Good Jobs Western North Carolina

Workshop 3: Validate Demand and Build Solutions
Tues, May 19

GOOD JOBS WNC

Welcome!

What We’re Building

Good Jobs WNC helps employers find, develop, and retain the skilled talent they need—while providing context on what defines a good job.

By strengthening local talent pipelines, employers can **fill critical roles faster and more effectively.** This effort brings community colleges and employers together to **align training with real hiring needs**, so candidates are better prepared, easier to onboard, and more likely to stay—**supporting business success and the growth of good jobs in the region**.

Good Jobs WNC Coalition

Why Employers are Critical to This Work

Community colleges have developed an initial view of employer demand—but we need your input to validate and refine it.

Through this workshop, we'll:

1. Begin **aligning programs to real hiring needs** and skills
2. Incorporate **employer input into program design** and delivery
3. Start **building partnerships that support hiring** and placement outcomes

By the end of today, we hope you'll be invested in co-designing solutions that better support your hiring needs.

How This Work Supports Your Workforce Needs

Near-Term Impact

What this means for you now

- Programs **aligned to your hiring needs**
- Clearer **insight into talent gaps** and demand
- **Direct input into training** and pathways

Long-Term Sustainability

What this builds toward

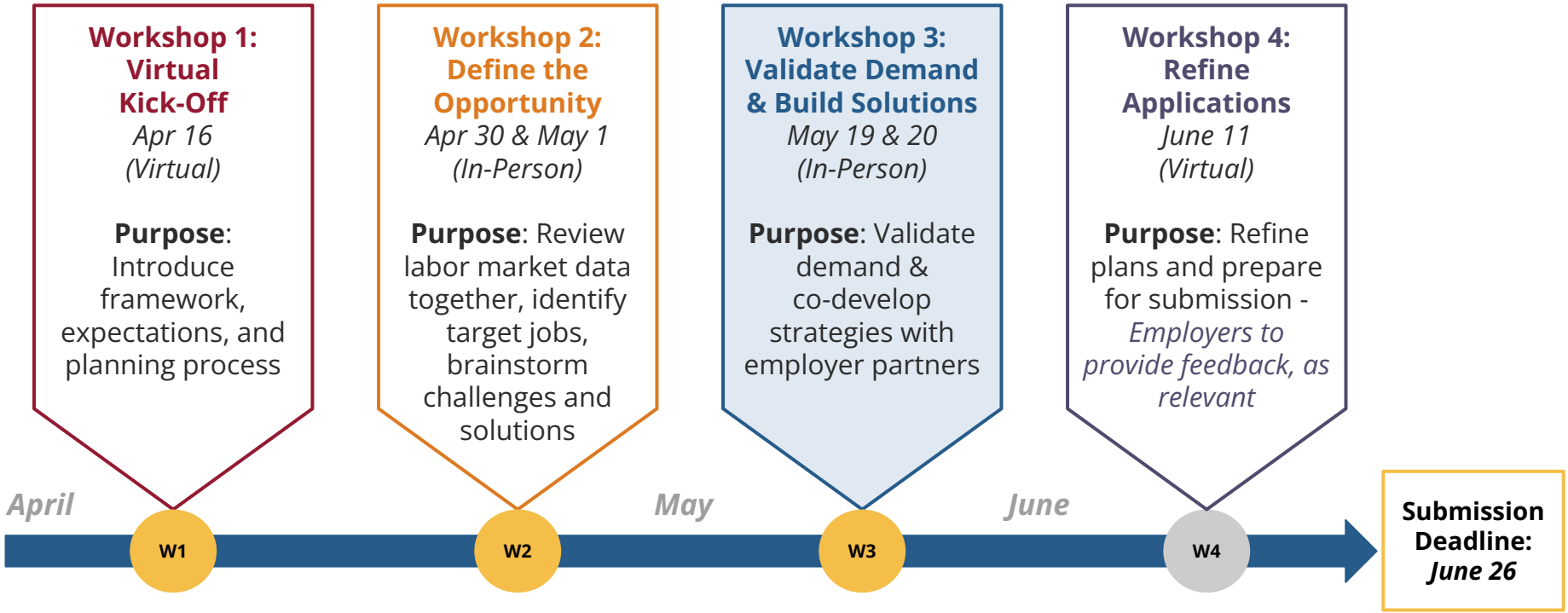
- A more reliable **pipeline of job-ready candidates**
- **Stronger alignment** between training and hiring needs
- Sustained partnerships that **support your workforce over time**

What We're Asking of Employers

Through today's 4-step process, your input directly shapes the programs, training, and hiring pathways that will be built in the region.

