



PRIORITY POPULATIONS

A Statewide Scan of Current Services & Key Recommendations



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INTRODUCTION

The South Carolina Workforce Development Board (SWDB)¹ is a partner in the workforce development system, providing strategic direction and oversight to the Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW), as it relates to the implementation of WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act), and the SC Works system. The functions of the SWDB are delegated to five standing committees: Executive, Board Governance, SC Works Management, Collaboration and Partnership, and Priority Populations.

In response to a number of factors, including South Carolina's low unemployment rate and WIOA's emphasis on serving individuals with barriers to employment, the Priority Populations Committee (PPC)² was formed in 2016. In its first year, the PPC used a number of data points to identify seven priority populations that are most prevalent in South Carolina³:

- Homeless,
- Youth with barriers,
- Low-income,
- Veterans,
- Individuals with disabilities,
- Ex-offenders, and
- Long-term unemployed.

In 2017, the SWDB developed its Strategic Plan, *Strategies to Build a Competitive Workforce*⁴. Two of the 11 strategies detailed within the plan were incorporated as key focus areas for the PPC, specifically:

- Identify, develop and support policies that highlight or focus on priority populations in the workforce system, (Objective 1, Strategy 1.2) and
- Increase engagement and develop awareness with business and industry, jobseekers and workforce stakeholders (Objective 4, Strategy 4.1).

Additionally, South Carolina's departments of employment and workforce, education, vocational rehabilitation, and social services partnered to modify and update the state's WIOA Unified State Plan. Together, the Statewide Strategic Plan and the Unified State Plan are aligned to promote collaboration and coordination among workforce system partners, creating a seamless, high-performing and customer-driven workforce system that produces a pipeline of skilled individuals prepared to meet current and future workforce needs.

¹ Members of the board are appointed by the Governor and represent a diverse mix of industries, programs, and geographic locations. A majority of the members represent business organizations.

² State Instruction Letter 14-03 required each Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) to have both a youth and disability standing committee to ensure similar outreach and policy development at the local level.

³ WIOA places a heightened emphasis on serving individuals with barriers to employment, especially individuals with disabilities and disconnected youth, which includes both out-of-school youth, homeless youth, and youth in or aging out of foster care. The Federal legislation defines an individual with a barrier to employment as a member of one or more of the following populations: displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, individuals with disabilities, older individuals, ex-offenders, homeless individuals, youth who are in or have aged out of foster care, English language learners, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility of Social Security benefits, single parents, long-term unemployed, and any other groups the Governor determines to have barriers to employment.

⁴ *Strategies to Build a Competitive Workforce* is available online at:
https://scworks.org/media/WIB/Strategic_Plan_for_South_Carolina.pdf

To drive implementation of these plans, specifically, the strategies outlined therein (and listed above), the Priority Populations Advisory Council (Advisory Council) was convened, which includes members of agencies or entities serving or otherwise representing each priority population identified by the Priority Populations Committee. During the Advisory Council's first meeting, discussion focused on the development of an asset map and gap analysis to identify employment and training resources and services available to each of the priority populations. Based on initial results of the asset map and gap analysis, the Advisory Council identified action items or areas of focus. Representatives from local workforce development areas built upon the Advisory Council's selected areas of focus by brainstorming possible roles of the state and local workforce development boards in addressing the gaps.

This report is a summary of the gaps in programs or services identified by the Advisory Council, recommended action items or areas of focus, proposed or recommended roles of the state and local boards, and national best practices. Information included in this report is of a qualitative nature and is compiled for the purposes of providing insight to the Priority Populations Committee.

ADVISORY COUNCIL CONVENING & SERVICE GAPS

The Advisory Council (See Appendix A for attendance list) mapped existing programs with a statewide impact that serve the seven priority populations identified by the PPC. The Advisory Council gathered in groups of two-to-three to map services for the priority populations they were assigned. As part of this mapping activity, participants were asked to list programs within a matrix and identify the services each program offered (See Appendix B for matrices). After the mapping session, the Advisory Council identified two-to-three major service gaps to focus on when developing possible solutions, resources needed to implement the solutions, key barriers to overcome, and parties/entities to engage in the development and implementation of solutions. The Advisory Council identified the following:



Access to Reliable Transportation

Advisory Council members identified access to transportation as an issue focus for youth with barriers, ex-offenders, homeless, long-term unemployed and individuals with disabilities. The Advisory Council agreed that transportation is a major service gap across the state of South Carolina with an impact on all priority populations, often preventing individuals from accessing services, training and vocational opportunities. An additional layer to this issue is that transportation is often not physically accessible, specifically in relation to individuals with disabilities.

Possible Solutions // Public transportation that is affordable, available and accessible in every county; Improving the visibility of transportation resources through outreach and marketing campaigns; Providing more accessible drivers' education programs for individuals who can and want to operate their own vehicle; and Increasing the number of employer-sponsored transportation programs.

