

APRIL 2015

REGIONAL WORKFORCE STUDY

PREPARED FOR THE SRS COMMUNITY REUSE ORGANIZATION



AIKEN • ALLENDALE • BARNWELL • COLUMBIA • RICHMOND

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the next five years, the region is projected to have more than 37,000 job openings. Filling those openings will require the regional talent pipeline to be well-aligned with high-demand jobs and will require recruiting key talent from outside of the region. In an effort to position the region to do this, the Savannah River Site Community Reuse Organization (SRSCRO) assembled an internal task force to look at strategies the region could implement. The intent of the project was to support the region's economic growth and competitiveness. It was also to provide valuable tools for regional educational institutions and economic developers to use in their work aligning industry and education, attracting talent, and recruiting businesses to the region.

APPROACH

The SRSCRO hired TIP Strategies, an economic and workforce development strategy consultancy, to assist in conducting a detailed labor study and developing a regional workforce strategy with a deep dive into four of the region's key economic drivers—nuclear, manufacturing, cybersecurity/IT, and healthcare.

Over the course of the last six months, we have visited with stakeholders in each of the five counties that compose the SRSCRO Region—Aiken, Allendale, Barnwell, Columbia, and Richmond. We have gathered input through one-on-one interviews, employer and educator roundtable discussions, and an employer survey. We have conducted a comprehensive analysis of the region's laborforce, factors driving demand, and an examination of the alignment between educational output and industry requirements. For each of the four industries, we have developed detailed profiles that include staffing patterns, regional labor supply, job posting analytics, relevant educational output, and regional resources.

KEY FINDINGS AND CHALLENGES

An analysis of the SRSCRO Region's commuting patterns shows that more than 50,000 workers commute into the five-county region for work each day. The surrounding counties of McDuffie, Burke, Edgefield, and Lexington are the primary sources of these workers. For this reason, we defined the SRSCRO laborshed to include Aiken, Allendale, Barnwell, Columbia, and Richmond Counties as well as McDuffie, Burke, Edgefield, and Lexington. **This nine-county region has a civilian workforce of over 400,000.**

The analysis of commuting and migration patterns revealed how **highly mobile** the region's labor force is. Over 49,000 workers (40 percent) in the SRSCRO Region, who live and work within the five counties, commute across county lines each day for work. In addition, more than 4,000 households, on average, move from one county to another within the region.

As mentioned above, the region is projected to have more than 37,000 job openings between 2014 and 2019. Approximately **80 percent of these openings are replacement jobs**. Replacement jobs are those openings that occur due to turnover, including attrition and retirement. Only 7,600 openings of those projected between 2014 and 2019 are new jobs in the region. Many occupations in the region have a large percentage of workers that are

age 55 and older, and in some occupations, more than 10 percent of the workers are estimated to already be 65. **The looming wave of retiring workers poses a significant challenge for regional employers.**

The 15 regional higher education institutions graduate about 7,300 students annually. The most popular fields of study chosen by students are nursing, liberal arts, and business administration. While the popularity of nursing matches with regional demand in health science, the other highest demand career clusters that require post-secondary training are education, manufacturing, and architecture/construction. In other words, **students in the region are not choosing education programs that match the high demand occupations.**

In addition, employers reported difficulty finding low skill and entry level talent with the **basic skills**, soft and hard, that they need to be successful in the workplace. For high-skill positions, employers find that **recruiting talent from other areas of the country is difficult.**

THE RESPONSE

Addressing these challenges will require a collaborative, regional effort. It will also require a great deal of coordination to ensure that information is shared and connections are made consistently across the region. The result of these efforts should yield a more demand-driven workforce system that is responsive to the needs of both existing and future employers in the region.

The strategic plan that follows defines the key roles that must be filled—collect, convene, connect, inform, and market. A summary of the plan is featured in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1. SUMMARY OF THE SRSCRO REGION'S WORKFORCE STRATEGY

VISION: *The SRSCRO Region is an economically competitive region where existing and new business can flourish.*

GOAL: *To create a more demand-driven workforce system that supports the recruitment, retention, and development of talent.*

FRAMEWORK & PRIORITY PROJECTS:

- 1. COLLECT.** Serve as the regional clearinghouse of information and resources to support the regional workforce system.
PRIORITY PROJECTS: Database of education and training resources
- 2. CONVENE.** Be a regional convener around workforce topics.
PRIORITY PROJECTS: Workforce Summit
- 3. CONNECT.** Create networks that partners can leverage to build a more responsive workforce system.
PRIORITY PROJECTS: Employer engagement, network of alumni networks
- 4. INFORM.** Coordinate activities to raise awareness of opportunities in the region and to change perceptions.
PRIORITY PROJECTS: Expand STEM Career Connections, Manufacturing Day
- 5. MARKET.** Develop an external marketing campaign to assist regional employers in attracting talent.
PRIORITY PROJECTS: Shared marketing collateral, digital ambassadors

