



2021 Cobb Workforce Partnership Study

A collaboration between the Cobb Chamber, Cobb Workforce Partnership Study Steering Committee, and SelectCobb's Industry Councils

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Introduction

In 2015, the Cobb County Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with representatives from local educational institutions, job training programs, and a wide range of businesses and industries in Cobb, partnered to develop a comprehensive workforce study for Cobb County. The result of this work was an in-depth report identifying the industry sectors in Cobb County with the greatest need of support in workforce development as well as high-demand occupations and skills within those sectors. This study also served as the launching point for the **Cobb Workforce Partnership (CWP)**, a collaborative effort between the Cobb Chamber and the community to foster the development of a well-trained local workforce from which local businesses can recruit qualified candidates. As part of its five-year strategy, the CWP established four “industry councils” to focus on the industry-specific skill and labor needs of Cobb’s most prominent sectors.

Much has changed in the span of five years. Economic development has boomed across the state and within the county. The labor force grew while unemployment shrank. Existing businesses expanded and outside businesses relocated to Cobb. New industries and new technologies have arisen, changing the landscape of where and how Cobb’s citizens participate in the labor market. In 2020, CWP recognized that new strategies and approaches would be needed to sustain the community’s continued growth. Thus an update to the original workforce study was launched, with the goals of understanding how the needle of workforce development had moved since 2015, as well as garnering input from community partners to understand their successes as well as their challenges.

This research and input would drive CWP’s strategy for the next five years. This study was originally envisioned as a straightforward update to the original study. However, two factors necessitated a more thorough analysis: the degree of change in Cobb’s labor makeup, and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020.

THE COBB WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP

To begin the study, an organizational SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis was conducted. In addition, engaged representatives from five of Cobb’s major industries were brought together to conduct focus group discussions with business and education representatives to identify:

- high-demand jobs in each sector;
- the types of skills local businesses most desire among potential hires;
- existing barriers to identifying and recruiting qualified candidates for employment, and
- strategies for building a better pool of qualified job candidates

Identified common themes emerging from all of these efforts, and developed a number of action items to guide future CWP activities.

Conducted surveys of local businesses to obtain their opinions on the quality of the local labor pipeline and their ability to access and utilize available workforce development resources.

Identified successful initiatives resulting from the original 2015 efforts.

Developed new vision and mission statements for the CWP.

The discussions that follow summarize the results of each of these items.

Key Themes & Action Items

Key Themes

A number of common themes emerged during the completion of the various tasks associated with the 2020 update. These key themes are items that our community as a whole can work on together, with the CWP, the Cobb Chamber of Commerce, and SelectCobb playing a supporting role.

These key themes include:

- Engaging and educating parents of K-12 students about career and education pathways available to their child(ren).
- Supporting organizations and activities that identify and reduce skills gaps.
- Increasing awareness and improving perception of high-demand careers and industries through multimedia storytelling and education approaches.
- Reducing barriers to employment, such as transportation access, “second-chance” approaches to criminal backgrounds, benefits cliffs, etc., to access untapped/underutilized talent pools.
- Focusing on attracting and recruiting underrepresented populations in high demand industries.
- Increasing exposure and workforce readiness of youth population through elementary and middle school career education.
- Supporting inclusion and greater equity in the workplace.
- Developing learning opportunities where youth and adults can acquire employability skills.

Action Items

These discussions helped to identify a number of specific action items that the Cobb Workforce Partnership, the Cobb Chamber of Commerce and SelectCobb can strive to achieve independently of broader community efforts.

These items are measurable deliverables CWP seeks to achieve starting in 2021:

- Facilitate relationship building between workforce development consumers and stakeholders via Cobb Workforce Partnership meetings (two times per year) and Targeted Industry Council Meetings (one meeting per industry per year, total of five).
- Increase effectiveness of industry councils by creating one advisory group for each industry sector in Q1 of 2022.
- Enhance local workforce development efforts by connecting industry partners and allied organizations to regional workforce development initiatives starting Q4 2020.
- Utilize the SelectCobb brand and communication channels (e.g. website, newsletter, social media group, etc.) for communicating workforce development resources and updates to interested consumers at least once monthly.
- Increase reach and impact of Cobb Workforce Partnership through engagement and targeted recruitment of 20 or more first-time attendee organizations by end of 2022.
- Support development of work-based learning opportunities and fulfilling employment needs via CobbHires, with a rolling average of 15 job postings per month and five internship postings per month.
- Facilitate access to workforce development resources on a per-request basis.
- Promote equity in the workforce by delivering annual content on diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Vision & Mission Statements

One of the first tasks completed by the Cobb Workforce Partnership 2020 Steering Committee was a review of the vision and mission statements that were originally developed in 2015.

2015 VISION STATEMENT

"The vision of the Cobb Workforce Partnership is a future in which Cobb County employers know that students educated in Cobb have the skills that they are looking to hire and students in Cobb County know how to connect with internships, apprenticeships, and job opportunities in Cobb."

With that vision in mind, the Cobb Workforce Partnership envisions a future (next five years) where the following conditions exist:

- Industry and education are optimally connected and aligned.
- More employers have the workforce they need locally.
- Students and the underemployed/unemployed are more engaged and focused on a career path.
- A more defined workforce pipeline exists in Cobb County, and partners are aligned to coordinate and secure resources. An organizational structure is in place to facilitate the alignment of Cobb's business needs and workforce supply. The education systems respond quickly to the changing needs of employers and the skills they need.
- Parents, students, and teachers are more informed about their career paths and the training and education required.
- Employers understand changing needs and work style of the future workforce.
- Residents of Cobb County know where to go (e.g., resources, programs, and assistance) for career advice and training, and residents are more workforce ready/employable or able to start their own enterprises.

2015 MISSION STATEMENT

"The Cobb Workforce Partnership's mission is two-fold: Leverage community partnerships to meet the workforce needs of industry through innovative approaches to education and training; and develop a workforce supply chain that eliminates skill gaps and is prepared to adapt to changing workforce demands in Cobb."

2020 Updated Vision and Mission Statements

After reviewing the original vision and mission statements, the steering committee agreed that redefining the vision and mission would help guide CWP in its actions for the years to come.

2020 VISION STATEMENT

"Cobb County's world-class workforce pipeline drives unparalleled opportunity and prosperity."

2020 MISSION STATEMENTS

"To foster synergistic partnerships between our educators, industry experts, government leaders and community partners for the development of innovative workforce development strategies; and to develop within our community a dynamic, resilient and highly skilled workforce equipped for meeting current industry needs and future opportunities."

SWOT Analysis

After developing new vision and mission statements, the steering committee conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats, and Opportunities) analysis of the current state of the Cobb Workforce Partnership. The following is a summary of that discussion.

STRENGTHS

Collaboration between education, industry, and community partners has been very effective

- Construction Ready, an accelerated construction training program, is one example of how community partnerships have successfully met a workforce need.

Cobb County has strong education systems from K-12 through postsecondary

- Cobb County School District and Marietta City Schools significantly outrank other school districts in overall performance and boast numerous accolades in academics and career education. Cobb County is home to institutes of higher learning, including Georgia's largest community and technical college Chattahoochee Technical College, Kennesaw State University which offers more than 150 degree programs to its 41,000 students, and Life University, home of the world's largest single-campus chiropractic college and a breadth of degree offerings specializing in health and wellness.

Cobb County's location and geography grants numerous benefits to workforce development and availability

- Cobb benefits from Georgia's designation as the number one state for doing business and number one state for workforce training programs as well as its proximity to metro Atlanta, one of the top 15 large cities in America in economic performance and the nation's busiest airport. Additionally, Cobb's geographic and economic variety – from urban centers to suburbs to rural and industrial areas – bolster its workforce diversity and stability.

Cobb's business and educational partners are skilled at adapting to changing needs

WEAKNESSES

CWP has had mixed success in recruiting representation from a diverse group of businesses

- Some sectors – such as construction & skilled trades – have had steady participation, but others such as manufacturing and technology have been less consistent.

Participants have pointed out that CWP meetings have followed roughly the same format and have not yielded immediately visible action

CWP has struggled with sustaining the interest and participation of new group members

OPPORTUNITIES

Diversifying CWP membership, focusing on more small- and medium-sized businesses

Focusing on regional opportunities

- CWP members like WorkSource Cobb have identified south Cobb as a high-priority area for workforce development and believe concentrated efforts would yield powerful benefits for the labor pool as well as the businesses located there, especially in manufacturing, healthcare, and logistics & supply chain.

Identifying labor market changes resulting from COVID-19

- As reported by focus group participants, while many industries experienced significant job loss during the COVID-19 pandemic, others saw little change or an increase in labor demand. In December 2019, with a 2.4% unemployment rate in Cobb County, many CWP participants were contending with a tight labor market and unable to fill open positions; disruption in the labor market may present opportunities for new conversations and strategies.

Rethinking technology and workforce

- While it has traditionally been – and will continue to be – a separate and distinct industry cluster, the CWP would benefit from considering technology's role in each of its industry sectors.

Improving communication

- With only two CWP meetings and one industry council meeting per industry each year, the CWP can strengthen its impact by facilitating information sharing between meetings.

Supporting efforts to develop work-based learning programs

Engaging subject matter experts

- Human resources professionals should be priority candidates for CWP recruitment, as well as college career advisors and educators representing specific industries.

THREATS

Lack of participation in CWP or Industry Council meetings

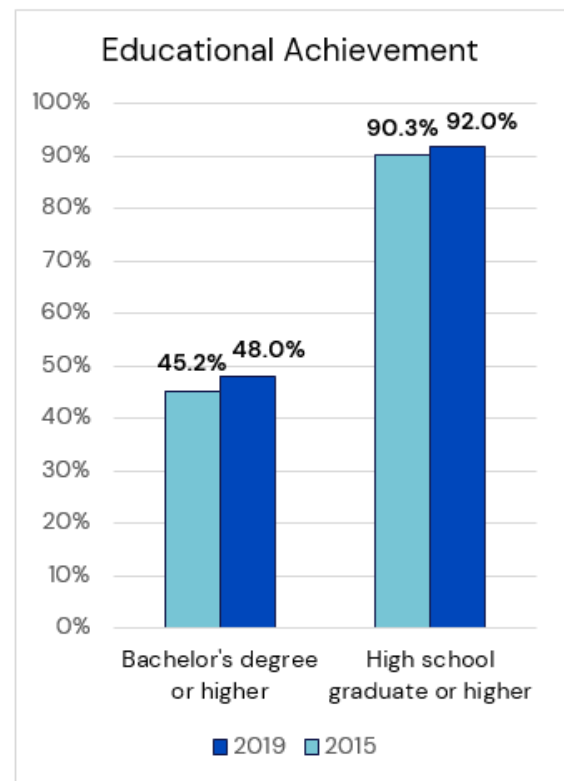
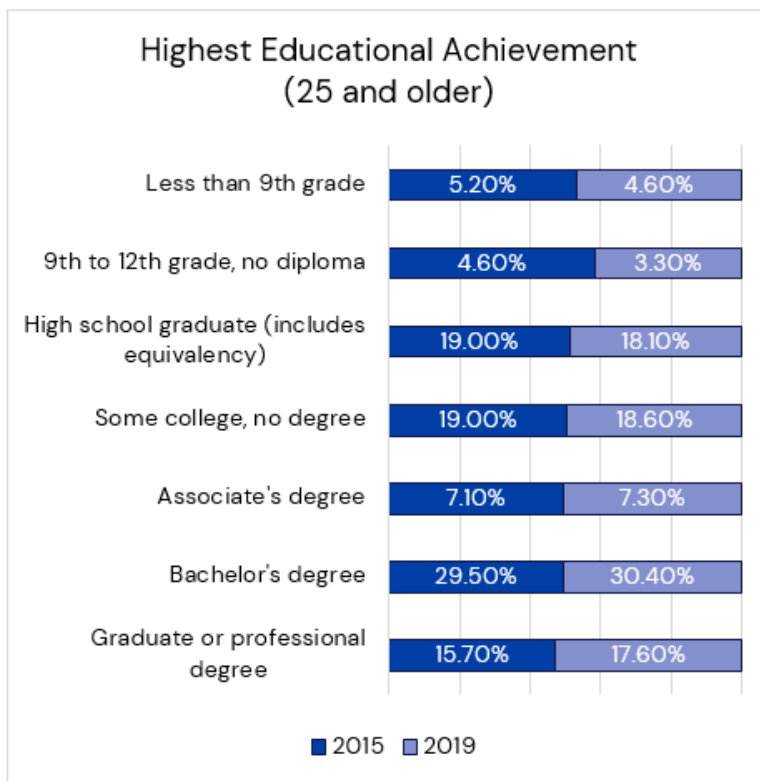
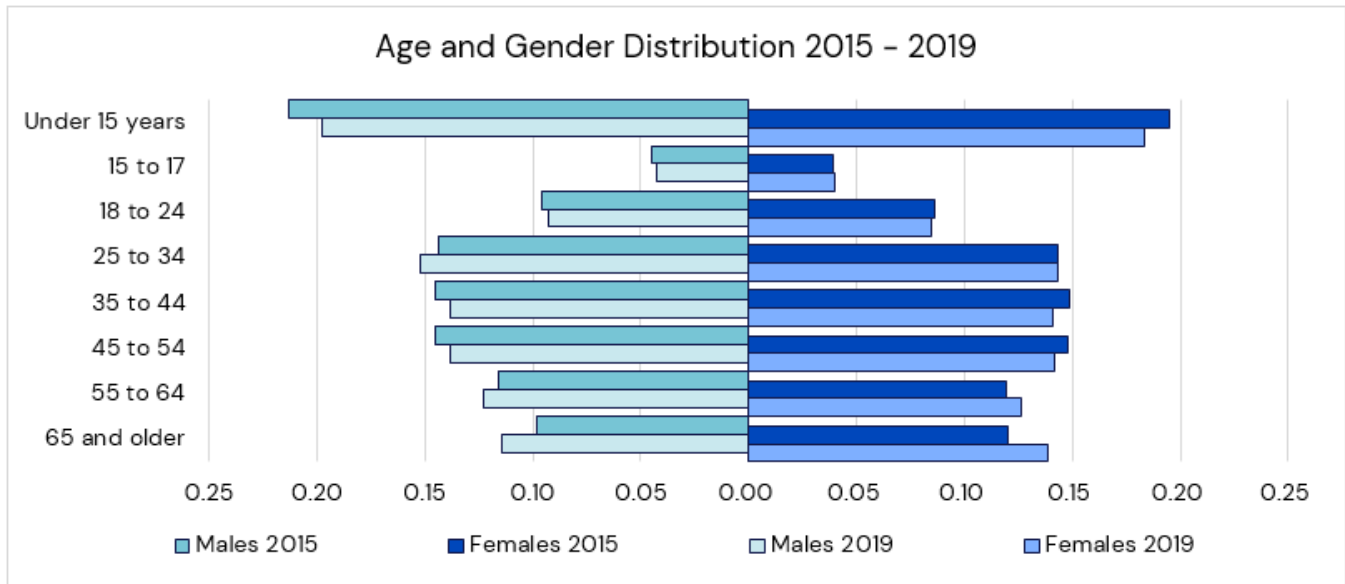
Failing to engage the community in rethinking workforce development

