



THE POWER OF

PARTNERSHIPS



A National Fund for Workforce Solutions Model

CareerEdge Funders Collaborative

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## About CareerEdge

CareerEdge is an innovative partnership of business, government, and philanthropic organizations that leverages public and private dollars to provide opportunities for better jobs and wages in Manatee and Sarasota Counties.

The first regional collaborative of workforce investors in the southeastern United States to be designated as a site of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, CareerEdge was created with funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, City of Bradenton Central Community Redevelopment Agency, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Bank of America, Bradenton 14th Street Community Redevelopment Agency, Bradenton Downtown Development Authority, and Manatee Community Action Agency. It is also supported by contributions from Jane’s Trust, Microsoft, Sarasota County Government, J.P. Morgan Chase, United Way Suncoast, Jobs for the Future, Charles and Margery Barancik Foundation, and The William H. Donner Foundation, Inc.

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# Introduction

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It's a beautiful day on the Gulf Coast. Standing on the bridge overlooking Nathan Benderson Park, you can see the scullers rowing in unison. You can feel the beat of teamwork, everyone pulling together, in sync, in the same direction, as one. You can track the smooth, steady forward progress as the boat cuts through the glistening water.

The scullers represent a movement in Manatee and Sarasota Counties... the pulling together of many forces to work in collaboration. The creation of a world class rowing facility at Nathan Benderson Park and being awarded the hosting rights for the 2017 World Rowing Championships represents this kind of effort.

And this spirit of pulling together toward a common cause resonates throughout the region, perhaps in an unlikely area – workforce development. Through shared commitment to the economic viability and vitality of the region, local government, educators, employers, and funders are pulling together to improve the workforce development process in Manatee and Sarasota Counties. The goal: to create a workforce system that supports current employers and attracts new ones, and a system that opens career pathways for its citizens.

In rowing, the coxswain is the driving force that organizes the crew and sets and maintains the rhythm of the team. In workforce development, you also need a coxswain– an organizing mechanism to assemble a team, create a plan, and move it forward. When all team members work together, the power of workforce partnerships can be realized. CareerEdge Funders Collaborative is that coxswain for the Manatee-Sarasota region.

**CareerEdge** Funders Collaborative

# A Catalyst for Change

The great recession hit the Manatee-Sarasota area hard, with 2010 unemployment rising above 12%. Community leaders recognized that current workforce development efforts were not enough. The focus on the supply side – the job seekers – was not closing the gap.

Employers with job openings could not find qualified workers. Educators were eager to hold classes but didn't know which ones to hold. Workforce Development offices wanted to train people but didn't know if the skills matched what employers needed. The regional Economic Development Corporations (EDCs) wanted to attract businesses but couldn't guarantee that new companies would be able to find the skilled workers they would need. Funders wanted to help but were looking for evidence-based programs to invest in. Job seekers and workers had unmarketable skills and poor prospects for improved earning opportunities.

## A change was needed.

The leaders – from the John S. & James L. Knight Foundation to the Central Community Redevelopment Agency (CCRA), Gulf Coast Community Foundation and other large institutional funders, from county government to the EDC's – knew they needed to address the demand side of the equation – the employers. They recognized that businesses are the drivers of economic growth. Prior efforts to engage employers in workforce development, while well-intended, often proved disjointed, isolated, fractured, and even competitive; others simply never gained momentum, while others lacked the necessary bandwidth, influence, and expertise to implement true systemic change. Rather than a crew propelling the boat forward in unison, there appeared to be several boats, rowing in the same general direction, but each to a different beat.

**One leader professed to have just one wish for his community's workforce efforts:**

***"That different organizations would understand that each has a different purpose and resources, and that they will come together to work as a collective, not as competitors."***

**Sherod A. Halliburton**

*President at Manatee Community Federal Credit Union*

## Original Funders (By date of contribution)

**John S. & James L. Knight Foundation**

**Central Community Redevelopment Agency**

**Bradenton 14th Street Community  
Redevelopment Agency**

**Bradenton Downtown Development Authority**

**Gulf Coast Community Foundation**

**Bank of America**

**Manatee Community Action Agency**

**National Fund for Workforce Solutions**

# A New Idea

Through the Knight Foundation, the community leaders learned of a national organization with that same vision – one of a community working together in partnership to tackle workforce issues. The problem was too big for any one entity to solve. The National Fund for Workforce Solutions (NFWS) was offering seed money to pilot sites across the country to implement, test and refine a dual-customer workforce model in the form of a “workforce collaborative.” The model, funded by public and private monies, views both job seekers/employees AND employers as customers, representing the supply and demand of workforce development.

**NFWS’s collaborative approach had three primary objectives:**

- **Advance careers**
- **Address employer needs**
- **Change workforce policy**

The John S. & James L. Knight Foundation stood ready to invest \$1 million in support of a new workforce collaborative in the Manatee-Sarasota community if the local leaders could demonstrate a level of community commitment to this new approach. Central Community Redevelopment Agency (CCRA) stepped up with \$200,000 and encouraged the Bradenton Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to do the same. The leaders leveraged this \$400,000 in public monies and the \$1 million in private monies from the Knight Foundation as a strong mechanism to attract additional private money from the other initial philanthropic investors: the Gulf Coast Community Foundation and Bank of America. In 2010, with initial funding in place, the Manatee-Sarasota Workforce Funders Collaborative was launched. Today the collaborative, now known as the CareerEdge Funders Collaborative, is one of 36 NFWS collaboratives across the country and the only one in Florida. And today, by demonstrating real outcomes, 95% of CareerEdge’s funding comes from private sources.