What is Needed to Implement the Solutions // Alternative funding methods (e.g., grants, vouchers); Investment from business and industry; Improved and consistent coordination among partnerships at state and local levels; Involving community- and faith-based organizations (particularly those that have vehicles available to transport community members); and Data to demonstrate or document transportation needs.

Possible Barriers to Overcome // Locating resources; Funding restrictions; Improving visibility of transportation resources; Identifying and engaging appropriate partners; and Communicating about how to access existing transportation.

Prospective Partners to Engage // Department of Transportation; Regional Transit Authorities; Local government; Community leaders; and Service providers.



Access to Identification & Vital Records

Access to identification and vital records was reported by the Advisory Council as a common barrier among youth, ex-offenders and homeless populations. Although lack of access to vital records may inhibit access to employment, which is the ultimate outcome for most individuals, this issue may also mean that individuals will not have access to the programs and services, including education and training, which are positioned to help them gain employment.

The Advisory Council specifically spoke to the issue of having access to identification and vital records in relation to individuals who are/were incarcerated. Oftentimes their credentials are left at home and when

this occurs, family members dispose of them. This act is both intentional and unintentional; however, trying to obtain these credentials post-incarceration is difficult. This affects everything from getting a job, housing, and other benefits and supportive services.

Possible Solutions // Increased and consistent coordination among partners; Change of internal policies and/or the development of interagency agreements among partners; Providing vital records to individuals at no cost (e.g. birth certificate, driver's license, Social Security card); Providing funding to obtain vital records; Developing and implementing training for people who serve priority populations.

What is Needed to Implement the Solution // Information on the cost of obtaining vital records; Identifying funding sources to support providing vital records at no cost to individuals; Building and developing partnerships; Identifying or developing efficient methods for sharing vital documents between state and federal agencies; and, Data to document specific need for intervention.

Potential Barriers to Overcome // Financial barriers (individuals cannot afford costs to obtain documents); Lack of coordination statewide regarding available resources; and Accessibility to vital records.

Prospective Partners to Engage // Department of Motor Vehicles; Department of Health and Environmental Control; the Social Security Administration; and Community- and faith-based organizations.



Affordable Housing & Housing Assistance

Affordable housing and assistance to obtain housing were a common theme throughout the discussion, specifically for youth, ex-offenders and Veterans. A reason given for this is that affordable housing is not located near the low-to-middle skilled jobs and individuals lack transportation and vital records, which means that they cannot participate in the employment opportunities that are necessary for them to both obtain and maintain housing. Additionally, there appear to be few resources dedicated to helping individuals obtain housing.

For ex-offenders, specifically, restrictions such as a criminal background may limit access to housing, especially in certain locations.

Possible Solutions // Increase availability of transitional housing; Increase number of residential training programs; Identify available and affordable housing options; Provide financial literacy courses; Provide education to landlords; Offer special incentives to entities providing housing to individuals with barriers; and Expand the use of supportive services/needs related vouchers.

What is Needed to Implement the Solution // Funding; Public and private partnerships.

Potential Barriers to Overcome // Background checks and perceived stigmas surrounding ex-offenders; Transportation to/from housing to employment opportunities; Perceived stigmas surrounding vouchers that limit access to housing; and Access to identification and vital records.

Prospective Partners to Engage // Housing and Urban Development; Veterans Affairs; Housing authorities; Public and private landlords; Owners of transitional homes; Community- and faith-based organizations; and State and local governments.

Access to Shared Resources & Coordinated Services

Questions that the Advisory Council members asked the larger group on this topic included how closely connected agencies were with central, regional and state offices and agencies. They also inquired about how closely acquainted organizations were with economic development. This exercise allowed the Advisory Council to determine that access to shared resources and coordinated services was, in fact, a barrier for all populations but specifically, low-income and long-term unemployed populations.

Horizontal (cross-team) and vertical (cross-organizational) communication ensures full awareness of what each entity is doing and what services are available. Many agencies and organizations operate in silos where data and resource sharing is limited at the state and local level, which can lead to inefficiencies and duplication of services.

Possible Solutions // Increased coordination among partners; Development and expansion of resource sharing agreements; Training and professional development for all levels of employees.

What is Needed to Implement the Solution // Development of consistent policies among partners; Training curriculum and programs for internal staff.

Potential Barriers to Overcome // Lack of funding; Little or no succession planning when leaders leave or retire.

Prospective Partners to Engage // Workforce, economic development and social/human services partners at state and local levels; community- and faith-based organizations.

Other Service Gaps

Economic Development

Specifically referring to low-income populations, Advisory Council participants passionately shared that in South Carolina, “The product is the people; they are the contributors to the economic system. Depending on how skilled employees are, it drives what comes into this market.” The sense of participants was that many low-income individuals are not adequately prepared for the type of jobs being developed within South Carolina’s economy.

Possible Solutions // Develop industry-led sector partnerships; Develop career pathways that align education and training with business and industry; Increase non-traditional training opportunities such as on-the-job training and apprenticeship programs; Increase recruitment of new businesses in rural counties; Improve engagement of existing businesses; Improve access to transportation; and Improve access to community resources.