- Missing opportunities to highlight and promote pathways to high demand careers, especially with parents and elementary and middle school students, will undermine CWP efforts.

Environmental factors that impact workforce development strategies and resources

- As stated by focus group participants, benefits designed to support the labor market can have unintended consequences, such as disincentivizing individuals from returning to work, or creating barriers to upward mobility. Additionally, workforce development programs often rely on federal, state, or local funding or the availability of external investment or grants.

Demographics & Labor Pool

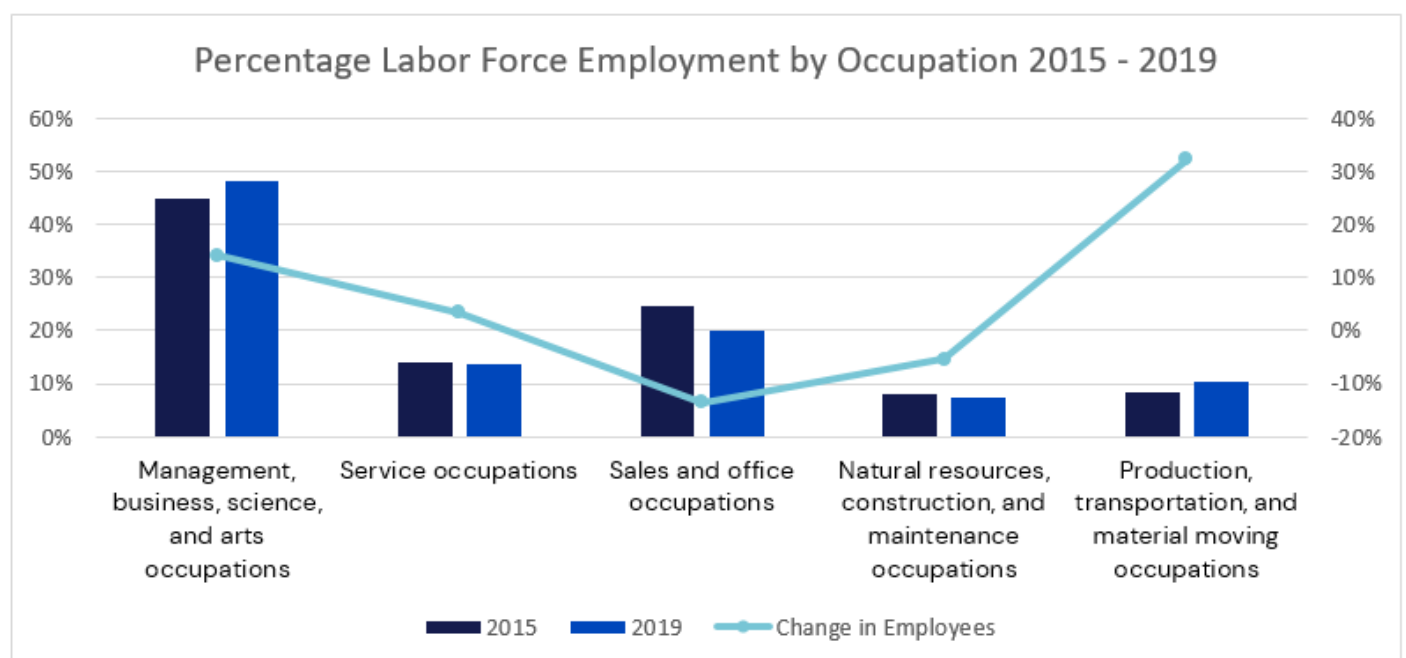
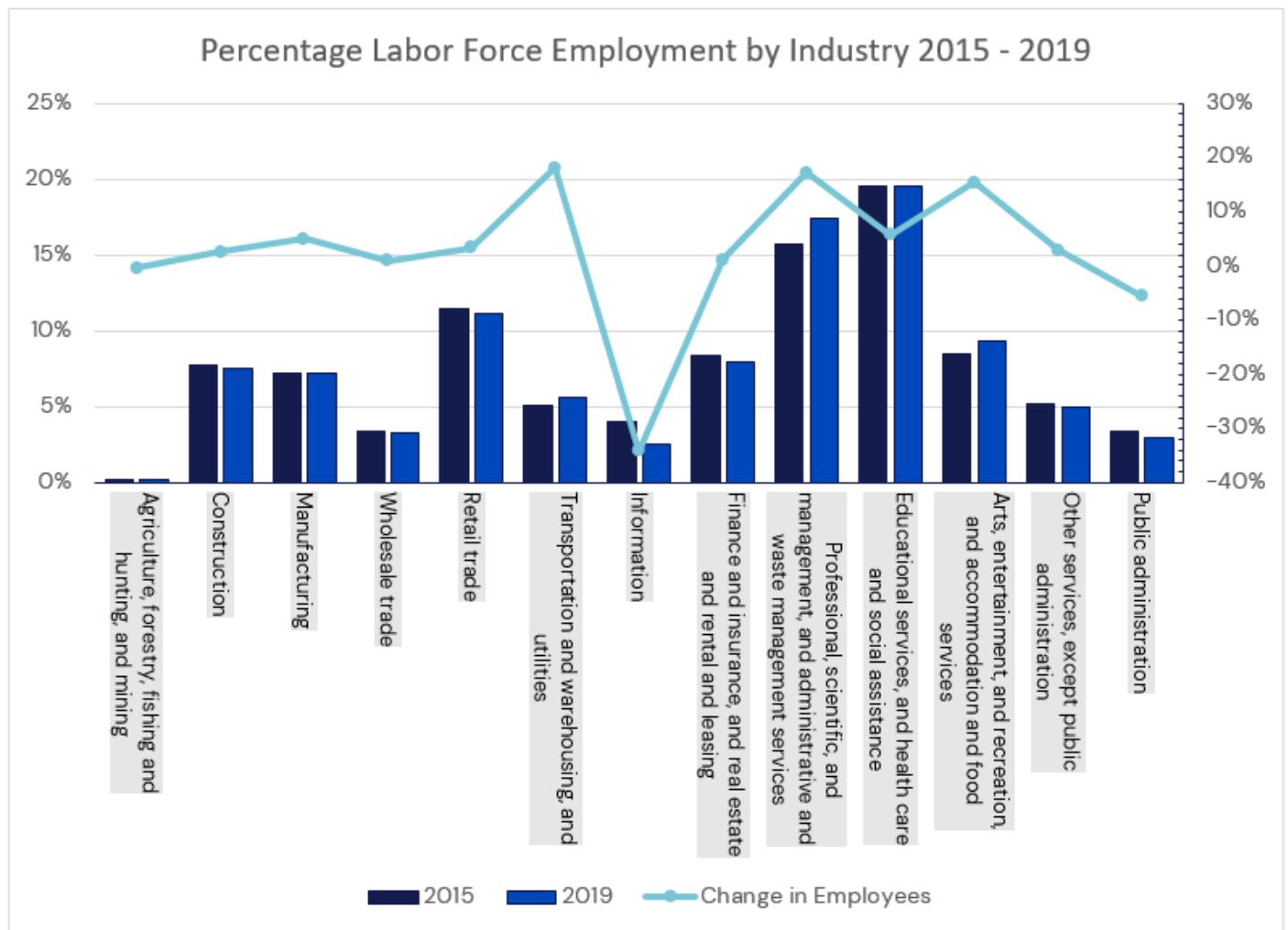


Total Population		2.5%
2015	2019	
741,334	750,141	

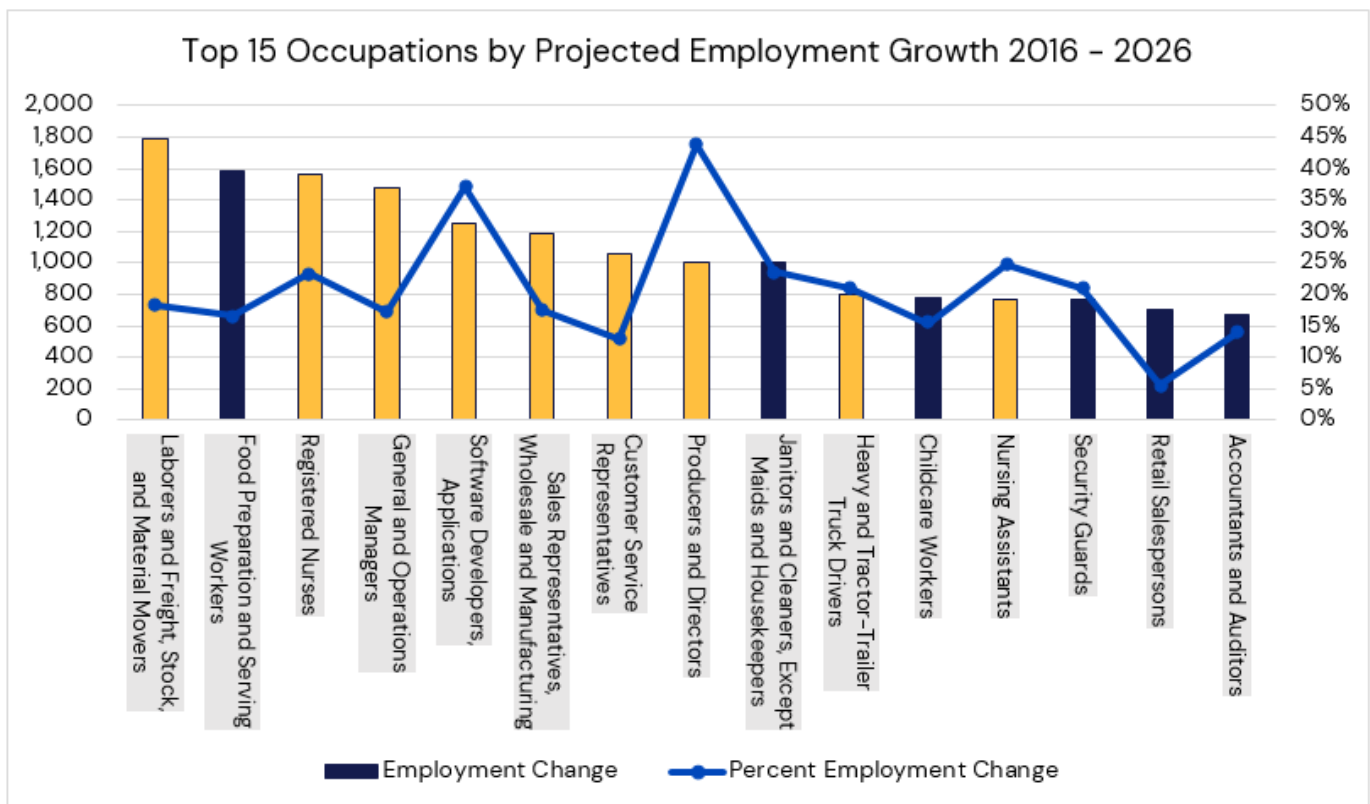
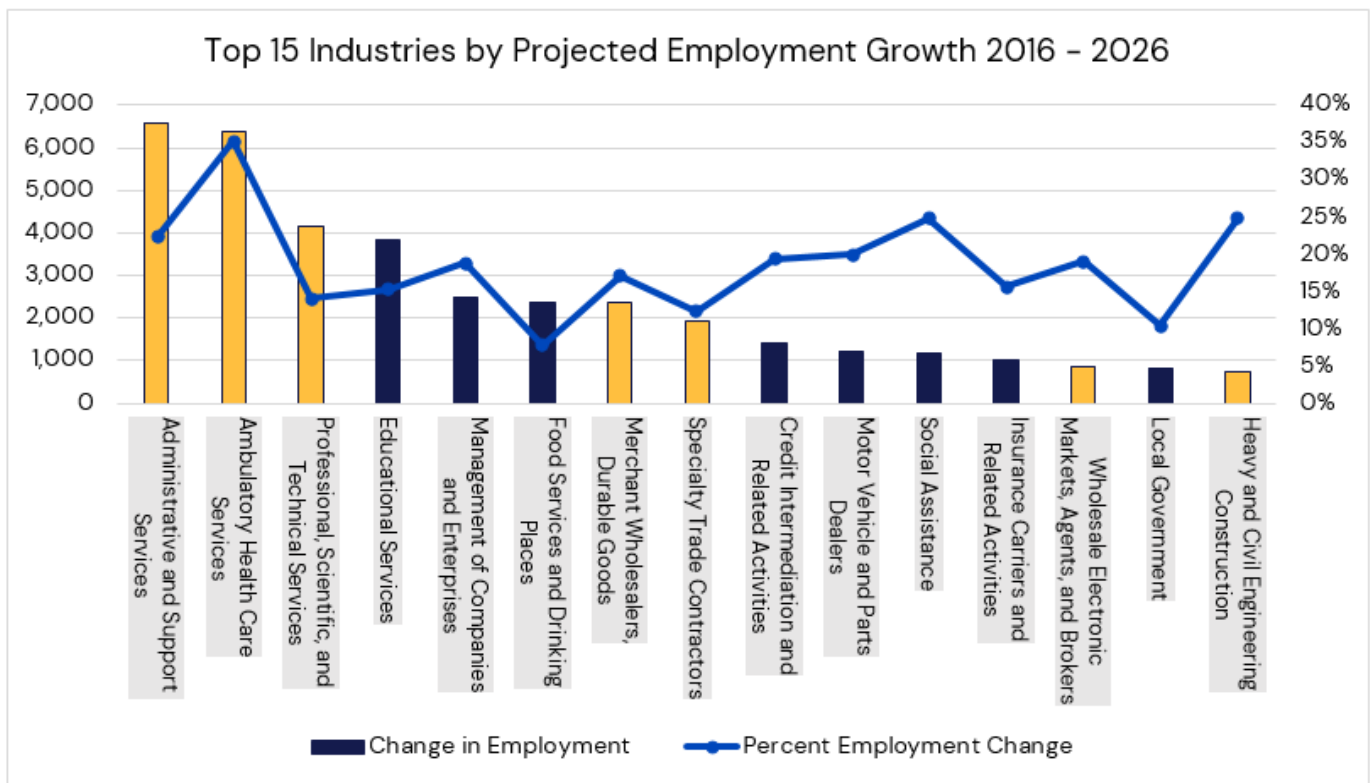
Labor Pool		3.0%
2015	2019	
408,141	420,506	

