Americans are experiencing near-record low unemployment and a booming economy. Despite the relative availability of jobs for workers, employers regularly report difficulty in finding qualified persons with the right skills for specific jobs. The persistence of the skills gap over many years has caused many workers and employers to turn to workforce training programs to learn marketable skills and find qualified employees respectively.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) Workforce Development Council (WDC) Best Practices Committee developed a quarterly journal to showcase our member cities’ best practices. *The Essential Role of Workforce Boards in Meeting the U.S. Skills Gap*, the third publication, showcases how workforce systems have successfully met the job needs of industries in their region and assisted individuals in acquiring the necessary skills to fill available jobs.

Please be on the look-out for the next USCM WDC Best Practice Committee’s call for submissions.

For more information on the USCM WDC, please visit our website at: www.uscmwdc.org. If you have any questions regarding the WDC Best Practices Committee, please contact Megan Judge, mjjudge@usmayors.org, (202) 861-6735.
DATA POINTS ON UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOR TRENDS

The unemployment rate for Summit County, Ohio was 4.4% as of October 2018. That is compared to the Ohio rate of 4.3% and the US rate of 3.5%.

According to the 2024 Job Outlook for Akron Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) provided by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, total employment is expected to increase by 19,300 by 2024.

Projected high growth occupations include, Health Care Practitioners and Technical Operations and Health Care Support; Management and Business and Financial Operations Occupations; Computer and Mathematical Occupations; Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations; Construction and Community and Social Service Occupations.

Low unemployment means that employers depend on our programs more than ever to deliver the talent they need. Therefore, employers from high demand industries such as health care, services and manufacturing utilize the Ohio Means Jobs Center to conduct recruitment and meet with candidates in our spacious and professional office space at no cost.

We make our facility available to companies such as Meijer Stores which uses our facility as a recruitment home base as they recruit all levels of talent for stores they are opening in NE Ohio in 2019.

Organizations such as the Akron Area Society for Human Resource Management hold monthly executive committee meetings at the facility and the workforce system benefits from this relationship and increased job postings and employer engagement.

Tactics Team members from county economic development visit companies, assess needs and refer to appropriate partner. Company needs range from workforce development to assistance with purchasing land and buildings.

The Tactics Team utilizes Salesforce to coordinate and track efforts. Since 2016 staff of the Summit County Ohio Means Jobs Center and Summit and Medina County Workforce Area Council of Governments have worked closely with the Tactics Team to expand the knowledge base on available services and programs to ensure proper marketing of such to area businesses.

When a workforce need is determined, business services staff from the WIOA system contact employers and work diligently to fill needs. This includes coordination with workforce partners to provide job placement and training in high demand industries. The business services team becomes the talent search liaison as they build relationships with local companies.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS

Broad scale employer engagement strategies include coordination with public and private economic development entities through the efforts of the Summit County Business Retention & Expansion Tactics Team. Key members include the City of Akron and Summit County Departments of Economic Development, the Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce, the Summit and Medina Workforce Area Council of Governments, the Summit County Department of Job and Family Services, ConxusNEO, Downtown Akron Partnership and the Development Finance Authority of Summit County. Although not specifically named, this group also works closely with other political subdivisions in Summit County on their respective economic development initiatives.

Tactics Team members from county economic development visit companies, assess needs and refer to appropriate partner. Company needs range from workforce development to assistance with purchasing land and buildings.

We also provide the traditional value added WIOA incentives including on-the-job-training contracts and classroom training through Individual Training Accounts.

RESULTS, KEY TAKEAWAYS, AND LESSONS

Summit County WIOA Adult/Dislocated stats between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018:

Total placements: 1004 (873 individuals)
Demographics of individuals hired: 68 veterans, 203 ex-offenders, 269 on public assistance
Individual Training Accounts: 47 OJTs written: 52
Most recent job retention information: Employment 2nd Q After Exit (Exits July 2016 – June 2017) 85% for adults, 87.7% for dislocated
Employment 4th Q After Exit (Exits July – December 2016) 82.8% for adults, 84.7% for dislocated

Services are most effective when coordinated with all aforementioned workforce and economic development entities.

Build relationships with companies to benefit all levels of job seekers from entry level or ex-offenders to executive. New and ongoing business relationships result in opportunities for all levels of job seekers.

Mandated and non-mandated workforce partners share services and costs in the Ohio Means Job Center resulting in successful outcomes for customers.
UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOR TRENDS
The City of Boston anticipates a potential talent shortage in several municipal departments as many long-time employees near retirement age. The pool of available workers to meet this demand is limited: as of May 2018, Boston’s unemployment rate was a low 3.1%.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS
City Academy, a new initiative of the Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development (OWD), is designed to address this skills gap while opening new career pathways for Boston residents. City Academy trains participants to become eligible for entry-level city positions that pay the living wage, confer benefits, and offer opportunities for advancement. OWD worked with each participating city department to determine the skills required for the jobs that need filling. Based on these conversations, OWD created the following City Academy training tracks:

1. Emergency Medical Technician training. Of the over 15 months, qualified participants learn job readiness skills, take a basic EMT course, complete an internship (optional), and enter Boston EMS Recruit Academy. Successful graduates are eligible for employment as Boston EMS EMTs at a starting salary of $57,000 per year.

2. CDL/Hoisting training. In this two-month training program, participants learn job readiness skills, prepare for the hoisting exam, take a CDL training workshop, and sit for exams for their CDL and hoisting credentials. Successful graduates are eligible for employment with the Boston Water & Sewer Commission, Department of Public Works, Parks Department, and Boston Housing Authority. Starting salaries for job positions with these departments range from $32,000 to $51,000 per year.