Validate Demand	Diagnose Problem & Gaps	Co-Design Solutions	Explore Partnership Opportunities
Confirm priority roles, hiring needs, and required skills	Identify where breakdown(s) occur in the talent pipeline	Shape collaborative strategies to strengthen the talent pipeline	Define how employers will engage (e.g., hiring, WBL, advising)

Where We Are & Where We're Going



What We Want to Accomplish

By the end of today
What We'll Accomplish Together

- Key **workforce gaps** identified
- Priority **roles and hiring needs** validated
- **Initial solutions** shaped with employer input
- **Success measures** discussed (hiring, readiness, retention)
- **Partnership opportunities** explored

By June 26
What This Builds Toward

- **Employer-informed application** submitted
- Program **plans tied to real hiring** needs
- Hiring goals, wages, and **outcomes defined**
- Employer input and **partnership reflected in design and delivery**
- **Launch plan** drafted

What Participation Could Look Like

Greater Impact on Good Jobs Outcomes

Informal Advisory

- Limited to advisory roles
- Ad hoc or transactional

Formalized Supports

- Documented through MOUs or letters of support
- General support but no commitments (e.g., WBL, interviewing, hiring)

Collaborative Design

- Actively engaged in co-design of credentials or programs
- Defining skills, competencies
- Has informal commitments

Integrated Partnership

- Formalized hiring commitments
- Sustained across multiple cycles
- Work-based learning
- Ongoing student engagement
- In-program student support

Strategic Co-Ownership

- Co-investing in priority programs
- Spans recruitment, design, and career placements
- Sharing accountability for outcomes

Goal for Good Jobs WNC

Agenda

Welcome & Why Employers Are At The Table (12:30 – 1:00 pm)

Defining the Problem & Opportunity (1:00 – 2:30 pm)

Break (2:30 - 2:45 pm)

Understanding Causes & Identifying Solutions (2:45 - 4:00 pm)

Exploring Collaboration Opportunities (4:00 – 4:30 pm)

Questions & Day 1 Closing (4:30 – 5 pm)

Happy Hour (Optional) (5 – 6 pm)

Defining the Problem & Opportunity

Session Objectives

- Build a **shared view of regional labor market** demand
- Align on **priority occupations** and **validate employers' unique talent needs**
- Examine **gaps between employer demand and available talent** supply
- Explore the **implications of those gaps for employers** and potential **areas for collaboration**

Good Jobs WNC Data Hub

Developed by Julius Education, the Good Jobs WNC Data Hub is a labor market tool that aligns employer demand with local training pipelines.

What It Shows

- **In-Demand Occupations:** Roles most needed in your sub-region, based on postings and wages
- **Hiring Employers:** Which companies are hiring for key roles and at what scale
- **Career Pathways:** How roles connect across skill levels and industries
- **Talent Supply:** How local community college completions compare to employer demand

Why It Matters for Employers

The Data Hub supports stronger alignment between employers and education providers by:

- Clarifying current and emerging talent needs
- Highlighting opportunities to shape training programs
- Identifying gaps in the local talent pipeline
- Supporting more targeted and effective employer engagement

Three Industries, Six Regions, One Tool

A unified view of demand, supply, and good jobs across Western North Carolina.

Healthcare

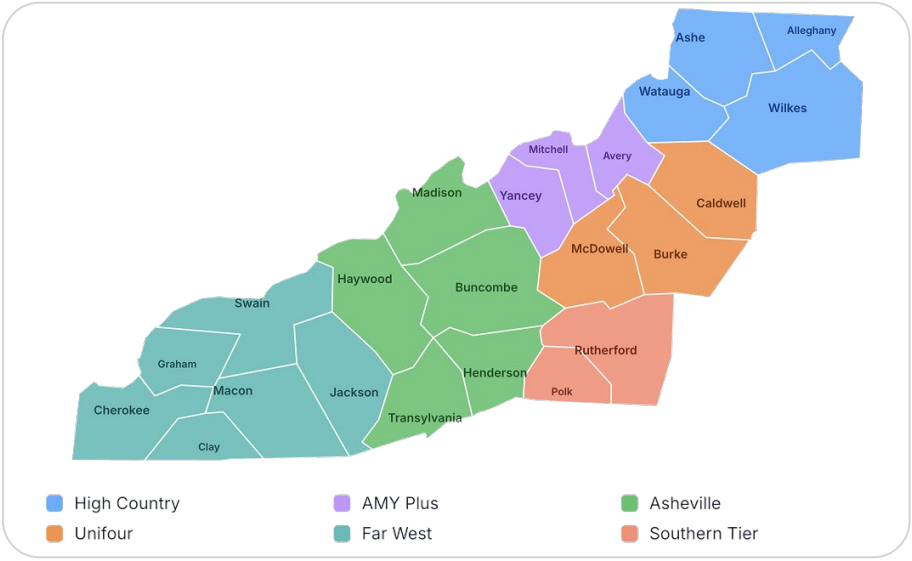
Nursing, allied health, and clinical support roles

Manufacturing

Production, machining, mechatronics, and industrial maintenance

Skilled Trades

Electrical, HVAC, plumbing, and construction trades



Framing

Data Sources at a Glance

DEMAND

Employer Job Postings

Julius labor market intelligence platform reflecting 2025 job posting activity.

SUPPLY

Program Completions

IPEDS 2024 reporting year. Tied to selected community college(s).

WAGES

Median Wages

Cross referenced between job postings (where available) and Bureau of Labor Statistics.

BENCHMARK

Cost of Living

Regionally adjusted cost of living, calibrated by MIT for each of the six WNC sub-regions.

Limitation

Reading the Data: Caveats and Gaps

IPEDS Completions

Supply reflects completed credentials only. New programs and active students not yet graduated are not captured, understating emerging pathways.

