



## CHATTANOOGA REGION TALENT DIVIDEND INITIATIVE

### ABSTRACT

Economic development is an ongoing collaborative effort among all people including public and private higher educ. and businesses, nonprofits and governmental entities to promote, improve and strengthen regional economics via a vibrant quality workforce.

A variety of ways to accomplish this may be undertaken. The Chattanooga Region Talent Dividend Initiative (CRTDI) niche focuses on the talent of persons 25+ who have some college experience but no degree. This focus involves the following:

- A. **COLLABORATION and ENGAGEMENT:** An independent autonomous nonprofit organization that facilitates the collaboration of businesses (small, medium and large) and higher education institutions, as evidenced by signed MOU's of engagement. This enables a scalable impact that is probable working together rather than independently.
- B. **SUCCESS, CELEBRATIONS, LEADERSHIP and JOBS:** Establishes metrics of success by setting degree attainment objectives for the tri-state (AL, GA, and TN) 16 county region for successive three (3) year intervals. Tri-annual public achievement reports of successes are published. Distinctive practices and degree attainment are featured during celebration events that invigorate ALL relative to inspiration, value and importance of degree completion. Chambers of Commerce in the region are to be activated for planning, organizing and implementing such celebration events. Culmination of the celebration events are designed to produces renewed energy and enthusiasm of the region as being recognized as a leading factor in a sustained quality workforce The collaborative effort among ALL provides relevant quality academic, economic and cultural leadership producing talented employees and dynamic business and industries that are competitive and profitable in a global economy. Truly this is

an environment that strengthens existing businesses, attracts new business, stimulates innovation and creates jobs.

- C. **RESOLUTIONS:** CRTDI stimulates awareness and importance among the citizenry as evidenced by “resolutions” adopted by governmental and other appropriate entities. (Examples: City of East Ridge, Chatt. City Council, Hamilton County Commission-ultimately all cities, counties and relevant organizations of the 16 county region)
- D. **ADVISORY PANEL:** Engages community leaders that promote the CRTDI niche focus and mission as evidenced by committing time and dedication by serving on the Talent Dividend Advisory Panel.(Higher Educ. Presidents, Provosts, Vice Presidents, Board Chairmen, Mayors, Chamber of Commerce Executives, CEOs-see list on page 5)
- E. **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS and TIMELINES:** Establishes “Key Performance Indicators” relative to:
  - 1. Sustainable Quality Workforce
  - 2. Business Sector
  - 3. Higher Education
  - 4. Business/Higher Education Collaborative Roundtables
  - 5. Marketing Campaign
  - 6. Accountability-Budget and accounting
  - 7. Tri-Annual Celebrations
  - 8. Sponsorships and Sustainability
  - 9. Advisory Panel and 501 (c)(3) Community Foundation of Greater Chatt.
  - 10. Establishment of “Ambassadors of Talent” throughout the region
- F. **JOB DESCRIPTIONS:** Establishes “Job Descriptions” including:

1. Qualifications
2. Primary responsibilities
3. Typical duties (1-3 applies to Positions: Talent Dividend Liaison, Administrative Assistant and Research Assistant (consultant)).

- G. **DESTINATION and SUPPORT of PATHWAYS:** Reinforcement of “Pathways” as routes within the context of the CRTDI “destination” (college completion) is important. Various “pathway” models have been and continue to be adopted at the federal, state, and local levels such as Southeast Tennessee STEM, Pathways to Propensity (Grade 9-14 curriculum), Complete College America, Complete College America – Time is the Enemy, Thrive 2055, Drive to 55, Tennessee Reconnects and Tennessee Promise, for example. CRTDI is an active participant of the Adult College Completion Network and incorporates the work of CEO’s for Cities and the Lumina Foundation (A Stronger Nation through Higher Education).
- H. **DISSEMINATES PUBLICATIONS:** Disseminates various publications regarding degree completion which are developed and produced by the Lumina Foundation. An example is the publication entitled “A Stronger Nation through Higher Education” -Visualizing Data to Help Us Achieve a Big Goal for College Completion).
- I. **RECRUITMENT and ACCESS:** Encourages higher education institutions to implement “Actionable Steps” to aggressively pursue and recruit former non-traditional adult students. Also “Actionable Steps” outlined for Business/Industry, government entities, health insurance, healthcare providers and others to recruit employees 25+ with some college but no degree for re-entry to continuously improve relevancy of skills and competencies.
- J. **RESEARCH for CREDIT and BUSINESS NEEDS:** Graduate students at higher education institutions perform research central to the needs of business/industry. Such research is beneficial to businesses/industries as it addresses needs and cost effectiveness as students perform work for credit. Students meet degree requirements and strengthen their skill sets and businesses benefit from applied tailored research.
- K. **OPERATIONS SYSTEM and RESOLUTIONS and MOUS:** Strategic Manual (CRTDI) shows flow charts of Operations System for Talent Dividend Sustainable Human

