



Annual Report

PY 2024/2025



[CAPITALAREANCWORKS.COM](https://capitalareancworks.com)

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A Message From The Director



Each year, I'm reminded that the strength of Capital Area isn't measured by numbers alone. It's measured by people. The jobseekers who persevere through challenges, the businesses that open doors to new opportunities, and the partners who believe in the power of collaboration. They all define our success. Together, we've built a workforce system that doesn't just respond to change but drives it.

This year's report is a testament to what can happen when vision meets teamwork. From helping over 7,000 individuals secure employment to supporting small business and launching new initiatives like the Healthcare Collaborative, our impact continues to reach deeper into communities and industries across our region. None of this would be possible without our dedicated staff, unwavering support of our partners, and the steady leadership of our board members.

I am incredibly proud of what we've accomplished this year. And while the data on the following pages highlights great outcomes, the real story lies in the lives changed, the barriers broken, and the futures built for our residents of our service area. As we look ahead, I'm confident that our shared commitment, creativity, and resilience will continue to shape a workforce system that works for everyone.

Pat E. Sturdivant
Executive Director

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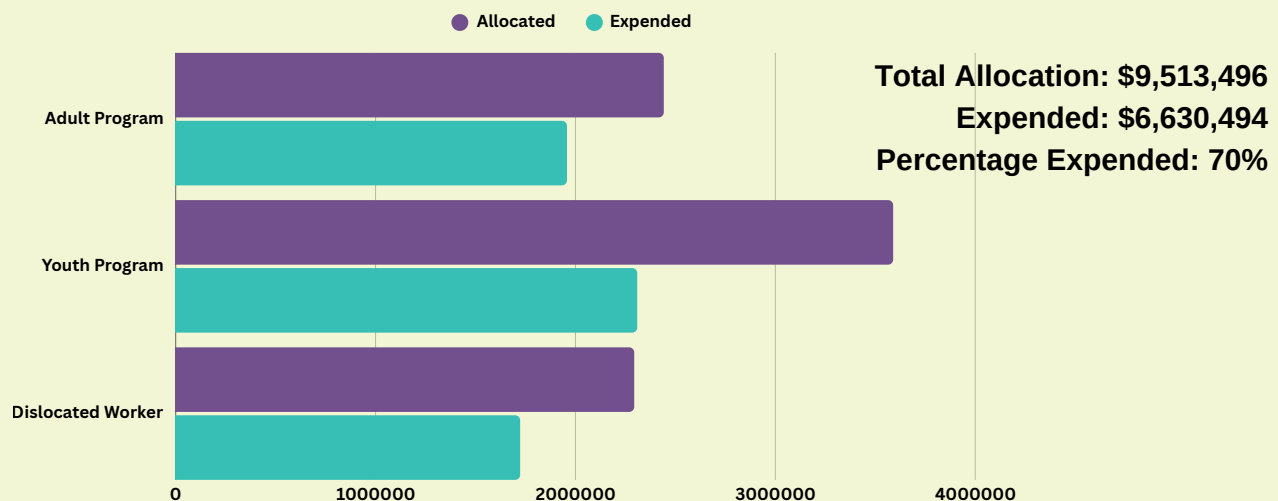
DOLLARS AT WORK



Investments today for a stronger workforce tomorrow.

Capital Area is committed to careful stewardship of public funds. We make sure every dollar is invested in ways that strengthen our workforce system and respond to the changing needs of residents and businesses. By managing resources wisely, we maximize taxpayer value, expand opportunities, and keep our programs strong for the future.

WIOA Formula Grants



We have received several grants from state and local partners to expand services for businesses and job seekers. With our region's population steadily growing, these capacity-building grants are increasingly vital, offering greater flexibility than traditional WIOA funding. While some of these funds may be used over multiple years, we expended over 76% this program year in service to businesses and jobseekers.

