



Quarterly Report

Business & Education Council Meeting

February 10, 2026
12:00 pm

Employers in Attendance:

Paula Deboles-Johnson (Leon County Government), Kara Palmer-Smith (Early Learning Coalition), Stephanie Thomas (Big Bend Cares), Luis Ramirez (CHP), Adrian Wright (SBDC/Abelita LLC), Dana Dudley (BBMC/Pittman Law), Katie Harwood (Tallahassee Chamber), Jujuana Howard (Leon County Clerk of Courts), Tanyisha Thomas (Big Bend Transit), Kim Anders (Prime)

Education Providers in Attendance:

Phyllis Watson (FAMU), BJ VanCamp (Lively Tech)

Members Absent:

Regina Browning (Leon County ACE), Matt Roberson (Leon County Schools), Richard Myhre (Wakulla County Schools), Michelle Gayle (Leon County Schools K-12), Shyam Mistry (Keiser University), Willie Jackson (Gadsden Technical College), Calandra Stringer (TSC), Regina Browning (Leon County Schools ACE), Jackie Pons (Jefferson County Schools), Elijah Key (Gadsden County Schools), Trish Andrews (GDLS), Steve Capenos (FSU HR), Shawn Woodin (Southern Scholarship Foundation), Cindy Bruton (Brynwood Health and Rehab), Selina Barden (Family Promise of the Big Bend), Nicole Kessler (Kessler Construction)

Others in Attendance:

David Dunkle (North Florida College)

Staff: Trish Yahn, Khari Harrison, Britny Bacon, Keantha Moore

I. Welcome & Call to Order – Trish Yahn, staff liaison

Meeting called to order at 12:02 p.m. Trish told the group there were several people attending the meeting who were interested in joining the council. Each attendee introduced themselves, their role and title of their organization.

II. Labor Market Information – Trish Yahn

- Average Annual Occupational Wages
- Skills Gaps/Surplus
- Occupation Gaps/Surplus

III. Other Discussion Topics:

All members were asked to share if there was specific LMI that they would like presented at our meetings.

Members were also asked to let staff know if they would like LMI specific to their organization or a specific occupation and an Account Executive will be assigned to work directly with the employer.

The Tallahassee Chamber is still recruiting employers for their high school graduates job fair, WOW 2.0. seeking employers, who have three, four, or five entry-level positions. Employers should be willing to hire high school students who may or may not have work experience.

A link to the WOW 2.0 website was included in the chat for all members.

IV. Educator/Employer Discussion

Employers:

- **Adriene Wright** *Currently helping employers look for skilled labor. Currently working with employers looking for skilled labor with longevity.*
- **Luis Ramirez** *Currently focusing on finance positions. Typically Hire for nurses. Explained most work is now project driven.*
- **Paula DeBoles-Johnson** *Seems to see a steady vacancy in EMT positions due to burnout rate and nature of the job. Salaries are not competitive and in line with other areas close by. Would like to hire more people to work in Public Works & Parks (not a lot of young folks are applying for these positions working outside). Currently using junior apprentice & youth programs to bring in the younger population. Looking at using temp agencies to fill their Compensation Analyst.*
- **Jujuana Howard** *Currently looking for managers and accountants in the finance arena. Salaries tend to be the main issue in obtaining talent. Their salaries are on the lower scale and can't meet salary demands. Unable to provide candidates with a livable wage coming out of school. Even retirees feel the salaries are too low.*
- **Katie Harwood** *Will report out at next meeting.*
- **Dana Dudley** *On the call gathering information since this is her first meeting. Will be able to report out at next meeting*
- **Kara Palmer-Smith** *Currently struggling to find candidates with a financial background because salaries are low and can't meet demands. Recently brought entire staff up to livable wage.*
- **Stephanie Thomas** *Currently going through a transition with a new CEO. Very interested in looking at labor market information for all positions. Great benefit with company is they pay all benefits for employees and their dependents 100%. Has great success in filling open positions because they utilize their employee referral program.*
- **Kim Anders** *Currently struggling with labor because volume of business is up and down. Has utilized temp services lately to fill positions. The ideal candidate would be one that is looking for long term employment not temp work*
- **Tanisha Thomas** *Always in need of drivers but pay remains an issue. Turnover rate is good. Struggling to get people because most applying has a CDL and the position doesn't support the salary they are requesting. Struggling with the hiring process taking up to 4 weeks. People need jobs faster than that and they lose candidates.*

Education

- **Phyllis Watson** *FAMU provides training for upskilling current employees. Wants to partner with employers to do specialized training.*
- **BJ Van Camp:** *Programs at LTC are more specialized for trades. Unable to help employers for finance positions. Looking to be aa resource for short ter credentials (NCCR, etc.).*
- **David Dunkle:** *Offering 4-year degrees. Referred employers in meeting to TSC as they are also offering 4-year degrees but if there are programs NFC offers that TSC does not, they'd love to assist. Wants everyone to know they do much more than associates degrees.*

VI. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 12:51 p.m. by Trish Yahn. Next meeting will be via Zoom on May 20, 2026 12:00-1:00 pm