Unemployment		-1.6%
2015	2019	
5.9%	3.5%	

Demographics & Labor Pool



Demographics & Labor Pool





Cobb Workforce Targeted Industries

Construction & Skilled Trades, Advanced Manufacturing, Technology & Communications, Healthcare & Bioscience, and Logistics & Supply Chain

Construction & Skilled Trades

Participating Organizations

Altierus Career College	Brasfield & Gorrie, LLC
BRPH	Chattahoochee Technical College
Cobb County School District	Cobb Innovation and Technology Academy
Construction Education Foundation of Georgia (CEFGA)	Exploring, Inc.
Georgia Highlands College	JE Dunn Construction
Marietta High School College and Career Academy	MetroPower, Inc.
WorkSource Cobb	

Industry Data

Construction and Skilled Trades is one of the top two sectors in Cobb by employment numbers. The auto repair and maintenance industry is also a high-demand area, given the number of job postings by employers in this industry, as well as the need for occupations typically employed in this field.

Table 1: Top Industry Employment Categories – Construction and Skilled Trades

(Q1 2020; sorted by average employment number)

INDUSTRY	ESTABLISHMENTS	AVG EMPLOYMENT	AVG ANNUAL WAGE
Building Equipment Contractors	430	9,350	\$78,876
Architectural and Engineering Services	434	6,568	\$100,911
Nonresidential Building Construction	164	5,087	\$95,676
Foundation, Structure, and Building Exterior	227	4,289	\$64,263
Building Finishing Contractors	312	2,953	\$64,321
Auto Repair and Maintenance	368	2,592	\$45,450
Other Specialty Trade Contractors	99	2,378	\$63,400
Landscaping Services	266	2,206	\$43,609
Residential Building Construction	439	1,713	\$82,788
Utility System Construction	46	1,462	\$99,703
Highway, Street, and Bridge Construction	18	1,437	\$70,074
Electric Power Generation and Distribution	11	644	\$165,980
Electronic and Precision Equipment Repair	58	507	\$57,589
Natural Gas Distribution	6	340	\$94,237
Commercial Machinery Repair and Maintenance	42	214	\$115,697
Land Subdivision	17	85	\$102,234
Other Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	10	30	\$63,688
Water, Sewage, and Other Systems	3	*	*

** Note that in this and subsequent tables, some data is restricted by law and will be represented by an asterisk.*

SOURCE: Georgia Department of Labor (GADOL), 2020

Table 2: Top Industry Employers – Construction & Skilled Trades

(2020; sorted by current approximate employee count)

BUSINESS NAME	DESCRIPTION	EMPLOYEES
ThyssenKrupp Elevator Corp	Installation/Erection of Building Equipment	500
Enercon	Engineering Services	320
ARCADIS	Engineering Services	291
Gas South	Transportation and Public Utilities	225
Cobb EMC	Transportation and Public Utilities	200
Holder Construction Co, LLC	General Contractors – Nonresidential	200
JE Dunn Construction Group Inc.	General Contractors – Nonresidential	180
DPR Construction	General Contractors – Nonresidential	140
Geosyntec Consultants, Inc.	Engineering Services	120
Action Electric Co. Inc.	Electrical Work Misc	100
Brasfield & Gorrie	General Contractors – Nonresidential	100

SOURCE: BusinessWise [Computer software], 2020**Table 3: Top Industry Hiring Employers – Construction & Skilled Trades**

(Q3-Q4 2020; sorted by total job postings)

EMPLOYER	JOB POSTINGS
Pep Boys	38
ServiceMaster	37
HD Supply	30
Trugreen	27
Cornerstone Building Brands	24
ECS Corporate Services, LLC	21
Gerber Collision Glass	19
Nova Engineering & Environmental	18
Driven Brands	17
Icahn Automotive Group	17

SOURCE: Burning Glass [Computer software], 2020

Occupation Data

Construction laborers are in high demand, as seen in their position as number one occupation in both current and desired employees in Construction and Skilled Trades. The demand for workers with automotive service and repair skills is strong. Nine out of the top 10 occupations by job posting require less than a four-year degree, highlighting the need for a labor force with specialized training rather than educational attainment.

Table 4: Top Occupations Requiring at Least Four-Year Degree – Construction & Skilled Trades

(2019; sorted by employment number)

OCCUPATION	EDUCATION REQ.	AVG EMPLOYMENT	AVG WAGE
Civil Engineers	Bachelor's degree	1,600	\$87,859
Construction Managers	Bachelor's degree	1,130	\$103,022
Engineers, all other	Bachelor's degree	550	\$72,176
Electrical Engineers	Bachelor's degree	480	\$80,496
Mechanical Engineers	Bachelor's degree	410	\$78,520
Environmental Engineers	Bachelor's degree	230	\$84,219
Surveyors	Bachelor's degree	200	\$77,126
Environmental Scientists and Specialists, Including Health	Bachelor's degree	190	\$86,466
Landscape Architects	Bachelor's degree	60	\$67,080
Geoscientists, Except Hydrologists and Geographers	Bachelor's degree	50	\$64,563

Table 5: Top Occupations Requiring Less Than Four-Year Degree – Construction & Skilled Trades

(2019; Sorted by employment number)

OCCUPATION	EDUCATION REQ.	AVG EMPLOYMENT	AVG WAGE
Construction Laborers First-Line Supervisors of Construction	No Formal Education Req.	4,630	\$29,557
Trades and Extraction Workers	HS Diploma or Equivalent	2,690	\$65,832
Carpenters	HS Diploma or Equivalent	2,250	\$39,416
Electricians	HS Diploma or Equivalent	1,870	\$55,099
First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	HS Diploma or Equivalent	1,270	\$63,149
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	No Formal Education Req.	1,240	\$27,352
Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	HS Diploma or Equivalent	1,090	\$37,398
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	HS Diploma or Equivalent	1,010	\$52,645
Helpers – Electricians	HS Diploma or Equivalent	610	\$28,725
Electrical power-line installers and repairers	HS Diploma or Equivalent	520	\$65,832

Table 6: Top Desired Occupations – Construction & Skilled Trades

(Q3-Q4 2020, sorted by number of job postings)

OCCUPATION	JOB POSTINGS
Automotive service technicians and mechanics	91
Sales representatives, wholesale and manufacturing (not technical products)	48
Construction laborers	46
Cleaners of vehicles and equipment	39
Maintenance and repair workers, general	37
Customer service representatives	36
First-line supervisors of mechanics, installers, and repairers	34
Construction managers	32
Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	32
Heating, air conditioning, and refrigeration mechanics and installers	27

SOURCE: Burning Glass [Computer software], 2020**Table 7: Top Desired Skills – Construction & Skilled Trades**

(Sorted by popularity)

BASELINE SKILLS	SPECIALIZED SKILLS	SOFTWARE SKILLS
Communication Skills	Customer Service	Microsoft Excel
Computer Literacy	Repair Skills	Microsoft Office
Detail-Oriented	Scheduling	Microsoft Word
Organizational Skills	Sales Skills	Microsoft Powerpoint
Physical Abilities	Plumbing	Quickbooks
Teamwork	Auto Repair	Customer Relationship Management
Multi-Tasking	Client Base Retention	Salesforce
Relationship Building	HVAC	Revit
Troubleshooting	Carpentry	AutoCAD
Energetic	Hand Tools	Computer Aided Drafting/Design

SOURCE: Burning Glass [Computer software], 2020

Industry Council Discussion

HIGH DEMAND OCCUPATIONS

Carpenters, including specialty	Electricians, including specialty
Pipefitters	Heavy equipment operators
Ironworkers	Welders
Masons	

HIGH DEMAND SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

Carpentry and electrician specializations	Perseverance
Willingness to work in uncomfortable environments	Positive attitude
Hardworking	Punctuality
Teamwork	Respect and care for teammates
Business acumen	Critical thinking
Willingness to travel	Ability to pass drug screening
Math skills	Safety-minded
Communication skills	

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BARRIERS

Applicants screened out by drug tests
Lack of connection between schools and hiring companies
Negative cultural perceptions and attitudes about industry
Aging workforce
Imbalanced recruitment focus on management positions over entry-level positions
Access to basic needs like transportation, affordable housing, and childcare
Lack of industry exposure in early education

EXISTING STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTIONS

Opening of College and Career Academies
Soft skills education embedded in accredited construction training programs
Recruiting industry experts into education roles
Highlighting skills development through activities like SkillsUSA competitions
Implementing resources at the high school level, including career fairs and career counselors

FUTURE STRATEGIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Appeal to younger generations and their parents through experiential learning and creative storytelling
Using technology to provide virtual learning experiences to students, like site visits and career days
Facilitating entry into industry careers by highlighting education pathways and earning and advancement potential while maintaining realistic expectations about the nature of the work
Continuing to focus on soft skill development
Creating and maintaining support systems to overcome barriers to employment
Developing more hands-on learning opportunities, e.g. internships

Advanced Manufacturing

Participating Organizations

Ascendia Advisors	Chattahoochee Technical College
Cobb County School District	Cobb Innovation and Technology Academy
Kennesaw State University	New South Publishing
Next Generation Manufacturing	North Georgia Staffing
Taylor English Decisions	Win-Tech, Inc.
WorkSource Cobb	

Industry Data

Although Department of Labor data is suppressed for this industry, it can be inferred from employee counts and job postings from businesses like Lockheed Martin that Aerospace product and parts manufacturing is a significant source of employment within Cobb County. When viewing three-digit NAICS codes and current employee counts, food production also stands out as a top employer in the county.

