



News Release

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Talent Development and NCWorks Branding Take Center Stage in New Durham Workforce Development Board Strategic Plan

DURHAM, N.C. — Over the next two years, ensuring that Durham is an international “brain hub” where jobseekers and employers meet will be the focus of the recently-launched strategic plan for the Durham Workforce Development Board.

Even better news is that services and programs will be delivered through the NCWorks Career Center System Partnership, certified by the North Carolina Department of Commerce in February, naming Durham’s two career centers as official “NCWorks Career Centers.”

The Durham Workforce Development Board’s 2015-2017 Strategic Plan that went into effect on January 1, is built upon two primary goals: to create conditions for success for jobseekers and employers as well as to strengthen and simplify the delivery of services to the entire workforce community.

The Board, a statutory body that serves as the coordinating entity for workforce development in Durham, developed this plan over a five-month period in 2014, with the NCWorks Partnership now responsible for putting the plan into action. This partnership consists of the private-sector members of the Durham Workforce Development Board, the City of Durham’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development, Durham County Government, the North Carolina Division of Workforce Solutions, Durham Technical Community College, Durham Public Schools, the Durham County Department of Health and Human Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and many important private not-for profit partners.

According to Durham Workforce Development Board Chair Steven Williams, the implementation of this new strategic plan will require partnership across the spectrum if it's to be successful. "We need collaboration with the business community, staff at organizations that are ready to roll up their sleeves together, and engaged volunteers that want businesses and jobseekers to connect for gainful employment with career growth possibilities," said Williams. "With all that said...what better place to implement this plan than Durham!"

Signature projects to help achieve these two primary goals, and which tie directly into the new Strategic Plan, include:

- The Job Driven Initiative, an NCWorks signature effort to provide training for jobs such as certified production technicians, bio-manufacturing, and service industry support;
- The Environmental Technology Workforce Development Training Program, an effort to train individuals for industry-based credentials and place residents in jobs that will involve the clean-up of environmental sites and other sustainability-focused professions;
- The Telecommunications and Energy Job Training Program, a partnership between NCWorks and the North Carolina Institute of Minority Economic Development to credential and place residents in telecommunications jobs;
- The Durham YouthWork Internship Program, an NCWorks effort to provide youth opportunities to gain work experience while connecting with fast-growing sector jobs in government and businesses;
- Collaboration with Made in Durham and the Youth Opportunity Initiative to increase outreach to disconnected youth and connect them with holistic programs;
- Integrated Service Delivery, a new system in the NCWorks Career Centers to make jobseeking more user-friendly and;
- Organization of industry clusters to strengthen knowledge of the labor market in key industries, bolster private-sector participation, support NCWorks Career System training and hiring initiatives, and lay the foundation for long-term, private-sector engagement.

"This plan comes at a time when Durham is enjoying considerable growth and where the community's penchant for making good things happen is apparent each day," said Durham Workforce Development Board Executive Director Kevin Dick. "Through partnerships with the business community and among the various governmental and not-for-profit organizations that connect talent to jobs, we will continue to make strides in employment growth, employability,

and educational attainment. Durham will continue to be an international brain hub, where as many jobseekers and businesses as possible get connected.”

According to Dick, who also serves as the director for the City’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development, the next two years will be critical as the plan leads the work to develop local talent and help them transition into high-demand careers. “As we implement this plan over the next two years, the Workforce Development Division will be involved with initiatives such as a STEAM Team, which will focus on encouraging young people to explore careers in science, technology, the arts, engineering, and math,” Dick said. “Labor market research tells us that these are the fields that result in high-paying, higher-demand careers and we want Durham residents to fill those jobs.”

Another key component of the new Strategic Plan is a concentrated effort to help brand the NCWorks system, which is often mistook as being only NCWorks Online. “NCWorks Online is the online platform that connects jobseekers and businesses, but it is not the entire system,” Dick said. “The NCWorks system brand, which is relatively new and replaces what was formerly known as JobLink, fortifies all of our signature projects through training, credentialing, placement, and ongoing support.”

According to Dick, the Strategic Plan specifically speaks to the effort to position the NCWorks system in Durham as the best source for businesses to find top talent by connecting businesses and jobseekers using evidence-based best practices and by forging partnerships between businesses and the workforce system with an emphasis on emerging fields.

To learn more about the Durham Workforce Development Board’s 2015-17 Strategic Plan, visit <http://www.DurhamWorkforce.org> and select “Board Publications,” or contact Durham Workforce Development Board Assistant Executive Director Esther Coleman at (919) 560-4965, ext. 15209 or by email at Esther.Coleman@DurhamNC.gov.

About the Durham Workforce Development Board

Established by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, the Durham Workforce Development Board (DWDB) is a consortium agreement between the City and County of Durham. The City of Durham Office of Economic and Workforce Development serves as the administrative entity and staff to the DWDB. Through collaborative partnerships, the DWDB is the local policy

organization responsible for the planning, oversight and coordination of workforce development initiatives that help support economic development in Durham. For more information, visit <http://www.DurhamWorkforce.org>.

About NCWorks

NCWorks *Connecting Talent to Jobs* is a dedicated system for workforce success. This system is comprised of many partners including the NC Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions; the [North Carolina Commission on Workforce Development](#); the North Carolina Community College System; local Workforce Development Boards; and many others. It also operates on a technology platform for jobseekers to find jobs, for businesses to post them, and for workforce staff to provide other needed supports called NCWorks Online. The focus is on one goal: connecting North Carolina jobs with North Carolina people through the efficient use of resources, streamlined customer service for citizens and businesses, alignment of programs, and a cohesive strategy all under one name [NCWorks](#). For more information about NCWorks, visit <http://www.nccommerce.com/ncworks>.

About the Office of Economic and Workforce Development

Guided by the City of Durham's Strategic Plan, the Office of Economic and Workforce Development helps ensure that Durham has a strong and diverse economy by increasing the city's tax base through several revitalization initiatives, including new development efforts in the central city area. The department also plans and promotes cultural awareness and events, identifies and recruits target industries as well as assesses and trains Durham residents to fill new jobs. For more information, visit <http://www.DurhamEconomicDevelopment.org>.

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