Foundational Skills and Digital Literacy

Final Report: Findings and Recommendations

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Deloitte.

CareerSource.
FLORIDA

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I.   Executive Summary

In alignment with ongoing work under Florida's Workforce System Transformational Plan and Florida's Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Act, passed in 2021, **CareerSource Florida (CSF)** seeks to accelerate employment opportunities that build economic prosperity for Floridians through a more integrated, customer-focused and accountable workforce system. In January 2025, CSF launched an initiative to conduct a **statewide assessment** of the existing landscape and of current opportunities to **improve the delivery of foundational employability skills and digital literacy training**, with an immediate goal of receiving recommendations and findings aimed at addressing gaps in the areas of foundational employability skills and digital literacy resources.

This report provides an **overview of the efforts performed under this assessment**, to include key survey responses, focus group results, research and data analysis efforts on in-demand skills and competencies possessed by the workforce, current training programs, and approaches to outreach and engagement across the CSF network and within comparative select peer states. Analysis results for digital literacy were based on six key areas of digital literacy skills used to effectively categorize the competencies related to Computer Operations; Software, Internet and social media; Automation and AI; Information Technology; and Technological Equipment. Analysis results for foundational employability skills were based on six key areas to categories soft skills competencies related to Applied Academic Knowledge; Personal Qualities and Interpersonal Skills; Reliability, Organizing, and Time Management; Communication; Critical and Creative Thinking; and Using Tools and Technology.

Regarding digital literacy, the skills analysis showed that **Computer Operations and Using Software ranked highest** in the top, in-demand skill groups. The most significant gap observed in workforce skills gaps was in **Reporting and Metrics, where demand exceeded supply by 11.4%.** Regarding foundational employability, 83% of the job listings mentioned skills related **to personal qualities and interpersonal skills**. Determining exact skill gaps for foundational employability proved challenging due to the nature of these skills, given that employers may list the skills needed for the job, but **soft skills were not always explicitly listed in resumes**.

Although training offerings and content for digital literacy and foundational employability skills vary by local workforce development board (LWDB) area, feedback indicated that **training is most effective when courses and workshops are facilitated in-person.** Blended approaches are sometimes used but are not always a possibility due to resources or accessibility barriers (e.g., transportation, broadband access, childcare). LWDBs use **diverse methods of outreach** to engage the workforce (e.g., flyers, job boards, social media) and operate individual websites to target job seekers and employers in their area. The effectiveness of each engagement method is unclear, as are the employment outcomes in connection with training completions, demonstrating the **importance of improved data tracking on program outcomes** to make more data-driven decisions on training offerings.

Some of these challenges can be addressed by **standardizing the approach to training delivery** to both improve the user experience and access while closing curriculum gaps by offering training more aligned to employer needs. Having a comprehensive **state-wide reporting and data analytics tool**, in alignment with more **targeted and modernized outreach efforts** and **streamlined social media branding**, will benefit the CSF network by tracking, reporting, and highlighting program outcomes measures based on training completions and engagement methods to support refinement of training offerings over time in comparison to employment outcomes. Enhancing approaches to **collaborative partnerships that align to specific solutions needed to decrease training barriers** for special populations can improve training utilization and employability; it is crucial to maintain strong communication and support of LWDB efforts in alignment with their efforts to engage and understand local community needs.
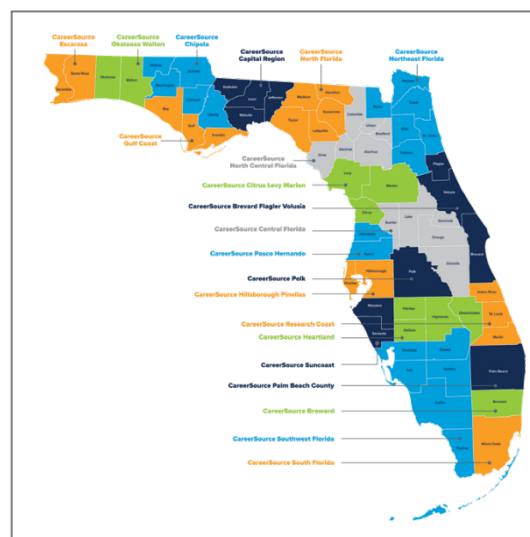
II. Introduction and Context

Research and surveys conducted by various business associations indicate that **workforce issues are the number one challenge businesses face nationally** and within most states. Workforce development has renewed focus at the state level as policymakers work to identify and execute strategies to expand the labor force, increase access to good jobs, and provide high-quality training and education opportunities for more students and workers amid a changing labor market and demand in certain critical sectors.[1] Strong and effective workforce development efforts are vital to keeping the nation strong and providing individuals with the means and opportunity to achieve sustainable employment.

Within Florida, workforce development efforts are championed by **CareerSource Florida (CSF),** the Governor's designated organization responsible for workforce policy and investment. In alignment with

Figure 1: Current LWDB Map of Florida

ongoing work under Florida's Workforce System Transformational Plan and Florida's Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Act, passed in 2021, CSF seeks to accelerate employment opportunities that build economic prosperity for Floridians through a more integrated, customer-focused and accountable workforce system. The CSF network includes **REACH Act state partners**, including the **Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce)**, 21 Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), and over 100 career centers, providing a range of career management and training services to connect jobseekers with businesses and training programs.[2]

CSF serves approximately **45% of Florida businesses**, with 59% reporting they are somewhat or very likely to use CSF network services in their next recruitment search.[3] In FY23-24, CSF helped over 63,000 job seekers achieve gainful employment in collaboration with nearly 76,000 businesses across healthcare, manufacturing, construction, administration, and professional services.[4] The state is currently undergoing a workforce system integration effort led by FloridaCommerce[5], which further underscores CSF's commitment to growth, innovation, and improved economic prosperity for workers and businesses alike.

Scope and Project Approach

In January 2025, CSF launched an initiative to conduct a **statewide assessment** of the existing landscape and of current opportunities to **improve the delivery of foundational employability skills and digital literacy training**, with an immediate goal of receiving recommendations and findings aimed at addressing gaps in the areas of foundational employability skills and digital literacy resources. CSF engaged an external consulting firm to execute this assessment by conducting a series of research and data analysis efforts across Florida's workforce system to determine the in-demand skills needed by employers and the occupations they are associated with; gaps in foundational skills and digital literacy skills experienced across Florida's workforce system and barriers to training and employability; and the availability, accessibility, and efficacy of current training programs to meet in-demand skill needs and close workforce skill gaps.

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[1] National Governors Association, "Workforce Development in 2024 State of the State Addresses," March 21, 2024

[2] https://careersourceflorida.com/about-us

[3] https://careersourceflorida.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2022-23-WIOA-Annual-Performance-Report.pdf

[4] https://careersourceflorida.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/csf-annual-report-2023-2024.pdf

[5] ¹https://www.floridajobs.org/office-directory/division-of-workforce-services/initiatives/workforce-system-integration

The 12-week assessment was conducted through three core project elements - **Project Management**, **Skills Assessment,** and **Findings and Recommendation*s*** – with the intent to generate a series of periodic reports to highlight key analysis and evaluation results and to culminate in a final report of findings and recommendations delivered to CSF.

Project Management enabled the team to hit the ground running by conducting a kickoff meeting to align with CSF leaders on the project goals, activities, milestones, timelines, and key data elements. Weekly project management status meetings and reports kept the team on track for delivery and provided CSF leadership with the opportunity to give input on activities and deliverables.
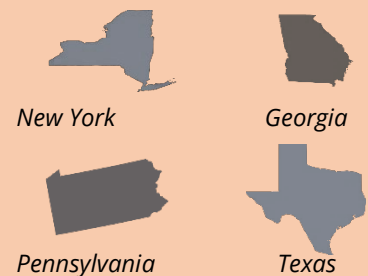
Skills Assessments focused on identifying the digital literacy and foundational employability skills needed across Florida's key employment sectors and how those skills could be improved through current workforce development programming across the CSF networks. The assessments used a multi-pronged approach to examine the workforce landscape and to evaluate the efficacy of current training programs:

- **Skills List Validation:** Numerous frameworks, studies, and models from the state, the consulting firm, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), and other best practices were reviewed to gain a shared understanding of the definition and components of both foundational employability skills and digital literacy skills. A **common framework of skills** was established at the beginning of the initiative as a reference point for data analysis. These definitions and the list of skills can be found on pg. 7 for Digital Literacy and pg. 15 for Foundational Employability.

- **Research and Data Analysis Efforts:** Numerous data collection and research activities were conducted on in-demand skills, workforce skill supply and gaps, and training program delivery related to digital literacy and foundational employability. This included **open-source research** on Florida workforce system state partners including FloridaCommerce (FL Commerce), the Florida Department of Education (DOE), and the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), a review of the **21 LWDBs websites** and social media channels, **training curriculum data** from state-wide systems and LWDBs, and collection and review of current **workforce-related policies** (e.g., WIOA). Efforts also included targeted research to examine the workforce development practices in **peer states** to understand where innovation exists in training delivery and with approaches to engagement and outreach. This comparative analysis was beneficial in understanding how other states address digital literacy and foundational employability skills, providing a **benchmark for Florida**

> **Peer State Comparison**
>
> The project team examined practices for outreach, engagement and training in four peer states like Florida in size, geography, and growing labor markets:
>
> *New York*
>
> *Georgia*
>
> *Pennsylvania*
>
> *Texas*

to develop effective strategies (see appendix pg. 43 for peer comparison indicators). Lastly, the research activities included **predictive analytics assets and proprietary datasets** to provide deep insights on Florida's skills gaps, identifying supply and demand for digital literacy skills and employability.

- **Survey:** To supplement research and data analysis, a survey was distributed and 81 responses[6] were received over a 25-day period from industry employers (22) and non-employers (59) from LWDBs, state leaders, REACH Act partners, and education providers across the state. Employer responses represented **10 different industries** and representation from 15 of the 21 LWDBs. The survey aimed to collect information and sentiments on numerous topics, such as skills in-demand, perceived skill gaps, how

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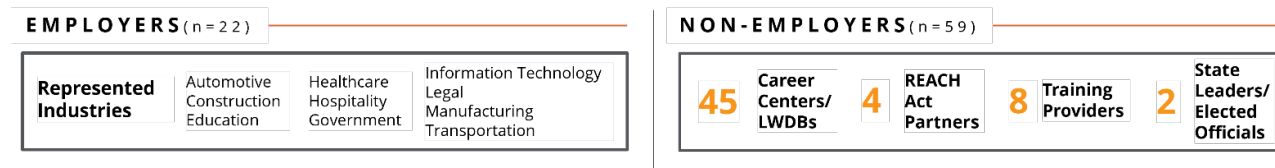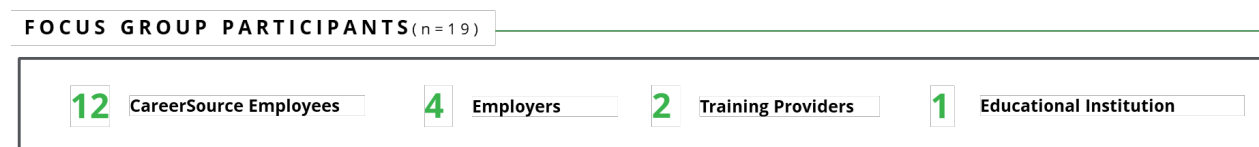[6] Survey was sent to 285 employers and non-employers invited to partake in the survey. Number completed includes 7 surveys by non-employers that were near-complete but not submitted. Sample size of responses for non-employers may fluctuate between 52 and 59.

skills are assessed, barriers to training, and partnership across the network to improve access to training. A breakdown of the survey respondents is on pg. 40 in the Appendix.

E M P L O Y E R S (n=22)

Represented Industries	Automotive Construction Education	Healthcare Hospitality Government	Information Technology Legal Manufacturing Transportation

N O N - E M P L O Y E R S (n=59)

45	Career Centers/ LWDBs	4	REACH Act Partners	8	Training Providers	2	State Leaders/ Elected Officials

- **Focus Groups**: The survey was accompanied by small focus groups to generate additional insights from survey responses and to provide context on current workforce skill needs, skill development program efficacy and outcomes, and engagement with training providers and workforce development agencies. The focus group data included 19 participants – either directly invited to participate or self-identified from the survey to opt-in to a focus group – from LWDBs, employers, and training providers. Questions varied based on participants but generally focused on both foundational employability and digital literacy skills, training needs, curriculum and data, and outreach and partnerships between employers and training providers.

F O C U S G R O U P P A R T I C I P A N T S (n=19)

12	CareerSource Employees	4	Employers	2	Training Providers	1	Educational Institution

Findings and Recommendations brought together a range of insights and data-driven evidence from the preliminary Digital Literacy and Foundational Employability assessments reports to provide robust, solution-oriented **recommendations for CSF to consider for implementation**. Recommendations covered the geographies and occupations where skill gaps exist, the key skills and development programs needed to close gaps, and potential opportunities to improve training programs to share with key partners and supporters across the state.

The remainder of this report positions the assessment's **key findings** – first on digital literacy, followed by foundational employability – and includes **geographic heat maps** to demonstrate greatest needs against scarcest resources. Insights are also provided on analysis performed **on partnerships, engagement and outreach**, both for Florida and the four peer states. The report concludes with a summary of **improvements to consider for implementation** to close skills gaps and improve training delivery related to foundational employability and digital literacy, followed by a detailed **data and reference appendix**.

III.   Key Findings

Digital Literacy

Digital Literacy: Overview

The increasing integration of technology in the workplace underscores the necessity for digital literacy skills in the workforce. Digital literacy is defined as, "*the skills associated with using technology to enable users to find, evaluate, organize, create, and communicate information*."[7] Although 92% of today's jobs require digital skills, more than a third of workers do not have foundational digital skills necessary for today's jobs.[8] Digital skills gaps are prevalent among many different populations, including those with limited access to broadband, those re-entering the workforce, career pivoters, and even GenZ'ers who are often seen as digital natives
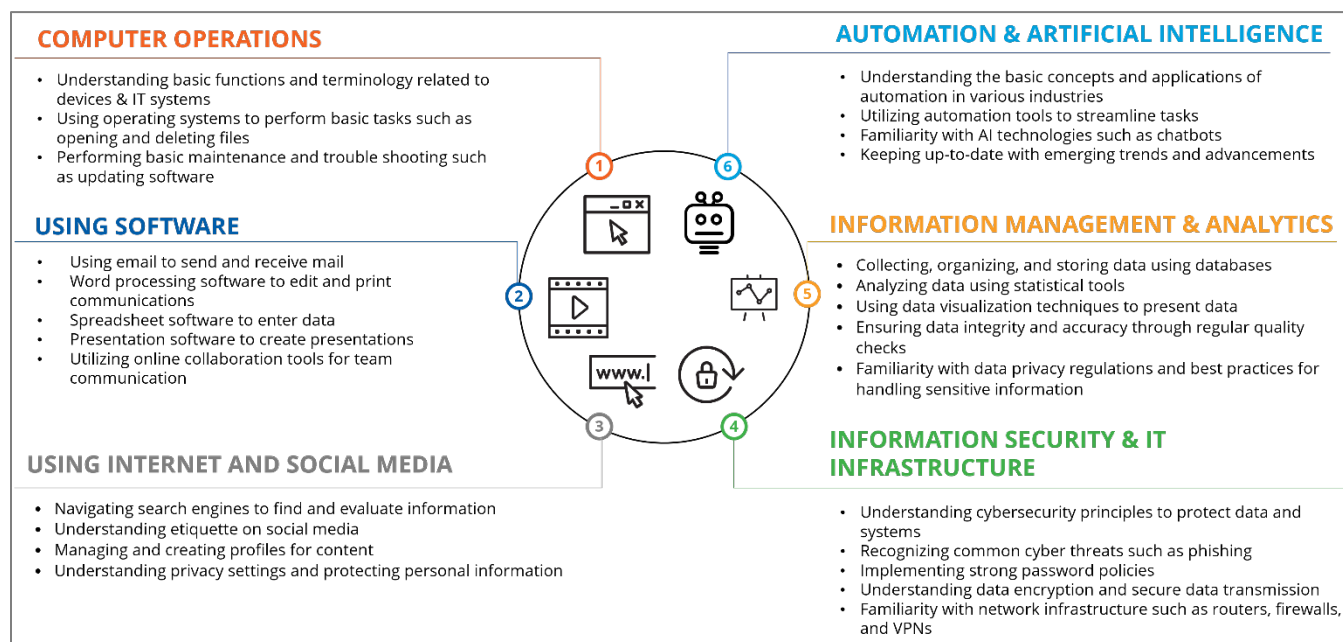
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[7] Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA); Digital Equity Act of 2021; Museum and Library Services Act

[8] 2https://nationalskillscoalition.org/news/press-releases/new-report-92-of-jobs-require-digital-skills-one-third-of-workers-have-low-or-no-digital-skills-due-to-historic-underinvestment-structural-inequities/

but lack computer operations skills. While some employers offer on-the-job digital skills training for occupation-specific digital skills, many existing training courses and assessments focus on discrete digital skills, which quickly become obsolete given rapidly changing technologies, have limited transferability, and do not support digital resilience.

As part of the Skills Validation effort in this initiative, **six key areas of digital literacy skills** were identified to effectively categorize the competencies related to computer operations, software, internet and social media, automation and AI, information technology, and technological equipment. These areas were used as a framework to evaluate digital literacy in Florida.

Figure 6: Digital Literacy Skills and Competencies

COMPUTER OPERATIONS
- Understanding basic functions and terminology related to devices & IT systems
- Using operating systems to perform basic tasks such as opening and deleting files
- Performing basic maintenance and trouble shooting such as updating software

USING SOFTWARE
- Using email to send and receive mail
- Word processing software to edit and print communications
- Spreadsheet software to enter data
- Presentation software to create presentations
- Utilizing online collaboration tools for team communication

USING INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA
- Navigating search engines to find and evaluate information
- Understanding etiquette on social media
- Managing and creating profiles for content
- Understanding privacy settings and protecting personal information

AUTOMATION & ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
- Understanding the basic concepts and applications of automation in various industries
- Utilizing automation tools to streamline tasks
- Familiarity with AI technologies such as chatbots
- Keeping up-to-date with emerging trends and advancements

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT & ANALYTICS
- Collecting, organizing, and storing data using databases
- Analyzing data using statistical tools
- Using data visualization techniques to present data
- Ensuring data integrity and accuracy through regular quality checks
- Familiarity with data privacy regulations and best practices for handling sensitive information

INFORMATION SECURITY & IT INFRASTRUCTURE
- Understanding cybersecurity principles to protect data and systems
- Recognizing common cyber threats such as phishing
- Implementing strong password policies
- Understanding data encryption and secure data transmission
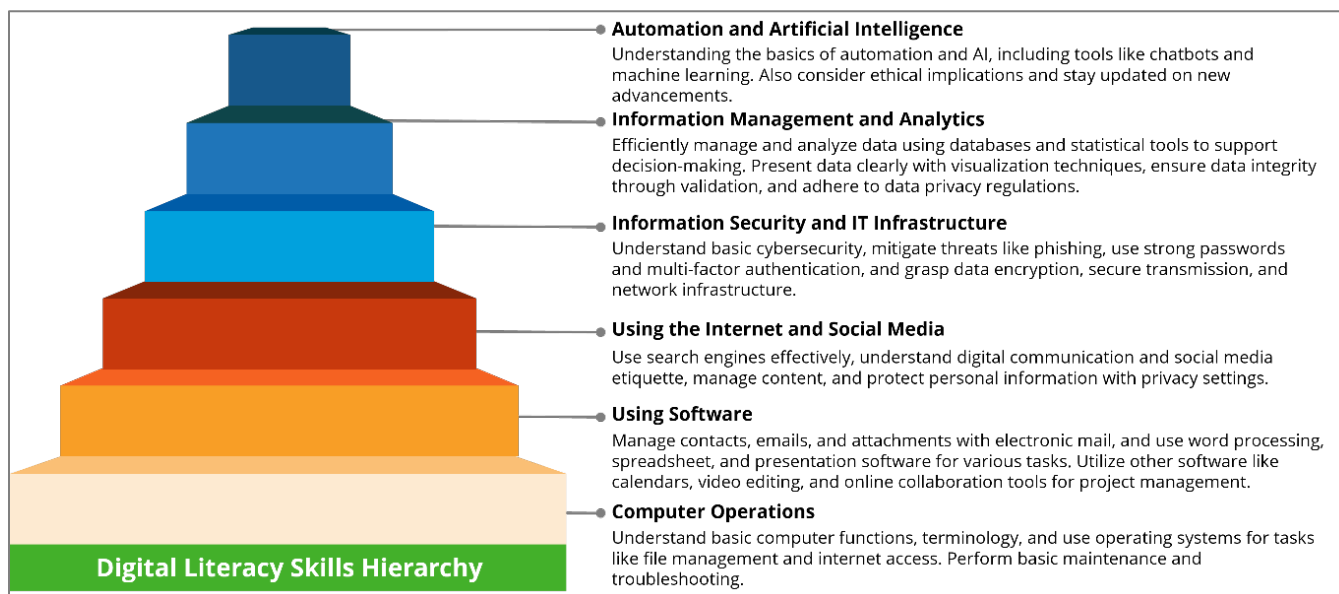- Familiarity with network infrastructure such as routers, firewalls, and VPNs

In evaluating digital literacy, digital skills were **structured within a competency hierarchy** (see Figure 3 on next page). Each successive skillset is predicated upon a foundational mastery of the preceding level. At the base of this hierarchy lies Computer Operations, recognized as the most fundamental level. As one progresses through the hierarchy, the skills become increasingly sophisticated, necessitating a comprehensive understanding of the prior skillset to ensure effective advancement.

