

Economic Vitality Team Workplan Tasks & Assignments – Workforce Needs Capstone Project

The Hendersonville Downtown Advisory Board and Economic Vitality team understand that having a sustainable downtown workforce is a key need for our downtown business district. With our downtown economy being largely tourist-driven, we would like to create a plan for ways we can support our downtown workforce. This would include:

1. Needs assessment - (see below, draft survey has been created but not sent yet)
 - a. Examples of other places – tourist towns with similar economic hardships or disparities
 - b. Examples of workforce training programs
 - c. Examples of cooperative benefits (if they exist) among multiple businesses, how does this work if it is possible?
2. Identification of Partners – (this has started, more are likely needed:
 - a. Blue Ridge Community College
 - b. Housing Assistance Corporation
 - c. Pisgah Legal Services
 - d.
3. Strategic plan – the ideal capstone report would result in a strategic plan for our downtown advisory board or partners to implement, and give a backbone for staff and partners to seek funding for future projects.
 - a. Quick / Low hanging fruit projects. The Economic Vitality team have already discussed several projects that would be an easier start:
 - i. Training partnerships for downtown workers and business owners – CPR, Servsafe, Hendersonville 101 (customer service training that would familiarize workers with other businesses and attractions – creating a better guest experience). Potential partners listed above. In developing the project, the plan can have more confirmed class descriptions.
 - ii. “perks” for downtown employees who participate – as an incentive for the training, we could create ways to give out downtown dollars or farmers market dollars to employees, first right of parking permits
 - b. Longer term / Bigger / More expensive projects – help create a plan for getting us toward addressing bigger needs in:
 - i. Financial literacy / wealth building
 - ii. Housing
 - iii. Benefits
 - iv. ???
 - c. Other recommendations

Survey of downtown businesses and employees (draft started in publicinput.com)

- d. One survey but splits off depending on if it is an employee or employer
- e. Parking updates – if you complete the survey you’ll get on the list for the special employee pass

- f. What type of training would you like to see for employees?
 - i. Examples – customer service / visitor information
 - ii. CPR
 - iii. Servsafe
 - iv. Financial planning / retirement / budgeting / debt management
 - v.
- g. Training or other support for businesses:
 - i. Marketing/Website/Social Media
 - ii. Business growth/intermediate/advanced classes
 - iii. Financial / administrative / Operating - employer
 - iv. Open Ended - leave chance for specific responses
- h. Where do you park? / How much do you pay for parking?
- i. Hours of operation (help determine parking hours and needs for employee parking)
- j. Where do you live, do you own or rent your home? How far do you drive
- k. Employees – why do you choose to work downtown?
- l. Farmers Market matching dollars (not survey but offering – think about budget for that)
 - businesses buy in / pay to play
- m. Review past questions, ask to downtown employees
- n. Parking – safety / where do you feel safe walking and at night time

Survey distribution - to employees?

Give downtown dollars in a drawing for participation