Table 8: Top Industry Employment Categories – Advanced Manufacturing

(Q1 2020; sorted by average employment number)

INDUSTRY	ESTABLISHMENTS	AVG EMPLOYMENT	AVG ANNUAL WAGE
Aerospace product and parts manufacturing	3	*	*
Printing and related support activities	97	1,311	\$48,672
Plastics product manufacturing	17	1,001	\$59,656
Architectural and structural metals manufacturing	34	710	\$56,732
Soap, cleaning compound, and toilet preparation manufacturing	15	701	\$83,720
Converted paper product manufacturing	13	564	\$59,540
Bakeries and tortilla manufacturing	28	551	\$27,404
Other general purpose machine manufacturing	18	540	\$91,988
Navigational, measuring, electromedical, and control instruments manufacturing	20	537	\$97,968
Electrical equipment manufacturing	9	486	\$201,136

Table 9: Top Industry Employers – Advanced Manufacturing

(2020; sorted by current approximate employee count)

BUSINESS NAME	DESCRIPTION	EMPLOYEES
Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co	Aircraft	5000
Tip Top Poultry, Inc.	Poultry Processing	680
GLOCK, Inc.	Small Arms	550
Heidelberg USA	Printing Trades Machinery & Equipment	400
Huber Engineered Materials	Industrial Inorganic Chemicals, Other	350
Airgas, Inc.	Industrial Gases	300
Atlanta Cheesecake Corp.	Frozen Bakery Products	300
Printpack Inc.	Packaging Paper and Plastics Film,	300
CP Kelco	Industrial Inorganic Chemicals, Other	250
Automated Logic Corp.	Automatic Controls for Regulating Residential and Commercial Environments and Appliances	200
Arylessence, Inc.	Manufacturing, Perfumes, Cosmetics, Other	150

SOURCE: BusinessWise [Computer software], 2020**Table 10: Top Industry Hiring Employers – Advanced Manufacturing**

(Q3-Q4 2020; sorted by total job postings)

EMPLOYER	JOB POSTINGS
Lockheed Martin Corporation	224
Emerson Electric Company	41
Owens & Minor	37
Yamaha Corporation of America	36
Pmc Building Materials	35
Panasonic	32
Mohawk Industries	23
Cryolife Incorporated	23
Oldcastle Precast Incorporated	20
Coca-Cola Enterprises Inc.	20

SOURCE: Burning Glass [Computer software], 2020

Occupation Data

The need for entry-level positions like laborers and freight, stock, and material movers is reflected in both the comments made by focus group participants and in job posting data. The number of job postings for industrial truck and tractor operators likewise aligns with the top specialized technical skill, forklift operation.

Table 11: Top Occupations Requiring at Least Four-Year Degree – Advanced Manufacturing

(2019; sorted by employment number)

OCCUPATION	EDUCATION REQ.	AVG EMPLOYMENT	AVG WAGE
Industrial production managers	Bachelor's degree	730	\$115,211
Architectural and engineering managers	Bachelor's degree	660	\$136,469
Industrial engineers	Bachelor's degree	650	\$86,944
Health and Safety Engineers	Bachelor's degree	590	\$78,229
Electrical engineers	Bachelor's degree	480	\$80,496
Electronics engineers, except computers	Bachelor's degree	480	\$89,710
Mechanical engineers	Bachelor's degree	410	\$78,520
Health and safety engineers	Bachelor's degree	350	\$81,078
Commercial and Industrial Designers	Bachelor's degree	340	\$65,811
Chemists	Bachelor's degree	220	\$79,560

Table 12: Top Occupations Requiring Less Than Four-Year Degree – Advanced Manufacturing

(2019; Sorted by employment number)

OCCUPATION	EDUCATION REQ.	AVG EMPLOYMENT	AVG WAGE
Packers and packagers, hand	No formal ed requirement	2,120	\$24,294
Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers	HS diploma or equivalent	1,630	\$38,667
Production workers, all other	HS diploma or equivalent	1,540	\$23,213
First-line supervisors of production and operating workers	Postsecondary non-degree award	1,190	\$60,819
Helpers – production workers	No formal ed requirement	670	\$27,248
Industrial machinery mechanics	HS Diploma or Equivalent	650	\$51,771
Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers	HS Diploma or Equivalent	650	\$37,794
Avionics technicians	Associate's degree	560	\$64,334
Printing press operators	HS diploma or equivalent	520	\$39,021
Machinists	HS Diploma or Equivalent	480	\$37,835

Table 13: Top Desired Occupations – Advanced Manufacturing

(Q3-Q4 2020, sorted by number of job postings)

OCCUPATION	JOB POSTINGS
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	130
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	109
Production Workers, All Other	102
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	55
Managers, All Other	46
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	37
Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	36
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	35
Aerospace Engineers	34
Computer Occupations, All Other	33

SOURCE: Burning Glass [Computer software], 2020**Table 14: Top Desired Skills – Advanced Manufacturing**

(Sorted by popularity)

BASELINE SKILLS	SPECIALIZED SKILLS	SOFTWARE SKILLS
Communication Skills	Forklift Operation	Microsoft Office
Physical Abilities	Scheduling	Microsoft Excel
Teamwork / Collaboration	Repair Skills	Microsoft Powerpoint
Organizational Skills	Customer Service	SAP
Detail-Oriented	Sales	Microsoft Word
Problem Solving	Quality Assurance and Control	Enterprise Resource Planning
Planning	Project Management	Software Development
Computer Literacy	Budgeting	Microsoft Outlook
	Lifting Ability	Oracle
	Packaging	Microsoft Access

SOURCE: Burning Glass [Computer software], 2020

Industry Council Discussion

HIGH DEMAND OCCUPATIONS

CNC Precision Manufacturing Programmers
Coordinate Measuring Machine Programmers
Robotics Technicians
Entry-Level Production Workers
Logistics positions
Quality Control Engineers
Lab Technicians
Industrial and Manufacturing Engineers

CNC Precision Manufacturing Operators
Welders
Industrial Maintenance
Mechanical Drafters
Quality Control Technicians
Composite Technicians
Process Engineers

HIGH DEMAND SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

Reading comprehension
Detail oriented
Reliability
Ability to be trained
Adaptability
Critical thinking
Ability to keep up with changing technology

Safety oriented
Math skills
Timeliness
Flexibility
Troubleshooting/problem solving
Forklift operating skills
Ability to use hand tools (e.g. tape measure)

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BARRIERS

Negative cultural perceptions and attitudes about industry
Lack of awareness of career opportunities amongst general public
Applicants screened out by drug tests and background checks
Access to basic needs like transportation, affordable housing, and childcare
Language barriers between labor pool and employers
Aging workforce

EXISTING STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTIONS

Relationships between private businesses and education
Industry and career presentations for students at high school level

FUTURE STRATEGIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Increasing the available workforce through intentional diversification of recruitment and labor pool development
Making the industry more appealing to younger generations and their parents through experiential learning and creative storytelling
Understanding and speaking to the elements that attract younger workers to employers
Creating more hands-on, in-person, or virtual learning opportunities for students
Capitalizing on dual enrollment opportunities
Concentrating on skill attainment over degree attainment

Technology & Communications

Participating Organizations

Ascendia Advisors	Chattahoochee Technical College
Cobb County School District	Cobb Innovation and Technology Academy
eBryIT, Inc.	Eclipse Network
Georgia Commute Options	Marietta High School College and Career Academy
Sciera, Inc.	WorkSource Cobb

Industry Data

Telecommunications resellers have a strong presence in Cobb County, seen in both number of establishments and employees. Financial technology, or fintech, is a rising field in Cobb County as seen in the employee count and job postings of companies like FiServ, Inc.

Table 15: Top Industry Employment Categories – Technology & Communications

(Q1 2020; sorted by average employment number)

INDUSTRY	ESTABLISHMENTS	AVG EMPLOYMENT	AVG ANNUAL WAGE
Telecommunications Resellers	68	3,312	\$105,111
Software Publishers	81	1,249	\$116,962
Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services	92	1,108	\$173,861
Other Telecommunications	23	614	\$99,243
Other Information Services	52	348	\$87,161
Radio and TV Broadcasting	12	276	\$124,039
Graphic Design Services	82	238	\$63,228
Newspaper, Periodical, Book, and Directory Publishing	37	217	\$84,169
Photographic Services	33	130	\$36,533
Sound Recording Industries	6	8	\$17,662
Motion Picture and Video Industries	72	*	*

SOURCE: Georgia Department of Labor (GADOL), 2020

Table 16: Top Industry Employers – Technology & Communications

(2020; sorted by current approximate employee count)

BUSINESS NAME	DESCRIPTION	EMPLOYEES
Manhattan Associates, Inc.	Software Products & Services	1300
Comcast Cable Communications	Cable and Other Pay TV Services	700
FiServ, Inc.	Computer Processing and Data Preparation and Processing Services	700
SITA Americas	Computer Processing and Data Preparation and Processing Services	600
Sprint Corp	Mobile Telecom	850
Travelport GDS	Software Products & Services	460
Wolters Kluwer TAA NA	Software Products & Services	400
Fusion Connect	Telecom Excluding Mobile	400
Infosys McCamish	Computer Programming Services	350
The Ultimate Software Group Inc.	Computer Programming Services	420
Vonage	Telecom Excluding Mobile	400

SOURCE: BusinessWise [Computer software], 2020**Table 17: Top Industry Hiring Employers – Technology & Communications**

(Q3-Q4 2020; sorted by total job postings)

EMPLOYER	JOB POSTINGS
FiServ, Inc.	112
Intuit	93
Advantage Sales & Marketing	59
Intersect Software Incorporated	21
Viva USA	19
Polyone Corporation	17
Hallmark Cards	15
N2 Publishing	11
Google Inc.	10
Valassis	9

SOURCE: Burning Glass [Computer software], 2020

Occupation Data

Software development, software applications and computer applications, are the top three positions for employment and job postings. This indicates a strong demand for these occupations in Cobb County. Evidence of cybersecurity's rising prominence can be seen in the job posting frequency for information security analysts. The influence of television and film production's growing popularity in the Atlanta metro region can be seen in occupations like producers and directors and audio and video equipment technicians.

Table 18: Top Occupations Requiring at Least Four-Year Degree – Technology & Communications

(2019; sorted by employment number)

OCCUPATION	EDUCATION REQ.	AVG EMPLOYMENT	AVG WAGE
Software Developers, Applications	Bachelor's degree	4,590	\$93,101
Computer Occupations, All Other	Bachelor's degree	2,780	\$95,680
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	Bachelor's degree	2,010	\$68,869
Software Developers, Systems Software	Bachelor's degree	1,910	\$101,837
Computer Systems Analysts	Bachelor's degree	1,860	\$85,488
Computer and Information Systems Managers	Bachelor's degree	1,820	\$142,230
Network and Computer Systems Administrators	Bachelor's degree	1,200	\$85,717
Marketing Managers	Bachelor's degree	980	\$143,062
Computer Programmers	Bachelor's degree	710	\$99,424
Producers and Directors	Bachelor's degree	700	\$87,506

Table 19: Top Occupations Requiring Less Than Four-Year Degree – Technology & Communications

(2019; Sorted by employment number)

OCCUPATION	EDUCATION REQ.	AVG EMPLOYMENT	AVG WAGE
Computer User Support Specialists	Some College, No Degree	2,090	\$47,050
Computer Network Support Specialists	Associate's Degree	620	\$64,730
Photographers	HS diploma or equivalent	600	\$45,864
Computer, automated teller, and office machine repairers	Some college, no degree	390	\$35,880
Advertising sales agents	HS diploma or equivalent	330	\$50,024
Web Developers	Associate's Degree	290	\$82,722
Audio and Video Equipment Technicians	Postsecondary Nondegree Award	220	\$54,954
Broadcast Technicians	Associate's Degree	80	\$47,736

Table 20: Top Desired Occupations – Technology & Communications

(Q3-Q4 2020, sorted by number of job postings)

OCCUPATION	JOB POSTINGS
Computer Occupations, All Other	38
Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	35
Software Developers, Applications	32
Information Security Analysts	27
Demonstrators and Product Promoters	22
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	16
Retail Salespersons	15

SOURCE: Burning Glass [Computer software], 2020**Table 21: Top Desired Skills – Technology & Communications**

(Sorted by popularity)

BASELINE SKILLS	SPECIALIZED SKILLS	SOFTWARE SKILLS
Communication Skills	Customer Service	Microsoft Excel
Organizational Skills	Sales	Microsoft Office
Computer Literacy	Scheduling	Microsoft Word
Problem Solving	Retail Industry Knowledge	Oracle
Research	Fiserv	Software Development
Bilingual (English/Spanish)	Tax Law	SQL
Troubleshooting	Tax Preparation	Java
Written Communication	Tax Returns	Linux
Detail-Oriented	Budgeting	Python
Teamwork / Collaboration	Project Management	Atlassian JIRA

SOURCE: Burning Glass [Computer software], 2020

Industry Council Discussion

HIGH DEMAND OCCUPATIONS

Information Specialists	Systems Engineers and Administrators
Service Desk Managers	Configuration Technicians
Local Delivery Drivers	Field Project Technicians
Project Managers	Networking Specialists
Cybersecurity Specialists	

HIGH DEMAND SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

Prioritization	Multitasking
Team Management	Interpersonal and Communication Skills
Troubleshooting and Problem-Solving	Ability to Stay Current with Changing Technology
Detail Oriented	Ability to work independently, especially from home

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BARRIERS

- Small number of available candidates
- Recruits have excellent technical skills, but lack leadership and interpersonal skills
- Stiff competition amongst hiring companies, especially in offering perks like hardware upgrades and work/life balance
- Employees difficulties with self-awareness, unwillingness to ask for help
- Slow rate of diversification
- Lower priority given to upskilling and training

EXISTING STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTIONS

- Relationships between private businesses and education
- Industry and career presentations for students at high school level

FUTURE STRATEGIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Increasing the utilization of virtual technology for training
- Understanding employees' (current and future potential) priorities to keep them engaged and enthusiasm high
- Developing closer relationships with schools and students, especially at the middle school level
- Creating more hands-on, in-person, or virtual learning opportunities for students
- Investing in employee development and fostering teamwork
- Supporting soft skills development

Healthcare & Bioscience

Participating Organizations

Altierus Career College	The Barcliff Group, Inc.
Chattahoochee Technical College	Cobb Collaborative
Cobb County School District	Cobb/Douglas Public Health
Cobb Innovation and Technology Academy	Comforting Arms
Georgia Commute Options	Georgia Sports Medicine Specialists
Life University	Marietta City Schools
Office of U.S. Representative Barry Loudermilk	Wellstar Health System
WorkSource Cobb	

Industry Data

Although the two industries are linked, it was important to distinguish between healthcare and bioscience when reviewing data. Hospital employment data is suppressed in some reports, but the count of employees at establishments like Wellstar Kennestone Hospital demonstrates their key role as employers. Offices of physicians are significant employers in healthcare. In bioscience, medical equipment and supplies manufacturing leads.