Digital literacy skill groups were assessed on a hierarchy where more advanced skills implied core competency for all preceding, more basic skill groups. From basic to advanced, the hierarchy order is as follows: Computer Operations, Using Software, Using the Internet and Social Media, Information Security and Information Technology (IT) Infrastructure, Information Management and Analytics, and Automation and Artificial Intelligence.

For example, the skill Data Analysis in a job description implies that the candidate is expected to have competency in Information Management & Analytics, along with all preceding skill groups, which would be flagged as expected competencies for Information Security and IT Infrastructure, Using the Internet and Social Media, Using Software, and Computer Operations[9].

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[9] For the purposes of this report, the skills related to Computer Operations and Using Software will be consolidated into a single skill group. This decision is based on the observation that there were no distinct skills identified specifically for the ability to turn on a computer. It is assumed that individuals proficient in using software such as Microsoft Office Suite are also capable of operating a computer.

Figure 7: Digital Literacy Skills Group Hierarchy

Automation and Artificial Intelligence
Understanding the basics of automation and AI, including tools like chatbots and machine learning. Also consider ethical implications and stay updated on new advancements.

Information Management and Analytics
Efficiently manage and analyze data using databases and statistical tools to support decision-making. Present data clearly with visualization techniques, ensure data integrity through validation, and adhere to data privacy regulations.

Information Security and IT Infrastructure
Understand basic cybersecurity, mitigate threats like phishing, use strong passwords and multi-factor authentication, and grasp data encryption, secure transmission, and network infrastructure.

Using the Internet and Social Media
Use search engines effectively, understand digital communication and social media etiquette, manage content, and protect personal information with privacy settings.

Using Software
Manage contacts, emails, and attachments with electronic mail, and use word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software for various tasks. Utilize other software like calendars, video editing, and online collaboration tools for project management.

Computer Operations
Understand basic computer functions, terminology, and use operating systems for tasks like file management and internet access. Perform basic maintenance and troubleshooting.

Digital Literacy Skills Hierarchy

Digital Literacy: Key Findings

As shown in Figure 4, Computer Operations and Using Software ranked highest in the top, in-demand skill groups, yielding 40% of job postings[10]. This demonstrates the broad assumption that job postings in Florida **require applicants to have basic computer operations skills** and the ability to use software such as Microsof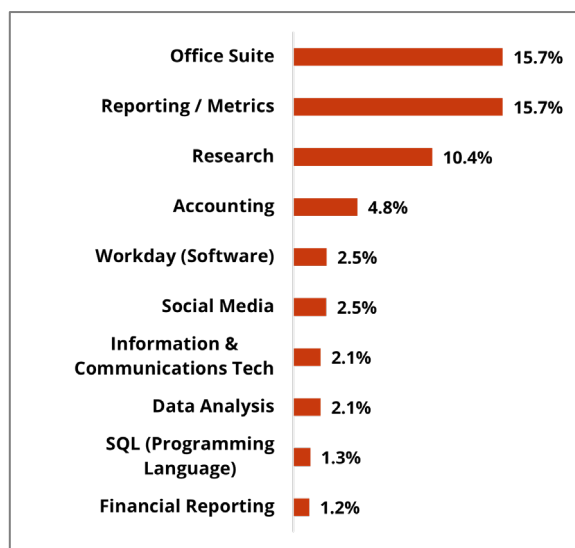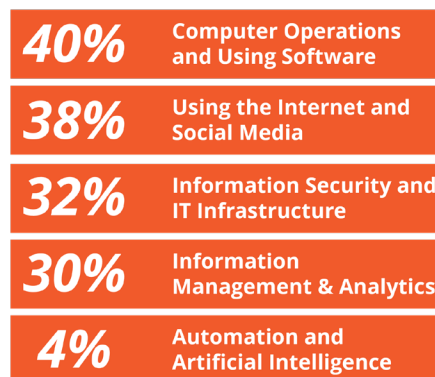t Office Suite[11]. To further analyze each digital skill group, the analysis referenced job postings available from proprietary datasets over the previous 2 years, which yielded a total of 2.5 million job listings between 2023 – 2024 in the state of Florida. During that period, as shown in Figure 5, Microsoft Office Suite skills, and reporting/metrics were the most highly in-demand skills both found in 15.7%[12] of all job listings, followed by research as number three at 10.4%[13].

Accounting placed fourth at nearly 5%. This skill was included in the skills list under Information Management and Analytics as it encompassed a range of digital literacy skills outlined in this skill group's definition, which includes analyzing, reviewing, and managing data; presenting and

Figure 4: In-demand Skill Groups

40%	Computer Operations and Using Software
38%	Using the Internet and Social Media
32%	Information Security and IT Infrastructure
30%	Information Management & Analytics
4%	Automation and Artificial Intelligence

Figure 5: Top 10 Digital Literacy Skills in Demand

Skill	Percentage
Office Suite	15.7%
Reporting / Metrics	15.7%
Research	10.4%
Accounting	4.8%
Workday (Software)	2.5%
Social Media	2.5%
Information & Communications Tech	2.1%
Data Analysis	2.1%
SQL (Programming Language)	1.3%
Financial Reporting	1.2%

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[10] The number of job postings yielding Computer Operations and Using Software as the top in-demand skill group: 1,008,045

[11] Microsoft Office Suite skills refer to proficiency in using a collection of software applications that are commonly used for productivity and office tasks, typically used in professional environments. This skill aggregate includes Microsoft Office Suite; more specific Microsoft products such as Word, Excel PowerPoint, OneDrive, Outlook, Visio; Google Docs; and more general skills such as Office Suite and Calendaring Software. The Microsoft Office Suite skills were counted in each unique job posting to avoid any duplicative counting.

[12] The job listings between 2023-2024 in the state of Florida that listed Office Suite skills and Reporting and Metrics as a top in-demand skill: 394,412 and 394,315 job postings, respectively.

[13] The number of job listings between 2023-2024 in the state of Florida that listed research as a top in-demand skill: 261,585.

reporting information clearly and effectively; ensuring data accuracy and integrity; and adhering to data privacy regulations.

To further support the findings from the proprietary analysis, a survey conducted with both employers and non-employers yielded similar results. The survey listed 28 digital literacy skills that fell under the five skill groups and survey respondents were asked the following:

- Employers: *"Select the most important digital literacy skills needed for employees in your organization (Only rank the skills that apply. Please rank at least five skills from the list."*

- Non-Employers: *Based on your understanding, select the digital literacy skills that are in high demand from job seekers who leverage your services (Only rank the skills that apply. Please rank at least five skills from the list."*

The top skill group in demand from employers and training providers alike was Computer Operations and Using Software. The results highlight a **need for workers to understand the basic functions of a computer and operating software** in the workplace such as email and word processing software. Figure 6 below highlights skill needs from employers and the training needs requested by employers and jobseekers.
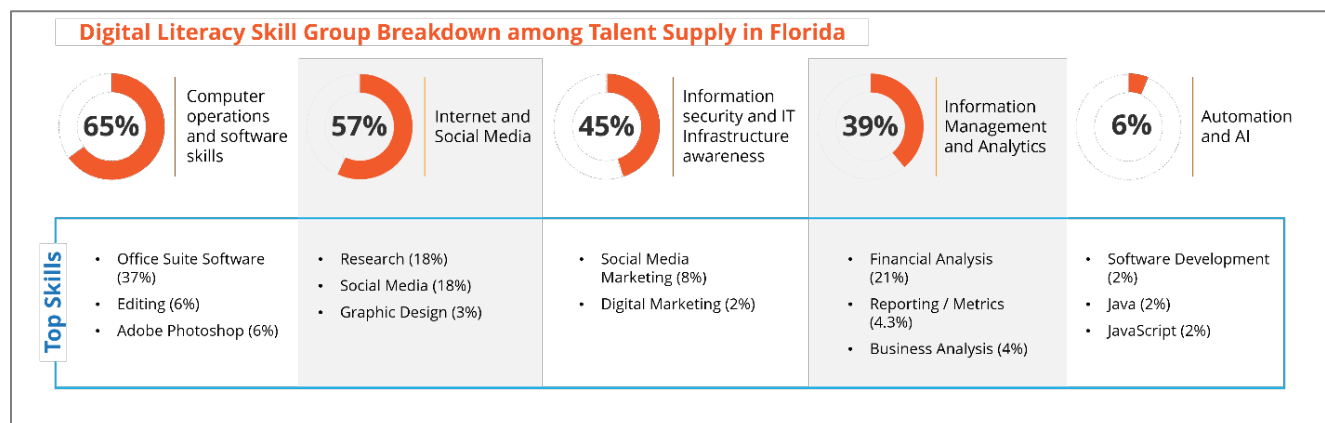
Figure 6: Ranking of Skills Needs from Survey Respondents

Survey respondent	Employers	Training Providers (Employer Needs)	Training Providers (Job Seeker Needs)
Sample size	N=22	N=59	
RANKING 1	Using email to send and receive mail and open and download file attachments	Using common operating system to perform basic tasks such as saving files	Using email to send and receive mail and open and download file attachments
2	Using common operating system to perform basic tasks such as saving files	Using email to send and receive mail and open and download file attachments	Using common operating system to perform basic tasks such as saving files
3	Using spreadsheet software to enter, edit, and format data	Using word processing software to compose, edit, and print documents	Using word processing software to compose, edit, and print documents
4	Understanding functions and terminology related to computer hardware and software	Using spreadsheet software to enter, edit, and format data	Understanding functions and terminology related to computer hardware and software
5	Using word processing software to compose, edit, and print documents	Understanding functions and terminology related to computer hardware and software	Navigating and utilizing search engines to find and evaluate information

Fortunately, **Florida's talent supply as a whole, possesses the skills most in demand**. Based on the data analysis that sourced talent supply from publicly available resumes, results yielded 2.1 million unique resumes from Florida. Over two-thirds of resumes listed skills that aligned to Computer Operations and Software Skills, namely Microsoft Office Suite software which applied to 37% of resumes[14] that listed skills such as Microsoft Word and Excel. Figure 7 below provides a skills breakdown for the talent supply.

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[14] The number of resumes in the proprietary database that listed Office Suite software as a skill possessed by the talent supply in Florida: 788,013.

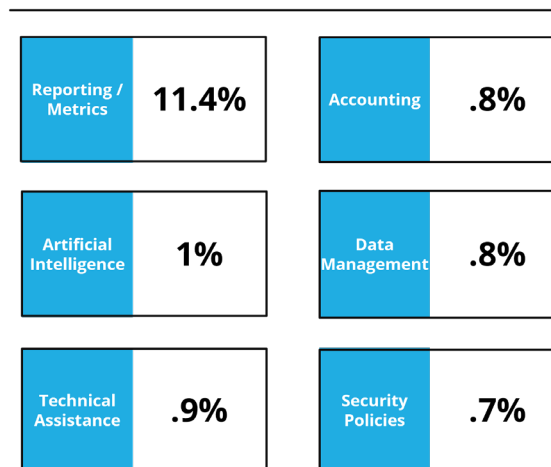Figure 7: Digital Literacy Skills Among Talent Supply

Digital Literacy Skill Group Breakdown among Talent Supply in Florida

65% Computer operations and software skills	57% Internet and Social Media	45% Information security and IT Infrastructure awareness	39% Information Management and Analytics	6% Automation and AI

Top Skills

| • Office Suite Software (37%)
• Editing (6%)
• Adobe Photoshop (6%) | • Research (18%)
• Social Media (18%)
• Graphic Design (3%) | • Social Media Marketing (8%)
• Digital Marketing (2%) | • Financial Analysis (21%)
• Reporting / Metrics (4.3%)
• Business Analysis (4%) | • Software Development (2%)
• Java (2%)
• JavaScript (2%) |

Beyond Computer Operations and Software Skills, employers have articulated a need for the Information Management and Analytics skill group which is inclusive of Research, Accounting, Data Analysis, and Financial Reporting—skills previously listed from the top 10 skills in demand.

Digital Literacy: Talent Supply Skill Gaps

The analysis of talent supply gaps involved comparing the prevalence of specific skillsets in Florida job postings, representing demand, with the availability of those skillsets in resumes from Florida residents, representing supply. The skills gap was identified by subtracting the supply percentage from the demand percentage, resulting in a percentage-point difference.

As shown in Figure 8, the most significant gap observed was in **Reporting and Metrics, where demand exceeded supply by 11.4%.** Reporting and Metrics fall under the digital skill category of Information Management and Analytics. This skillset involves data collection and gathering, which includes accessing data from various sources such as databases, spreadsheets, and online platforms. It also encompasses data extraction, which involves filtering, sourcing, and cleaning data. Furthermore, Reporting and Metrics require the use of digital tools to analyze and interpret data, enabling effective presentation of information to support data-driven decision-making.

Figure 8: Talent Supply Skill Gaps

Reporting / Metrics	11.4%	Accounting	.8%
Artificial Intelligence	1%	Data Management	.8%
Technical Assistance	.9%	Security Policies	.7%

The focus groups on digital literacy skills underscored the critical need for **proficiency in basic computer operations and software applications**. Participants highlighted a significant gap between the ability to use mobile devices and the skills required to navigate and utilize computers effectively. Many individuals, particularly younger people, are proficient in social media and mobile phone usage but lack essential skills in using email, Microsoft Office Suite (including Excel and Word), and cloud-based systems like Microsoft 365. Focus group participants consistently reiterated the **lack of skills with Microsoft Office Suite** due to high schools teaching on Chromebooks and using Google Workspace. There is a pressing need for training in these areas, as well as in basic computer functions such as saving files, right-clicking, copying and pasting.

Digital Literacy: Industries

Survey respondents who were non-employers were asked to identify the top three industries with the highest demand for digital literacy skills training. Based on 57 responses, the leading industries named were: 1. Information Technology at 19.7%, 2. Healthcare at 14%, and 3. Professional and Managerial Services

at 10.1%. Additionally, 22 employers across various industries participated in the survey to provide insights into the most critical digital literacy skills required. The responses from the three leading industries are in the figure below. However, due to the small sample size for each industry, the data was not significant enough to draw key conclusions. Figure 9 shows digital skills ranking by industry.

Figure 9: Digital Skills Ranking by Industry

Employer Industry	Information Technology	Healthcare	Professional & Managerial Services
Sample size	N=1	N=2	N=1
RANKING 1	• Use common operating systems to perform basic tasks	• Familiarity with data privacy • Implementing strong password policies	• Understanding the principles of digital communication and social media etiquette
RANKING 2	• Using email to send and receive mail and open and download file attachments	• Understanding ethical considerations and biases in AI systems • Understanding functions and terminology related to computer hardware and software	• Understanding privacy settings and managing online presence to protect personal information
RANKING 3	• Utilize online collaboration tools for team communication and project management	• Understanding basic concepts and applications of automation and AI • Use common operating systems to perform basic tasks	• Understanding basic cybersecurity principles to protect data and systems

However, the focus groups noted the importance of digital literacy in various job sectors, including cashier roles, construction, manufacturing, customer service, and office jobs. Employers often require job seekers to take digital literacy assessments, such as the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) assessment and utilize online learning platforms like Alison.com and GCFglobal.com. There is also a need for training in operating systems, electronic medical records, and autonomous vehicle technology. The discussions revealed a disconnect between the perceived digital nativeness of younger generations and their actual proficiency with workplace technology, emphasizing the need for digital literacy education across multiple age groups.

Digital Literacy: Existing Credentials and Programs

The **digital literacy skills offerings** provided by LWDBs are **currently limited**. Out of the 21 LWDBs, 17 provided a list of their training programs, and six included digital literacy courses. These courses, typically titled "Computer Basics" or "Basic Computer Training," are all conducted in person. The content of these courses varies, but generally, they focus on accessing the internet, proficiency with emails (sending and receiving), creating usernames and passwords, and basic internet functions. Some courses cover even more fundamental computer operations, such as using a mouse, moving objects across a screen, and improving typing skills.

Table 1: Digital Literacy Credentials and Programs by LWDB

CareerSource LWDB	Digital Literacy Course	Targeted Skill Group	Offers Metrix	Utilizes Free Online Course	Logged Florida Ready to Work Training
Brevard Flagler Volusia	• Computer Basics I • Computer Basics II	• Computer Operations • Using Software • Internet and Social Media • Information Security	X		X
Broward			X		Not enrolled
Capital Region					X
Central Florida	No data available to report				X
Chipola					X
Citrus Levy Marion			X		X
Escarosa	• Basic Computer Skills	• Unknown	X		X

Gulf Coast	No data available to report			X	0 minutes
Heartland	• Basic Computer Training	• Computer Operations • Internet and social media	X		X
Hillsborough Pinellas	• Basic Computers • Intermediate Computers	• Computer Operations • Using Software			X
North Central Florida	No data available to report				X
North Florida			X		X
Northeast Florida					X
Okaloosa Walton	• Computer Skills Workshop	• Computer Operations • Using Software • Internet and Social Media		X	X
Palm Beach County	No data available to report		X		0 minutes
Pasco Hernando					X
Polk					X
Research Coast			X	X	X
South Florida	• Digital Literacy Skills Training	• Computer Operations • Using Software			X
Southwest Florida	No data available to report		X		0 minutes
Suncoast					x

In addition to the data captured in the table above, CareerSource Hillsborough Pinellas offers an intermediate computer course aimed at individuals seeking to enhance their skills in document formatting and layout, such as adjusting margins and switching between landscape and portrait orientations. This course also covers word processing software, teaching participants how to format headers, footers, and page numbers to create visually appealing and organized documents.

Feedback from focus groups indicates that **in-person digital literacy training is most effective**, as individuals who lack digital literacy skills may find it challenging to access online training. Once individuals master basic computer operations and internet access, training providers can offer more advanced digital literacy courses, such as Excel or PowerPoint, virtually by sharing screens. The online approach may also alleviate the barrier of finding transportation to attend in-person training, which was a recurring theme from focus groups and surveys.

Among the 21 LWDBs, **nine offer training through Metrix Learning**, an e-learning portal with over 7,000 courses designed to enhance job prospects. Metrix Learning is available 24/7 at the learner's discretion. CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion exclusively offers training through Metrix Learning and has partnered with the College of Central Florida to provide dedicated computers in labs across all three campuses. This initiative aims to encourage public access to Metrix and generate interest for students to enroll.