RESULTS, KEY TAKEAWAYS, AND LESSONS
City Academy succeeded in enrolling a diverse group of participants. Among all trainees, 92% are people of color, 54% are bilingual, and 54% are female. The program was able to recruit these candidates by holding 50 information sessions in some of Boston’s most diverse neighborhoods. After receiving more than 500 applications, City Academy enrolled 61 residents who met eligibility requirements and demonstrated a willingness to commit to the program.

While the immediate goal of City Academy is to provide participants with the necessary skills for city jobs, program leaders learned that support services and case management were just as important. During their training, many participants faced logistical challenges related to transportation, childcare, and other family and work responsibilities.

Despite these challenges, trainees have persevered in building the skills they need for city careers. Among students in the EMT bridge course, 90% obtained their first aid and CPR certifications. For CDL/Hoisting participants:

- 100% obtained first aid and CPR certifications
- 83% who enrolled in CDL classes obtained their Class B license
- 60% who sat for their hoisting exam obtained a Hoisting Engineer license (with the remainder re-taking the test in January)

The EMT participants are currently continuing their training; CDL/Hoisting trainees will begin the job placement process after their January graduation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Learn more about City Academy at: owd.boston.gov/CityAcademy
Staff Contact: Katie Liesener, Communications Manager, Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development, Boston, katie.liesener@boston.gov

UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOR TRENDS
Unemployment/Labor Trends for Mecklenburg County:
- Most recent unemployment rate (October, 2018) = 3.2%, or 19,813 people unemployed
- Similar to the national trend, our unemployment rate has been trending downward since 2012 with seasonable fluctuations
- This is our lowest unemployment rate since 2000
- One other national trend that we have been following is low labor force participation. North Carolina’s current labor force participation rate is 61.3%, a rate we expect is similar for Mecklenburg County, though that information is not available on the county level

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS
Sector Partnerships: Charlotte Works has convened three industry sector partnerships in construction, hospitality, and advanced manufacturing. Each has addressed the labor shortage for their respective industries in different ways:

- Construction: The partnership branded itself as Coalition for Construction Careers (C3) and developed a website that serves as a repository for construction career pathway information and information for employers on where to find talent
- Hospitality: The partnership developed pilot programs to hire talent for hotels, restaurants and the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority via Charlotte Works Job Coordination Unit (JCU)

Advanced Manufacturing: The partnership developed an advertising campaign to promote interest in the industry using advertisements on Pandora music streaming service, commercials on the local PBS television station, and billboards placed throughout targeted areas of high unemployment within the county.

Charlotte Works has also recently joined a fourth sector partnership in Information Technology, this group is in the early stages of development

Job Coordination: Job Coordination Unit (JCUs) are an initiative led and executed by Charlotte Works in collaboration with local community partners. The mission of JCU is to partner with employers to identify and develop talent to match an employers’ current and future labor needs in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg region. Job Coordination Unit members include workforce developers, economic developers, educational providers and other service providers. The launch of Charlotte Works Job Coordination Unit began in March 2018.

Careers Pathways: The Health Career Pathway national initiative, launched in March 2017, is led by Atrium Health in collaboration with Charlotte Works as the backbone organization. It focuses on building career pathways for entry and middle-level skilled jobs in the health care industry. This partnership between Charlotte Works and Atrium Health with the support of community partners has resulted in 46 candidates referred for Certified Nurse Aide and Certified Medical Assistant positions. Of the 46 candidates, 12 have been hired. Charlotte Works presented the success of this initiative to the US House of Representatives Committee on Education and Workforce at its Innovation Forum & Showcase in July 2018.

RESULTS, KEY TAKEAWAYS, AND LESSONS
Results from the job coordination and sector partnerships have been impactful in connecting the employers and community resources to our programs, resources, and talent available through Charlotte Works. The Hilton Center City Hotel pilot program placement rate was 100%. The pilot goal was to fill 5 positions. We referred 30 candidates, 14 were considered, 5 were hired. The Health Career Pathway Project profile was developed to highlight the impact and success of the Health Career Pathways initiative (see below under additional information for the full profile).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Click here to read the full Health Career Pathways Project profile: http://uscsmcds.org/2018/03/19/1-03hCpNAtriumHealthProjectProfile.pdf
Staff Contact: Alyssa Brown, Research & Performance Manager, Charlotte Works, abrown@charlotteworks.com.
The Essential Role Of Workforce Boards In Meeting The U.S. Skills Gap

UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOR TRENDS

There are just under 3.2 million jobs in the Houston-Gulf Coast 13-county region—approximately 70,000 for each year. Unemployment is currently at historic lows, indicating growth at 3.8% for the past year. The number of unemployed individuals has fallen from about 700,000,000 to under 130,000. The increasing number of jobs and a falling unemployment rate are symptoms of our tightening labor market.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS

Employer Service and Talent Development: The Board’s operating affiliate Workforce Solutions has had, since its start, a separate and distinct unit to serve employers. Recently we reorganized part of Employer Service to focus on talent development for our customers. The staff in Talent Development work directly with employers and employer groups who want and need help in skilling new and current workers—leveraging resources and dollars available through Workforce Solutions with other sources.

UpSkill Houston: The Greater Houston Partnership—acting as a regional chamber/economic development organization—forms the backbone for UpSkill Houston, an employer-driven approach to building and strengthening talent pipelines for labor-short occupations in seven industry groups. UpSkill has worked extensively in the past three years with the petrochemical manufacturing industry and industrial/commercial construction. The Workforce Board is a founding partner in this effort and continues to support UpSkill’s work and expansion.

