

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025

BAKER • CLAY • DUVAL • NASSAU • PUTNAM • ST. JOHNS



CareerSource
NORTHEAST FLORIDA

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LETTER TO STAKEHOLDERS

Our Year in Review

Dear Community,

It is with deep pride and gratitude that we share the progress and positive impacts CareerSource Northeast Florida (CareerSource NEFL) achieved for job seekers and our business partners throughout our six counties during the 2024-2025 program year.

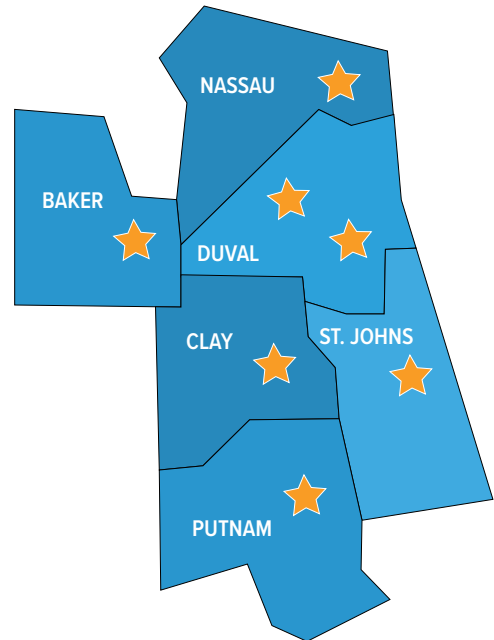
This past year marked an important moment in our organization’s history. With the retirement of former president Bruce Ferguson, Jr. after 20 years of distinguished service, the board of directors embarked on an executive search that concluded with the appointment of Cheryl Taylor to take the reins of the organization on July 1, 2024.

We want to extend our heartfelt appreciation to Bruce for his two decades of exceptional leadership and steadfast commitment to building a strong regional workforce system. The board also commends Bruce, Cheryl and the rest of the CareerSource NEFL team for their collaboration in ensuring a seamless leadership transition, which set the tone for another year of stability, innovation, and strong performance.

We are proud to report that during this time, we maintained our “A” rating: a grade by the Florida Department of Commerce under the Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Act, where CareerSource NEFL met or exceeded state performance measures.

Over the last year, we grew several new initiatives including the Recruitment Wednesday events held at our Duval County Career Center on Beach Boulevard – where five-to-eight employers participate each week in the in-person hiring event. Not only does this allow job seekers to talk directly to company representatives, which is becoming rarer in this age of digital job searches, but those with transportation issues know they are held every Wednesday – making it easier for them to travel to the center using public transportation.

We continued our collaboration with our partner organizations, including high schools, colleges, universities and trade/technical schools to share our services with job seekers of all ages, including the funding of apprenticeships and other upskilling through our customized training program for businesses and our Individual Training Accounts for those eligible to receive funding help to attend school and obtain professional accreditation to enter a new career.





Our Year in Review continued

In this year's report, you'll find stories of resilience and achievement from job seekers and business partners, each demonstrating how strategic partnerships, dedicated staff, and community support make a measurable difference in people's lives.

On behalf of the board of directors, we thank and appreciate our staff, partners, and community stakeholders for their continued trust and support. Together, we are building a stronger, more unified workforce system—one that continues to empower individuals and drive economic growth throughout our region.

Kevin Doyle
Board Chair
CareerSource Northeast Florida

Cheryl Taylor
President
CareerSource Northeast Florida

Note from the President: We're also fortunate that our board chair, Kevin Doyle, was nominated to his first year serving on the National Association of Workforce Development Board of Directors – bringing new perspectives and insights from the national level to our regional board.

The First Coast Workforce Development Board of Directors (dba CareerSource NEFL) provides strategic leadership and policy direction for workforce development in Northeast Florida. The Board convenes business, education, and community partners to develop regional workforce strategy, oversee employment and training services, and ensure our one-stop delivery system effectively connects job seekers with opportunities and employers with skilled talent.

2024-2025 Board of Directors

BOARD OFFICERS

Kevin Doyle, Chair

Managing Partner, Wexford Strategies

Tim Hinson, Vice Chair

Corporate Training Director, Miller Electric

Amy Rice, Treasurer

President & COO, Proficient Auto Logistics

BOARD MEMBERS

Beth Payne, AICP

Chief Executive Officer, Northeast Florida Regional Council

Clay Lyons

Partner, Lyons & Lyons

Crawford Powell

President, Clay Florida Economic Development Corp.

Darryl Register

Economic Development Director, North Florida Professional Services, Inc.

Diane Williams, SPHR, SHRM-SCP

HR Director, Talent Engagement, ICE

Donna Wagner

Administrator, Cardiovascular Services, HCA Memorial Hospital

Elaine A. Johnson, SPHR, SHRM-SCP

Founder and Chief Vision Officer, Excelan Advisors

Jake Schickel, Esq.