So, how do we know if this new workforce development model is working? Since inception, annual evaluations examined activities such as training, job placement, raises, and promotions and revealed that job seekers and incumbent workers were benefiting. Simultaneously, employers were reporting improvements in their workforces because of CareerEdge-supported training – from improved confidence among health care workers to reduced turnover among newly-hired entry level manufacturing employees. An associated economic impact study revealed the multiplier effect of these employment gains.

While these early results paint an encouraging and positive picture, sustainment of this momentum requires real systems change. Now, after five years of learning and refining the new model, it’s time to reflect on what is really different, determine if there has been real systems change, and examine if the CareerEdge approach represents a repeatable and sustainable model.

***“CareerEdge’s innovative approach to workforce development will fuel the mending economy and lead to greater economic growth and expansion.”***

**Teri A. Hansen**

*President and CEO at the Charles and Margery Barancik Foundation*



CareerEdge receives \$50,000 in funding from J.P. Morgan Chase

# What Makes the CareerEdge Approach Different?

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The NFWS model, as implemented by CareerEdge, is highlighted by characteristics not typically found in traditional workforce initiatives. These characteristics offer the synergy and momentum that the original funders were seeking.

*“A workforce collaborative needs to become the human capital motivator for an entire community, for a prosperous community. How will we develop this prosperity agenda? We’ll think about the needs of employers. We’ll think about the talent supply chain. We’ll think about the people getting these jobs and see that they are making enough – a living wage – to let everyone share in the prosperity.”*

**Fred Dedrick**

*Executive Director at National Fund for Workforce Solutions*

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## **Unrestricted Funds**

- Nimble, flexible, innovative -
- Additive to the workforce board -

## **Employer-Focused**

- Market- and demand-driven -
- Employer commitment of resources -

## **Sector-Based**

- Gain critical mass around common needs within an industry -
- Industry-level employer partnerships -

## **Data-Driven**

- Evidence-based -
- Aggregation of needs across employers -

## **Founded as a Collaborative**

- Bridging gaps between government, education, and business -
- Connecting partners toward a common cause -
- Holding each other accountable -

# CareerEdge

## Investing to Close Skills Gaps & Create Jobs



**New Workers**  
or re-entering workers, who were unemployed or underemployed

**Low-Wage Workers**  
who want to advance, but lack the skills and resources they need to take the next step

**Middle-Wage Workers**  
already earning "middle-class" wages, some just barely, who want to invest in upward mobility through training and development to grow their income and improve their families' quality of life

**High-Wage Workers**  
with 21st century skills and credentials that put them at the top of the income spectrum

### Career Ladder Investments

CareerEdge invests with employers to close skills gaps in two parts of the skills spectrum.

#### Employer Partnerships

CareerEdge invests in designing and funding training programs for middle-skill jobs primarily, presetting goals for promotions and pay raises, and proactively supporting job creation opportunities.

#### Bridges to Careers Program

CareerEdge invests heavily in "coaching" and "bridging" workers into entry-level and middle-skill career-track jobs and helping them retain those jobs.

#### Labor Market Investments

CareerEdge also invests in "systems" change initiatives that improve labor market efficiencies and strengthen the talent supply chain.

# A Different Approach

## The Power of Unrestricted Funds

**B**y its nature, government funding for workforce development comes with restrictions. While ideal for serving job-seekers, such funds simply cannot directly support employer-specific workforce initiatives. The CareerEdge model depends on private, unrestricted funding which dramatically expands the possibilities for skill-building initiatives across a broader spectrum of workforce needs. With its private funding, CareerEdge has been able to be flexible and creative within a system known for bureaucracy. It has also opened doors to work more directly with employers and educators.

By example, the new federal healthcare requirement for IDC-10 medical record coding means massive retraining of staff at local health care employers. Without proper training by the deadline, employers would need to terminate uncertified employees and seek replacement workers from the local job pool. Employers had not budgeted for the extensive, federally mandated training in their training budgets. With assistance from CareerEdge, employers were able to train their existing employees on the new coding process. As a result, employers were able to retain experienced employees, improving both employee engagement and patient care. And employees kept their jobs.

The benefits of unrestricted funds are felt by employees too.

***"I frequently have people come up to me and say 'I never would have been able to do it [get my certificate or degree] without assistance.' We provide tuition assistance, and CareerEdge provides money for books and fees. These sorts of expenses can snuff this out. CareerEdge's assistance helps keep them in the program."***

**Lisa Baumgardner**, DNP, CNS-BC, CNML, PCCN  
Manager Education, Professional Development & Research at Sarasota Memorial Hospital

***"CareerEdge is able to think differently. They are able to see things differently because they are nimble and agile, and not encumbered by bureaucracy. They don't fall into looking at opportunities that others see, but to look for those that others don't see."***

**Lisa Krouse**

Executive Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer at FCCI Insurance Group

Access to unrestricted funding does not suggest that CareerEdge acts alone or replaces the much needed services provided by the local workforce board, CareerSource Suncoast. Rather, it promotes collaboration for a more holistic solution to specific workforce challenges to leverage both public and private funds. This collaboration has helped attract new employers to the region.

***"Companies coming from out of the area may have experience with workforce boards. None have heard about a CareerEdge-type organization with private funding options that could be appropriate to them [and that could be used in conjunction with traditional workforce efforts]. We market CareerEdge as a unique tool - a feather in our cap that is unique in the state. Companies who have traditionally used the workforce board are interested."***

**Mark Huey**

President and CEO of The Sarasota Economic Development Corporation



# CareerEdge

This public-private collaboration came into play when a manufacturer was looking to open a new facility located near a shipping port. Manatee County's ports put it on the list of possible new locations for the out-of-state employer. Beyond access to ports, access to talent proved to be a major decision-making variable. The new facility would require a wide range of talent, from managers and administrators to technicians and welders. One key production job demanded special skills: welding. While welders with general skills might be available in the existing labor pool, the employer was concerned about getting them proficient in the company's specialized applications.

