests. Dr. Erica Von Nessen presented an update about the first data request for the skills area.

Charles Appleby reviewed the purpose of the Portal Steering Committee, the initiatives of the committee, and some of the milestones for the central portal. He presented snippets from the budget hearing and took comments from Jay West about the Ways and Means process. Former Rep. West continued to solidify his support.

Charles Appleby updated the committee members and staff about the launch of the Find Your Future SC platform and its press release. He pointed to the surveys to gain feedback from the public and CCWD partners and members.

Finally, Chairman Floyd encouraged sharing the link to the Find Your Future SC website. He then reported on some of the details about the Veterans Committee.

With no questions, the meeting was adjourned

## February 21, 2025 – CCWD Executive Committee Meeting

Chairman Floyd turned it over to Dr. Rebecca Battle-Bryant to introduce herself. He then segued into the CCWD structure and the extensive committee updates.

Robert Davis summarized information about the Metrics Baseline Committee. He began with the Awareness metric and explained the source, metric, survey sample, and proposed actions. Mr. Davis discussed college/career-ready criteria, high-value credentials, post-secondary work-based learning, and summarized key findings with a recommended metric and proposed actions for each. He then moved to the Skills metric (Use of Skills), specifically related to high school and post-secondary graduate outcomes, transportation, and childcare. He ended his updates with milestones.

Charles Appleby then updated the executive members about the Portal Steering Committee with the central portal's milestones, milestones/phases for the interim hub, the Future Finder pilot, and options for a prototype. He transitioned to presenting initiatives for the Communications Committee and reviewed the purpose, membership, objectives, and focus areas of the Veterans Committee. Finally, Dr. Jeffrey Perez presented the initiatives, updates, and timeline for the Pathways and Alignment Committee.

Finally, Chairman Floyd commented positively about the Pathways and Alignment Committee.

With no questions, the meeting was adjourned.

## June 17, 2025 – CCWD Executive Committee Meeting

Robert Davis summarized information about the Metrics Baseline Committee, detailing the survey sample and key findings related to job training and career advancement. He then fielded questions from the committee, including Dr. Jeff Perez. Mr. Davis discussed proposed actions and recommended metrics based on this topic. In addition, he mentioned sources used to gather data on childcare and a possible metric used to measure the information. There was a discussion about obstacles in childcare during this time, with questions and comments from Jay West, Sam Orr, Ian Headley, and Marlena Isaac. Mr. Davis continued with Skills – Education Readiness, reporting on sources and metrics recommended for each area of awareness, skills, and obstacles. He then showed an overview of the proposed metrics on which the Executive Committee will be asked to vote in the next full council meeting.

Chairman Floyd mentioned that this is an ongoing conversation and talked about the impactful nature of the metrics. Charles Appleby then updated the executive members about the Portal Steering Committee with the central portal's milestones, and he congratulated the committee on the funds secured to move forward with the portal stages. He discussed the current pilot and presented dates for action on the portal.



Finally, Dr. Jeffrey Perez presented the initiatives, updates, and timeline for the Pathways and Alignment Committee.

With no questions, the meeting was adjourned.

### August 18, 2025 – CCWD Executive Committee Meeting

Robert Davis summarized information from the staff meeting report, detailing the three metric topics: awareness, skills, and obstacles. He outlined each metric and the proposed project within the topic. Mr. Davis gave a synopsis of one awareness project, discussed four separate skills projects, and ended with the obstacle project. He then answered questions and concerns from the Executive Committee. Finally, he asked for thoughts and preferences on which projects the CCWD and its subcommittees should focus.

Chairman Floyd thanked the members for their staffing and showed appreciation to everyone involved in the work related to the metrics projects. He segued to Dr. Rebecca Battle-Bryant to update the executive members about the Portal Steering Committee with the Future Finder Pilot, interim hub, and full portal's development, and discuss how to sustain the final product of the full portal. Chairman Floyd asked for a motion to rescind the previous decision to move forward with phase two of the FutureFit AI experiment, which was motioned by Dr. Jeffrey Perez and seconded by Kim Mann.

Finally, Chairman Floyd commented positively about the presentation and discussion in today's meeting. Next, he asked for comments and suggestions and reminded everyone of the full council meeting on September 22, 2025.

With no questions, the meeting was adjourned.

## CCWD Full Council

Meetings of the full Coordinating Council, held quarterly, operate as an opportunity for council members to engage in their agency roles, hear directly from employers in various industries, learn more about the workforce system, and provide input to the Executive Committee on the direction of the council.



## December 9, 2024 – Full CCWD Meeting

Chairman Floyd welcomed new council member Adrienne Fairwell from SCETV & Public Radio. After reviewing the agenda, Chairman Floyd asked Melissa Bilka to begin presenting information on the Business Spotlight related to hospitality and tourism.

The Business Spotlight featured Brittain Resorts with Melissa Bilka. Ms. Bilka introduced Brittain Resorts and gave an overview of its partnerships. She mentioned tourism and hospitality is the world's largest and fastest growing industry. Ms. Bilka shared her personal experiences in the hotel industry and the opportunities for career growth. She presented the various positions and workforce challenges, such as high turnover, lack of available and affordable childcare and housing, lack of desire to perform some duties, etc. Then she highlighted some local partnerships that help solve some of these issues.

Chairman Floyd thanked Ms. Bilka for her presentation and then transitioned to Robert Davis to present information about the Metrics Baseline Committee.

Robert Davis discussed the CCWD Bylaws Amendment regarding data requests affecting CCWD work. He outlined the details of the bylaws and asked for questions from the audience. Chairman Floyd then took a vote regarding the adoption of this amendment. Dr. Tim Hardee moved to accept, and Superintendent Weaver seconded. The adoption of the amendment passed with Sen. A. Shane Massey abstaining.

Chairman Floyd then asked Dr. Hardee to move to approve the Meeting Minutes from September's full council meeting. The minutes were approved.

Dr. Richard Cosentino introduced the Portal Steering Committee as the committee's head. Dr. Cosentino gave details about the committee's work and its initiatives. He then turned it over to Charles Appleby to discuss the milestones of the interim hub. The timeline showed how the interim hub will be built and rolled out. Mr. Appleby also presented the milestones for the central portal regarding the feasibility study drafting, consulting, and results. He paused for questions and clarified the difference between the hub and the portal. Mr. Appleby then introduced Gartner Consulting to present information about the feasibility study for the central portal.

