



Partnering to Implement a  
**REGIONAL WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**



# Executive Summary

One of the key determinants of Acadiana's economic competitiveness and long-term success is the quality and skill of our workforce. Like other regions, Acadiana faces a skills gap in key industry sectors, with a lack of qualified candidates for a number of high-wage, high-demand jobs. At the same time, due to the recent downturn in the oil & gas market, Acadiana is also home to a large number of unemployed and underemployed workers.

**These regional challenges require a regional response.**

One Acadiana (1A) is working with regional partners to address our workforce needs. Over the course of 2016, we analyzed regional workforce data and interviewed 30 employers in key sectors to gain insight on how to focus our efforts. Four key challenges emerged from this analysis, and working with partners we identified five initiatives to address these issues by leveraging regional assets, bridging talent and resource gaps, and connecting the dots for employers and talent through effective partnerships:

## Workforce challenges

- Sector-specific **talent shortages** (e.g., RNs, software programmers)
- **Lack of awareness** about certain high-wage, high-demand jobs and negative perceptions of career & technical education
- Employer desire for **improved soft skills** among entry-level workers
- Need to **re-employ** displaced oil & gas workers

## Regional workforce initiatives\*

- ① Support education initiatives that provide increased training for high-wage, high-demand jobs
- ② Deploy Nepris software to help raise awareness of high-wage, high-demand careers among K-12 students
- ③ Scale model programs like The Leader in Me to improve soft skills
- ④ Advocate for sufficiently funding early childhood care and education
- ⑤ Build on the Acadiana Opportunity initiative to reemploy displaced oil & gas workers

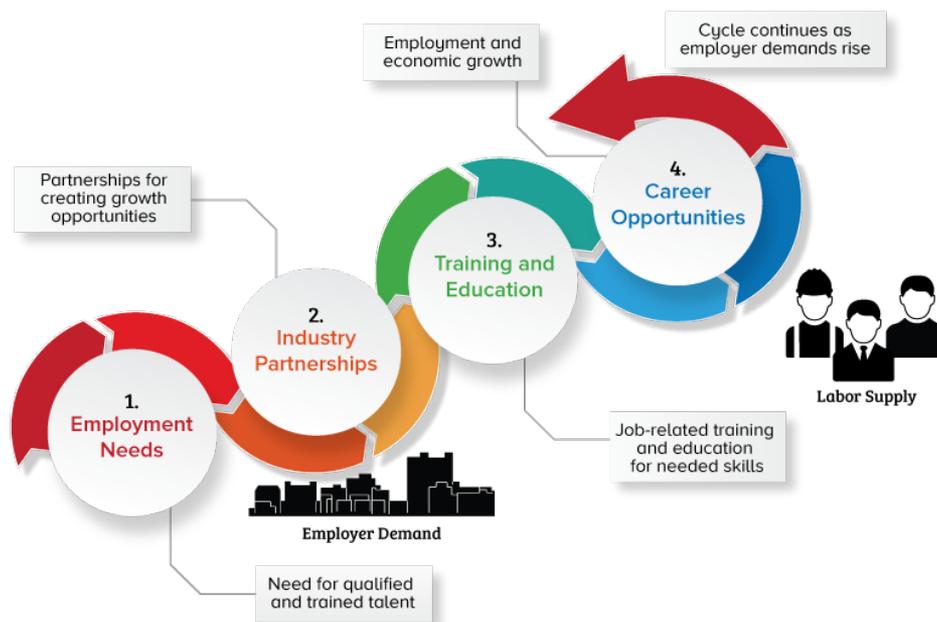
The initiatives identified in this strategy can only be achieved through the collaborative efforts of regional partners working for collective impact. Together, we can build a talent pipeline capable of supporting high-growth sectors and cultivating a diversified economy.

