

GREENVILLE WEST SIDE

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



February 19, 2014

City of Greenville, South Carolina



Chapter 5: Homegrown Jobs



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Homegrown Jobs

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5.1: Overview

West Side's proximity to downtown, the location of some of the highest concentration of jobs in Greenville, is an excellent asset. Additionally, analysis of existing businesses indicates that the West Side exhibits some relatively strong economic indicators, suggesting that it is well located as a regional attraction for business operations.

Yet, there remain many challenges to connecting West Side residents to quality jobs in downtown, as well as other areas of Greenville. These challenges include lack of sufficient or relevant education and training, few nearby businesses that fit residents' skill sets, limited transportation options to places offering a range of job opportunities, and barriers associated with poor work histories and personal backgrounds.

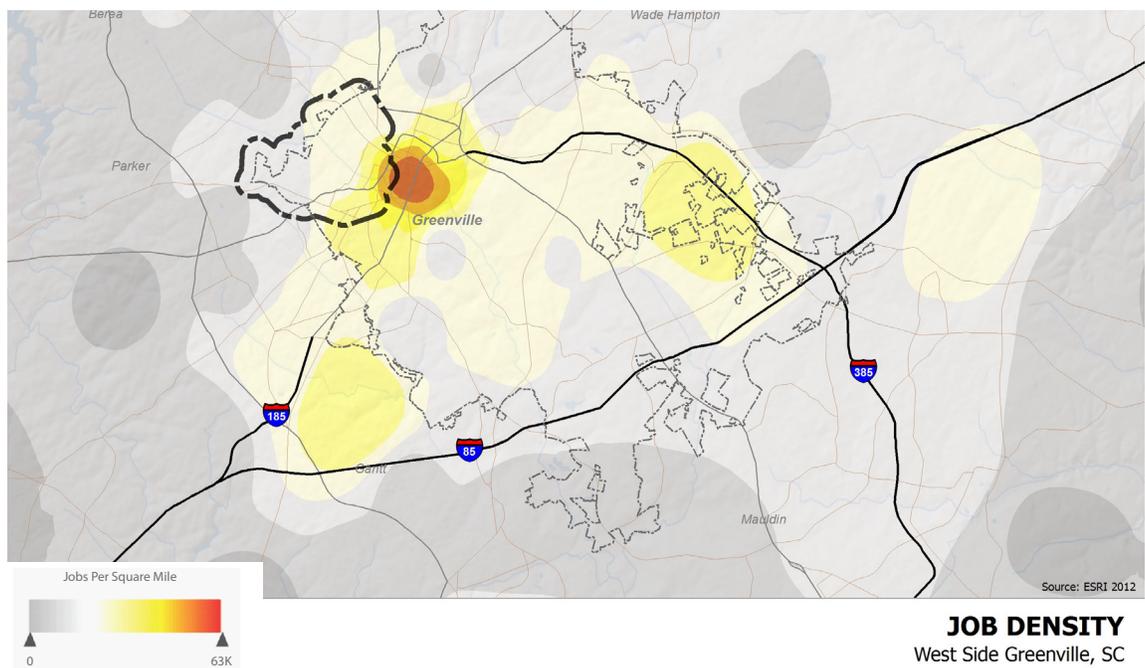
An important element in building a ladder of opportunity is supporting residents as they gain the skills that will enable them to support themselves, either with career-oriented employment or as independent business owners. The strategies in this chapter seek to connect West Side residents to the various career ladder levels by strengthening access

to education and training opportunities, providing non-conventional career options, and supporting entrepreneurship and businesses in the area — in general, by increasing capacity of existing organizations to focus resources and programs on the West Side.

5.2: Work Readiness and Access to Training and Jobs

Greenville has many organizations providing a variety of job training and placement programs. One of the key challenges in connecting West Side residents to these programs is addressing work readiness.