Prototype projects: Through our relationships with local community organizations, the City of Houston government, and economic development organizations, we have fully or partially funded or otherwise supported multiple projects that source, skill, and place individuals in jobs with specific employers. Most of these projects are with construction industry employers and include on-going recruiting and development of women in the industrial construction trades, workers in commercial construction, and a project with the national Home Builders Institute and the Greater Houston Builders Association to move opportunity youth into construction trades.

Apprenticeship: For the past three years, the Board has worked to spread awareness of apprenticeship models, help employers register apprenticeship programs, and recruit and place individuals in apprenticeships.

RESULTS, KEY TAKEAWAYS, AND LESSONS

- Employers and new/current workers through Talent Development
  - 150 employers
  - 1,400+ workers
  - Includes customized training, on-the-job training, current worker projects

- Apprenticeships
  - 190 apprentices
  - 15 employers
  - Began sourcing for apprenticeships with veterans, expanded to opportunity youth

- Prototype projects
  - Seven employers, including industrial, commercial, and residential construction; health care; small manufacturers
  - 130 workers
  - Focused on sourcing from opportunity youth and women

Lessons Learned:
- Listen first to employers’ wants and needs and then craft a solution
- All solutions are custom—one-size doesn’t fit all
- Leverage our dollars with other people’s money

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Staff Contact: Mike Temple, Director, Gulf Coast Workforce Board/Workforce Solutions, mike.temple@wrksolutions.com.
consideration and, if selected by a City Department, individuals are hired into an entry-level position (receiving full pay and benefits). During the year-long probationary period, they receive extensive on-the-job training before transitioning into their permanent, full-time civil service jobs (without the need to pass a subsequent civil service exam).

RESULTS, KEY TAKEAWAYS, AND LESSONS
The TLH Program has proven to be a successful hiring method for the City, as well as a tool to engage under-served communities in the City. As of October 2018, the City has received over 7,000 applications for the TLH program; has referred nearly 4,000 individuals for interview consideration, and has offered employment to 450 individuals. As shown in the charts below, since the inception of the TLH Program in February 2017, the City has successfully outreached, interviewed, and hired from the targeted, under-served communities:

The success of the TLH Program is due in great part to the strong relationships established with key partners and stakeholders. The support and collaborative relationship with labor unions was pivotal in establishing the TLH Program. Additionally, leveraging existing City infrastructure and expertise through partnerships with the WorkSource Centers and Community-Based Organizations has been crucial in ensuring that applicants have the support and resources to ensure that they are prepared for a City career. Finally, making the TLH Program as simple, fair and transparent as possible to the public and stakeholders has earned the respect and trust of the community and the departments that it serves.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
http://lalocalhire.lacity.org/

Staff Contact: Robert Sainz, Assistant General Manager, City of Los Angeles Economic & Workforce Development Department, Robert.Sainz@lacity.org.
UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOR TRENDS
Following the nationwide trend, the unemployment rate in the Louisville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) has fallen to one of the lowest rates experienced in the last 30 years. At 3.8% in August 2018, the unemployment rate hasn't been this low since the economic expansion of the late 1990s.

Despite the low unemployment rate, wages in the Louisville region continue to lag behind the nation and other comparable metro areas. Even after adjusting for the relatively low cost of living, wages in Louisville are lower than other mid-size cities.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS
KentuckianaWorks has engaged with employers to form five industry collaboratives with a sixth on the way. The five current groups cover manufacturing, healthcare, IT, hospitality, and construction. A business services group is in the early stages of its formation. The goal of the collaboratives is to identify workforce challenges and work on systemic fixes. We have strategic plans that are updated annually. The focus is on strategic doing as we track progress on the plan and seek out projects that support the plan. Many recent projects have tackled defining detailed career pathways and identifying transferrable skills.

RESULTS, KEY TAKEAWAYS, AND LESSONS
The healthcare group oversees a sector-focused career center as does the manufacturing group. Additionally, the healthcare group has worked together to establish a nursing assistant program geared towards an acute care setting. The manufacturing group led the development of a two-week preparatory program for production workers. The IT group is leading the work to advise the sustainment plan for the Code Louisville program as well as developing new work and learn models. The hospitality group has worked towards the development of a customer service curriculum that could be applied across the workforce. The construction group is actively involved in a pre-apprenticeship program run by KentuckianaWorks. The biggest lesson is to make sure we are delivering value if we are gathering business leaders together. Groups will wither if they do not see progress being made.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
KentuckianaBuilds Staff Contact: Rider Rodriguez, Director of Sector Strategies, KentuckianaWorks, Rider.Rodriguez@kentuckianaworks.org.
UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOR TRENDS
The unemployment rate in Central Florida has been on a steady decline since the start of 2018 with 3.8 percent in January. The latest report from October reflects a rate of 2.7 percent, which has been consistently lower than the unemployment rates of Florida and the United States currently at 3.0 percent and 3.5 percent, respectively. Central Florida has impacted the job market by adding over 55,000 jobs at a 4.4 percent increase since last year and continues to lead the state in job growth. The Mining, Logging and Construction industry has had the most significant growth of 15.6% combined, with 11,700 jobs added. Additionally, the Leisure and Hospitality industry added 15,700 jobs over the last 12 months.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS
Within the last year, CareerSource Central Florida (CSCF) has had a strategic focus in driving impactful effort through:
1. The CSCF Board becoming more strategic and laser-focused in analyzing the business environment, crafting strategic partnerships with businesses, and engaging the talent pool to create career pathways with sustainable wages;
2. Driving organizational efforts by smart navigation of employment data and unique intelligence; and
3. Partnering with educational institutions that deliver training programs that meet the growing demands of the six high-growth industries. If there is not a program in place, CareerSource Central Florida collaborates with premier educational partners to build new curriculum to help create additional career pathways for students.