A local workforce team, led by the Bradenton Area EDC and in collaboration with the Sarasota-Manatee Manufacturers Association (SAMA), CareerEdge, CareerSource (both local and state), schools, and local government, prepared a plan to show the employer that Manatee County could provide them with workers with the requisite skills. Ultimately, the employer selected Manatee, and used a grant from CareerEdge to offset the cost of specialized welding at Manatee Technical College. The custom curriculum was co-developed by the school and the employer, while using school facilities and faculty to deliver the courses. The plant manager had previously worked with technical schools in other parts of the country, but never was able to work this closely and collaboratively with them on curriculum, scheduling, and facilities. This collaboration took the strain off the employer's own resources to find a place to train and instructors to do the training. Perhaps most importantly for **Mark Evans**, *Plant Manager at Air Products & Chemicals, Inc.*, "students are coming out with skills we can instantly use."

## The Power of Unrestricted Funds

### Employers

- Job seekers with the right skills -
- Training for all employees -
- Paid internships -
- Career laddering options -
- Collaboration on common curricula needs -

### Educators

- Align curricula with employer needs -
- Support for new programming -
- Support for new certifications -
- Support for acquisition of equipment -

***"Many entities facilitated this – the EDC, SAMA, CareerEdge, the schools themselves, CareerSource, even government. CareerEdge provided financial assistance. They also got the colleges on board. They bring together the people who can make it happen."***

***The fact that they are all working together is the most impressive thing. I haven't seen any friction. Everyone seems to be pulling in the same direction. It doesn't seem to get too political. It seems like they all want a better community. A lot of people were trying to make it a good move for us. They put in time and effort to make it work: land, training grants, and so on. We were made very welcome."***

**Mark Evans**

*Plant Manager at Air Products & Chemicals, Inc.*

# A Different Approach

## The Power of Focusing on the Employer

The role of employer is crucial to workforce development. Employers create jobs – not CareerEdge, not CareerSource, not the EDC, and not the government. A viable employer impacts the entire community by strengthening, diversifying, and growing the local economy through job growth, tax revenues, civic involvement, and the resulting multiplier effect. And a viable employer needs a quality workforce. This is true for existing employers as well as those considering locating to the area.

CareerEdge embraces the “employer as customer” aspect of the NFWS model. Rather than assuming to have the answer, CareerEdge conducts research to understand the needs of the local businesses and then works toward a solution. It results in targeted solutions... solutions that may be non-traditional - both for workforce development and for employers.



The CareerEdge model does not simply provide grants to employers with no strings attached. A diligent proposal process requires employers to articulate the need and commit to provide funding of their own as well. All parties learned early on that employers need to have significant “skin in the game” to really embrace the mission of CareerEdge. In fact, 68% of the funding for worker training to date has come directly from employer match money.

Participating employers all acknowledged their responsibility to train their workforces. What they spend on training far exceeds the contributions from CareerEdge. So why do they need CareerEdge?

### According to employers, the value is three-fold:

- **Funding**
- **Employer partnerships**
- **Connections for change**

*“Over the past 10 years other organizations have tried to work on the workforce development issue, but hadn’t succeeded. CareerEdge really reached out to actual employers much more. In the past, employers were standing on the outside looking in, and being told what the workforce community was going to do. They didn’t come to employers to ask, to help design, to discuss, to narrow down what we needed. So what happened was there were trainings that weren’t applicable and there was other possibly good trainings that manufacturers were unaware of.*”

*CareerEdge said let’s get the employers around a table; what do they need; what’s their opinion; let employers be developers of the training, so we’re not doing all this is vain. They first came to employers, then did a plan (vs creating a plan and taking to employers). We felt we were an integral part of how, what, when, where.”*

#### **Jennifer Behrens Schmidt**

*President at Atlantic Mold & Manufacturing Corp &  
President of the Sarasota-Manatee Manufacturers Association*

# CareerEdge

## Provide Funding

Funding helps extend employer training budgets so they can offer training and internships to more people. It also helps pay for colleges to create new trainings tailored to employer needs.

***“CareerEdge was able to get additional resources to make it work for us, along with some other trainings around employability and digital literacy. I was very impressed. They have some good partners behind them including Gulf Coast, Knight Foundation, and Microsoft”***

**Tim Graham**

*Head of Human Resources at Tervis*

## Initiate & Support Employer Partnerships

CareerEdge’s Healthcare partnership identified a skill gap in leadership. Individually the employers could not afford to put on high caliber leadership training. CareerEdge, recognizing the importance of leadership, put up \$50,000 to develop a leadership curriculum for staff leaders across all employers in the partnership.

***“This level of collaboration has not happened before. It exemplifies the level of openness and collaboration today. We are competitors, but those boundaries and walls came down with an improved partnership. It allowed all of us to send leaders to one consortium. In the past, we might have called and talked one-on-one. Now we are sitting and learning at the table together. This forum opened up the collegial feel. It is very cool from a social perspective based on prior boundaries.”***

**Veronica Lequeux Thames**

*Vice President of Human Resources at Blake Medical Center*

## Make Connections

For one local insurance employer, funding was not as paramount as CareerEdge’s ability to be a connector and a catalyst for change. The local insurance industry faces challenges similar to other local industries: the workforce is aging and there is a looming gap in talent. The industry needs to attract talent to the insurance field. By bringing employers together and gathering data about the true nature of the gap, employers and CareerEdge were able to meet with educators to discuss the need and the requisite skills. Educators explained the need for sufficient enrollment numbers to build a new curriculum. Employers agreed to commit to supporting internships to drive enrollments. Further, employers signed up to get the word out to local high schools, and to work with agent and broker associations to promote the new program.

