

Gaston's BEST

BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

Gaston County Business and Employer Services Team (BEST) is a group of partners who are dedicated to providing local businesses an edge in today's global economy. Our goal is to provide our employers with information on how to access money for training, financial incentives, human resources services, recruitment assistance, no cost advertising, and community partnerships.

*An Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity Employer/Program
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities*

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Economic Development

Economic Development Commission (EDC)

The Gaston County Economic Development Commission is dedicated to attracting and retaining desirable businesses and employers to continue diversifying economic opportunities in Gaston County. We recruit and assist businesses with their relocation and expansion plans and have an established program to support existing local business. Some of the services we provide include: available building and site inventory, community information, demographics, and research, help to facilitate local and state grant process, workforce assistance, business visitation and support, assistance in working with local and state government contracts, and access to business leaders who know the community and want to share their experiences.

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Gaston Business Association

The Gaston Business Association (GBA) is focused on driving business success and economic growth in Gaston County. Since 1913, we have maintained a legacy of strengthening Gaston businesses. Through generating bold advocacy, business, and talent outcomes, we are creating a Gaston County that leads the region in economic prosperity and opportunity for all. Along with providing investors the services and support of a traditional Chamber, the GBA employs a broader, strategic approach to business challenges and opportunities.

The Gaston Business Association leads and partners on the following workforce programs and events:

- **Talent Pipeline Management (TPM)** – With the leadership of employers across the Gaston County region, the GBA is managing an in-demand talent solution called Talent Pipeline Management (TPM). This proven initiative, currently enjoying success across the country, operates by organizing employers into small industry groups known as “Collaboratives” to maximize responsiveness and deliver employer return on investment. In essence, the GBA builds and improves talent pipelines for businesses greatest workforce needs. Through the TPM process, training and education providers receive actionable information on employer demand (including skill and credential requirements) and improve job placement and employment outcomes for learners. If a business is interested in addressing talent needs through this program, please contact the GBA.

- **Gaston County Advanced Manufacturing Career Expo** – This annual event features area manufacturing companies presenting information about local career opportunities available after high school to 700+ middle and high school students. The event is co-sponsored by partners in the Workforce Solutions Action Team (WSAT) consisting of Gaston County Schools, Gaston College, Gaston Business Association, Gaston County Economic Development Commission, Gaston County Workforce Development Board, Career Climb, NCWorks Career Center, and several local businesses in Gaston County.
- **Educators In The Workplace** - This collective effort among the Gaston Business Association, Gaston County Schools, and local businesses provides teachers, administrators, and guidance counselors insight and information into available Gaston County workplace opportunities. This knowledge assists educators in helping students increase awareness of both jobs and careers to pursue in their own community. The program began in 2015 with a pilot effort involving 20 teachers and 8 local businesses. Since then, both the number of educators and the number of businesses has doubled. This opportunity can be offered virtually or in person.
- **Students @ Work** - Students @ Work is a collaborative program between Gaston County Schools and the Gaston Business Association. Over 2,300 students from all Gaston County middle schools are paired with a local business. Students tour business facilities, hear from company representatives and discuss career options. This opportunity can be offered virtually or in person. Virtual accommodations feature a team of Gaston County School content creators visiting participating businesses to distribute and market this information to students.

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Gaston College – Small Business Center

Gaston College's Small Business Center (SBC) is proud to serve small business owners and entrepreneurs with complimentary seminars, a resource center, and one-on-one counseling. As part of a network of experienced SBC's across North Carolina, we're dedicated to helping small businesses thrive. Our SBC understands the unique challenges that local businesses encounter, and we're ready to offer professional advice and instruction. For more information, to arrange an appointment, or to pre-register, visit the link below, or call 704.922.6447.

<https://www.ncsbc.net/center.aspx?center=75220>

Training

Apprenticeship Programs

Gaston College

Apprenticeship 321 is a multi-path training and education program administered by Gaston College in collaboration with local employers. Apprenticeship is a unique “earn and learn” model that prepares new employees or an incumbent workforce for in-demand careers. It combines paid on-the-job training with an employer along with courses at Gaston College. Current apprenticeable occupations range include nine advanced manufacturing pathways and two healthcare pathways. Upon completion, apprentices are awarded with a nationally recognized journeyworker certification and an academic credential from Gaston College. Companies can have apprentices from various student populations, including high school students, post-secondary students, incumbent workers, Veterans, or other populations interested in learning a new career. Employers are responsible for tuition, textbooks, and related fees. The length of an apprenticeship depends on the trade. Gaston College manages the registration, enrollment, and placement testing of apprentices. Most importantly, the College manages the administrative portion of the apprenticeship program through the Office of Apprenticeship within the North Carolina Community College System. We register each apprentice, complete the required reports, and ensure that companies’ expectations are met. Currently, tuition is covered by grants.