\*Initial set of initiatives based on clarity of approach, ease of implementation, speed and scope of impact, and best practices

# Goals of the Regional Workforce Development Strategy

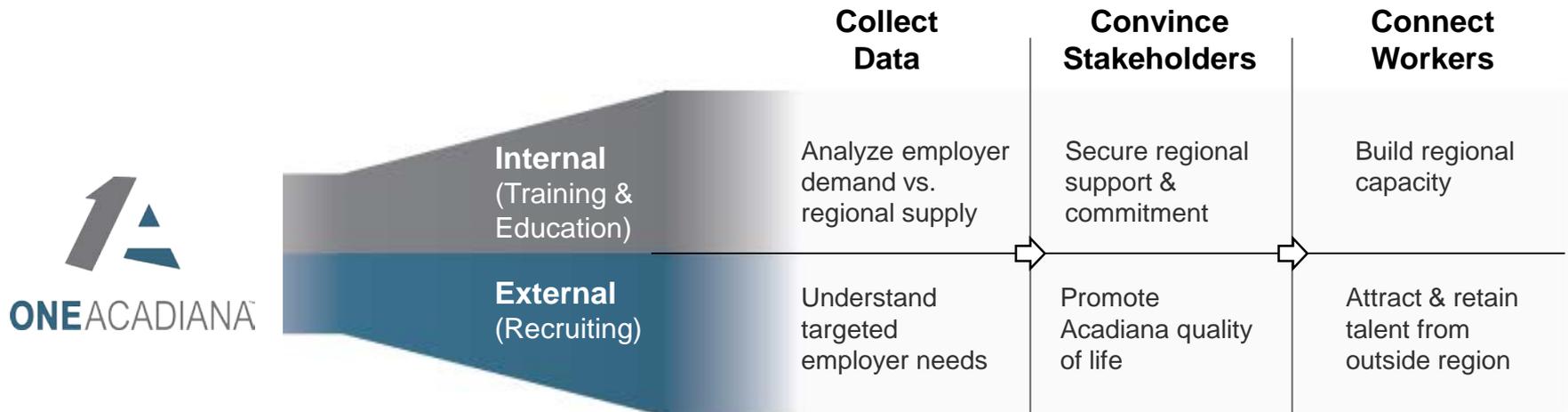
-  **Meet employer needs through a demand-driven approach:** Cultivate foundational skills and strengthen a talent pipeline for the region's economic driver industries by:
  - Identifying and supporting career educational pathways aligned with industry need
  - Attracting qualified talent from outside the region
-  **Improve individual quality of life and career opportunities:** Economically empower individuals by connecting them with education, training, and job opportunities
-  **Achieve a collective impact:** Build alignment among employers, educators, and other workforce development partners

## Demand-Driven Approach:



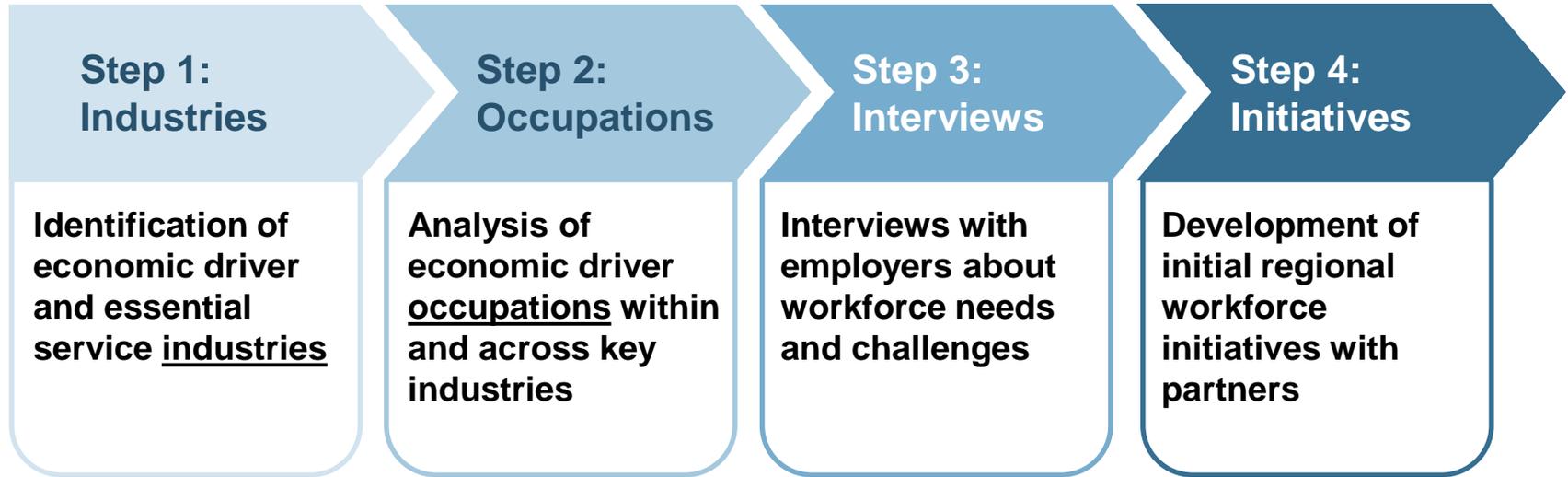
# One Acadiana's efforts to strengthen our workforce pipeline within the region will parallel our efforts to attract talent from outside the region