***“We would never be having the business discussions with the local colleges around our talent need without CareerEdge”***

**Lisa Krouse**

*Executive Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer at FCCI Insurance Group*



# A Different Approach

## The Power of Sector-Based Approach

**W**e live in a world of scarce resources. CareerEdge is no exception. The demand for workforce development is great. By using NFWS's sector-based approach, CareerEdge focuses resources on particular industries or job categories known as "sectors," rather than spreading resources thinly across a wide swath of needs.

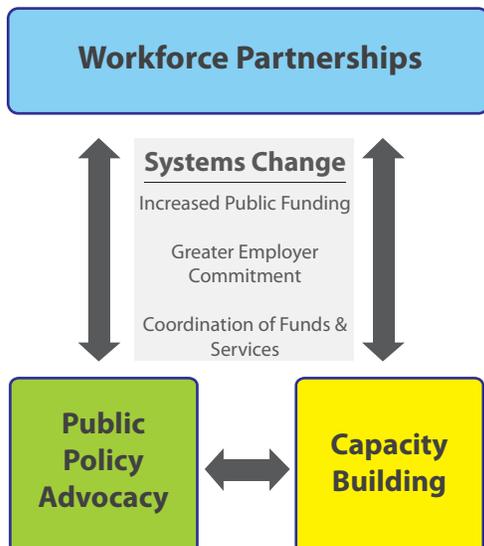
By considering an entire sector, such as healthcare, the pool of employers with common needs is greater as is the number of available jobs. This enables concentrated use of funds to develop trainings that will benefit multiple employers within the sector – and ensures that sufficient jobs are available to graduates.

***"A sector approach is different in this community. You have the workforce board. They have lots of resources but are not focused on one segment of the economy, so it's difficult to gain momentum. It's powerful to get community leadership to focus on ONE sector."***

**Lisa Krouse**

*Executive Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer at FCCI Insurance Group*

### CareerEdge Three Prong Approach



To date, CareerEdge has invested in the following industries:

#### HEALTHCARE



#### MANUFACTURING



#### FINANCIAL SERVICES & INSURANCE



#### TRANSPORTATION, DISTRIBUTION & LOGISTICS (TDL)



#### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & COMPUTER SCIENCE



# CareerEdge

This approach forces CareerEdge to learn the challenges of an industry and to stay focused. It also benefits employers. According to employers, this type of collaboration affords them new and unique opportunities:

- Having a voice in creating new college curricula - Individually, they may not have sufficient job demand to warrant new and targeted training programs; collectively they may.
- Co-developing curricula with employers to benefit their employees and the community's labor pool.
- Collaboration with like-minded business people - While they may have known and talked to others in their field about workforce issues, they rarely would come together as a group for such focused discussions.

CareerEdge's recent involvement with the Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce Talent 4 Tomorrow initiative in Computer Science & Information Technology (IT) provides an example of a "job category" sector. Regardless of industry, all companies today need IT support. However, employers were discovering that IT graduates were strong on theory, but did not have much practical knowledge. Employers are anxious for CareerEdge to leverage a Skills Gap Study to clarify the need.

***"CareerEdge will be able to highlight this gap in our community and will be able to bring training partners into the fold to address this. Local educators are beginning to understand our needs. We are beginning to work out internships with high school and college students. We may also get instructors to come work during summer breaks."***

**Tim Graham**

*Head of Human Resources at Tervis*

Similarly, another new sector, Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics (TDL) crosses industry lines. CareerEdge's ability to aggregate the needs and skill gaps across industries has brought a new gap - and a new training opportunity - to light for area employers and educators.

***"We wouldn't have thought of TDL training grants on our own. We focused more on hourly workers. TDL is so broad and covers so many roles at our company, we were stunned. Our leadership team brainstormed a lot of possibilities. CareerEdge has helped us expand our creativity in terms of what we can do to develop our employees."***

**Rod Hershberger**

*CEO and Chairman at PGT Industries*



# A Different Approach

## The Power of Data

In both public and private enterprises, decisions are sadly often based on hunches and best guesses. This approach can result in squandering scarce resources... or missing a great opportunity to take action. Smart organizations are using data to make investment decisions. Why shouldn't workforce decisions be guided by data too?

Before entering a new sector, CareerEdge reviews labor market studies to identify growing industries. While these studies can surface areas of opportunity, they lack the specificity to take any particular workforce action. What is missing is data that provides insights into the unmet needs of employers across Manatee and Sarasota Counties. Early in its entrée into the manufacturing sector, CareerEdge recognized this gap and got serious about becoming data-driven.

***“CareerEdge has been the largest contributing factor to value in assisting the manufacturing sector to create a comprehensive workforce development plan.”***

**Jennifer Behrens Schmidt**  
President at Atlantic Mold & Manufacturing Corp.

In the manufacturing sector, employers were concerned – and vocal – about their inability to find quality entry-level employees. Local colleges struggled to respond as different employers all seemed to have different needs. Educators needed hard data before they would commit resources to new programming. Any evidence to date had been anecdotal. With private funding and support from the National Manufacturers Institute, CareerEdge underwrote a Manufacturing Skills Gap Study. Engaging area manufacturers via a survey and phone calls, CareerEdge learned that employees actually had very similar needs – skilled machinists. Because each employer had different titles for the position, local colleges were never able to garner critical mass to develop a curriculum. The study led to the development of a precision machining curriculum with employers guaranteeing jobs – and all of the graduates of the inaugural class had jobs lined up even before graduation.