Carlton McArthur gave a brief introduction about Gartner Consulting, and then two of his colleagues, Sharon Thomas and Maurice Anderson, introduced themselves. Mr. McArthur discussed the phases of conducting the feasibility study to evaluate the best path forward with the central portal. He detailed previous work that relates to the proposed study for the portal. Mr. McArthur supported the need for a centralized education and workforce portal based on their discussions with stakeholders and end-users via focus groups, etc. He provided statistics and data backing this need. Mr. McArthur handed the conversation to Maurice Anderson to show the central portal's intended offerings. The presentation was paused due to Governor McMaster's arrival.

Governor McMaster encouraged and praised the collaboration of the people throughout South Carolina's history and how that applies to what we're doing in education and workforce today. He stressed the importance of in-person relationships and segued into introducing his nominee for the Office of Statewide Workforce Development director, Dr. Rebecca Battle-Bryant. Dr. Battle-Bryant will now await confirmation from the Senate.

After a brief speech from Dr. Battle-Bryant, Chairman Floyd invited Gartner to complete their presentation.

Maurice Anderson returned to his presentation after the governor's speech and announcement to share the central portal's architecture. Sharon Thomas followed with two options to implement the central portal, including a phased approach and a pilot approach, including estimated costs and benefits, and drawbacks of each approach. She also included a timeline of each proposed implementation. Ms. Thomas wrapped up by asking for questions. Dr. Hardee asked how people would locate training.

Chairman Floyd thanked the Gartner team and highlighted the proposal of a new committee headed by Secretary McCaffrey.

Chairman Floyd reviewed the purpose of the proposed new Veterans Committee, gave an overview of the initiatives, and turned it over to CCWD staff lead David Rozelle (SCDVA). Mr. Rozelle introduced himself and briefly supported Chairman Floyd's overview of the committee.

Chairman Floyd began the final portion of the meeting by acknowledging the hard work and collaboration of everyone involved.

With no questions, the meeting was adjourned.

### March 24, 2025 Full CCWD Meeting

Chairman Floyd welcomed the council members and audience. After reviewing the agenda, Chairman Floyd introduced a South Carolina tourism video from Duane Parrish discussing the economic health of tourism in South Carolina.

The Business Spotlight featured Food People Restaurant Group with James Williams. Mr. Williams introduced himself and gave background on his education and work experience. He gave an overview of the restaurants within their group and highlighted the importance of good employees. Mr. Williams discussed some of the challenges the restaurant industry is facing. He mentioned some solutions they've found to maintain employees, including training, internships, appropriate messaging, and benefits for employees and their families.

Chairman Floyd thanked Mr. Williams for his presentation and transitioned to Dr. Bryan Grady to present information about the post-secondary supply gap analysis.



Dr. Grady generally discussed the labor demand compared to people entering the workforce with a post-secondary degree or credential. He mentioned the Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act as the driving force behind gathering this data and how they are building on the first iteration of their findings about the supply gap. Dr. Grady defined supply and demand and reviewed results and the largest gaps by career cluster.

Chairman Floyd then asked Charles Appleby to give an overview of the Communications Committee.

Charles Appleby reviewed the purpose and some initiatives of the Communications Committee. He then introduced another video from Director Duane Parrish. Dir. Parrish reviewed some of the committee's achievements, including the Find Your Future SC interim hub and other marketing efforts to raise awareness around the state.

Chairman Floyd then asked Dr. Cosentino to speak about the Portal Steering Committee.

Dr. Richard Cosentino gave a brief overview of the PSC's membership and detailed a description of the portal as presented to the legislature in the past few weeks. He pointed out that all CCWD members should know how to describe the undertaking of the central portal. Dr. Cosentino presented some information about the central portal and how it is coming together. He turned it over to Charles Appleby to provide more details about the portal. Mr. Appleby outlined the milestones of the central portal while highlighting the wait for budget approval. He moved on to information about the interim hub milestones and outlined the various phases of the project. He then presented a video from FutureFitAI that showed a step-by-step demonstration of the technology. Mr. Appleby ended this portion of the presentation by talking about the Future Finder Personalization Portal.

Chairman Floyd turned it over to Dana Yow to detail the Metrics Baseline/Data Committee.

Dana Yow outlined the details of the bylaws, purpose, and membership of the committee. She also gave a summary of data requests. Then, Ms. Yow gave the floor to Robert Davis to explain more about the data requests. He outlined the first data request establishing a baseline for the two "use of skills" from the USP.

Chairman Floyd then asked Kim Mann to move to approve the data request. The data request was approved. Then Mr. Davis, gave examples of a baseline summary, a metric status update, and milestones.

Sec. Todd McCaffrey reported information about the Veterans Committee using local data to demonstrate some of the workforce challenges to this community and demographic. He introduced Dave Rozelle to talk about committee membership. Sec. McCaffrey ended their presentation with objectives, initiatives, and the cadence of the committee. Sec. McCaffrey took

questions, and Chairman Floyd moved to the final committee updates.

Charles Appleby reviewed the purpose of the proposed new Pathways and Alignment Committee, introduced some of the staff working on the committee, and gave an overview of the initiatives. Chairman Floyd then moved to approve the meeting minutes.

Chairman Floyd then asked for someone to move to approve the Meeting Minutes from December's full council meeting.

Chairman Floyd began the final portion of the meeting by acknowledging the hard work and collaboration of everyone involved.

With no questions, the meeting was adjourned.

### June 23, 2025 Full CCWD Meeting

Chairman Floyd welcomed the council members and other attendees. After reviewing the agenda, Chairman Floyd (with the committee members) approved the meeting minutes from the March council meeting, and he welcomed Dr. Rebecca Battle-Bryant to her first full council meeting as the Office of Statewide Workforce Development (OSWD) Director.

The Business Spotlight featured Lowe's with Betsy Conway, Director at Lowe's Foundation. Ms. Conway introduced herself and gave statistics about Lowe's stores in South Carolina. She gave an overview of community relations and their four areas of focus. Ms. Conway discussed how Lowe's engages locally and added details about their foundation history. She mentioned Lowe's Foundation's commitment to skilled trades and reviewed some of their challenges. Ms. Conway talked about Gable Grants, including how they help prepare individuals for careers in skilled trades. She presented more information about the grant recipients and their innovations, highlighting key learning objectives through a community of practice.

