



CareerSource  
NORTHEAST FLORIDA

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

## LETTER TO STAKEHOLDERS

# Talent is the Primary Driver of Economic Development

Over the last year, Northeast Florida experienced net new job growth of nearly 40,000 jobs. This growth was across all of our industries, which highlights the great economic diversity in our region. As the workforce organization for Northeast Florida, we remain committed to serving our businesses and job seekers. Our efforts continue to help job seekers find a career path, workers enhance their skills and businesses meet their talent needs.

CareerSource Northeast Florida (NEFL) partnered with state colleges and other training providers to provide career pathway opportunities for individuals through skills training such as registered nurse (RN), licensed practical nurse (LPN) and commercial driver license (CDL) training. Our team supported businesses to create strategies to grow their own talent. Through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Customized Training Program, CareerSource NEFL helped businesses develop employee training to upskill and retain close to 500 workers in areas such as Electrical Apprenticeship Training and Industrial Manufacturing Technician Apprenticeship Training.

In total, almost 4,000 businesses were served, and job seekers received over 200,000 services, all delivered with highly positive outcomes. Our organization met or exceeded all federal performance measures negotiated with the state; one of only three regions to do so. In addition, CareerSource NEFL earned a grade of A+ based on performance criteria developed by the Governor's Reimaging Education and Career Help (REACH) Office.

In May of 2023, I had the honor to testify at a U.S. House hearing in Washington, D.C. on a panel considered updating the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). With CareerSource NEFL recognized as a national leader in WIOA Customized Training, I suggested that the key for companies to use WIOA services is to reduce administrative burdens and focus on effective services. I also cited several examples of businesses in Northeast Florida that have leveraged WIOA Customized Training to enhance the skills of their workers and grow their companies.

During this year, we engaged with JAXUSA Partnership and our regional economic development, education, and industry partners in the Northeast Florida economic development planning processes. Through this process, it became clear that talent is, and will continue to be, the primary driver of the economic success for the region. The Future is Now, the region's new economic



**BRUCE FERGUSON**  
President



**WAYNE MCCLAIN**  
Board Chair

Letter to Stakeholders continued

development plan, named Talent Development as the first goal. As such, CareerSource NEFL's role continues to be a vital component of economic development. To bring the plan to fruition, we will continue to work with our partners to leverage workforce programs to ensure talent is developed and retained in Northeast Florida and support work-based learning strategies towards long-term career pathways.

In the new program year, we will continue to provide streamlined services for the greatest efficiency and effectiveness, empower individuals to make informed decisions to best meet their career needs and provide universal access to all customers. CareerSource NEFL remains committed to the board's vision to provide a world-class workforce development system in Northeast Florida that enables businesses across the area to be successful in the global economy and allow individuals to have access to careers that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

On behalf of the entire team, we want to thank Wayne McClain for his leadership as board chair for the last two years. With his extensive business knowledge, professionalism and enthusiasm, he guided the CareerSource NEFL Board and staff in strengthening our commitment to serve businesses and job seekers throughout the region.



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CUSTOMERS, SERVICES, RESULTS AND KEY METRICS

# CareerSource Northeast Florida Performance Year 2022-2023



## JOB SEEKERS SERVED

<b>35,710</b> Career Center Visits	<b>18,898</b> Job Seekers Served	<b>207,163</b> Job Seeker Services
<b>266</b> Youth Served	<b>2,059</b> Veterans Served	<b>1,550</b> Job Seekers with a Disability Served



## BUSINESSES SERVED

<b>3,813</b> Businesses Served	<b>32,977</b> Job Orders	<b>27,903</b> Referrals
<b>152</b> Job Fairs/ Recruitment Events	<b>40,419</b> Total Services	



## INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS

<b>368</b> New Training Accounts	<b>298</b> Credentials Earned	<b>\$5,633</b> Average Training Cost
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## CUSTOMIZED TRAINING

<b>489</b> Employees Trained	<b>928</b> Credentials Attained	<b>\$2,110</b> Average Cost Per Trainee
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**7** Career Centers  
**6** Counties



\* Performance Year 2022-2023 is defined as the period from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.