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Gaston Workforce Development Board

Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) funds may be used to fund participants in both the classroom training and hands-on (OJT) portions of an apprenticeship program. WIOA funds can also possibly be used to provide supportive services to relieve barriers that participants have in order to help them succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship program.

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Career & Technical Education Programs

Gaston County Schools (CTE)

The CTE programs in Gaston County Schools begin recruitment for interns during the first semester of the school year and they begin work in late January of the following year. We currently place students who are at least 18 years of age in paid internship programs with local employers that are open to offering full time employment, after graduation, if the student has displayed desirable qualities and work habits. The interns that are to be hired are featured at the Career Signing Day held near the end of the school year.

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Customized Training

Gaston College

The Customized Training program at Gaston College provides assistance to support full-time production and direct customer service positions that are created in NC and enhances the growth potential of these companies while also preparing the state's workforce with the skills essential for successful employment in emerging industries. To receive assistance, eligible business and industries must demonstrate two or more of the following criteria:

- Make an appreciable capital investment
- Deploy new technology
- Currently creating jobs, expanding an existing workforce, or enhancing the productivity and profitability of the operations within the State
- Desire to enhance workers' skills by participation in this program

Resources may support training assessment, instructional design, instructional costs, and training delivery for personnel. The use of Customized Training funds requires that trainees are paid by the company for all time during training hours.

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Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)

Gaston Workforce Development Board

Incumbent Worker training is designed to meet the needs of an employer or group of employers to avert potential layoffs or obtain the skills necessary to retain employment, such as increasing the skill levels of employees so they can be promoted within the company and create backfill opportunities for new or less-skilled employees. Unlike other trainings, employers, instead of individuals, must meet the local eligibility criteria to receive funds for training their workforce. In most circumstances, incumbent workers being trained must have been employed with the company for at least six months. Employers who apply for these funds must meet requirements for providing the non-federal share of the cost of the training. Target populations include businesses and employers who meet local eligibility criteria to receive IWT funds and who need to provide training to their current workforce to meet new or changing business needs.

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Work-based Learning Services

On-the-Job Training (OJT)

Gaston County Workforce Development Board

On-the-Job training is a work based learning opportunity provided by the Gaston Workforce Development Board. OJT provides reimbursements to employers to help compensate for the costs associated with training newly hired staff. It can assist employers who are looking to expand their businesses and who need additional staff trained with specialized skills. OJT employers will receive a percentage (50% or 75% depending on the size of the company) of the wage rate of trainees. The target population for OJT is adults and dislocated workers in need of new employer-based

skills, individuals with barriers to employment, underemployed workers, and out of school youth. Participants come to OJT with at least one year of work experience. Assess® assessments will be used to identify the skills gap and develop a training plan. The length of the OJT will depend on the skills gap.

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Work Experience

Gaston County Workforce Development Board

A work experience (WEX) is a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited amount of time but no longer than six months. Work experience is another work based learning opportunity fully sponsored by the Gaston Workforce Development Board and no cost to the employer. The participants of WEX will have less than six months of work experience and will need training to develop soft skills as well as employer specific training. The target populations for WEX participants are youth/adults with barriers to employment, dislocated workers needing exposure to new industries/occupations, unemployed workers, underemployed workers, and long-term unemployed workers.

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Gaston College – NextGen Youth Program

A work experience (WEX) is a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited amount of time. Work experience is another work-based learning opportunity available to employers at no cost. The participants of WEX will have less than six months of work experience and will need training to develop soft skills as well as employer specific training. The WEX offered thru NextGen is available to young adults ages 18-24.

Tamara Jones, NextGen Coordinator
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Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) assists individuals with chronic physical, mental, or emotional impairments that affect their ability to obtain and maintain employment. If an individual is eligible for assistance, VR is able to provide a variety of services to assist the individual in reaching their employment goal. Most services are at no cost to the individual. However, for some services there are financial eligibility criteria.