Our dual strategy entails collecting data, convincing stakeholders, & connecting workers



One Acadiana will **partner** with workforce development stakeholders across the region on **implementing** these internal and external approaches

# Over the course of 2016, we took the following steps to develop a collaborative Regional Workforce Development Strategy



## Economic Driver Industries:

- Growth potential is limited by workforce availability rather than population
- Generate sales primarily from outside the region rather than recirculating wealth within the region
- Average wages for the industry are above the region's average wage
- Examples include mining and manufacturing

## Essential Service Industries:

- Necessary for a high quality of life
- Demand grows with local population
- Provide economic driver industries the support to grow
- Examples include healthcare and education

 Essential service industry

**Example analysis of economic driver and essential service industries:**

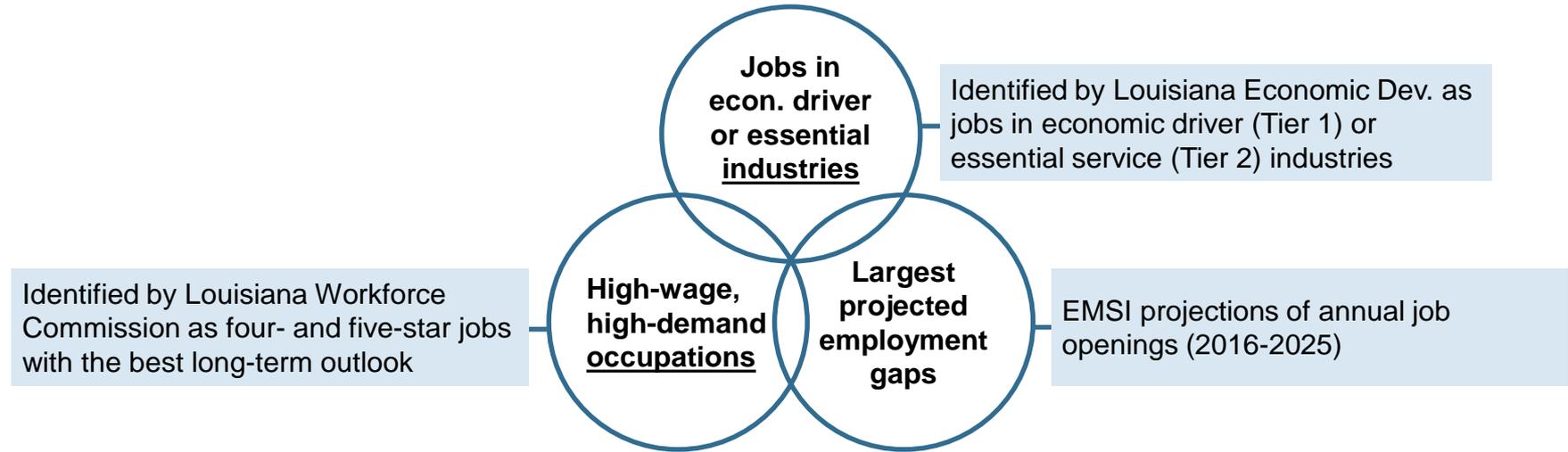
NAICS code(s)	Industry	% Traded industries*	Regional employment
21	Mining	100%	24,803
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	100%	3,699
11	Agriculture, Fishing, Forestry, and Hunting	100%	2,076
31-33	Manufacturing	98%	26,176
52	Finance and Insurance	89%	6,764
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	88%	3,298
51	Information	78%	3,280
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	67-77%	10,459
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	74%	12,141
42	Wholesale Trade	72%	12,311
62	Healthcare and Social Assistance	0%	38,835