Additionally, two of the LWDBs—CareerSource Okaloosa Walton and CareerSource Research Coast—are utilizing **free online learning resources** through Alison.com and GCFglobal.org, which focus on both digital literacy skills and foundational employability skills. However, digital literacy skills, understanding computer operations and navigating the internet—is a prerequisite to accessing these free online tools. This highlights the importance of teaching job seekers computer basics so they can further their learning independently. Another resource utilized by the LWDBs to train job seekers in digital literacy skills is the **Florida Ready to Work (FRTW) program**. In PY2023-2024, FRTW **added a digital skills solution** focused on five areas: computer operations, internet browsing, digital communications, digital documents, and digital security. All modules in FRTW are self-paced, online, and at no cost to the end user. The training is optional; however, it prepares the job seeker for the one-hour online assessment, which is proctored at the LWDBs. Those who pass the assessment earn the **FRTW Credential**, which is issued by the State of Florida. In PY 2024-2025,

CareerSource Polk had the highest number of digital skills assessments and digital skills credentials at 67 and 66 respectively. CareerSource Polk reported that they offer FRTW as a training workshop. Figure 10 shares a summary of FRTW credentials against assessments administered by area.

PY2024-2025 Florida Ready to Work Credentials vs. Assessments by LWDB
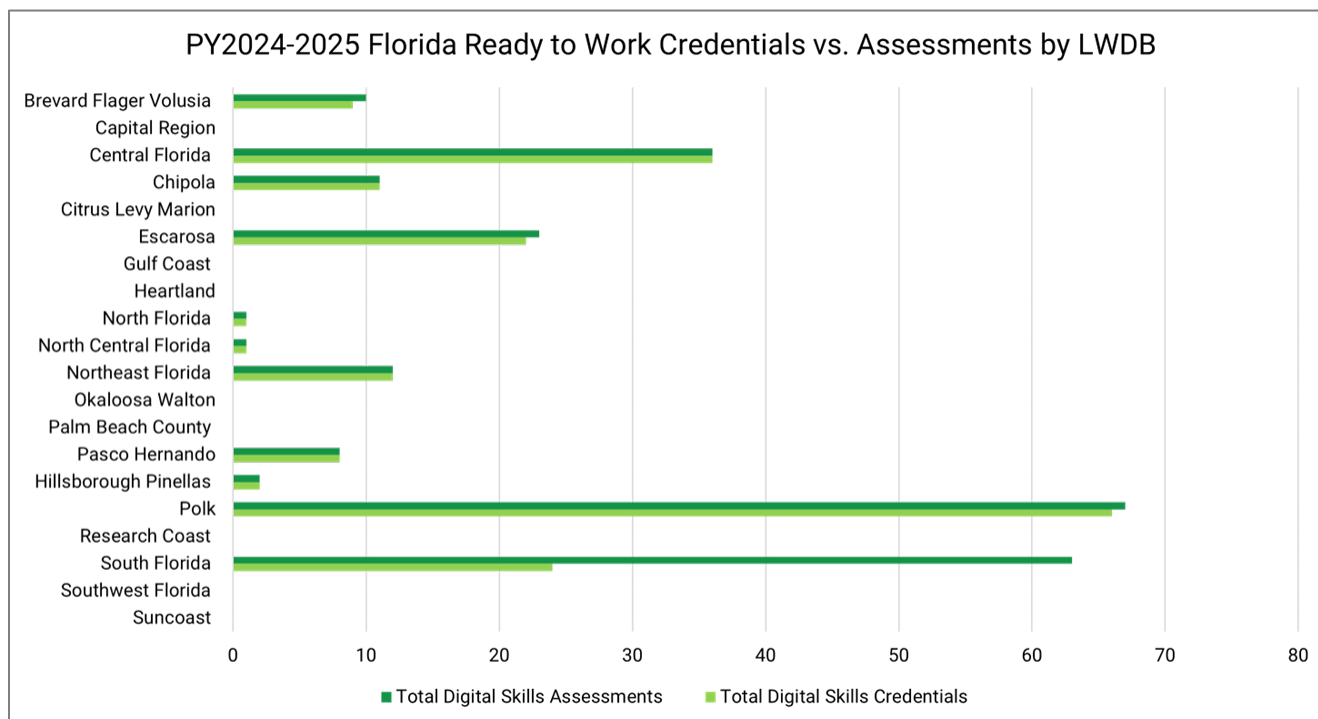
Overall, the FRTW digital skills assessment has a high success rate among the LWDBs who administer the assessment. Of the 11 LWDBs that administered assessments and credentials in PY2023-2024 and PY2024-2025, **the average pass rate is approximately 89%**. When assessing each of the five digital skill areas, the digital documents module logged the most training hours cumulatively across all the LWDBs compared to the other four modules. However, there is inevitably variance between each LWDB regarding training minutes logged per module (see table below).

Furthermore, there is not a direct correlation between the training minutes and the assessments. For example, job seekers logged 15,149 training minutes at CareerSource Central Florida and 36 assessments were administered whereas CareerSource Hillsborough Pinellas logged more training minutes at 62,262 minutes but 2 assessments were administered. However, despite the number of assessments administered, CareerSource Central Florida and CareerSource Hillsborough Pinellas both had a 100% passing rate, whereas South Florida logged 128,550 training minutes and administered 63 assessments, yet 24 credentials were earned (an outlier at 38% passing rate.)
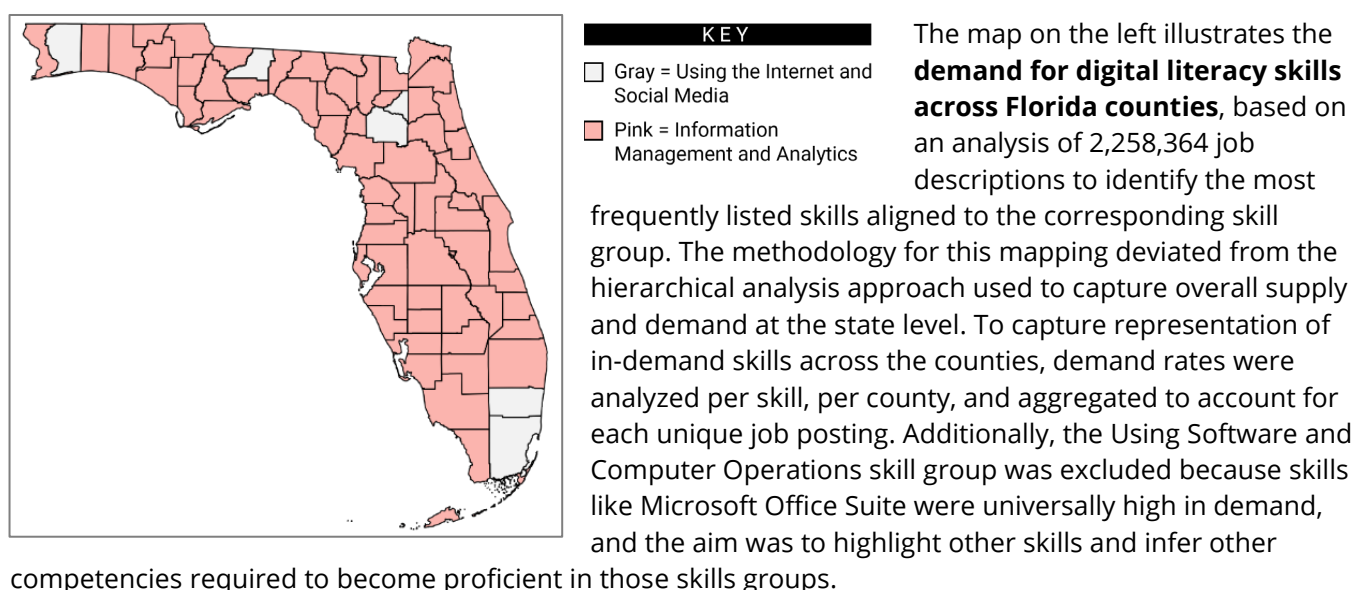
Table 2: Florida Ready to Work Training Data by LWDB

Florida Ready to Work PY2024-2025			
CareerSource LWDB	**Digital Skills Training Minutes**	**Assessments**	**Credentials**
Brevard Flagler Volusia	14,961	10	9
Broward	CareerSource Broward is not enrolled in the Florida Ready to Work Program		
Capital Region	472	0	0
Central Florida	15,149	36	36
Chipola	1,325	11	11
Citrus Levy Marion	20	0	0
Escarosa	17,115	23	22
Gulf Coast	0	0	0

Heartland	43	0	0
Hillsborough Pinellas	62,262	2	2
North Central Florida	1,303	1	1
North Florida	14,512	1	1
Northeast Florida	2,194	12	12
Okaloosa Walton	79	0	0
Palm Beach County	0	0	0
Pasco Hernando	23,763	8	8
Polk	34,865	67	66
Research Coast	12	0	0
South Florida	128,550	63	24
Southwest Florida	0	0	0
Suncoast	163	0	0

Digital Literacy: Geographic Map

Figure 11: Demand for Digital Literacy Skills by County

KEY
☐ Gray = Using the Internet and Social Media
▨ Pink = Information Management and Analytics

The map on the left illustrates the **demand for digital literacy skills across Florida counties**, based on an analysis of 2,258,364 job descriptions to identify the most frequently listed skills aligned to the corresponding skill group. The methodology for this mapping deviated from the hierarchical analysis approach used to capture overall supply and demand at the state level. To capture representation of in-demand skills across the counties, demand rates were analyzed per skill, per county, and aggregated to account for each unique job posting. Additionally, the Using Software and Computer Operations skill group was excluded because skills like Microsoft Office Suite were universally high in demand, and the aim was to highlight other skills and infer other competencies required to become proficient in those skills groups.

The analysis reveals that **employers are primarily demanding skills in Information Management and Analytics, as well as Internet and Social Media Use**. These top skills encompass specific competencies such as Data Management and Analysis, Data Visualization, Reporting Tools, Microsoft Excel, HTML Scripting, and Accounting. Accounting is included within the Information Management and Analytics category because it involves a range of digital literacy skills, including analyzing, reviewing, and managing data, presenting and reporting information clearly and effectively, ensuring data accuracy and integrity, and adhering to data privacy regulations.

Furthermore, the Internet and Social Media Use category includes skills like Internet Research, social media, virtual teams, and research. Applying the competency hierarchy in this case, the analysis assumes that a **foundational understanding of computer operations is essential for advancing to more technical skills** such as information management and analytics. Basic computer knowledge serves as the starting point for growing digital literacy skills, and training in digital literacy should begin with building a strong foundation in computer use. Once job seekers understand how to operate a computer, they can pursue more targeted training in social media use, internet research, and information analytics. The analysis also highlights the **importance of utilizing software, with employers specifically seeking proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite tools** such as Word and Excel.
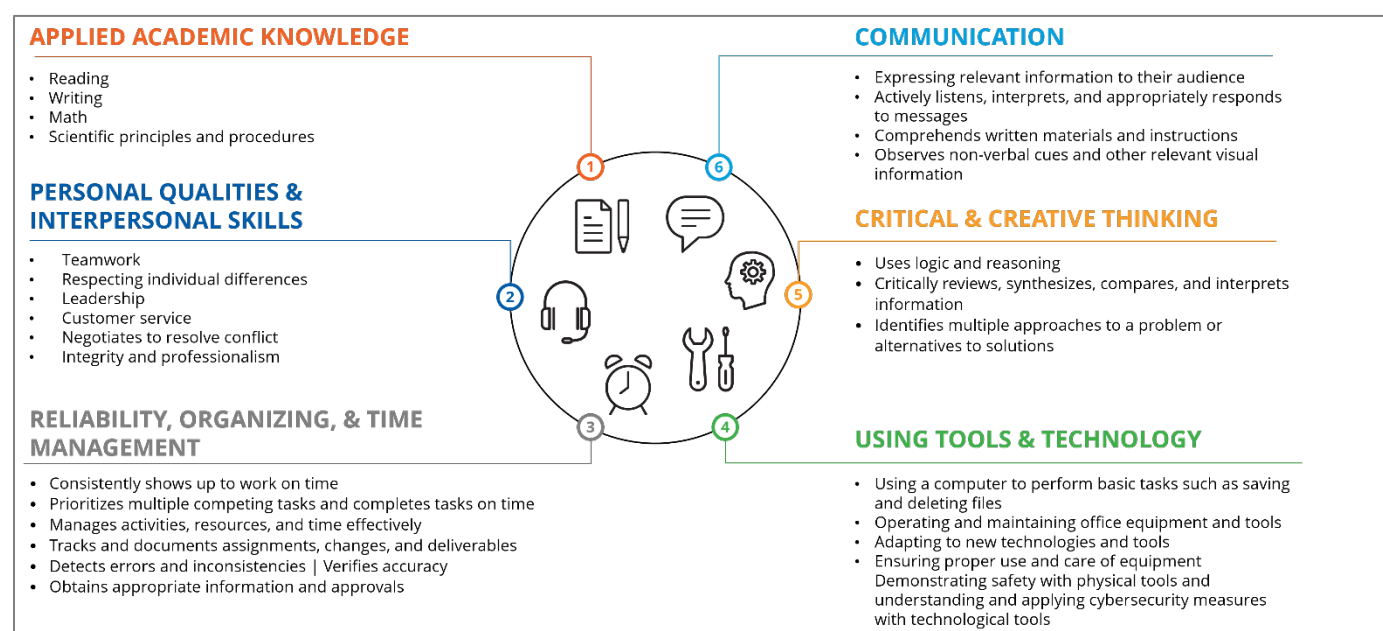
Training programs that focus on these areas would enable job seekers to meet the needs of many employers and continue to enhance their skillsets on the job. Overall, the insights from this map underscore the importance of foundational digital skills and targeted training to meet the evolving demands of the job market in Florida.

Foundational Employability

Foundational Employability: Overview

Foundational employability refers to the universal work competencies required for individuals to be college and career ready. These skills are highly valued in the workplace, industry-agnostic, transferable, and common to all work roles. As part of the Skills Validation effort in this initiative, six key areas of foundational employability skills were identified to effectively categorize 29 key competencies related to job and workplace readiness. These areas, shown in Figure 12, were used as a framework to evaluate foundational employability skills in Florida.

Figure 12: Foundational Employability Skills and Competencies

APPLIED ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE
- Reading
- Writing
- Math
- Scientific principles and procedures

PERSONAL QUALITIES & INTERPERSONAL SKILLS
- Teamwork
- Respecting individual differences
- Leadership
- Customer service
- Negotiates to resolve conflict
- Integrity and professionalism

RELIABILITY, ORGANIZING, & TIME MANAGEMENT
- Consistently shows up to work on time
- Prioritizes multiple competing tasks and completes tasks on time
- Manages activities, resources, and time effectively
- Tracks and documents assignments, changes, and deliverables
- Detects errors and inconsistencies | Verifies accuracy
- Obtains appropriate information and approvals

COMMUNICATION
- Expressing relevant information to their audience
- Actively listens, interprets, and appropriately responds to messages
- Comprehends written materials and instructions
- Observes non-verbal cues and other relevant visual information

CRITICAL & CREATIVE THINKING
- Uses logic and reasoning
- Critically reviews, synthesizes, compares, and interprets information
- Identifies multiple approaches to a problem or alternatives to solutions

USING TOOLS & TECHNOLOGY
- Using a computer to perform basic tasks such as saving and deleting files
- Operating and maintaining office equipment and tools
- Adapting to new technologies and tools
- Ensuring proper use and care of equipment Demonstrating safety with physical tools and understanding and applying cybersecurity measures with technological tools

Foundational Employability: Key Findings

To assess foundational employability skills, proprietary datasets were leveraged to further categorize the 29 competencies into 132 skills under the six key skill groups (Applied Academic Knowledge; Personal Qualities and Interpersonal Skills; Reliability, Organizing, and Time Management; Communication; Critical and Creative Thinking; and Using Tools and Technology) based on aligned definitions. Given the broad scope of foundational literacy skills, a wider array of advanced skills was included as representative measures to capture both competency and demand rates effectively. This approach ensured accurate representation of the competencies included in the analysis.

Most employers in Florida recognize and acknowledge the need for their employees to possess soft skills across various industries and occupations. As shown in Figure 13, an analysis of over 2.5 million job listings in the state of Florida between 2023 – 2024 noted **83% of the job listings mentioned skills related to personal qualities and interpersonal skills.** During that period, reliability, organizing, and time management were cited in 78% of job postings, and communication in 60% of job postings.

Comparisons with **peer states** to Florida revealed a consistent need for similar skills among workers and job seekers – Georgia, New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas rank **general management and communications** as the top foundational skills needed by their employers.

Applied Academic Knowledge was cited in 59% of job postings. This skills group includes foundational employability skills such as basic reading, basic math, research, written and verbal communication, and analytical thinking.

To further support the findings from the proprietary analysis, a survey conducted with both employers and non-employers yielded similar results. The survey listed 29 foundational employability skills aligned to six skill groups and survey respondents were asked the following:

IN-DEMAND FOUNDATIONAL EMPLOYABILITY SKILL GROUPS

- 83% Personal Qualities and Interpersonal Skills
- 78% Reliability, Organizing, and Time Management
- 60% Communication
- 58% Applied Academic Knowledge
- 41% Critical and Creative Thinking
- 33% Using Tools and Technology

- Employers: *"Select the most important foundational employability skills **needed for employees** in your organization. Please rank at least five skills from the list in order of **highest demand to lowest demand**. Only rank the skills that apply."*

- Non-Employers: *Based on your understanding, select the foundational employability skills that are in **high demand from job seekers** who leverage your services (Only rank the skills that apply. Please rank at least five skills from the list."*

Teamwork and Working with Others was ranked by both employers and non-Employers as the #**1 skill in demand**, highlighting the need for workers and job seekers to hone Personal Qualities and Interpersonal Skills, regardless of industry or occupational group.

Foundational Employability: Focus Group Insights

The focus groups highlighted several foundational employability skills that are critical for workforce readiness. **Effective communication emerged as a key theme**, encompassing the ability to speak to different people, problem-solving communication, and the need for English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes for bilingual individuals. Functional skills such as basic math, precision measurements, blueprint reading, and the ability to perform metric conversions were emphasized, with a notable concern that many individuals lack these skills upon entering the workforce. Critical thinking and problem-solving abilities were also underscored as essential, with a recurring issue being that many people are not adequately prepared in these areas by the time they reach secondary education.

Additionally, the focus groups pointed out the importance of **time management, organization, and reliability**, particularly the need for workers to show up on time and be dependable. Customer service skills, including being warm, friendly, and hospitable, were also highlighted; an employer shared during a focus group interview that, "after COVID, we've seen a decline in individuals being hospitable. They need to come with those skills." There was a recognition of the challenges faced by first-time workers and older retirees supplementing their income, as well as the difficulties in catching up on skills like math later in life. Overall, the discussions revealed a widespread concern about the preparedness of individuals entering the workforce, particularly in terms of basic work practices and foundational skills.
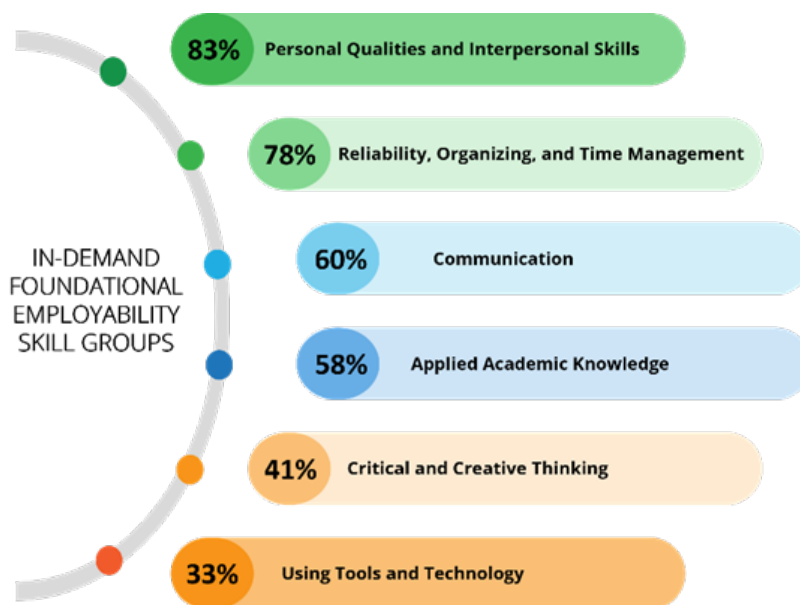
The top skill group in demand from Employers and Training Provider survey respondents was Teamwork and Working with Others, followed by Reading Skills. Figure 14 below highlights additional foundational employability skills needs desired by employers and training needs requested by Training Providers and Job Seekers in the state of Florida.