Table 22: Top Industry Employment Categories – Healthcare & Bioscience

(Q1 2020; sorted by average employment number)

INDUSTRY	ESTABLISHMENTS	AVG EMPLOYMENT	AVG ANNUAL WAGE
General medical and surgical hospitals	14	*	*
Offices of physicians	565	13,241	\$83,688
Offices of dentists	384	3,373	\$55,172
Medical equipment and supplies manufacturing	212	3,361	\$23,764
Outpatient care centers	93	2,585	\$75,140
Home healthcare services	93	2,283	\$52,832
Offices of other health practitioners	430	2,277	\$46,904
Skilled nursing care facilities	18	1,950	\$45,396
Continuing care retirement communities	43	1,286	\$27,196
Medical and diagnostic laboratories	57	923	\$96,460
Pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing	10	647	\$259,740

Table 24: Top Industry Employers – Healthcare & Bioscience

(2020; sorted by current approximate employee count)

BUSINESS NAME	DESCRIPTION	EMPLOYEES
Wellstar Kennestone Hospital	Hospitals, General Medical & Surgical	5000
Wellstar Cobb Hospital	Hospitals, General Medical & Surgical	2500
Aveanna Healthcare, LLC	Home Health Care Services	500
Q2 Solutions	Medical Laboratory	575
Wellstar Health System (HQ)	Hospitals, General Medical & Surgical	500
Benevis, LLC (HQ)	Dentists Offices & Clinics	300
CryoLife, Inc.	Surgical and Medical Instruments and Apparatus	400
MiMedx Group Inc.	Biological Products, Excluding Diagnostic	300
UCB, Inc.	Manufacturing, Pharmaceutical Preparations	350
Presbyterian Village	Nursing Care Facilities	300
Vonage	Telecom Excluding Mobile	400

SOURCE: BusinessWise [Computer software], 2020**Table 25: Top Industry Hiring Employers – Healthcare & Bioscience**

(Q3-Q4 2020; sorted by total job postings)

EMPLOYER	JOB POSTINGS
Wellstar Health System	3,792
Healthcare Travelers	194
Rn Travel Healthcare	94
Banfield Pet Hospital	92
Pruitthealth	90
UHS-Pruitt	66
Thrive Skilled Pediatric Care	64
Encompass Home Health	59
Fresenius	53
Careinhomes	48

SOURCE: Burning Glass [Computer software], 2020

Occupation Data

Registered nurses are in very high demand, as seen in their average employment numbers as well as their number one place on desired occupations by job postings. Comments from focus group participants as well as job postings indicate a need for nurses at other levels as well as nursing assistants. Bioscience occupations are represented in smaller numbers and share some common characteristics with manufacturing.

Table 26: Top Occupations Requiring at Least 4-Year Degree – Healthcare & Bioscience

(2019; sorted by employment number)

OCCUPATION	EDUCATION REQ.	AVG EMPLOYMENT	AVG WAGE
Physicians and surgeons, all other	Doctoral degree	1,070	\$241,696
Nurse practitioners	Master's degree	800	\$99,216
Industrial engineers	Bachelor's degree	650	\$86,944
Medical and health services managers	Bachelor's degree	600	\$108,118
Pharmacists	Doctoral degree	570	\$105,830
Physical therapists	Doctoral degree	460	\$83,907
Physician assistants	Master's degree	420	\$104,021
Speech-language pathologists	Master's degree	370	\$73,840
Industrial production managers	Bachelor's degree	320	\$111,654
Optometrists	Doctoral degree	300	\$88,733
Occupational therapists	Bachelor's degree	240	\$89,398
Natural sciences managers	Bachelor's degree	100	\$92,266
Medical scientists, except epidemiologists	Doctoral degree	90	\$86,050

Table 27: Top Occupations Requiring Less Than 4-Year Degree – Healthcare & Bioscience

(2019; Sorted by employment number)

OCCUPATION	EDUCATION REQ.	AVG EMPLOYMENT	AVG WAGE
Registered nurses	Associate's degree	4,960	\$68,536
Assemblers & fabricators, all other	HS diploma or equivalent	3,110	\$25,771
Nursing assistants	Postsecondary nondegree award	2,620	\$24,565
Medical assistants	Postsecondary nondegree award	1,730	\$31,283
Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers	HS diploma or equivalent	1,630	\$38,667
Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	Postsecondary nondegree award	1,250	\$41,038
Clinical laboratory technologists	Associate's degree	850	\$51,459
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	Postsecondary nondegree award	740	\$38,418
Dental assistants	Postsecondary nondegree award	650	\$33,467
Pharmacy technicians	HS diploma or equivalent	570	\$31,595

Table 28: Top Desired Occupations – Healthcare & Bioscience

(Q3-Q4 2020, sorted by number of job postings)

OCCUPATION	JOB POSTINGS
Registered Nurses	2,575
Nursing Assistants	401
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	368
Medical and Health Services Managers	348
Medical Secretaries	333
Medical Assistants	332
Physicians and Surgeons, All Other	188
Customer Service Representatives	179

SOURCE: Burning Glass [Computer software], 2020**Table 29: Top Desired Skills – Healthcare & Bioscience**

(Sorted by popularity)

BASELINE SKILLS	SPECIALIZED SKILLS	SOFTWARE SKILLS
Communication Skills	Scheduling	Microsoft Office
Computer Literacy	Customer Service	Microsoft Excel
Organizational Skills	Acute Care	Microsoft Word
Research	Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS)	ICD-10
Teamwork / Collaboration	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	Microsoft Powerpoint
Critical Thinking	Critical Care Nursing	EPIC Software
Multitasking	Patient Care	SAP
Time Management	Pediatrics	Enterprise Resource Planning
Written Communication	Teaching	Oracle
Detail-Oriented	Treatment Planning	SQL

SOURCE: Burning Glass [Computer software], 2020

Industry Council Discussion

HIGH DEMAND OCCUPATIONS

Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA)	Paramedics
Bilingual mental health providers	Nurses – RN
Medical assistant	Surgical technologists

HIGH DEMAND SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

High academic achievement	Multilingual
Geriatric care	Infection control
Flexibility with scheduling	Telemedicine
HIPAA knowledge and compliance	Artificial intelligence
Virtual technology, especially in training	Global health
Reliability	Customer service
Rapport building	Flexibility
Willingness to take on new tasks	Willingness to learn
Active listening	Understanding of holistic healthcare
Knowledge of barriers to accessing healthcare	Computer/technical skills
Critical thinking skills	Passion for the work

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BARRIERS

- COVID-19 has lead to burnout and turnover
- Shortage of clinical learning opportunities
- Competition in a tight labor pool is driving up employer costs
- Length of education pathway for higher-level practitioners
- Some occupations have relatively low pay (e.g. EMT, mental health)
- Chronic shortage of nurses
- Difficulty hiring home health workers due to coronavirus concerns

EXISTING STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTIONS

- Local college and career academies will graduate students with professional certifications, ready to practice
- Partnerships between local colleges and hospital systems for work-based learning opportunities

FUTURE STRATEGIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Exposing students to the industry and creating relationships with them at a younger age
- Creating more opportunities for professionals to visit school campuses
- Developing more hands-on, in-person, or virtual learning opportunities for students
- Solving the scarcity of clinical learning opportunities/settings
- Promoting awareness of financial support available to employees for education and professional development
- Prioritizing learning opportunities for lower level employees to facilitate upward mobility
- Rethinking work schedules and fostering schedule flexibility

Logistics & Supply Chain

Participating Organizations

BOS Staffing	Chattahoochee Technical College
Cobb County School District	Cobb Innovation and Technology Academy
Georgia Commute Options	Georgia Highlands College
Hire Dynamics	JAMNDH, Inc.
Marietta High School College and Career Academy	New South Publishing
Nexterus	Vanderlande Industries
Walker International Transportation, LLC	WorkSource Cobb

Industry Data

The wholesale trade of electronic and electrical goods ranks highest in industries by employment overall as well as the top employer in this sector. Likewise, general freight trucking takes the number two spots on each list, just behind number one; most job postings align with general freight trucking as well. This trend could be impacted by increased needs for shipping, delivery services and hiring amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 30: Top Industry Employment Categories – Logistics & Supply Chain

(Q1 2020; sorted by average employment number)

INDUSTRY	ESTABLISHMENTS	AVG EMPLOYMENT	AVG ANNUAL WAGE
Wholesale electronic markets agents and brokers	668	2,892	\$85,696
General freight trucking	120	2,792	\$49,504
Professional and commercial equipment and supplies merchant wholesalers	157	2,713	\$98,228
Machinery, equipment, and supplies merchant wholesalers	170	2,671	\$88,140
Couriers and express delivery services	31	2,563	\$29,224
Lumber and other construction materials merchant wholesalers	75	2,147	\$70,668
Grocery and related product merchant wholesalers	55	1,497	\$68,224
Motor vehicle and motor vehicle parts and supplies merchant wholesalers	46	1,283	\$97,084
Miscellaneous durable goods merchant wholesalers	71	923	\$74,256
Household appliances and electrical and electronic goods wholesalers	104	104	\$147,368

Table 31: Top Industry Employers – Logistics & Supply Chain

(2020; sorted by current approximate employee count)

BUSINESS NAME	DESCRIPTION	EMPLOYEES
GE Power	Wholesale Trade, Electrical Apparatus and Equipment	1100
YRC Freight/Distribution	Transportation and Public Utilities, Trucking	600
FedEx Ground	Transportation and Public Utilities, Trucking	550
HD Supply Holdings, Inc.	Wholesale Trade, Lumber, Plywood, Millwork, and Wood Panels	500
Core-Mark International	Wholesale Trade, Grocery, General Line	460
MSC Industrial Supply Co	Wholesale Trade, Industrial Supplies	425
BlueLinx Corp	Wholesale Trade, Lumber, Plywood, Millwork, and Wood Panels	400
Southeastern Freight Lines Inc.	Transportation and Public Utilities, Trucking	300
Yancey Bros	Wholesale Trade, Motor Vehicle Supplies & New Parts	300
XPO Last Mile	Transportation and Public Utilities, Arrangement of Freight Transportation	300
Vanderlande Industries	Wholesale Trade, Industrial Machinery and Equipment	300

SOURCE: BusinessWise [Computer software], 2020**Table 32: Top Industry Hiring Employers – Logistics & Supply Chain**

(Q3-Q4 2020; sorted by total job postings)

EMPLOYER	JOB POSTINGS
FedEx	178
Averitt Express	96
United Parcel Service Incorporated	69
Crete Carrier Corporation	66
Poly Trucking	56
Jm Tank Lines	50
J Grady Randolph Incorporated	49
United States Xpress Enterprises Inc.	49
Paper Transport Incorporated	41
Quality Driver Solutions	37

SOURCE: Burning Glass [Computer software], 2020

Occupation Data

Drivers, laborers, and material movers are in high demand, as seen by their overall representation in current employment as well as job postings. Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers seem to be in very high demand with their number of job postings significantly above the next highest occupation. Fewer positions in this field require a bachelor's degree or higher; in this category, logisticians are the most numerous in current employment.