Chairman Floyd thanked Ms. Conway for her presentation, then transitioned to Dr. Erica Von Nessen to present the South Carolina workforce pulse with findings from a survey conducted by The Research Associates.

Dr. Von Nessen gave an overview of the survey details, followed by a group activity that asked members to rank industry sectors they thought those in South Carolina were most aware of. After the activity and discussion, she presented data related to industry familiarity, highlighting specific industries and regional data. Dr. Von Nessen identified some challenges by industry and then offered another group activity that focused on factors when considering a job. After a brief discussion with the groups, she gave findings related to the activity topic. At the end of the presentation, Dr. Von Nessen gave data about the job market perception, job market challenges – including lack of good-paying jobs, and job-seeker barriers. Dr. Von Nessen then answered questions from the audience.

Chairman Floyd then asked Dana Yow to introduce the Metrics Baseline/Data Committee. She gave a brief introduction and then turned it over to Robert Davis to present details regarding the findings of some of the metrics.

Robert Davis outlined the details of the purpose, initiatives, and milestones. He then detailed the three topics within each focus: Awareness, Skills, and Obstacles. Starting with Awareness, Mr. Davis discussed the data source, metric, information about the survey sample, key findings, summary of proposed actions, and a recommended metric. He did the same with the next area of focus within Skills. These themes included use of skills, college and career-ready criteria, high-value credentials, and post-secondary work-based learning. Within the focus of Obstacles, data related to transportation and childcare were explored. At the end of the presentation, there was a requested motion for the Executive Committee to approve the inclusion of the recommended metrics from the Metrics Baseline Committee in the next Unified State Plan.

Chairman Floyd then asked Rep. West to move to approve the motion. The motion was approved.

Chairman Floyd then asked Charles Appleby to speak about the Portal Steering Committee (PSC) since the Portal Steering Committee Chair and Lead Staff were unable to attend due to an out-of-state conference.

Charles Appleby gave a brief overview of the PSC's purpose and detailed initiatives of the committee. He illustrated how the central portal aims to connect agencies and entities related to SC's workforce and education. Mr. Appleby thanked the committee, General Assembly, and the governor's office for helping secure recurring and non-recurring funds to build and maintain the portal. In addition, he discussed the interim hub and outlined the regular pages and the personalization pilot.

Dr. Battle-Bryant ended the meeting with closing questions and comments from the committee and audience. She encouraged the members to spread the word about utilizing the interim hub and to think about the information presented about the metrics.

The meeting was adjourned.

### September 22, 2025 Full CCWD Meeting

Chairman Floyd welcomed Lt. Governor Pamela Evette, the council members, and other attendees. He then gave the floor to Lt. Gov. Evette to speak about youth employment. She discussed soft skills for today's entering workforce and gave several personal anecdotes related to soft skills, employment, and how to overcome some of the issues in the workforce. The Lt. Gov. touched on being a lifelong learner in today's evolving work-life and the importance of internships for young people. She ended her presentation by encouraging the audience to embrace internships.



After wrapping up, Dr. Rebecca Battle-Bryant introduced each workforce generation, leading to facts and data based on the different generations. She talked about the unique perspectives of Gen Z specifically and segued into the panel discussion with five Gen Z panelists.

Dr. Battle-Bryant then briefly introduced each panelist and welcomed them to the meeting. She began asking targeted questions based on work experience and education. The first question asked what they wished they'd learned before entering the workforce. Answers ranged from interpersonal skills, more guidance, help with scheduling, dealing with authority, and making decisions for yourself. The next question asked about priorities in a job search, with answers focusing on mentorship, fitting in, flexibility in schedule, work culture, impactful/meaningful work, work-life balance, and compensation. The last question asked about what the panelists would change about the workplace. The responses included a human connection, companies being straightforward about their values and mission, partnerships between education entities and businesses, more prepared candidates, and caring about employees from top to bottom.

Dr. Battle-Bryant thanked the panelists for their participation, then tasked the committee members with answering their own questions about what they heard and creating follow-up questions for the panel. After a ten-minute breakout for preparations, Dr. Battle-Bryant gathered everyone back to ask more questions of the panel. Each panelist talked about what influenced them to begin their workforce journey and what their generation may need to improve upon.

Chairman Floyd then reviewed the CCWD structure and turned it over to Robert Davis to present details regarding the metrics.

Robert Davis showed a visualization of the metrics (Awareness, Skills, and Obstacles) created during the CCWD staff meeting in July. He then outlined the obstacles resource guide, a targeted sector awareness campaign, industry engagement in schools, skills and credential use improvement, and pre-K and K-12 on-grade-level skills for the council to vote on the projects to support soon. The council approved three skills-based projects with Kim Mann motioning and Jay West seconding. Sen. A. Shane Massey abstained from the vote.

Chairman Floyd requested that Sec. Todd McCaffrey give an update about the Veterans Committee. Sec. McCaffrey introduced the SC Smart Start program with a video. This tool will be available in October 2025.

Chairman Floyd then asked Bunnie Ward to speak about the Pathways and Alignment Committee. She presented information about the different initiatives (Career Pathways and Education Alignment Toolkit) to standardize elements related to education alignment throughout the state.

Dr. Richard Cosentino gave a brief overview of the PSC's purpose and detailed some of the initiatives of the committee. He illustrated how the terminology for this portal project is being

updated and aligned, and then provided information related to the Find Your Future website and portal. Dr. Cosentino addressed the experiments (Future Finder AI Pilot and Google Prototype).

Chairman Floyd then asked Dr. Battle-Bryant to give some final reminders and wrap up the main points of the meeting. After the review, Chairman Floyd welcomed new member Jess Key to her first full council meeting, approved the meeting minutes from the June council meeting, and asked Kim Mann to move to approve the motion.

Chairman Floyd wrapped up by acknowledging everyone's work, and the meeting was adjourned.