Partner Of Counsel, Coker Law

John (Jay) Paterson

Assistant Vice President of Workforce and Career Services, St. Johns River State College

Jennifer Roach

Area 2, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Florida Department of Education

Kirk Barras

Training Director, Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 234

Lucia Valdivia-Sanchez

Director, Florida Migrant Interstate Program

Michael F. Templeton

Owner, Templeton Manufacturing Solutions

Michael Rathjen

Vice President of School Programs, Vystar Credit Union

Reggie Fullwood

President & CEO, Operation New Hope

Terry Morgan

Human Resources Manager, LignoTech Florida

Wayne McClain

Vice President, Beck Automotive Group

Strategic Workforce Alignment

The State of Florida requires each local workforce development board to create an education and industry consortium composed of educational entities and business representatives in their respective regions of the state.

In Northeast Florida, the Talent Advancement Network (TAN) for Northeast Florida, managed in partnership by CareerSource NEFL and the JAXUSA Partnership, fulfills this role.

Since the relationship between industry and education is vital to the state and local workforce development system, TAN meets quarterly and provides reports, including community-based information related to educational programs and industry needs. TAN then reports out to the CareerSource NEFL board and staff on programs, services and partnerships in the region – allowing the organization to create strategies and that align educational programs with industry needs.

Through these efforts, TAN leverages existing educational systems and leadership, industry strengths and leadership, and pockets of workforce excellence to create a stronger talent pipeline focused on the youth, adults and veterans currently living in Northeast Florida.

In program year 2024-25, to help business owners – along with job seekers and the general public – CareerSource NEFL introduced a new regional talent and labor market dashboard.

The new dashboard offers a one-stop resource for current employment trends, the industries that are hiring the most workers and have the most in-demand jobs, along with the region’s evolving talent pipeline.

Job seekers can use the dashboard for their career planning: staying on top of rising job categories, learning the skills that are the most ‘in demand’ among area employers and tracking local wage trends. Businesses throughout the region can access the information to make strategic hiring decisions, identify skill gaps within the area’s workforce and leverage the workforce development programs at CareerSource NEFL to build stronger teams.

Also, employers and job seekers, along with residents and media representatives, can quickly access statistics on job growth, wages and sector-specific developments.



Impact & Reach: Serving Our Community

CareerSource NEFL provided nearly 154,000 services to job seekers throughout six counties in fiscal year 2024-25 – with nearly 34,000 job seekers served, which was up from about 19,500 the previous program year.

Team members helped people in many stages of their job search: from those just entering the workforce to those looking for a new job, with some exploring new career paths. Our workforce representatives providing a wide range of support, providing resumé help, interviewing tips and coaching and career counseling – along with multiple leads to jobs, networking and job fair opportunities.

In addition, the organization helped more than 6,000 job seekers through the Mobile Access Points (MAP) team. Acting as an extension of the career centers, the MAP Team provides use of laptops and 4G/5G internet access to help job seekers target their resumes, locate potential employers and identify workshops covering a variety of work-readiness topics.



The team takes part in JobNewsUSA.com job fairs held throughout the year, and makes periodic visits to locations including Hasting Library, Victory Point, Charles Webb Wesconnett Library, Vocational Rehabilitation, Ponte Vedra Beach Library and St. Paul A.M.E. Church. The MAP team also visits area correctional facilities to assist prisoners about to be released to be better prepared to reenter the job market.



JOB SEEKERS SERVED

153,946

Job Seekers Services

33,791

Job Seekers Served

6,096

Job Seekers Served by
the MAP Team



The MAP Team's Mobile Unit downtown to support the JobNewsUSA Job Fair held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Jacksonville Riverfront.

Meet Our Success Stories

TURNING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITY: JOHNATHAN STRANGE'S PATH TO A NEW ROLE

As the owner of a multi-million dollar company with more than 100 employees providing stucco and stonework statewide, Palatka, Florida resident Johnathan (Jody) Strange never envisioned he would ever be receiving unemployment benefits – but hiring issues with some of his employees came with challenges from federal agencies, which proved too much for him to continue operating his company.

His sister in Fleming Island suggested he contact FloridaCommerce and sign up for benefits – and he soon received a call from Putnam County Career Center Workforce Representative Kim Reynolds.

Strange would find a complete match for his construction management experience when he was hired in May of 2025 by Hendricks Stucco, where he's now a full time project manager in Middleburg, Florida.

“I was very apprehensive because through my whole life I've made my own way and made my own money,” he said. “But the people at the office in Fleming Island were very nice and helpful, and then when I got with Kim, she was awesome and was right there to help me every step of the way.”



Kim Reynolds with Johnathan Strange.



MILITARY EXPERIENCE MEETS PUBLIC SERVICE: CHARLES WILSON'S JOURNEY TO CORRECTIONS

Charles Wilson (left) was newly unemployed and filling out the weekly information on his job search at the career center on Beach Boulevard when he was told about an upcoming hiring fair and made the decision to attend and speak directly to the employer representatives there.