Table 33: Top Occupations Requiring at Least Four-Year Degree – Logistics & Supply Chain

(2019; sorted by employment number)

OCCUPATION	EDUCATION REQ.	AVG EMPLOYMENT	AVG WAGE
Logisticians	Bachelor's degree	1,180	\$66,456
Sales representatives, wholesale and manufacturing, technical and scientific products	Bachelor's degree	890	\$67,330
Purchasing managers	Bachelor's degree	300	\$144,269
Sales engineers	Bachelor's degree	*	\$101,317
Airline pilots, copilots, and flight engineers	Bachelor's degree	*	\$92,219
Captains, mates, and pilots of water vessels	Bachelor's degree	*	\$66,810
Medical scientists, except epidemiologists	Doctoral degree	90	\$86,050

Table 34: Top Occupations Requiring Less Than Four-Year Degree – Logistics & Supply Chain

(2019; Sorted by employment number)

OCCUPATION	EDUCATION REQ.	AVG EMPLOYMENT	AVG WAGE
Laborers, freight, stock, and material movers, hand	No formal education requirement	8,570	\$26,686
Sales representatives, wholesale and manufacturing, except technical and scientific products	HS diploma or equivalent	5,970	\$64,709
Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers	Postsecondary nondegree award	4,430	\$36,213
Light truck or delivery service drivers	HS diploma or equivalent	3,260	\$36,275
Industrial truck and tractor operators	No formal education requirement	2,410	\$37,336
Packers and packagers, hand	No formal education requirement	2,120	\$24,294
Buyers and purchasing agents	HS diploma or equivalent	1,510	\$80,954
First-line supervisors of transportation and material moving workers, except aircraft cargo handling supervisors	HS diploma or equivalent	1,280	\$51,646
Driver/sales workers	HS diploma or equivalent	1,190	\$29,786
Transportation, storage, and distribution managers	HS diploma or equivalent	470	\$112,653

Table 35: Top Desired Occupations – Logistics & Supply Chain

(Q3-Q4 2020, sorted by number of job postings)

OCCUPATION	JOB POSTINGS
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,776
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	274
Driver/Sales Workers	71
Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	68
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	35
Customer Service Representatives	33
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	33
General and Operations Managers	32
Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	30
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	28

SOURCE: Burning Glass [Computer software], 2020**Table 36: Top Desired Skills – Logistics & Supply Chain**

(Sorted by popularity)

BASELINE SKILLS	SPECIALIZED SKILLS	SOFTWARE SKILLS
Physical Abilities	Customer Service	Microsoft Office
Computer Literacy	Forklift Operation	Microsoft Excel
Organizational Skills	Scheduling	Microsoft Word
Communication Skills	Truck Driving	Microsoft Powerpoint
English / Bilingual	Flatbed Trucks	SAP
Detail Oriented	Commercial Driving	Agile Development
Teamwork / Collaboration	Repair	Software Engineering
Time Management	Sorting	Adobe Photoshop
Planning	Logistics	Software Development
Problem Solving	Over the Road	Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

SOURCE: Burning Glass [Computer software], 2020

Industry Council Discussion

HIGH DEMAND OCCUPATIONS

Warehouse supervisors	Frontline operations
Commercial truck drivers	Forklift drivers
Diesel repair	Industrial maintenance
Logistics designers	Electrical engineers
Mechatronics	Data analysts

HIGH DEMAND SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

Customer service skills	Critical thinking
Problem solving	Quick thinking
Experience in international logistics	Sales skills
Computer skills	Data analysis
Time management	Effective communication

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BARRIERS

- Less familiarity with the industry amongst the public
- Rigid application and applicant screening processes stymie recruitment and hiring
- Underutilization of diverse labor pools
- Underutilization of available workforce development resources

EXISTING STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTIONS

- Development of new logistics and supply chain education pathways at college level

FUTURE STRATEGIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Exposing students to the industry and creating relationships with them at a younger age
- Rethinking hiring practices and tools to facilitate “outside-the-box” recruitment
- Developing more college-level internship opportunities
- Accessing underutilized talent pools
- Maximizing efficiency by utilizing available workforce development resources
- Harnessing current trends (such as supply chain shortages) to tell the story of the industry and create more interest



Cobb Workforce Survey Results

Survey Results

INTRODUCTION

To better understand the workforce status, challenges, and opportunities of Cobb County, the A.L. Burruss Institute of Public Service and Research at Kennesaw State University conducted an online survey of local business, industry, and education partners. The purpose of this survey was to gather data on a number of workforce related topics, such as availability of a skilled labor pool, participation in workforce development systems, and openness to more robust relationships between industry and education sectors.

Additionally, Cobb Workforce Partnership recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic unquestionably altered the workforce landscape in 2020; in previous years, one of the greatest challenges reported by CWP participants was a tight labor market with historically low unemployment rates. This survey sought to understand the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on local workforce. Participants also reported the degree to which their organizations were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the nature of those impacts, and measures taken to preserve business operations as well as health and safety.

The Cobb Chamber of Commerce provided contact information for 500 partners, and the survey invitation was distributed by the A.L. Burruss Institute over the summer of 2020. 92 surveys were completed. It is possible that participation in the survey was negatively impacted due to COVID-19 pandemic conditions.

SUMMARY

Responses to the survey were generally positive. Of note:

- **67.4%** of respondents agreed that employees hired in Cobb County have the technical skills and knowledge needed to be successful in their jobs.
- **63.2%** of respondents agreed that employees hired in Cobb County have the soft skills needed to be successful in their jobs.
- **60.7%** of respondents indicated that someone in their organization knows where to access training for new or existing employees.
- **56.2%** of respondents indicated that someone in their organization is familiar with organizations that can help meet their workforce development needs.
- **54.6%** of respondents agreed that their business has the opportunity to partner with the local schools on workforce development and initiatives.

An area of concern illuminated by survey responses: 54.4% of respondents indicated they are unable to find a sufficient number of job candidates in Cobb County to meet their hiring needs. This is consistent with feedback provided by CWP participants in the past.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Cobb Workforce Partnership included a broad range of industries and businesses of all sizes in this survey.

Construction – 12 respondents

Healthcare and Wellness; Business Services - 9 each

Information and Technology – 8

Banking/Finance/Insurance – 7

Manufacturing; Transportation and Logistics – 6 each

Education; Non-profit and Community Services – 4 each

Legal; Public Services; Hospitality and Tourism – 3 each

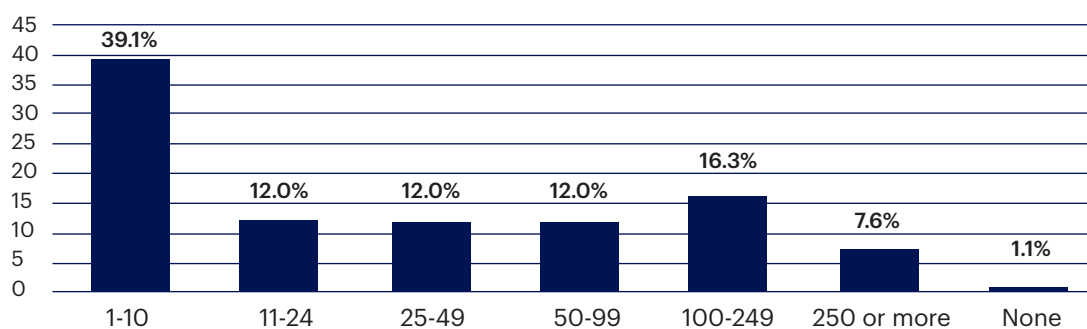
Advertising and Marketing; Automotive; Engineering; Food Services; Retail; Specialty Trades - 2 each

Communications and Media; Employment Services; Trade Organization; Utilities; Government – 1 each

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

Most respondents to the survey represented Cobb County's small business community, with 10 or fewer employees. Larger businesses (250 or more employees) represented only 7.6% of responses.

Figure 1: Number of employees



LENGTH OF TIME IN BUSINESS IN COBB COUNTY

Most respondents reported their business has been in operation for 10 or more years. A relatively small percentage (5.4%) indicated their business is not located in Cobb – these responses were valuable as well, due to the number of Cobb County citizens who travel outside the county for work.

Figure 2: Length of time in business

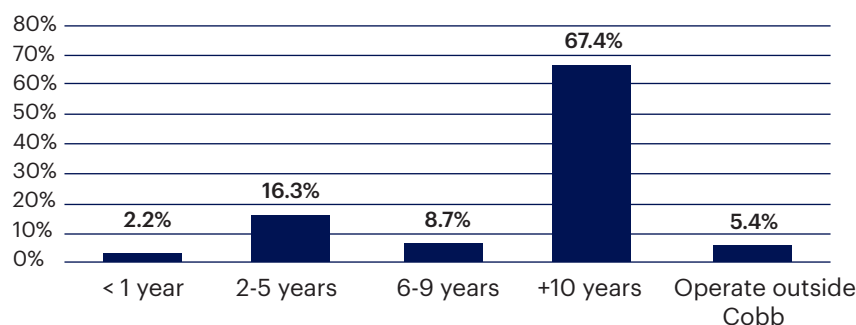
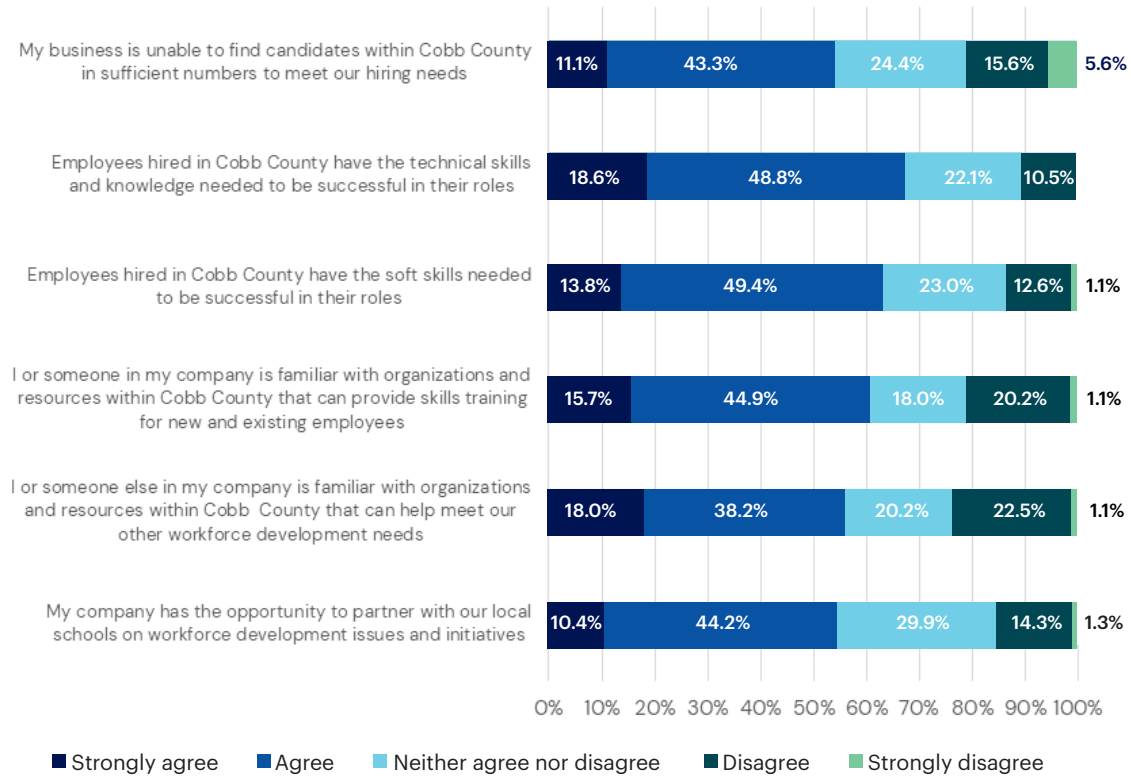


Figure 3: Opinions on selected issues related to workforce development

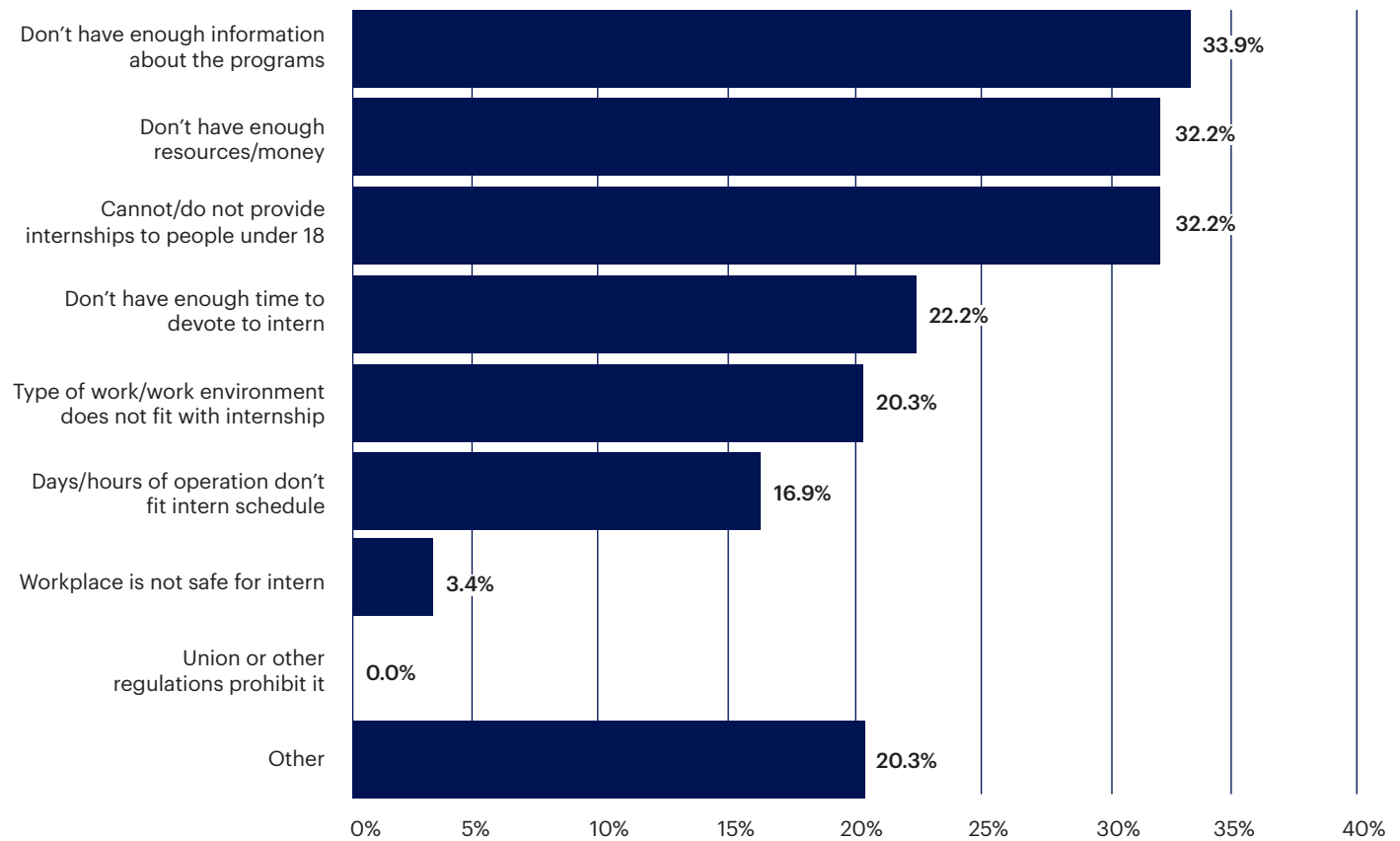


EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

A key component in workforce development is experiential learning: the opportunity for students to learn about industries and companies through experiences like internships, co-ops, and job shadowing. Cobb Workforce Partnership’s survey aimed to examine the attitudes of its respondents toward offering these experiences to both high school and college level students.