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## YEAR IN REVIEW

# Area Employers Learn about Apprenticeships at ‘Accelerator’ Workshop

CareerSource NEFL, Apprentice Florida and the First Coast Manufacturer’s Association (FCMA) teamed up to host an ‘Apprenticeship Accelerator’ breakfast workshop for businesses in early March at the Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ) downtown campus to offer guidance to companies in setting up their own apprenticeship programs.

More than 75 people heard from experts about the benefits of setting up an apprenticeship program to fill open positions and how to leverage help and resources from CareerSource NEFL and the other agencies in the region.

Miguel Madrigal, a technical recruiter with Flightstar Aircraft Services, says the company is interested in starting an apprenticeship program to make up for the lack of highly experienced technicians needed at the company, which provides airframe maintenance, modification and conversion capabilities for the airline industry.

“As a company, we decided that it would be worth looking into the investment necessary to ‘grow our own’ versus buying on the market, so we’re looking to gain that experience,” Madrigal said.

Madrigal, who worked as an aircraft mechanic prior to becoming a recruiter two years ago, says Flightstar currently has about 800 employees – which includes its administrative and logistic teams.

“We’re always looking for new employees, like everyone else in the aviation industry,” he said. “We have the positions in place to start an apprenticeship program, but we don’t necessarily have a structured program. So, the workshop offers us the guidance as far as how we can be successful and putting these apprentices through what they need to know and how to follow up with it, as well.”

Keynote speaker Scott Ellsworth, the principal of Scott Ellsworth Consulting and Sherpa Management Solutions, discussed how to engage an employer in developing effective apprenticeship programs to help increase a pipeline of workers, while driving greater inclusion of all populations into their workforce. Ellsworth was joined by other local, state and national experts including representatives from Miller Electric and FloridaMakes, who provided testimonials on the benefits of apprenticeships and funding opportunities.

Attendees had the opportunity to sit down with experts to fast-track a custom program, view FSCJ facilities that can be used to train workers and to discuss establishing registered apprenticeships in areas such as manufacturing, human resources, cybersecurity/information technology or data analysis.

Apprenticeships are available in all industries and can provide a valuable workforce solution for many employers, offering a positive return on investment while improving their production capability and helping companies achieve diversity and retention goals. Apprenticeships are a benefit for job seekers as well, who do not have to incur college debt to earn a salary while they gain new skills.



*Flightstar Technical Recruiter Miguel Madrigal asks a question of an expert panel during the Apprenticeship Accelerator event held at the FSCJ Downtown Campus.*

## CUSTOMIZED TRAINING

# GRACE Aerospace Captures ROI on Internal Training through CareerSource NEFL Program

CareerSource NEFL's Customized Training Program is a resource that helps businesses respond to changing skills requirements caused by new technology, retooling, new product lines, or new organizational structures.

GRACE Aerospace (GRACE) was able to put the program to use and enjoy a significant return on the investment. GRACE provides electrical and structural manufacturing and systems integration for commercial and United States military aviation clients. Due to support provided through the CareerSource NEFL Customized Training Program, GRACE Quality Manager Eddie Morris was able to become a certified Institute for Printed Circuits (IPC) trainer. Since Morris received his IPC Trainer Certification in June 2022, GRACE has leveraged his knowledge to train seven other GRACE employees – who are now IPC certified, as well.

"Although Eddie's now able to train people both in the organization and outside, we've only leveraged it to train our internal employees," said GRACE President Pauline Sevigny. "It's a challenging certification to obtain – they receive a 300-page workbook and they take tests throughout the duration of the training program. It's pretty intensive, but so far everyone here has passed."