Wilson had 20 years of logistics experience from his service in the U.S. Navy, followed by 18 years working at UPS. Wilson felt he should look for a logistics position when a hiring representative with the state prison system asked if he would ever consider working as a parole officer.

Wilson said he had heard the difficulties about working with prison inmates but, having been in the military, he wasn't too concerned – and wanted to experience the situation and find out what it was really like to work in that environment.

Wilson initially served as a contingent correctional officer. He eventually took the Criminal Justice Basic Abilities Test and became a Corrections Officer in Training. He plans to attend 13 weeks of school followed by a state exam to become a full-fledged corrections officer for the State of Florida.

“I feel I'm getting a chance to change lives,” Wilson said.

COLLABORATION CREATES OPPORTUNITY: LANA KEMP'S JOURNEY

Thanks to a long-time relationship between Job Corps Program Manager Tanzy James and CareerSource NEFL's Doreen Lund, Lana Kemp (right) has a full-time position with Love's at its facility on Pecan Park Road in Jacksonville.

James has worked as a partner with CareerSource NEFL for more than 20 years while administering training and employment grants in Jacksonville. (The Jacksonville Job Corps is one of 120 campuses across the country that provide free career training and education for 16- through 24-year-olds.)

"Because our students come from all over, they weren't familiar with CareerSource NEFL, so Lana was among a group of five students on a tour at the CSNEFL Gateway Career Center," James said.

Kemp had already completed three trades with Job Corps, including the advanced manufacturing trade, and was very anxious to move on with her career.

"I have a contact at Love's and shared what a great job Lana had been doing, forwarded her resume on and they must have been pretty impressed," Lund said. "They called her the next day and Lana had an interview the following day."

However, instead of the apprenticeship she was inquiring about, Love's offered Kemp a full-time position as a service advisor and a higher care technician for the company. In her new role, Kemp works with customers to fulfill service needs, provides cost estimates, sales promotions and customer service, along with assisting maintenance crews with some projects.

"I love hands on work, so I'm looking forward to the maintenance part of the job," she said. "To have these connections and these people around me who are so willing to assist me...I'm so grateful. And, after the tour at Gateway, I told my mom she should move out and get with CareerSource NEFL and get a better job. I'll definitely be recommending to other people, for sure."





Supporting Career Growth Through Training

CareerSource NEFL also provides eligible job seekers direct financial support through training scholarships so they can earn industry-recognized certifications to gain employment in high-demand occupations.

Through Individual Training Accounts (ITA) program administered by CareerSource NEFL, the organization provided funds for 243 eligible participants during the 2024-25 program year – with people receiving nearly 360 credentials for a variety of jobs.

There are more than 130 positions in the region that can qualify for ITA funding in a wide range of industries, from positions in healthcare, manufacturing and software development to trade occupations such as plumbing and welding.

During this program year, more than 85 percent of training scholarships were within the healthcare industry, which helped individuals get into a career path to a rewarding job with a self-sustaining wage.

CareerSource NEFL collaborates with more than 20 other organizations to provide ITA training, including the Florida State College at Jacksonville, St. Johns River State College, Fortis College, St. Augustine Technical College and Flagler College.



INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS

243

New Training Accounts

356

Credentials Attained

\$5,740

Average Cost per Customer

ITA Scholarship Successes

FROM CLASSROOM TO CAREER: HOW CAREERSOURCE NEFL HELPED PAUL SOTO SUCCEED



Paul Soto and Lorenz Cotton.

“I’ve been absolutely blessed and fortunate to be able to use the resources at CareerSource Northeast Florida,” said Paul Soto, a 31-year-old who graduated in the Spring 2025 from St. Johns River State College with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree. “They have helped me to purchase books, attend classes and have helped me achieve my nursing goals from the beginning... they’ve played a pivotal role in my success.”

Soto had earned an Associate of Arts Degree from FSCJ when he first heard about CareerSource NEFL through a fellow classmate at the time and visited an office representative working at the FSCJ campus. With the financial help he received through CareerSource NEFL, Soto had previously received his certification as a registered nurse (RN) in 2018 and as a licensed practical nurse (LPN) in 2021.

He credits CareerSource NEFL Workforce Services Representative Lorenz Cotton with helping him not only to continue to obtain an ITA, but also in assisting him through his personal challenges.

“I just really appreciate CareerSource Northeast Florida...they’ve been great,” he said. “I can’t say enough good things about how they’ve helped me and, to be honest, I wish everybody knew about it. I spread the word about it to my fellow classmates all the time.”

FROM RETAIL TO HEALTHCARE: HOW CAREERSOURCE NEFL HELPED LATIFAH LENTON SUCCEED

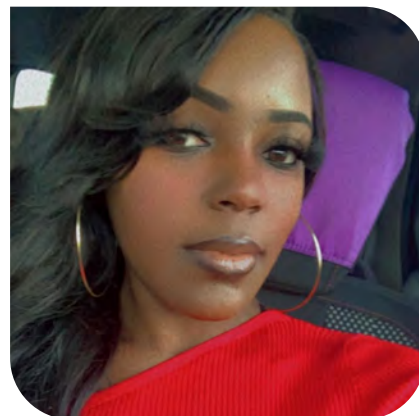
In 2024, Latifah Lenton (right) completed some medical training with the help of CareerSource NEFL and is now embarking on a new career.