Capital, template for “resolutions” and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for participating organizations and Sponsorship Pledge Form. Focusing on the Common Purpose of promoting quality education and talent is the energy of “Political Will” and “Voice of Power” of participating institutions through the CRTD’s systemic operations.

- L. **INVESTMENT BUDGET:** Budget documents show breakdown of operations. Expenses can be minimized by capitalizing on “in-kind” contributions of engaged entities.
- M. **WEBSITE:** Website ([betterbydegrees.org](http://betterbydegrees.org)) is under construction that includes key element of relevant components and facilitates access.
- N. **PERSONAL CONTACTS:** Quick reference list of “Contact Representatives” at higher education institutions provides basis for expediting engagement with higher education providers.
- O. **RELEVANT RESEARCH:** CRTDI provides research and related commentary regarding the following: College Completion: Firm Level Productivity, College Completion: Fiscal and Societal Impact, A Perspective on Degree Completion, Job Developing and Responsibilities, Pathways and Chattanooga Region Talent Dividend, Power Point Presentations and College Credit for Prior Learning (video). CRTDI is an active member of the National Adult College Completion Network.
- P. **ROUNDTABLES:** “Roundtables” are another critical component Of CRTDI. A descriptive guide includes: Introductions (sets context), Steps To Action, Discussion Questions and Hart Research Associates document regarding perceived preparation of students versus employers.
- Q. **GEOSPATIAL MAPPING:** CRTDI applies Geospatial Mapping relevant to degree completion population for the entire region and “drills down” to the election districts including investment growth (\$) in each county and city, due to degree completion.
- R. **GDP and WAGES:** CRTDI provides customized data analysis regarding GDP and Wage projections for 3 year cycles through 2025. The customized data analysis was made possible by the Milken Institute as an extension of the report “A

Matter of Degrees”- CRTDI acknowledges appreciation of the Milken Institutes Ross Devol, chief research officer, and Nan Zhang, senior research analyst.

- S. **CREDIT for PRIOR LEARNING:** CRTDI has facilitated the development and production of a “video” about “Credit for Prior Learning (CPL).” This has involved the collaboration of higher education institutions and the Chattanooga Electric Power Board (EPB) that provided “in-kind services” of technical support personnel for technical assistance and production. CPL saves “time and “money” of employees and employers working toward degree completion. The affirmation of being a valued employee because of what they know, can do and will do is powerful. Powerful since education is considered continuous, stemming from work responsibilities, development and performance, as well as relevant higher education courses.
- T. **TALENT DIVIDEND AMBASSADORS and MARKETING the “BRAND”:** Ambassadors for Talent (AFT) is a planned marketing program to engage “community volunteers” that:
  - 1. Foster and promote links with the public, businesses and education institutions (K-22)
  - 2. Promote and encourage ongoing education of citizens in the region (better education, better business, better jobs, better economy and better quality of life) – marketing the “brand” (“Talent Changes Everything”).

Higher education institutions must offer degree programs that support current and future businesses and industries. And in order to keep college graduates local – as well as attract and retain a sustainable quality workforce – a given region must provide an attractive and distinctive job market, including the recruiting of an appropriate mix of employment opportunities. As the demise of a once robust city such as Detroit demonstrates, focusing only on immediate employment needs may sacrifice long term prospects. (Devol, Shen, Bedroussiam, Zhang, 2013, A Matter of Degree: The Effect of Educational Attainment on Regional Economic Prosperity. Washington, D. C.: Milken Institute).

The CRTDI’s goal is to increase by 60% post-secondary graduates in the region by 2025 (Regional goals are reset every 3 years). The Lumina Foundation goal is 60% of the nation’s adults by 2025. The first step in reaching these goals is to remain committed to them. Together, higher education, working with business and industry

can make this possible. The CRTDI in a facilitating role is causing this happen and, consequently, talent heretofore untapped will develop continuously.

Our communities and our nation will be strengthened by a sustainable quality workforce – the brand being “Talent Changes Everything”. <sup>TM</sup>

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