***“CareerEdge can bring all the data – from large and small manufacturers – and consolidate it, and say there is a shortage of a specific skill.”***

**Rod Hershberger**  
CEO and Chairman at PGT Industries

## 2012 Manufacturing Skills Gap Study Results

### UNFILLED JOBS

65% of employer respondents indicated they had between 1-10 jobs currently available

45% indicated 1-3 jobs have gone unfilled for 3 months or more

11% indicated 4-10 jobs have gone unfilled for 3 months or more

### TYPES OF UNFILLED JOBS

41% indicated skilled production as the number one unfilled position

17% indicated engineering technologies was the second unfilled position

### SKILLED PRODUCTION

56% of manufacturers indicate they need skilled productions workers

38% stated that over the next 3-5 years, hiring for skilled production positions would be a top challenge

### SKILL GAPS

71% of employers believe there is a skills gap in our region

69% believe this has gone on longer than three years

# CareerEdge

Data provided the basis for a clear understanding of the problem and the development of CareerEdge's first "Community-Wide Plan." With data in hand, employers, educators, county government, and others participated in the plan's development and made commitments to real change.

The Community-Wide Plan goes beyond just the training. It tackles another impediment to manufacturers finding skilled workers – encouraging and identifying people who want to enter the manufacturing field. In a state economy dominated by tourism, manufacturing is still considered a "bunch of smokestacks." The success of the precision machining initiative did not go unnoticed by the media. Because of CareerEdge grants and Sarasota County providing funding for equipment, because of employers co-developing curricula with community colleges and CareerSource helping with placements and because graduates are landing jobs, the story now reads "Resurgence in Manufacturing." The Manatee-Sarasota region has a story to tell about jobs that can attract people to the industry.

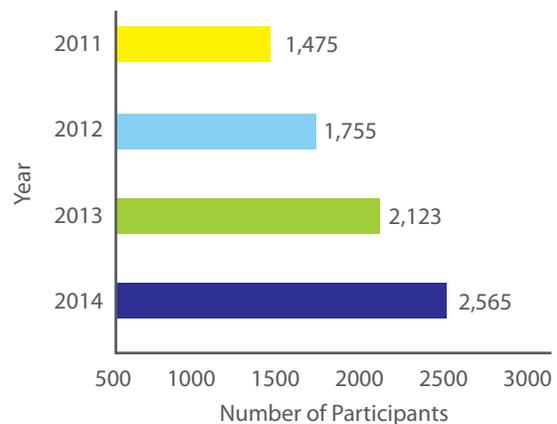
Using data to identify needs has been such a powerful and galvanizing tool that CareerEdge has adopted the Skills Gap approach to get a real pulse on the needs of employers before entering a new sector.

***"By using data and helping manufacturers articulate their need for a certain type employee, CareerEdge broke the log jam between the county and the school system. They got employers to commit to hiring the graduates. They broke the inertia."***

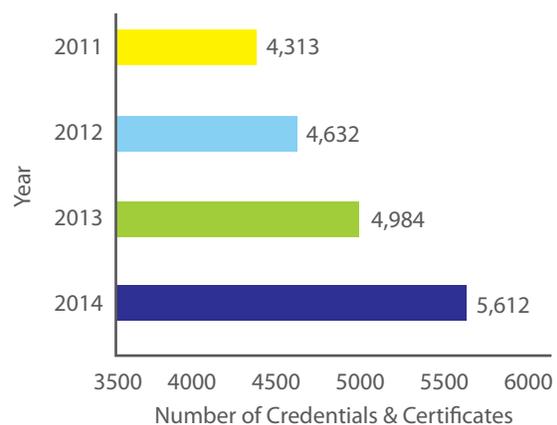
**Mark Pritchett, Ph.D.**

Senior Vice President for Community Investment at Gulf Coast Community Foundation

**Cumulative Number of Individuals Trained (2011-2014)**



**Cumulative Number of Credentials & Certificates Earned (2011-2014)**



# A Different Approach

## The Power of Collaboration

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The initial funders, like NFWS, recognized that workforce development isn't done by any single group but requires multiple entities working in partnership. The region boasts tremendous energy, passion, and talent around workforce development. What was needed was an organizing mechanism to connect the right players, pull them together as a team, and to get them all "rowing in the same direction." This was the hope when launching CareerEdge.

A critical early step involved the evolution of the partnership between CareerEdge and CareerSource. After some initial jockeying for position, there is now a growing spirit of collaboration as they realize the synergies between both agencies.

As CareerEdge has found its rhythm, employers began to recognize the value the agency was bringing – something that had been missing from the local workforce scene – a true connector of resources. CareerEdge has worked hard to break down the barriers between employers, educators, workforce development, government, and other community partners, all while being responsive to funders. Today virtually every engaged stakeholder cites one of CareerEdge's hallmarks as the demonstrated ability to bring employers, educators, and government to the table.

Making connections and getting the right people in the room only goes so far. As wisely noted by one community leader, "Talk doesn't cook rice." CareerEdge's model includes more than just connecting people and getting together to talk. It includes planning, such as the Community-Wide Plan for manufacturing. It includes coaching, guidance, and prodding as with career laddering within healthcare for lower level employees. And importantly it includes driving for results and outcomes, and holding people accountable.