Figure 14: Foundational Employability Skills Ranking by Survey Respondents

Survey respondent	Employers	Training Providers (Employer Needs)	Training Providers (Job Seeker Needs)
Sample size	N=22	N=59	
1	Teamwork and working with others	Teamwork and working with others	Teamwork and working with others
2	Reading skills	Reading skills	Reading skills
3	Consistently shows up to work on time	Consistently shows up to work on time	Customer service
4	Customer service	Customer service	Writing skills
5	Integrity and professionalism	Writing skills	Integrity and professionalism

Like digital literacy, an analysis of publicly available resumes from the state of Florida indicates that **Florida's talent supply possesses most of the skills in highest demand according to skills groups**. Over two-thirds of resumes listed skills that aligned to Reliability, Organization, and Time Management (75%), Personal Qualities & Interpersonal Skills (64%), Applied Academic Knowledge (59%), and Using Tools & Technology 49%). Figure 15 highlights the skills group supply for foundational employability skills.

Figure 15: Foundational Employability Skill Group Among Talent Supply

Skill Group Supply

75% Reliability, Organizing, & Time Management	64% Personal Qualities & Interpersonal Skills	59% Applied Academic Knowledge	49% Using Tools & Technology*	36% Communication	29% Critical & Creative Thinking

Top Aligned Skills

Management, Planning and Evaluating, Project Management	Customer Service, Leadership, Negotiation	Research, Budgeting	Information and Communications Technology, Heavy Equipment, Test Equipment	Public Speaking, Written and Verbal Communication, Marketing Communications	Creativity, Problem Solving, Critical Thinking

Foundational Employability: Industries

A survey was conducted among non-employers to identify the top three industries with the highest demand for foundational employability skills training. Based on 57 responses, the leading industries are:
1. Healthcare at 20%; 2. Manufacturing at 11%, and 3. Construction at 10%.

Like digital literacy skills, 22 employers across various industries participated in the survey to provide insights into the most critical foundational employability skills required. Due to the limited sample size of respondents for each industry, with two employers from healthcare, three from manufacturing, and three from construction, the data was not significant enough to draw key conclusions (see Figure 16).

Figure 16: Foundational Employability Skills Ranking by Industry

Employer Industry		Healthcare	Manufacturing	Construction
Sample size		N=2	N=3	N=3
R A N K I N G	**1**	• Consistently shows up to work on time	• Leadership • Consistently shows up to work on time	• Reading • Integrity and Professionalism
	2	• Tracks and documents assignments and deliverables • Customer Service	• Reading • Comprehends written materials and instruction • Understands the relationships between facts and applies understanding when problem solving	• Teamwork and working with others
	3	• Ensuring proper use and care of tools and equipment • Respecting Individual Differences	• Teamwork and working with others • Operating and maintaining relevant equipment, tools, and machinery	• Writing • Math • Using a computer to perform basic tasks

Foundational Employability: Existing Credentials and Programs

The number of foundational employability skills offerings provided by LWDBs vary across locations, with Hillsborough Pinellas and Capital Region offering the most courses when compared to the other LWDBs. Out of the 21 LWDBs, 17 provided a list of their training programs, and seven included foundational employability courses. The content of these courses varies, but generally, they focus on communicating effectively, conveying professionalism, promoting teamwork and collaboration, and thinking critically and solving problems. These courses, typically titled "Soft Skills", are mostly facilitated in person; however, LWDBs take different approaches such as offering a blended approach to online and in-person, and the frequency differs as some may offer training once per week while others offer the training upon request.

Table 3: Foundational Employability Credentials and Programs by LWDB

CareerSource LWDB	Academic Employability Courses	Targeted Skill Group
Brevard Flagler Volusia	No data available to report	
Broward	• Soft Skills: Body and Mind • Soft Skills: Feelings and People	• Personal Qualities and Interpersonal Skills
Capital Region	No data available to report	
Central Florida	• Conflict Resolution Skills • Effective Communication Skills	• Personal Qualities and Interpersonal Skills • Communication
Chipola	• Stress and Time Management	• Personal Qualities and Interpersonal Skills • Reliability, Organizing, and Time Management
Citrus Levy Marion	No data available to report	
Escarosa		
Gulf Coast		
Heartland	• 10 Soft Skills Training	• Personal Qualities and Interpersonal Skills • Reliability, Organizing, and Time Management • Critical and Creative Thinking • Communication
Hillsborough Pinellas	• Professional Communication	• Communication
North Central Florida	No data available to report	
North Florida		
Northeast Florida		
Okaloosa Walton		
Palm Beach County		
Pasco Hernando		
Polk		
Research Coast	• Soft Skills	• Personal Qualities and Interpersonal Skills

		• Reliability, Organizing, and Time Management • Critical and Creative Thinking • Communication
South Florida	• Effective Communication • Professionalism Workshop • Time Management • Soft Skills Training • Academic Employability and Skills Training • Employability Skills	• Personal Qualities and Interpersonal Skills • Reliability, Organizing, and Time Management • Critical and Creative Thinking • Communication
Southwest Florida	No data available to report	
Suncoast		

Like digital literacy, CareerSource Capital Region, Polk, and South Florida use the FRTW program to facilitate foundational employability through two different training and credentialing programs: academic employability and soft skills training. The Academic Employability Skills training is comprised of three modules: Work Ready Math, Work Ready Reading, and Work Ready Data. The Soft Skills training focuses on conveying professionalism, communicating effectively, teamwork and collaboration, and thinking critically and solving problems. CareerSource Polk offers a blended approach to online and in-person training upon request, while CareerSource Capital Region offers on-line training and CareerSource South Florida offers FRTW Training in-person, as needed.

Table 4: Florida Ready to Work PY2024-2025 Soft Skills Training by LWDB

Florida Ready to Work Soft Skills Training PY2024-2025			
CareerSource LWDB	**Soft Skills Training Minutes**	**Assessments**	**Credentials**
Brevard Flagler Volusia	103,356	29	28
Broward	CareerSource Broward is not enrolled in the Florida Ready to Work Program		
Capital Region	2,802	22	17
Central Florida	46,759	58	46
Chipola	62	2	2
Citrus Levy Marion	12,048	0	0
Escarosa	57,892	42	41
Gulf Coast	0	0	0
Heartland	325	0	0
Hillsborough Pinellas	302,261	48	46
North Central Florida	144	0	0
North Florida	18,843	0	0
Northeast Florida	7,851	1	0
Okaloosa Walton	836	0	0
Palm Beach County	0	0	0
Pasco Hernando	40,060	0	0
Polk	24,456	21	21
Research Coast	292	0	0
South Florida	26,1575	18	7
Southwest Florida	0	0	0
Suncoast	110	0	0

Table 5: Florida Ready to Work PY2024-2025 Academic Employability Training by LWDB

Florida Ready to Work Academic Employability Training by LWDB PY2024-2025			
CareerSource LWDB	**Academic Employability Skills Training Minutes**	**Assessments**	**Credentials**
Brevard Flagler Volusia	33,300	0	0
Broward	CareerSource Broward is not enrolled in the Florida Ready to Work Program		
Capital Region	5,092	375	75
Central Florida	11,286	0	0
Chipola	5,077	33	7
Citrus Levy Marion	0	0	0
Escarosa	33,343	31	12
Gulf Coast	0	0	0
Heartland	25	0	0
Hillsborough Pinellas	159,014	0	0
North Central Florida	4439	91	26
North Florida	37,834	245	73
Northeast Florida	13,898	334	98
Okaloosa Walton	175	0	0
Palm Beach County	0	0	0
Pasco Hernando	27,225	9	3
Polk	2,076	0	0
Research Coast	15	0	0
South Florida	133,846	112	32
Southwest Florida	0	0	0
Suncoast	0	0	0

Overall, the FRTW foundational employability skills assessment has a **high success rate among the LWDBs who administer the assessment**. Of the eight LWDBs that administered soft skills assessments and credentials in PY2024-2025 highlighted in Table 4, the average pass rate is approximately 88%. Of the seven LWDBS that administered academic employability assessments and credentials in PY2024 – 2025 highlighted in Table 5, the average pass rate is approximately 27%. When assessing each of the six foundational employability skills areas, the communicating effectively module logged the most training hours cumulatively across all the LWDBs compared to the other four modules. However, there is inevitably a variance between each LWDB regarding training minutes logged per module.

Like digital literacy, there is no direct correlation between the training minutes and the assessments. Job seekers logged 57,892 training minutes at CareerSource Escarosa and 42 assessments were administered whereas CareerSource Hillsborough Pinellas logged more training minutes at 302,261 minutes and 48 assessments were administered. Despite the number of assessments administered, CareerSource Escarosa and CareerSource Hillsborough Pinellas both had an average passing rate of 99%.

Other Florida Credentials and Programs

Floridians can also access foundational employability and soft skills training through the Workforce Partner Agencies in the FL WINS Program. FL Commerce, DCF, and DOE each offer a variety of comprehensive programs and services for job seekers and employers. Their training programs are designed to enhance employability and career advancement through vocational training, on-the-job training, and industry-specific certifications that align with current market demands.[15]

FL Commerce lists a variety of workforce and services, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program, Veterans Employment Program, WIOA and other WIOA-eligible programs (e.g., Wagner-Peyser). DOE offers adult education programs, literacy services,

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[15] https://www.floridajobs.org/office-directory/division-of-workforce-services/initiatives/workforce-system-integration

and career and technical education which are designed to help adults get the basic skills they need to be productive workers and enter and succeed in postsecondary education. Programs such as Adult Basic Education, Adult High School and GED Preparation, and English for Speakers of Other Languages.

Foundational Employability: Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Programs

Enacted in 2014, WIOA sought to streamline and strengthen the public workforce system, ensuring that job seekers, particularly those facing significant barriers to employment, have access to the necessary education, training, and support services to secure and retain meaningful employment. Foundational employability programs under WIOA focus on equipping individuals with essential skills such as literacy, numeracy, digital proficiency, and soft skills, which are critical for navigating the modern job market[16]. By fostering a collaborative approach among federal, state, and local agencies, WIOA promotes a more integrated and efficient service delivery system, ultimately driving economic growth and enhancing the quality of the workforce.

Foundational employability programs under WIOA are designed to provide individuals with the essential skills and competencies required to succeed in the workforce. These programs target a broad spectrum of job seekers, including youth, adults, and dislocated workers, with a particular emphasis on those who face significant barriers to employment, such as individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals, and those with limited educational attainment. Key components of foundational employability skills programs include: Basic Skills Training, Digital Literacy, Soft Skills Development, Career Exploration and Counseling, Work-Based Learning, and Support Services.

In the state of Florida, 116,321 total participants were served by WIOA programs, with 9,750 receiving training in 2023.[17] CareerSource Florida is moving towards a more standard approach to deliver their WIOA training programs, which is similar to peer states, such as Georgia and Pennsylvania, that have like numbers of LWDBs and training participants. The following information highlights insights from the LWDB training delivery data:
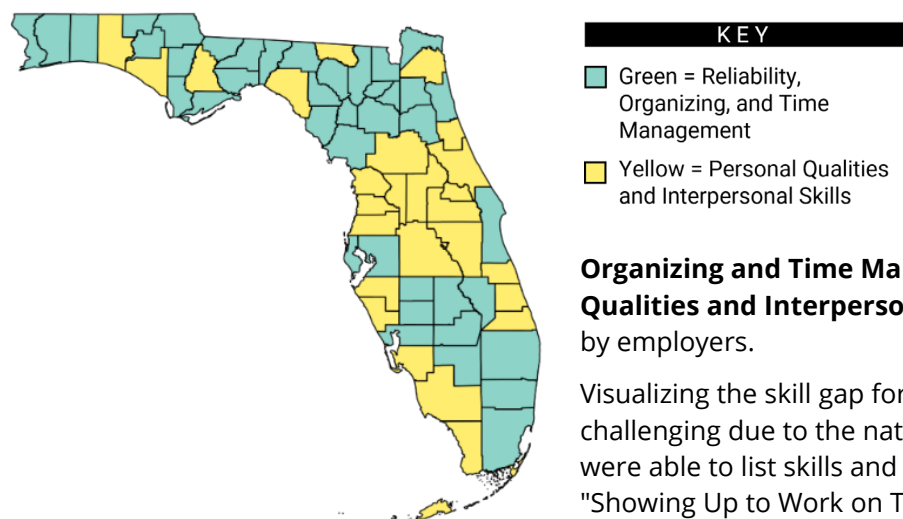
- CareerSource Okaloosa Walton – Ft. Walton Beach offer Career Edge Work Readiness Training to youth. A total of nine online modules for 1.5 hours each offers basic skills training to prepare participants for the workforce.

- CareerSource Hillsborough Pinellas offers 12 youth-focused programs and services that cover a broad range of topics, such as mentoring, SMART Goals, interviewing, resume writing, job search, financial literacy, networking, stress management, and choosing a career path. Each course is 90 minutes and offered on either a weekly or monthly basis. Their ACE Bootcamp is delivered on a cohort basis as an all-day activity.

- CareerSource North Central Florida – Lake City offers programs to participants of all age ranges, with a specific focus on Aircraft maintenance and nursing. Courses range from nine weeks to 48 weeks and are delivered in-person.

- CareerSource Gulf Coast offers on-line digital courses through Alison and Udemy, as well as in-person training through Gulf Coast State College's Start Right Stay Right program. Alison courses are available upon request for job seekers of all age ranges, while Udemy and Start Right Stay Right courses are offered on a quarterly basis and are primarily targeted at out-of-school youth.

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[16] https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa/
[17] Performance Data | U.S. Department of Labor

Foundational Employability: Geographic Heat Map

Figure 17: Demand for Foundational Employability Skills by County

KEY

☐ Green = Reliability, Organizing, and Time Management

☐ Yellow = Personal Qualities and Interpersonal Skills

The map depicts the demand for two primary categories of foundational employability skills across Florida counties. An analysis of 2,258,364 job descriptions revealed that skills related to **Reliability, Organizing and Time Management**, as well as **Personal Qualities and Interpersonal Skills**, are highly sought after by employers.

Visualizing the skill gap for foundational employability proved challenging due to the nature of these skills. While employers were able to list skills and qualities such as "Teamwork" and "Showing Up to Work on Time," the proprietary labor market analysis concluded that **soft skills were not always explicitly listed in resumes**. This discrepancy created a larger perceived skill gap that may not accurately reflect the actual situation in Florida. Job seekers tended to list more technical skills rather than soft skills, which contributed to this discrepancy.

Under the Personal Qualities and Interpersonal Skills category, some of the key skills include **collaboration, empathy, leadership, decision making, customer service, and hospitality**. The demand for these skills is predominantly found in the following LWDBS areas: CareerSource Pasco Hernando, CareerSource Suncoast, CareerSource Central Florida, CareerSource Southwest Florida, and CareerSource Research Coast

In the Reliability, Organizing, and Time Management skill group, important skills include **planning and evaluating, multitasking, organization skills, attention to detail, and quality assurance.** The demand for these skills is concentrated in the following LWDB areas: CareerSource South Florida, CareerSource Broward, CareerSource Palm Beach, CareerSource Heartland, CareerSource Central Florida, and most of the panhandle, including CareerSource Capital Region, CareerSource Chipola, CareerSource Escarosa, and CareerSource Northeast Florida.

Overall, the heat map analysis highlights the significant demand for foundational employability skills across various regions in Florida. Addressing the skill gap in these areas requires a focus on both technical and soft skills to meet the needs of employers and enhance job seekers' employability.

Foundational Employability and Digital Literacy: Geographic Heat Maps

The following heat maps highlight the skill gaps in the state of Florida at the LWDB level and the county level, showcasing 21 different LWDB areas and 67 different counties in Florida, respectively. The skill gaps are shown on a five-point scale where dark green signifies a very low skill gap and red signifies a very high skill gap, relative to the 67 counties.

KEY
- Dark green = Very Low
- Light green = Low
- Yellow = Average
- Orange = High
- Red = Very High
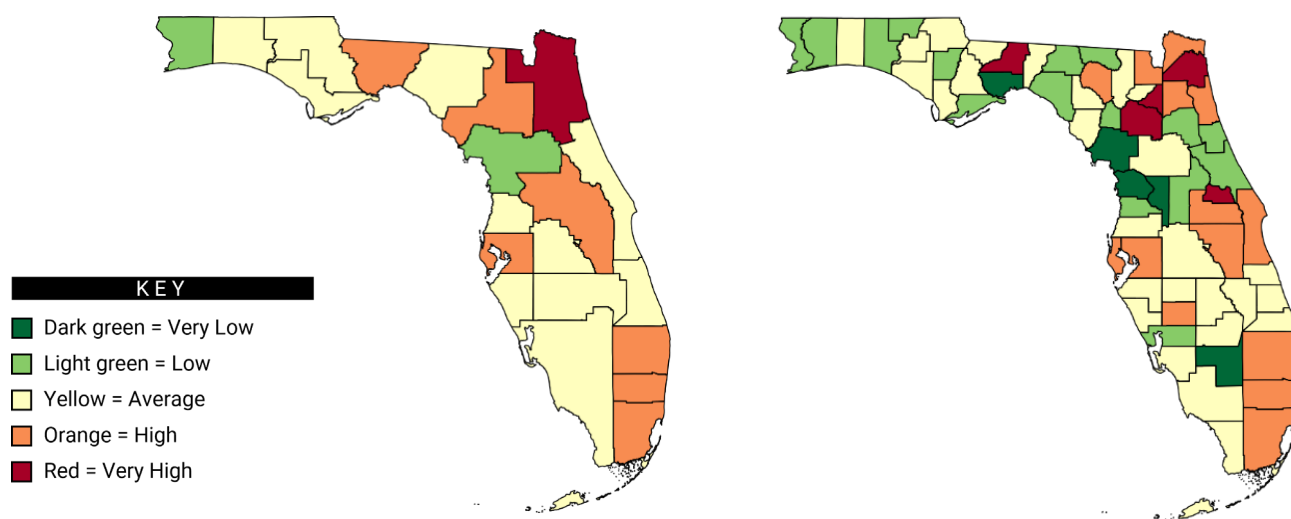
The heatmap analysis involved both Foundational Employability and Digital Literacy skills. Skills were assessed at the county level, by both workforce skill demand and supply. Workforce skill demand measures the prevalence of skills identified among 2,512,484 unique job postings within the State of Florida. Workforce skill supply measures the prevalence of skills appearing in 2,129,765 publicly available resumes from people who list Florida as their residency on their resume.

The skills gap is measured in two steps. The first step is pulling the difference between the demand and supply rates, per skill, to identify whether there is a skills gap or surplus present. The second step reviews the proportion of skills that exhibit a gap versus a surplus to capture the volume of the skills that exhibit gaps within a given county.

At the LDWB level, the counties were weighed by population density to produce an overall aggregate to appropriately represent the residents across counties.

While some counties may appear to have more moderate skills gap ratios than anticipated, the data does not consider commuting patterns where a sizeable amount of the population may travel from their resident county to another county for work due to lower workforce demand in the resident county. This factor may impact counties that are more rural or have higher poverty rates, such as Dixie County, where a majority, 69.3%, of residents work outside the county[18].