Lenton is now a certified phlebotomy technician. Phlebotomy technicians, who can work in hospitals, clinics and for blood donation agencies like One Blood Northeast Florida, collect blood from patients and prepare the samples for testing. They are important members of the health care team and often need to explain the blood-drawing procedure and put patients at ease during the process.

A Jacksonville native and graduate of First Coast High School, Lenton says she had worked many retail and fast-food jobs before she found out about a possible career in the medical industry and how the organization could help.

Lenton qualified for the ITA program, which provided full funding for the support training she needed to start a new career.

“I don’t know how much more I can thank CareerSource Northeast Florida and my training provider, Medical Career Healthcare Training, for believing in me and working with me,” she said. “I’m not below holding a regular kind of job, but I knew I was better than that and I needed a career. Thanks to their help and support, I have a career path.”



Supporting Workforce Transitions

The CareerSource NEFL Rapid Response Team acts quickly when an employer makes a reduction in its workforce to ensure that laid-off workers quickly transition to new employment. Team members guide those affected by a closure through a career transition program that includes resumé writing, interviewing assistance, networking skills, job search guidance and help in filing for Reemployment Assistance with the State of Florida.

During the last program year, the CareerSource NEFL Rapid Response team worked with 15 companies – which impacted about 2,000 employees across Northeast Florida.

“They did a lot of work with our transitioning employees and thanks to their outreach, nearly 20 employers came out and met with our people,” he said. “Thanks to Roben’s assistance, and that of the entire team, the transition was made more palatable for the people. I’m a really big advocate of CareerSource Northeast Florida.”



Gigi Culler and Louis Urso.

The largest single layoffs occurred in the Jacksonville area, which included 500 employees at C&S Wholesale Services when it closed its distribution center in Baldwin, Florida, along with 120 Revlon employees who lost their jobs when the company ended its operations in the city after 70 years.

Louis Urso, the human resource director at Revlon for 20 years, commended the Rapid Response Team for their “phenomenal” work: singling out CareerSource NEFL’s Industry Manager for Manufacturing/Aviation/Aerospace, Roben Faircloth and Rapid Response Manager Gigi Culler for their efforts in helping guide employees to find new employment.



Opening Doors to Second Chances

Every year, more than 30,000 people are released from Florida prisons and face challenges when they attempt to reenter the workforce – and CareerSource NEFL takes part in Second Chance workshops and job fairs to help these men and women overcome the barriers posed by incarceration by opening the door to gainful employment.

Coinciding with National Second Chance Month in April, CareerSource NEFL partnered with Operation New Hope, FSCJ, the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office, the Duval County Probation Office, Jacksonville Reentry Center and Goodwill to host an in-person Second Chance Job Fair at the Florida State College at Jacksonville’s Advanced Technology Center in downtown Jacksonville.

More than 300 attended, with the participating companies interviewing 32 job seekers and hiring 29 of them at the event.

In addition to the job fair, the organization’s MAP Team works throughout the year in assisting prisoners transition to work – with that effort headed by CareerSource NEFL Mobile Access Point (MAP)/Reentry Manager Dwaine Sweet.

As a reentry manager for MAP, Sweet has been holding classes at the Baker County Correctional Institute for about four or five years – adding the Putnam Correctional Institute in Palatka in the last program year. The classes, each involving 20 prisoners or more, are held three to six months away from their release dates.

“We provide the education segment...we register each of them with Employ Florida, assist them with their resumes and prepare them for job interviews,” Sweet said. “We also provide them with information on financial resources and other workplace information about jobs – not only how to get a job, but how to keep it afterward – basically everything they need to know to transition back into the workforce.”



Sweet said either he or the team visit each facility at least every other month.

“One of the big things the sheriffs in the counties want is to provide those being released with certification opportunities, as well,” he said.

While CareerSource NEFL focuses on employment, the inmates can also obtain warehouse/logistics and OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) certifications. In addition, the University of North Florida provides training for forklift certification, while Operation New Hope provides them with post-release assistance – which includes housing for up to three months after they leave the prison system to get on their feet.



Honoring Service Through Employment

CareerSource NEFL once again took part in the annual Paychecks for Patriots, hosting a special hiring fair dedicated to employing veterans and their spouses during the FSCJ Fall Career Fair held on Nov. 7 at its downtown campus in Jacksonville.

More than 80 employers from a wide array of industries were represented at the event, which attracted more than 340 attendees – including more than 130 veteran job seekers.

This was one of several Paychecks for Patriots events that took place throughout the state in November – which have resulted in more than 8,000 veteran candidates and military family members gaining employment statewide since the event was created.

While this special event occurs in November each year, the Veteran team at CareerSource NEFL offers guidance to these job seekers and provides opportunities throughout the year for employers to connect and recruit veterans and their spouses.