Services for Individuals

- Job Placement, Vocational Evaluation, Career Exploration
- Physical restoration, Surgery, Physical Therapy, Prescription Medications
- Mental Restoration, Community Rehabilitation Programs
- Retraining, Job Accommodation, Supported Employment

Services for Businesses

(No fee to your business)

- Job Skills Testing & Assessment
- Vocational Training Assistance
- Applicant Screening & Referral
- No-Cost, On-Site Job Coaching
- Staff Training Such as Disability Sensitivity Training
- Job-Retention Services
- Job-Site Assessment
- Information & Referral
- Work-Site Modification

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Transitional Jobs

Gaston Workforce Development Board

Transitional jobs are a type of work experience the Gaston Workforce Development Board provides under WIOA and are considered an individualized career service. These types of jobs are time-limited and wage-paid work experiences that are fully subsidized. These jobs are in public, private, or nonprofit sectors. Target populations include adults and dislocated workers with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history.

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Job Shadowing

Gaston Workforce Development Board

Job shadowing is an unpaid, short term work experience that allows individuals to see what a job or industry entails before committing to training.

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Gaston College – NextGen Youth Program

Job shadowing is an unpaid, short term work experience that allows youth ages 18-24 to see what a job or industry entails before committing to an employer or training.

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Career Readiness Certifications

Gaston College

ACT® WorkKeys® National Career Readiness Certificate® (NCRC®)

The NCRC® is a nationally recognized credential confirming the recipients abilities in applied math, workplace documents, and graphic literacy. The NCRC® measures and certifies the essential work skills needed for success in jobs across industries and occupations.

This credential is used across all sectors of the economy and verifies the following cognitive skills:

- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Reading and using work-related text
- Applying mathematical reasoning to work-related problems
- Setting up and performing work-related mathematical calculations
- Locating, synthesizing, and applying information that is presented graphically
- Comparing, summarizing, and analyzing information presented in multiple related graphics

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Career Preparation

Career / Employability Skills

Gaston College's Human Resources Development (HRD) program offers Employability Skills classes to help you prepare for a current or new career path.

HRD@gaston.edu or call 704-922-2244.

Gaston College Certified Production Technician

The Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) is an industry-led training, assessment and certification system focused on the core skills and knowledge needed by the nation's front-line production employees. The nationwide MSSC System, based upon industry defined and federally-endorsed standards provides skills-based training that leads to demonstrative mastery of the core competencies of manufacturing production at the front-line (entry-level through front-line supervisor) through successful completion of the certification assessments. The goal of the certification program is to raise the level of performance of production workers both to assist the individuals in finding higher-wage jobs and to help employers ensure their workforce increases the company's productivity and competitiveness.

How will it benefit employees?

- Increase your skill level to build a career
- Can result in more fulfilling work and increased responsibilities
- Increased skill levels and more responsibility often lead to higher wages
- Employers invest in updating worker skills

What will you learn?

- Module One - Safety (Intro to manufacturing and work-readiness skills) - 40 hours
- Module Two - Quality Practices & Measurement - 40 hours
- Module Three - Manufacturing Processes & Production - 40 hours
- Module Four - Maintenance Awareness - 40 hours

MSSC awards certificates to individuals who pass any of its Modules: Safety, Maintenance Awareness, Manufacturing Processes & Production, and Quality Practices & Measurement; and a full Certified Production Technician (CPT) Certificate to those who pass all four modules.

Emily Hansley, Business and Industry Services Coordinator

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NOTE: **Workforce Innovations and Opportunities Act (WIOA)** - WIOA programs serve individuals and businesses within our area by providing access to the programs and services that help employers find and train the best employees, and alternatively help individuals gain funding for training and education to become more employable.

Our offerings are multi-faceted and we collaborate with a multitude of businesses, educational and training institutions, community partners & agencies, as well as regional and state government representatives. Our work reaches adults seeking more meaningful careers, dislocated workers aiming to regain employment, and youth focused on getting the right start.

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Tamara Jones, WIOA Youth Program Manager
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network

Talent Recruitment

NCWorks Career Center - Gaston

The career center can recruit, screen, and provide you with qualified applicants so that you can quickly fill critical openings with the right people. Your job openings can be posted on NCWorks Online and reach hundreds of qualified job seekers. Employers can also create an online account at no cost and view job seekers' resumes that have been uploaded to NCWorks Online.

