

Local Workforce Development Board 19 CAREERSOURCE HEARTLAND EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY CONSORTIUM] QUARTERLY REPORT

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

Report quarter: October 2025- December 2025

Date of meeting: December 3, 2025

Report prepared by: D Doubleday, D. Davis

Local workforce development board contact: D Doubleday **Date:** December 3, 2025

B. ATTENDANCE

| Name | Organization | Industry or Education Organization | Contact Information |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Krystin Chapman | The Development Group | Industry-Economic Development | kchapman@thedevelopmentgroup.net |
| Tina Gottus | South Florida State College | Education | gottust@southflorida.edu |
| Scott Morgan | School Board of Highlands County | Education | morgans@highlands.k12.fl.us |
| Daryl Roehm | Okeechobee County School District | Education | roehmd@okee.k12.fl.us |
| Sara Sebring | Everglades Seasoning | Manufacturing | sara@evergladesseasoning.com |
| Kathy Severson | School District of DeSoto County | Education | kathy.severson@desotoschools.com |
| Dana Davis | CareerSource Heartland | Workforce | ddavis@careersourceheartland.com |

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| Donna Doubleday | CareerSource Heartland | Workforce | ddoubleday@careersourceheartland.com |
| Ann Martin | CareerSource Heartland | Workforce | amartin@careersourceheartland.com |

B. SUMMARY REPORT

The Consortium Chair, Scott Morgan, welcomed participants and reminded everyone of the three key components that are the focus of this Consortium, which will always be shown at the top of the agenda.

1. Summary Analysis of local labor market based on the industry representative needs and educational offerings.
2. Information on priority industry sectors and occupations for the local area; and
3. Information on the status of existing talent pipelines for in-demand occupations.

Ms. Doubleday reported that six business members who planned to join today sent their regrets for being unable to participate. Each had last minute/unexpected business situations arise that required immediate attention.

Discussion:

A. Labor Market Information

i. August 2025 Florida Counties Ranked by Unemployment Rate

Members reviewed the August 2025 Florida Counties Ranked by Unemployment Rate: CareerSource Heartland (19). Mr. Morgan reported the layoff and unemployment numbers. No questions or concerns were raised by members.

ii. Industry Updates from Members

Mr. Morgan reported the Florida Chamber Foundation’s Scorecard data for the area showing a year-over-year decline in the number of open jobs and an increase in the number of people unemployed. He asked participants about the local trends in their specific industries or areas represented. Ms. Sara Sebring stated that Everglades Seasoning has not had any layoffs, and no layoffs are planned. One position was recently added. Ms. Sebring also stated that the food industry in Florida has taken on a big change lately due to Aldi’s buying out the Winn-Dixie stores. The floor plans of those stores have been

reduced drastically in size. The retail chain is changing. Krystin Chapman from The Development Group stated that in Hardee County she notices that growth is stalling, especially in the housing market. Some growth continues in the commerce park. She does not anticipate area layoffs but does not see the hiring frenzy that previously existed. Tina Gottus from South Florida State College stated that the trucking industry and construction (especially electrical) have multiple open positions.

Ms. Doubleday said she would query the members who were not able to participate today and would report final responses to the Consortium, to keep all aware of the local trends.

B. Existing Talent Pipelines

i. New Training Opportunities

Mr. Morgan drew the members' attention to the "You Asked, We Listened" handout. Ms. Doubleday explained that this committee along with several local businesses have shared that soft skills (foundational skills) are very much needed in the workplace. All have also shared the need for basic computer skills. Several businesses also expressed the understanding that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is here, yet they are not comfortable implementing as they are not sure how to do so and maintain business safety and security. CareerSource Heartland (CSH) has received a grant that will allow individuals and businesses to attend training courses for soft skills (5G), and businesses to send employees to AI, and Microsoft (computer skills) courses. Ms. Doubleday briefly reviewed the details on the handout, adding that Indian River State College has also committed to providing computer skills and AI training to businesses. She indicated the grant allows CSH to reimburse businesses 100% of tuition costs upon course completion. This grant will end on 06/30/2026.

Mr. Roehm stated he would share this training information with the Okeechobee Economic Development Corporation. He commented that the 5G course was particularly good and he thought several Okeechobee businesses would be interested.

Tina Gottus added that they would like each 5G course to have a minimum of 10 participants, adding that the course is meant to be fun and interactive. Historically they found that fewer than 10 participants tended to limit the interaction, which also limits the course "takeaways."

- Other discussion:

Mr. Morgan reminded all committee members that most of them were appointed in January 2024, the terms of this committee are a 2-year commitment, and many are coming up for renewal in January 2026. Mr. Morgan stated that members are appointed by the Chair of the Board of CareerSource Heartland. He stated Ms. Doubleday will be reaching out to members whose terms are expiring to determine their interest in continuing. Mr. Morgan also asked if members are unable to commit to continuing to serve that they please nominate someone to represent their industry.

As Mr. Morgan adjourned the meeting, he thanked all for their input, indicated we will meet again in the first quarter of 2026, and wished all a happy holiday season.