What is Needed to Implement the Solution // Increased and consistent coordination among workforce, economic development and education partners; Improved business/industry engagement; Funding for training programs; and Engagement of community- and faith-based organizations to provide services in the absence of larger programs, especially in rural counties.

Potential Barriers to Overcome // Funding; Agency/program silos.

Prospective Partners to Engage // Workforce, economic development, education, business/industry organizations; and Community- and faith-based organizations.

Availability of Benefits Counseling

For individuals with disabilities, Advisory Council participants discussed the current state of benefits counseling, where the discussion shifted focus to the lack of understanding about benefits. One Advisory Council member noted that individuals with disabilities may have misconceptions about their benefits, which stem from lack of benefits counseling and education.

Possible Solutions // Increased outreach and education to dispel myths about how benefits are affected by work; and Training and professional development for benefits counseling staff.

What is Needed to Implement the Solution // Increased and consistent collaboration between agencies; Creating additional positions to increase the number of counselors providing benefits counseling.

Potential Barriers to Overcome // Funding limitations.

Prospective Partners to Engage // State and local agencies; Employers; Community- and faith-based organizations.

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA CONVENING

Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) representatives were asked to review the matrices that the Advisory Council created. After reviewing the matrices, LWDB representatives participated in an exercise and discussion to determine what the role of the local and state workforce development boards should be when addressing critical gaps that exist for priority populations. In groups of three, LWDB representatives worked together to identify the following roles and responsibilities:

Access to Reliable Transportation

Role of the Local Workforce Development Boards // Providing supportive services such as gas cards and bus passes; Setting policies and priorities; Being the local convener of discussions among partners and providing information regarding where to access transportation; Providing numbers and data to support the need for transportation intervention; and Advocating for reliable and accessible transportation.

Role of the State Workforce Development Board // Building from “lessons learned” using pilot grants; Being the state convener of discussions among partners; Utilizing state reserve funds to provide additional funding to local areas for supportive services; and Building and strengthening partnerships and encouraging collaboration with key partners and stakeholders.

Prospective Partners to Engage // Department of Transportation; Regional Transit Authority; State and local government; Other transportation providers; Community- and faith-based organizations; Public-private partnerships; and Employers.

Access to Identification & Vital Records

Role of the Local Workforce Development Boards // Creating a resource guide on “How to Obtain Identification and Vital Records”; Setting policies and priorities; and Ensuring staff is able to properly assist individuals who need access to identification and vital records.

Role of the State Workforce Development Board // Building and strengthening partnerships and encouraging collaboration with key stakeholders.

Prospective Partners to Engage // Department of Motor Vehicles; Department of Health and Environmental Control; and Veterans Affairs.



Affordable Housing & Housing Assistance

Role of the Local Workforce Development Boards // Identifying residential training programs for basic education and occupation training; Strengthening local area partnerships; and Building and strengthening partnerships and encouraging collaboration among key partners.

Role of the State Workforce Development Board // Building and strengthening partnership and encouraging collaboration with key partners, especially housing agencies and other relevant organizations; and Facilitating extensions of partnerships among key local representatives.

Prospective Partners to Engage // Housing Authority; Community- and faith-based organizations; and Sub-grantees.



Access to Shared Resources & Coordinated Services

Role of the Local Workforce Development Boards // Communicating and explaining updates and changes to areas of focus and policies; Having a similar method in which to provide referrals; Eliminating the duplication of services; Convening partnerships; Working with partners on coordinated service delivery.

Role of the State Workforce Development Board // Building and strengthening partnerships and encouraging collaboration and alignments; Communicating and explaining updates/changes to policies and focus; Working towards eliminating the duplication of services; and Encouraging more widespread use of the state data system to ensure coordinated service delivery.

Prospective Partners to Engage // State and local government agencies; Individuals to lead a shared common-intake system; and Community- and faith-based organizations.



Other Service Gaps

Economic Development

This service gap was specific to low-income individuals.

Role of the Local Workforce Development Boards // Ensuring that a wide variety of education and training opportunities is available or accessible through local SC Works centers; Providing funding for sector partnerships and other business engagement strategies; Maintaining a robust list of training providers; and Building and strengthening partnerships with local economic development organizations.

Role of the State Workforce Development Board // Building and strengthening relevant partnerships; Encouraging collaboration and alignment of programs and services, including shared resources when appropriate; and Creating policies and providing guidance and technical support on sector partnership and career pathway development.

Prospective Partners to Engage // Economic Development; Training providers; Community- and faith-based organizations.

Availability of Benefits Counseling

This service gap was specific to individuals with disabilities.

Role of the Local Workforce Development Boards // Setting “priority” times for centers that serve individuals with disabilities so these individuals can become educated on their benefits.

Role of the State Workforce Development Board // Identifying and building partnerships.

Prospective Partners to Engage // Vocational Rehabilitation; WIOA Staff; South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce; South Carolina Commission for the Blind; Community- and faith-based organizations.

