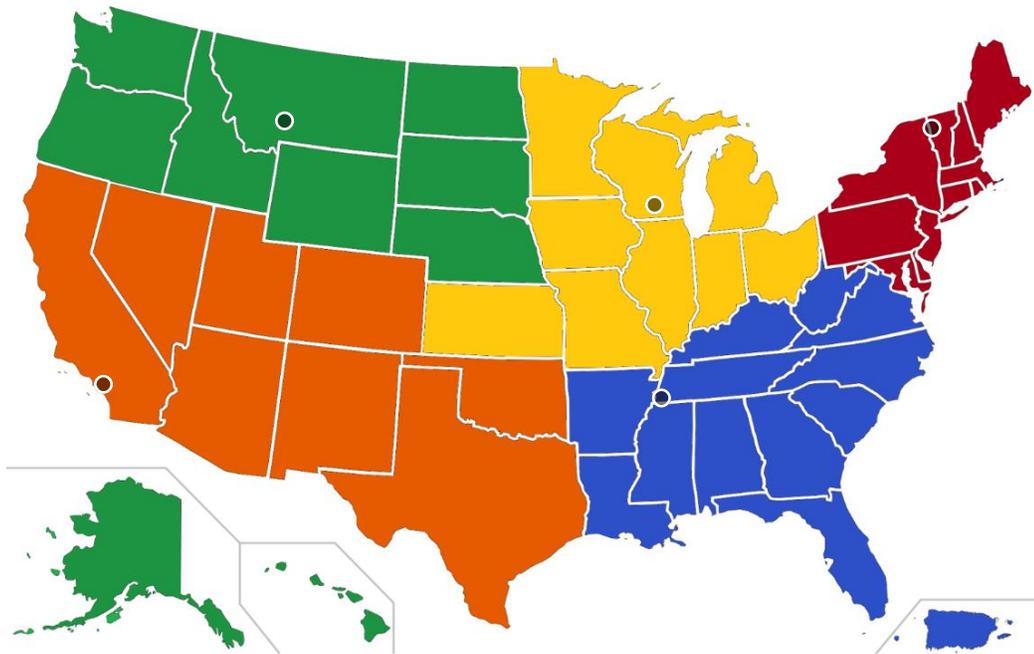




Job Priorities and Needs Report Phase 1: Southeast Region

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Overview

The U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) established five centers throughout the United States to lead and coordinate transportation workforce development efforts across the country’s major geographic regions (i.e., Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, West, and Southwest regions). These Regional Surface Transportation Workforce Development Centers will supply the people, planning, and resources necessary to address region specific priorities while working together to coordinate a national network capable of achieving workforce-related objectives that impact the country as a whole.

Nationwide challenges in workforce development that were the impetus for this work include demographic changes (retirees), barriers to career awareness and recruitment, and advances in technology changing occupational requirements. The Southeast Region Job Needs and Priorities Report identifies region-specific needs both in terms of key transportation careers and employee skill development. Findings were developed through analysis of regional labor data, real-time job postings, and stakeholder input.

Methodology

Regional information was analyzed from Federal, State, and private sector research, technical reports, conference presentations, case studies, strategic plans, and human resource documents. Transportation industry and employment trends were then characterized and assessed within the region.

Private and public industry stakeholders throughout the region were engaged through a variety of techniques. Stakeholders include contacts within DOLs, DOTs, industry associations, universities, private sector organizations, and labor unions. Interviews, surveys, and focus groups were conducted to identify critical job functions, workforce development activities, and anticipated workforce trends, as well as common recruitment, retention, and training challenges and innovative strategies underway to address these challenges. These engagement efforts helped to shape the list of critical transportation occupations within the region.

Historic, current, and future occupational estimates were generated and analyzed for all priority occupations identified through existing Department of Labor and Bureau of Labor Statistics databases. Supplementing occupational demand information with input from real-time job postings and stakeholder input provided a more accurate regional picture of job priorities and needs. The major transportation modes considered in these reports include ports of entry, highways, transit, rail, marine, non-motorized, pipeline, and air. Occupations serving these modes were identified for inclusion in this effort. **Table 1** outlines the screening criteria for identifying priority occupations.