## Industry and Private Sector Engagement

- South Carolina Manufacturers Alliance
- South Carolina Chamber of Commerce
- South Carolina Council on Competitiveness
- South Carolina Trucking Association
- South Carolina Hospital Association
- South Carolina Healthcare Association
- South Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association
- South Carolina Retail Association
- South Carolina Education Association
- Public Charter School Alliance of South Carolina
- South Carolina Automobile Dealers Association
- South Carolina Banker Association
- Lobby SC
- Greenville Chamber of Commerce
- Together SC
- Columbia Chamber of Commerce
- Spartanburg Academic Movement
- South Carolina Economic Developers Association
- United Way of SC
- United Way of Piedmont
- SCBio
- Forestry Association of South Carolina
- Home Builders Association of South Carolina
- Municipal Association of South Carolina
- South Carolina Association of Counties
- South Carolina School Boards Association
- Palmetto State Teachers Association
- Beacon Association Management
- Gallman Personnel Services
- 1101 Public Affairs
- Capital Consultants
- Copper Dome Strategies
- Charleston Chamber of Commerce
- South Carolina Boating and Fishing Alliance
- OneSpartanburg, Inc.
- South Carolina School Boards Association
- South Carolina Association of School Administrators
- Be Pro Be Proud SC
- South Carolina Power Team
- Greenville County School District
- South Carolina Career Kids
- South Carolina Quantum Association
- University of South Carolina
- Medical University of South Carolina





# Appendix





# Appendix A

## FutureFit AI Pilot Report

### Executive Summary

South Carolina's Coordinating Council for Workforce Development launched the Future Finder demonstration project with FutureFit AI to explore what a modern, AI-powered statewide workforce portal could look like in practice. Over a 12-month period, the project gave thousands of South Carolinians hands-on access to a live portal while also generating critical lessons for agency leaders, policymakers, and state partners.

Unlike traditional feasibility studies or requirements-gathering exercises, this project showed the power of *practical experimentation*. By standing up a live system, the state was able to test ideas quickly, see what worked, and capture real-world feedback from jobseekers, students, employers, and agency partners. The result was accelerated learning that would have taken years through paper-based planning alone.

The demonstration proved that:

- **Modern technology can transform experiences.** Users reported satisfaction scores and engaged at levels far above legacy systems, with many preferring (and trusting) the portal even over national platforms like LinkedIn and Indeed.
- **Integration makes a single front door possible.** The project successfully tied together state systems, higher education, and wraparound resources, while demonstrating how AI personalization can route individuals to the right next step.
- **Engagement depends on outreach.** More than two-thirds of users were reached via digital marketing, showing the importance of proactive outreach for adoption. The user base was broadly representative across geography, education, and other demographics.
- **SaaS can enable fast, efficient value.** Partnering with a SaaS technology provider enabled the state to launch quickly and maintain the solution with little staff capacity or technical expertise required. Rapid iteration cycles produced tangible improvements.
- **Employers must be at the center.** Working groups with healthcare employers — not initially in scope but added at no additional cost — confirmed that a statewide portal must serve as a two-sided marketplace, connecting talent supply with employer demand. More discovery must be done to validate requirements for the employer solution.

Equally important, the demonstration built momentum and buy-in. Once the portal was live, stakeholders across the state wanted to participate, and visible success helped secure political support and long-term funding for a future statewide portal.

In sum, the Future Finder project delivered immediate value for thousands of South Carolinians while giving the state something even more enduring: **clear, evidence-based lessons for designing the statewide portal to come.**



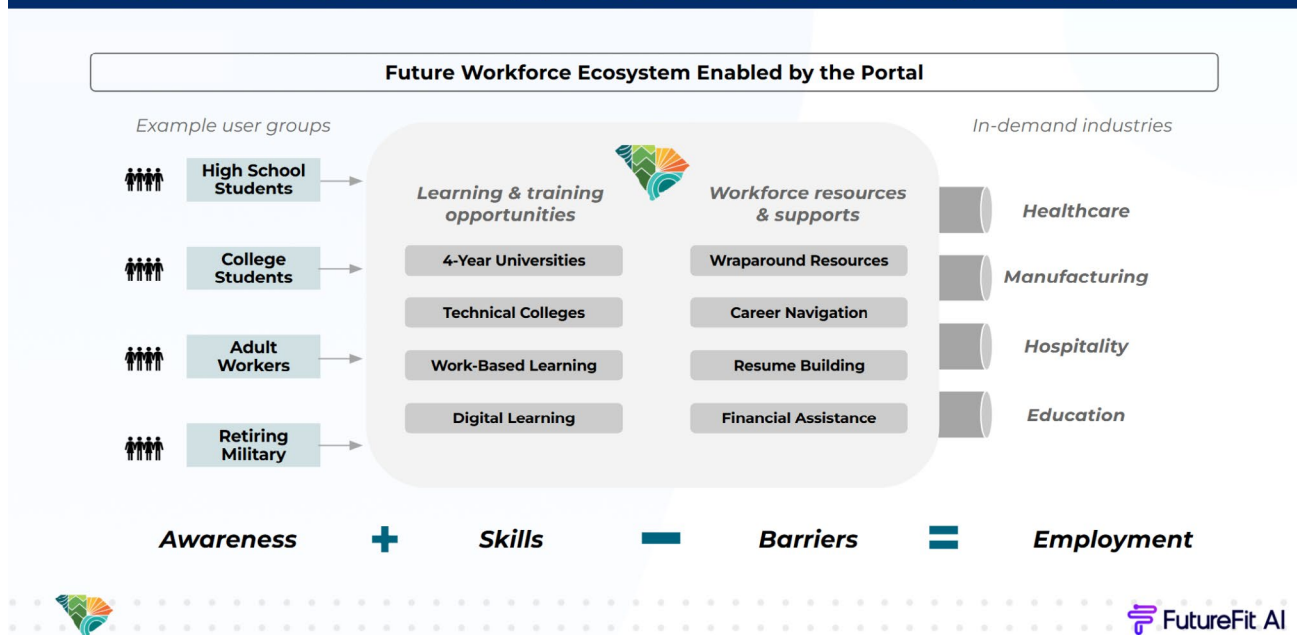
## Project Purpose & Objectives

South Carolina Coordinating Council for Workforce Development (CCWD) and its state agency partners are preparing to implement a statewide workforce portal that connects South Carolinians to work and educational opportunities and services across the state. To inform the design and development of this portal, CCWD and FutureFit AI (FFAI) partnered on a 12-month demonstration project to complement CCWD's feasibility study and the launch of an Interim Hub. Given the rapid evolution of technology, including AI, available to workforce agencies, this project leveraged FFAI's AI-powered Pathways Platform to enable a hands-on demonstration of cutting-edge and emergent capabilities that CCWD could leverage in a statewide portal, while providing immediate value to jobseekers and agency partners.