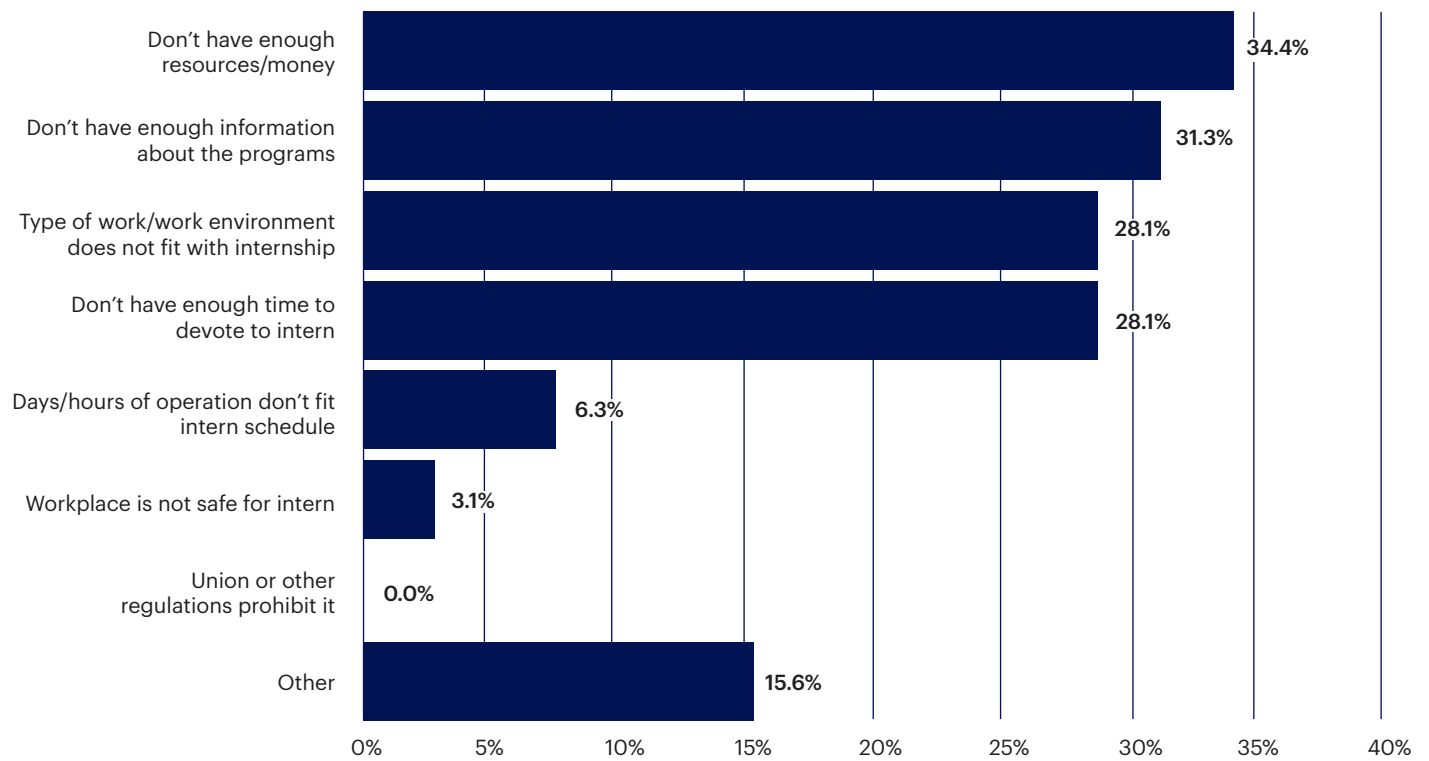
Nearly two-thirds of respondents stated they do not currently offer experiential learning opportunities to high school students. Almost 40% of respondents who said they do not offer these experiences stated they would be willing to offer experiential learning opportunities if their concerns or barriers could be adequately addressed.

Figure 4: Why doesn’t your company offer experiential learning opportunities to high school students? (n = 59)



Many responses in the “Other” category indicate a preference for college-level interns due to considerations of the technical knowledge or level of maturity required for the work.

Figure 5: Why doesn't your company offer experiential learning opportunities to post-secondary students? (n = 32)

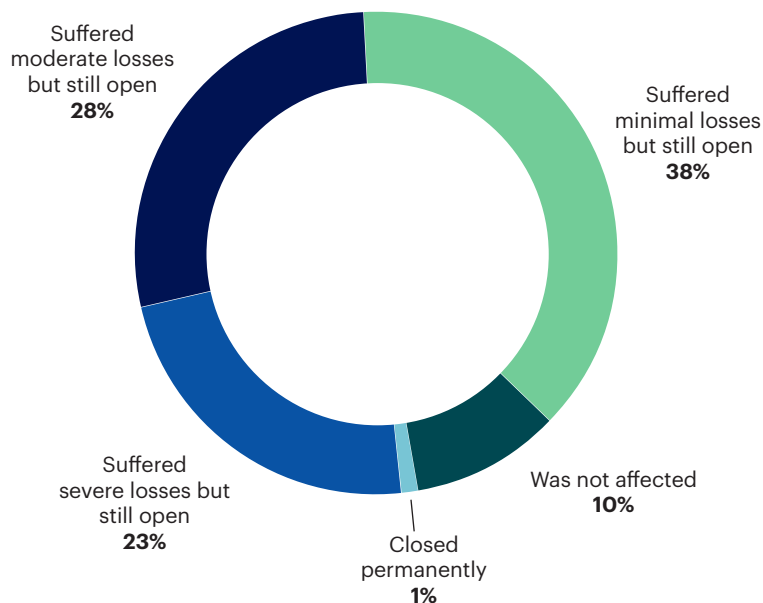


Only 34.8% of respondents stated they do not offer experiential learning opportunities to postsecondary students. Roughly 21% of these businesses stated they would offer these kinds of programs to postsecondary students if their concerns and barriers could be adequately resolved.

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON RESPONDING PARTNERS

Respondents were asked about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their organizations. Only one respondent indicated their business has been permanently closed due to the financial impact of the pandemic. Half of respondents suffered moderate to severe losses in their organization, but an almost equal number stated they had experienced minimal or no losses (see Figure 6).

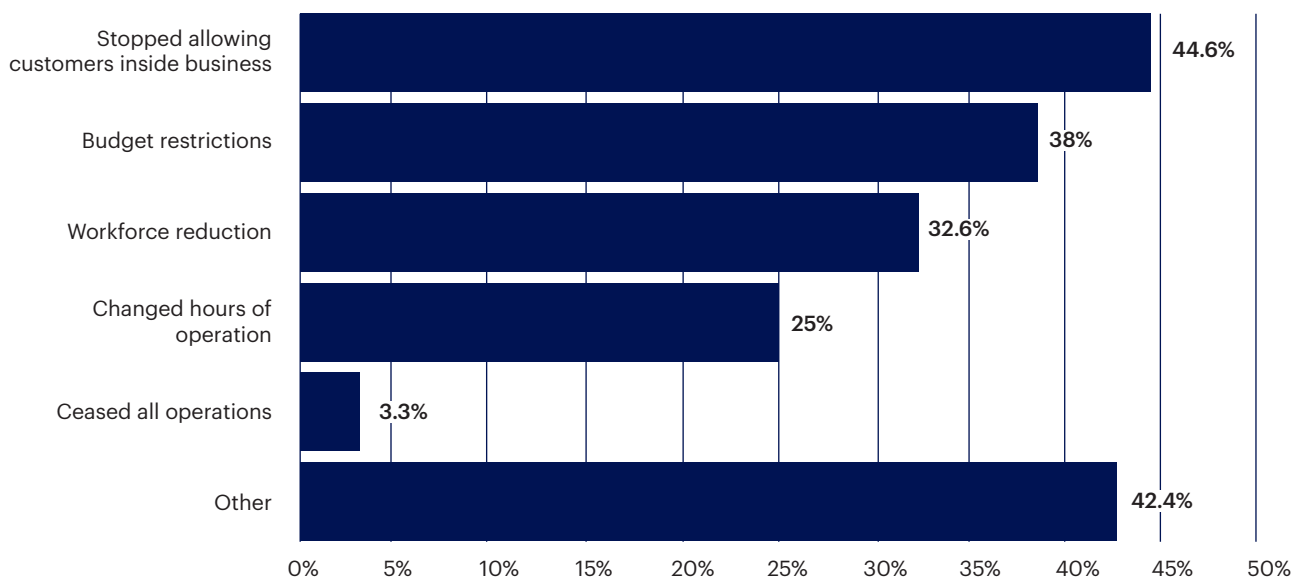
Figure 6: Impact of COVID-19 on Respondent's Company



IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON COMPANY'S ONGOING BUSINESS OPERATIONS

The survey asked respondents if their organization modified operating procedures or service delivery in response to the pandemic. 90% indicated their organization had made changes; those are outlined below.

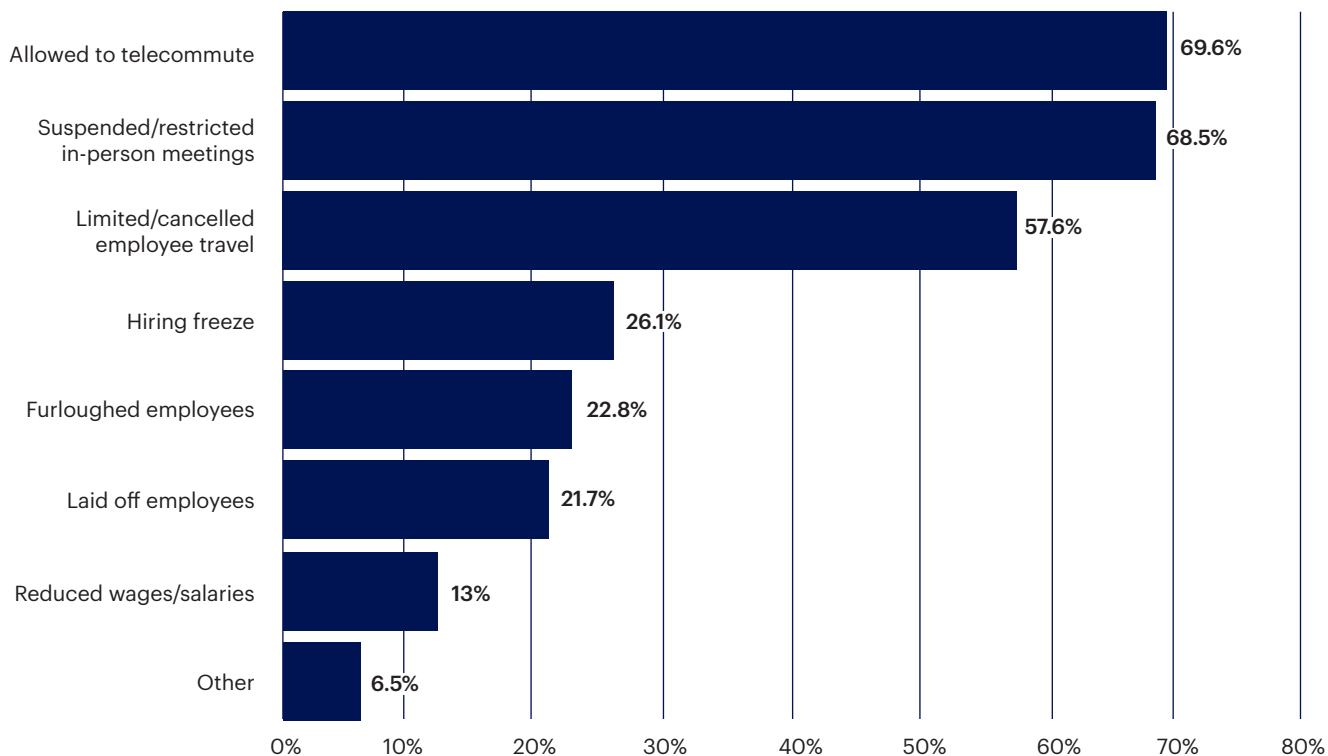
Figure 7: Impact of COVID on companies' general business operations



IMPACT OF COVID ON EMPLOYEES

Respondents were asked whether or not the COVID pandemic had specific effects on their employees. Two-thirds (69.6%) of the partners indicated at least some of their employees were allowed to telecommute; and almost equal percentage (68.5%) said their company eliminated or restricted in-person meetings (see Figure 8). A majority (57.6%) limited or cancelled employee travel. Other impacts were selected by far fewer partners.