Capacity-Building Grants: \$13,197,349 (8 grants)
Expended: \$10,108,673 / 76.5%

Business Solutions Expansion



- Small business work-based learning
- Sector partnerships
- Entrepreneurship
- Five Stars Hotel Workforce Initiative

Job Seeker Assistance



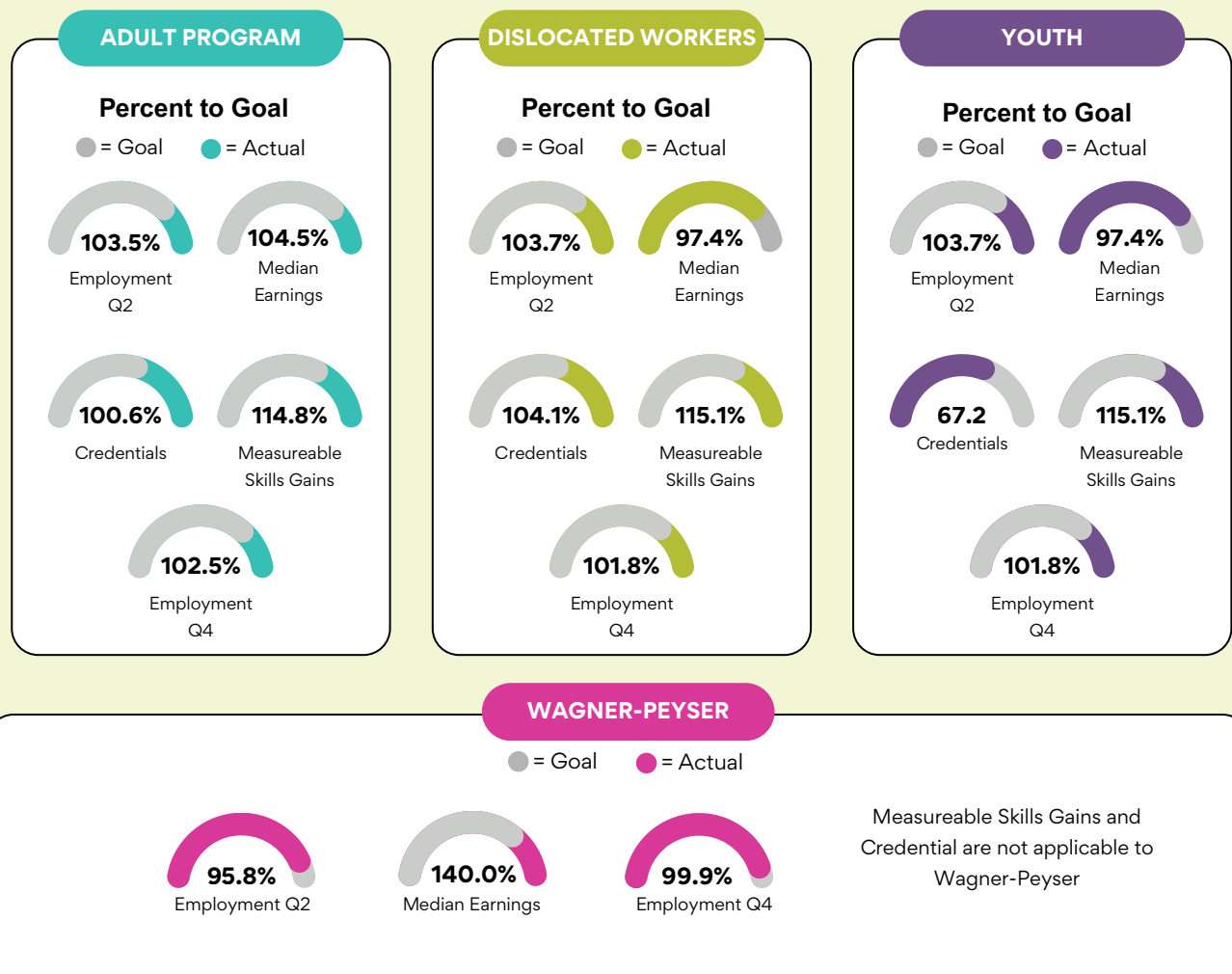
- Reentry Services
- Wake Local Reentry Council
- NC PROWD Reentry Program
- Youth substance use disorders
- Innovations grant for women in trades
- Virtual reality career exploration

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE



Meeting the Needs of Every Customer. Right Where They Are.

Performance measures are areas that have a significant impact on a participant's career advancement, skill acquisition and employment potential. **Under WIOA, the expectation is for workforce boards to achieve at least 90% of each performance measure goal.** **CAWD actually exceeded expectations with the exception of Youth Credentials.** We do expect to meet this measure in PY 25/26.





CAWD's NCWorks Career Center System:

Preparing individuals for today's workplace.