The demonstration project was designed to showcase what could be possible in the long term across the following elements aligned to CCWD's mandate and vision:

- **Expand Access:** Enable a “common front door” to services for jobseekers, providing accessible, consistent, high-quality services and access to resources across the state.
- **Improve Jobseeker Experience:** Rapidly connect jobseekers to personalized and relevant recommendations for in-demand career pathways, related training, wraparound services, and work-based learning and employment opportunities.
- **Increase Coordination & Efficiency:** Serve as the connective tissue across state agencies, services, and training and education partners, enabling more consistency in service delivery and data capture.
- **Align to Industry Need:** Drive jobseekers towards in-demand sectors through a demand-driven platform that connects jobseekers and employers and enables skills-based hiring and connection to work-based learning.
- **Gain Insights & Intelligence:** Leverage AI to extract data insights and intelligence about how jobseekers navigate career pathways and services across agencies.

The State is preparing to develop a Central Portal that connects citizens to work and educational opportunities while meeting industry needs.



Visualization of Portal vision developed during Implementation phase of demonstration project

## Implementation & Delivery Overview

The Future Finder demonstration project was delivered over a **12-month period (Oct 2024 – Sept 2025)**, with implementation, launch, iteration, and transition phases. The project was highly collaborative, marked by weekly meetings during implementation, biweekly meetings throughout, structured Insights & Iteration sessions, and responsive product development.

### Phase 1: Implementation (Oct–Dec 2024)

- Conducted initial project scoping and stakeholder alignment, with biweekly read-outs and discussions with the Portal Steering Committee.
- Partnered with the **Commission on Higher Education** to identify >5,000 degree programs for inclusion in the portal's Learning catalog, and received inputs directly from 15+ institutions to increase the comprehensiveness of program listings.
- Partnered with CCWD Comms team to establish branding, communications plan, and early marketing strategy.
- Designed intake forms, mapped skills and career pathways, configured user journeys.
- Defined technical integration requirements with **GeoSol (SCWOS Labor Exchange)** and **MySC.gov (single sign-on)**, in partnership with the Department of Administration
- Delivered a fully configured production environment for testing within **90 days**.



## Phase 2: Soft Launch & Early Testing (Jan 2025)

- **Jan 23:** *Soft Launch* of Find Your Future Hub + Future Finder (FFAI) Portal.
- Activated “hypercare” protocols, including daily monitoring and live user support.
- Began onboarding initial users, validating journeys, and surfacing early usability insights.



*Visualization of the portal's connected ecosystem of resources and supports*

## Phase 3: Hard Launch & Full Rollout (Feb 2025)

- **Feb 5:** *Hard Launch* with CCWD press release and FFAI-managed digital marketing.
- **Feb 7:** Completed GeoSol integration, adding 2,000+ jobs to the Work section.
- **Feb 17:** Completed MySC.gov SSO integration
- Initiated targeted, FFAI-managed digital outreach campaigns

## Phase 4: Iteration & Expansion (Mar–Aug 2025)

During this period, FFAI and CCWD engaged in structured **Insights & Iteration sessions every 6–8 weeks**, driving continuous improvements:

- **Onboarding & Engagement**
  - *April:* Revamped onboarding, boosting completion rates from <50% to ~70%, especially on mobile.
  - Redesigned home page with a focus on progressive disclosure, simplified navigation, and fuzzy search to reduce cognitive load.

- **Learning & Resource Catalog Expansion**

- *Spring 2025:* Added **550+ high-quality non-degree programs** from trusted regional partners, mapped to skills and careers to drive recommendations.
- Added filters for course type, provider, location, and delivery format.
- Expanded **resource catalog** with new categories (veterans, parents, formerly incarcerated, disabled) and support needs (food, housing, childcare, transportation).

- **Jobseeker Features**

- Rolled out new features, informed by SC user and stakeholder input, including job notifications, localized labor market information (LMI), dynamic roadmaps (e.g., for veterans), and mobile experience enhancements.

- **Employer Engagement**

- Formed and ran the Healthcare Employer Working Group, with a series of employer sessions focused on employer workforce needs and testing and refining employer capability needs.

- **Learning & Resource Catalog Expansion**

- Conducted multiple product discovery sessions with Veteran/Veterans Affairs organizations to inform targeted improvements for that community.
- Cohort of USC students tested the platform and provided feedback that informed updates to the Future Finder homepage and mobile experience.

## Phase 5: Transition & Close-Out (Sept-Oct 2025)

The project's transition and close-out phase began in September 2025 and was carried out in a structured, transparent manner to ensure a smooth conclusion. CCWD and FFAI aligned on final reporting, notified the Portal Steering Committee, and issued clear communications to users about the platform's conclusion. On September 22, the portal was formally decommissioned, with CCWD receiving guidance on exporting data from the platform.