During the planning process, service providers indicated that it is often difficult to find job training program candidates who possess basic employable criteria - a high school diploma or GED, reliable transportation, an understanding of basic job etiquette, a clean record and stable work history. Many other service organizations provide programs that can help individuals address these basic work readiness issues. Yet, access to these programs is often challenged by limited case management, a lack of community trust in



Density of Jobs Per Square Mile: The downtown area has the highest concentration of jobs while the areas west of Downtown Greenville have the some of the lowest. West Side's proximity to downtown businesses is an asset. (Note: The map is based on data at the census tract level).

these aid organizations, and limited physical access to locations where services are being provided.

The recommendations seek to utilize existing resources in a way that creates more opportunities for the West Side residents. Strategies include providing dedicated case management within the community, focusing on work readiness, expanding the pool of potential employers, and providing local access to programs.

5.2.1: Fund a West Side “career-ladder” case manager

Responsible Agent(s): [Greenville Region Workforce Collaborative and Partners, West Side Collaborative](#)
Lead Organization

Action Type: [Programs & Policy](#)

Funding Level: \$-\$

Time Frame: [Year 1-5 ; On-going after startup](#)

The plan recommends designating a West Side case manager to recruit, assess, and refer candidates to partner organizations, with a special emphasis on resources addressing work readiness, such as GED, life skills, personal finance, and legal assistance for expunging criminal records. This case manager may be affiliated with the West Side Collaborative (§4.2.1), Greenville Region Workforce Collaborative, or some other existing West Side partner organization.

This case manager should be locally based, perhaps at the West Greenville Community Center or at a public school, and seen by the community as a credible and accessible resource. Building relationships within the community will be critical. Moreover, case management should be provided on a continuing basis to assist residents in transitioning through various programs as they work up their personal ladders of opportunity.

Potential funding sponsors include the larger employers located in and near the West Side and members of the Greenville Region Workforce Collaborative.

Connecting Ex-Offenders to Jobs

Regardless of abilities or quality of work ethic, individuals with criminal backgrounds are often disqualified for conventional job paths at the job application stage. “Ban the Box” programs and similar state-level legislative actions that would ease restrictive hiring practices for ex-offenders have been considered in South Carolina, but have not yet passed. Helping residents who are eligible to apply to expunge their records and connecting them to employers who are willing to hire ex-offenders are interim options to improve access to jobs for such ex-offenders.

Sources:

The Sentencing Project. (September, 2012). Legislative Update: State Reforms Reducing Collateral Consequences for People with Criminal Records. [http://www.sentencingproject.org/doc/State%20Collateral%20Consequences%20Legislative%20Roundup%20Sept%202012%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.sentencingproject.org/doc/State%20Collateral%20Consequences%20Legislative%20Roundup%20Sept%202012%20(1).pdf)

SC Center for Fathers and Families. (August 2013). Your Guide to Expungement in South Carolina. http://www.scfathersandfamilies.com/public/files/docs/Full_Expungement_Guide.pdf

Greenville Region Workforce Collaborative (GRWC)

In 2011, the GRWC was founded to address the skills gap crisis facing Greenville County. Funded in part through the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, the GRWC brings together local non profits, faith-based initiatives, educators, and employers to find creative and effective solutions to the skills gap crisis¹. GRWC works to not only train low-skilled, under or unemployed workers, and low income families, but to place them in sustainable careers with the help of case management workers and networks with local businesses.

The GRWC acknowledges that closing the skills gap in the Greenville region requires large-scale collaboration among partners, each of whom contribute a different yet vital function to the GRWC mission. For example, the Greenville Region Workforce Collaborative provides a working link between United Ministries, a local faith-based organization that assists the homeless and those in financial crisis through, among other things, GED training and literacy programs, and Goodwill Job Connection, a program created by Goodwill Industries that provides case management for those seeking job training and job placement. The GRWC, in turn, connects Goodwill Job Connection to the WorkKeys training program through a partnership with the Greenville County School system, Life Long Learning, and United Ministries.