Crosswalk Direction

The SOC-to-CIP crosswalk is directional. It identifies programs that can feed an occupation, not a guarantee that graduates work in matched roles.

Data Vintage

Completions lag postings by about a year. We compare 2025 demand to 2024 supply, which can overstate gaps in fast-growing roles.

Wages

Shown as regional medians and not every job posting include wage details.

Good Jobs Profile

Reflects a single adult with no dependents. Workers supporting families face higher thresholds.

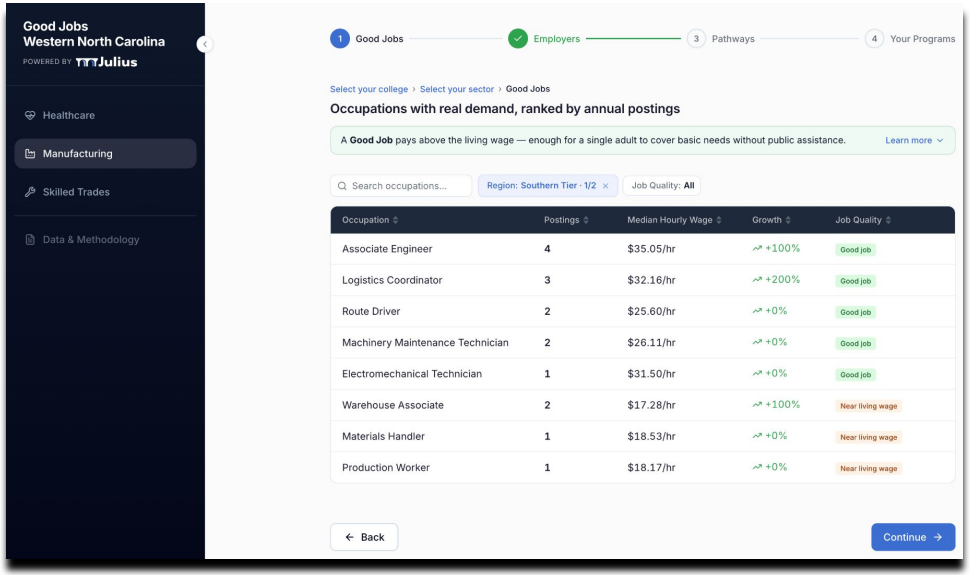
Small Sub-Regions

Lower posting volume means more year-over-year volatility. Read growth rates there as directional, not precise.

The Tool

Access the Good Jobs WNC Data Hub

wnc.juliuslmi.com



Activity 1

Defining the Problem & Opportunity

Objective: Validate priority roles and talent needs using Data Hub insights and employer input, and capture key hiring requirements, demand signals, and talent gaps to inform next steps.

Instructions

01 — Ground in the Data *(15 min)* Open the Data Hub, select your region and sector, and review in-demand roles, hiring activity, and pathways. Colleges briefly share how this analysis informed their focus and why employers were invited into the discussion.

02 — Employer Perspective & Validation *(20 min)* Employers react to the data and college perspective—what reflects your experience, and what doesn't? Discuss:

- Current and future demand for key roles, including where needs are greatest
- Skills, readiness, and hiring requirements by role
- Current hiring pipelines and talent sources

03 — Align on Needs & Implications *(15 min)* As a group, align on priority roles and the most critical talent gaps. Discuss what these gaps mean for employers, for example:

- Business impacts of talent gaps, including revenue, turnover, recruiting costs, and operational challenges
- Potential return on investment if workforce gaps were addressed

Activity 2

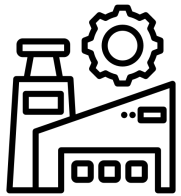
Industry Group Share Out

In your industry groups, share the key insights you discussed at your tables

Healthcare

Front of the Room

Nation & Jason



Manufacturing

In the Bar Section

Zach & Kate

Skilled Trades

Back of the Room

Lindsay & Camielle

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Understanding the Causes & Identifying Solutions

Session Objectives

- Develop a **shared understanding of why talent gaps exist** in priority roles
- Identify **where breakdowns occur** and **highest-impact opportunities** across the talent pipeline (e.g., outreach, recruitment, program design, hiring, placement)
- Generate **potential employer–college solutions** to address key drivers of current outcomes

Talent Pipeline Strategy Analysis

Talent Pipeline Strategy Analysis & Key Questions

WHERE
is this working or breaking down?

HOW
do we know (e.g. via evidence, outcomes)?

WHY
is this happening?

HOW
can we build on strengths or fix gaps?