New Gaps Added by Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) Representatives

Access to Mental Health and Medical Resources

Access to Mental Health and Medical Resources is a service gap added by the Local Workforce Development Board Representatives for the homeless population.

Role of the Local Workforce Development Boards // Training staff to support efforts regarding access to mental health and medical resources.

Role of the State Workforce Development Board // Building and strengthening partnerships; Providing funding for pilot projects; Identifying best practices from other states and around South Carolina.

Prospective Partners to Engage // Department of Mental Health and the Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services.

Information Surrounding Budgeting & Prioritizing

Information Surrounding Budgeting & Prioritizing is a service gap added by the Local Workforce Development Board Representatives for the low-income population.

Role of the Local Workforce Development Boards // Providing financial literacy resources, workshops and classes; and Conducting research studies and/or evaluations on livable wage standards.

Role of the State Workforce Development Board // Ensuring the availability of accurate labor market information that fully details high-demand, high-growth jobs, required education level for entry into the occupation, and the anticipated salary level.

Prospective Partners to Engage // Financial institutions and Employers.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Access to Reliable Transportation

Recommended Next Steps

- Gather and review partner organization policies, rules, and regulations governing the use of public funds for transportation assistance;
- Identify and catalogue public transportation resources available throughout state;
- Identify geographic areas where public transportation is not readily available;
- Consider the establishment of collaborative statewide efforts or initiatives among partners to maximize the usage of public funding for essential transportation assistance related to job seeking and retention and education/skill development for priority populations;
- Identify potential partners, including faith-based organizations, to help close the gap in access to transportation;
- Explore funding opportunities (public or private grants, foundations, endowments, etc.) to increase transportation resources available to priority populations; and
- Provide technical assistance, including the development of cooperative service/resource sharing agreement templates, to local workforce boards and partners to facilitate expansion of transportation services to priority populations.

Access to Identification & Vital Records

Recommended Next Steps

- Research and catalogue the documentation requirements for an individual to apply for and receive Identification Card, Birth Certificate, Social Security Card, and other vital records;
- Develop simplified guidance containing this information to provide to priority populations in need of vital records;
- Share guidance through partner organizations (printed materials in offices, on partner websites, etc.);
- Review and catalogue data validation requirements for enrollment into key programs that serve priority populations, identifying common and unique program requirements;
- Develop sample data sharing, co-enrollment, and/or reciprocity agreements that reduce the need for multiple copies of vital records.

Affordable Housing & Housing Assistance

Recommended Next Steps

- Explore and identify curriculum for financial literacy that could be made available to priority populations through SC Works centers or an online portal;
- Consider mandating financial literacy education for unemployed individuals seeking education/training or employment assistance through SC Works;
- Engage South Carolina Housing Finance and Development Authority (SC Housing) and other key housing partners to investigate housing issues and opportunities for priority populations in more detail; and

- Develop and/or sponsor a study identifying the key challenges faced by priority populations in locating long-term housing.

Reduce Barriers for Access to Services and Further Explore Underlying Issues Shared by Priority Populations

Recommended Next Steps

- Review existing resource sharing agreements, co-enrollment and integration policies among partners at the state and local levels;
- Define and disseminate minimum expectations for resource sharing, co-enrollment, integration, etc. between programs that provide services to priority populations;
- Develop and provide workshops/technical assistance to local partners that are interested in expanding coordination of services to priority populations.



BEST PRACTICES

Reliable Transportation

The Rideshare Company⁵

The Problem // Employers and residents are looking for ways to participate in cost-effective and environmentally friendly ways to ensure they can get to and from employment opportunities.

The Solution // Operating as a 501(c)(3), the Rideshare Company helps individuals get to and from work for a low monthly fare (paid by employers or a resident using the program). The environmentally friendly approach of providing transportation to local residents helps reduce congestion and energy consumption. The organization has served companies as large as FOX (known for television, film and entertainment), that wanted to create a comprehensive commuter program across multiple Fox locations. The Fox Commute effort allowed employees to save money travelling back and forth between locations.

The Outcome // To date, the Rideshare Company has had the following outcomes: 20,885,265 vehicle miles reduced, 1,770,585 vehicle trips avoided, and \$7,159,172 commute dollars saved.

Employers can view the Commuter Tax Benefit Calculator to determine how pre-tax income can pay for transit, vanpool fares and parking costs.

Dakota Area Resource Transportation Services Vehicle Coordination Program (DARTS)⁶

The Problem // Dakota County leaders recognized that individuals in their community may not be able to own or rent a vehicle. Additionally, DARTS recognized that community partners may not have the funds to buy/rent their own paratransit vehicles at an affordable price.

The Solution // The Dakota Area Resource Transportation Services (DARTS) Vehicle Coordination Program offers ride sharing for older and non-driving adults. DARTS provides vehicles to local churches and offers a maintenance program that incurs the maintenance costs associated with paratransit vehicles. The maintenance program offered through DARTS provides cost-effective services for non-profits and faith-based organizations.