***"CareerEdge has been instrumental in bridging the gap between the public and private sectors for local workforce needs. This means more of our residents getting trained and employed by local companies as opposed to companies recruiting from other areas. It has played a key role in planning and quick implementation of industry-based sector plans and trained workforce growth. Our economy has improved because CareerEdge has been there to meet the needs of our local businesses."***

**Christine Robinson**  
Sarasota County Commissioner



CareerEdge "Industry Experience Tours" with Sarasota County Principals and Vice Principals at Tervis



# A Different Approach

## The Power of Collaboration

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*“Partnerships have been formed that might not have been formed. Sarasota County, the school board, and employers have never partnered like this before. CareerEdge did a skills gap assessment to identify jobs that were available now or would be in the near future. The technical school said we have a facility but not the equipment. I lobbied the county commission to purchase equipment to make the program happen. We had to be creative as we didn’t have funds available in the general fund. The business community needed it – we want the businesses to succeed and to retain young skilled talent. It was a win-win-win for the county, for employers, for employees. Nothing had been done like this before... The model is in place.”*

**Jeff Maultsby**

*Sarasota County Director of Business and Economic Development*

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*“We now call on employers with CareerEdge and the EDC. It’s not “vs.” It’s who has funding for what. Workforce board funding is targeted at individuals who meet certain population criteria. CareerEdge can service the others. They are an important part of our regional advantage.”*

**Ted Ehrlichman**

*President and CEO at CareerSource Suncoast*

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*“CareerEdge has allowed me to be more focused on the employer. Lots of folks come to me and want to speak on behalf of other people saying, “You should have a welding program.” But they aren’t actually hiring welders. CareerEdge gets the employers’ needs out there. We now view employers as the main stakeholder and have them on every curriculum board to work through curricula, registration, fee structures, and more to ensure we are serving employer needs.”*

**Dr. Todd Bowden**

*Director at Suncoast Technical College*

*“CareerEdge could really help us to keep moving the needle on the cultural conversation around manufacturing with students, parents, and educators: Manufacturing never went away; there are good jobs and careers right here in manufacturing. It’s all in the Community Wide Plan. We need to keep driving it forward and holding people accountable.”*

**Peter D. Straw**

*Executive Director at Sarasota-Manatee Manufacturers Association*

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*“CareerEdge is an integrator and catalyst for improved collaboration within the healthcare community. There is a lot more synergy between educational facilities and employers. Schools have become more attentive to market trends and market needs, and have become more flexible and willing to tailor to the needs of our employees and others in the community. This is now shaping curriculum, training locations, and schedules. Relationships with the schools have improved just by having the forum.”*

**Veronica Lequeux Thames**

*Vice President of Human Resources at Blake Medical Center*

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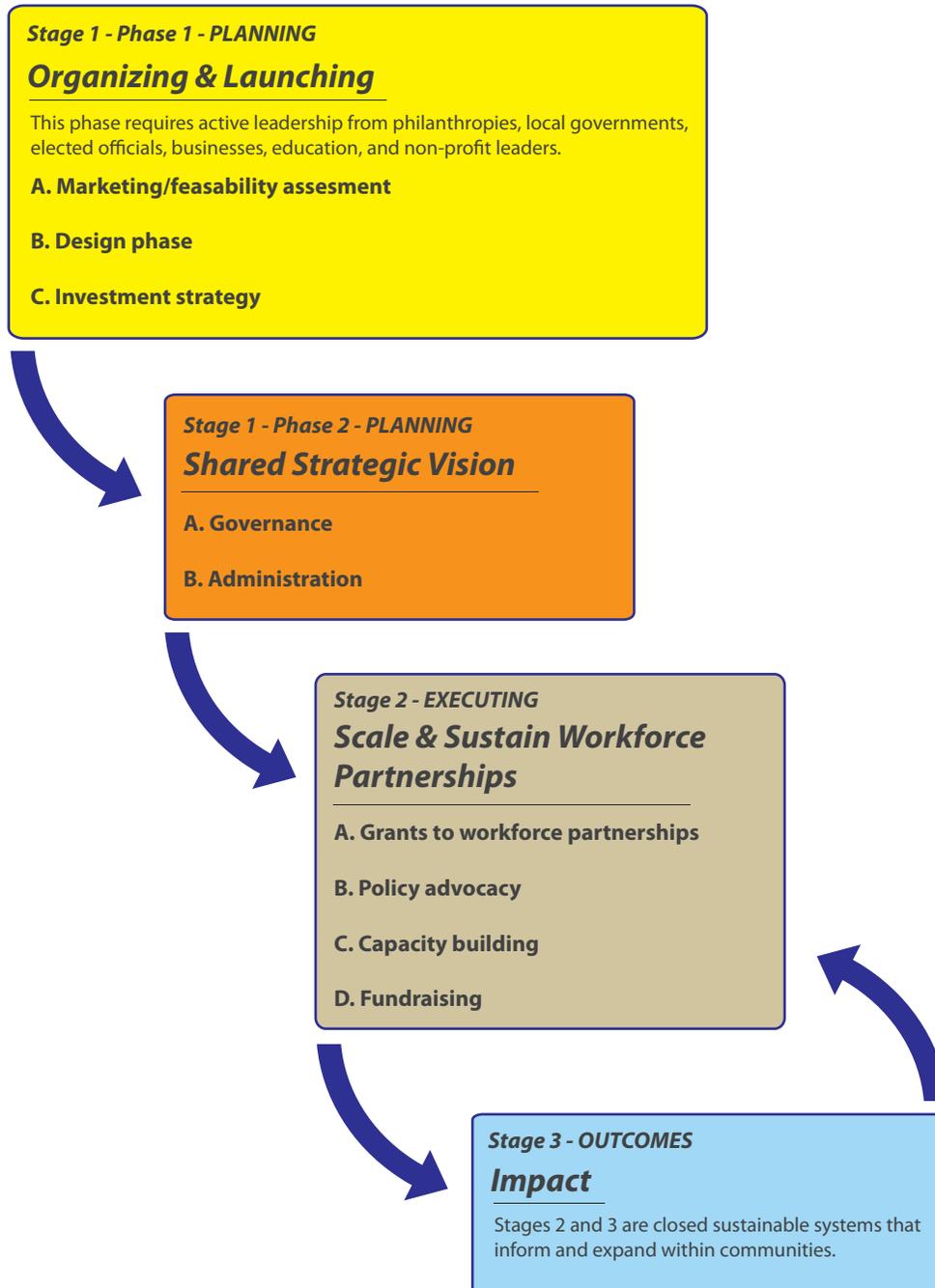
*“We started a lot of initiatives that never went anywhere. They always seemed to stall. It seemed like there were always different parties working on similar things. Employers would get bombarded by a lot of sources trying to help. CareerEdge has been able to make things happen. When CareerEdge starts something, they finish. They bring a product to the table and get it done. Too many other initiatives die on the vine.”*