Table 1. Criteria for the Prioritization of Transportation Occupations in the Southeast Region	
Criteria	Potential Qualification(s) for Inclusion
Phase 1 Screening Criteria: Based on Industry Assessment and BLS Data	
Increasing demand for employees/ High growth of occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Examine gross “percentage” of increasing demand change to identify those occupations with the greatest percentage of expected growthEliminate occupations that are expected to decrease in terms of number of employees the near future because less employees will be needed to fill these occupations

Table 1. Criteria for the Prioritization of Transportation Occupations in the Southeast Region

Criteria	Potential Qualification(s) for Inclusion
Established high demand for employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Examine historic, current, and future “number” of employees in the occupation ▪ Select occupations with the greatest number of employees or job openings, as there will be many positions that will need to be filled in these occupations
Phase 2 Screening Criteria: Based on Stakeholder Interviews and Alignment with SE Focus Areas	
Limited supply of new graduates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use data from training programs to identify areas where there may not be enough graduates to fill needed positions ▪ Select occupations with the greatest gaps between number of available positions and new graduates because these occupations will likely require support in terms of identifying new sources of employees or increasing the number of students in training programs
Experienced challenges in recruiting or retaining employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gather input from stakeholders regarding occupations in the region that there have traditionally been challenges in filling or keeping filled ▪ Selected occupations that have traditionally had these problems because these occupations may benefit from additional attention
Occupation has requirements for or relies upon new or up-and-coming technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Based on job requirements or stakeholder input, identify occupations in which employees must use technology frequently. Then, determine if the technology used in the occupation is new or evolving ▪ Select occupations with the greatest reliance on new technology as it is likely employees in these areas will have new training or educational requirements or the occupations will require different types of employees than in the past
Uniqueness of critical job functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Based on job requirements, identify unique occupations that do not share job functions with other occupations ▪ Select these occupations because they have the most individualized needs and would benefit from specialized attention.
Occupations that are unique to the Southeast or have a higher demand in the region than in other regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use existing job data to identify occupations that are unique to the region or in higher demand in the Southeast states (e.g., specialized job functions, reliance on specific technology, certain seasonal work) ▪ Select these occupations because they are specific to the region and therefore likely important elements of the workforce that will not be examined by other regions
Aligned with focus areas of the SETWC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine if the occupation or the potential workforce align with any of the region’s areas of focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Women in transportation ▪ Freight (including rail, truck, warehousing, and logistics) ▪ Military/veteran transition to transportation workforce
Ability of Center to positively impact occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider the reasons for challenges experienced in hiring/retaining employees in the occupation to determine if there are actions that the center can feasibly take to improve workforce issues ▪ Select only those occupations for which the center can reasonably have a positive impact

Analysis and Results

The report outlines in detail current industry trends within each state/commonwealth in the Southeast Region, provides analysis of regional priority job occupations based upon existing data, industry publications, and stakeholder feedback, and outlines in detail the projections, education or training requirements, and unique skillsets needed for successful employment in these occupations. A unique feature of the southeast region is the heavy influence of aerospace and aviation industry as well as distribution and logistics. These are dominant industry sectors for 11 of the 13 states/territories included in the region. The regions’ infrastructure also supports a strong distribution and logistics sector, with all modes represented in the region, and most within all states. The expansive coastline and port operations as well as extensive US interstate system and railroad infrastructure within the region set the stage for growth in intermodal operations. With freight volumes expected to increase significantly (along with intermodal interactions), this trend will create a lasting need for increased workers in the freight transportation arena.

Priority occupations in the transportation industry identified for the southeast region were organized into 4 categories (STEM, Vocational or Technical, Laborer, Supply Chain and Logistics). **Table 2** presents the identified priority occupations.

Table 2. Southeast Priority Occupations			
STEM Occupations	Supply Chain and Logistics Occupations	Technical Occupations	Skilled Labor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Computer and information systems managers ▪ Civil engineers ▪ Network and Computer Systems Administrators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Logisticians Operations ▪ Research Analysts ▪ Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bus and truck mechanics and diesel engine specialists ▪ Bus drivers, transit and intercity ▪ Heavy and tractor-trailer drivers ▪ Operating engineers and other construction equipment operators ▪ Aircraft Structure, Surfaces, Rigging, and Systems Assemblers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First-line supervisors of transportation and material-moving machine and vehicle operators

What’s Next?

The Phase 2 Job Priorities and Needs Reports will further build upon the findings included in the five initial reports. In Phase 2, each region’s research team will identify and discuss potential workforce development programs to address the skills needs identified. The Phase 2 Reports will also include detailed action plans and recommendations to address workforce needs regarding the key occupations in the regions. These initiatives will allow for the Centers and partners to better support the rapidly progressing transportation industry.