Furthermore, supply is based on publicly available resumes. Candidates, particularly those with at least some college education, are typically trained to focus their resumes on transferable skills. This is evidenced in the University of Florida Career Center resumes guides where **students are encouraged to highlight their functional and digital literacy skills on their resumes** based on their sample resumes provided. Moreover, at Florida State University, their resources teach students to refrain from including Foundational Employability skills such as Interpersonal skills and Time Management. Alachua County and Leon County, where the University of Florida and Florida State University are located, were flagged as having higher skills gaps ratios than other counties. These findings support the understanding that candidates may be more inclined to **prioritize listing hard skills as opposed to foundational employability, which focuses on soft skills**, on their resume, thereby contributing to the higher ratios observed in some counties.

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[18] Summary of Employment, Demographics, and Commuting Patterns for Dixie County, Florida

- The highest skill gap can be found in CareerSource Northeast Florida and CareerSource North Central Florida, specifically in Duval County, Bradford County, and Alachua County

- Very high skill gaps exist in Leon County (CareerSource Capital Region) and Seminole County (CareerSource Central Florida), indicating a high proportion of skills that exhibit a gap between talent supply and demand in these counties.

- There is a large disparity in the CareerSource Capital Region area as it has Leon County with a very high skill gap adjacent to Wakulla County, with one of the lowest skill gaps. Similarly, Levy County (CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion) has one of the lowest skill gaps and borders Alachua County (CareerSource North Central Florida) who has a very high skill gap.

- The CareerSource Brevard Flagler Volusia area shows an average skill gap, but upon closer inspection by county, Flagler and Volusia counties have a low skill gap whereas Brevard has a high skill gap. This is a similar finding in the CareerSource Southwest Florida area where the LWDB map shows CareerSource Southwest Florida as having an average skill gap, but Charlotte County and Hendry County have low to very low skill gaps, while the rest of the area may have more of a skill gap, which averages out the skill gap for the area.

- There are very low skill gaps present in the CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion area and in the CareerSource Escarosa area, indicating a lower proportion of skills that exhibit a gap between supply and demand.

- There are five counties with very low skill gaps: Wakulla, Levy, Citrus, Sumter, and Hendry.

IV. Partnerships, Outreach and Engagement

Effective engagement and partnerships with industry and other community organizations are vital to understanding economic challenges and employer needs that impact educational programming. The large and diverse population in Florida necessitates using a variety of different engagement strategies to effectively partner with businesses and institutions and to reach jobseekers to address barriers to training, self-sufficiency, and employment.

Engaging with Employers and Industry

In the survey, employers were asked, "Is your organization familiar with CareerSource Florida's Workforce Development Boards and the services they provide?" Of the 22 employers who responded, four employers (18.2%) said no whereas 18 employers (81.8%) said yes and selected the CareerSource Florida services they utilize. Each of the employers were able to select multiple services.

- 22.7% (5 employers) – Onsite interviews
- 45.5% (10 employers) – Participation in career fair
- 63.6% (14 employers) – Posting vacancies
- 31.8% (7 employers) – Searching for resumes
- 9.1% (2 employers) selected Other
- 1 WIOA funding for new hires
- Our HR director attends meetings

Two of the employers (9.1%) who are familiar with the CareerSource Florida network and

Figure 19: LWDB Services Utilized by Employers
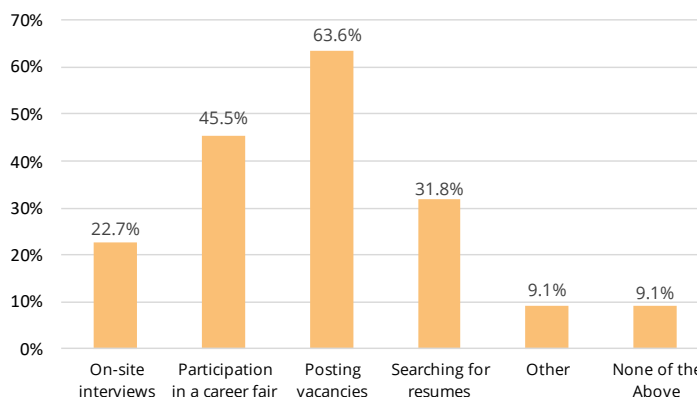
services selected that they do not utilize any of the services listed above.

Additionally, in the survey, employers were asked, "Does your organization partner with local workforce or economic development organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, faith-based organizations, or non-profits to help you identify skilled candidates?" Of the 22 employers who responded to the survey, 13 out of 22 (59.1%) answered yes. Employers were then promoted to select the organizations they partner with and were able to select all that applied:

- 27.3% (6 employers) - Chamber of Commerce
- 31.8% (7 employers) - LWDB
- 22.7% (5 employers) - Local non-profit organization
- 9% (2 employers) - Faith-based organization
- 18.2% (4 employers) – Other

The employers who selected "Other" listed the following services and organizations: CEP, local industry associations, local economic development, Urban League, Veterans Administration, and Jewish Family and Career Services.

Employers were also asked, "Does your organization partner with the K-12 public or private education system for recruitment, training, career awareness, or pre-apprenticeships?" Nine of 22 employers responded yes and listed partnerships with the following 13 higher education institutions:

- College of Central Florida
- Daytona State College
- Daytona State College Advanced Technology College
- Florida A&M University
- Florida State College at Jacksonville
- Hillsborough Community College
- Jacksonville University
- Manatee Technical College
- St. Johns River State College
- University of Central Florida
- University of Florida
- University of North Florida
- University of South Florida

Anecdotally, from the LWDBs, CareerSource Chipola highlighted an initiative where they teach a 14-lesson course at local high schools, covering labor market information, soft skills, financial literacy, interview techniques, and career exploration.

To grow and maintain industry partnerships, Florida leverages **education and industry consortiums** within each LWDB area to convene representatives from local educational entities and businesses.[19] Each LWDB area convenes the consortia based on community and industry need, providing quarterly reporting on programs, services, and partnerships that **drive educational and workforce opportunities**. Peer states employ similar practices to engage industry and bring different entities together. For example:

In **Georgia,** workforce training and readiness is centralized through their **QuickStart program**, which partners with employers and training facilities in key industries to give workers hands-on, direct experience tailored to specific jobs. **Customized training** helps to upskill employees to improve performance and advancement opportunities, The program also **matches employees with specific skill sets** to employers, incentivizing training by linking it directly to job placement opportunities.

In **New York**, programs are administered through the NY State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) in cooperation with many entities, including the Office of Strategic Workforce Development (OSWD), which was chartered to **align job training with the needs of employers** through grant awards, especially in growth industries, to better meet the needs of employers and create career opportunities through training and curriculum resources available to NY workforces.[20] NYSDOL also

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[19] CareerSource Florida Policies and Initiatives
[20] 6Office of Strategic Workforce Development | Empire State Development

tracks repeat business customers, based on the total number of businesses that used a service anytime within a 3-year period, with a repeat business customer rate of 75.3%.[21]

In **Pennsylvania**, training and financial aid is delivered through their LWDBs, which provide resources, training, and credentialing in collaboration with educational institutions and in partnership with state-wide programs such as **PASmart and SkillUp™** to fund industry-specific training and apprenticeship programs and to **improve employability and marketability** of skills through business, technical, and industry-specific certification trainings.[22]

In **Texas**, The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) was established to better support employers and create a job-ready workforce that is prepared and equipped to fill critical in-demand jobs, both now and in the future. TWC uses WIOA fundings along with numerous grants and targeted programs, including **Upskill Texas**, to finance businesses for customized job training and to rapidly upskill incumbent workers across the state aligned with emerging job needs or to avert layoffs.[23]

Engaging with Job Seekers

The LWDBs employ a diverse range of methods to outreach and engage with job seekers through their programs. These methods include:

- Advertising programs at CareerSource Florida LWDB orientations
- Client intake process
- Community outreach initiatives
- Email communications
- Face-to-Face interactions
- Flyers

- Hiring events
- Job boards
- Partnership with organizations for referrals
- Social media
- Text message
- Website – calendar

Each LWDB utilizes multiple outreach avenues for their programs and did not identify any single method as being more effective than others. Furthermore, data was not provided on how job seekers become aware of each program. Insights from focus groups with training providers revealed that one technical college experienced an increase in enrollment through social media marketing and word-of-mouth referrals. Students who complete their programs often share their positive experiences with friends and family, leading to subsequent enrollments at the college.

Additionally, each of the LWDBs operate their own CareerSource LWDB website to target job seekers and employers specific to their areas. Pennsylvania takes a similar approach, with each of their LWDBs operating their own website for outreach to their area. CareerSource Florida and Pennsylvania's Department of Labor and Industry both collect and publish economic, geographic, and demographic data for each of their workforce development areas. Detailed data collection allows CareerSource Florida and Pennsylvania's Department of Labor and Industry to analyze the impact of current economic conditions while maintaining accountability.

Delivery methods

Most training sessions are conducted in-person with an available virtual option, and their durations range from 60 to 120 minutes. Insights from focus groups indicate that foundational digital literacy courses are best delivered in-person due to participants' initial lack of computer literacy and knowledge. However, once job seekers acquire basic computer and internet navigation skills, they can effectively participate in more

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[21] 5https://dol.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2024/12/py-2023-annual-statewide-performance-report-12-02-2024.pdf
[22] https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/dli/documents/businesses/workforce-development/wdb/documents/2023%20workforce%20development%20annual%20report_submitted%2003.01.2024.pdf
[23] https://www.twc.texas.gov/sites/default/files/oei/docs/upskill-texas-application-twc.pdf

advanced courses virtually. This approach helps to overcome potential time and transportation challenges associated with attending in-person workshops.

Employment Outcomes

At the time of this report, five of the 17 LWDBs who provided a list of training programs shared varying levels of employment outcomes. Twelve of the 17 LWDBs indicated that employment outcomes are either not tracked or the data is unavailable. From the data received, the courses offered at LWDBs have a high completion rate, however, due to the lack of data, a **correlation between program outreach, program completion, and employment outcomes could not be established.**

During a focus group with a training provider outside of CareerSource network, it was noted that all employment data collected is self-reported by students. Some students secure employment during career fairs before completing their courses at the technical college, while others contact their instructors for references, which serves as another method of data collection for this particular training institution.

Outreach and Engagement: Marketing Personas

In addition to providing insights on segmented populations of Florida's workforce regarding employment barriers, proprietary advanced analytics solutions were used to segment the population and understand how the different demographic variables can affect strategies to effectively outreach and message to different populations within Florida's workforce. By using **nation-wide archetypes** based on various socioeconomic, behavioral, and lifestyle variables, patterns begin to emerge that convey how to **market and improve outreach to more effectively engage** targeted workforce segments and businesses. At present, there are 15 unique national personas in use, which are divided into three cohorts based on resource security.

When applying these personas to the Florida workforce, **five of the 15 personas represent more than 53% of the workforce state-wide,** with three of the five falling in the resource-constrained cohort:

Figure 20: Florida Marketing Personas
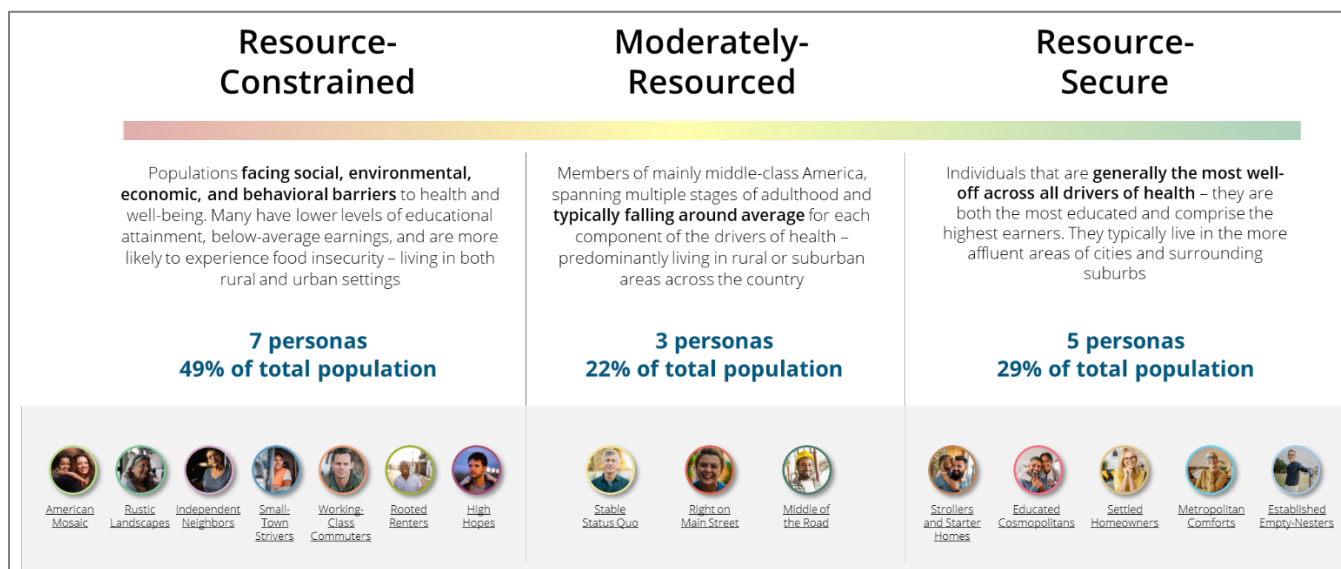
Table 6: Top Five Personas in Florida by County

Persona	Highest Statewide Percentage	Highest County Percentage
Stable Status Quo: Older, family-oriented homeowners with high rates of veterans; politically engaged	12.26%	Sumter Nassau

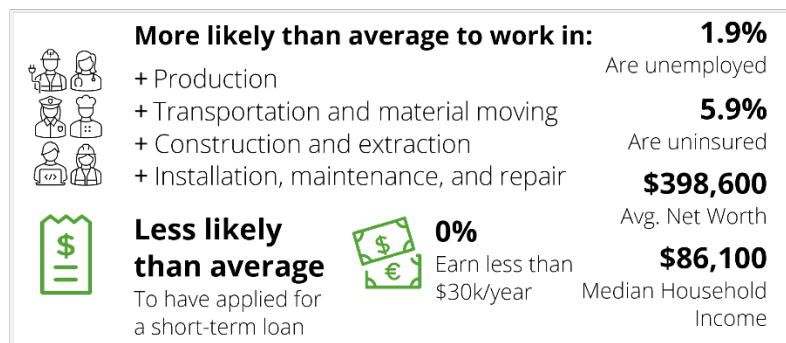|		Flagler
Rustic Landscapes: One of the oldest personas; predominantly White, low-income, living in rural areas	11.05%	Glades Dixie Highlands
Rooted Renters: Predominantly Black or African Americans in later adulthood; connected to their cultural heritage	11.01%	Miami-Dade Broward Duval
Middle of the Road: Urban-adjacent, working-class entering mid-adulthood; mixed educational attainment	9.93%	Broward Pinellas Miami-Dade
American Mosaic: Younger, urban-based adults who are racially diverse; 34% speak English as a 2nd language	9.02%	Miami-Dade Leon Orange

In the pursuit of developing a more targeted marketing and socialization strategy to improve outreach and engagement, key persona characteristics have been shared below for the top 5 personans that may influence outreach channels, content, and delivery.
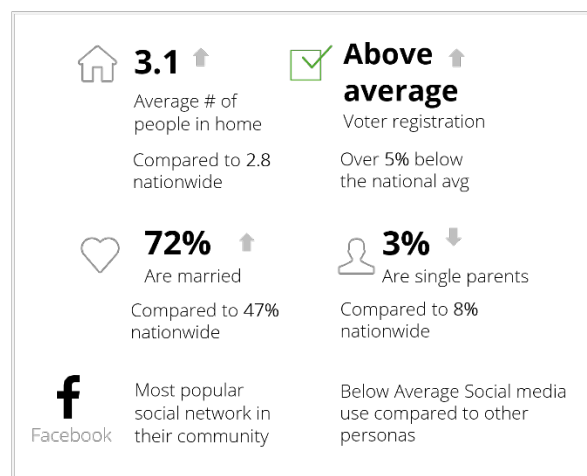
Stable Status Quo

\+ High family orientation
\- Low in novelty, risk- taking
\- Low in continuous learning

WEALTH & EMPLOYMENT

More likely than average to work in:
\+ Production
\+ Transportation and material moving
\+ Construction and extraction
\+ Installation, maintenance, and repair

Less likely than average
To have applied for a short-term loan

0%
Earn less than $30k/year

1.9%
Are unemployed

5.9%
Are uninsured

$398,600
Avg. Net Worth

$86,100
Median Household Income

ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

3.1
Average # of people in home
Compared to 2.8 nationwide

Above average
Voter registration
Over 5% below the national avg

72%
Are married
Compared to 47% nationwide

3%
Are single parents
Compared to 8% nationwide

Facebook
Most popular social network in their community

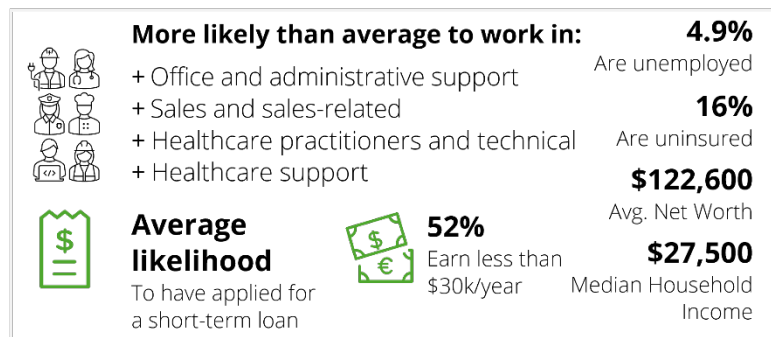Below Average Social media use compared to other personas

Stable Status Quo individuals are older, family-oriented homeowners. They have some of the highest rates of veterans, and are politically engaged, with above- average voter registration. However, they are unlikely to seek out new experiences and have a low desire to learn new things. While they have below-average educational attainment, they fall within the middle to upper-middle class and are typically employed with health insurance. High school and associate degree attainment are above the national average, but a bachelor's degree and above are below the national average. To best engage this population, consider areas and communities where these individuals are already visiting as they're unlikely to see out new experiences. Engage these individuals at the library, the local community center, the gym, or the grocery store. Due to their political engagement, engagement through political campaigns may also be effective. Consider Facebook as the main social medial channel for online outreach.
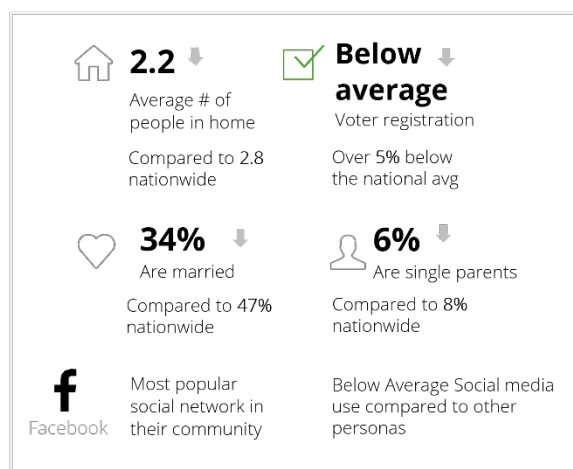
Rustic Landscapes

+ Highest religious importance
- Lowest tech fluency
- Lowest in continuous learning

WEALTH & EMPLOYMENT

More likely than average to work in:

+ Office and administrative support
+ Sales and sales-related
+ Healthcare practitioners and technical
+ Healthcare support