**Tim Graham**

*Head of Human Resources at Tervis*

# CareerEdge

## Forming a Regional Collaborative



# The Funders' Imperative

The flexibility of unrestricted funds is a luxury that traditional workforce boards do not have. For CareerEdge, it creates opportunities to support non-traditional workforce development ideas such as leadership training for healthcare partners and skill gap surveys to clarify labor needs.

The roster of CareerEdge's high-visibility investors who believe in the model sends a signal of credibility to all stakeholders. Employers believe CareerEdge is for real. Schools are more willing to engage. And the quality and continued support of existing investors can help attract other funders. But fundraising is, and will always be, a tough and ongoing effort.

***"We are about helping individuals and making lives better. We are about sustainable communities because if the economy grows, everyone benefits. CareerEdge does both – helping individuals, and by helping employers grow, they help the economy grow."***

## **Christine Ruiz**

Senior Vice President, Market Manager  
Enterprise Business & Community Engagement at  
Bank of America

CareerEdge grants often go directly to for-profit organizations – the employers. Funders want to ensure that employers, as recipients of these funds, are committed to workforce development in a meaningful and relevant way beyond their own company's gain. Funders want results and funders need employers to have "skin in the game." As one investor elaborated, "It is not a free gift."

So just how are employers giving back? Is it donating money back to the grant pool, is it absorbing some of the financial responsibility of underwritten training, or is it offering something else of value to the community? To examine how employers give back, economic development experts and employers offered perspective on the employer's role in workforce development.

## **The Employer's Role in Education and Workforce Development**

Many stated the employer's real role and the ultimate benefit is to bring jobs to the region acknowledging that only employers can create those jobs. Not CareerEdge, CareerSource, or the EDCs.

***"Employers may be "trainers" but they are not the educators. As a rule, the market doesn't pay for workforce development in the pricing of an employer's products. Developing a workforce is part of the function of community. We have to do our part, employers have to do their part. Companies cannot fix the talent pipeline on their own; it's our role as a community."***

## **Mark Huey**

President and CEO of The Sarasota Economic  
Development Corporation

## **Collective Workforce Impact (2010-2015)**



# CareerEdge

## Employer's "Skin in the Game"

Beyond the nearly \$4 million in matching and co-funding monies to date, employers are demonstrating their advocacy for building a stronger workforce in the Manatee and Sarasota region. Employers all acknowledged that they should give back – with their own training budgets, with their time, with their expertise, with jobs – for the betterment of the community. Beyond providing jobs, one employer coined a term to sum up the employer's role in workforce development: Community Collaboration –giving back to the community on an advisory and a partnership basis.

***"We're offering good jobs. We're bringing talent into the area. They will all spend money here. And we'll be using other local companies as suppliers. When we contract with them, it may have a ripple effect in creating jobs for them too."***

### Mark Evans

*Plant Manager at Air Products & Chemicals, Inc.*

## Workforce Development Model



## How Employers Give Back

### Direct Investment in Employee Training

Over \$3.9 million in matching monies to date  
(68% of the total investment in worker training)

Co-funding of: training, tuition assistance, paid time off  
for training, materials, equipment

Partnership meetings, advising CareerEdge on  
industry issues

Trade school sponsorships for high school students

Sponsoring programs to help low income workers

### Time

Curriculum advisory boards

Extensive involvement in curriculum development

Accreditation review boards

Teaching courses

Internships

Externships for teachers

High school job fairs

Mentors into middle and high schools

Community involvement:  
Board and volunteer positions

### Facilities

On-site industry tours for students, parents and teachers

Expanded clinical floor space commitments

Host meetings

Consortium training

# The Power of Partnerships

## A Repeatable Process

After five years, players across the Manatee and Sarasota collaborative understand how the model works... and believe the underlying process of identifying and addressing workforce needs is repeatable. In fact, CareerEdge is already replicating the process across each new sector it enters.