*While the customized training was obviously beneficial in supporting internal employee growth, this new skillset enabled GRACE to enter into new market segments and perform electrical work for the Department of Energy and NASA – which required certified IPC technicians to perform the manufacturing.*

Sevigny says the organization's programs are extremely advantageous to a small business – allowing them to receive funds to accelerate training that they normally might not be able to afford or would be delayed by budget constraints on their business.

"It's building on the whole idea of upskilling the local workforce, which is what we've been able to do," she said. "My incentive as a business owner is having my employees well trained, but it's also a huge win from an employee standpoint...they're gaining the skills to increase their resume and help with their professional progress."

In that respect, Sevigny says it's really a win-win working with



GRACE Aerospace Quality Manager Eddie Morris (left) with President Pauline Sevigny. With support from the CareerSource NEFL Customized Training Program, Morris is now a certified Institute for Printed Circuits (IPC) trainer – and has leveraged his knowledge to train seven Grace employees to become IPC certified, as well.

## CareerSource NEFL.

"We've been working with CareerSource NEFL since 2018 and we've leveraged the organization's work experience program as well as customized training," Sevigny said. "It's a streamlined process and I would recommend any small business that has training needs to investigate leveraging the work experience or customized training programs."

## CareerSource NEFL Assists UF Health St. Johns Launch Surgical Technologists Apprenticeship

To meet the need for more surgical technologists, UF Health St. Johns (UF Health) coordinated with CareerSource NEFL to receive state approval and launch the first apprenticeship program for surgical technologists in Northeast Florida.

*“Surgical technologists prepare operating rooms and assist physicians during surgery, and we were looking for a new way to identify and assist people who wanted to enter this field,” said Donna Wagner, UF Health Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer. “By establishing an apprenticeship program, participants can earn money while they are in training, learn a new skill and help us fill this need in the future.”*

UF Health’s Surgical Tech Apprenticeship classes began in August 2022, with six participants receiving classroom and on-the-job training over 12 months. All apprentices were already employed by UF Health in other areas of the hospital and were interested in moving into a new career. Apprentices did not need any required education above a high school diploma or GED and are considered full-time employees during training – receiving full benefits and pay increases as they learned new skills.

The Surgical Technologists Apprenticeship program is the first of its kind in Northeast Florida.

UF Health worked with CareerSource NEFL, which provided introductory information and case-managed the program through development and approval at the state level with the Florida Department of Education. CareerSource NEFL also secured funding to offset the cost of apprenticeship training.

Through the program, UF Health achieves a positive return on investment by increasing employee retention, with improvements in production capability and quality assurance because their people are well-trained, while also helping them achieve diversity goals. Taking advantage of programs like these allow employers to encourage and support new talent coming into their companies, while at the same time offering a ‘earn-as-you-learn’ opportunity for job seekers.



*During UF Health’s Surgical Tech Apprenticeship classes, these participants received classroom and on-the-job training over 12 months. All apprentices were already employed by UF Health and were considered full-time employees during training – receiving full benefits and pay increases as they learned new skills. program in the state.*

## YEAR IN REVIEW

# Providing Disaster Recovery Support after Hurricane Ian in Southwest Florida

About a week after Hurricane Ian made landfall in Fort Myers, Florida, the first of three teams from CareerSource NEFL were taking part in the restoration effort to help the community get back on its feet after a devastating landfall. The teams worked along with other state and federal agencies from a Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) set up by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at Suncoast Technical College in North Point, Florida – and provided services to support the Charlotte County CareerSource Center.

In October 2022, CareerSource NEFL deployed 17 employees in three separate groups through the end of the month. Each team was equipped with two vans, 50 laptops, four generators, printers and routers. The teams provided reemployment assistance support, disaster SNAP applications support, FEMA online application support, job search assistance and resource room assistance. By the end of October, our teams had served more than 650 residents at the DRC at the Suncoast Technical College and more than 150 at the CareerSource Center in Port Charlotte. Due to the hurricane damage and lack of accommodations in the Fort Myers area, the teams were driving between 40 to 50 miles each day from an Airbnb to their job sites.