¹Source: Excerpt from The Greenville Region Workforce Collaborative White Paper, Greenville Region Workforce Collaborative



5.2.2: Expand pool of potential employers for job placement programs

Responsible Agent(s): Greenville Region Workforce Collaborative and Partner Organizations, Local Employers

Action Type: Programs & Policy

Funding Level: \$

Time Frame: Year 1-5; On-going after startup

As residents complete various levels of training and education, it is critical to have a pool of potential employers with which to place those individuals. While a variety of organizations provide job placement assistance, the largest effort is coordinated through the Greenville Region Workforce Collaborative (GRWC), which focuses on both the employer’s needs and the skill development of the potential employee.¹ GRWC has the infrastructure to serve as the key coordinator of the wide spectrum of job readiness and training programs within the area. Yet, due to funding restrictions, the current focus of GRWC is narrowly focused on the manufacturing sector, highly technical jobs with employers with fairly strict hiring practices.

Of the 18 major employment sectors in the Greenville County economy, only two were projected to experience job decreases between 2008 and 2018 - utilities and manufacturing.² This does not diminish the need for skilled manufacturing workers; yet, it does reinforce a need to assist the other sectors with preparing qualified employees.

Seek additional funding to expand reach:

This could include identifying a pool of employers that both match resident skillsets and are accessible from the West Side.

¹ United Way: <http://www.unitedwaygc.org/greenville-regional-workforce-collaborat.php>

² SC Department of Employment and Workforce

Explore incentives and/or programs for businesses willing to serve as “work history incubators” for individuals with limited work history and criminal backgrounds:

South Carolina Technical College System has developed the “Apprenticeship Carolina” program, which provides free apprenticeship consultants to employers and helps employers to develop and accredit their apprenticeship programs. Employers can receive state tax credits for providing such apprenticeships.³ GRWC could coordinate with regional Apprenticeship Carolina representatives and work to recruit local employers to participate.

Additionally, several grassroots programs that incorporate on-the-job training already exist in the West Side. Project Host’s CC Pearce Culinary School provides food service training while cooking meals for community-members.⁴ Homes of Hope’s Men’s Development program provides construction-related training while participants help to build affordable homes.⁵ Mill Village Farms provides urban farming education to youth while growing produce to sell at local mobile markets.⁶ GRWC should explore ways to incorporate these and other similar model programs as creative ways to provide job opportunities in the West Side.

³ South Carolina Technical College System. “Apprenticeship Carolina.” <http://www.apprenticeshipcarolina.com/>

⁴ Project HOST CC Pearce Culinary School <http://www.projecthost.org/cc-pearce-culinary-school/>

⁵ Homes of Hope, Men’s Development <http://www.homesofhope.org/mens-development>

⁶ Mill Village Farms, Growing Jobs <http://www.millvillagefarms.org/growing-jobs/> For more information about the mobile market, see Sec 6.1.2

Case Study: PUSH Green

Started by PUSH Buffalo in Buffalo, New York, PUSH Green integrates the need to retrofit existing homes for energy savings with training and contracting that provides jobs to community members. To date, the program has performed more than 300 free energy audits, retrofitted more than 100 homes, and created 20 weatherization jobs. (Expert from *The Buffalo News*)

The Community Jobs Pipeline combines conventional workforce development activities - recruitment, referral, job development, job placement - with opportunities for community building and leadership development. Building a Community Jobs Pipeline requires transformation of the local consumer market for energy efficiency services. We need to create customer demand in order to create jobs for trainees, workers, and contractors.

PUSH Green provides opportunities for workforce volunteers to engage in customer outreach campaigns in neighborhoods across Erie County to educate residents about the benefits of energy efficiency improvements. Creating consumer demand for energy efficiency services is no guarantee that economic benefits will flow to area residents who are currently underemployed and working in the industry or to those from low income communities of color or with barriers to employment who are looking for job opportunities in the green economy. (Excerpt from PUSH Green’s Website)



Program info: <http://pushbuffalo.org/green-jobs-green-new-york1>
Push Green, Workforce
<http://www.pushgreenwny.org/workforce>

Source: The Buffalo News (September 27, 2013) “PUSH Green retrofits more than 100 homes.” <http://www.buffalonews.com/city-region/erie-county/push-green-retrofits-more-than-100-homes-20130927>

5.2.3: Expand access to West Side educational facilities

Responsible Agent(s): [Greenville County School District](#), [A.J. Whittenberg Elementary](#), [Legacy Charter School](#)

Action Type: [Programs & Policy](#)

Funding Level: \$

Time Frame: [On-going](#)

Less than 10 years ago, most West Side students were bused outside of the neighborhood to attend school. Today, there are many schools within the community.