\*% traded industries refers to the number of industries within a NAICS categorization that qualify as traded, or as generating sales primarily from outside the region

## Step 2: Occupations

# Analysis of economic driver occupations within and across key industries

Our analysis of economic driver occupations relies on three pillars:



## Example analysis for Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics industry:

Occupation	LWC star rating	2016 regional employment	Projected annual openings
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	★★★★★	4,302	80
Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels	★★★★★	1,289	80
Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	★★★★★	718	30
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	★★★★	860	20
First-Line Supervisors	★★★★	539	20
Bus and Truck Mechanics, and Diesel Engine Specialists	★★★★	403	10

In 2016, we met with 30 employers from economic driver & essential service industries

Acadian Companies	FENSTERMAKER	Noble Plastics
ATC Group Services	Frank's International	Oceaneering / C & C Technologies
Bell Helicopter	Home Bank	Peppers Unlimited of Louisiana
Bizzuka	Island Operating Company	Perficient
Cameron Valves	Lafayette General Health	PHI
Cameron	Louisiana Rice Mill	Schilling Distributing Company
CGI	The Lemoine Company	Sunland Construction
Digital Machining Systems	M&M International	United Vision Logistics
Dupré Logistics	Macro Companies	Ville Platte Iron Works
Enquero	Metal Shark	Women's & Children's Hospital

One Acadiana will continue to engage our economic driver and essential service industries on workforce development. ***Let us know if your company is interested in discussing your workforce needs.***

## Step 3: Interviews

# Interviews with employers about workforce needs and challenges

## What we're hearing from employers:

"Working with our partners at UL and SLCC, we are focusing on building a talent pipeline that incorporates diversity, inclusion and STEM in the earliest stages of education. Exposing our younger generation to technology is key to sustaining a workforce capable of supporting the future development of a diverse economy in Acadiana."



*James Debaillon*  
CGI

"I am happy with the quality of the people I hire, but have concerns with the broader pool of applicants. Many lack understanding of appropriate dress, interview protocol, and other important professional skills."



*Missy Rogers*  
Noble Plastics

"We are recruiting out-of-state talent for several key positions. We would like to establish Lafayette as a place IT professionals want to come."



*Eric Prudhomme*  
Perficient

"There are a lot of skilled workers who are looking for employment right now. We know that will change when the price of oil goes up. The boom-bust cycle has been a huge challenge for our region."



*Candy Gerace*  
Cameron Valves

"We need to improve training opportunities for the skilled trades workforce to build strong careers for these individuals."



*Don Broussard*  
The Lemoine Company

"We need to address the stigma about blue-collar occupations. These are stable jobs with great benefits."



*Chris Schouest*  
Schilling

"There is a perception problem among students and parents about careers in manufacturing. We need to change that."



*Jim Carter*  
Digital Machining Systems

Our analysis and interviews pointed to four key challenges.

Our analysis and interviews revealed four key challenges, and working with partners we identified five initiatives that respond to the challenges:

### Workforce challenges

- Sector-specific **talent shortages** (e.g., RNs, software programmers)
- **Lack of awareness** about certain high-wage, high-demand jobs and negative perceptions of career & technical education
- Employer desire for **improved soft skills** among entry-level workers
- Need to **re-employ** displaced oil & gas workers

### Regional workforce initiatives\*

- ① Support education initiatives that provide increased training for high-wage, high-demand jobs
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- ③ Scale model programs like The Leader in Me to improve soft skills
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# The five regional workforce initiatives respond to key challenges identified through analysis and interviews