CAWD's career center network is where workforce development becomes tangible.

Whether someone is seeking their first job, a better job, or new skills to keep pace with change, adults and youth can receive the guidance, training, and resources needed to take that next step.

We are fortunate to have strong partnerships with government, education, community organizations that translate into real results for people and employers alike. Working together, NCWorks strives to provide businesses with the right people with the right skills at the right time.

Adults, youth, and employers are able to access programs for their specific needs...under one roof. Integrating federal, state, and local programs offers a comprehensive and seamless customer experience to everyone we serve.

Outcomes on the following pages reflect NCWorks' role as a great equalizer, able to unlock the potential of every customer and enrich the local job market with skilled talent.



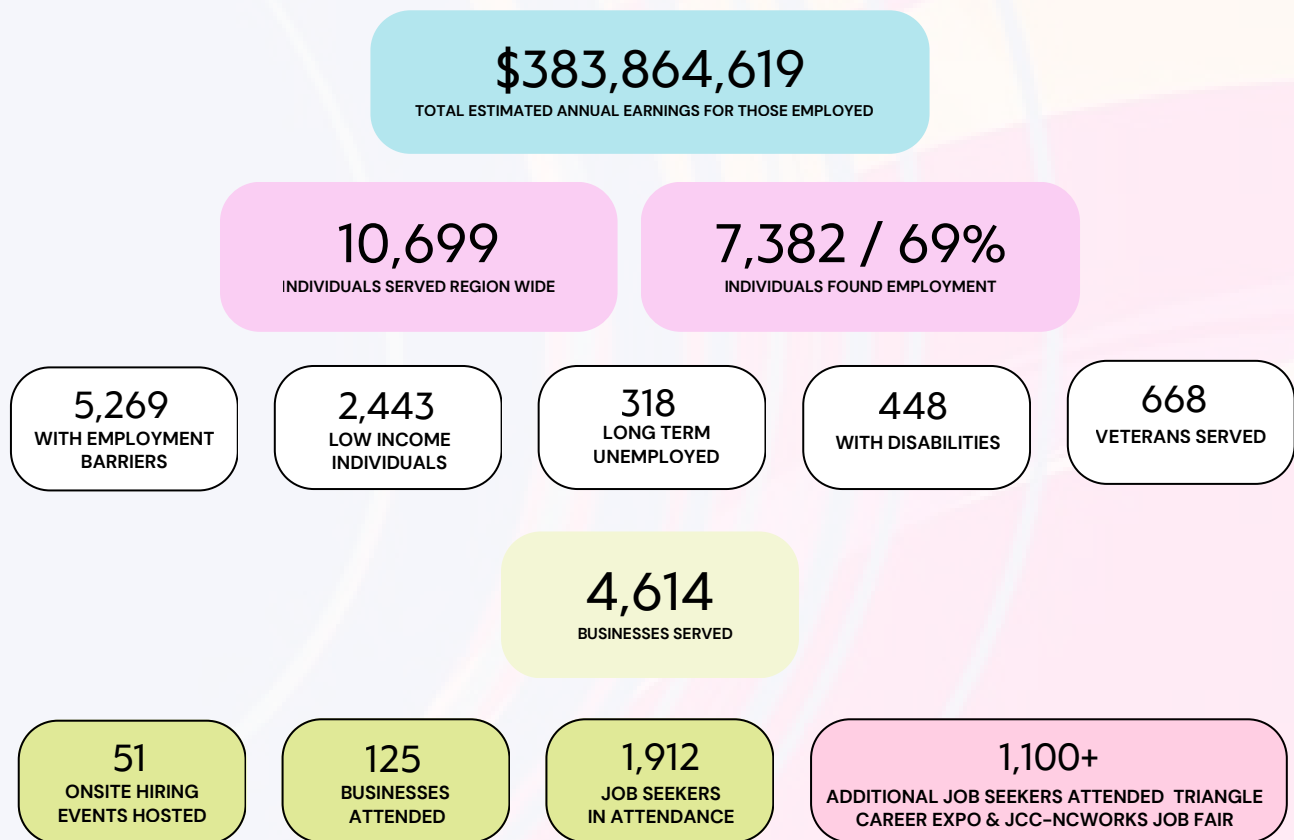
Impact Report Jobs, Wages, and Wins.