Figure 8: Impact of COVID on employees



Some notable responses in the “Other” category include:

- Reduced employee benefits*
- Adjusted project timelines*
- Reduced hours*
- Temporary furloughs*

Workforce Development Successes

In its original 2015 mission statement, Cobb Workforce Partnership declared its commitment to two priorities:

- Leverage community partnerships to meet the workforce needs of industry through innovative approaches to education and training, and
- Develop a workforce supply chain that eliminates skill gaps and is prepared to adapt to changing workforce demands in Cobb.

Through direct action and support, Cobb Workforce Partnership and its partners achieved significant victories in placing Cobb County as a top-tier location for businesses seeking a skilled labor pool. Following are some of those key accomplishments.

Cobb Workforce Partnership

Resulting from the initial 2015 workforce study, the Cobb Workforce Partnership was founded to identify and address the workforce challenges facing the Cobb community. Over time this group has grown and consists of educators, industry professionals, economic developers, investors, and community stakeholders.

Over the last five years, Cobb Workforce Partnership has convened several times each year to address and problem-solve around pressing workforce issues such as skills gaps, workforce availability, shifting employment and industry trends, and industry-education partnerships.

Targeted Industry Councils

Another outcome of the initial 2015 workforce study was recognizing the need for targeted interventions for four of Cobb County's top industry sectors: Advanced Manufacturing, Construction and Skilled Trades, Healthcare and Bioscience, and Information Technology. These clusters represent industry sectors that drive strong economic growth while also providing jobs with opportunity for advancement, desirable wages, and healthy economic outlooks.

Each Industry Council met and continues to meet once to twice per year, engaging in focused conversations that impact the short and long term workforce needs in each area. Industry experts and education leaders discuss the issues pertinent to their specific industry and share solutions for workforce challenges. In 2020, the Cobb Workforce Partnership identified an emerging industry and created the Logistics and Supply Chain Industry Council, bringing the total number of councils to five.



COBB **WORKFORCE
PARTNERSHIP**
BUILDING COBB'S
**FUTURE
WORKFORCE**

College and Career Academies

One of the high priority goals coming out of the original 2015 workforce development study was the inception of college and career academies for Cobb County's two public school systems. Through community partnerships and investments as well as state funding, Cobb County School District (CCSD) and Marietta City Schools (MCS) brought these goals to fruition with the opening of their own respective state-of-the-art educational facilities.

COBB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

CCSD's Cobb Innovation and Technology Academy (CITA) enrolled its first class of students in fall 2020, with some students attending virtually and some attending in-person to promote public health and safety. Located adjacent to the existing Wheeler High School campus, CITA's career education magnet program offers career education to students from all across the county school district.

Students can take classes in one of 15 career pathways, organized into three pillars:

Emerging Technologies

Cyber Security
Networking
Energy & Power

Maker Industries

Automotive
Carpentry
Welding
HVAC
Masonry
Plumbing
Electrical

Healthcare Services

Clinical Lab
Patient Care
Emergency Medical Response
Phlebotomy
Surgical Technology

MARIETTA CITY SCHOOLS

In addition to being an International Baccalaureate World school, Marietta High School College and Career Academy is the site of MCS' College and Career Academy. MCS' College and Career Academy stands apart from other similar schools by being the only school of its kind in Georgia with all eligible career pathways being industry certified. Classes in Cybersecurity will start in 2021.

Students can enroll in one of 21 career pathways, organized into 12 clusters:

Architecture and Construction

Architectural Drawing and Design
Construction

Business, Management and Administration

Entrepreneurship

Government and Public Administration

Air Force JR ROTC

Hospitality and Tourism

Culinary Arts

Human Services

Nutrition and Food Science

Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security

Criminal Investigations
Public Safety Communications

STEM

Engineering Drafting and Design

Arts, A/V Technology, and Communications

A/V Technology and Film
Graphic Communications (Production)
Graphic Design

Education and Training

Early Childhood Care and Education

Health Science

Biotechnology Research and Development
Certified Nursing Assistant
Emergency Medical Responder
Sports Medicine

Information Technology

Computer Science
Cybersecurity
Game Design

Marketing

Marketing Communications and Promotions

Veteran's Education Career Transition Resource (VECTR)

In June 2020, \$2.25 million was allocated to convert up to 13,000 sq. ft. of existing space at the Marietta Campus of Chattahoochee Technical College for a second Georgia Veterans Education Career Transition Resource (VECTR) Center. The single current VECTR in Warner Robbins, at Central Georgia Technical College (CGTC) provides benefits of this unique focus as a one-stop-shop single access point for military, veterans and their families to receive academic coaching, benefits counseling, employment assistance and resources to meet their unique needs.

With Dobbins Air Reserve Base and hundreds of thousands of veterans in metro Atlanta and northwest Georgia, a VECTR Center on Chattahoochee Tech's Marietta campus will dovetail our community's strongly shared and longstanding commitment to veterans and would also meet the workforce needs of our businesses so that we can continue retaining and recruiting more top companies to Georgia.

WorkSource Cobb CARES Act Funding

As the official workforce development agency for Cobb County, WorkSource Cobb carries out the education, employment, training and support services necessary to support workforce development in the Cobb community.

In response to economic impacts of COVID-19 on businesses and residents, Cobb County Government issued \$1,000,000 CARES Act funding to CobbWorks, Inc., the private not-for-profit organization operating as WorkSource Cobb, to provide a robust Economic Recovery and Humanitarian Assistance Project to more than 230 Cobb residents and employers.

The project focused on high demand career fields such as healthcare, IT, advanced manufacturing, and transportation and logistics. In the short term, eligible individuals received education, training, and employment services focusing on high-wage, short-term training programs including apprenticeship models. Participants also have access to supportive services such as child care and transportation as needed. Long term support addressed employment retention and homelessness mitigation through rent assistance. To aid employers in the wake of a slow economic recovery and encourage hiring, employers were able to receive assistance with talent recruitment and talent sourcing and 50% wage reimbursement for all eligible new hires, up to \$5,000 per new hire.

CobbHires

In 2020, the Cobb Chamber recognized a need for local businesses to access a pool of local talent, both for employment opportunities as well as work-based learning experiences. In response, the Cobb Chamber launched CobbHires, a portal for employers to post their job openings and internship offerings.

Second-Chance Employment

In August 2020, Governor Brian Kemp signed into law Georgia SB-288, a piece of legislation designed to help individuals with past convictions to rejoin the workforce after successfully rehabilitating. Individuals can request the court to restrict and seal certain misdemeanor convictions, given that four years have passed since the completion of their sentence and there have been no new or pending charges.

The law also provides employers with liability protection. This bill passed unanimously in both Georgia legislative chambers and with broad support from the business community.

Higher Education Expansions

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY

December 2020: Recognized as second-largest public university in Georgia by student enrollment.

February 2020: Announced two new degree programs: Master of Science in Cybersecurity and a Bachelor of Business Administration in Hospitality Management.

February 2020: Broke ground on a new Academic Learning Center, a 143,000-square-foot building that will provide a new home for its Honors College, additional classrooms, lecture hall, and computer and specialized labs.

February 2020: Began renovations of a 21,000-square-foot arts and designs facility, with the goal of becoming “the best print facility in the South” with high-tech printing equipment and supplies.

New programs added from 2015-present:

Bachelor's Degrees

Bachelor of Arts

Asian Studies

Bachelor of Business Administration

Entrepreneurship

Bachelor of Fine Arts

Digital Animation

Bachelor of Science in Education

Secondary Education

Bachelor of Science

Systems Engineering

Computational and Applied Mathematics

Cybersecurity

Environmental Engineering

Interactive Design

Journalism & Emerging Media

Organizational & Professional Communication

Public Health Education

Public Relations

Certificates

Advanced Leadership & Career Development

Applied Peacebuilding

Computer Science Foundations

Data Management & Analytics

Doing Business With Asia

Health Information Technology

Performance Computing Cluster and Big Data Analytics

Independent & Charter School Leadership

Information Technology Security

Information Security & Assurance

Nonprofit Management & Social Innovation

Robotics Programming

Visual Communication & Graphics

Master's Degrees

Master of Science

Engineering Management

Mechanical Engineering

Healthcare Management &

Informatics

Specialist

Education

Elementary Education

Doctoral Degrees

Doctor of Education

Elementary Education

Doctor of Philosophy

Analytics & Data Science



CHATTAHOOCHEE TECHNICAL COLLEGE

October 2020: Broke ground on the Center for Advanced Manufacturing and Emerging Technologies, housing high-tech labs for industrial maintenance and electrical technology, and precision machining and manufacturing. It will also feature a robotics lab.

September 2020: Celebrated opening of new Health Sciences building on Marietta campus, hosting licensed practical nursing, medical assisting, certified nursing assistant, clinical laboratory technology, patient care technician, and dental assisting programs. The new facility is equipped with Technology Enhanced Learning classrooms and labs for anatomy, biology, chemistry, physics, and physiology.

New programs added from 2015-present:

Degrees

Associate of Applied Science

Interdisciplinary Studies

Diplomas

Carpentry

CNC Technology

Dental Assisting

Film/Video Production Technology

Precision Machining & Manufacturing

Certificates

Certified Construction Worker

Certified Nurse Assistant – High School

CNC Specialist

Computer Forensic / Investigation Spec

Cosmetology for Licensure

Cybersecurity Fundamentals

E-Learning Design & Development Specialist

Forensic Science Fundamentals

Fundamentals of Robotics

Heavy Diesel Service Tech

Light Commercial Air Conditioning Spec

Social Media Specialist

Supply Chain Specialist

Water Quality Technician

Dual Enrollment Certificates

DE Java Programmer

DE C# Programmer

DE PHP Programmer

DE Basic Shielded Arc Welder

DE Gas Metal Arc Welder

DE Gas Tungsten Arc Welder

DE Flux Cored Arc Welder

DE Advanced CompTIA A+

Certified Tech

DE Preparation for A+

DE Microsoft Network

Administrator

DE Cisco Certified Entry

Network Tech

DE Cisco Network Specialist

DE Computer Forensic &

Investigation

DE Linux/UNIX System

Administrator

DE Network Technician



LIFE UNIVERSITY

2020: Achieved record enrollment and participation in Compassionate Integrity Training, a multi-part training program that cultivates basic human values as skills for the purpose of increasing individual, social and environmental flourishing. On September 21, 2020, the U.N. International Day of Peace, nearly 4,000 people participated in Skill One of CIT's Global Lesson in Social Emotional Learning focusing on "Calming Body and Mind." CIT graduates now number in the thousands worldwide, and numerous translations of CIT are underway to continue reaching more people.

2015: Upgraded from traditional cadaver labs to virtual anatomy labs in 2015. LIFE's virtual anatomy labs contain the largest collection of Anatomage tables (eight) in the world among higher educational institutions.

2015: Launched the Chillon Project, which provides high-quality, credit-bearing degree programs to people in prison and formerly incarcerated people in Georgia. Life University offers two degree programs through Chillon at Arrendale State Prison, a maximum-security women's facility in Alto, Georgia. Chillon also includes full scholarships for correctional staff and formerly incarcerated students who began Life University degrees while in prison. These scholarships enable students to complete a Life University undergraduate degree of their choice.

New programs added from 2015-present

Associate's Degrees

Associate of Science

Health and Wellness

Bachelor's Degrees

Bachelor of Science

Culinary Nutrition

Human Ecology

Interdisciplinary Studies

Master's Degrees

Master of Science

Positive Psychology

GEORGIA HIGHLANDS COLLEGE

2019: GHC's new academic building at the Cartersville site opened in 2019 with a full slate of classes. The 52,000-square foot building is focused on STEAM-based (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) areas of study, adding an art studio, computer labs, science labs and several classrooms to GHC's site in Cartersville with the ability to directly impact and support the community workforce through STEAM-based degrees.

2018: Georgia Highlands College was listed by Rice University-based publisher OpenStax as one of the top 10 schools that has served the most students with the adoption of free college textbooks in the 2017-18 school year. GHC's faculty have been working since fall 2015 to expand Open Education Resources (OER) courses each semester. On average, GHC has saved students over \$2 million a year.

2018: GHC has seen steady economic impact growth for the last five years and now holds the second highest economic impact among state colleges in Georgia. Of the more than \$18 billion reported by the USG as a whole, Georgia Highlands College's contribution was over \$181 million. This represents an increase of over \$4 million from the Fiscal Year 2018 report.

New programs added from 2015-present

Associate's Degrees

Associate of Science

Film Production

Graphic Design

Associate of Science

Entrepreneurship

Bachelor's Degrees

Bachelor of Business Administration

Healthcare Management

Logistics & Supply Chain Management

Bachelor of Science

Criminal Justice

Health Science

Sports Management