CareerSource Central Florida kicked off the year by launching strategies to drive a stronger impact and build meaningful relationships between businesses and career seekers to achieve the Board’s priorities in meeting the demands of Central Florida’s six high-growth industries: healthcare, construction, IT/finance, trade and logistics, advanced manufacturing and hospitality. Influencing change begins with gathering data, analyzing trends of the labor market and collaborating with educational partners to ensure career seekers receive training to elevate their skills.

RESULTS, KEY TAKEAWAYS, AND LESSONS
CSCF’s business consultants collaborate with local businesses to identify skill-set needs and pinpoint employment gaps needing to be filled with trained career seekers. The selection of in-need businesses relies on a combination of the size of the organization, industry served, and type of occupations offered. Then business needs are properly identified, and career seekers are enrolled into educational programs that reflect the talent gap; upon training completion, CSCF works diligently with the career seeker to get them placed into a career. Based on statistics of past trends and projected job growth, CSCF is able to present these findings to educational partners so that the programs they offer are a direct reflection of the analyzed data. In addition, CSCF has taken a more qualitative approach to pinpointing the most beneficial educational programs per county. This way, there is a greater focus placed on the programs with higher enrollment and completion rates. Career seekers are also provided with the opportunity to learn and earn through on the job training and work experience programs that are funded 50 to 100 percent by CSCF. These programs allow for businesses to properly train individuals without having to make significant financial investments.

The data-driven strategies of CSCF have proven to greatly impact Central Florida residents with close to 20,000 individuals gaining employment during the 2017-2018 program year. This figure is partially attributed to placing more career seekers into short-term, hard skills based training programs which have yielded significantly higher completion rates than traditional schooling. This career in a year model has improved traction within the niche demographic of career seekers in Central Florida and over the program year, close to 800 individuals have been trained through CSCF programs and placed into careers.

Through strategic partnerships, innovation, and intentional focus, CSCF has evolved from the traditional transactional approach that limited the impact and opportunities for both businesses and career seekers. Navigating strategized efforts in developing programs that are relevant and valuable to businesses and the community has led to services that better meet the unique needs of almost 70,000 individuals who received service last program year. CSCF career seekers that have been trained and placed in a career, boast an average wage of $14.25 across Central Florida which is well above the state’s minimum wage of $8.25.

This is a direct result of the more tactical and laser-focused approach guided by the Board. Supporting the career seeker does not end once they receive an offer letter because CSCF forms a career pathway with support throughout their journey of returning to work, thus, advancing the community and developing a sustainable workforce while making Central Florida the best destination for talent.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Staff Contact: Toni-Ann Burke, Public Relations and Communications Affairs Specialist, CareerSource Central Florida, TBurke@careersourcecf.com.
DATA POINTS ON UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOR TRENDS

CareerSource Brevard (CSB) serves the Brevard County Region of Florida’s East Coast – known as the Space Coast. Home to the City of Palm Bay, Kennedy Space Center and Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, we have a population of just over 589,000 with a civilian labor force of just over 274,000. The key sectors driving our economic footprint are our robust Aerospace/Aviation, Advanced Manufacturing, IT and Healthcare industries.

The current unemployment rate (October 2018) is 3% and we are facing an unprecedented demand for engineers and high-tech talent (Brevard boasts 48 engineers per 1,000 workers; more than the 25 most populated metropolitan areas in the country). To ensure the continued prosperity of our industry base, CSB is addressing the local workforce skills gap and talent pipeline development through a systematic approach called Sector Strategies.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS

Sector Strategies are regional, industry-focused approaches to building skilled workforces. Sector-based strategies take a comprehensive approach to identifying and addressing skills needs across key industries rather than focusing on the needs of individual employers. Founded on a shared vision, this collaborative partnership of workforce developers, education, government, economic development and other stakeholders addresses the skills needs of critical industries in a region. Sector Strategies are led by industry, driven by great data and transform how services (both to the employer and jobseeker) are delivered.

RESULTS, KEY TAKEAWAYS, AND LESSONS

CSB has been convening the sector partnerships in our key industries (Aerospace/Aviation, Manufacturing, IT and Healthcare) for the last few years. These consortium meetings are designed to continually validate current qualitative and quantitative data finds regarding these industries, to gather additional information to inform the development of customer-driven solutions and to compile information regarding the prioritization of activities to address business needs.

CSB has been successful in securing over $2.1 million in grant resources to support these efforts. This has allowed us to allocate dedicated staff, employer and jobseeker training funds, and vigorous outreach/marketing efforts to stakeholders to ensure sector initiatives are rewarding. We are confident it is the Sector Strategy methodology to addressing skills gap needs that has awarded CSB these competitive grants.

A few examples of CSB’s sector work outcomes has been delivering over 250 trained workers with sector identified skill sets into the manufacturing industry base, public schools’ learning center equipment purchases leveraged by manufacturing champions, and CNC training software purchased and being taught in local high schools that articulate to AS degrees at Brevard’s local state college. A new pre-apprenticeship to support Brevard’s existing construction and skill trade’s apprenticeships has been developed and recently approved by Florida’s Department of Education.

Our healthcare sector consortium efforts have resulted in over 100 new trainees entering the occupations of CNA, LP and RN. A credentialed Soft Skills training program was recently developed to support cross-industry needs and endorsed by the Space Coast Human Resources Association – more than 425 jobseekers have received this certification.