Greenville County School District has several new public schools A.J. Whittenberg Elementary School of Engineering, and the two Legacy Charter School campuses that include Elementary, Middle, and Early College High School programs. These schools are part of the open enrollment plan of the school district, meaning that students from the surrounding neighborhoods, as well as from all over the county, attend.

Additionally, there are several private elementary schools in the area. One of these schools, St. Anthony of Padua Catholic

School, is located in the West Greenville neighborhood, within the West Side study area. While the school has a locally-based mission, many of the students come from outside the neighborhood as well.

While access to education for children in the West Side is much improved, there still remain some challenges. Comments from the community during the planning process indicate concerns about accessibility to the schools, particularly A.J. Whittenberg Elementary. And, while about half of the student body comes from the surrounding neighborhood, there have been questions as to whether West Side residents have had an equal opportunity to attend.⁷

School officials recently implemented a lottery system in place of the original first-come, first-serve policy for A.J. Whittenberg, which provides more equal opportunity for local students. Yet, it is still possible that

⁷ Barnett, R. (December 16, 2012). "Open enrollment raises questions of access." Greenville Online. <http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20121216/NEWS09/312160016/>



A.J. Whittenberg Elementary



Bottle Greenhouse built by A.J. Whittenberg students as part of the *Connections for Sustainability* project

many students who live in the surrounding neighborhood may not be able to attend the school. Legacy Elementary School is a strong alternative for local students. Yet, comments from residents suggest a limited understanding of this option.

Other initiatives, such as educational programming developed by the Livability Educator under the City of Greenville's *Connections for Sustainability* project, are utilizing the West Side schools to engage students and neighborhood residents in camps, after school programs, and community activities.

Key Recommendations

Continue to Increase Local Access to Schools: It is critical to the revitalization of the West Side that children within the neighborhoods have access to, and attend, local schools. It is recommended that the school district continue to improve on neighborhood accessibility to A.J. Whittenberg Elementary. This would include reevaluating the designated attendance area for the school, as well as considering reserved lottery spaces for students in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Additionally, it is recommended that Legacy School, as well as the private mission based schools in the area, such as St. Anthony of Padua Catholic School, consider additional marketing/outreach efforts to the West Side neighborhoods to increase awareness and enrollment within the community.

Utilize School and Community Facilities for Adult Education, Job Training Programs, and Community Activities: Expanding programming outside of daytime school hours would more fully utilize the new school facilities, as well as create stronger connections within the surrounding neighborhoods. It is recommended the school district continue to seek opportunities to offer school facilities during non-school times for local use, such as adult job training and skills development, local sports, arts programs, tutoring, recreational activities, community meetings and special events. Service agencies not currently located within the West Side could consider offering satellite programs in the school facilities, to make access more convenient to the community residents.



Front door: Legacy Charter Elementary School

Source: Legacycharterschool.com

5.3: Entrepreneur Support and Business Recruitment

Small businesses are the economic engines of local economies. Supporting entrepreneurs as they bring their ideas to the marketplace means more local jobs. The recommendations in this section focus on supporting small business through retention and recruitment, while supporting entrepreneurs in the West Side.



TTR Bikes: South Hudson Street



Lashbar Downtown: Pendleton Street in the Village

5.3.1: Connect small businesses to existing resources

Responsible Agent(s): **City of Greenville (Economic Development), Chamber of Commerce, Other Small Business Support Organizations**

Action Type: **Programs & Policy**

Funding Level: **\$**

Time Frame: **Year 1-5; On-going**

There are many resources available to West Side residents and business owners interested in starting and/or growing small businesses, including assistance with developing business plans, securing financing, acquiring permits, bookkeeping, managing employees, marketing, and networking. Yet, it can be very challenging to identify and access these resources.