Case Study

Talent Pipeline Strategy Analysis

Isothermal Community College

Margaret Annunziata, *President*

Scott Queen, *Vice President of Economic and Workforce Development*

McDowell Technical Community College

Chris Walden

Dir.of Business Engagement and Industry Engagement

Wilkes Community College

Naomi Bivins

Director of Strategic Projects

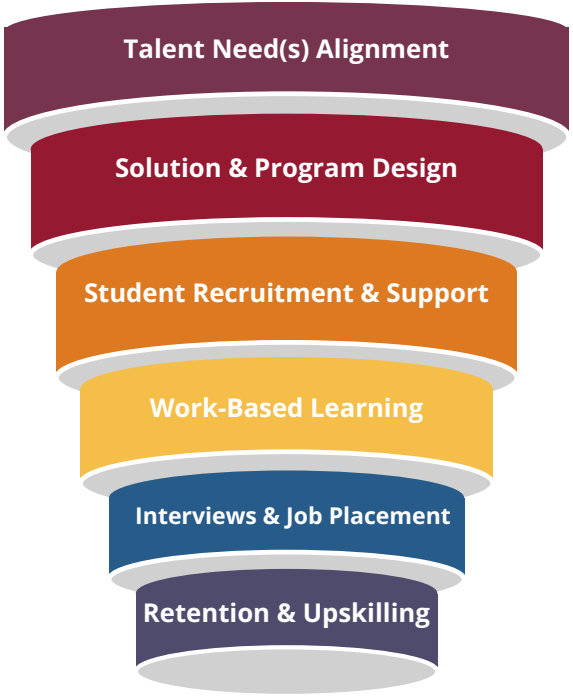
Talent Pipeline Strategy Analysis & Examples

WHERE is this working or breaking down?	**HOW** do we know (e.g. via evidence, outcomes)?	**WHY** is this happening?	**HOW** can we build on strengths or fix gaps?
Alignment between programs and hiring needs	**Hiring rates, employer feedback, job placement data**	**Employer engagement and labor market feedback**	**Ongoing employer advisory and shared demand data**
Alignment between curriculum and industry skills	**Credential attainment, employer satisfaction, skill readiness**	**Curriculum update cycles and industry exposure**	**Co-designed curriculum and industry-recognized credentials**
Enrollment and completion in high-demand fields	**Enrollment, persistence, and completion data**	**Awareness, access, and student support factors**	**Targeted outreach and wraparound supports**
Internship, apprenticeship, and work-and-learn pathways	**Participation rates and work-based learning outcomes**	**Employer capacity and coordination**	**Structured programs and intermediary support**
Connections between graduates and employment	**Placement, hiring, and wage outcomes**	**Hiring practices and employer pipeline**	**Skills-based hiring and direct employer pipelines**
Retention and advancement pathways	**Retention, promotion, and career progression data**	**Onboarding, mentorship, and career progression**	**Mentorship, career ladders, ongoing training**

Activity 3

Talent Pipeline Strategy Analysis & Key Questions

Instructions: At your table, use the **WHERE–HOW-WHY–HOW framework** to identify where talent pipelines are strong or break down, understand root causes, and identify potential high-impact solutions.



WHERE are current strengths and areas for further development, **HOW** do we know, **WHY** might these dynamics exist, and **HOW** could approaches evolve over time?

WHERE are there opportunities to further align program design and employer input, **HOW** do we know, **WHY** might gaps or variations exist, and **HOW** could collaboration be strengthened?

WHERE are there shifts in student participation or progression, **HOW** do we know, **WHY** might these patterns occur, and **HOW** could recruitment and support approaches evolve?

WHERE are there opportunities to strengthen access to work-based learning experiences, **HOW** do we know, **WHY** might engagement vary, and **HOW** could participation be enhanced?

WHERE are there opportunities to strengthen connections between training and employment, **HOW** do we know, **WHY** might outcomes vary, and **HOW** could pathways be further supported?

WHERE are there opportunities to strengthen retention and advancement, **HOW** do we know, **WHY** might experiences differ over time, and **HOW** could support structures evolve?

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Exploring Collaboration Opportunities

Session Objectives

- Reflect on **insights from community colleges** about effective partnership development
- **Define clear expectations** for employers and colleges across program delivery, work-based learning, and hiring outcomes
- **Align on partnership structures, roles, and contributions** that align with your context

Exploring Employer - College Partnership Models

Colleges and employers across the country use a range of partnership models — these can be adapted and expanded upon to meet the needs and opportunities of your unique context.

Model	What It Is	Why It Matters
Curriculum Co-Design	**Employers partner with colleges to shape program content** identifying required skills, tools, certifications, and real-world competencies	Ensures programs stay aligned to current industry needs
Work-Based Learning	**Students gain hands-on experience** through internships, apprenticeships, clinicals, or employer-sponsored projects that are integrated into training programs	Builds experience, increasing hiring success and reducing risk for employers
Hiring Partnerships	**Employers commit to engaging in the hiring process**, such as interviewing program completers, offering conditional job offers, or prioritizing graduates for open roles	Creates a clear pathway to employment and helps fill roles faster
Student Engagement & Career Prep	**Employers engage through activities** like guest lectures, mentorship, mock interviews, and career awareness events	Improves job readiness and strengthens the candidate pipeline
Co-Investment	**Employers commit in-kind or financial resources to augment** access to additional qualified faculty, current equipment or technology, or student support interventions	Expands program capacity beyond what public dollars alone can support and enables faster program updates

Activity 4

Exploring Collaboration Opportunities

Objective: Identify a small set of promising employer–college collaboration approaches and assess which are most feasible and worth exploring further.

Instructions

01 — Revisit Key Opportunities *(5 min):* Align on the top gaps and / or opportunity areas from Activity 1.