Our IT Consortium has identified newly required Department of Defense certification requirements in Cyber Security personnel and education partners have responded by offering this training in a boot camp setting. An Aerospace pre-apprenticeship program is currently under development.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

More information can be found at the following link: https://careersourcebrevard.com/trending-in-brevard

Staff Contact: Marci Murphy, President, CareerSource Brevard, City of Palm Bay, mmurphy@careersourcebrevard.com.
UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOR TRENDS
For the Phoenix MSA the following Labor Market information includes: Total population: 4,816,795 people; Projected growth: 6.7% through 2023; Total working age population: 3,856,498 people; Not in labor force (15+): 1,501,712 people; Labor Force: 2,354,786 people; Unemployed: 100,747 people

Jobs increased 12.4% from 2013 to 2018 above the national average by 5%; Arizona Unemployment rate: 4.7% (October 2018); Phoenix MSA Unemployment rate: 3.9%

Top growing industries include: Health care, Finance and Insurance, Retail, Accommodation and food service, Construction

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS
The City of Phoenix engages a team of five Workforce Business Engagement specialists that bridges discussions and develops organizational learning between economic and workforce development departments. The team works in tandem with local economic development attraction, retention, and expansion groups as well as human services members who assist job seekers.

The business engagement team leads and participates in priority sector collaborations that identify programs and practices relevant to bring stakeholders in workforce, education, industry, and job seekers together. This is accomplished through:
• On the job training programs
• Customized training (pre-vocational programs created by business and education)
• Incumbent Worker training programs
• Cohort training programs
• Industry focused recruiting, engaging regional stakeholders

RESULTS, KEY TAKEAWAYS, AND LESSONS
Over the past two years our team has created efficiencies and process changes increasing the number of job seekers connected to positions by over 140% each year. By increasing cooperation

between workforce stakeholders, our teams have increased awareness for industries with low employment brand awareness. While awareness programs are early in process, they are demonstrating an ability to create congruency to a vision using aligned strategic initiatives.

Cohort and customized training programs are similar in approach, with different funding mechanisms. A recent example of noticeable creations of job ready individuals has been in the IT sector. CompTIA related training programs are a foundational stepping stone for several IT related industries. As the programs tied three variables together, programmatic success increased:
1. Commitment from industry partners to not only assist with creating or adjusting curriculum to align with job-matching requirements but remain active in the classroom and begin interviews before the certification was complete
2. Education partners willing to implement agile practices that meet the job-matching needs.
3. Collaboration of workforce development partners to promote programs, outreach, information sessions, fast eligibility processing

We recognize that there is an increase in those individuals who are not in the labor force, have increased frustration; and whom our workforce development programs need to focus on how to best support these individuals. Focusing on the impact of unemployment duration dependency allowed us to identify key “reset” buttons for the long-term unemployed that provide the following:
1. Employer attraction
2. Increased confidence by the job seeker
3. Meaningful connections that bolsters motivation in the long-term unemployed
4. Training that increased the job seekers confidence in their ability; and
5. Supports that increased volition.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Staff Contact: LaSetta Hogans, Executive Director, Phoenix Business and Workforce Development Board, LaSetta.Hogans@phoenix.gov.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOR TRENDS
The Foothill Workforce Development Board (FWDB) is a consortium of six cities dedicated to the implementation of a local workforce development plan which is focused on providing integrated customer-centered services to the most vulnerable populations in the Foothill area and is aligned with strategies proposed in the regional and state plans, as well as, the regional SlingShot initiative. As a member of the Los Angeles Basin Regional Planning Unit (LABRPU), FWDB works collaboratively to address barriers of regional poverty levels of 17.8% and more than 1.4 million adults over the age of 25 who do not have a high school diploma in the Los Angeles Basin and 13,427 in the local area.

1. The most current unemployment rates for FWDB consortium cities range from 2.7% to 5.5% recorded for October 2018, some are significantly higher than the state’s rate of 4.0% and the national rate of 3.7% for the same time period.
2. FWDB local area’s working population (ages 16-64) is comprised of approximately 164,000 residents while the LABRPU reports a working population (ages 16-64) of more than 6.4 million residents with 474,056 (civilian, non-institutionalized) reporting a disability.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS
The regional strategy identifies four pillars that address community needs and define the regional workforce development system:
1. It is demand-driven, reflecting the needs of priority sectors;
2. It ensures inclusiveness and accessibility, enabling all individuals to train for and obtain a quality job;
3. It seeks alignment across disciplines, including workforce services, education and economic development; and
4. The volume of working age individuals with multiple barriers to employment, including those with disabilities, requires innovative approaches to integrate and deliver services that result in demand-driven skills attainment and upward mobility. Based on these demographics and challenges, plans were developed with priority goals that respond to the needs of its communities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Staff Contact: LaSetta Hogans, Executive Director, Phoenix Business and Workforce Development Board, LaSetta.Hogans@phoenix.gov.
UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOR TRENDS

In October 2018, the not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in Seattle-King County was 3.2 percent. The largest industry gains were in information and professional and business services (up 9,300 and 8,600 respectively). UI claims activity peaked in May 2009 and has been on a downward trend ever since.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS

To service businesses as a partner and a customer, the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County (WDC-SKC) engages business in a three-tiered model.

Convener of Partners
• WDC-SKC nurtures ongoing partnerships with industry by developing and staffing industry/sector panels. Industry partnership and participation on these panels helps inform challenges, needs and products such as industry reports, career mapping and funding for industry training and needed staff.