The Outcome // The vehicle maintenance program currently has 100 customers.

Ride JAUNT⁷

The Problem // There was a growing need to create more transportation among a seven-county region in central Virginia to better connect rural and urban areas.

The Solution: JAUNT offers a connector service that transports riders among seven counties across central Virginia, which includes both urban and rural areas. This consists of fixed stops, door-to-door service, or a combination of the two to transport individuals using the services. This service is best used for those commuting to and from work.

⁵ Retrieved from: <https://www.rideshare.com/>; https://www.rideshare.com/Content/www/CMS/files/RS_Case_Study2018_thru_9-30_pages_HR.pdf

⁶ Retrieved from: <http://www.coordinatemntransit.org/about/howto/examples/dartsvehiclesharing/documents/DARTS.pdf>

⁷ Retrieved from: <http://ridejaunt.org/>

The Outcome // Using federal, state, and local funds to supplement fares from riders, JAUNT has 85 vehicles in operation that provide regional transportation services to seven counties in central Virginia, four of which are rural.

Other Resources

Formula Grants for Rural Areas⁸

The Formula Grants for Rural Areas program supports public transportation to states with rural areas of less than 50,000 people, which are typically areas where residents rely on this mode of transportation to reach their destinations. This is done through the provision of capital, planning and operating assistance. The program also provides funding for state and national training and technical assistance through the Rural Transportation Assistance Program.

Eligible recipients include states and federally recognized Indian Tribes. Subrecipients may include state or local government authorities, non-profit organizations, and operators of public transportation or intercity bus service.

Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities⁹

The Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities provides formula funding to states to assist non-profit groups with transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities. This funding is best served when the transportation service provided is unavailable and/or insufficient in meeting these needs.

States and designated recipients are direct recipients; eligible subrecipients include private non-profit organizations, states or local government authorities, or operators of public transportation.



Identification & Vital Records

The Homeless I.D. Project¹⁰

The Problem // Not having identification or vital records makes it nearly impossible for priority populations to get the social and human services they require.

The Solution // Over 30 years ago, Reverend Gerald Roseberry spent a month living among the homeless in the Phoenix and Tucson areas in Arizona, where he realized how detrimental living without identification was to the homeless population. A small outreach effort 30 years ago has now expanded into a partnership program reaching across the Valley. Today, the Homeless I.D. Project helps homeless individuals replace documents, like assisting the individual in procurement/replacement of birth certificates and other supporting documents needed to get a state ID or driver's license. This also includes file storage, which is offered to clients who are homeless or not settled to prevent losing the documents, theft and/or destruction of documents, and helps preclude any need for replacing the documents once secured. The Homeless I.D. Project offers additional supportive services due to their location on the Human Services Campus. They offer referrals regarding food, housing, rehabilitation programs, medical assistance, and other human and social services.

⁸ Retrieved from: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/rural-formula-grants-5311>

⁹ Retrieved from: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/enhanced-mobility-seniors-individuals-disabilities-section-5310>

¹⁰ Retrieved from: <https://azhomeless.org/about-us-299083.html>

The Outcome // In 2017, the Homeless I.D. Project served 8,220 clients, resulting in 7,600 documents issued (e.g. birth certificates and other items necessary to get an identification). This represented a 37% increase since 2016. For 2018, the organization anticipates assisting individuals in obtaining 8,500 documents.

Homeless ID Assistance Program¹¹

The Problem // Homeless populations often do not have personal identification documents. Identification documents such as birth certificates are necessary to be an active, working citizen in the United States.

The Solution // Lexington, Kentucky established the Homeless ID Assistance Program in August 2018. The Fayette Circuit Court Clerk's Office and Office of Homelessness Prevention are two major contributors to the start of this program. People who are homeless need their birth certificate, Social Security card, and a certified letter of their homeless status in order to receive a Kentucky-issued identification card. The Clerk's Office will supply the identification cards and the Office of Homelessness Prevention will fund the office.

The Outcome // Although it is a very recent innovation in Kentucky, it has sparked statewide acclaim. The Fayette Circuit Court Clerk's Office keeps track of how many identification cards are given per month. It helps bridge homeless populations to necessary social services. In order to certify that the person is homeless, the person must work with a case manager or Kentucky homeless center. Therefore, it requires homeless people to seek significant assistance that goes beyond merely receiving an identification card. Additionally, case managers in shelters are identifying homeless people who could take part in this program.

The ID Program¹²

The Problem // Individuals that do not hold a birth certificate or photo identification struggle to find the services and they need. This includes homeless families looking for shelter or individuals seeking addiction treatment where in-house recovery services often require documentation.

The Solution & Outcomes // United Way of Greater Stark County works with the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles and health departments in the area to provide vouchers for residents who are born in Ohio to obtain free birth certificates and identification.

