



Workforce Development Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is workforce development? Who is involved?

Workforce development can be defined as efforts that provide opportunities to prepare people for education and available careers, and connect businesses to skilled workers. Any organization that helps businesses find workers or prepares individuals (of any age) for careers takes part in workforce development.

2. What is the Workforce Development Board? Who do they serve?

Workforce Development Boards are organizations tasked with directing federal, state, and local funding to support workforce development services in a local region. Each Workforce Development Board consists of voluntary board members representing public and private organizations in a community, and a staff to implement decisions and direction set by board members. There are 23 Workforce Boards in North Carolina representing all counties.

3. Who are the Workforce Development Board members?

Each Workforce Development Board consists of voluntary members who are representatives from business and industry, secondary education (K-12) and post-secondary education, community-based organizations, economic development agencies, public employment and assistance agencies, vocational rehabilitation, and labor organizations.

4. What do the Workforce Development Boards do?

Workforce Development Boards provide leadership and direction to the community that closes the gap between what employers want and the skills workers have. They build relationships and trust, bring partners together, and coordinate resources that meet the needs of the economy of today and the future. For example, workforce development boards:

- Help businesses identify and obtain talented individuals that they need to sustain or grow their workforce.
- Provide information and data about available jobs and wages to education stakeholders to ensure the training and services they provide to students are relevant to businesses.
- Provide resources such as career information and guidance, access to training and additional education, and job search assistance to help individuals reach their career goals.
- Partner with education, industry, and economic development to increase awareness about available careers in the region and how to begin down a specified career path - for students still in school, individuals just starting out in a career, and those wanting to make a career change.

5. How does the Workforce Development Board impact the community?

Even now, nearly a decade after the Great Recession, individuals still struggle to build skills that will help them secure a career. Also, finding and keeping employees is one of the biggest concerns for businesses. Individuals and communities prosper when residents have access to gainful employment and businesses have access to a skilled workforce; that's at the heart of making the people who live or work in our region thrive. Studies show that for every dollar spent on workforce development, the community receives a \$17 return in that investment¹.

Workforce Development Boards help businesses identify the skills they need and then connect workers to the education and training needed to meet those requirements. Specifically, workforce development boards:

- Build relationships and customize solutions that assist businesses to relocate or expand, avoid layoffs, and (if necessary) transition workers to other employment. Businesses thrive when they have access to the skilled workers they need, now and in the future.
- Support career seekers with career information and guidance, access to relevant training and education, and other additional services, which can provide individuals with a sustainable income and build financial assets, such as savings, a house, or a car, or pay for their child's college education.

6. How do Workforce Development Boards partner with and convene other organizations to find workforce solutions? Why is this important to the community?

Workforce Development Boards are deliberately structured with board members who represent public and private organizations with a role in workforce development. As opportunities emerge, this structure lends itself to convene partners together to discuss solutions.

No one organization can do this work alone. Convening partners who represent multiple perspectives ensures the solutions are driven by industry experience and skill needs and are accessible for all individuals looking to access career opportunities. Partnerships that have evolved over several years show a united front and assist employers and career seekers more effectively. For example:

- Employers are more efficiently assisted with multiple service options when there is buy-in and a team approach from multiple community stakeholders.
- Individuals looking to access career guidance and training may find themselves in a NCWorks Career Center, where they have access to various resources and training opportunities.
- Workforce development boards lead local teams that work with businesses, and connects employers and students in work-based learning opportunities.
- Working with both industry leaders and education providers, workforce development boards ensures students are learning skills they will use in their future careers and they understand what is needed to go begin a career or find a job after high school.

One example of a successful partnership to find a workforce solution: Based on reports from businesses in the region that they could not find employees with skills they needed in Advanced Manufacturing-Mechatronics, The local Workforce Development Boards convened education, economic development, and industry representatives to find a solution. The regional group successfully developed a career pathway (that starts in middle school) to increase the number of individuals with mechatronics skills.

7. How is the Workforce Development Board different from other community agencies? (ie. Goodwill) How are Workforce Development Boards associated with other workforce agencies in the area (ie Goodwill, church organizations, community colleges)

The Workforce Development Board structure allows it to serve both employers and individuals seeking careers, while focusing on the community as a whole. The workforce development board works with community organizations in multiple ways, including as a:

- Convener to find workforce solutions with education, economic development, and other stakeholders.
- Funder to support services and initiatives.
- Partner that makes referrals to better serve businesses and career seekers.
- Source of information to guide the development or the changes to a workforce program.

8. Where does funding come from to support workforce development?

Workforce development is supported through federal, state, local, and sometimes private dollars. The federal Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act is federal legislation that regulates federal dollars.

9. What is the NCWorks Career Center? How is it related to the workforce development boards?

Workforce development boards oversee NCWorks Career Centers. NCWorks Career Centers are physical offices to help businesses and career seekers find the resources they need.

10. What services are provided at NCWorks Career Centers? Where are they?

NCWorks Career Centers offer a wide range of services for business and career seekers.

BOARDS MAY LIST THEIR NCWORKS CAREER CENTER LOCATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION HERE.

Business Customers

- Recruitment Assistance
- Job Posting Assistance
- Interview Space
- Retention Strategies
- Hiring and Tax Incentives
- Labor Market Trends and Data

Career Seeker Customers

- Employment and Training Services
- Information on Careers in Growing Industries
- Job Listings
- Job Training and Education

11. I am a business, what can you do for me?

Workforce Development Boards help businesses hire the skilled employees that they need to sustain or grow. They help businesses directly, as well as the current and future workforce. For example:

- Workforce Development Boards help businesses focus their search by identifying the specific types of skills they need, and then helping them obtain workers with those skills.
- If a new skill is required of employees, workforce development boards can work with the business to supply the additional training they need.
- Workforce Development Boards help individuals from all walks of life build their skills and find a career.
- They also help mold the future workforce by shaping secondary (K-12) education, post-secondary education, and technical education and training services, based on specific industry needs.

Contact your local Workforce Development Board to find a full list of service options, some of which may be available at no cost or at a reduced cost to the business.

12. I am an individual looking for work, what can you do for me? What are the costs? What are the eligibility requirements?

Workforce development organizations can provide several one-on-one services, including:

- Career guidance;
- Professional resume creation or updates;
- Job matching and referral assistance;
- Training and education to build skills;
- Paid and unpaid opportunities to increase job retention skills and learn on the job; and
- Support services, including financial assistance.

Services vary depending on your individual needs. Some classroom and on-the-job training and education may be free or available at a reduced cost. Contact your local NCWorks Career Center for additional information.