Initiative	Rationale	Talent shortages	Career awareness / perceptions	Reemploying displaced workers	Soft skills
<p>① Support education initiatives that provide increased training for high-wage, high-demand jobs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A strong workforce demands alignment of student outcomes at the post-secondary level with private sector demand</li> <li>K-12 systems train individuals in core competencies and offer career &amp; technical education</li> </ul>	✓	✓		
<p>② Deploy Nepris software to help raise awareness of high-wage, high-demand careers among K-12 students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employers and educators identified barriers to student career awareness</li> <li>This cloud-based platform engages industry &amp; educators to improve student awareness of various careers</li> </ul>	✓	✓		
<p>③ Scale model programs like The Leader in Me (TLIM) to improve soft skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Few programs exist to nurture leadership and soft skills; TLIM program shows promise</li> <li>TLIM program is gaining traction and demonstrating results across the region</li> </ul>				✓
<p>④ Advocate for sufficiently funding early childhood care and education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High-quality early childhood care is the most proven, efficient, and impactful investment in our long-term talent pipeline</li> <li>Ongoing advocacy is necessary to ensure stable and sufficient funding for early childhood education</li> </ul>				✓
<p>⑤ Build on the Acadiana Opportunity initiative to reemploy displaced oil &amp; gas workers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acadiana's displaced oil and gas workers have skills and experience that can translate into industrial jobs across the state</li> <li>Retraining displaced workers for high-wage, high-demand jobs provides new opportunities for a skilled portion of Acadiana's workforce</li> </ul>	✓		✓	

# We identified workforce initiatives with the greatest promise for addressing regional challenges...

## Initiatives:

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## Rationale and background:

- A 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce demands strong alignment of student outcomes at the post-secondary level with private sector demand, requiring greater collaboration between business and higher-education and instructional flexibility to match business needs
- Collaborating with K-12 public school systems will support academic achievement and effective career & technical education (e.g., the Jump Start initiative)

## Key steps / outcomes for 2017:

- Strengthen partnerships between industry and education by facilitating greater dialogue to inform instructional practice
- Support policy at the state and local level that provides higher education partners with operational autonomy, adequate funding, and increased accountability
- Align efforts with anticipated criminal justice reform initiative

## Partners:



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## Rationale and background:

- Nepris is a cloud-based social platform that connects industry professionals and educators to bring virtual workplace experiences into the classroom. Nepris will help raise K-12 career awareness by:
  - Reducing barriers to student interest in industry jobs through direct engagement, including addressing diversity concerns
  - Providing teachers with industry support that is aligned with their curriculum
  - Tracking participation (educators and industry) in order to encourage better synergy and relationships among businesses and schools

## Key steps / outcomes for 2017:

- Launch One Acadiana's Nepris platform
- Work with employers and educators to deploy licenses of the software and begin robust region-wide implementation in 2017

## Partners:

- Employers across Acadiana
- Teachers and school systems
- Louisiana Dept. of Education
- Local EDOs and chambers



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## Rationale and background:

- The Leader in Me (TLIM) is a school transformation program based on Stephen Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, which aims to instill students with key skills vital for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Few proven programs exist to address leadership and soft skills for K-12 students. However, TLIM shows promise in teaching these skills
- The program is gaining traction across the region, with the United Way of Acadiana (UWA) championing the program in their four-parish area. With additional resources, our region can scale the program to additional schools and expand the impact across the 1A region

## Key steps / outcomes for 2017:

- Support efforts of UWA and others interested in accelerating implementation, including fundraising efforts
- Support "Leadership Day" at local schools
- Connect business leaders to schools implementing TLIM program

## Partners:

The  
**Leader in Me**™



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## Rationale and background:

- Studies demonstrate that students who participate in high-quality early childhood programs achieve greater success throughout their education, which carries forward to long-term positive outcomes for the workforce and economy
- The Early Childhood Education Act (Act 3) of 2012 has helped to unify Louisiana's early childhood development system, providing stronger standards, but more work needs to be done to ensure the system has stronger accountability and sufficient funding
- In Louisiana, little more than half of students entering kindergarten are academically and developmentally ready to succeed\*

## Key steps / outcomes for 2017:

- Support policies that strengthen early childhood education during the state legislative session
- Develop approach for early childhood education advocacy