Workforce Housing

Massachusetts¹³

The Problem // Middle-income households help fuel the growing economy in Massachusetts. These occupations are typically young professionals, teachers, healthcare workers, construction workers, firefighters and police officers, among others. They are usually priced out of Massachusetts housing markets, which is problematic because middle-income housing represents nearly 25% of the new housing that is needed over the next 15 years to serve the workforce necessary to grow the State's economy.

¹¹ Retrieved from: <https://www.wkyt.com/content/news/Program-to-help-homeless-obtain-official-identification-set-to-launch--489795381.html>

¹² Retrieved from: <http://uwstark.org/our-work/community-programs/id-programs/>

¹³ Retrieved from: https://www.masshousing.com/portal/server.pt/community/developers/204/workforce_housing

The Solution // MassHousing has implemented a Workforce Housing initiative to provide multifamily developers across the state with resources to support construction of rental housing for middle-income residents. Stimulating the construction of middle- and low-income units, MassHousing sees this as a viable retention effort to keep middle-income residents in Gateway Cities and other emerging markets instead of relocating to the Boston-metro area.

The Outcome // This effort promotes the following: new construction of rental housing; provides soft debt to support units for renters with households earning above income limits for traditional affordable housing programs; provides funds for housing in conjunction with MassHousing permanent financing; allows for income-mixing in both market rate and traditional affordable housing deals; and sets aside \$25 million for transformative projects, such as state-owned land and/or, transit-oriented development.

California¹⁴

The Problem // There is a growing demand for housing in California. Job growth continues to outpace national rates, but construction activity remains low throughout the State.

The Solution // Proposition 1 is the Veterans and Affordable Housing Bond Act. If passed, it would authorize the sale of \$4 billion in bonds to finance existing low-income housing programs, build state-owned housing, and match local housing trust funds dollar-for-dollar as they pilot new programs. One-quarter of this \$4 billion would help Veterans purchase homes, mobile homes and farms. Nearly \$1.5 billion would help rehabilitation and construct transitional rental housing and apartments for California households that earn up to 60% of the area median income (\$41,000). Additionally, \$150 million is earmarked for cities, counties, transit agencies and developers to build high-density housing near transit stations.

Other legislation in the works includes:

- S.B. 166 and S.B. 167, which would require cities to identify sites for construction of housing at various income levels and assist in ensuring that the housing is built through the state's Housing Accountability Act (HAA), which limits a local entity's ability to stall a housing project that otherwise satisfies city planning and zoning requirements;
- S.B. 35, which would create a streamlined approval process for housing that meets certain criteria—including affordability and density—when cities do not meet their goals under the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA);
- S.B. 277, which would allow local agencies to require that a certain percentage of rental units be affordable as a condition of development; and
- S.B. 540, which would allow a single environmental review to be completed for all projects identified within a workforce housing zone by cities and counties, thereby incentivizing construction in those zones.

The Outcome // Will be determined in the next legislative session.

Illinois¹⁵

The Problem // There was a need for low-to-middle income housing throughout the state of Illinois.

¹⁴ Retrieved from: <https://la.curbed.com/2018/10/18/17851014/proposition-1-california-veterans-housing-explained>; <http://www.kalw.org/post/california-proposition-1-veterans-and-affordable-housing-bond-act>; <https://urbanland.uli.org/development-business/building-affordable-housing-california/>

¹⁵ Retrieved from: http://www.granitecity.illinois.gov/docs/Illinois_Affordable_Housing_Tax_Credits.pdf; http://www.chicagorehab.org/resources/docs/policy/state/dtc/iahtc_fact_sheet_2.pdf

The Solution // The Illinois Affordable Housing Tax Credit (IAHTC) encourages private investment in affordable housing. It provides donors to non-profit affordable housing sponsors with a tax credit on their income tax that is equal to 50% of the donation. Illinois tax credit is unique because it is strictly donation-based, which helps simplify the process and lower costs for the developer and donor, which functions as grassroots support from businesses and private donors.

Because the tax credit program is available for non-profit housing developers only, the developer must submit an application to the Illinois Housing Development Authority to reserve credits. When approved, the developer has 12 months to secure the donation. The Housing Development Authority issues credits to the developer when they are provided evidence of the donation, and the tax credit is passed on to the donor.

The Outcome // Since 2001, the IAHTC has seen the donation of \$360 million in assets like land, buildings, and long-term leases from private sources to affordable housing development in Illinois; provided key financing for property-tax paying developments representing over \$3.3 billion invested by 51 of 59 Illinois State Senate Districts; preserved or created over 17,000 homes stabilizing seniors, families, Veterans and people with disabilities in communities across Illinois; and supported more than 25,000 jobs with over \$1 billion in wages and business income.

Other Best Practices to Create & Preserve Affordable Housing

Housing Trust Funds¹⁶

The Housing Trust Fund (HTF) is a production program for affordable housing to complement existing Federal, state and local efforts. HTFs increase and preserve the supply of decent, safe and sanitary housing for low- and very low-income households, including homeless families. These funds may be used for the production and/or preservation of affordable housing through the acquisition, new construction, reconstruction or rehabilitation of non-luxury housing with suitable amenities.