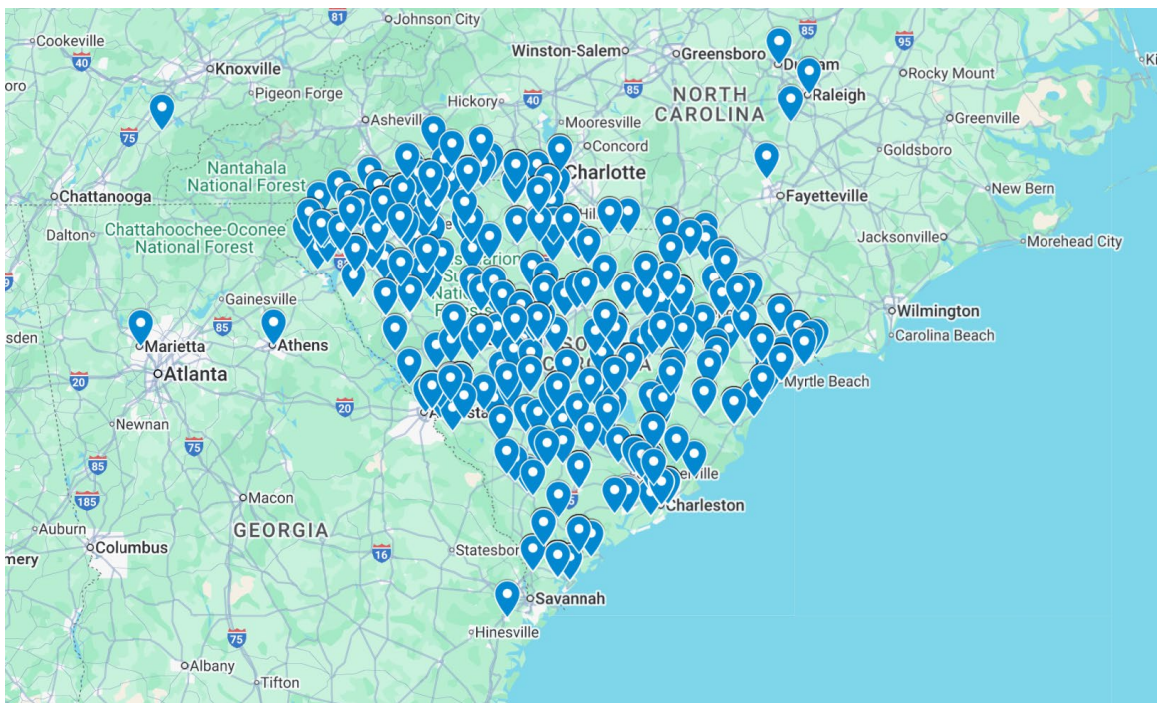
By the end of the month, Future Finder branding was removed from the Find Your Future hub, and a final close-out call was held with CCWD leadership to confirm that all deliverables had been met. On October 3, the project concluded with delivery of the final summary report, marking the successful completion of the demonstration contract.

# Project Results & Impact

## a. Expand Access

**Overall Impact:** The project cut through barriers to reach people and places conventional career services often miss — unlocking access across geography, education, age, and device.

- **Reach:** 3,700+ users registered; two-thirds came through targeted digital ads, while others arrived via the Find Your Future Hub, referrals, and organic search. By summer, organic traffic was bringing 5-10 new users / day, showing sustainability of demand.
- **Geographies:** Users came from more than 300 towns and cities, with the highest concentration in Columbia, Charleston, Myrtle Beach, Greenville, and Summerville.
- **Demographics:** Engagement across all age groups, with “Under 20” and “Above 50” each representing ~25% of users. ~40% of users were unemployed or underemployed, while three-quarters had less than a Bachelor’s degree.
- **Key Communities:** 8% of all registered users identified as veterans, 14% single parents, 6% users with disabilities, and 2% formerly incarcerated.
- **Device Type:** Two-thirds of all users signed up for the platform on a mobile device.



*Map of the locations provided by all registered users (note: this does not reflect location density)*



## Overview of Digital Marketing Campaign

FFAI managed a digital marketing campaign to reach users across the state. With a focus on Google ads, the campaign ran for ~6 months at a cost of \$40,000 and resulted in >2,500 registered users (~\$16 per user).

### Reaching Deeper, Reaching Further

The campaign cut through barriers to reach people and places conventional career services miss — unlocking access across geography, education, age, and device.

- **Rural Reach** – Connected isolated counties that in-person programs rarely touch.
- **Education Access** – 3–4x higher engagement from people with only a GED or high school diploma.
- **Generational Impact** – Reached both under-20 and over-60 audiences at same time.
- **Device Precision** – Identified which devices different age groups used — targeting older audiences on computers and younger audiences on mobile for greater impact.

### Analytics-Driven Audience Breakthroughs

After the first wave of analytics, we identified who was searching, what they were searching for, and how they accessed our platform. That insight powered rapid pivots — building unique ad sets for each audience that drove higher sign-ups and lowered acquisition costs.

- **Segment Discovery** – Search queries and device types revealed clear patterns across age, education, and region.
- **Tailored Campaigns** – Built custom ads for each group — from older adults seeking second jobs to younger audiences with limited education.
- **Efficiency Gains** – Increased sign-up rates while driving down cost per acquisition through precision targeting.