Implement a West Side “Entrepreneur Friendly” Initiative: The City of Greenville, through its Economic Development Division, should work with its business sector partners, such as the Chamber of Commerce, to develop a small business development strategy for the West Side similar to the one used in downtown. Next steps would include taking inventory of resources and local businesses, setting benchmarks, educating the community, and interviewing local entrepreneurs to determine support needs.

The “Entrepreneur Friendly” Initiative created by the Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) provides a good model for identifying key steps for local strategies. Currently, the South Carolina Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) is developing an online toolkit based on a similar tool used by GDEcD. The program will allow local communities to provide a customized resource for their local entrepreneurs. ACOG is working with the City of Pickens on a pilot program. Greenville could take advantage of this resource as soon as it becomes available.⁸

Create Local Access to Resources: Utilize local community centers and public schools to provide entrepreneur training and support programs per §5.2.3.

⁸ Toppe, J. (October 16, 2013) “Pickens selected as pilot community for project to aid entrepreneurs.” Pickens Sentinel. <http://pickenssentinel.com/>

Support Area Business Associations: Two business organizations are located within the West Side – the West End Association and the West Greenville Business Association. The City’s Economic Development Department provides a professional staff liaison to both. The City should continue to support these organizations and seek other opportunities to support the creation of similar groups in other parts of the West Side as appropriate.

5.3.2: Implement a business retention and recruitment program for the West Side

Responsible Agent(s): **City of Greenville (Economic Development), Chamber of Commerce**

Action Type: **Programs & Policy**

Funding Level: **\$**

Time Frame: **Year 1-5; On-going after startup**

The City of Greenville is known for providing a business-friendly environment and has implemented successful retention, as well as recruitment, efforts in many areas, particularly

in downtown. The West Side project area encompasses approximately 650 businesses and 6,700 employees.⁹ While some of these businesses may be located within the western fringe of downtown, it indicates that there are many active businesses within the West Side.

Generally, it is estimated that over 80 percent of job and capital growth comes from existing businesses. An active retention, expansion and recruitment program in the West Side plays a key role in connecting residents to new local job opportunities.

In the West Side, the most likely growth opportunities will build on the area’s key assets, such as:

- Proximity to downtown
- An excellent arterial road network
- Available land
- Existing and proposed transit system

⁹ Esri’s Business Analyst Online database

Georgia’s “Entrepreneur Friendly” (“EF”) Initiative

The Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) provides a community-based program that helps local communities establish an entrepreneur support program, better understand their existing entrepreneur environment, and develop sustainable, effective local strategies within the community’s overall economic development plan.

Key steps to becoming “Entrepreneur Friendly”:

- Identify a local champion to lead the entrepreneur and small business development strategy.
- Increase community awareness of and support for strategies, needs and resources. Educate the community about the benefits of homegrown business development and fast-growth companies. Create a “How to Start a Business in Your City” booklet and/or web page.
- Create a system for gathering and reporting job growth, investment, and new businesses. Sponsor activities such as business plan contests, entrepreneur spotlights, youth entrepreneur recognition, finance seminars, and presentations to civic organizations.
- Enhance relationships with state and federal resource providers. Host workshops for Small Business Development Center (SBDC), local governments, chambers of commerce and other groups to present on how they support small businesses.
- Visit and interview local entrepreneurs. Review and compile results to determine appropriate strategies.
- Identify local entrepreneurs and unique local resources.

Source: <http://www.georgia.org/business-resources/small-business-resources/small-business-development/Pages/EntrepreneurFriendlyInitiative.aspx>

- Relatively low rents for commercial space
- Potential for attracting regional customers

The fastest growing sectors in the Greenville economy are in administrative support, healthcare, professional services, and education.