02 — Explore Collaboration Options *(25 min):* In college–employer groups, discuss ways you could potentially collaborate. This might include:

- Curriculum input (e.g., skills, tools, competencies)
- Career preparation (e.g., guest speaking, mock interviews, resume feedback)
- Work-based learning (e.g., internships, projects, mentorship)
- Hiring commitments (e.g., interviews, consideration for roles)
- Ongoing coordination (e.g., sharing hiring needs, upskilling needs, periodic check-ins)
- Other ideas

Consider: Which approaches could best address identified gaps, and what participation from each side could look like?

03 — Prioritize & Sense-Check Feasibility *(15 min):* Narrow to a few ideas to carry forward:

- Which ideas seem both *high potential* and *realistic to test*?
- What would be required to get started (e.g., time, people, coordination)?
- Are there any obvious barriers or dependencies?

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Questions

Workshop 3 Objectives

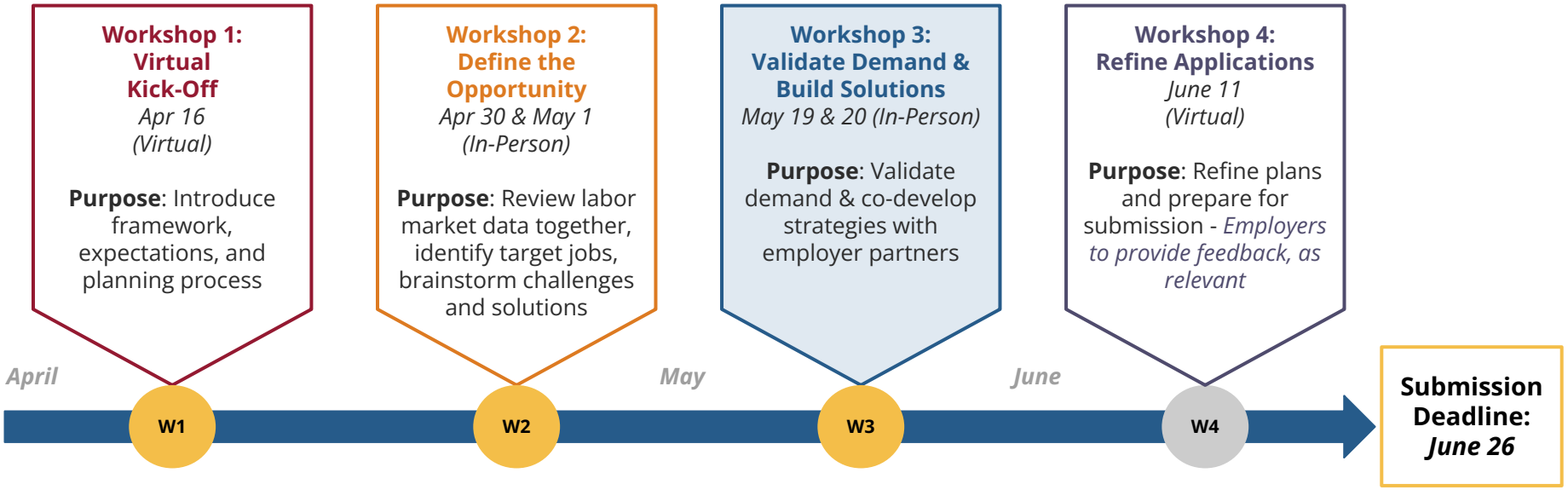
Today's Focus

Employer Alignment	• **Validate employer demand, talent needs, and key workforce gaps and root causes** through direct employer–community college dialogue
Program Co-Design & Partnership Development	• **Ideate on the full range of potential solutions** to address identified gaps and root causes • **Prioritize the strongest set of interventions** to advance • **Advance application development** by incorporating employer input and feedback
Strategy, Goals & Planning	• **Define goals, outcomes, and key data inputs** to inform program design and decision-making • Discuss an **initial implementation plan and budget**