CareerSource NEFL President Bruce Ferguson contacted the other CareerSource region's CEOs and started to mobilize our support to the impacted area, so we were prepared when Florida Department of Commerce (Florida Commerce) asked for assistance. The state awarded a grant to CareerSource NEFL to reimburse the deployment costs.

This is not the first time that CareerSource NEFL provided such assistance. Four years ago, CareerSource NEFL worked with FloridaCommerce to send teams to the Florida panhandle in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael to assist jobseekers and businesses as part of recovery efforts.



*The CareerSource NEFL Board of Directors honored 18 team members who provided assistance to victims of Hurricane Ian (pictured here with CSNEFL Board Vice Chair Kevin Doyle and President Bruce Ferguson, far right).*

## TESTIMONIALS AND SUCCESS STORIES

# Ratkovic Credits CareerSource NEFL for Transition to Nursing Career

Nikki Ratkovic was working at the community center in Interlochen as a fitness instructor teaching Yoga and other wellness regiments and in her late twenties when the COVID-19 Pandemic struck in March of 2020 – totally shutting down her only means of financial support.

“I knew I needed a job that offered more stability in the future, and I knew nursing was the right career choice since I have a strong interest in health and wellness arena, but I wasn’t sure how I could make nursing school possible being in a difficult economic situation,” Ratkovic said. “I didn’t have any funds coming in and I was already in debt from past school loans.”

Ratkovic said she was “vigorously looking for funding” to help her pay to attend nursing school, but all the options she found “seemed really hard and inaccessible” – until she received an email from the financial aid office at St. Johns River State College in Palatka. She contacted CareerSource NEFL Workforce Representative Tammie Jackson in Palatka – who promptly reached out to Ratkovic and provided her with “all the direction needed” to complete the application process.

With funding help provided through CareerSource NEFL’s Individual Training Accounts, Ratkovic was able to begin her nursing education.

“When I was accepted, I was so relieved,” she said. “CareerSource NEFL not only paid for my classes, but for my books and my uniforms, as well. The program was surprisingly accessible and easy...and the people at the agency were so supportive. I had been to college before, but Tammie checked in with me throughout the nursing program. It was very good to have that support...and a very motivating factor that helped me stay focused.”

To become a nurse, she first had to pass all the classes and, after graduating in August 2022, Ratkovic then had to pass the board examination for certification. “It’s a lot of pressure, but I passed on the first go-round.”

It was less than a month after passing the boards and receiving her nursing license in October that she was hired at HCA Putnam in Palatka.



*“I love nursing,” she said. “It’s definitely challenging, but I love being a professional and being a productive part of the community and contribute like I do at the hospital. Finding CareerSource NEFL was exactly what I needed...and they gave me the support to make me feel more confident in going forward as a full-time nursing student for two years. That’s why I’m so grateful...CareerSource NEFL made nursing school, and my career, possible for me.”*

## TESTIMONIALS AND SUCCESS STORIES

# St. Augustine Fire Department Enhances Medical Response with Paramedic Funding

The St. Augustine Fire Department now has two more certified paramedics responding to emergencies throughout the city through training support provided through CareerSource NEFL.

With a team of 33 line firefighters and a total staff of 35, the department responds to calls within the City of St. Augustine – including the Olde Town Historic District. About one-third of its firefighters are certified paramedics today.

In October 2021, Chris Pacetti, the deputy chief at the St. Augustine Fire Department, reached out to CareerSource NEFL Healthcare Sector Manager Carol Cullen, who worked with him to secure training for two of the fire department’s Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) – Paul Hopkins and Hannah Riederich – to become paramedics.

“Paul and Hannah were interested in going to paramedic school and that’s when I remembered CareerSource NEFL,” he said. “When people get hired with us, they come in as EMT/Firefighters, but if they want to advance their education and their careers, we’ll help them get into the classes however we can. With the funding through CareerSource NEFL, we were able to get them into classes at First Coast Technical College.”