Inclusionary Zoning¹⁷

Inclusionary Zoning refers to municipal and county planning ordinances. These require that a share of new construction be affordable for people with low and moderate incomes. The overall goal is to create mixed-income neighborhoods to reflect the multiple incomes within an area. Developers are incentivized to engage in Inclusionary Zoning with floor area bonuses, financial assistance, expedited approvals and permitting, and fee waivers/reductions and relaxed development standards.

Tax Credit Investing¹⁸

The Low Income Housing Tax Credit has become the largest source of affordable housing in the United States since it was created in 1986. These tax credits are awarded to developers who have been qualified for development projects, which are administered by the state housing finance authorities. Developers usually sell their tax credits to investors in exchange for equity. By selling these tax credits, developers reduce debt they may have incurred. As a result, they have lower financing costs, which they can then use to create more affordable housing.

¹⁶ Retrieved from: <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/htf/>

¹⁷ Retrieved from: <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2018/07/citylab-university-inclusionary-zoning/565181/>

¹⁸ Retrieved from: <https://www.nhlp.org/resource-center/low-income-housing-tax-credits/>;
<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS22389.pdf>

Employer Assisted Housing¹⁹

Employer Assisted Housing refers to ways that employers can invest in workforce housing solutions. This includes providing employees with homebuyer education, offering down payment assistance, and providing access to loan guarantee programs. This can also be added to an employees' benefit package.

Purpose Built Communities²⁰

Creating a Purpose Built Community is done by bringing together communities to support affordable housing. This includes assembling community leaders, policymakers, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, business/industry leaders, financiers, and economic developers, among others. These innovative thinkers are driven by efforts to transform communities and neighborhoods.

CONCLUSION

These best practices provide solutions, in whole or in part, to assisting South Carolina as it addresses similar issues. Many of the best practices support key themes that the Advisory Council and the LWDB representatives identified during the strategic planning sessions. In addition to the ideas and actions provided by the Advisory Council and LWDB at the beginning of the report, the recommendations and best practices offer possible longer-term action if implemented. These recommendations and best practices can be adopted to scale or supported by the Local and State Workforce Development Boards to help overcome major barriers that South Carolinians face when obtaining education, training, and/or employment.

¹⁹ Retrieved from: <https://www.nar.realtor/fair-housing/housing-opportunity-program/employer-assisted-housing-class>

²⁰ Retrieved from: <https://purposebuiltcommunities.org/>

APPENDIX A

Advisory Council Representatives

- Kyle Walker (SCCB)
- Elisa Edwards (SCNG)
- Jesus Caldera (United Way Association of SC)
- Nena Staley (SCDC)
- Valerie Nesbitt (SCDC)
- Stephanie Donaldson (SCDC)
- Harold Mayes (SCDJJ)
- Melissa Snyder (Able SC)
- Deborah Lakin (SCDJJ)
- Laura Elder (SCDDSN)
- Michele Murff (SCDMH)
- Johnell Gaines (Bamberg Job Corps Center)
- Monique McDaniels (SCCDJJ)
- Mike Daniels (Goodwill SCSEP)
- Richard Barr (SC Center for Fathers and Families)

Local Workforce Development Representatives

- Phyllis Anderson (Catawba)
- Nicole Lawing (Catawba)
- Simone Mack-Orr (Upstate)
- Andre Anderson (Lower Savannah)
- Areatha Clark (Santee-Lynches)
- Tammy Beagen (Midlands)
- Joette Dukes (Pee Dee)
- Linda Lagroon (Upper Savannah)
- Trent Acker (WorkLink)

APPENDIX B

Priority Population: Youth with Barriers					
Program/Partner	Outreach Services	Employment Finding Services	Employer Services	Training Services	Support Services
South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department	X	X	X	X	X
South Carolina Commission for the Blind	X	X	X	X	X
South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice	X	X	X	X	X
Job Corps	X	X	X	X	X
SC Department of Mental Health	X	X		X	X
South Carolina Department of Social Services - SNAP/TANF	X	X	X	X	X
Department of Disabilities and Special Needs	X	X	X	X	X
SC Department of Employment and Workforce	X	X	X	X	X
Goodwill	X	X	X	X	X
SC Centers for Independent Living	X	X			X
Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council	X	X	X	X	
United Way	X			X	X
Catholic Charities	X	X			X
Dannon Project	X	X		X	X
SC National Guard Youth Challenge	X	X	X	X	X
Youth Build	x	X	X	X	X
SC Thrive					X
Equip	X	X			X
Project Search	X	X	X	X	
JAG	X	X		X	X
Adult Education	X	X		X	
Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School	X	X		X	X
K-12	X			X	

Priority Population: Long-Term Unemployed					
Program/Partner	Outreach Services	Employment Finding Services	Employer Services	Training Services	Support Services
SC Department of Employment and Workforce	X	X	X	X	X
Senior Community Service Employment Program/Goodwill	X	X	X	X	X
Able SC	X	X	X		
United Way	X			X	X
South Carolina Department of Social Services - SNAP/TANF	X	X	X	X	X
South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department	X	X	X	X	X
Title V	X	X		X	X