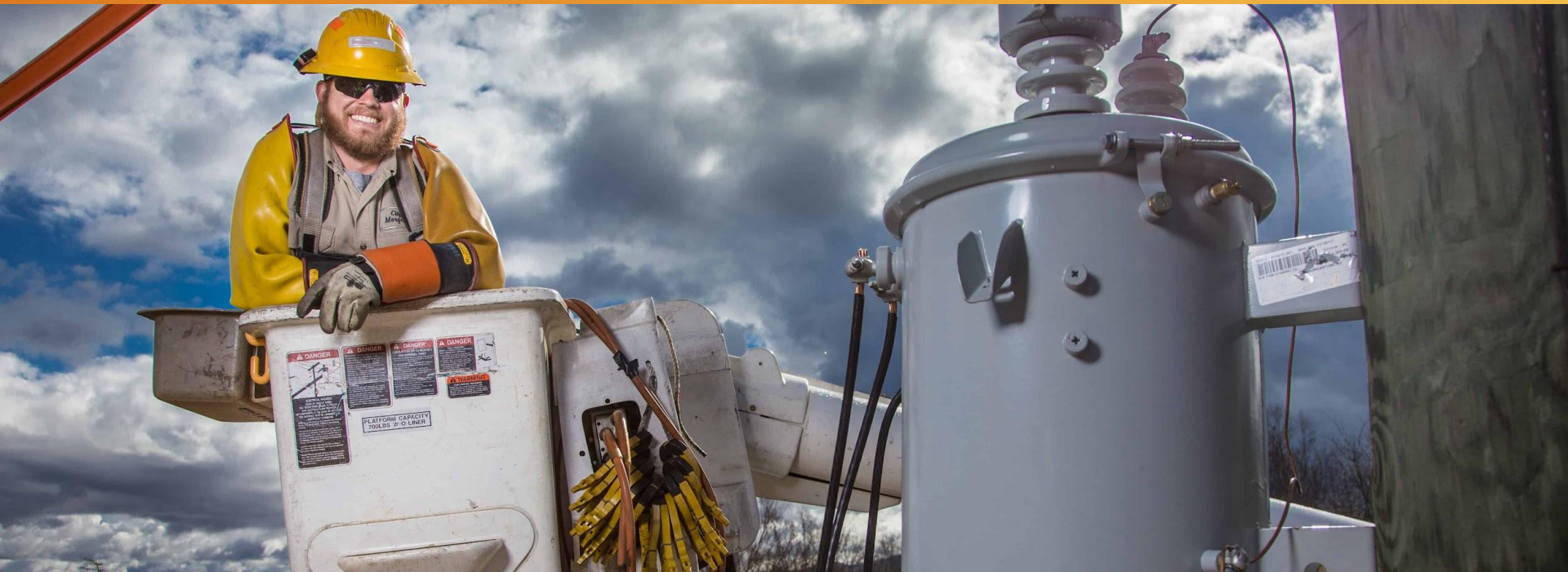
As a next step, **community colleges will further refine priorities and re-engage employers ahead of Workshop 4** to strengthen and validate the plan

The Planning Journey: Workshops & Timeline

Four workshops will guide you from problem definition to final plan submission.



Closing Remarks



GOOD JOBS WNC

Good Jobs
Western North Carolina

Workshop 3: Validate Demand and Build Solutions
Wed, May 20

GOOD JOBS WNC

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Priorities & Strategies (9:25 - 10:15 am)

Outcomes, Data, & Sustainability (10:15 - 11:00 am)

Implementation Plan & Budget (11:00 –11:45 am)

Next Steps & Closing (11:45 am – 12:00 pm)

Welcome!

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Reflections on Employer Sessions

Instructions

- Using the stickies at your table, take a few minutes to **jot down your answers to the prompts below** *(one per sticky)*

- Once ready, **place your stickies on the easel board**!

Discussion Questions

1. How were you able to use discussions and insights shared yesterday to **refine your initial thinking developed in Workshop 2**?

2. What are **outstanding questions** that need to be addressed as part of your plan?

3. How will the outstanding questions be **resolved and integrated into your plan**? Who is best-positioned to inform the answers to those questions?

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Priorities & Strategies

Session Objectives

- Build on insights from employer engagement to **narrow a broad set of ideas into a focused set of solutions**
- **Clarify the qualitative priorities and core strategies** for each solution
- **Prepare a clear foundation to define outcomes and implementation** in the next steps

Priorities & Strategies: From Ideas to Focus

Start with Key Gaps

Data and employer conversations surfaced key needs, gaps, and opportunities

Narrow the Focus

Select a small set of solutions that best address priority gaps

Clarify the Approach

Define clear strategies to implement selected solutions

This is about making focused, practical choices, not perfecting every detail

Activity 5

Priorities & Strategies

Objective: Select a focused set of priority solutions and define clear, high-quality strategies aligned to employer demand and strong student outcomes.

Instructions

01 — Review *(5 min)* From yesterday's discussion, which program approach(es) will you pursue in your Round 2 application?

02 — Rank *(15 min):* Within those approaches, which 3–5 priorities best address key gaps, reflect employer input, and could drive the most impact? In ranking the priorities to pursue, consider:

- Strength of employer demand and engagement
- Potential to lead to quality jobs and advancement
- Clarity of how the solution would work in practice
- Fit within your college and regional context
- Staffing, partnership capacity, and available resources needed to support implementation

03 — Define Strategies *(20 min):* For each selected solution, clarify:

- What is the solution? (1 sentence)
- What is the core approach? (1 sentence)
- Who is involved? (e.g. students, employers, partners)

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Outcomes, Data, & Sustainability

Session Objectives

- Build a **shared understanding of outcomes, data tracking, and sustainability** considerations
- **Apply these considerations to begin defining** metrics, targets, and approaches for tracking and validating outcomes over time
- Identify early thinking on **how outcomes could be sustained** beyond initial implementation

“Some is not a number. Soon is not a time. My target is: 100,000 lives saved, by 14 June 2006.”

Donald Berwick - 100,000 Lives Campaign

Targets & Trajectories Flow from your Aspiration

Overarching ambition: Your answer to the question "**what are we trying to do**?"

The desired performance level for success. What is the **specific number** you want to achieve? Is it **ambitious, realistic, and time-bound**?

Expected **performance over time.** How will outcomes will be **tracked and validated**?

