



## TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE & UTILITIES SECTOR ROUNDTABLE REPORT

DC Workforce Investment Council (DCWIC)

Date: May 26, 2026

### Attendees:

| Attendee Name       | Organization                               |
|---------------------|--|
| Bedney, Kunta       | EAS Carpenters                             |
| Bell, Raymond       | Toni Thomas Associates                     |
| Bernard-El, Craig   | Year Up United                             |
| Dempsey, Mike       | EAS Carpenters                             |
| Lewis, Tanisha      | Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority |
| Montgomery, Estelle | FH Faunteroy Resilience Center             |
| Pinto, Brittney     | Pepco                                      |
| Spriggs, Nicole     | Toni Thomas Associates                     |
| Taylor, Deontay     | Repair Today                               |

| DCWIC Staff Name            | Role                                    |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Goodman, Chandra            | Manager, Training, Skills & Development |
| Gholston, Alseta            | Manager, Sector Strategies              |
| Philippe, Pat (facilitator) | Associate Director, Business Engagement |

### SECTION 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The DC Workforce Investment Council (DCWIC) convened the Transportation, Infrastructure, and Utilities Sector Roundtable on May 21, 2026 to gather direct input from employers, training providers, workforce practitioners, and industry stakeholders regarding workforce needs, hiring challenges, training alignment, career pathways, and supportive service gaps within the sector.

The roundtable was designed to strengthen employer engagement, validate workforce trends, identify system barriers, and inform future workforce strategy development, Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) expansion efforts, and career pathway alignment.



## **Purpose of the Roundtable**

- Understand current and emerging workforce needs within transportation, infrastructure, and utilities industries.
- Identify barriers affecting recruitment, retention, and workforce pipeline development.
- Gather employer feedback to improve career pathway maps and workforce system navigation.
- Strengthen alignment between employers, training providers, and workforce partners.
- Identify opportunities for work-based learning, apprenticeships, and industry partnerships.

## **SECTION 2. KEY THEMES & FINDINGS**

### **Need for Stronger Career Navigation**

- Participants emphasized that workforce systems must include strong career navigation and coaching support, particularly case managers and workforce development specialists at the AJC's, to help residents successfully transition into career pathways and unsubsidized employment.

### **Training Pipelines Need Better Employer Connection**

- Employers and training providers consistently stated that businesses are not adequately connected to training pipelines, apprenticeship programs, or workforce resources.

### **Basic Job Readiness Skills Remain a Major Concern**

- Employers highlighted the continued importance of soft skills such as time management, communication, emotional intelligence, conflict management, and professionalism.

### **System Navigation is Fragmented**

- Participants discussed the need for a centralized repository of workforce resources, training opportunities, hiring supports, and supportive services.

### **Post-Training Support is Critical**

- Participants emphasized that residents often need continued support after completing training programs to ensure successful transition into employment and long-term career retention.

### **Funding and Contracting Challenges**

- Training providers and workforce organizations expressed concern regarding cumbersome funding processes, ETPL requirements, and challenges accessing training resources.



### **SECTION 3. INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC INSIGHTS**

- Transportation employers identified driver's licenses, time management, and reliability as significant barriers affecting recruitment.
- Pepco representative identified drug testing requirements as a significant hiring challenge.
- Participants highlighted opportunities to strengthen apprenticeship pipelines within niche infrastructure occupations such as elevator and escalator repair.
- Employers expressed concern that DC Public Schools no longer maintain strong trade-school pipelines, forcing businesses to recruit from Maryland and Virginia.
- Participants identified opportunities to create stronger partnerships between unions, employers, and workforce agencies.
- Participants requested that career pathway maps be more interactive, user-friendly, and integrated with workforce resources and training providers.

### **SECTION 4. TRAINING ALIGNMENT & CAREER PATHWAYS**

The roundtable discussion reinforced the importance of aligning workforce training programs with real-time employer needs. Participants expressed interest in career pathway maps that include direct access to training providers, career navigation tools, supportive service resources, and employer-defined competencies.

Employers and workforce stakeholders also emphasized the importance of integrating career assessments, strengths assessments, and individualized guidance into the career pathway process to improve participant alignment with career opportunities.

#### **Priority Skills Identified by Employers**

- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Time management and professionalism
- Conflict management and emotional intelligence
- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Drug-test readiness
- Basic work readiness and reliability



## SECTION 5. SYSTEM GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

| Gap Identified   | Opportunity / Recommendation  |
|--|---|
| <b>Lack of centralized workforce navigation</b>                  | Develop a centralized workforce resource hub and employer-facing navigation system.                           |
| <b>Weak employer-training provider connections</b>               | Create stronger sector partnerships and recurring employer convenings.  |
| <b>Difficulty accessing workforce funding and ETPL processes</b> | Streamline technical assistance and communication related to ETPL participation.                              |
| <b>Limited post-training support</b>                             | Expand mentorship, alumni engagement, and post-placement follow-up supports.                                  |
| <b>Limited exposure to skilled trades among youth</b>            | Strengthen career exposure and pre-apprenticeship opportunities tied to infrastructure and utilities careers. |

## SECTION 6. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- Expand employer participation in apprenticeship and work-based learning programs.
- Increase collaboration between workforce agencies, unions, and training providers.
- Develop alumni mentorship models to support participant retention and advancement.
- Strengthen partnerships with AJCs and community-based organizations.
- Improve integration between career pathway maps and workforce system tools.



## **SECTION 7. NEXT STEPS**

1. Continue sector-based employer engagement sessions throughout 2026.
2. Refine Transportation, Infrastructure, and Utilities career pathway maps using employer feedback.
3. Strongly encourage current ETP's to attend roundtable(s) that is aligned to program offerings
4. Identify opportunities for ETPL expansion aligned to employer demand.
5. Develop follow-up communication with participating employers and workforce partners.
6. Explore opportunities for a centralized workforce navigation and employer engagement model.

## **SECTION 8. CONCLUSION**

The Transportation, Infrastructure, and Utilities Sector Roundtable reinforced the importance of employer-centered workforce development strategies that align training, career navigation, supportive services, and employer engagement. Participants consistently highlighted the need for stronger coordination, clearer pathways, and more responsive systems that connect residents to sustainable careers while helping employers address critical workforce shortages.

The feedback gathered through this roundtable will inform future sector strategies, career pathway development, ETPL expansion efforts, and workforce system coordination across the District.