They began attending classes from January through December 2022 and both were certified as paramedics in January.

“It’s kind of hard on a firefighter’s salary to go to school because it takes a lot of money,” she said. “That’s when Paul and I asked if there were any grants, or options for the city to pay for it. That’s when Chris did some digging and came up with CareerSource NEFL, so we were definitely aware of where the help was coming from.”

While she already had an EMT license, as is required for all firefighters, Riederich says with the certification she feels more confident in her abilities when they respond to an emergency.



*Paul Hopkins and Hannah Riederich are now paramedics at the St. Augustine Fire Department – receiving customized training support provided through CareerSource NEFL.*

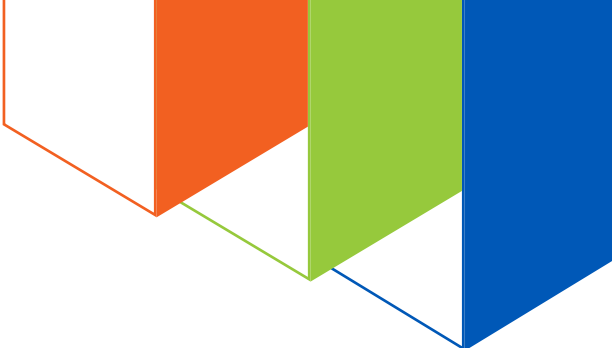
“I’d say about 95 percent of our job somehow relates to a medical issue on a call,” she said. “What I’ve noticed is that now that we go on calls our EMTs are a lot more susceptible and appreciative of the information we give them...they don’t have to backtrack and they trust in us and our ability.”

Hopkins relates becoming a paramedic akin to “opening Pandora’s Box.”

“You go from not being able to do too much on the scene to offering a wider range of skills you couldn’t do before,” he said.

Some of these include performing a cricothyrotomy (a procedure that involves placing a tube through an incision to establish an airway for oxygen), chest decompressions, needle decompressions to relieve pressure on the chest, start IVs (administering a drug or other substance through a needle or tube inserted into a vein) and administer other drugs on the scene.

“Paul and Hannah learned new medical skills that in turn enhances our response abilities...and it also led to a pay raise for each of them, since the department offers an incentive for certified paramedics,” Pacetti said.. “For the program they went through, they would have had to pay for it themselves or have to wait until we could budget for it in future years.”



## OUR COMMITMENT TO NORTHEAST FLORIDA

### OUR MISSION

Connecting workers to jobs and businesses to the talent they need to thrive. CareerSource NEFL provides innovative services that build a talent pipeline for the jobs of today and the future.

### OUR VISION

Northeast Florida will have a world-class workforce development system that will enable our businesses to be leaders in the global economy.

### CAREER CENTERS & LOCATIONS

#### **Baker County**

1184 South 6th St.  
Macclenny, FL 32063

#### **Clay County**

1845 Town Center Blvd., Suite 150  
Fleming Island, FL 32003

#### **Duval County**

##### **Gateway:**

5000 Norwood Ave., Suite 2  
Jacksonville, FL 32208

##### **Southside:**

11268 Beach Blvd.,  
Jacksonville, FL 32246

#### **Nassau County**

96042 Lofton Square Ct.  
Yulee, FL 32097

#### **Putnam County**

400 Highway 19 North, Suite 53  
Palatka, FL 32177

#### **St. Johns County**

525 State Road 16, Suite 109  
St. Augustine, FL 32084

#### **Welfare Transition and SNAP Service Center**

215 N. Market Street, Suite 100,  
Jacksonville FL 32202



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*The First Coast Workforce Development board of directors provides critical guidance, feedback and direction in delivering the full range of CareerSource Northeast Florida's services. The board is composed of community and civic leaders in the areas of education, business and government – and mandated legislatively to have local college presidents, school superintendents, labor leaders and representatives from state agency partners. Board members are nominated by local chambers of commerce, county commissioners, city councils and mayors.*



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