Activity 6

Outcomes, Data, & Sustainability

Objective: Define success metrics, targets, and data tracking approaches, and identify considerations for sustaining outcomes over time *(See Workbook, Section 4)*

Instructions

In your community college teams:

01 — Define Success Metrics *(10 min):* Identify 3–5 key metrics aligned to your Good Jobs goal (e.g., enrollment, completion, job placement, wages, retention)

02 — Set Targets & Timeframes *(10 min):* Assign a clear target and timeframe for each metric

03 — Plan Data Tracking & Validation *(10 min):* Outline how you will track outcomes and validate employment, wage, and retention data (including noncredit programs, if relevant)

04 — Consider Sustainability *(5 min):* Note early ideas for sustaining this work beyond the grant (e.g., funding, institutional support)

Outcomes, Data, & Sustainability Next Steps

Discussion Questions

- **What work is still needed** to complete this section of the workbook?
- **Who will take the lead** on this work, and what is the **timeline**?
- How (if at all) would you like to **use Good Jobs WNC resources** (e.g., office hours) to support your progress?

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Implementation & Resource Planning

Session Objectives

- Incorporate **grant requirements, timelines, and funding parameters**
- Apply these inputs to **outline actions, sequencing, ownership, and high-level budget** needs
- Align on **immediate next steps and owners** to further develop the plan

Implementation & Resource Planning Considerations

The **award size will be between $200,000 - $300,000**

Funding can be **allocated across 1 year or 2 years** (the window is August 2026 through July 2028)

Incorporate grant reporting, including an interview in February 2027 and a data report-out and interview in August 2027

Include **key processes and milestones** (e.g. program design, enrollment, and the first cohort of graduates)

Round 2 Eligible Expenses

Eligible for Funding

- **Program development/scaling** aligned to employer demand
- **Equipment unlocking high-wage pathways**
- **Student support removing completion barriers**
- **Work-based learning integration**
- **Dedicated staffing** for coordination & student success
- **K-12 to employer pipeline building**
- **Employer co-investment** matching demonstrating sustainable partnerships

Ineligible for Funding

- **General operating support** without Good Jobs outcomes
- **Sub-living wage programs** without evidence-based advancement pathways
- **Scholarships/tuition subsidies** as standalone interventions (could be considered as part of a holistic strategy)
- **Capital construction projects**
- Activities **substituting for existing funding** obligations
- **Disconnected pilots** without regional coordination or scalability
- **Programs lacking employer demand validation** or placement pathways

Activity 7

Implementation & Resource Planning

Objective: Translate priority strategies into a practical path forward by defining key actions, ownership, sequencing, and resource needs *(See Workbook, Sections 5 & 7)*

Instructions

01 — Define Core Actions *(10 min):* For each strategy, what are the 3–5 critical actions required to implement?

02 — Assess Timing & Assign Ownership *(10 min)*

- What is a realistic starting time frame?
- What needs to happen first versus later?
- Who would lead or own each action?

03 — Assess Resources & Gaps *(10 min)*

- What resources are required (staff capacity, funding, tools, partnerships)?
- What is already in place versus what is missing?
- What is needed to plug the gap?

04 — Pressure-Test Feasibility *(5 min):* Does this feel doable given current constraints?

Implementation & Resource Planning Next Steps

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Next Steps

- **Community colleges to submit a draft application by Monday, June 8th** for facilitator and peer review ahead of Workshop 4 (June 11th)
    - Please **follow up with your employer partners** to test and refine the thinking in your applications and to confirm partnership commitments
    - **We will share a simplified application and budget template** for you to convert your draft content from the workbook into a final submission
    - **We will also share MoU templates** to support your team in establishing partnerships with employer partners
- **Community colleges** to sign up for office hours for additional questions and support

Round 2 Application Criteria

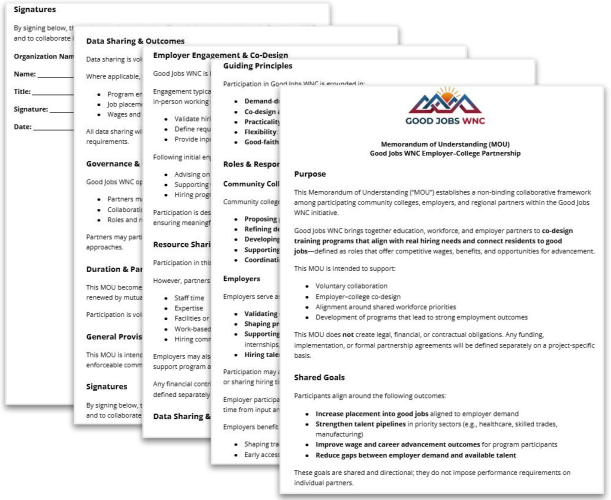
Success Criteria	Weight	Description
Labor Market Alignment	25%	• Good jobs focus ($19–$24/hr + benefits) • Clear job placement goals • Strong employer demand
Employer Partnership	25%	• Employers co-design programs • Commitments (hiring, WBL, resources)
Program Quality	25%	• Clear outcomes + execution plan • Pathways to advancement (no dead ends)
Collaboration & Coordination	10%	• K–12, workforce, regional alignment
Evidence, Tracking & Sustainability	10%	• Data tracking and sustainability plan
Budget & Overall Quality	5%	• Realistic budget + clear, strong proposal

While funders will review applications against these criteria, the goal is to support every college in reaching a level that is competitive for funding