Business Services Team
• The WorkSource Business Services Team provides ongoing customized services for industry and business partners.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Staff Contact: Ricardo Quezada, Deputy Director, Foothill Workforce Development Board, RQuezada@foothilletc.org.
as King County in-demand, high-economic impact industries. Seven staff members with specific expertise assist the following industries:
1) Healthcare 2) Manufacturing 3) Construction 4) Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services, 5) Information Technology 6) the Public Sector 7) Transportation & Warehousing and 8) Trade. 1,816 businesses engaged, 36,750 job openings announced, 670 hires, 90% employer customer satisfaction rate

Projects/Grants
- The WDC-SKC works with agencies in addition to DOL to develop and implement specific programs for industry.
  a. Workforce for the Future (HWF)
  b. The WDC-SKC Upskill/Backfill project works with industry and incumbent workers to upskill employees and provides a pipeline of “backfill” employees to fill the upskilled positions.
  c. 78 incumbent workers enrolled, 56 people in/coming training
  d. Career Connect - Using Governor’s WIOA discretionary funds, Career Connect Washington increases career guidance, work-based opportunities, and apprenticeship pathways for youth and adults in Seattle-King County. Employers involved in this partnership and work include Seattle Public Utilities, FareStart, and Finishing Trades Institute Northwest.
  e. 3,553 learning experiences, 204 internships, 1,612 youth get comprehensive plan

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Staff Contact: Liesel Schilperoort, Project Manager, Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, LSchilperoort@seakingwdc.org.

SNOHOMISH, WA

UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOR TRENDS
In October 2018, the not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in Snohomish County was 3.5 percent. This is down from 3.7 percent over the month, and lower than 4.2 percent, observed 12 months ago. The largest annual industry gains were attributed to manufacturing, construction, and government. Financial activities and information both shed jobs over the year.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS
In order to better understand workforce needs and challenges Snohomish County employers are faced with, Workforce Snohomish (WFS) began hosting industry-specific employer roundtables two years ago. Robust conversations, ideas, and strategies to combat the challenges were identified and prioritized in these events.

From the construction roundtable, WFS heard from employers:
- There are not enough apprentices and entry-level workers to fill shortages;
- There is a lack of general exposure around construction opportunities and their benefits;
- Lack of passion and interest in the construction field due in part to public perception.

A prevalent theme throughout all roundtable discussions, regardless of the industry, was how to better incorporate youth and young adult workers into existing workforce structures; employers often spoke of their struggles in understanding and working with individuals from younger generations.

RESULTS, KEY TAKEAWAYS, AND LESSONS
In order to assist the construction industry develop a much-needed effective pipeline of skilled individuals, WFS used a two-prong approach.

TradeUp: WFS partnered with the Snohomish County Labor Council to provide TradeUp, a one day, hands-on introduction into skilled trade careers for high school students. This year, over 400 students from multiple school districts participated in TradeUp events to learn about high-paying, stable careers, including construction.

Career Connect Washington: Through Washington State Career Connect Washington funding, WFS was able to contract with the local Sheet Metal Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (JATC) to add 50 additional apprenticeship slots within 18 months, increase the vocational and pre-apprenticeship training to WIOA Enrolled Youth, and grow the paid/unpaid internships within the region for all industries through various entities.

Youth Report: To assist all employers across industries, WFS partnered with local high schools and partner organizations to learn more about the inherent intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of youth and young adults. WFS held youth and young adult roundtables and disseminated scenario surveys, a means to understand the value youth and young adults place on money, ideals, and free time, across the county.

The preliminary results were compiled into “The Next Wave: A Look Into Our Future Job Seekers Ideal Workplace,” a report designed to help bridge the divide between the next generation of employees and the current workforce environment.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Access the report “The Next Wave: A Look Into Our Future Job Seekers Ideal Workplace”: www.edline.net/pages/Adult_Community_Education/Academics
Staff Contact: Erin S. Monroe, President/Chief Executive Officer, Workforce Snohomish, Erin.Monroe@workforcesnohomish.org.
UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOR TRENDS
The South Plains Workforce Development Area (WDA) encompasses 15 counties in West Texas: Bailey, Cochran, Lamb, Hockley, Motley, King, Crosby, Dickens, Lubbock, Garza, Hale, Yoakum, Floyd, Lynn, and Terry. Unemployment rate - historically low 2.9% Overall employment has been rising steadily for past ten years. The top five industries: Health Care and Social Assistance, Educational Services, Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, and Construction.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS
Fostering a productive relationship with the local economic development organization is a strategy. The Board of Directors include representatives from the local chamber of commerce, economic development, and businesses. There are quarterly meetings of leaders from secondary education, higher education, and economic development. We partner with economic development to invest in secondary schools’ career and technical education through grants that purchase equipment, supplies and curriculum.

RESULTS, KEY TAKEAWAYS, AND LESSONS
Regular meetings with stakeholders including educators and economic development has led to various collaborations that fund the education and training of the South Plains WDA’s future workforce. As a result of these projects, more than 1,000 high school students have had the opportunity to graduate high school with an industry recognized certification and/or college credits. Partnering education, economic development and business is key to successfully addressing the skills gap.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Staff Contact: Erin Rea, Director of Strategic Planning, Workforce Solutions South Plains, Erin.Rea@spworkforce.org.