Military Spouse Mondays are held on a rotating schedule at the various CareerSource NEFL locations to educate military family members as they explore career options, develop as professionals, and launch career plans.

According to the 2020 Census, more than 90,000 veterans reside in Duval County, making it one of the largest veteran populations of any metropolitan area in the United States.



VETERANS SERVED

3,053

Youth Services: Preparing the Future Workforce

CareerSource NEFL continues to invest in the region's young workforce by providing employment and training opportunities for individuals ages 16 to 24. Through direct engagement with youth and strong partnerships with organizations that specialize in youth development and employment, CareerSource NEFL helps young adults build the skills and confidence needed for long-term career success.

Through these collaborative efforts, 44 young adults entered employment during or after training and 153 out-of-school youth earned valuable credentials in high-demand industries such as healthcare, construction, and welding. Participants also received individualized career guidance, work experience opportunities, and job placement assistance designed to prepare them for success in the future workforce.

Throughout the year, CareerSource NEFL participated in numerous job fairs and career events at local high schools, colleges, and universities to connect young job seekers with employers and meaningful career pathways. Youth participants also engaged in mock interviews, center tours, presentations, financial literacy sessions, and one-on-one coaching offered both onsite and virtually.

CareerSource NEFL's Youth Providers and Partner Organizations serving youth ages 16 to 24 included:

- Eckerd Youth Alternatives, Inc.
- St. Johns County School District designated for First Coast Technical College (FCTC)
- Wealth Watchers, Inc.
- A-Step Program
- Career Pathways through EarnUp.org
- Job Corps
- Year Up
- Stepping Stones

These collective efforts not only improve employment outcomes for young adults, but also strengthen the region's talent pipeline to meet the needs of local industries. CareerSource NEFL remains dedicated to advancing youth opportunities that support both individual success and regional economic growth.



CareerSource NEFL was among 80 organizations that took part in the Brave Summit in St. Augustine, a free event at the St. Augustine Amphitheatre sponsored by UF Health St. Johns Care Connect attended by more than 2,500 high school students from 10 Florida counties.



YOUTH SERVED

162



Pathways to Self-Sufficiency

The Welfare Transition program, officially known as the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, provides cash benefits to eligible families with dependent children, while the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) program is designed for able-bodied adults without a dependent and provides food assistance benefits.

CareerSource NEFL administers both programs in Duval, St. Johns, Putnam, Baker, Clay, and Nassau Counties in partnership with FloridaCommerce. In program year 2024-25, both TANF and SNAP operations moved to the CareerSource NEFL Gateway Career Center on Norwood Avenue in Jacksonville.

Throughout the year, CareerSource NEFL gave participants enrolled in these programs assistance in developing employability skills and allowed access to vocational training, career readiness and career pathing through work experience and community service opportunities.

To assist Welfare Transition program job seekers, the CareerSource NEFL team, along with other community partners, provided supportive services such as assistance with childcare, uniforms, certifications, transportation, diversion services, job training and employment services.

Florida's TANF program emphasizes work, self-sufficiency, and personal responsibility to enable participants to move from welfare to work.

One-Stop Services Through Partnership

The CareerSource NEFL Gateway Career Center, located at 5000 Norwood Ave. in Jacksonville, also serves as the region's only one-stop job center – also referred to as an American Job Center (AJC).

In addition to the workforce representatives at the center helping job seekers, there are agency partners on-site that can provide additional assistance beyond employment help.

Among the AJC agency partners that have access to the center, four partners have a physical presence at the center – including the Florida Division of Blind Services.

As part of the Florida Department of Education, this division helps blind and visually impaired individuals achieve their goals and live their lives with as much independence and self-direction as possible.

“Our counselors have a scheduled time at the center each Thursday from 9 to noon, but we have people on site when job fairs and other employment or community events are held there,” said division district Administrator Daniel W. O’Connor. “When we are there, it makes it easier to help our clients with their release forms and send referrals directly to the other agencies on site, including CareerSource NEFL, which can help them get into the EmployFlorida system and assist them with some targeted job searches.”

Recently, Mr. O’Connor said Federal Express was taking part in one of the job fairs at Gateway and one of their clients was hired by the transportation company.

“That’s a success story and we’d like to see more of them,” he said. “In short, it’s an important collaboration and it serves as a key linkage for our clients to utilize...whether it’s employment, housing or financial assistance they need.”

Along with the Florida Division of Blind Services, other partners with a physical presence are Florida State College at Jacksonville, the National Caucus on Black Aging, the Northeast Florida Community Action Agency and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). Other partner agencies include the Florida Department of Education Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the National Council on Black Aging, Inc., the Jacksonville Housing Authority and the Northeast Florida Community Action Agency.



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network

Partners in Workforce Development



AARP Foundation SCSEP

The AARP Senior Community Employment Program is the nation's oldest program to help low-income, unemployed individuals aged 55+ find work.

- Work experience in nonprofits and local agencies
- (If eligible) Supportive services and skills paid training



NCBA, Inc.