4.9%
Are unemployed

16%
Are uninsured

$122,600
Avg. Net Worth

Average likelihood
To have applied for a short-term loan

52%
Earn less than $30k/year

$27,500
Median Household Income

ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

2.2
Average # of people in home
Compared to 2.8 nationwide

Below average
Voter registration
Over 5% below the national avg

34%
Are married
Compared to 47% nationwide

6%
Are single parents
Compared to 8% nationwide

Facebook
Most popular social network in their community

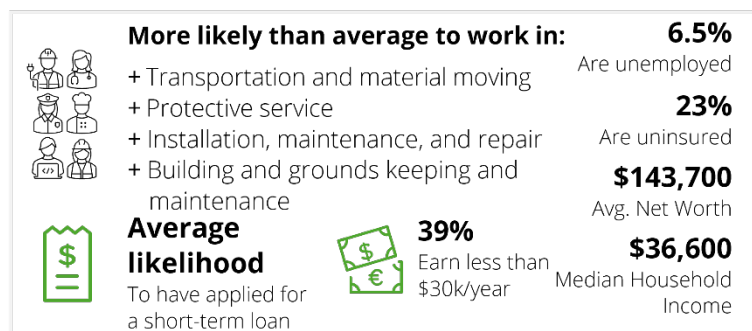Below Average Social media use compared to other personas

Rustic Landscapes is one of the oldest personas living in some of the most rural areas. As the most religious of any persona, they often prioritize faith. They tend to live either on their own or with one other person. Rustic Landscape individuals not only have below average educational attainment but the highest rate of individuals with only a high school education. Their attainment of a bachelor's degree and above fall 13% below the national average. They also may face obstacles such as below-average broadband access and lower levels of tech fluency compared to other personas. Based on these factors, engaging this population may require more in-person outreach rather than through digital media. However, Facebook would be the most popular social media channel and should be utilized over Instagram or LinkedIn. Additionally, as the most religious persona, partnerships with faith-based organizations or local employers would be an effective way to engage with this population.
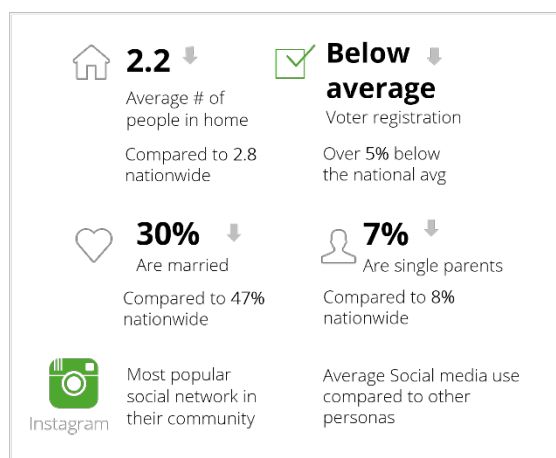
Rooted Renters

+ Most highly value cultural connection
+ High religious importance
+ Highly value novelty, risk-taking

WEALTH & EMPLOYMENT

More likely than average to work in:

+ Transportation and material moving
+ Protective service
+ Installation, maintenance, and repair
+ Building and grounds keeping and maintenance

6.5%
Are unemployed

23%
Are uninsured

$143,700
Avg. Net Worth

Average likelihood
To have applied for a short-term loan

39%
Earn less than $30k/year

$36,600
Median Household Income

ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

2.2
Average # of people in home
Compared to 2.8 nationwide

Below average
Voter registration
Over 5% below the national avg

30%
Are married
Compared to 47% nationwide

7%
Are single parents
Compared to 8% nationwide

Instagram
Most popular social network in their community

Average Social media use compared to other personas

Rooted Renters are predominantly Black or African American individuals in later adulthood. Religion is central to their lives, paired with a connection to their cultural heritage and community. Around one-fourth of Rooted Renters speak English as a second language. Their high school completion is above the national average and attainment of an associate degree is on par with the national average. Mostly in urban areas,

they are the least likely to own a home and a car. Rooted Renters are also some of the most likely to live alone and to be unmarried. Engaging with this population would be effective in partnership with faith-based organizations or local community centers. Due to low car ownership, consider spaces that are within walking distance or accessible via public transportation. Additionally, smaller group classes may be more attractive as this population values the importance of community connection.
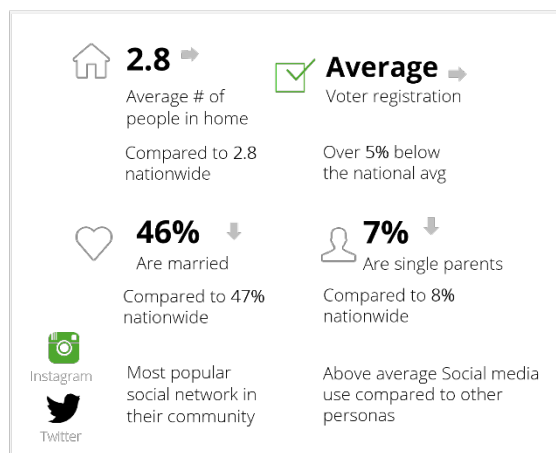
Middle of the Road

+ High tech fluency
+ Highly value continuous learning
+ Highly value novelty, risk-taking

WEALTH & EMPLOYMENT

More likely than average to work in:
+ Construction and extraction
+ Installation, maintenance, and repair
+ Computer and mathematical
+ Transportation and material moving

Average likelihood
To have applied for a short-term loan

4%
Earn less than $30k/year

4.6%
Are unemployed

15%
Are uninsured

$315,400
Avg. Net Worth

$81,900
Median Household Income

ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

2.8
Average # of people in home
Compared to 2.8 nationwide

Average
Voter registration
Over 5% below the national avg

46%
Are married
Compared to 47% nationwide

7%
Are single parents
Compared to 8% nationwide

Instagram
Twitter

Most popular social network in their community

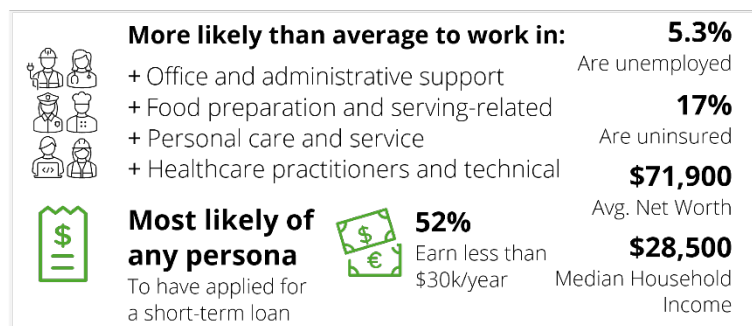Above average Social media use compared to other personas

Middle of the Road consist of working-class professionals entering their mid-adulthood. They have mixed educational attainment and reside in urban peripheral areas – often renting condos, apartments, or single-family homes. The attainment of an associate degree and a bachelor's degree is above the national average. They are more likely to live alone and go unmarried than average. One of the younger personas, they have high technological fluency and are open to trying new things, with an emphasis on continuous learning. Engage with these individuals virtually as this population has high-tech fluency and will be online. Consider partnerships with condo and apartment complexes to engage this population in-person. A hybrid model of engagement may work well for this population as this population may be online but are open to trying new things so they may be willing to engage in-person as well.
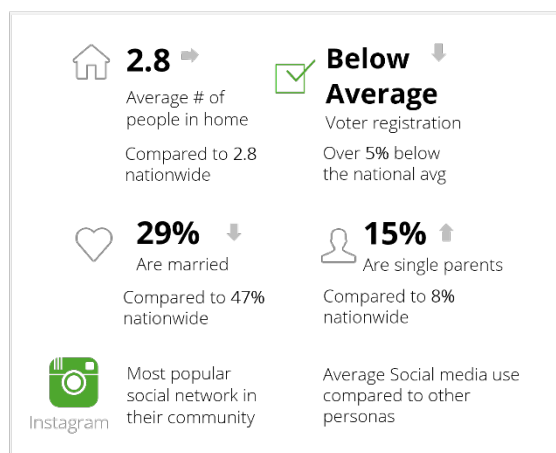
American Mosaic

+ Highest tech fluency
+ Most highly value novelty, risk-taking
+ Highly value cultural connection

WEALTH & EMPLOYMENT

More likely than average to work in:
+ Office and administrative support
+ Food preparation and serving-related
+ Personal care and service
+ Healthcare practitioners and technical

Most likely of any persona
To have applied for a short-term loan

52%
Earn less than $30k/year

5.3%
Are unemployed

17%
Are uninsured

$71,900
Avg. Net Worth

$28,500
Median Household Income

ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

2.8
Average # of people in home
Compared to 2.8 nationwide

Below Average
Voter registration
Over 5% below the national avg

29%
Are married
Compared to 47% nationwide

15%
Are single parents
Compared to 8% nationwide

Instagram

Most popular social network in their community

Average Social media use compared to other personas

These younger adults are racially diverse, with 34% as non-native English speakers, and often live in urban areas. They value their culture as part of their identity and love to try new things and take risks. However, these residents face several obstacles – they are the most likely to be single parents, most at-risk for food insecurity, have some of the lowest education rates, and experience some of the highest unemployment. Still, likely linked with their younger age, they are tech savvy and likely to use their mobile phones to manage their life, which lends itself well to digital health innovations, if accessible to them. The attainment of an associate degree is 3% above the national average but for a bachelor's degree and above, it falls 8% below the national average. A hybrid approach to engagement with digital media and in-person outreach may work best for this population as they're both online but enjoy trying new things. Consider engaging with this population at community events such as farmer's markets and festivals but also consider areas of regular foot traffic such as the local grocery store, libraries, doctor offices, and community/civic centers.

V.   Recommendations

Based on the research and analysis conducted, there are 7 key areas of improvement for CareerSource Florida to consider:

1. **Standardize the approach to digital literacy training delivery to improve the user experience and close curriculum gaps.**

   Assessing the digital literacy training data provided by LWDBs, gathered through open-source research and the FRTW training data, highlights a significant lack of digital literacy training courses across the 21 CareerSource Florida LWDBs. Focus groups revealed that training providers commonly use observational assessments to evaluate job seekers' digital literacy skills in real time, focusing on their ability to manage basic computer tasks. Additionally, the delivery of training varies by region, with hybrid models proving effective in some areas, while rural counties often rely more on in-person sessions due to limited internet access.

   Table 1 on pg. 11 illustrates the digital literacy courses offered by each LWDB. Six LWDBs offer digital literacy courses which focus on basic computer skills. Two LWDBs offer two digital literacy courses, the second course being a more intermediate level from the primary basic computer course.

   Recommendation Details:

   - **Curriculum development:** Develop a comprehensive and standardized digital literacy curriculum that includes essential skills such as basic computer operations, internet navigation, and information management and analytics as there is as high demand across the state of Florida and a low talent supply for the latter.
   - **Training delivery:** Collaborate with educational institutions to deliver curriculum and increase access, especially in rural areas with lack of broadband access.
   - **Assessment and credentialing:** Strengthen the use of standardized assessments for digital literacy skills and ensure job seekers receive credentials recognized by employers. For LWDBs not utilizing FRTW or delivering digital literacy courses, implement a uniform assessment system to be adopted by all CareerSource Florida LWDBs.
   - **Instructor training:** Provide comprehensive training for instructors to ensure they are well-equipped to deliver the standardized digital literacy curriculum effectively. Establish a continuous professional development program for instructors to keep them updated on best practices and emerging trends in digital literacy training.
   - **Monitoring and evaluation:** Implement a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to track the progress and impact of the standardized digital literacy training approach. Collect and analyze

feedback from participants and employers to identify areas for improvement and ensure the training remains relevant and effective.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- **Increased digital literacy:** Improve digital literacy skills among job seekers, making them more competitive in the job market and better prepared for a variety of roles that require digital proficiency.
- **Consistent training quality:** Ensure a high and consistent quality of digital literacy training across all LWDBs, leading to a more uniform and positive user experience for job seekers.

2. Standardize the approach to foundational employability training delivery to improve the user experience and close curriculum gaps.

Current training workshops primarily focus on job preparation activities such as resume building and interview techniques. However, there is a pressing need to enhance foundational employability skills among job seekers. The Academic Employment assessment, which includes Math, Reading, and Data (analytical skills), covers core foundational employability skills highly valued by both employers and job seekers, as evidenced by survey data. Additionally, seven out of the 21 LWDBs offer workshops focused on foundational employability skills, with most of these workshops concentrating on communication and interpersonal skills.

Recommendation Details:

- **Curriculum development:** Collaborate with industry experts and educational institutions to ensure the curriculum aligns with current employer expectations and job market demands. Develop a comprehensive and standardized curriculum that includes essential foundational employability skills, specifically focused on Personal Qualities and Interpersonal Skills and Reliability, Organizing, and Time Management, and that skill group is highest in demand across the state of Florida.
- **Training delivery:** Implement a consistent training delivery model across all LWDBs to ensure uniformity in the quality and content of the training provided. Consider utilizing a blended learning approach that combines in-person workshops with online modules to cater to diverse learning preferences and increase accessibility.
- **Assessment and credentialing:** Implement or reinforce a statewide standardized assessment for foundational employability skills using a preferred vendor to measure the effectiveness of the training and provide job seekers with a credential recognized by employers. LWDBs should also partner with preferred vendors to actively monitor and promote the completion of training modules and assessments to achieve credentialing. Regularly review and update these assessments to ensure they remain aligned with evolving industry standards and job market requirements.
- **Instructor training:** Provide comprehensive training for instructors to ensure they are well-equipped to deliver the standardized curriculum effectively using a preferred vendor. Establish a continuous professional development program in partnership with a preferred vendor for instructors to keep them updated on best practices and emerging trends in employability training.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** Implement a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to track the progress and impact of the standardized training approach. Collect and analyze feedback from participants and employers to identify areas for improvement and ensure the training remains relevant and effective.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- **Consistent training quality:** Establish a high and consistent quality of training across all LWDBs, leading to a more uniform and positive user experience for job seekers.

- **Data-driven improvements:** Utilize data from assessments and feedback to continuously refine and enhance the training programs, ensuring they remain aligned with the evolving needs of the job market.

3. **Implement a standardized state-wide reporting and data analytics tool to collect and publish state and local training-related data.**

Each LWDB currently has an autonomous approach to collecting data for their training workshops and programs. When asked to produce data on attendance, completion rates, and employment outcomes for workshop attendees, few LWDBs could provide comprehensive data, and some indicated that certain data was not collected at all. To effectively measure the efficacy of training programs and determine optimal resource allocation, it is essential to consistently collect data across all LWDBs. This standardized approach will enable informed decision-making and enhance the overall effectiveness of training initiatives.

Recommendations Details:

- **Create a standardized reporting tool**: Create and implement a state-wide reporting tool that standardizes the collection of training-related data across all LWDBs. This tool should capture key metrics such as attendance, completion rates, and employment outcomes.
- **Implement data analytics capabilities:** Integrate advanced data analytics capabilities into the reporting tool to analyze and visualize data. This will help identify trends, measure program efficacy, and support data-driven decision-making.
- **Provide training and support:** Offer comprehensive training and support to LWDB staff on how to use the standardized reporting tool and interpret the data in support of consistent and accurate data collection and analysis.
- **Ensure data privacy and security:** Implement robust data privacy and security measures to protect sensitive information. Ensure compliance with relevant regulations and best practices for data management.
- **Publish data for transparency:** Regularly publish state and local training-related data to promote transparency and accountability. Make the data accessible to stakeholders, including policymakers, employers, and the public.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- **Consistent data collection:** Standardized data collection across all LWDBs so key metrics are consistently captured, enabling accurate comparisons and assessments.
- **Enhanced program efficacy measurement:** With comprehensive data on attendance, completion rates, and employment outcomes, the efficacy of training programs can be accurate and consistent, leading to more effective program improvements.
- **Informed resource allocation:** Consistent and reliable data to support informed decision-making regarding resource allocation, so resources are directed to the most effective training programs.
- **Improved decision-making:** Advanced data analytics capabilities to provide insights into trends and patterns, enabling data-driven decision-making and strategic planning.
- **Increased transparency and accountability:** Regularly publishing training-related data to promote increased transparency and accountability, building trust among stakeholders and the public.
- **Enhanced data privacy and security:** Robust data privacy and security measures to protect sensitive information, and compliance with regulations and maintain stakeholder confidence.

4. **Streamline the CareerSource Florida network brand on social media for greater cohesion and an improved user experience.**

While recognizing that each CareerSource Florida LWDB area utilizes a unique approach to engaging their stakeholders, who may differ across various counties and LWDB areas, it is essential to establish standardized branding across all CareerSource Florida LWDB social media and websites. This will support a consistent and professional approach to representing the CareerSource Florida network brand, enhancing stakeholder engagement and trust.

Table 7: CareerSource Florida LinkedIn Categories

Category Label	Count
Public Policy	1
Staffing and Recruiting	6
Non-Profit Organization Management	2
Non-Profit Organization	4
Human Resources Services	5
Government Administration	3
Individual and Family Services	1

Currently, there is an inconsistent categorization on LinkedIn: Each CareerSource Florida LWDB has an established LinkedIn page, but the About section is categorized differently across all 22 pages. Additionally, there is inconsistent and duplicative Instagram presence: Every CareerSource Florida LWDB, except for two, has an Instagram account to advertise services. However, two LWDBs have two accounts and have not deactivated their less active account, creating potential confusion for stakeholders searching for resources via social media.

Recommendation Details:

- **Standardize social media profiles**: Develop standardized guidelines for all CareerSource Florida LWDB social media profiles, including LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook. Ensure consistency in the About sections, profile pictures, cover photos, and contact information.
- **Consolidate duplicative accounts**: Identify and deactivate duplicative social media accounts to eliminate confusion. Ensure that each LWDB has a single, active account per platform to streamline communication and engagement.
- **Create a unified content strategy:** Establish a unified content strategy that aligns with the CareerSource brand. Provide templates, branding assets, and content calendars to ensure consistent messaging and visual identity across all LWDBs.
- **Provide training and support:** Offer training and support to LWDB staff on best practices for social media management, including brand consistency, content creation, and engagement strategies. This will ensure that staff are equipped to maintain a cohesive brand presence.
- **Monitor and evaluate performance:** Implement a monitoring and evaluation system to track the performance of social media accounts. Use analytics to assess engagement, reach, and effectiveness, and make data-driven adjustments to the social media strategy as needed.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- **Consistent brand representation:** Standardized social media profiles and content will create a consistent and professional representation of the CareerSource Florida network brand, enhancing stakeholder engagement and trust.
- **Reduced confusion:** Consolidating duplicative accounts will reduce confusion for stakeholders, making it easier for them to find and engage with CareerSource Florida resources on social media.

- **Improved user experience:** A unified content strategy will provide a seamless and cohesive user experience, ensuring that stakeholders receive consistent messaging and information across all platforms.
- **Enhanced engagement:** Consistent branding and messaging will foster stronger engagement with stakeholders, increasing awareness and utilization of CareerSource Florida services.
- **Increased efficiency:** Training and support for LWDB staff will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of social media management, ensuring that the CareerSource Florida network brand is consistently represented.
- **Data-driven adjustments:** Monitoring and evaluating social media performance will enable data-driven adjustments to the strategy, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with stakeholder needs.

5. Modernize approach to outreach and engagement to jobseekers.

Multiple approaches to engagement and outreach are essential to effectively target job seekers for foundational employability skills training and digital literacy skills training across all LWDBs. Each CareerSource Florida LWDB area has a diverse demographic, varying in age, economic class, and digital fluency. A single approach may not be effective across different counties due to varying community engagement preferences and marketing material reception. For instance, areas with an older population may prefer using Facebook, while working adults in urban areas may be more active on Instagram. Additionally, some populations may not engage with social media but have strong religious affiliations, learning about community events through their faith-based organizations. These factors must be considered to effectively engage job seekers.