SPOKANE, WA
UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOR TRENDS
Spokane is currently experiencing its lowest unemployment rate (4.4%) since 1998, surpassing its pre-recession labor force numbers and continuing to see job growth and an influx of new workers due to in-migration. The Spokane MSA anticipates a 3.5% increase in the total number of jobs in 2018 with the healthcare, manufacturing, and finance & insurance sectors driving much of the employment growth and contributing to higher average wages and more workers having access to employer-sponsored benefits.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS
The Spokane Workforce Council (SWC) delivers a range of vital services and talent solutions to businesses throughout our region. Working from our business one-stop, our team conducts outreach and brings real-time labor market intelligence to help identify skills gaps and work together to develop training solutions. Our talent acquisition efforts include outplacement assistance, candidate matching and screening, business seminars addressing relevant subjects e.g., tax credits, federal bonding, and paid family and medical leave, and numerous hiring events - large-scale as well as industry and company-specific. Our team also supports talent pipeline development to ensure business can access the skilled workforce they need to grow. We offer industry navigators that help recruit workers into in-demand sectors, On-the-Job Training assistance to offset training costs for new hires, and we partner with training providers to ensure workers have the right skills to succeed.

The Spokane Workforce Council has implemented a cohort training model for workforce system customers to obtain an occupation-specific certification in an in-demand occupation in Spokane County. Certifications are determined by a data-driven process, which includes reviewing online job postings data to determine workplace...
relationships with the business customers of WorkSource Spokane and reduced duplication of efforts. The CRM tool has mobile capabilities which allow BET members to log activities and notes from the field when meeting with employers and at events. The Business Engagement Team is expanding the number of business customers served by WorkSource Spokane and strengthening business relationships to create further brand awareness for WorkSource Spokane among the business community.

Over the past year, more than 193 businesses and 2460 job seekers have participated in over 70 regional hiring events. Businesses participating in these events and working with our team of professionals report that these have led to the most hires and provided the highest quality skilled candidates that they have found in this very tight labor market. Our dedicated staff are able to use their deep expertise in human resources practices and knowledge of industry sectors to successfully develop and match a skilled workforce to the needs of our employers.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

worksourcespokane.com/for-employers

Staff Contact: Mark Mattke, Chief Executive Officer, Spokane Workforce Council, MMattke@wdcspokane.com.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOR TRENDS
According to Missouri Statistical Area (MSA) the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the St. Louis MSA was 3.2% in April 2018, down from 3.6% in April 2017. This is lower than the national rate of 3.9% and the state rate of 3.6%. St. Louis mirrors the state and national trend of higher unemployment rates for workers younger than 22 years of age. Nationally, the unemployment rates for all ages were 5.8% for males and 5.2% for females. This is slightly higher than the St. Louis rate of 5.7% for males, and nearly 1 percentage point higher than the St. Louis rate of 4.3% for females.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS

The St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE) approach employer engagement strategies from multiple avenues. Assessing the economy’s growth, we’ve found businesses across all industries and employers are expressing the need for a pipeline of skilled workers to help them remain competitive. Registered Apprenticeship is a global tried and true workforce development strategy that offers apprentices opportunities to earn a salary while learning the skills employers demand in a variety of occupations across industries sectors, such as an aircraft mechanic in Advanced Manufacturing, an electrician in the Building Trades/Construction, a nursing assistant in Healthcare and a coder in Information Technology. For employers, Registered Apprenticeship serves as an opportunity to grow their own workforces and meet skill needs for the future. SLATE also host daily hiring fairs strategically designed to serve employers and job seekers seeking employment from entry level to professional level positions. During these hiring events, employers interview potential employees on the spot.

SLATE offers a plethora of initiatives that serve to empower, employ, and engage our community which in effect reduces crime and increases public safety. One stand-out initiative is the 24-Hour Workforce High School (24WHS). It is a new and unprecedented workforce program that extends services for youth customers beyond SLATE’s standard office hours. It is the country’s only 24-hour high school aimed at giving young adults, ages 17-21, an opportunity to attain a High School Diploma at their convenience as they navigate many responsibilities at home, school and the workplace. In addition to the SLPS High School curriculum, access to teachers, a computer lab, educational resources, and technical assistance, young men and women have 24/7 access to education mentorship and case management services. Upon completion of their High School education through 24WHS, SLATE continues to guide and support participants in their pursuit of post-secondary educational opportunities and career options. Without a doubt, open access to education is one chief initiative that will reduce crime and increase public safety.

The Business Engagement Team at WorkSource Spokane plans and coordinates the hiring event and invites local businesses who have posted for jobs asking for the certification that cohort graduates have just obtained. This model is designed to help fill immediate workforce needs for businesses and put WorkSource customers back to work as quickly as possible in an in-demand occupation.
**ST. LOUIS, MO**

The most important best practice is to listen to the job seeker and the employer.

- Identifying training providers and training facilities that will train in specific areas that will appeal to employer’s interest.
- Identifying training opportunities that are short-term, project based, and hands-on.
- Provide Personal and Professional development, Job Readiness, SkillUp and Resume Etiquette.
- Attend career fairs, hiring events and surrounding community partnering events to stay connected to employers/unemployment trends in the community.
- Consistent follow up to the participants up to one year.
- Be intentional on connecting a participant to employment upon completion of training.

We have learned that employers

- Prefer to hire job candidates that are well-prepared in terms of job readiness skills;
- Are willing to facilitate and integrate their new employee orientation as part of the job readiness process;
- Appreciate when the job developer assists with job coaching to alleviate problems beforehand and to address questions or issues that could disrupt work;
- Are open to hiring in groups as this can foster teamwork and a positive work environment; and
- Are willing to train a dependable worker if it means an increase in job retention.