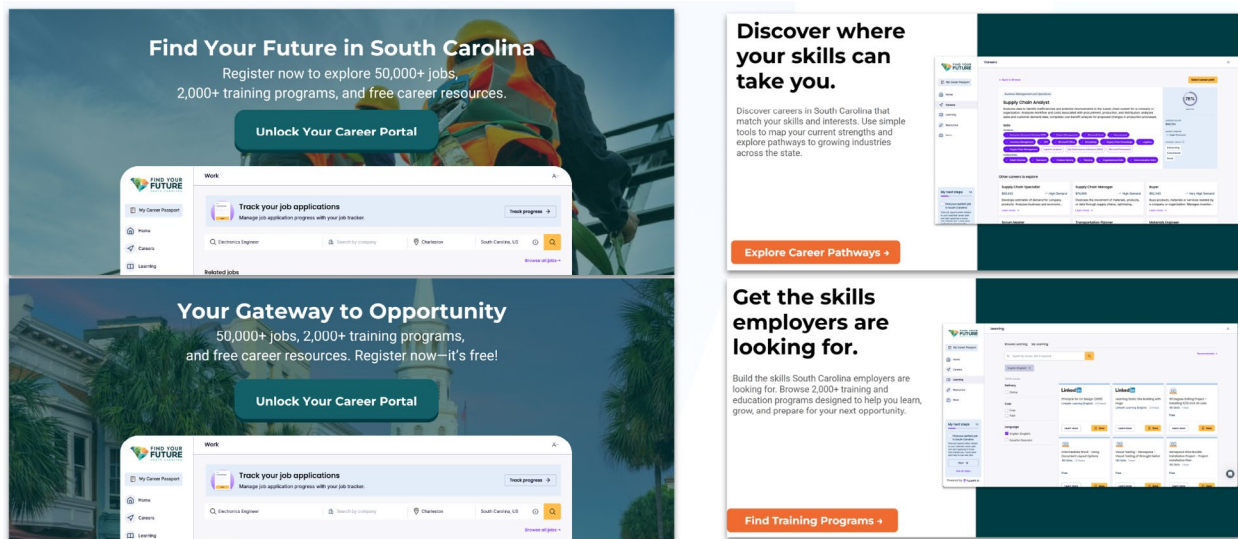




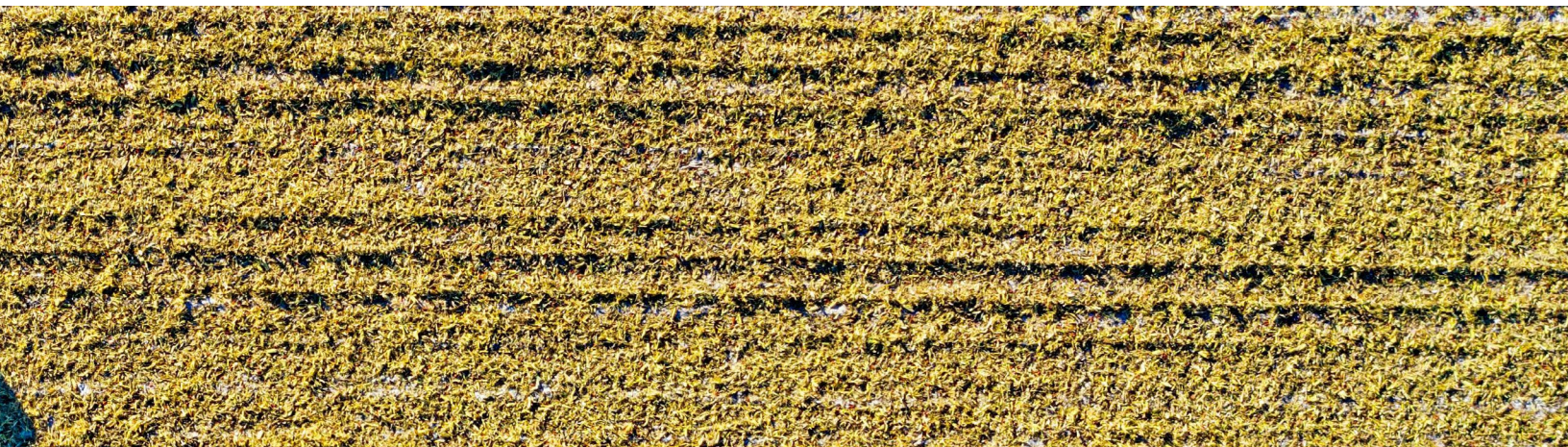
## b. Improve Jobseeker Experience

**Overall Impact:** Personalized experiences with modern UX and low barriers to entry created higher engagement and satisfaction than traditional systems.

- **Features Deployed:** Personalized career pathways with learning/training and job recommendations, resume parsing, job notifications, localized LMI (salary and demand data), and comprehensive catalogs of learning and wraparound resources.
- **Engagement:** More than 3,500 job listing clicks and 1,000+ learning program clicks. Average first session length of 8–9 minutes. Users who completed onboarding came back to the platform more than 4 times on average.
- **Satisfaction:** In-app net promoter score (NPS) surveys averaged 8.3/10 with steady improvements over time; 90%+ of survey respondents reported a positive experience. Users with just a high school diploma rated the platform an 8.7/10 on average, while current high school students rated it a 7.5, indicating room for improvement with early career discovery / exploration. Users in all categories highlighted ease of navigation, career relevance, and the value of a single portal compared to national platforms.
- **Enhancements:** Revamped onboarding boosted completion rates from <50% to ~70%, particularly for mobile users. New features simplified navigation and reduced cognitive load for students and first-time users.



Map of the locations provided by all registered users (note: this does not reflect location density)



## c. Increase Coordination & Efficiency

**Overall Impact:** The platform proved it is possible to develop connective tissue across agencies, resources, and systems, enabling rapid coordination across departments and programs to provide a more unified jobseeker experience.

- **Education Integration:** 5,000 degree programs across the state (via CHE) and another 550+ non-degree programs were integrated into a single catalog and mapped to skills and careers, enabling skills-based recommendations of learning and training.
- **Wraparound Services:** United Way 211 resources integrated, with new filters by community and support needs (e.g., food, housing, childcare).
- **Single sign-on with MySC.gov:** SSO integration with MySC enabled a more seamless experience for jobseekers accessing government services. Users who accessed Future Finder using their MySC credentials were 25% more likely than other users to complete the onboarding process (i.e., upload resume and complete intake questionnaire) and provided higher satisfaction ratings (8.5/10) than non-SSO users (8.2/10).
- **Labor Exchange integration:** Job feed integration with the state's Labor Exchange extended the reach of employer job postings beyond users required to use SCWOS.

## d. Align to Industry Need

**Overall Impact:** Demonstrated the feasibility of a demand-driven approach that links jobseeker recommendations to actual employer needs, with ability to align to the state's priority sectors.

- **Demand-Driven Features:** Jobs and training recommendations prioritized in-demand sectors; localized labor market data surfaced salary and demand insights across 800+ occupations; ability to "feature" jobs and careers in priority industries (CCWD elected not to do so for this pilot).
- **Healthcare Employer Workstream:** A series of working sessions were held with leading healthcare systems to better understand employers' hiring needs and understand what features in a portal would drive employer engagement and outcomes.

## Healthcare Employer Workstream Summary

As part of the demonstration, FFAI and CCWD engaged healthcare employers across the state, including Carolina Pines, Self Regional, Tidelands Health, Beaufort Memorial, and Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC). This workstream was designed to understand employer hiring challenges and assess the value of employer features in a statewide system.





## Employer Priorities and Challenges

1. **Expanding and Diversifying the Talent Pool** – Hiring is significantly more difficult post-pandemic. Employers seek candidates across experience levels — youth, veterans, career-switchers — and want pipelines that reflect community diversity.
2. **Beyond Nurses** – While nursing shortages remain critical, employers emphasized equal or greater needs in allied health, support, and non-clinical roles (e.g., IT, facilities, HVAC), where few reliable sourcing solutions exist.
3. **Community-Based Pipelines** – Employers expressed strong interest in closer collaboration with SC Works, DEW, community colleges, K-12, and nonprofits to surface qualified local talent and provide wraparound supports.
4. **Regional LMI** – Employers require localized data on salary benchmarks, job demand, and credential alignment, beyond what national sources provide.
5. **Streamlined Employer Engagement** – Any new technology must reduce recruiter workload, not add to it. Simplicity, speed, and automation are critical.

## Employer Priorities and Challenges

Employers were given access to a live test environment of the FFAI Employer Portal. Feedback was strongly positive:

- **Usability:** Simple and intuitive design; Career Passport and one-click candidate outreach noted as standouts.
- **Skills Focus:** Ability to filter by skills and auto-suggest requirements filled a critical gap left by Applicant Tracking Systems.
- **Breadth of Talent:** Access to underserved candidate pools (veterans, non-degree holders) not visible on platforms like LinkedIn or Indeed.
- **Claim Jobs:** Employers valued being able to “claim” jobs from existing postings and immediately see candidate matches.