Capital Area measures success not just in numbers, but in lives changed and businesses strengthened. At the heart of our mission is a commitment to increasing economic mobility and ensuring individuals, regardless of their barriers, can access career pathways that lead to lasting independence.

Our work also supports the region's economic engine by helping businesses find and grow the talent they need to compete and thrive. Whether it's connecting employers to skilled candidates, training future workers, or addressing equity in access to opportunity, our impact is felt on both sides of the labor market.

The results from Program Year 2024 are clear: thousands of adult and youth jobseekers served, strong employment outcomes, and over \$383 million in estimated earnings across the region. That's the power of a workforce system working for people and businesses alike.



NCWORKS ADULT

CHANGEMAKER

When Amir lost his job in September 2024, he faced the uncertainty that comes with starting over. Determined to find a stable career that matched his experience and ambitions, Amir turned to NCWorks for support. This connection made all the difference

The NCWorks Business Services Team, always working to bridge opportunities between jobseekers and employers, had been collaborating closely with Google Fiber to support their hiring needs. Through regular conversations with their Talent Attraction Program Manager, Senior Business Services Consultant Sunny Rai stayed up to date on their open positions.

When a new opening for a Small Business Field Sales Representative became available, Sydney Kueny, Inside Recruitment Consultant, quickly recognized that Amir's skills and background were a perfect match. She referred him for the role, and after a successful interview, Google Fiber offered Amir **a full-time position with a base salary of \$51,500—just two months after he first sought help!**

Today, Amir is thriving in his new position, building relationships with small businesses and representing one of the most recognized names in technology. His success is a shining example of how strategic partnerships and personalized service can change the trajectory of someone's career.

Amir's journey is more than a successful job placement. It's proof of the NCWorks Business Services Team's dedication to aligning employer needs with individual potential. It's a reminder that when collaboration, care, and expertise come together, great things happen.





A Lifeline for Young People Needing a Fresh Start

NCWorks NextGen provides the right support at the right time to youth and young adults who need a career path and life-sustaining skills. Participants get help to overcome obstacles that might otherwise hold them back: dropping out of school, justice involvement, unstable housing, or the lack of career direction. With guidance, mentorship, and access to education and training, participants can create a brighter future.

From earning diplomas and industry-recognized credentials to gaining full-time employment and entering college or the military, their stories show what's possible. Beyond the numbers, what shines through is the resilience of young people who refuse to be defined by their circumstances.

The following pages highlight both outcomes and individual journeys. You'll see the impact of NextGen in the data we proudly report and in the stories of courageous participants who turn setbacks into stepping stones. Together, these results capture the true spirit of NextGen: helping youth and young adults move forward with confidence, purpose, and hope.

NextGen Hosts First Career Exploration Day

Capital Area's NextGen team brought career exploration to life with an inaugural Career Exploration Day! The event showcased an exciting mix of employers, training providers, and community colleges with hands-on exhibits so attendees could experience various careers.



Graduation Celebrates Participant Success!

NextGen hosted a graduation ceremony to celebrate the outstanding accomplishments of youth from CAWD's five counties. **Thirty-six graduates were recognized for earning GED's and HVAC, CDL, Biopharma, RBT, Dental Assisting, IT, and Phlebotomy credentials.**

Congratulations to all the graduates for setting their sights on the bright futures ahead.





Biopharma Apprenticeship Prep Opens New Doors for Local Youth

We took our apprenticeship prep efforts to new heights with the launch of two Biopharma training cohorts! Made possible through Wake County's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) initiative, the program is designed to prepare young people for the region's growing life sciences sector through a blend of technical training alongside real-world exposure to biopharma occupations.

Each youth completed the BioWork certification through Wake Technical Community College. This credential sets the foundation for success in biopharma and is highly valued by the industry's employers.

