

Workforce Analysis – Washington County Development Authority

Location: Washington County, GA

Status of County: Rural

Project Timeframe: November 2017 – October 2018

Type of Assistance: Applied Research



Photo from <http://washingtondev.com/>



Aerial image of the Washington County courthouse
Photo from <http://washingtondev.com/>

The Washington County Development Authority applied for and was awarded a countywide workforce analysis through the Economic Development Research Program (EDRP). Washington County is located halfway between Atlanta and Savannah in the Central Savannah River Area. There are seven cities located in Washington County with much of the economic activity within the county is in or around the City of Sandersville, which is also known as the “Kaolin Capital of the World”. The Enterprise Innovation Institute (EI2) was brought on to conduct a workforce analysis for the Washington County Draw Area in 2018.

To assess the existing workforce in the area, this study included a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods. This research evaluated the types of jobs available to the community, the skills held by members of the labor force, and the skills and training required by DAWC’s focus industries. By reviewing labor force characteristics and commuting patterns, and analyzing industries and occupations to measure workforce demand, Georgia Tech’s Enterprise Innovation Institute (EI2) took an in-depth look at the state of the DAWC’s three focus sectors — Poultry, Forestry, and Manufacturing. Interviews with local employers offered additional insights into their hiring needs and challenges regarding talent attraction and retention. Local industries offered valuable insights

to their hiring, talent attraction, and talent retention needs through interviews. Study results led to several recommendations for DAWC officials in the areas of workforce development and retention, industry engagement and educational partnerships, and community development. Using the results of the interviews, analysis of labor force characteristics, and industry demand conditions, the EI2 project team developed a series of recommendations. Recommendations addressed four broad areas, including: workforce development strategy for advancing economic development goals; increasing industry engagement and educational partnerships to allow the existing local workforce to transition into the opportunities presented by prospective companies in the county’s target industries.; developing a strategy to retain local workforce by gathering additional information regarding their employment, educational levels, skills, and desire to work within the Washington County area; and building quality of life and community development by supporting equitable development across the county.