The City of Greenville, along with other business support organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, should identify active businesses within the West Side and schedule site visits to show appreciation and to gain feedback from business owners and ways to continue to support their positive growth. Follow-up on specific issues would be critical. Key businesses to target include large employers, significant revenue generators, minority-owned and long-term West Side businesses, and businesses identified as having high growth potential.

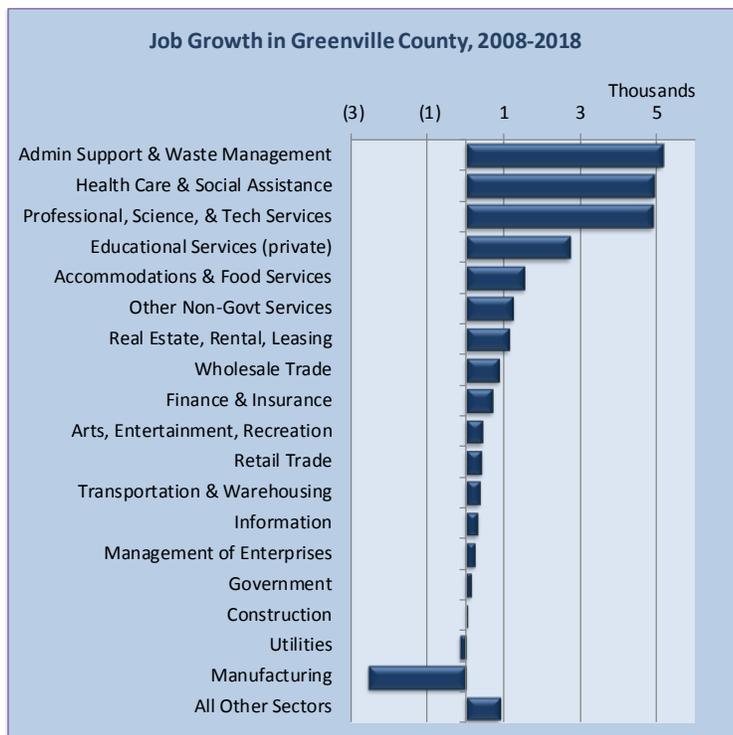
Additionally, the City and its partners should actively recruit businesses with a regionally-oriented customer base within the fastest growing sectors.

These areas include:

- Wholesale trade and warehousing
- “Back office” operations in healthcare, such diagnosis centers, and family clinics;
- Small start-up professional services (i.e. lawyers, architects), scientific, and technical services who seek inexpensive unique spaces near a downtown customer base;
- Educational services; and
- Niche retailers offering unique products or services.

Public-private partnerships should be explored to support growth and the attraction of businesses key to the success of the West Side economic growth.

Finally, no matter how well-suited a particular firm is to the local economy, it will resist relocating, or expanding, within a community it perceives as unsafe, unkept, difficult to access for employees, suppliers and customers, or generally “separated” from the broader commercial sector. Therefore, investment in civic infrastructure, services and amenities, as recommended in other chapters of this plan, will be key to creating an overall positive business climate for the West Side.



5.3.3: Develop a tech incubator on West Washington Street

Responsible Agent(s): **City of Greenville (Economic Development), Chamber of Commerce, Private High-Tech Businesses**

Action Type: **Programs & Policy**

Funding Level: **\$ for Program; \$\$ for Infrastructure**

Time Frame: **Year 6-10**

Building on the success of the co-working space at Crescent Studios, located at Mulberry Street, a new tech incubator could be developed to anchor a high-tech and advanced manufacturing employment hub. This strategy also presents opportunities for high-tech education and job training programs to help fuel entrepreneurial enterprises.