Table 8: Florida Personas by LWDB and County

Persona	LWDB Area	County	Characteristics
Stable Status Quo: Older, family-oriented homeowners with high rates of veterans; politically engaged	Central Florida Northeast Florida Brevard Flagler Volusia	Sumter Nassau Flagler	• Low in novelty, risk-taking Low in continuous learning • Facebook is the most popular social network in their community • Below average social media use compared to other personas
Rustic Landscapes: One of the oldest personas; predominantly White, low-income, living in rural areas	Southwest Florida North Central Florida Heartland	Glades Dixie Highlands	• Highest religious importance • Lowest tech fluency Lowest in continuous learning • Facebook is the most popular social network in their community • Below average social media use compared to other personas
Rooted Renters: Predominantly Black or African Americans in later adulthood; connected to their cultural heritage	South Florida Broward Northeast Florida	Miami-Dade Broward Duval	• Highly value cultural connection • High religious importance • Instagram is the most popular social network in their community • Average social media use compared to other personas
Middle of the Road: Urban-adjacent, working-class entering mid-adulthood; mixed educational attainment	Broward Hillsborough-Pinellas South Florida	Broward Miami-Dade Pinellas	• High tech fluency • Highly value continuous learning • Instagram and Twitter are the most popular social networks in their community • Above average social media use compared to other personas

American Mosaic: Younger, urban-based adults who are racially diverse; 34% speak English as a 2nd language	South Florida Capital Region Central Florida	Miami-Dade Leon Orange	• Highest tech fluency • Highly value cultural connection • Instagram is the most popular social network in their community • Average social media use compared to other personas

Recommendation Details:

- **Develop Multi-Channel Outreach Strategies:** Create tailored outreach strategies that utilize multiple channels, including social media platforms, email marketing, community events, and partnerships with local organizations, to reach diverse demographics effectively.
- **Engage with Job Seekers in Person:** Host tabling events and distribute flyers in-person at community events and in partnership with local organizations. Consider reaching out to people at local YMCAs, community centers, libraries, sporting events, or other gathering places. Engage with the local community to understand what works best for them and how they prefer to receive marketing information.
- **Leverage Social Media Platforms:** Utilize platform-specific strategies to engage different age groups and demographics. For example, using Facebook to target older populations and Instagram to reach younger, urban job seekers.
- **Engage Community and Faith-Based Organizations:** Partner with community and faith-based organizations to reach populations that may not engage with digital platforms. Use these partnerships to disseminate information about training programs and events.
- **Implement Digital Literacy Initiatives:** Introduce digital literacy initiatives to help job seekers who may lack digital fluency. Provide training sessions and resources to improve their ability to engage with online platforms and resources.
- **Personalize Communication:** Personalize communication efforts based on the specific needs and preferences of different demographic groups. Use data and feedback to tailor messages and outreach methods.
- **Monitor and Adjust Strategies:** Continuously monitor the effectiveness of outreach strategies and make data-driven adjustments as needed. Use analytics to assess engagement and reach and refine approaches to maximize impact.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- **Increased Reach and Engagement:** Multi-channel outreach strategies will increase the reach and engagement of job seekers across diverse demographics, ensuring that more individuals are aware of and can access training programs.
- **Increased In-Person Engagement:** Hosting table events and distributing flyers in-person will enhance direct engagement with job seekers, providing opportunities for immediate interaction and feedback.
- **Enhanced Digital Fluency:** Digital literacy initiatives will improve job seekers' ability to engage with online platforms, increasing their access to resources and training opportunities.
- **Stronger Community Connections:** Partnerships with community and faith-based organizations will strengthen connections with populations that may not engage with digital platforms, ensuring inclusive outreach.
- **Improved Program Participation:** Tailored and personalized communication will lead to higher participation rates in training programs, as job seekers receive information in ways that resonate with them.

Data-Driven Adjustments: Continuous monitoring and data-driven adjustments will ensure that outreach strategies remain effective and responsive to the changing needs and preferences of job seekers.

6. Enhance approach to collaboration and partnerships at the local level (LWDBs, boards, school districts) to find solutions to decreasing training barriers and improving employability

The survey identified that the primary challenge employers face in hiring workers is the scarcity of qualified candidates with relevant skills. Focus groups revealed that training providers believe some essential skills are not adequately developed by the time candidates reach secondary education. This skill gap makes it challenging for candidates to catch up within a short timeframe. LWDBs reported various methods of course delivery, including mobile trucks, community partnerships, and targeted audiences such as local correctional facilities. However, they did not provide extensive details on their collaborations or partnerships.

Recommendation Details:

- **Strengthen K-12 partnerships:** Develop and enhance partnerships with K-12 school districts to introduce and reinforce essential skills early in students' education. Implement programs that integrate foundational literacy and digital literacy skills into the K-12 curriculum. Additionally, align digital tools and software in the classroom with the tools and software used by employers. If employers are using Microsoft Word, teach Microsoft Word instead of utilizing Google Docs.
- **Engage Higher Education Institutions:** Proactively target higher education institutions across the state for collaboration. Develop partnerships that leverage the expertise and resources of universities and colleges to create specialized training programs that meet local workforce needs.
- **Leverage Local Organizations:** Consider forming partnerships with free local organizations, including faith-based organizations and non-profit organizations, to extend the reach of training and support services. These organizations can provide additional resources, venues, and community connections to support workforce development initiatives.
- **Address resource allocation:** Disparate funding may deter educational institutions from seeing the value in partnerships. Develop strategies to highlight mutual benefits and create win-win scenarios for all parties involved.
Continued flexible approach: Recognize that there is no "single right way" to foster collaboration. Allow LWDBs the flexibility to maneuver and justify their approaches based on local needs and circumstances.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- **Improved Career Readiness:** Enhanced career exploration and preparation will lead to better-informed students who are ready to pursue further education or enter the workforce.
- **Early Skill Development:** Enhanced collaboration with K-12 allows students to acquire relevant skills earlier, reducing the gap by the time they reach secondary education. Partnerships with higher education institutions will lead to more comprehensive and relevant training programs, reducing the skill gap among job candidates.
- **Enhanced Employability:** Collaboration with higher education institutions will expand training opportunities and ensure that training programs are aligned with industry standards, improving the employability of graduates.
- **Increased Accessibility:** Partnerships with local organizations will make training and support services more accessible to underserved populations.
- **Community Engagement:** Engaging with community organizations will foster a sense of community involvement and support, enhancing the overall effectiveness of workforce development programs.

- **Stronger Partnerships:** Flexible and justified approaches to collaboration will foster stronger partnerships between LWDBs, employers, and educational institutions, ultimately benefiting the workforce ecosystem.

7. Continue to strengthen communication and change management support for LWDBs

Over the past several years, CareerSource Florida has made significant efforts to enhance change management and communications support for LWDBs. These efforts have been recognized and appreciated, contributing to improved transparency and open communication channels. Maintaining and further strengthening these efforts can foster a culture of collaboration and support between the LWDBs and the main CareerSource Florida office. As LWDBs operate in unique ways, focusing on building relationships, sharing resources and best practices, and collaborating with one another can be mutually beneficial.

Recommendation Details:

- **Maintain open communication channels:** Facilitate continuous and open communication between CSF and all LWDBs. Utilize regular meetings, newsletters, and digital platforms to keep all parties informed and engaged. Host monthly townhall meetings to bring LWDBs together for resource sharing, updates, and new approaches to advancing Florida's workforce.
- **Enhance transparency:** Promote transparency by sharing updates, decisions, and strategic plans openly with all LWDBs. Provide clear and timely information to build trust and foster a collaborative environment.
- **Facilitate resource sharing:** Encourage the sharing of resources and best practices among LWDBs. Create a centralized repository where LWDBs can access and contribute valuable materials, tools, and insights.
- **Foster relationship-building activities among LWDBs:** Organize networking events, workshops, and collaborative projects to strengthen connections and encourage mutual support.
- **Establish feedback mechanisms:** Gather input from LWDBs on communication and change management efforts, using feedback to make continuous improvements and address any concerns.
- **Promote collaboration:** Support collaborative initiatives that involve multiple LWDBs working together on common goals and projects. Encourage joint efforts to leverage collective strengths and resources.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- **Improved communication:** Maintaining open communication channels facilitates opportunities to keep LWDBs well-informed and engaged, leading to better coordination and alignment with CSF.
- **Enhanced transparency:** Increased transparency builds trust and fosters a collaborative environment, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system.
- **Resource optimization:** Sharing resources and best practices can optimize the use of available tools and knowledge, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of LWDB operations.
- **Effective change management:** Comprehensive change management support can help LWDBs navigate transitions smoothly, minimizing disruptions and ensuring successful implementation of new initiatives.
- **Stronger relationships:** Building relationships among LWDBs can contribute to a supportive network, encouraging collaboration and mutual assistance.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Implementing feedback mechanisms can enable continuous improvement of communication and change management efforts, to meet the evolving needs of LWDBs.
- **Collaborative success:** Promoting collaborative initiatives will leverage the collective strengths of multiple LWDBs, leading to more impactful and successful projects.

VI. Appendix

Methodology
Survey

The survey mentioned in the report was distributed to over 285 participants and was open for two and half weeks from February 19th, 2025, to March 7th, 2025. There was a total of 81 completed surveys broken down by the following participants:

Table 9: Survey Participant Demographics

	Employers (n=22)		Non-Employers (n=59)	
What part of the CareerSource Florida network are you aligned to?	22 Industry Employers		59 Non-Employers: • 45 Career Centers and LWDBs • 2 State Leaders/Elected Officials • 4 REACH Act Partners • 8 Education/Training providers	
What term best describes your role in your organization?	Finance	0	Finance	1
	Human Resources	7	Human Resources	4
	Managerial/Supervisory	5	Managerial/Supervisory	16
	Operational	0	Operational	3
	Other	2	Other	2
	Owner / C-Suite/Board of Directors	3	Owner / C-Suite/Board of Directors	4
	President / Vice – President / Executive Director	2	President / Vice – President / Executive Director	18
	Program / Project Management	3	Program / Project Management	11
How many employees currently work at your organization?	Fewer than 50	6	Fewer than 50	28
	51-250	5	51-250	26
	251 - 1,000	8	251 - 1,000	3
	More than 1,000	3	More than 1,000	2
Which workforce development area are you located in? (Select all that apply)	Brevard Flagler Volusia, Broward, Capital Region, Central Florida, Citrus Levy Marion, Hillsborough Pinellas, North Central Florida, North Florida, Northeast Florida, Pasco Hernando, Southwest Florida **Not Represented:** Chipola, Escarosa, Gulf Coast, Heartland, Okaloosa Walton, Palm Beach County, Polk, Research Coast, South Florida, Suncoast		Brevard Flagler Volusia, Capital Region, Central Florida, Citrus Levy Marion, Heartland, Hillsborough Pinellas, North Central Florida, North Florida, Northeast Florida, Pasco Hernando, Polk, Research Coast, Southwest Florida, Suncoast **Not Represented:** Broward, Chipola, Escarosa, Gulf Coast, Okaloosa Walton, Palm Beach County, South Florida	

Of the 59 non-employers who completed the survey, there were 7 surveys that were near-complete but not submitted, whose results have also been considered in the survey data. Throughout the report, the sample size of non-employers may fluctuate between 52 and 59, depending on how far the last 7 respondents made it in the survey.

Employers were asked 21 questions whereas non-employers were asked 19 questions. The following question types are listed below along with a sample question:

- Skills In-Demand (employers): Select the most important foundational employability skills needed for employees in your organization.
- Skills In-Demand (non-employers): Based on your understanding, select the digital literacy skills that are in high demand from employers who partner with your organization.

- Skill Gaps: What are your top challenges with recruiting and hiring workers with the most needed skills?
- Partnerships: Does your organization participate in workforce training programs, either public or private?
- Skills Assessment: How often do you assess job seekers' education needs regarding foundational employability skills?
- Training Barriers: Rank the primary barriers to offering job seekers courses that supplement in-demand foundational and digital literacy skills?

Focus Group Interviews

The focus groups were conducted over two and a half weeks in February and March of 2025. There were 19 focus group participants: 12 CareerSource employees; 4 employers; 3 training providers; and 1 educational institution. Focus groups were held for 30-45 minutes and contained questions related to the following categories: Assessing skills, training and partnerships, curriculum evaluation, data collection, and engagement and outreach. See below for a sample of questions asked in the focus groups:

- Please share the top 3 digital literacy skills that are essential in your industry.
- Can you share the resources or training you've utilized to help close gaps in foundational employability or digital literacy skills?
- How do you design your curriculum to meet the evolving needs of employers?
- What data do you collect related to workforce training programs?
- How do you assess the efficacy of training programs to train and upskill your current workforce?
- What partnerships have been most beneficial in enhancing the reach and effectiveness of your training programs?

Training

The focus groups revealed several key insights regarding the training, assessment, and delivery of foundational employability and digital literacy skills. E-courses tend to have higher turnout rates compared to live workshops, and the use of job seeker portals to track course completion is effective. Training programs are designed to align with employer needs, focusing on practical skills such as healthcare terminology and work experience learning. Internships, pre-apprenticeships, and apprenticeships are utilized to skill up job seekers, particularly those who are under-skilled or facing difficulties in finding employment. For individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), additional support and tailored training are essential.

Assessments of training programs are largely informal, relying on trends and labor market information, to guide curriculum development. Training providers must also keep up to date on salary data as many job seekers are interested in career pathways with high salaries or pay. This impacts curriculum development as training providers can speculate which skills and courses will be more popular with job seekers.

Gaps in Training

The focus groups identified several significant gaps in the training programs for foundational employability and digital literacy skills. One major issue is the need for more funding to enhance the effectiveness of workshops. While healthcare training and work experience can be provided, certain specialized training must be outsourced to institutions, which can be cost-prohibitive. Collaborating with employers can help reduce costs, improve workplace safety, and decrease turnover, but this approach is not always feasible. Additionally, there is a marketing challenge, as the names of training programs often do not clearly describe the career pathways available to job seekers. For example, titles like "advanced manufacturing" can be confusing, and terms like "manufacturing" may deter students due to misconceptions about the industry.

Another gap is the lack of awareness and understanding of certain fields, such as manufacturing and automation. Many students are drawn to courses labeled as "robotics" because they sound appealing, but they avoid "manufacturing" due to negative perceptions. This results in skewed perspectives, with students opting for fields like electrical or HVAC for perceived higher earnings. Furthermore, there is currently no formal system in place to assess the effectiveness of training programs or to track outcomes. The focus group conducted with the technical college informed the assessment that information on students' progress and success is not collected from their institution unless self-reported, highlighting the need for better data-sharing agreements and assessment mechanisms to evaluate training impact comprehensively.

Institutions may not independently track and provide employment outcomes upon graduation or program completion. However, the state of Florida offers data through the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP)[24]. FETPIP is a data collection and consumer reporting system that compiles information on students and participants of public education or training programs within Florida. This program provides data on employment, continuing education, earnings, and public assistance recipients at the county level for high schools. Additionally, the FETPIP website includes reports for the Florida college system, categorized by degree and program.

It is important to note that many reports contain incomplete data. FETPIP employs a record-linking technique that integrates individually identifiable data from multiple databases to generate aggregate statistics. However, if an institution does not track specific data, it will not be included in the FETPIP report, which may affect the comprehensiveness of the data.

Barriers to Training

The focus groups identified numerous barriers to delivering training and connecting job seekers to these opportunities. One significant barrier is the cost associated with running these programs, including recruiting qualified instructors who can often earn more in their respective industries. Additionally, the rapid pace of technological advancements makes it challenging to find instructors who are current with industry standards. There is also the issue of determining which programs are in demand and helping individuals figure out their career paths, particularly for those in a challenging age range trying to balance work and education. Youth face financial barriers, often needing grants to afford schooling, while language barriers, transportation issues, and low digital literacy further complicate access to training.

Engagement and retention are also significant challenges. Many job seekers agree to participate in training but fail to follow through due to life's demands. Workshops often suffer from low attendance and engagement, and individuals may need guidance to claim unemployment benefits. Hybrid training models were determined to be most effective for those with adequate digital literacy skills, necessitating in-person support for those at the lowest skill levels. Cultural norms and basic employability skills, such as punctuality and communication, also pose challenges. Focus group participants were aware of external training programs offering incentives—like gift cards and financial rewards—for completing training programs and have noted the correlation between incentives improving retention. However, restrictions on funding, such as the inability to provide food for participants, limit the effectiveness of these incentives for CareerSource LWDBs and training partners. Overall, the focus groups highlighted the need for comprehensive support systems, better marketing of programs, and more accessible training delivery methods to overcome these barriers.

Training Partnerships

The focus groups highlighted several key partnerships within the Florida workforce ecosystem that are instrumental in connecting job seekers to training and employment opportunities. Satellite offices at

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[24] Results from FETPIP were not included as a part of this assessment due to the assessment's focus on CSF workshops related to foundational employability and digital literacy. FETPIP collects information from the following sources: universities, community colleges, school districts, selected private vocational schools, welfare transition services, corrections system, farm worker jobs and education programs, and specialized and longitudinal studies.

technical colleges and active youth teams engaging with high school students are crucial components. Business services teams maintain ongoing dialogues with employers about training opportunities, while regular attendance at events helps to secure training grants. A bi-weekly email reaching over 20,000 individuals in the database ensures widespread dissemination of information about available programs. Florida also has a statewide demand occupations list and 21 local area demand occupations list by LWDB area which lists occupations in demand based on high growth and/or high wages in the local area. This list can provide guidance to job seekers on career pathways based on demand.

Under the WIOA program, the following are eligible to receive services: adults, dislocated workers, employed workers, and youth. Through CareerOneStop and Employ Florida, eligible individuals can search for WIOA-eligible training providers, training programs, and learning resources such as scholarships. Collaboration with institutions like South Florida State College and Panther Youth facilitates GED attainment and participation in WIOA training programs. For example, South Florida State College offers close to 50 WIOA-eligible programs such as Nursing, Law Enforcement, and Manufacturing. In Program Year 2023, the total number of participants were served in Florida:

Table 10: WIOA Annual Performance for 2023 Program Year[25]

2023 Program year WIOA Annual Performance							
	Total Participants Served	Participants Receiving Training Services	Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	Credential Attainment Rate	Measurable Skill Gains Rate
WIOA Adult	8,483	7,325	86.0%	86.6%	$9,984	76.8%	85.1%
WIOA Dislocated Worker	1,100	896	87.2%	86.4%	$10,717	75.2%	87.6%
WIOA Youth	5,344	1,529	79.6%	79.9%	$4,812	76.6%	79.8%
Wagner-Peyser	101,394	N/A	69.1%	68.5%	$7,547	N/A	N/A

Furthermore, employers often communicate their training needs directly, referring individuals to community or technical colleges, where training grants are available. Trainers are assessed through Florida's Workforce 21st Century program, which includes basic-level assessments to better match job seekers with suitable employment opportunities. Youth programs incorporate workplace readiness skills, and there are discussions about extending this component to adult training programs.

Strong partnerships with employers are fostered through customized training programs and active participation in college orientations, career fairs, and academy boards at high schools. Job fairs at institutions like Manatee Technical Colleges bring employers and training programs together, facilitating quick hires and aligning educational pathways with career opportunities. The focus is on finding students and ensuring they understand the commitment required for remote learning and have a strong study ethic.

Resource Needs

The focus groups underscored several critical resource needs for the Florida workforce training ecosystem. When training providers were asked about needed additional resources and support, everyone emphasized the need for additional funding. While focus group participants did not elaborate on their funding needs, they mentioned that funding would address needs around marketing, food and incentives for job seekers to attend training, scholarships, and additional training for HR and office positions

One of the focus groups made it clear that current available scholarships have limited criteria and not everyone is eligible for available scholarships. Additionally, there is a demand for training in occupations and schools not currently on the approved list, highlighting the need for more flexible and inclusive training

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[25] Performance Data | U.S. Department of Labor

options. Overall, the focus groups highlighted the importance of financial support, strategic marketing, and infrastructure improvements to strengthen the workforce training ecosystem in Florida.