The NCBA Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is an employment training program sponsored by the United States Department of Labor to serve seniors 55 and older who meet the federal poverty guidelines.

- Job-related paid training for unsubsidized employment
- Training in group sessions or at the work site and may involve performing duties at a non-profit, including daycare facilities, faith-based organizations, and senior centers



Division of Blind Services

The Division of Blind Services ensures blind and visually-impaired Floridians have the tools, support and opportunity to achieve success.

- Assistance with independent living
- Assistance with employment



FSCJ – Adult Education and Family Literacy

Adult Education at Florida State College at Jacksonville includes a range of instructional programs that help adults get the basic skills they need to be productive workers, family members and citizens.

- GED® Preparation: High School Equivalency
- Adult Basic Education
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Integrated Education & Training (IET)
- Academic Skills Building (ASB)



Jacksonville Housing Authority

JHA offers a variety of programs to fit the needs of low and moderate income families, senior and disabled adults in the greater Jacksonville, Florida area.

- Assistance to move into homeownership
- Staff assistance with education, job training, and counseling



Jacksonville Job Corps

- Career counseling
- Career technical training program
- Guidance in one of five career paths (Military, Advance Training, Employment, Apprenticeship and College)



Northeast Florida Community Action Agency

NFCAA works to combat poverty in Northeast Florida.

- GED prep and skills training
- Employment assistance
- Supportive services



Operation New Hope

ONH's Ready4Work Program provides support, life, and job skills training for people with a history of involvement with the criminal justice system and places them in employment that offers sustainable quality of life.

- Career development training course
- Employment placement and coaching
- Employment assistance



Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is a federal-state program that helps people who have physical or mental disabilities get or keep a job.

- Assessment
- Vocational training
- Employment assistance

Business Services: Supporting Regional Employers

Connections go both ways, and the CareerSource NEFL Business Services Team provides a comprehensive network of support to employers throughout the region. This includes coordinating and hosting recruitment events for hiring representatives at career centers, colleges and other locations, and providing research, assessment and training resources.

In 2024-25, CareerSource NEFL hosted or took part in nearly 200 recruitment events – an average of 16 each month – and provided services to more than 2,100 companies.

The Recruitment Wednesday events held weekly at the Duval County Career Center continued to draw more job seekers in to speak one-on-one with up to eight employers. CareerSource NEFL held 47 Recruitment Wednesdays in the last program year, with 74 employers participating. Last year, the organization also introduced industry-specific Recruitment Wednesdays events to focus on positions in manufacturing, healthcare, finance/information technology, transportation/logistics and accommodations/food services industries.

The organization also continued hosting monthly virtual hiring fairs (some of those industry-focused as well) – an interactive web-based option for job seekers and employers that was launched in late 2020 after the pandemic.

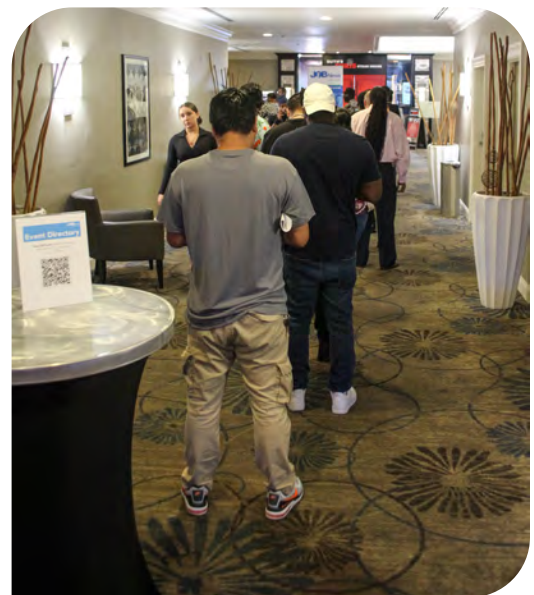
CareerSource NEFL also partnered with other organizations to connect job seekers with open positions, including the City of Jacksonville, the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA), the Jacksonville Aviation Authority (JAA), Jacksonville Electric Authority (JEA), Jacksonville Port Authority (JAXPORT), and Duval County Public Schools (DCPS).

The organization also partners on major job fairs twice annually with FSCJ – with ongoing collaboration with area colleges and school boards throughout the region.

CareerSource NEFL worked with businesses and organizations throughout its six-county service area to support recruitment and develop talent – working as an extension of an employer’s human resources department.



CareerSource NEFL took part in the Jax Authority Career Fair, which involved the City of Jacksonville, the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (pictured above) and other government agencies in the region.



Job seekers lined up at a recruitment event.



**BUSINESSES
SERVED**

2,143

Businesses
Served

7,050

Job Orders

192

Job Fairs &
Recruitment
Events

27,965

Referrals

Apprenticeship Programs: Earn While You Learn

CareerSource Northeast Florida’s apprenticeship program offers a proven “earn while you learn” pathway that benefits both employers and job seekers. Through registered apprenticeships, participants gain hands-on experience under skilled mentors, earn wages with periodic raises, and receive nationally recognized certifications upon completion—all without incurring college debt.