We'll share practical, flexible templates to support partnerships

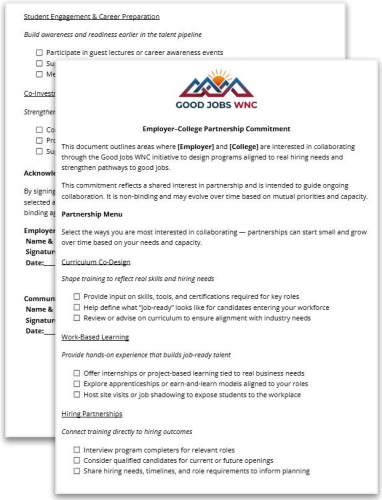
Traditional, Non-Binding MoU

Provides a flexible framework for partnership and collaboration



Shorter, Menu-Style Commitment Tool

Allows partners to select and capture specific areas of partnership



The goal is to demonstrate meaningful commitment in a way that is practical and manageable, while maintaining momentum and strengthening alignment with the state and potential funders.

Good Jobs WNC | Workshop 4 Agenda

Round 2 Application Review Workshop	
Time & Format	• June 11 | 9–11 AM ET | Virtual
Purpose	• Strengthen draft applications through peer feedback • Align on final refinements before June 26
Participants	• Community College Presidents, Good Jobs Leads, and Leaders of Identified Programs
Agenda	• **9:00–9:10** | Welcome • **9:10-9:20** | Review application criteria • **9:20–10:20** | Peer feedback on draft applications in breakout groups • **10:20–10:40** | Project team insights & cross-cutting themes • **10:40–11:00** | Questions & closing remarks
Outcome	• Defined revisions and path to final submission

Closing Questions & Next Steps

Instructions

- Using the stickies at your table, take a few minutes to **jot down your answers to the prompts below** *(one per sticky)*
- Once ready, **place your stickies on the easel board**!

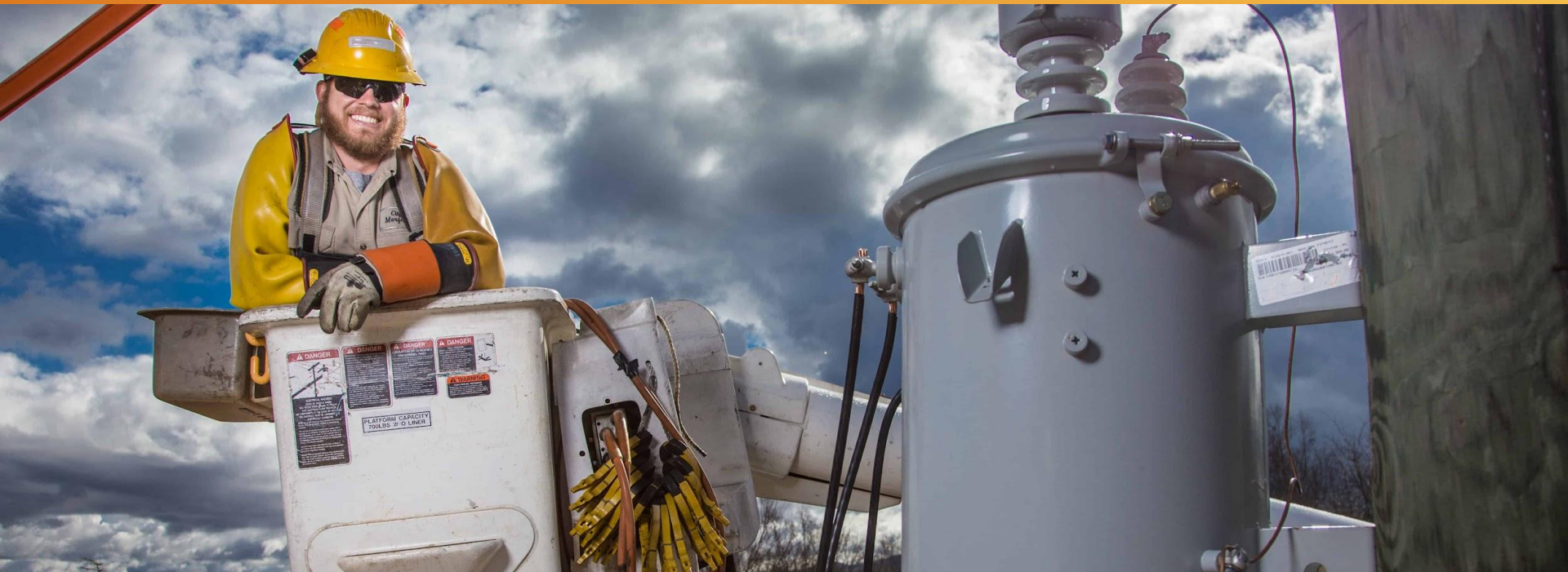
Discussion Questions

01 — What did you learn across the past three workshops?

02 — Did you see elements of the Developmental Rubric play out in your conversations with employers or as a team? Do you see **obvious areas that this employer partnership will enhance**?

03 — What **questions do you still have**? **How can we support you** ahead of the application deadline?

Closing Remarks



GOOD JOBS WNC