Skill Mapping

Figure 20: Digital Literacy Skill Groups/Skills Mapping

Computer Operations & Using Software	Graphic Design | Google Docs | Office Suite | Adobe Photoshop | Microsoft Word | Microsoft PowerPoint | Microsoft Office | Google Apps | Microsoft OneDrive | Microsoft SharePoint | OneDrive for Business | Microsoft Office 365 | Microsoft Outlook | Calendaring Software | Microsoft Visio | Editing | Microsoft Windows | Autocad | SAP CRM | Hubspot CRM | Oracle CRM | PeopleSoft Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
Using the Internet and Social Media	Business Ethics | Internet Research | Social Media | Workday (Software) | Virtual Teams | Research
Information Security and IT Infrastructure	Security Policies | Telecommuting | Technical Acumen | Technical Assistance | Social Media Marketing | Digital Marketing | Self-Awareness
Information Management and Analytics	Business Process Improvement | Relational Databases | Data Management | Data Analysis | Data Extraction | Analytical Techniques | Data Visualization | Tableau (Business Intelligence Software) | Reporting Tools | Data Quality | Technical Management | Cyber Security | Information And Communications Technology | Network Security | Data Management | Knowledge Management | Microsoft Excel | Business Technologies | Software Systems | Reporting / Metrics | Financial analysis | Data analysis | business analysis | HTML Scripting | Financial Reporting | Microsoft SQL Server | SAP | SQL (Programming Language) | Accounting*
Automation and Artificial Intelligence	Artificial Intelligence | Machine Learning | ChatGPT | Java | Javascript | C++ | Software development | Linux

Figure 21: Foundational Employability Skill Groups/Skills Mapping

Applied Academic Knowledge	Basic Reading | English Language | Written Communication | Written and Verbal Communication | Written and Oral Communication | Written English | Basic Math | Calculation | Analytical Thinking | Written and Verbal Communication | Research | English Language | Microsoft Skills* | Reporting / Metrics* | Microsoft Excel* | Analytics* | Budgeting* | Consulting* | Microsoft Office*
Personal Qualities and Interpersonal Skills	Collaboration | Teamwork and Collaboration | Interpersonal Skills | Teamwork | Team Oriented | Team Management | Empathy | Social Flexibility (Adaptable) | Emotional Intelligence | Cultural Sensitivity | Ethical Conduct | Leadership | Coaching / Team Management | Decision Making | Customer Experience | Customer Service | Hiring and Recruiting | Sales | Hospitality | Customer Satisfaction | Customer Focus / Design for CX | Relationship Management | Negotiation | Self Starter | Proactivity | Professionalism | Personal Integrity
Reliability, Organizing, and Time Management	Time Management | Multitasking | Time Constraints | Planning and Evaluating | Organizational Skills | Coordinating | Management | Staff Management | Operational Excellence | Project Management | Data Entry | Attention to Detail | Quality Assurance | Tactfulness
Critical and Creative Thinking	Strategic Thinking | Research | Troubleshooting (Problem Solving) | Problem Solving | Critical Thinking | Creative Problem-Solving | Creativity | Appetite for Risk, Innovation, and Experimentation
Communication	Communications | Public Speaking | Excellent Communication | Interpersonal Communications | Presentations | Written and Verbal Communication | Written and Oral Communication | Written Communication | Verbal Communication Skills | Effective Communication | Listening Skills | Active Listening | Telephone Skills | Reading Comprehension | Non-Verbal Communication | Strong Communicator | Marketing Communications | Telecommunications | Strategic Communications | Strategic Communication | Creative Writing | Copywriting | Legal Writing | Grant Writing | Corporate Communications | Proposal Writing | Underwriting | Internal Communications | Technical Writing & Communications | Technical Writing | Unified Communications | Intercultural Communication | Crisis Communications | Screenwriting | Scientific Writing | Academic Writing | Motivational Speaking | Communication Planning | Mortgage Underwriting | SEO Copywriting | Political Communications | Medical Writing | Social Communications | Satellite Communications | Fiction Writing | Business Communication | Professional Communication | Technical Communication | Business Writing
Using Tools and Technology*	*Aligned Skills* Computer Literacy | Technical Acumen | Test Equipment | Heavy Equipment | Medical Equipment | Production Equipment | Electrical Equipment | Label Printer | Laser Scanning | Automatic Test Equipment | Adaptability | Equipment Maintenance | Ethical Responsibility | Security Policies | Information And Communications Technology *Career Clusters*** Managerial positions, financial services, technical and software development, administrative assistants, engineering, equipment operation and maintenance, skilled trades

* Given the wide scope of the skill group, two analysis methods were employed to better capture the workforce landscape for Using Tools and Technologies. For identifying skills gaps, the aligned skills were utilized in the analysis. For assessing general supply and demand, the career clusters were used.

** Supply and demand were measured using career clusters that were aligned to roles that rely heavily on office equipment and tools to serve as a representative measure for supply and demand for basic operations, maintenance, and competency for work-related tools and technologies.

Peer Comparison States:

The peer comparison states were selected due to their similarity to Florida in size, geography, and growing labor markets.

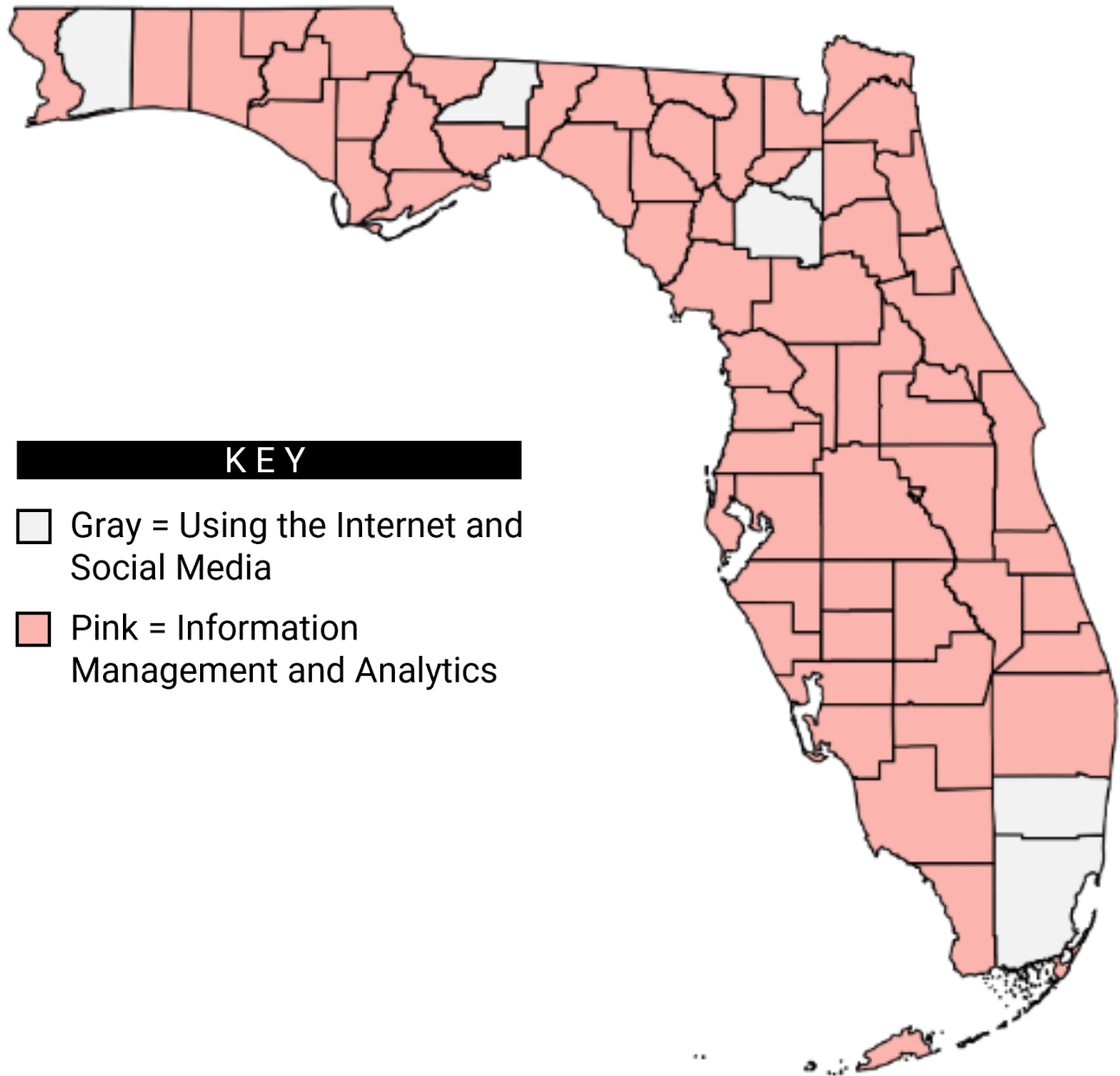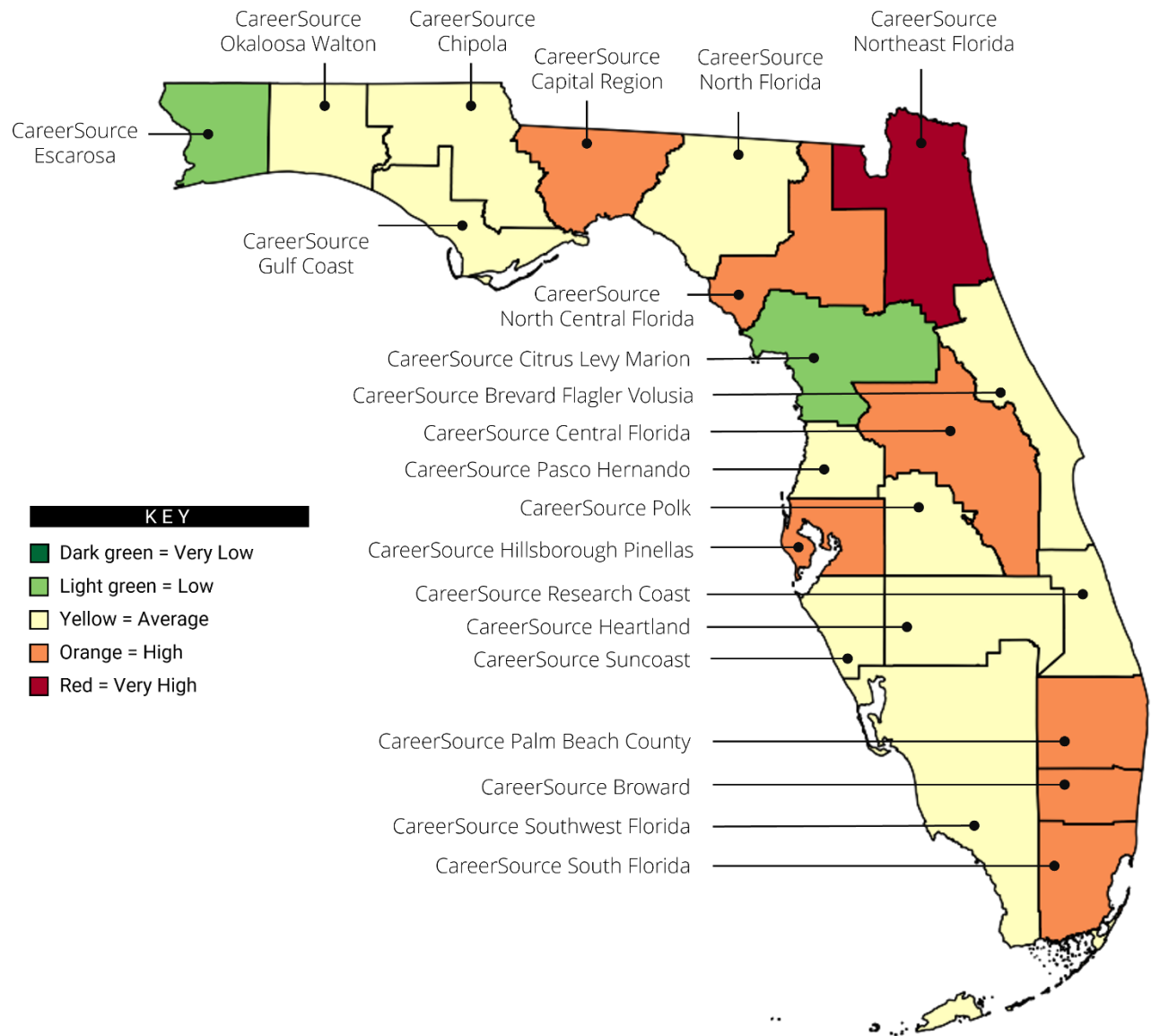### Figure 22: Peer State Comparisons

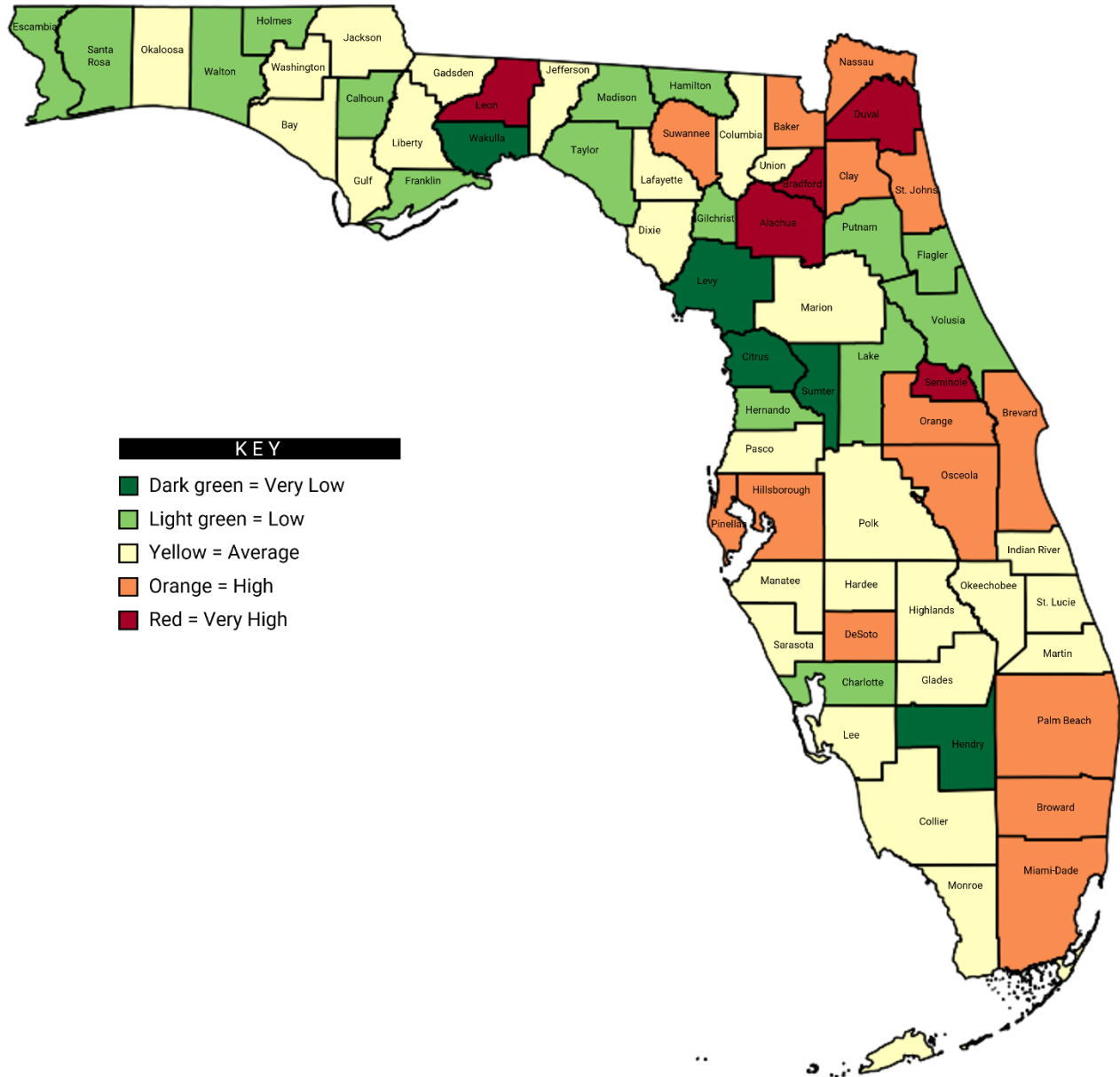|	State Population	Population Considerations	Gross Domestic Product	Geographical and Climate Considerations
Florida	3rd most populated state	• 23.3 Million Population on 6/1/24† • 2% 1-year population increase†	$1.7 Trillion Q3 2024 GDP (annualized)‡	• Peninsula bordered by The Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Straits of Florida • Prone to hurricanes, tornadoes, and thunderstorms • Holds the largest marsh system in the United States • Southern United States
Georgia	8th most populated state	• 11.1 Million Population on 6/1/2024† • 1% 1-year population increase†	$888 Billion Q3 2024 GDP (annualized)‡	• Southern United States • Coastal plain along the Atlantic Ocean • Vulnerable to hurricanes but rarely experiences a hurricane strike • 60% of the state is forested and is rich in agricultural resources
New York	4th most populated state	• 19.9 Million Population on 6/1/2024† • .7% 1-year population increase†	$2.3 Trillion Q3 2024 GDP (annualized)‡	• Majority rural with the most densely populated majority city in the US • Water-rich with freshwater lake, ponds, and reservoirs • Naturally sheltered harbor • Mid-Atlantic region
Pennsylvania	5th most populated state	• 13.1 Million Population on 6/1/2024† • .5% 1-year population increase†	$1.0 Trillion Q3 2024 GDP (annualized)‡	• No ocean shoreline but runs along Lake Erie and the Delaware river • 60% of the state is forested • Mid-Atlantic region
Texas	2nd most populated state	• 31.2 Million Population on 6/1/2024† • 1.8% 1-year population increase†	$2.7 Trillion Q3 2024 GDP (annualized)‡	• Southern and Central United States • The second largest state in the USA by land area • Diverse geographic regions and varied climate due to land mass • Western Coastline runs along the Gulf of Mexico

	Workforce Development Boards	Model of Development	Collaborating Institutions	Total Participants Served*	Total # of Participants Receiving Training*
Florida	21	Centralized through CareerSource Florida program	• Florida Commerce • LWDBs	116,321	9,750
Georgia	19	Centralized through QuickStart program	• Department of Economic Development • Technical College System of Georgia	49,870	5,980
New York	33	Centralized and operated through local workforce development boards	• NY State Dept. of Labor • Office Strategic Workforce Dev. • CUNY System • SUNY System	369,486	11,496
Pennsylvania	22	Centralized and operated through local workforce development boards	• Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry • LWDBs	73,738	7,283
Texas	28	Decentralized and implemented by local workforce development boards	• Texas Workforce Commission • LWDBs	322,253	10,379

*Includes Participant data from WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Wagner-Peyser

Figure 11 (Enlarged): Demand for Digital Literacy Skills by County

K E Y

☐ Gray = Using the Internet and Social Media

☐ Pink = Information Management and Analytics

Figure 17 (Enlarged): Demand for Foundational Employability Skills by County

KEY

- Green = Reliability, Organizing, and Time Management
- Yellow = Personal Qualities and Interpersonal Skills

KEY

- ■ Dark green = Very Low
- ■ Light green = Low
- □ Yellow = Average
- ■ Orange = High
- ■ Red = Very High

CareerSource Okaloosa Walton

CareerSource Chipola

CareerSource Capital Region

CareerSource North Florida

CareerSource Northeast Florida

CareerSource Escarosa

CareerSource Gulf Coast

CareerSource North Central Florida

CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion

CareerSource Brevard Flagler Volusia

CareerSource Central Florida

CareerSource Pasco Hernando

CareerSource Polk

CareerSource Hillsborough Pinellas

CareerSource Research Coast

CareerSource Heartland

CareerSource Suncoast

CareerSource Palm Beach County

CareerSource Broward

CareerSource Southwest Florida

CareerSource South Florida

KEY

- ■ Dark green = Very Low
- ■ Light green = Low
- ■ Yellow = Average
- ■ Orange = High
- ■ Red = Very High

VII. References

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