IMPLEMENTATION

While the SRSCRO and their task force led the planning efforts that resulted in the strategy outlined here, the implementation of these strategies requires region-wide involvement. Education, industry, workforce development, and economic development partners must come together to collaborate and move these strategic initiatives forward. Below, we have made recommendations of which group of partners could take the lead on implementing each strategy. We have also suggested a time frame for initiating the projects. The SRSCRO will lead this effort by evaluating their role and responsibilities over the next several months. A plan of action will be developed with the hopes that other partners will roll up their sleeves and help get these regional strategies moving forward.

FIGURE 2. IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

		LEAD PARTNER	TIMEFRAME					On-Going
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	
1.0	COLLECT: Serve as a regional clearinghouse of information and resources to support the regional workforce system.							
1.1.	Develop and maintain an inventory of regional training and education resources, including state programs, K-12, post-secondary, workforce development, apprenticeship, and non-profits.	SRSCRO	■					
1.2.	Develop and maintain a catalog of work-based learning opportunities and employer volunteers that educators can tap into as mechanisms for engaging students, counselors, and parents in hands-on industry experience.	Education Partners	■					
1.3.	Assemble and maintain a regional database of area employers to be a resource for education providers.	Economic Development Partners	■					
1.4.	Conduct a periodic survey of employers’ needs to aggregate results and report back to education and training providers.	SRSCRO			■			
2.0	CONVENE: Be a regional convener around workforce topics.							
2.1.	Organize an annual workforce summit.	SRSCRO	■					
2.2.	Host roundtables for educators and for employers to provide an ongoing forum for sharing information on resources and programs, employers’ needs and challenges, and best practices.	Education Partners	■					
2.3.	For any widespread issues, assemble a task force to identify solutions and manage the implementation.	SRSCRO + Partners		■				

FIGURE 2. IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (continued)

	LEAD PARTNER	TIMEFRAME					
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	On-Going
3.0	CONNECT: Create networks that partners can leverage to build a more responsive workforce system.						
3.1.	SRSCRO + Partners						■
3.2.	SRSCRO + Partners	■					
3.3.	Economic Development Partners						■
3.4.	SRSCRO	■					
3.5.	Economic Development Partners		■				
4.0	INFORM: Coordinate activities to raise awareness of opportunities in the region and to change perceptions.						
4.1.	SRSCRO	■					
4.2.	SRSCRO		■				
4.3.	Economic Development Partners			■			
4.4.	Education Partners		■				
4.5.	Education Partners			■			

FIGURE 2. IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX (continued)

	LEAD PARTNER	TIMEFRAME						
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	On-Going	
5.0	MARKET: Develop an external marketing campaign to assist regional employers in attracting talent.							
5.1.	Create and distribute talking points and marketing collateral to regional HR professionals to use for recruiting purposes.	SRSCRO + Partners	■					
5.2.	Create a campaign that communicates the region’s job opportunities and highlights its assets/advantages to alumni.	Economic Development Partners		■				
5.3.	Organize a group of digital ambassadors that promote the region as a great place for career opportunities and a great place to live.	SRSCRO + Partners		■				
5.4.	Organize groups of regional employers to jointly attend select career fairs and other recruitment events at targeted higher education institutions.	Economic Development Partners			■			

To view the full plan, visit:
www.srscro.org/community-issues/

ABOUT US

The SRS Community Reuse Organization (SRSCRO) is a 501(c)(3) private non-profit organization charged with developing and implementing a comprehensive strategy to diversify the economy of a five-county region, the SRSCRO Region of Georgia and South Carolina. The SRSCRO counties include Aiken, Allendale, and Barnwell in South Carolina and Richmond (Augusta) and Columbia counties in Georgia.

The SRSCRO is governed by a 22-member Board of Directors appointed by local governments, chambers of commerce, and members of the South Carolina and Georgia Congressional Delegations. SRSCRO’s overall objective is to create an environment conducive to technology-based startups, business expansions, and to attracting new ventures to the region.

The SRSCRO is composed of business, government, and academic leaders from Georgia and South Carolina. Initially, its mission was to develop and implement a regional economic development plan utilizing technology-based facilities at the Savannah River Site. Today, the SRSCRO remains focused on diversifying the region’s economy by supporting new business ventures that create new jobs in the region.



COMMUNITY REUSE ORGANIZATION

two states, one future