WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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fftc FWD
find what you need to lead

fftc:FWD is a civic empowerment platform for everyone.

fftc:FWD is an innovative civic leadership platform from The Robinson Center for Civic Leadership at Foundation for the Carolinas that makes it easier and faster for people, groups, and organizations to find what they need to lead on issues and topics they care about in our community.

Who	What	When	Where	How
is doing what and do they connect to each other?	issues are important in our community and to me?	I want to know more, how can I find what I need?	can I easily see opportunities for collaboration and partnership?	can I help?

fftc:FWD Folios like the one you are reading now provide on-ramps to knowledge, data, and information on key topics and themes to broaden access to the levers of change for everyone's access and use.

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fftc:FWD is focused on the communities within the Charlotte-Mecklenburg region in the state of North Carolina.

Cover art by: **Barbara Ellis**
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What is workforce development?

Workforce development refers to programs that build the skills, knowledge and abilities our community members need to find and land quality jobs. It includes preparing people for employment and supporting career advancement.

It's an issue that requires a community-wide effort to make progress, because it takes initiatives in a wide range of areas – such as transportation, childcare, and digital access – that remove obstacles preventing people from landing good jobs.

Education is key, because those of us seeking jobs need opportunities to develop skills. Colleges, universities, K–12 career pathways, and accessible training programs are needed to pair jobseekers with employers, and to help workers adapt to changing technology.

By connecting our residents – particularly those facing barriers to opportunity – to good jobs with living wages, our communities can increase household incomes, which strengthen local tax bases and boost economic mobility.

With so much at stake economically, finding ways to support programs offered by nonprofits and our local governments that improve workforce development is more important than ever.

Key Facts

Here are some key facts around workforce development locally

$1.6M

labor force workers in th Charlotte metro area

3.4%

unemployment rate in the Charlotte region

$32.55

average hourly wage for workers in the Charlotte region

27K

degrees and certifications conferred annually by colleges and universities in the Charlotte region

45%

of Charlotteans have a bachelor's degree or higher

60%

of Charlotte's population growth from 2015 to 2020 was young professionals

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What is happening now?

Charlotte has experienced broad economic shifts, from our agricultural roots to our position as the center of the Carolinas' textile manufacturing industry to becoming a hub of global finance.

Today, Charlotte is one of the top U.S. banking centers, which has created demand for skilled finance, IT, and professional services workers.

With rapid population and business growth, the need for a thriving labor force has heightened. More residents mean more demand for career advancement for all of our workers, not just management.

The region's workforce development efforts embrace initiatives that offer solid paths to good jobs for all of us and have a long-lasting impact.

One example is Charlotte's transportation and transit plan that passed in 2025 – a $19.4 billion investment that will pump money into public transportation (including new rail lines and expanded bus services), and update infrastructure over a 30-year span.

Efforts like these will boost our transportation and transit options – and job opportunities – as Charlotte's population continues to grow.

Charlotte Works leads the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Workforce Development Providers Council (WPC), a collection of 15 organizations that support businesses while developing workers and removing obstacles to advancement.

The goal is to ensure that people from every neighborhood and background can thrive in careers that sustain our families and expand our community's economic mobility.

Starting Points

These six organizations are good starting points for someone new to this topic to learn more.

Central Piedmont Community College

Fuels Charlotte's workforce by offering accessible, industry-aligned training and apprenticeships. *cpcc.edu*

CELC

A coalition of CEOs committed to positioning Charlotte as a national leader in economic vitality, equitable opportunity and better quality of life for all. *charlotteelc.com*

Charlotte Works

Serves as the region's workforce development board, aligning education, training and employment efforts to meet labor market needs. *charlotteworks.com*

cms Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) is the public school district serving the county, offering K–12 education and career readiness initiatives like the 3E strategy. *cmsk12.org*

City of Charlotte

Provides services, programs and resources to support residents and foster economic growth across the region. *charlottenc.gov*

Mecklenburg County North Carolina

Delivers public services and administers health, human services and economic development programs to residents. *mecknc.gov*

These are not the only organizations leading local work around workforce development.
Visit fftcfwd.net to see more!

Tools & Resources

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Workforce Providers Council: Operates as a central hub for employers to access the local talent pipeline at no cost. *charlotteworks.com/wpc*

Charlotte Works Labor Market Dashboard: Provides current labor market information and in-depth analysis highlighting industry trends and tracking the health of the local economy. *charlotteworks.com/workforce-data/labor-market-dashboard*

Explore More

Scan to see resources including articles and reports related to workforce development.

Take Action

Learn Who is Leading

Learn more about key organizations leading and coordinating around workforce development in the community. *fftcfwd.net/workforce-development*

Help a Jobseeker

Refer a jobseeker to the Charlotte Works or NCWorks websites.

charlotteworks.com

ncworks.gov/vosnet

Volunteer

Volunteer for a nonprofit whose work incorporates workforce development. Visit SHARE Charlotte's website for volunteer opportunities: *sharecharlotte.org*

Give Back Financially

Donate to a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose work incorporates workforce development.

Donate directly: *sharecharlotte.org*

Give through a fund: *fftc.org*

Support a Young Person's Future

Encourage youth in your networks to pursue opportunities that will lead to employment, whether it be apprenticeships, internships or higher education.

Align Priorities

Corporations and foundations can align strategic community and philanthropic priorities around issues related to workforce development.

Lingo to Know

Career pathway: A step-by-step roadmap that combines education, training, and work experience to help us advance in our career.

Economic mobility: The ability of a person to climb the income ladder and thrive over time, regardless of the social and economic conditions into which they were born.

Initiative: An organized effort to help solve a community problem, challenge, or opportunity.

Jobseekers: People who are unemployed and looking for work.

Regional competitiveness: A region's ability to create, attract, and retain businesses while keeping a high standard of living and offering good job opportunities for its residents.

Workforce: People in a community who are working or are available to work.

Connecting the Dots

Explore related folio topics such as those listed below on our website.

Digital Equity — Economic Mobility — K–12 Education — Small Business — Transportation & Transit

View this folio

fftcfwd.net/workforce-development

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Contact us: fwd@fftc.org

Thank you to Charlotte Works for providing guidance on core content as Lead Agency for this folio.

Sources for the content of this folio can be found on the Workforce Development folio webpage.

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