## Employer Priorities and Challenges

- **Healthcare demand is multi-dimensional:** Employers urgently need pipelines for both clinical and non-clinical roles.
- **Community connections are essential:** Effective pipelines depend on bridging employers, training providers, and wraparound supports.
- **Tech must be easy to use and aligned to employer workflows:** Employers will only adopt new tools if they save time, add real value, and complement current systems.
- **Localized insights are key:** Employers want actionable, regional data to guide hiring, training, and workforce planning.

## Employed feedback informed feature development, including:

- Credential-based filtering for licensed clinical roles (now implemented).
- A Menu of Resources to connect employers with workforce partners (in development).
- Localized LMI for employer-facing dashboards (planned).
- Ability to filter by specific schools/training providers (added to product roadmap).

This workstream demonstrated both the **value and feasibility of expanding employer-facing functionality** in the statewide portal, providing insights into future portal needs.

## e. Gain Insights & Intelligence

**Overall Impact:** The demonstration generated robust data on jobseeker profiles, activity, and satisfaction, while also generating input from a wide range of stakeholders on how a statewide portal could best serve their needs.

- **User Data Captured:** Whether parsed and inferred from their resume or inputted directly, the platform captured users' education, work experience, credentials, and skills, along with demographic information captured via a custom intake form — producing a uniquely detailed dataset on users.
- **Segmented Analytics:** Combining rich user profile data with platform activity data showed how different populations — such as unemployed workers, students, and veterans — used the portal, including points of progress and drop-off. Notably, the segments most likely to be power users were part-time workers or those with certificates.
- **Learning & Training Program Mapping:** Over 5,000 degree programs and 550+ non-degree programs were mapped to specific careers and skills, enabling the state to see how education and training offerings align with in-demand occupations.

## Lessons Learned & Recommendations

The Future Finder demonstration project provided South Carolina with more than a proof of concept — it generated practical, actionable lessons that should inform the design of a statewide workforce portal.

### Key Learnings for South Carolina

- **Agility beats abstraction.** States often default to long procurement cycles, feasibility studies, and hypothetical requirements. By contrast, this project showed the value of a hands-on demonstration: standing up a live portal quickly, testing it with thousands of users, and iterating based on real data and feedback. This approach accelerated learning dramatically compared to traditional methods.
- **SaaS enables speed with limited capacity.** By leveraging an off-the-shelf SaaS product, CCWD was able to launch a cutting-edge, end-to-end career navigation platform in under 90 days with limited staff capacity required, and with all ongoing maintenance and upgrades managed by the provider.
- **A live platform builds buy-in.** Once the portal was up, stakeholders across agencies, regions, and communities wanted to be involved and represented. Importantly, visible success with the demonstration helped secure strong support from key lawmakers and contributed to long-term funding for a statewide portal.
- **Marketing is not optional.** More than two-thirds of all users came via digital marketing campaigns, which reached a broader and more diverse population than existing channels alone. Without robust outreach, even the best technology risks low adoption.
- **Modern technology can drive real engagement.** Unlike legacy systems, the demonstration showed that user-friendly, AI-powered tools can sustain high levels of engagement — with session times, satisfaction scores, and feature usage far above what is typical for state portals.

- **Employer engagement is essential.** A portal's value to jobseekers will be limited if it does not also deliver value for employers. The healthcare workstream revealed critical features that would make a portal useful to employers, but most essential is that jobseeker pathways are aligned to employers' needs and integrated with how they hire.
- **Interoperability enables a true “single front door.”** Legacy systems have made it difficult to get data out and collaborate across agencies. By connecting with MySC.gov, SCWOS, CHE, and United Way 211 — and by layering in AI-driven personalization — the portal proved it is possible to unify disparate systems while giving each jobseeker a tailored roadmap. User feedback consistently highlighted how valuable it was to have one trusted entry point for opportunities in South Carolina, even preferring it to national platforms like LinkedIn and Indeed.

## Recommendations for Future Statewide Procurement

The Future Finder demonstration made clear that South Carolina is positioned to design and procure a statewide workforce portal that is both more effective and more responsive than traditional systems. Based on the lessons learned, several guiding principles should shape the state's upcoming procurement process:

1. **Leverage SaaS for Speed and Efficiency** – By using a SaaS platform, the demonstration launched in under 90 days with minimal staff burden, while maintenance and upgrades were handled by the provider. Procurement should explicitly prioritize solutions that can be implemented quickly and maintained without heavy IT investment.
2. **Require Agility and Iteration** – The success of this project stemmed from a cycle of rapid implementation, feedback, and continuous improvement. Future procurement should require vendors to operate on an agile, SaaS-based model with clear mechanisms for iteration, rather than a static, one-time build.
3. **Build for Adoption, Not Just Availability** – Engagement depends on visibility. More than two-thirds of users came through digital marketing, and outreach was critical in driving diverse participation across age, geography, and education levels. Unless the state is prepared to manage large-scale digital marketing campaigns, future contracts should require vendors to include robust, data-driven marketing and user acquisition strategies as part of their delivery.
4. **Define Success by Outcomes, Not Features** – Future contracts should emphasize measurable outcomes — such as user engagement, satisfaction, and successful connections to training and employment — rather than focusing solely on feature checklists or compliance requirements.
5. **Design for Two-Sided Value** – A statewide portal must serve both jobseekers and employers. Features such as skills-based candidate search, credential filtering, and integration with local pipelines were validated by healthcare employers and should be core requirements in the next procurement.
6. **Mandate Interoperability Across Systems** – Successful Integrations with MySC.gov, SCWOS (Labor Exchange), CHE, and United Way 211 proved the feasibility and value of connected systems and suggest that a true “single front door” is possible. Procurements should mandate integration with existing state systems, open APIs, and data-sharing capabilities to prevent duplication and ensure a unified user experience.
7. **Personalization Must Be Central** – Jobseekers and stakeholders consistently valued the portal's AI-powered personalization — tailored career pathways, local labor market insights, and contextualized resources. Procurement should require personalization capabilities that adapt to each user's background, goals, and needs.





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