Existing components and programs that would be explored as part of this tech hub include:

- Greenville Chamber of Commerce’s NEXT program: The NEXT Innovation Center on University Ridge in the Haynie-Sirrine neighborhood could be a viable model in this location.¹⁰
- The Iron Yard: Already operating at a small scale in Crescent Studios at 1040 West Washington Street, this organization includes an accelerator program, computer programming classes, and co-working space to support entrepreneurs and free-lancers.¹¹
- SC Technical College System’s readySC program: Developing and attracting new advanced manufacturing employers can be paired with this program to work directly with new, relocating, and expanding employers to develop the workforce and management needs to fit their business.¹²

¹⁰ Greenville Chamber of Commerce (<http://www.greenvillechamber.org/next.php>; <http://www.greenvillenext.com/>)

¹¹ The Ironyard (<http://theironyard.com/>)

¹² SC Technical College System (readysc - <http://www.readysc.org/about.htm>)



Crescent Studios: Offers a creative coworking space, including a gallery

Coder Dojo

CoderDojo is a not-for-profit organization founded in 2011 that has spread globally as membership-based “Dojos” across the globe. Its main focus is oriented around running free computer coding clubs and sessions for young people. Volunteers teach sessions on items such as coding, and developing websites, apps, programs, and games. Dojos also organize tours of technology companies and bring in guest speakers to talk about their careers in technology, and provide a forum to share work on coding projects.

CoderDojo Greenville is sponsored by The Iron Yard, a hi-tech accelerator/academy located in the NEXT Innovation Center on University Ridge, and offers free and fee-based programming and electronics classes for ages 8-18. In the West Side, CoderDojo meets at the West Greenville Community Center.

Sources: <http://coderdojo.com/> and <http://theironyard.com/education/>



Key Local Resources

City of Greenville Economic and Community Development Divisions

Provide a variety of small business resource referrals and job training support services. One program is a Comprehensive Jobs Training/Improvement and Placement program called Lifelong Advancement through Diligence, Determination and Employment Resources (LADDER), administered by Sunbelt Human Advancement Resources, Inc. (SHARE). LADDER addresses each individual participant's needs through utilization of a program network of over thirty local service providers and employers. <http://www.greenvillesc.gov/>

CommunityWorks Carolina:

Provides small business development education and microloans to entrepreneurs. <http://communityworkscarolina.org/>

Goodwill Jobs Connection

Goodwill is a public not-for-profit organization committed to helping people become independent through education and training leading to employment. <http://www.goodwillsc.org/find-work>

Greenville Chamber of Commerce's NEXT program:

Supporting entrepreneurs through funding and business incubators. <http://www.greenvillechamber.org/next.php>

Greenville Collaborative for Workforce Development (GCWD)

The Greenville Collaborative for Workforce Development (GCWD) is a community-based partnership that seeks to strengthen the financial stability of our region by investing in Greenville's low-income, underskilled workforce to address skill shortages in industries critical to South Carolina's economic health. <http://www.unitedwaygc.org/workforce-development-partnership.php>

Greenville Region Workforce Collaborative (GRWC)

The collaborative focuses on advanced manufacturing with workforce partnerships in the transportation, manufacturing and chemical sectors. GRWC supports foundational skills training for job seekers as they relate to manufacturing careers, and includes career pathway guidance, coaching and support and placement services. <http://nfw-solutions.org/regional-collaboratives/greenville-region-workforce-collaborative>

Homes of Hope, Men's Development

The Men's Development program is a voluntary one-year residential job training and mentoring program for men overcoming drug and alcohol addictions. Through biblical based discipleship, life skills training, and construction-related job training, men receive the ingredients necessary to start a new life. Our ultimate goal in this part of our ministry is to produce men who are able to succeed in any walk of life. <http://www.homesofhope.org/mens-development>

Project Host, CC Pearce Culinary School

Project Host's four programs are: a soup kitchen, the Feeding Hungry Children Project, the CC Pearce Culinary School and gardens. <http://www.projecthost.org/cc-pearce-culinary-school/>

South Carolina Women's Business Center

Supporting female entrepreneurs with education and a microloan program. <http://scwbc.net/>

United Ministries

The Adult Education Program is designed to assist people who lack a high school diploma to prepare for the GED exam. The mission of Employment Readiness is to remove barriers for individuals who are motivated to improve their employment status. The Employment Readiness program partners with multiple agencies and training providers to improve the financial stability of participants. <http://www.united-ministries.org/>

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