

Community Audit of the Midlands Workforce Investment Area



Client

Facts

Period

2005

Project Country

Communities and regions across the country face needs to adapt workforce training to meet the changing needs of new and expanding employers.

The Midlands Area of South Carolina faced a unique opportunity and challenge when the Dept. of Defense announced plans for new and expanded activities at three facilities - Fort Jackson Army Base, McEntire Air Guard Station and Shaw Air Force Base. The Midlands Workforce Development Board (MWDB) was charged with the responsibility of evaluating the current local economy and aiding in the transition of base-dependent workers into jobs in demand in the area.

BRAC -- the Base Realignment and Closure plan -- called for 1,900 individuals and their families to be moving to the Midlands. Under a grant provided by the US Department of Labor, MWDB selected the team of RTS (Regional Technology Strategies), EDR Group (Economic Development Research Group) and the Spectrum Group to conduct a "community audit" of the Midlands Workforce Investment Area.

The community audit study included analysis of labor market demand and supply in the Midlands' area, and anticipated occupational skills of incoming military dependents. The study also included identification of and coordination with key military leaders able to provide information on resources that the military will have and may need to identify individuals coming to the area, and to assist in determining their skills, abilities, employment background and employment interests. Finally, the consulting team made recommendations concerning roles of military and civilian leaders in implementing workforce services to the incoming dependents.

As part of this study, EDR Group assembled local information and data from the Bureau of Labor statistics to forecast changes in the regional labor market, including shifts in demand and supply of jobs by detailed occupation and business sector to the year 2008. Based on a comprehensive analysis of the region's employment base, seven high potential sectors of the economy were selected. They meet two sets of conditions. First, they are sectors that are expected to provide significant employment opportunities for the region. Second, they are consistent with the characteristics of new labor market entrants resulting from the BRAC process. This includes various professional and service occupations.

The result of this work provided the workforce development board with information needed to ensure that the identified high-priority/high-potential sectors in the Midlands region will create jobs in occupations that can be filled by military spouses and dependents. The results received strong coverage in local newspapers.

Project Press Release, December 12 2005

The State.com news article

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