

CareerSource SW Florida EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY CONSORTIUM QUARTERLY REPORT

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

Report quarter: 2nd Quarter

Date of meeting: April 24, 2025

Report prepared by: Yolanda Flores

Local workforce development board contact: Peg Elmore **Date:** May 13, 2025

B. ATTENDANCE

Name	Organization	Industry or Education	Contact Information
Brian Mangan	Lee County Public Schools	Education	2855 Colonial Blvd, Fort Myers, FL 33966
Ariel Pechokas	Collier County Public Schools	Education	3702 Estey Ave. Naples, FL 34104
Kristen Vanselow	Florida Gulf Coast University	Education	10501 FGCU Boulevard South Fort Myers, FL 33965
Jennifer Thayer	Lee Health	Industry	6630 Orion Drive, Suite 101 Fort Myers, FL 33912
Evelyn Valdes	Lee County Economic Development Council	Industry	2201 Second St. Suite 500 Fort Myers, FL 33901
Kay Tracy	Charlotte Economy Development Council	Industry	18501 Murdock Circle, Suite 302. Port Charlotte, FL 33948
Blanca Beauchamp	Conditioned Air	Industry	3786 Mercantile Avenue Naples, FL 34104

Whitney Rhynes	FSW	Education	8099 College Parkway Fort Myers, FL 33919

B. SUMMARY REPORT

1. Summary analysis of the local labor market based on the industry representative needs and education offerings.

John Shannon, Research Economist at Florida Gulf Coast University, presented an overview of the transportation and logistics sector in Southwest Florida. Currently, the sector employs approximately 4,790 individuals and has shown strong, sustained growth, with an average annual employment increase of 6.6% over the past decade.

Among the most in-demand occupations are Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers, Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians, and CDL Drivers. There is an annual gap of approximately 30 CDL truck drivers and 28 diesel mechanics.

Charlotte Technical College and Lorenzo Walker Technical College offer aircraft and automotive programs, while Immokalee Technical College provides a Global Logistics certificate. Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) offers a Bachelor of Science and Graduate Certificate in Supply Chain Management, as well as a variety of online courses including Certified Supply Chain Professional (CSCP), CSCP with Freight Broker/Agent Training, and Distribution and Logistics Management. Additionally, Florida SouthWestern State College, as presented by Dr. Tim Lucas, offers an Associate of Science in Business Analytics and a College Credit Certificate in Supply Chain Management.

There is clear misalignment exists between the occupational demands of the region and the capacity of the current education and training pipeline. Expanded

and targeted programming is needed in CDL training, diesel mechanics, and supply chain operations.

One of the primary barriers to CDL program expansion is cost. To help address this, Lee County Schools is exploring partnerships with local employers to develop apprenticeship programs that reduce the financial burden on trainees while aligning directly with workforce needs. Additional initiatives under consideration include forklift certification programs and summer work experiences to expose more students and adult learners to the logistics field. In Collier County, the Adult Education program is exploring a partnership with the local school district's transportation department to launch a CDL training program using existing school busses

2. Information on priority industry sectors and occupations for the local area.

The transportation and logistics sector is a priority industry due to its rapid growth, regional infrastructure, and the expanding role of the Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW). This airport is not only a major hub for passenger travel but also a growing center for air freight operations. As e-commerce, supply chain complexity, and just-in-time delivery models continue to rise, so does the demand for skilled workers in both passenger and freight-related services. The presence of the airport intensifies the need for trained personnel in air cargo handling, aircraft maintenance, and airport operations.

The top industry sectors driving workforce demand in the region include Scheduled Passenger Air Transportation, Other Airport Operations, and Freight Trucking. High-demand occupations in the area reflect these industry priorities. The most needed roles include Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers, Light Truck Drivers, Automotive Service Technicians, Diesel Mechanics, and Freight and Stock Movers.

Employers are seeking candidates with specific certifications to meet workforce and safety standards. Key credentials include Commercial Driver's Licenses (Class A and B), ASE Certification for automotive service professionals, Forklift Certification for warehouse and logistics operations, and HAZMAT certification for handling hazardous materials.

3. Information on the status of existing talent pipelines for in-demand occupations.

The current talent pipeline in Southwest Florida is falling short of meeting the workforce demands in the rapidly expanding transportation and logistics sector. Job postings for logistics-related roles continue to rise, yet the number of graduates from postsecondary programs remains too low to fill these openings. While Fort Myers Technical College, Lorenzo Walker Technical College, Immokalee Technical College, Charlotte Technical College, and Cape Coral Technical College offer programs in aviation and automotive technologies, there is a shortage of training programs such as CDL licensure, diesel mechanics and supply chain operations.

Recommendations:

- Increase the availability of training programs in CDL licensure, diesel mechanics, and logistics certifications. Partnering with employers to develop fast-track credentialing programs can help move individuals quickly into high-demand roles.
- Build stronger collaboration between education providers and employers by establishing advisory groups that co-design curricula.
- Develop and scale internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training in partnership with key regional employers such as Scotlynn, Allyn International, and Southwest Florida International Airport.
- Launch regional outreach campaigns in schools, community organizations, and adult education programs to raise awareness about career opportunities in logistics. Emphasizing the stability, growth potential, and variety of roles in this sector can help attract new talent, especially among youth and underemployed adults.