

WORKFORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no simple answers to the many issues related to workforce development. The many issues are related and interconnected—and should be addressed together. In an attempt to demonstrate the need to take a holistic approach to workforce development, a comprehensive recommendation has been developed—our individual recommendations have been listed as strategies in the overall recommendation. Please take a look at this and give feedback either through email or come out Monday night.

Overarching theme: Develop marketing, coordination, and implementation strategies among all service providers to assure that existing resources are used most effectively and located conveniently for consumers. This would include the development of a database of all available workforce resources and comprehensive service centers.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop a comprehensive workforce strategy to address the emerging workforce needs of Athens and the surrounding counties.

Strategies for this comprehensive plan would include:

- Develop a Job Readiness Educational (vocational) track beginning in middle school through high school. Job Readiness and business skills will comprise at least one half of the academic day beginning in middle school. Athens Technical College, Clarke County School System and employers in Athens will help develop and implement this comprehensive educational program.
- Develop a comprehensive Job Readiness / Career Skills track beginning in middle school through high school. Job Readiness and business skills would comprise at least one half of the academic day beginning at the middle school level. Athens Technical College, Department of Labor, Clarke County School System, and employers would help develop and implement this comprehensive educational program. The Career Pathways Program would be examined as a potential model. (http://www.workforcestrategy.org/publications/WSC_pathways_8.17.06.pdf)
- Develop marketing, coordination, and implementation strategies among all partners and service providers to assure that existing resources are used most effectively and located conveniently for consumers. This would include the development of a database of all available workforce resources. **(This language was in the Overarching Theme—which is now included in the recommendation.)**
- Expand student enrollment for dual track curriculum focus.
- Assure that all middle and high school students with and without disabilities are required to participate in some Job Readiness / Career Skills activities including soft skills instruction.
- Ensure that youth apprenticeship, work based learning and academic internship programs are accessible to students without transportation.
- Develop systems for ensuring that high school teachers outside of special education refer students to the Department of Labor Division of Rehabilitation Services (Voc Rehab)

- Utilize a standards based assessment to evaluate students' progress in developing soft skills.
- Expand programs like Empowered Youth Program and Performance Learning Center.
- Develop formal internships where businesses bring on trainees with and without disabilities and train them on the job
- Provide Saturday/evening programs
- Continue to support the development of Agrosience labs in the school district and the support the development of biotechnology labs in high schools.
- Visit the Seven Centers of Innovation to identify ways to prepare our students for high-skilled, technologically advanced careers.
- Explore the new Georgia's Work Ready Certificate Program and determine plausibility of implementing in Clarke County.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop a comprehensive workforce strategy to address the current workforce needs of Athens and the surrounding communities.

Strategies for this comprehensive plan would include

- Develop a comprehensive Job Readiness / Career Skills strategy to address current workforce needs. This would include a determination as to the current gaps in our workforce system.
- Athens Technical College, Clarke County School System, Athens Chamber of Commerce, Employers, Department of Labor, and other potential partners would help develop and implement this comprehensive educational program based on our current workforce needs. The Career Pathways Program would be examined as a potential model.
(http://www.workforcestrategy.org/publications/WSC_pathways_8.17.06.pdf)
- Develop marketing, coordination, and implementation strategies among all partners and service providers to assure that existing resources are used most effectively and located conveniently for consumers. This would include the development of a database of all available workforce resources.
- Ensure that the Chamber of Commerce and Athens Clarke County develop a proactive role in industrial land development/infrastructure development to recruit and retain new and existing business.
- Develop a program (or mechanism/process) to bridge gaps between current employer needs and existing programs. Quick Start is an example of such a program.
- Define needs of potential new biotech employers and deploy that information immediately to all training resources.
- Develop an effective collaborative to connect employers and job seekers.
- Develop/expand workforce mentoring opportunities including bringing unemployed and underemployed people to employers using ministers/mentors to work with them during their first year of employment.
- Provide information / technical assistance to employers on how to legally sponsor immigrant workers and on how to handle new immigration laws.
- Provide information / technical assistance to employers on hiring ex-offenders

- Develop formal internships where businesses bring on trainees with and without disabilities and train them on the job.
- Expand and coordinate comprehensive family literacy programs and opportunities in the school district, in and out of the workplace that also address the child care, transportation and family service needs of participants.
- Provide economic incentives to employers to hire local job seekers and to participate in this workforce development plan.
- Provide Saturday/evening programs
- Develop strategies to increase the educational attainment of low literacy level / income individuals employed fulltime and / or holding more than one job
- Ensure that the PPA works collaboratively with the CCSD / Chamber of Commerce Workforce and Education Committee
- Visit the Seven Centers of Innovation to identify ways to prepare the current workforce for high-skilled, technologically advanced careers.
- Explore the new Georgia's Work Ready Certificate Program and determine plausibility of implementing in Clarke County.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop an initiative to help assure that recommendations from PPA will be pursued and that there will be all appropriate advocacy to assure implementation of the recommendations.