*"This model is repeatable. What CareerEdge excels at is to shed light on where there is need; identify and marshal the resources, and provide funding. Manufacturing is now good. They are now looking to IT. Keep looking for next opportunity, and repeat the cycle."*

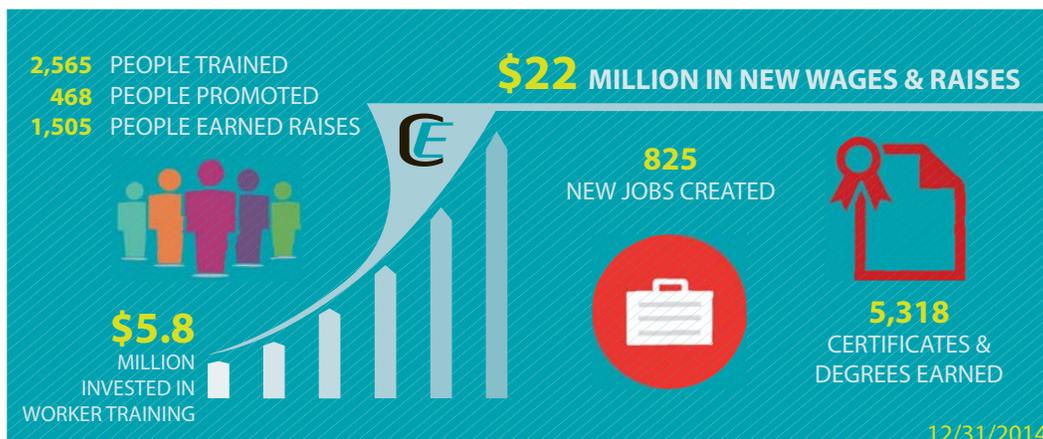
### Dr. Todd Bowden

Director at Suncoast Technical College

An early funder, **Sherod Halliburton**, Manatee County FCU, explained his support, "I believe in the business model... one that looks at incumbent employees to help them move up; as well as the Bridges program to help people get skills to get hired." A major investor, **Mark Pritchett**, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, cites the CareerEdge initiative as a great success. "It's a strategy that helps employers get workers they need; and helps the un- and under-employed get jobs."

### A Repeatable Process

1. Identify a need
2. Bring the right players to the table (decision-makers who can say "yes, we are committed")
3. Collect data from all employers in the sector to look at the whole picture
4. Identify the true common challenges
5. Educate the educators on the job need
6. Create trainings and certificates to fill the need
7. Create demand by reaching into K-12 (educators, parents, students)
8. Hold everyone accountable
9. Continuously learn and adjust
10. Use successes to affect policy change



## A Sustainable Model

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Sustaining the model will require clarity, strong leadership and an appreciation of what each organization can offer. As noted by **Ted Erlichman**, *CareerSource Suncoast*, the power of partnerships “is about collaboration and recognizing the available assets and leveraging each for their strengths. It’s about each organization having a meaningful role, and each organization appreciating the other.”

An area that caused some early confusion was clarity of roles and strengths between CareerEdge and CareerSource. With concerted efforts by the two organizations, the distinction and strengths of each seem to be crystallizing in the community. **Rod Hershberger**, *PGT Industries, Inc.*, sums it up as, “CareerEdge helps us with training and development of our workforce. CareerSource helps us with recruiting efforts.” Investor **Christine Ruiz**, *Bank of America* also noted a distinction, “CareerSource is employee-driven; CareerEdge is employer-driven.”

A big question in the sustainment of the CareerEdge model is CareerEdge’s ongoing role in supporting the partnerships it helps establish.

**“I think the role of CareerEdge is to oversee and to maintain the continuity. That is a huge benefit. They have no agenda other than filling a joint need of the community.”**

**Lisa Krouse**

*Executive Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer at FCCI Insurance Group*

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**“CareerEdge provides services our healthcare collaborative couldn’t do on its own – surveys, getting data, connecting with educators, and connecting us to services.”**

**Veronica Lequeux Thames**

*Vice President of Human Resources at Blake Medical Center*

Sustainability will require more than CareerEdge. Realizing the power of partnerships will require continued synergy between all the workforce partners.

**“There has been a continual effort by manufacturers to be on advisory council for continued training. CareerEdge and the employers understand that we have to stay engaged and involved for improvement and advisement, so we can meet needs and develop the correct training. This is ongoing; not just a program. This new scenario – the employers are completely and regularly engaged. Before, we sure were not leading the charge. Now we have ownership. We can better articulate what we need. CareerEdge can bring ideas; they can corral funding for programs.”**

**Jennifer Behrens Schmidt**

*President at Atlantic Mold & Manufacturing Corp & President of the Sarasota-Manatee Manufacturers Association*

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**“The four major manufacturers in the community get together every so often. We’ll have an idea about where we should go. CareerEdge comes with solid data. We need to bring CareerEdge into the conversation. It’s a value that everybody sees. We rely on the talent, expertise and connections she brings to the table.”**

**Rod Hershberger**

*CEO and Chairman at PGT Industries*



# The Power of Partnerships

## A Journey, Not a Destination

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While partnerships have formed and results are being realized, there is still work to be done to make inroads into changing the workforce system and achieving regional prosperity. It took vision to launch CareerEdge – the vision of early investors. As one healthcare employer observed, “CareerEdge’s funders have a great vision: helping people, helping patients.” (**Veronica Lequeux, Blake Medical Center**). It will take vision to continue the push for systems change.

Individuals from “Manatee-Sarasota workforce development rowing team” are now in the same boat. Co-developed plans, such as the community-wide plan, lead the way for the crew. Sometimes the boat stays true to course with everyone pulling together. Other times, it veers and jags as oars are out of unison – the team is still learning. One thing is for sure – everyone is rowing in the same direction.

***“We have the ear of certain members of our education community, have the ear of employers, have the ear of local government, but not at the state or federal level yet. To move up, you’d need to see better alignment of government dollars with what CareerEdge is doing. We’ve been able to align local dollars but not yet with state or federal dollars.”***

**Mark Pritchett, Ph.D.**

*Senior Vice President for Community Investment at  
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