Priority Population: Low Income					
Program/Partner	Outreach Services	Employment Finding Services	Employer Services	Training Services	Support Services
SC Department of Employment and Workforce	X	X	X	X	X
Senior Community Service Employment Program/Goodwill	X	X	X	X	X
Able SC	X	X	X		
JAG	X	X			
United Way	X			X	X
South Carolina Department of Social Services - SNAP/TANF	X	X	X	X	X
South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department		X	X	X	X
Transitions	X	X		X	X
All Community Action Agencies	X	X		X	X
South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice	X	X	X	X	X
SC Thrive (SNAP)					X
Well Vista					X
Department of Health and Human Services - Medicaid					X
Title V	X	X		X	X
Housing Authority	X			X	X
Catholic Charities	X	X			X
SC Legal Services	X				X

Priority Population: Veterans					
Program/Partner	Outreach Services	Employment Finding Services	Employer Services	Training Services	Support Services
VA Administration	X	X	X	X	X
SC Department of Employment and Workforce	X	X	X	X	X
Hire Me SC	X		X		
South Carolina Department of Social Services -TANF/SNAP	X	X	X	X	X
Operation Palmetto Employment		X	X	X	X
SC National Guard	X	X	X	X	X
Upstate Warriors Solution	X		X		X
Department of Motor Vehicles	X				X
Goodwill Good Jobs		X		X	
SC Department of Higher Education				X	X
SC Military Base Taskforce	X				
ESGR: Employment Support of the Guards Reserve			X	X	X
SC Thrive	X				X
Hiring our Heroes		X			
Department of Labor (grants)		X	X	X	
Centers for Independent Living	X	X			X
Department of Disabilities and Special Needs	X	X	X	X	X
South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department	X	X	X	X	X
Rental Assistance Program					X
Benefit Bank	X	X			
Fast Forward CTC				X	
SC Legal Services	X				X

Priority Population: Ex-Offenders					
Program/Partner	Outreach Services	Employment Finding Services	Employer Services	Training Services	Support Services
SC Department of Employment and Workforce	X	X	X	X	X
South Carolina Department of Social Services - TANF/SNAP	X	X	X	X	X
SC Center for Fathers and Families	X	X	X	X	X
United Way	X			X	X
SC Thrive	X				X
Catholic Charities	X	X			X
Telamon	X				X
Department of Health and Human Services					X
Goodwill GoodStart	X	X	X	X	X
SC Department of Mental Health	X				X
Department of Motor Vehicles	X				X
South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department	X	X	X	X	X
Department of Labor		X	X	X	
Department of Families and Special Needs	X	X	X	X	X
Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services					X
SC Legal Services	X				X
Alston Wilkes	X				X
Solicitor's Office	X				X

Priority Population: Homeless					
Program/Partner	Outreach Services	Employment Finding Services	Employer Services	Training Services	Support Services
Housing Authority	X			X	X
United Way	X			X	X
SC Department of Employment and Workforce	X	X	X	X	X
South Carolina Department of Social Services - SNAP/TANF	X	X	X	X	X
Goodwill Good Start	X	X	X	X	X
Catholic Charities	X	X			X
South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department	X	X	X	X	X
South Carolina Commission for the Blind	X	X	X	X	X
Shelters	X	X		X	X
Oxford House					X
Adult Education	X	X		X	
SC Department of Mental Health	X	X		X	X
Greenville Rescue Mission					X
Transitions	X	X		X	X
180 Place					X
SC Thrive					X

Priority Population: Individuals with Disabilities					
Program/Partner	Outreach Services	Employment Finding Services	Employer Services	Training Services	Support Services
SC Department of Employment and Workforce	X	X	X	X	X
Senior Community Service Employment Program/Goodwill	X	X	X	X	X
Able SC	X	X	X		
JAG	X	X			
United Way	X			X	X
South Carolina Department of Social Services - SNAP/TANF	X	X	X	X	X
South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department	X	X	X	X	X
Transitions	X	X		X	X
All Community Action Agencies					X
SC Thrive (SNAP)	X				X
Well Vista					X
Social Security Administration/Ticket to Work	X	X	X	X	X
Department of Disabilities and Special Needs/DSN Boards/ DSN Providers	X	X	X	X	X
South Carolina Commission for the Blind	X	X	X	X	X
Hire Me SC	X		X		
SC Centers for Independent Living	X	X			X
The South Carolina Assistive Technology Exchange	X			X	X
Able Access	X		X		
Equip/ For Future Access	X	X		X	X
Project Search	X	X	X	X	
Work Incentives Planning and Assistance - WIPA	X	X			
School for the Deaf and Blind	X	X	X	X	
Department of Health and Human Services - Medicaid					X
Individual Placement & Support (IPS) – SC Department of Mental Health	X	X	X	X	X