## Partners:

- Employers across Acadiana
- Teachers
- Louisiana Dept. of Education
- Local partners
- United Way of Acadiana
- Louisiana Policy Institute for Children



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- ⑤ **Build on the Acadiana Opportunity initiative to reemploy displaced oil & gas workers**

## Rationale and background:

- Several thousand industrial jobs are available across south Louisiana. Skills and experience gained in the oil & gas industry are needed in these positions
- In 2016, the State of Louisiana and regional partners joined together to help connect displaced workers from the oil & gas industry with hiring companies
- Rapidly retraining workers into other high-wage, high-demand jobs can connect unemployed workers to new opportunities

## Key steps / outcomes for 2017:

- Continue to connect job seekers to opportunities through the AcadianaOpportunity.com web portal
- Participate in hosting targeted job fairs throughout the year
- Support efforts of partners to retrain and reemploy workers (e.g., identifying and applying for third-party grants)

## Partners:



# Implementation overview

Initiatives	Key steps/outcomes for 2017	Success metrics
<p>① Support education initiatives that provide increased training for high-wage, high-demand jobs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Facilitate greater dialogue between education and industry to inform instructional practice</li> <li>▪ Support policy at the state and local level that provides higher education partners with operational autonomy, adequate funding, and increased accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number of graduates and/or certifications in high-wage, high-demand occupations</li> <li>▪ Increased flexibility in resource allocation for high-wage, high-demand jobs</li> </ul>
<p>② Deploy Nepris software to help raise awareness of high-wage, high-demand careers among K-12 students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Launch One Acadiana's Nepris platform</li> <li>▪ Work with employers and educators to deploy licenses of the software and begin robust region-wide implementation in 2017</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deployment of all licenses and level of use in schools</li> <li>▪ Number of regional employers engaged</li> </ul>
<p>③ Scale model programs like The Leader in Me to improve soft skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support efforts to expand The Leader In Me, including fundraising efforts</li> <li>▪ Support "Leadership Day" at local schools; connect professionals to schools implementing the program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase in schools implementing The Leader In Me</li> <li>▪ Improved student attendance &amp; grad rate, decreased disciplinary referrals, enriched school climate</li> </ul>
<p>④ Advocate for sufficiently funding early childhood care and education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support polices that strengthen high-quality early childhood education during the state legislative session</li> <li>▪ Develop approach for early childhood education advocacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expansion of high-quality PreK programs and increased funding</li> <li>▪ Enrollment in PreK programs</li> </ul>
<p>⑤ Build on the Acadiana Opportunity initiative to reemploy displaced oil &amp; gas workers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to connect job seekers to opportunities through the AcadianaOpportunity.com web portal</li> <li>▪ Support efforts of partners to retrain and reemploy workers, including participation in hosting targeted job fairs throughout the year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number of reemployed and retrained individuals</li> <li>▪ Use of web platforms</li> </ul>

# Initial Impact

## Key accomplishments of the Acadiana Opportunity initiative demonstrate the initial impact of the Regional Workforce Development Strategy

### Industrial Trades Career Fair

March 2016

- 1,800+ job seekers attended
- 72 job offers made on-site
- 266 follow-up interviews scheduled

February 2017

- Career fair in planning process

### AcadianaOpportunity.com

- Web portal connecting displaced oil & gas workers with job and training resources
- Nearly 10,000 page views since launching
- 775+ assistance forms completed and responded to by Louisiana Workforce Commission

### Rapid retraining for displaced workers

- 287 individuals retrained across eight parishes
- \$970k in grant funding for retraining programs
- Training in high-demand occupations\*
- 87% of program participants reemployed



“This initiative brought together key partners, all determined to create solutions for our displaced oil & gas workers. Acadiana has proven to be one of the most successful regions at working together toward shared goals, and I look forward to being a part of future collaborations.”



*Cortney Boutte-Breaux*  
*Louisiana Workforce Commission*

\*Program offerings include commercial vehicle operation (CDL), basic industrial scaffolding, commercial and residential HVAC, automotive technician, and several healthcare-related courses



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Digital copy available at [www.oneacadiana.org/rwds](http://www.oneacadiana.org/rwds)

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