OUTCOMES

Fall 2024

Participants: 17
Employed: 6
at Biogen, Merck, Grifols, Ajinomoto

Spring 2025

Participants: 13
Title I high schoolers
Pursuing continuing education and training at WTCC, BTEC, and area universities



NextGen Program Accomplishments

Youth Served
307

New Enrollments
203

Credentials Earned
57

HS Diplomas & Equivalencies
22

Rec'd Support Srvs
133

Apprenticeship Participants
11

Occupational Skills Trainees
69

Toured Colleges/Post-secondary Ed.
151

Completed Soft Skills Training
177

ENTERED EMPLOYMENT
121

NEXTGEN YOUNG ADULT CHANGEMAKERS

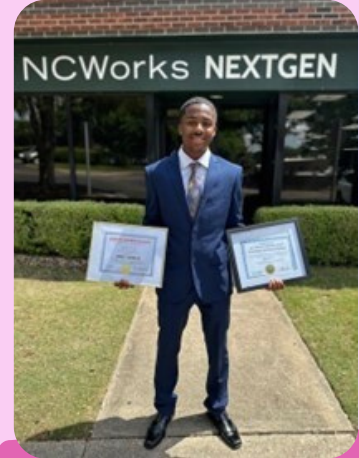
CORELL'S JOURNEY

When Corell entered the NextGen Wake program in June 2023, the odds were stacked against him. At just 18, he was navigating life without a GED, juvenile justice involved, and healing from a gunshot wound. Many might have given up, but Corell chose a different path.

Instead, he dove into GED classes proudly earned his diploma in October 2024. The following spring, he walked across the stage at Durham Tech, his cap and gown symbolizing not just a credential but a comeback!

Hungry for more, Corell immediately set his sights on a career path. By May 2025, he had completed CDL training, passed his exams, and earned his commercial driver's license. Along the way, he also finished probation, gained two industry-recognized credentials, and started a full-time job!

Now, with his confidence soaring, Corell has set his sights on the military—a goal once unimaginable but now within reach. His journey is a testament to resilience, determination, and the life-changing power of opportunity.



SYDERIA'S JOURNEY

From the start, Syderia knew what she wanted: an associate degree in accounting and a career she could be proud of. She managed to take classes at Durham Tech while also working as a bus driver at Chapel Hill Transit. However to graduate, a work-based learning credit was required and a NextGen work experience (WEX) would fulfill that requirement.

She decided to stop driving and participate in a WEX with JDIT Business Solutions, facilitated by NextGen, where she could gain experience more relevant to her career goals. Syderia embraced other growth opportunities NextGen offered as well, spending a week in Raleigh with the Governor's Page Program.

She also shared her story at a Future Business Leaders of American conference, and inspired other young adults as a panelist at NextGen's Career Exploration Day.

We're happy to report that Syderia graduated from Durham Tech with an Associate Degree in Accounting and Finance. Her journey reflects the power of determination and the way NextGen helps young adults turn goals into reality.





CAPITAL AREA BUSINESS **ENGAGEMENT**

Businesses: Our Primary Customer and Biggest Priority.

Business Engagement works at the intersection of workforce and economic development, providing both immediate and long-term solutions to help drive businesses sustainability. CAWD's focus on small business support and entrepreneurship reinforces our commitment to building a strong business environment to drive economic prosperity.

From guiding entrepreneurs through multiple growth stages to assisting employers having to layoff or close, the team delivers hands-on support and tailored resources. Their efforts extend beyond recruitment. They help businesses plan strategically, connect them to qualified talent, and provide access programs that turn challenges into opportunities.

Every hiring event, partnership, and consultation reflects Capital Area's deep commitment to helping businesses succeed.



Measuring Business Reach: Evaluating Our Market Footprint



This program year we started measuring business penetration by county. Penetration rates tells us how many employers in our region know about, and use, workforce services like recruitment support, training programs, or post jobs through the career centers. **There is no general standard for penetration rates, however 10% is the regional goal for North Carolina’s workforce boards.** These are results for PY 2024/25. With our regional footprint now expanded, our commitment to strong business engagement in all counties remains unchanged.

	# Served	Total Businesses	% Served
Chatham	183	2,220	8.24%
Johnston	566	5,222	10.84%
Lee	294	1,902	15.46%
Orange	328	5,587	5.87%
Wake	3,243	52,163	6.22%
CAWD Region	4,614	67,095	6.88%

Economic Development

Every new company or business expansion begins with people who have the right skills to drive it forward. That’s why workforce development and economic development go hand in hand. When businesses have access to talent, communities grow, and prosperity follows.

