

LWDB 21 Palm Beach County EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY CONSORTIUM of the Palm Beaches QUARTERLY REPORT

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

Report quarter: Q 2

Date of meeting: 04/30/2026

Report prepared by: Charles Duval, Associate Vice President

Local Workforce Development Board contact: Julia Dattolo, President & CEO

B. ATTENDANCE

See attached attendance of Consortium members and industry specific guests below.

C. SUMMARY REPORT

Summary:

The session focused on the collaboration between education and industry to address workforce needs in Palm Beach County, particularly in the skilled trades sector. Participants included representatives from various educational institutions and organizations involved in workforce development and the trades industry. The discussion was opened by Charles Duval who emphasized the importance of aligning educational programs with labor market demands, particularly in the trades, and presented labor market statistics to illustrate current job trends.

The conversation shifted to the CareerSource learner pathways initiative, which aims to connect students with educational opportunities in key industries such as the trades.

Participants highlighted the shortages in roofing and electrical occupations. Lack of skills also affects the number of available supervisors to train apprentices and fulfill the needs of the business.

The meeting also addressed the availability of resources including the Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant and funding from CareerSource Palm Beach County. A discussion followed on navigating complex applications for access resources intended to assist businesses.

Welcome and Introductions:

Charles Duval initiated the meeting by welcoming attendees and informing them about the recording. Participants introduced themselves, highlighting their roles and affiliations. The

introductions included a diverse group from various educational and workforce development organizations as well as apprenticeship sponsors and employers.

Labor Market Overview and Industry Needs in Skilled Trades:

A conversation was initiated about the collaboration between education and industry to address workforce needs in the trades. Key labor market statistics were shared, noting that skilled trades jobs in Palm Beach County are expected to increase for several occupations by 2030, highlighting the need to grow the industry with new talent. Joey Lee thought the projected numbers were lower than expected, and suggested a greater need than what the data showed.

Educational and Learner Pathways in Palm Beach County:

The CareerSource learner pathways were presented, emphasizing the importance of showcasing educational options in Palm Beach County to retain educated youth. The pathway reviewed construction and skilled trades and aims to identify gaps in educational offerings. Bob Terry felt that the career pathway should include the local electrical programs available at Palm Beach State College and Independent Electrical Contractors.

Julie Golan brought up the importance of training in soft skills. This led to a discussion on the possibility of employers in attendance becoming partners in an internship program to allow new hires the opportunity to put into practice soft skills training. Helena Cuellar inquired about opportunities for internships for new hires. Charles Duval then discussed CareerSource's efforts around internships including www.internpalmbeach.com. In general, employers felt that internships are not a good practice for their business due to liability concerns. Valvery Hillsman mentioned that these particular skills could be addressed in apprenticeship standards. Joey Lee mentioned that while interns could not do field work, there may be a path that starts in the office and leads to apprenticeship. Pamela Wilson and Christine Whiteleather mentioned their efforts to educate students on soft skills. Patricia Baltazar said that soft skills are in their apprenticeship standards and listed the expectations for an apprentice as it relates to leadership.

Industry Needs and Educational Partnerships:

Several employers commented on the lack of skilled journeyman available to do particular jobs. Another challenge is having enough jobs on which to train new hires. Additionally, Bob Terry mentioned in the state of Florida, electricians are not required to obtain journeyman's licenses. Some second- and third-year apprentices may have more book knowledge than a practicing journeyman. Joey Lee and Julie Golan agreed and shared similar experiences with journeymen not having as much knowledge as expected.

Discussion on Resources for Workforce Needs:

Julie Golan discussed difficulty with resources to assist in her business. She discussed the difficulties of navigating the Pathways to Career Opportunities (PCOG) Grant. She suggested the PCOG grant should fund a trailer that would provide a space for apprentices to get hands on training. This would be helpful during times where there may not be enough work to provide adequate on-the-job training. This would allow her to keep apprentices trained in areas where they may not be as active due to lack of work.