Apprentices typically start at \$15 per hour and can earn around \$60,000 annually as fully proficient workers. These programs are available across most industries, providing employers with a valuable workforce solution that improves recruitment, retention, production quality, and return on investment.

CareerSource NEFL Apprenticeship Manager Doreen Lund works directly with employers to develop and fund apprenticeship programs while guiding job seekers through the application process.

*“Apprenticeships are available in most industries and can provide a valuable workforce solution for many employers, offering a positive return on investment while improving production, quality assurance and employee retention,”
Lund said.*

On May 20, the organization hosted an Apprenticeship Accelerator lunch-and-learn workshop at the Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ) Advanced Technology Center in downtown Jacksonville. The event, which ran from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., brought together business leaders from Ring Power, FloridaMakes, FSCJ, Miller Electric, and UF Health St. Johns to share how apprenticeship models benefit their organizations.

Moderated by Leisa Rasmussen from Manhattan Strategy Group, the panel provided practical advice for developing apprenticeship programs. Apprentices also shared personal accounts of how work-based learning changed their lives. Florida Department of Education Apprenticeship Training Representative Julie Nichols joined Lund as a speaker.

Following the presentations, attendees toured FSCJ training facilities and met one-on-one with apprenticeship experts to explore program development options or learn about joining existing programs. Lunch was sponsored by Transfr, an organization building classroom-to-career pathways through immersive technologies.



Businesses learn about apprenticeships during the organization’s first accelerator event held in 2023.



CareerSource NEFL representatives Roben Faircloth (left) and Doreen Lund take part in a small business summit at FSCJ’s Kent Campus.

Training Solutions for Business Growth

To help employers meet the specific training needs for their existing employees, CareerSource NEFL provides a Customized Training (CT) Program to help employers meet short-term training needs and specific business requirements as they relate to new technologies, new production or service procedures, workplace literacy, or preparing employees for upgraded positions that require advanced skills.

During the 2024-25 program year, more than 240 people received training through the program, with nearly 750 certificates of completion earned for new skills, enhancing employers' ability to remain competitive in their industries. In many cases, these newly upskilled employees also received salary or hourly wage increases.

Through the Customized Training Program, CareerSource NEFL will reimburse the employer for up to 50 percent of the total training costs. Companies that take part in the program are required to meet several criteria and must fall under one of Northeast Florida's 'in-demand' job sectors. Reimbursable training expenses include instructors/trainers' salaries, curriculum development, textbook/manuals, and materials/supplies.

Funds from the Customized Training Program are also used to support job seekers in securing apprenticeships across a wide range of industries, including electrical/heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC), marketing, maintenance, transportation and logistics and healthcare. For apprentices, the program offers a mutually beneficial opportunity: they earn a salary and receive comprehensive health benefits, with access to pension and retirement plans offered by participating employers.

Additionally, CareerSource NEFL contributes toward the apprentices' tuition costs, helping to reduce their student loan debt upon completion of the program.



CUSTOMIZED TRAINING

242

Employees Trained

744

Certificates of Completion

\$2,562

Average Cost per Trainee



Stories of Success

STRENGTHENING THE WORKFORCE: SOLAR STIK'S PARTNERSHIP WITH CAREERSOURCE NEFL

Based in St. Augustine, private company Solar Stik provides solar-generated power to areas and facilities required to have power all the time.

Solar Stik Human Resources Assistant Sunmi (Sun) Jin says the company's biggest customer is often the U.S. Department of Defense.

"They have systems that are required to have power 24-7 and can't go offline," she said. "That's where we come in...we make sure that by using our products, with the help of hybridizing generators, they can take solar energy and store that. We basically make sure there's not an instance where they're without power."

Over the last two years, CareerSource NEFL has been able to help the company offset the cost of upskilling many of its 50 team members with the Customized Training Program.

Most recently, Solar Stik used the program to provide training for the company's logistics specialist Nancy Jenkins to receive her Hazmat Ground Shipper Certification, a U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) certification – along with similar training for the preparation and shipment of hazardous materials and by air transport.

Also, Jin is a beneficiary of customized training assistance herself, which she used to obtain credential in human resources through SHRM Certified Professional (SHRM – CP) Training.

"I'm personally thankful, and as a company we appreciate the partnership that we have with CareerSource Northeast Florida," she said. "Knowing that we have their support helps our company stay ahead of the curve when it comes to making sure that we're investing in the well-being and the upskilling of our workforce."



Solar Stik Human Resources Assistant Sunmi (Sun) Jin (left) and Logistics Specialist Nancy Jenkins have both received new certifications thanks to the Customized Training Support through CareerSource NEFL.



BUILDING A NURSING PIPELINE: BROOKS REHABILITATION UPSKILLS EMPLOYEES THROUGH LPN TRAINING

Brooks Rehabilitation (Brooks), a nonprofit organization in Jacksonville, has been at the forefront of physical rehabilitation care for more than 50 years. While it's best known for the clinical and community programs it has for individuals for disabilities, Brooks offers a comprehensive system of care: providing inpatient and outpatient services along with skilled nursing services, in addition to assisted living and memory care from several locations throughout the state.

