

# CareerSource Okaloosa Walton EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY CONSORTIUM QUARTERLY REPORT

## A. GENERAL INFORMATION

**Report quarter:** October 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024

**Date of meeting:** 11/14/2024

**Report prepared by:** Kelly Jordan

**Local workforce development board contact:** Kelly Jordan **Date:** 11/14/24

## B. ATTENDANCE

Name	Organization	Industry or Education Organization	Contact Information
Donna Daniels	Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University	Education	<a href="mailto:Danied15@erau.edu">Danied15@erau.edu</a>
Nicole McDonald (Virtual)	University of West Florida	Education	<a href="mailto:nmcdonald@uwf.edu">nmcdonald@uwf.edu</a>
Jon Williams	Okaloosa Technical College	Education	<a href="mailto:WilliamsJ2@Okaloosaschools.com">WilliamsJ2@Okaloosaschools.com</a>
Jesse Spaid (Virtual)	Emerald Coast Technical College	Education	<a href="mailto:Jesse.spaid@walton.k12.fl.us">Jesse.spaid@walton.k12.fl.us</a>
Al Smith	HR Florida	Industry	<a href="mailto:Alonzos3206@gmail.com">Alonzos3206@gmail.com</a>
Glenn Boschen	Micro Systems, Inc	Industry	<a href="mailto:Glenn.Boschen@kratosdefense.com">Glenn.Boschen@kratosdefense.com</a>
Tarey Franxman	City of Fort Walton Beach	Industry	<a href="mailto:tfranxman@fwb.org">tfranxman@fwb.org</a>

Name	Organization	Industry or Education	Contact Information
Bonnie Barlow	Bridgeway Center	Industry	<a href="mailto:BRushton@bridgeway.org">BRushton@bridgeway.org</a>
Dave Underwood	Walton County Economic Development Alliance	Economic Development	<a href="mailto:underwoodcol@outlook.com">underwoodcol@outlook.com</a>
Cole Randall	One Okaloosa	Economic Development	<a href="mailto:cole@oneokaloosa.org">cole@oneokaloosa.org</a>
Dennis Braun	Northwest Florida State College	Education	<a href="mailto:braund@nwfsc.edu">braund@nwfsc.edu</a>
Jeff Felice	Applied Technology Academy	Education	<a href="mailto:jeff.f@appliedtechac.com">jeff.f@appliedtechac.com</a>
<b>Guests Present</b>			
Jimmy Heckman	FloridaCommerce	Presenter	<a href="mailto:James.Heckman@commerce.fl.gov">James.Heckman@commerce.fl.gov</a>
Mary Taylor	FloridaCommerce	Presenter	
Derek Mattingly	City of Fort Walton Beach	Industry	
Tiffany Bishop	Ascension	Industry	
<b>Staff Present</b>			
Kelly Jordan	CareerSource Okaloosa Walton	Workforce	<a href="mailto:kjordan@careersourceow.com">kjordan@careersourceow.com</a>
Michele Burns	CareerSource Okaloosa Walton	Workforce	<a href="mailto:mburns@careersourceow.com">mburns@careersourceow.com</a>

Brad Balfanz	CareerSource Okaloosa Walton	Workforce	<a href="mailto:bbalfanz@careersourceow.com">bbalfanz@careersourceow.com</a>
Will Miles	CareerSource Okaloosa Walton	Workforce	<a href="mailto:wmiles@careersourceow.com">wmiles@careersourceow.com</a>
Emmy Epperson	CareerSource Okaloosa Walton	Workforce	<a href="mailto:eepperson@careersourceow.com">eepperson@careersourceow.com</a>

## B. SUMMARY REPORT

The meeting began with Kelly Jordan, the Chief Operating Officer at CareerSource Okaloosa Walton, welcoming members and introducing Glenn Boschen as the new chair of the Education and Industry Consortium. Kelly emphasized the importance of the labor market information presentation by the Bureau Chief of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Jimmy Heckman, and his colleague Mary Taylor, who traveled from Tallahassee to share insights crucial for the local community. The session aimed to provide valuable data and encourage collaboration among the Consortium members.

During the meeting, Jimmy Heckman discussed the current unemployment rate in the Okaloosa-Walton region, which is at 3.2%, slightly lower than both state and national averages. He noted a recent decline in labor force growth, primarily due to demographic changes, including an increase in retirements. Additionally, he highlighted the rapid growth of the professional business services sector, which has nearly doubled in job numbers over the past decade, alongside a significant increase in the healthcare and social assistance sectors. The construction sector was also noted as the third fastest-growing area, while manufacturing remains a focus for local economic development despite its smaller job market.

Jimmy provided an overview of the local labor market, indicating over 6,000 online job advertisements, reflecting a strong labor demand. Although job openings have decreased since the pandemic peak, they still exceed pre-pandemic levels. He pointed out that many of the largest job categories

require no educational qualifications or only a high school diploma. At the same time, there is a notable demand for bachelor's degrees and non-degree post-secondary credentials, with an expected 12,000 openings in the next eight years. This led to a discussion on workforce development, particularly regarding aligning graduating students' interests with job market demands.

The meeting also addressed recruitment challenges in various sectors, especially healthcare and public safety, where low wages and long commutes hinder filling positions. Bonnie Barlow from Bridgeway highlighted difficulties in recruiting nurses for addiction and psychiatric care due to affordability issues. Donna Daniels from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University discussed the demand for engineering degrees and the importance of promoting educational opportunities for military veterans and civilians. Jesse Spaid provided updates on school initiatives, including the introduction of a new LPN program and plans for a new health science building, emphasizing the importance of industry feedback and the success of a recent career fair that connected students with job opportunities.