To ensure that businesses can access work-ready talent, CAWD did the following to support our economic development development partners:

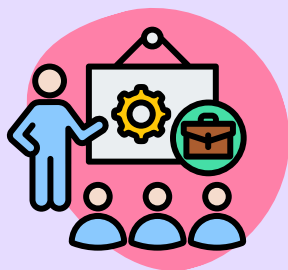
- ◆ **Issued 5 Letters of Support** to help economic development partners recruit businesses
- ◆ Supported efforts to create **968 New Jobs** with an **Average Compensation of \$117,956**

Projects were for high-value industries – Staffing and Talent Solutions, Advanced Manufacturing, plus Semiconductor and related device manufacturing.

Help When Business and Workers Need It Most

CAWD’s Rapid Response team act quickly to provide resources and support when businesses face downsizing or closure. **This year, we received 12 WARN notices plus 5 other referrals to provide assistance to 966 Impacted workers.**

This included a Rapid Response and Resource Fair in partnership with the Town of Chapel Hill to assist 20 workers, and businesses, impacted by Tropical Storm Chantal. In addition, a Rapid Response was held for 19 downsized workers of NC Office of Recovery and Resiliency.



Work-Based Learning: Investing in People and Progress

Work-based learning (WBL) is a vital strategy for employee development, business innovation, and workforce resilience. By blending real-world experience with structured learning, employees build practical skills and stay adaptable in a changing job market. **WBL is available to businesses of all sizes, and we're especially grateful for new funding that supports small businesses.**

A grant from Wake County supports businesses with fewer than 50 employees, while state funds from NC Commerce's Division of Workforce Solutions assists those with fewer than 25 employees. Both of these business categories are key drivers of local job creation and economic growth.

With these resources and WIOA funding, several businesses were able to launch WBL programs!

Catalyst 20/20 Incumbent Worker Training Grants

\$41,717

Awarded to businesses
with <50 employees

\$83,000

Awarded to businesses
with <25 employees

\$10,000

Awarded through
WIOA

87

Employees Trained



Sherrod Holloway, Owner
The Bar-Ber Shop

“That [Catalyst grant was] the game changer for me, I'm not going to lie. Just in so many ways, it has taken the burden off of the business...and allowed us to invest back into what's really important, which is the folks you work with. And man...we appreciate Capital Area Workforce Development, man, we really appreciate that program.”

On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Work Experience (WEX)

\$380,028

Invested in Training

52

Participant Agreements
Executed

37

Unique Employers

Pathway to Entrepreneurship

Pathway to Entrepreneurship (PTE) is helping Wake County residents turn ideas into thriving businesses.

Thanks to more than \$1.3 million in county support, CAWD has built a comprehensive model that offers training, mentorship, mini-grants and access to valuable resources to reduce barriers to full profitability, especially for entrepreneurs with low resources.

Program demand made hiring an additional small business advisor essential. We also implemented a mini-grants program to help participants mitigate startup costs, and partnered with Brasco Marketing to provide essential marketing guidance.

PTE has been so successful that funding is included in Wake County's 2025–26 budget!

See how far the program has come below!



PY 2022-23

Program planning and development



PY 2023-24

- Assisted 113 participants
- Awarded 20 minigrants totalling \$10,000
- Held 110 marketing sessions for 34 participants



PY 2024-25

- Hired a small business advisor
- Assisted 369 participants
- Awarded 190 grants totalling \$95,000
- Held 397 marketing sessions for 165 owners





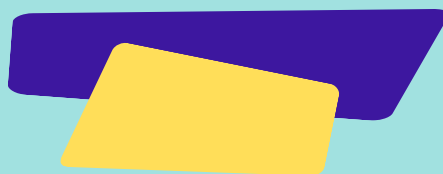
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Specific. Actionable. Measureable. Visionary.

Innovation doesn't happen by accident. It takes a team that is focused, forward-thinking, and unafraid to do things differently. CAWD's strategic initiatives are implemented to strengthen the organization's long-term impact. We look beyond the day-to-day to identify emerging workforce needs and trends, design pilot programs, and pursue partnerships to help carry out the vision.

Projects are always data-driven and resources are aligned where they can make the greatest difference. From developing new pipelines for high-growth industries to helping those with low resources, the work focuses on continuous improvement across various programs.