To upskill its own employees and address the growing nursing shortage in the region and throughout the state, Brooks partnered with CareerSource NEFL to provide training to its employees to become licensed practical nurses (LPNs).

Today, nine employees have gone through the training to become LPNs, with a second round of training under way now.

Brooks Senior Vice President of Nursing and System Chief Nursing Officer Joanne S. Hoertz said they plan to launch the third group of employees through LPN training this August – in large part thanks to the customized training funds.

“The nursing shortage is very real and it’s not going to go away,” she said. “We’re projecting that by 2035

there will be a shortage of 59,000 nurses across the state of Florida, which will vary from county to county, but northeast Florida will be hit by that, as well.”

Its first cohort of 11 employees started in June 2023 and graduated in August 2024, and its second group of 12 started in August 2024 and graduated in November 2025.

“I do think it would have been a struggle to do this without CareerSource Northeast Florida,” Hoertz said. “In addition to the funding, they helped us design the training program and identify the budget so we can clearly show the upskilling of our existing workforce and the life changing earning capacity of the individuals going to this program. It’s an excellent use of tax dollars to get employees in our state upskilled, achieve a livable salary and start them on a new career path.”

(Above) Brooks Rehabilitation’s first group (cohort) of Certified Nursing Assistants to graduate in 2024. (Left to right) Tianna Richardson Valda Brown, Rachel Price, Tamekia Pittman, Francis Davis, Dashiel Rogers, Malisa Teart, Sabrina Smith, Andrea Hamilton, Tiffny Hardin and Kathy Williams.



Outreach and Marketing

The CareerSource NEFL Communications team supports all departments through event management, content creation, marketing and media relations.

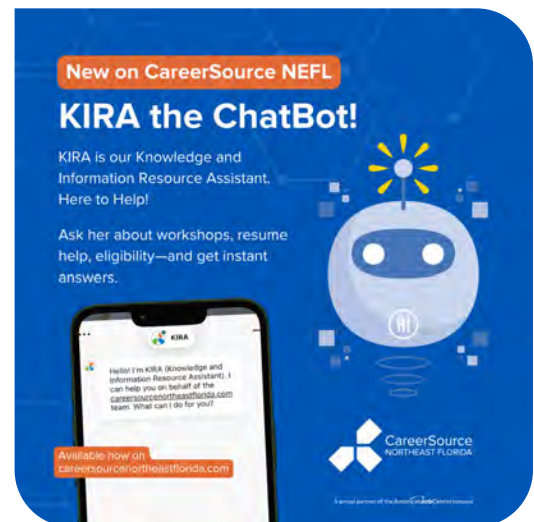
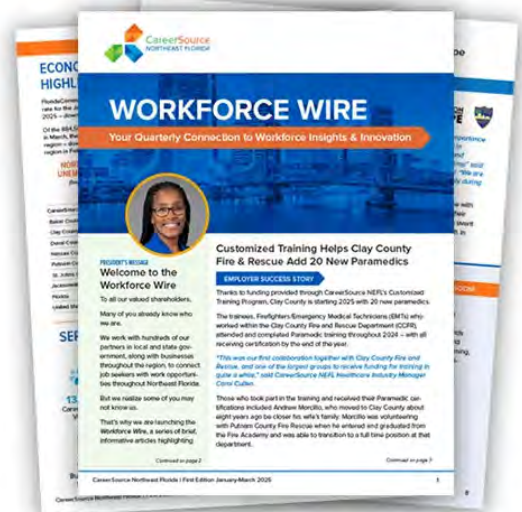
During the last program year, the organization experienced significant social media growth across its digital platforms and website – with followers up nearly 15 percent across all social platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube) from the previous year representing 540,640 impressions (up 18 percent) with interactions up 29,000 (13 percent).

CareerSource NEFL posted nearly 3,200 times – up 37 percent from the previous year. Also, website page impressions were up more than 20 percent compared to the previous year – with 453,210 impressions on the website.

Visitors to the website also saw a new chat feature, which went live in June 2025. Named the Knowledge and Information Resource Assistant (KIRA), the chat feature offers visitors another way to find what they’re looking for...and answers to their questions.

For local businesses, media outlets, or a curious job seekers, these website enhancements now offer another way to obtain clear, data-driven insights...and a new way to navigate to specific information at careersourcenefl.com.

To keep all our shareholders and partners informed on our programs, services and successes, we introduced a new digital newsletter, Workforce Wire, in early 2025.



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

5000 Norwood Ave., Suite 2
Jacksonville, FL 32208

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CareerSource Northeast Florida is an equal opportunity employer/agency. Auxiliary aids and accommodations for people with disabilities are provided. FRS users dial 711.

For program funding details in compliance with the Stevens Amendment, please visit <https://careersourcenortheastflorida.com/about>.



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