Visit www.ncworks.gov to create an employer account or contact the NCWorks Career Center - Gaston for personalized employer-based assistance. The NCWorks Career Center - Gaston can also provide the latest labor market information, along with local wage and salary data, helping your company to remain competitive in today's global market. NCWorks Career Center-Gaston hosts weekly in-center recruitment sessions and can provide a myriad of employer services.

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Job Fairs

The Gaston Workforce Development Board sponsors monthly job fairs at the Department of Health and Human Services Building at 330 Dr Martin Luther King Jr Way, Gastonia. The job fairs are open to the public and encounter a wide variety of job seekers. Depending on employer hiring practices, employers can accept job applications and/or resumes while at the event. Private conference rooms are available if an employer wishes to interview potential candidate(s) for employment on site. Tables, chairs, and light refreshments are always provided for employers in attendance.

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Hiring Events

The Gaston Workforce Development Board can provide employers with customized events for mass hiring. Ideal employers for customized events are ones who are new employers to Gaston County or existing companies looking to expand their business.

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Career Fairs

Career fairs sponsored by the Gaston Workforce Development Board aim to educate the public about local employers and what they manufacture. These events are usually targeted to a specific industry (Manufacturing, Healthcare, Hospitality, etc.). Employers are encouraged to display a product that their company manufactures so the public can see exactly what they do. The goal is to make people aware of career opportunities in Gaston County and surrounding areas.

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Placement Services

Gaston College's Work-based Learning and Placement office provides assistance to employers who have part-time and full-time job openings by connecting them to current Gaston College students and alumni. Through the College Central Network, employers can post job openings at no cost and receive resumes that have been uploaded to the College Central Network. Visit www.collegecentral.com/gastoncollege to set up a free account. Employers are also welcome to recruit students on-campus.

Joy Morrow
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Veterans

Division of Workforce Solutions

Our nation's veterans provide your company with leadership skills, efficient performance under pressure, diversity, integrity and the ability to triumph over adversity.

Hire Vets Medallion Program

The Hire Vets Medallion Program recognizes employers that recruit, employ, and retain veterans. The Medallion Program allows the recipients the opportunity to utilize the medallion in the marketing of their firm when hiring or to attract additional businesses. You can learn more at hirevets.gov or contacting your areas Local Veterans Employment Representative.

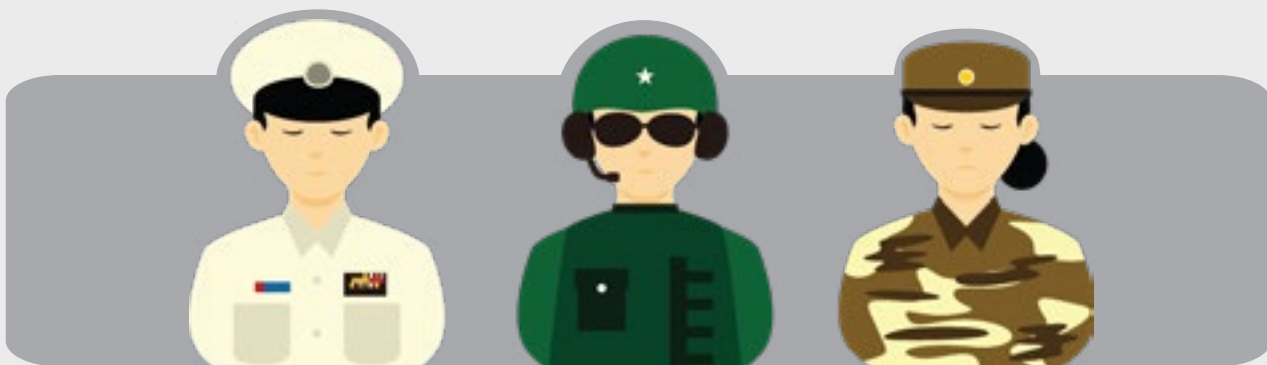
Work Opportunity Tax Credits

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a Federal tax credit available to employers for hiring individuals from certain targeted groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment.

To see if your business qualifies, see [IRS Notice 2012-13 \(PDF\)](#) for more detailed information.

For more information on these and other Veteran Employment Services, contact:

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