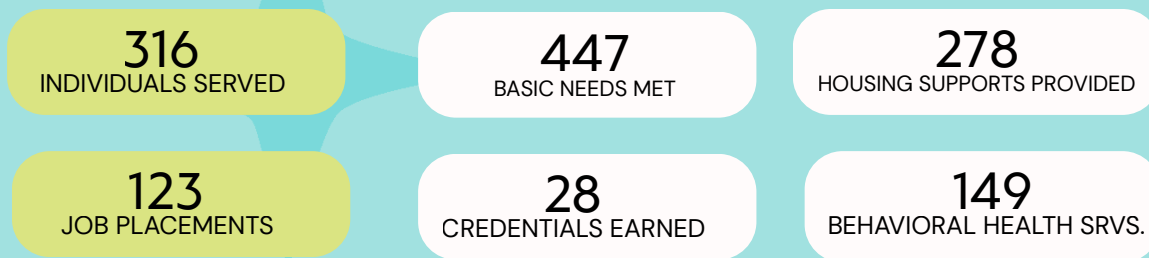
Strategic initiatives keep CAWD positioned at the forefront of workforce innovation, ensuring our systems evolve with the changing economy and continue to deliver opportunity for businesses and residents alike.





The Wake Local Reentry Council (WLRC) helps justice-involved individuals transition back into the community. As the intermediary, CAWD provides leadership and administrative oversight. By coordinating services for housing, employment, behavioral health, and basic needs, WLRC empowers participants to achieve stability, restore dignity, and reduce recidivism.

2025 PROGRAM IMPACTS

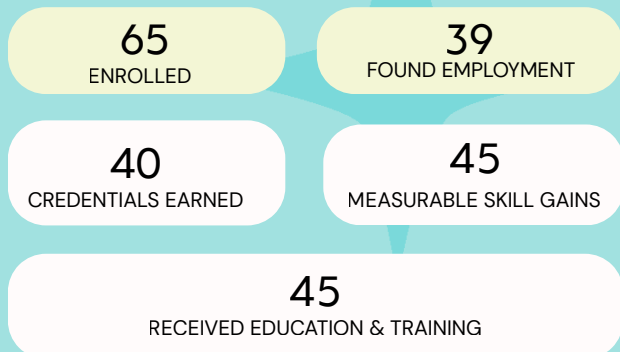


The recidivism rate for Wake LRC clients is 10.1%, well below Wake County’s estimate of 24% and the statewide rate of 38–50%. Thanks to a dedicated staff and partners, Wake LRC provides person-centered solutions that support true reintegration, growth, and reentry success.

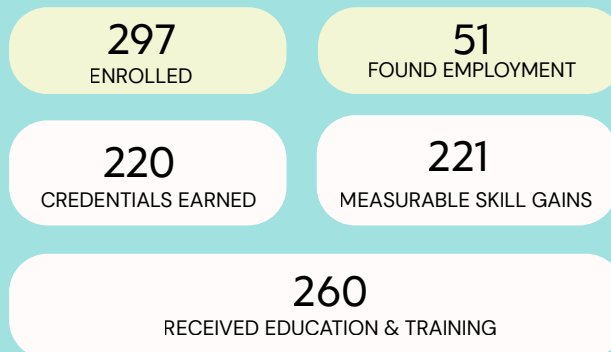


NC PROWD was Capital Area’s first reentry initiative to specifically help individuals leaving federal incarceration. This is a regional project done in partnership with Durham and Kerr–Tar Workforce Development Boards to serve individuals leaving the correctional facility in Butner and returning to Chatham, Durham, Franklin, Granville, Johnston, Lee, Orange, Person, Vance, Warren, and Wake counties.

THOSE RETURNING TO CAPITAL AREA



REGION-WIDE PROJECT TOTALS



Reentry Grants

When it comes to reentry services, no one organization can address all the needs of those looking for assistance. Capital Area's Wake Partners grants always support impactful community-based solutions. In order to help more men and women exiting incarceration, we started providing small grants of up to \$25,000 to organizations that service justice-involved citizens of all ages.

With decades of experience, these organizations play a pivotal role in helping individuals transition back into their families, workplace, and communities. Grant awards started in January 2022 and are awarded bi-annually.

Below are the grantees from the last two funding cycles and total outcomes since program inception.