**RESULTS, KEY TAKEAWAYS, AND LESSONS**

- SLATE has served 28,882 clients.
- SLATE has over 80 working and direct MOUS and articulation agreements with community partners.
- SLATE evaluates the partnerships frequently to ensure promising practices.
- SLATE evaluates frequent feedback from employers and clients weekly.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

http://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNU01374597
http://www.bls.gov/news.release/jolts.nr0.htm
http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pslfr.t01.htm
uscmwdc/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2019-1-4StLouisCity-SLATERegionPY17vsPY18Review.pdf

Staff Contact: Dr. Alice Prince, Executive Director, SLATE Missouri Career Center, APrince@stlworks.com.

**VANCOUVER, WA**

**UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOR TRENDS**

Southwest Washington has a population of 561,855 (labor force of 272,349); the average worker in the Southwest Washington area earned annual wages of $50,438 as of 2018Q2. Average annual wages per worker increased 3.5% in the region over the preceding four quarters. Unemployment rates: Clark County 4.4%, Cowlitz County 5.2%, Wahkiakum County 6.0%.

Healthcare, Construction, Tech and Manufacturing have been designated by our region as areas of focus. These sectors were chosen based on industry growth/demand, earning potential, career pathway opportunities, and importance of the industry to the region. One-hundred percent of Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW) funds are invested in these industries through job training programs designed to create qualified workers for employment.

**EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS**

Southwest Washington is located on the north side of the Columbia River adjacent to Portland, Oregon. Our bi-state region shares a labor shed; approximately 70,000 workers commute between the states each work day. To address this unique characteristic of our region, we have aligned with our workforce board partners in the Portland/Clackamas region in Oregon to form the Columbia-Willamette Workforce Collaborative (CWWC).

Together, we address the needs of our region’s four target sectors. Each sector has an advisory board of businesses that participated in the development of a workforce plan. These plans detail three key goals unique to each industry. Throughout each three-year plan, we work with employers, training providers, WorkSource centers, and other stakeholders to reach the goals our industry partners have identified. Each plan relies heavily on our region’s ability to create a qualified and readily-available talent pool.

To address this major goal, we have implemented sector-teams within our WorkSource centers. Teams are led by sector-specific Business Solutions staff and are comprised of a cross representation of job seeker-facing program staff who are trained to serve as employment experts in these industries. Teams work to source, train (if necessary) and place candidates into jobs in these industries. A website www.carersnw.org was created to help adults and youth learn about the four key sectors.
RESULTS, KEY TAKEAWAYS, AND LESSONS

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** table reflects PY17 data

Research shows that sector partnerships bring together multiple employers within an industry to collaborate with colleges, schools, labor, workforce agencies, community organizations and other stakeholders to align training with the skills needed for that industry to grow and compete. WSW has found just this, as engagement of our regional employers has risen as they see the ongoing outcomes of our regional collaborative for their local workforce needs. In addition to a higher level of engagement of local private industry, the sector-only investments in trainings have been much more effective in terms of higher job placement results.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CWLC-sponsored website to promote our four key sectors www.Careersnw.org

Staff Contact: Kevin Perkey, Chief Executive Officer, Workforce Southwest Washington, KPerkey@workforcesw.org.

WASHINGTON, DC

UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOR TRENDS

The District of Columbia’s unemployment rate at the end of October 2018 continued its slow downward trend in a year-over-year comparison, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). With a high watermark of 6.6% in October 2015, the unemployment rate fell to 6.0% in October 2016, 5.9% in October 2017, and now 5.6% in 2018. The District has seen its largest decrease in the unemployment rate in Wards 7 and 8, of 3.1% and 3.2% respectively, from January 2015 until now. The decrease in unemployment has tightened the labor market in the District where there are two advertised job openings for every unemployed person. This statistic paints a clearer picture of the skills gap.

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS

The Department of Employment Services (DOES) has engaged residents, business leaders, community leaders, academic institutions, and industry experts through our quarterly Community Conversations, and industry Roundtables. Community Conversations, held around the District, serve as a conduit for District residents to engage directly with agency leadership. Similarly, each industry Roundtable focuses on engaging non-profits, business leaders, academics, think tanks, and thought leaders on a particular topic or industry issue to better understand the problem, evaluate current program outcomes, and propose solutions. The feedback provided in these discussions has allowed DOES to double down on some existing programs and design a new program through partnerships.

RESULTS, KEY TAKEAWAYS, AND LESSONS

The District doubled down on the Marion Barry Summer Youth Employment Program (MBSYEP), which served over 1 million youth in the District during its 40-year history. In 2015, the program permanently expanded to 22-24-year-olds, providing everyone with an opportunity to earn money and gain meaningful exposure, while learning and developing the skills, attitudes, and commitment necessary to succeed in today’s workforce. In 2017, the first year since permanent expansion, 1,000 DC youth ages 22-24 earned more than $1.8 million in wages. Many of these youth came from Wards 7 and 8, where unemployment rates are high and the opportunity gap is the widest. A six-week summer program, MBSYEP is a locally-funded initiative that provides District youth ages 14 to 24 with enriching and constructive summer work experiences through subsidized placements in the private and public sectors.

The DC Infrastructure Academy (DCIA) is a new workforce initiative that brings multiple infrastructure related workforce development activities together under one roof to focus on the occupational skills training and work-based learning to address the gap between positions available and workers able to fill them in the infrastructure industry. Our partners – PEPCO, Washington Gas, Department of Public Works, Department of Energy and Environment, and the AFL-CIO – have come together to identify the specific credentials, licenses, and certification lacking from current applicants. With Quick Path (QP) to Energy, QP to Transportation (commercial driver’s license), QP to Information Technology, Solar Works DC, Automotive Technician, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training serving as the initial curriculum offerings, DCIA continues to increase its offerings as the demand grows. Since the program launched on March 12, 2018, more than 3500 residents have submitted application and over 500 participants have started training.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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