

Rowan Chamber of Commerce
Rowan EDC
Talent Attraction

OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

Workforce development is one of the top issues facing our community. Many employers are struggling to find the talent they need. Since the pandemic started to impact the business community in March 2020, we have experienced a “K” shaped economy. Manufacturers, distribution, and construction companies are healthy. Hospitality and small business retail shops are suffering.

The Rowan Economic Recovery effort has provided resources to assist the business community during the pandemic. Rowan Tourism Development Authority, Rowan EDC and the Rowan Chamber all worked together on community resource portals, webinars on PPP loans/grants and business recovery kits. With the vaccine now in distribution, it is time to turn our attention to talent attraction.

Communities across the country have developed comprehensive talent attraction initiatives. Please read this article for an excellent overview:

<https://www.stradaeducation.org/report/bridge-builders/>

The Rowan Chamber’s Workforce Development Alliance along with Rowan EDC representatives recently held a focus group to brainstorm the issue.

GOALS

- Actively support employers in finding, attracting, and retaining the talent they need.
- Align education and workforce resources more closely with the business community and the local talent pool.
- Collectively address structural issues that serve as barriers to secure talent pipeline.

STRATEGY

The caliber of our labor force determines the success of our employers which in turn creates the strong economy that sustains our quality of life. To be a community that attracts and retains talent, we need to:

- Compile existing resources through workforce development agencies, higher education, and K-12; determine which organizations have the “point” on key Talent Attraction strategies.
- Survey our existing industries to determine which positions employers are struggling to fill and which skill sets they most need, for example:

- Chewy needs forklift drivers who can operate cherry pickers and reach trucks (requires specialized certification)
- Novant Health needs phlebotomist (high turnover)
- Henkel needs maintenance workers and applicants who can pass their basic reading and math exam (only 50% pass rate)
- Integro Technologies needs experienced engineers in the following disciplines: field service, application, electrical, machine vision, robotics
- Develop a specific strategy to target market those applicants, e.g., the Military Talent Attraction program that was postponed during the pandemic.
- Develop strategies to engage unemployed and underemployed residents in training opportunities and meaningful career fields, e.g., Women in Construction/Manufacturing programs
- Reach diverse applicants via childcare and faith-based organization outreach with targeted short term certification training opportunities at RCCC.
- Enhance Community Spring and Fall Job Fairs so that they are better meeting the needs of employers and job seekers.
- Build on successful job shadow, internship, and apprenticeship programs to provide students with real world experiences to match education training expectations.
- Obtain the Work Ready Certification from the State of North Carolina.

To provide new residents with valuable information with which to make their relocation decision, we need to:

- Streamline our relocation resources into a central talent portal.
- Utilize Talent Attraction Guides and Newcomer Packets; create a VIP folder for major employers to use in recruiting efforts.
- Track newcomers and follow up with additional information to assist in their relocation to Rowan County.
- Highlight the four higher education facilities in our community.
- Promote our location on I-85, low cost of living, other key metrics and “smaller is better” aspects of our community vs. large metropolitan areas.
- Connect newcomers with each other and community leaders via New Executive briefings; peer-to-peer networking groups like the Leadership Rowan, Women in Business, Minority Business Council, and the Young Professionals group.

To increase the number of skilled workers in our community, we need to remove barriers that prevent us from retaining and attracting top notch talent. We want to be the “bridge builders” that links our community together. Some strategies are in place to address these issues; however, we can do more to create a diverse and welcoming community!

Please give us your feedback over the next few months as we develop the Talent Attraction Plan.

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