Current Awardees

Community Success Initiative	\$ 25,000
Step Up Ministry	19,215
Fellowship Home of Raleigh	5,000
Legal Aid of NC	25,000
Fathers Forever	50,000
The Great Raleigh Cleanup	<u>23,250</u>
	\$272,084.57

WAKE PARTNERS REENTRY	
Grants Awarded	21
Individuals Served	1,410
Education & Training Enrollees	416
Credentials Earned	32
Received Supportive Services	276
Entered Employment	987



Building Hope

Skilled Trades are among the most lucrative and in-demand occupations. In the construction industry, the workforce consists mostly of men. The goal of Building Hope was to build a 9-week training program to introduce others to these occupations and put them on a career path to success.

Thanks to funding from the NCWorks Commission Local Innovation Fund, CAWD established a new partnership with Hope Renovations and pulled in long-time education partner Wake Tech to provide the education and training components of the program.

Building Hope ran from July 2023 – June 2025 and all program goals were met!



PROGRAM GOALS

% to Goal

Graduate 40 Participants

100%

30 Participants Complete 4-week internship

133%

20 Complete Hope's Career Dev. Program

200%

40 Report Increased Personal Confidence

95%

Recruit 5 Employers for WBL and/or employment

400%



Healthcare Collaborative



The Healthcare Workforce Collaborative is a regional sector partnership between Capital Area, community colleges, training providers, employers, and industry associations. The group is focused on impacting the healthcare workforce through recruitment, retention, training, and employment.

Members include:

- NC Area Health Education Center (AHEC)
- Wake AHEC
- NC Board of Nursing
- NC Nurses Association
- NC Healthcare Facilities Association
- Wake Technical Community College
- Durham Technical Community College
- Johnston Community College
- Central Carolina Community College
- Wake Med
- Duke Health
- UNC Health Johnston
- Transitional LifeCare
- Well Care Health

To address the growing demand for nurses, the following strategies have been implemented:

- ✦ **Recruiting individuals with long-term nursing aspirations into CNA programs**
- ✦ **Providing financial support to current nursing students at risk of dropping out of a program**
- ✦ **Promoting the AHEC's RN Refresher Program to retain experienced nurses**

The pilot program is 67% through the reporting period and is making solid progress towards program goals.

HEALTHCARE COLLABORATIVE OUTCOMES				
Program Goal	Recruitment Goal	Referrals	Enrolled	% to Goal
Recruit retired RNs	15	2	1	0.07%
Recruit direct care workers into CNA prog.	20	90	28	140%
Retain current nursing students (CNA,LPN,RN)	30	56	18	60

CAWD BOARD MEMBERS

Brian Holland, Chair
General Counsel
Sectigo, Inc.

Melissa Short, Vice Chair
VP Human Resources
Transitions LifeCare

Tom White, Secretary
Director
Economic Development Partnership
NC State University

Kenneth Angeli
Center Manager
NC Division of Workforce
Solutions

Rob Axford
Business Manager
IBEW Local 553

Mark Bertoncino
Director of Customer Service
Buhler Inc

Doug Blizzard
Chief Solutions Officer
Catapult

Rodney Carson
Principal Customer Success
Manager
SAS

Michael Haley
Executive Director
Wake County Economic
Development

Sue Holaday
Chief HR Officer
Summit Design & Engineering

Courtney Holcomb
Human Resources Officer
Bharat Forge

Jerilyn Iacovetto
Managing Director – Strategy
& Performance Core
Ankura Consulting Group

Nicole Jarvis-Miller
Senior HR Consultant
Mass General Brigham

Paul Kane
Executive Vice President/CEO
Home Builders Associations
of Raleigh-Wake County

Tamika Walker Kelly
President
North Carolina Association
of Educators

Vic McCormick
Chief Workforce Continuing
Education Officer
Johnston Community College

Cameron McNeill
Strategy & Operations Lead
Guild

Shawnice Meador
President & Executive
Director
Public Ed Works

Kristina Gates Nix
Chief HR Officer
UNC Medical
Center/Chatham Hospital

Jerry Pedley
President & Owner
Mertek Solutions

Dreama Pilson
HR Manager
CTI Systems

Danielle Sardo
Human Resources/ PO & T
Biogen

Jill Straight
Assistant Director of
Volunteers and Partnerships
Meals On Wheels

Jordan Thomas
Chief of Rehabilitation
Field Services
NC Dept. of HHS
Vocational Rehabilitation

Glenda Underwood
Talent Acquisition Partner
Lowe's Home Improvement

Ross Yeager
Director
Wake County Northern
Regional Center



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Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