Valvery Hillsman mentioned the PCOG grant may be used to fund items such as a training pod, but companies would need to contact the state for further information on applying. While the room agreed the PCOG grant would be useful, it may be difficult to devote sufficient time to filling out an application.

Discussion on employers' biggest needs:

Joey Lee mentioned the importance of basic skills in entry level roles. Apprentices who understand how to work basic hand tools or read a tape measure are in short supply. In many cases, apprentices do not have their own tools so apprentices may be unfamiliar. As apprentice provider, tools are not purchased because of the lack of commitment from an apprentice, so Advanced Roofing partners with organizations such as Junior Achievement and CareerSource Broward to provide tools to new apprentices. Joey mentioned how great the resources at CareerSource are for supporting apprentices and companies.

Bob Terry mentioned apprentices having previous mechanical abilities. He said many pre-apprentices do not do enough hands-on lab work. If people are not getting experience using their hands at home then they may be at a disadvantage. Joey Lee mentioned that there is not enough hands-on experience with apprentices. Many early job experiences are not always directly related to skill building. Some apprentices may not have enough hands-on experience despite demonstrating proficiency in the classroom. More hands-on experience would benefit roofing apprentices. The communication between what is being taught and what is happening in the fields needs to be improved. The room agreed that while learning theory is great, hands-on learning is tremendously important to learning skills.

Julie Golan mentioned that every company should have a training pod to provide hands-on training for apprentices at jobsites. She mentioned police officers practice in real simulated environments. Others in the room mentioned sites such as Seminole Ridge High School who build homes and provide direct simulation. Dr. Ford at West Tech mentioned her school's experience doing that for their kids.

Discussion on education alignment with most needed skills:

Dr. Ford mentioned her students' skills are aligned at the "helper" level. For employment, many of her students are already employed in their field or they have to drive to coastal regions for employment.

Jimmie Majors mentioned the difficulty of finding employment and registered apprenticeship programs for students to matriculate into due to the geographic location of the Glades. Students attempt to travel east for employment and education, but it is often unsustainable due to the distance. He mentioned students in their east coast programs matriculate at a rate of 40% - 60% into registered apprenticeships.

Education support from employers:

Christine Whiteleather mentioned Palm Beach State College's Business and Industry Leadership Teams, an advisory where companies can provide feedback and thoughts on what should be included in instructional training. They need more employers to participate in various disciplines. Dr. Ford mentioned West Tech's Occupational Advisory Boards are available for companies to provide their input. Valvery Hillsman mentioned the apprenticeship standards as the space for employers to speak to what is needed to be included in the apprenticeship. Pamela Wilson wants to see more involvement from companies in the classroom as guest speakers and more chances for students to speak to employers directly. She will make more requests for employers to visit with her students.

Julie Golan mentioned CareerSource Broward program World of Work. This program brings together professionals from industries to provide hands-on demonstrations to high school

students. Students need more experiential education opportunities for exposure to the trades. Julia Dattolo mentioned Junior Achievement and the Business Development Board’s Claim Your Future Showcase. We also mentioned the industry-specific field trips organized by CareerSource and the School District for high school students. She also mentioned CareerSource’s involvement in the Elite Trades Championship Series.

Key Takeaways:

Students need early exposure to skilled trades
 Opportunities for hands-on learning may inspire students to pursue a career in the trades
 Companies should take advantage of local resources for supporting apprenticeships

Action Items:

Education leaders will reach out to companies for opportunities to inform curriculum
 Pamela Wilson will reach out to employers to meet with students
 Charles Duval will continue to engage both education and industry to develop opportunities

EDUCATION & INDUSTRY CONSORTIUM OF THE PALM BEACHES
 (FOCUS) APPRENTICESHIP AND SKILLED TRADES INDUSTRY MEETING

04/30/26

ATTENDEES CONTACT INFORMATION

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** Industry and Education Consortium Board members