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PFLUGERVILLE WORKFORCE STUDY

Pflugerville Community Development Corporation



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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TIP Strategies, Inc., is a privately held Austin-based firm providing consulting and advisory services to public and private sector clients. Established in 1995, the firm's core competencies are strategic planning for economic development, talent strategies, organizational development, resiliency planning, and equity initiatives.

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CONTENTS

Project Overview 1

Recommendations 4

 1. Career and Technical Education 4

 2. Adult Workers 7

 3. Higher Education 9

 4. Advanced Technology and Innovation 11

 5. Funding..... 13

 6. Talent Attraction and Retention..... 14

 7. Entrepreneurship 16

 8. Small Business..... 17

 9. Soft Skills 19

 10. Wraparound Supports 21

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In early 2024, the Pflugerville Community Development Corporation (PCDC) adopted its comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS). The CEDS provides Pflugerville with a unified vision and approach for fostering a strong, resilient economy over the next three years and beyond. It aligns PCDC, the City of Pflugerville (the City), and leaders from business, education, nonprofits, and the public sector toward shared goals.

While the CEDS outlined workforce strategies, this workforce development study translates those strategies into actionable steps. PCDC engaged TIP Strategies (TIP) to delve deeper into workforce challenges and opportunities that focus on high-wage jobs and resident workers. TIP's work, based on thorough quantitative analysis and qualitative input, provides PCDC and Pflugerville community leaders with a comprehensive workforce approach through 10 recommendations (see Figure 1). Certain recommendations are identified as key priorities for the short-term, medium-term, and long-term. These high impact recommendations are intended to jumpstart workforce development and have transformative effects throughout the community.


Figure 1. Overview of Recommendations

KEY PRIORITIES: ● Short Term ● Medium Term ● Long Term

- 1 **CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION.** Align career and technical education (CTE) programming to in-demand, high-quality jobs in Pflugerville.
- 2 **ADULT WORKERS.** Support adult workers with a diverse range of training options like upskilling and reskilling opportunities and earn-and-learn models like apprenticeships.
- 3 **HIGHER EDUCATION.** Attract higher education programs to Pflugerville that focus on the advanced skills needed to support local industry.
- 4 **ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION.** Collaborate with economic development organizations, industry associations, and workforce entities across the region to meet the sector's talent demands.
- 5 **FUNDING.** Pursue public, private, and philanthropic funds to invest in workforce development initiatives.
- 6 **TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION.** Promote talent attraction and retention by supporting employee recruitment for local companies and investing in Pflugerville's quality of place.
- 7 **ENTREPRENEURSHIP.** Expand support for entrepreneurs in Pflugerville to stimulate new business formation and job creation and to elevate entrepreneurship as a viable career pathway.
- 8 **SMALL BUSINESS.** Convene local small businesses to provide networks and tools that address common human resource challenges.
- 9 **SOFT SKILLS.** Provide support to training programs and organizations that focus on soft skills training and development.
- 10 **WRAPAROUND SUPPORTS.** Address wraparound supports like housing, transportation, and childcare to remove barriers to work.

At the outset of the engagement, TIP conducted a comprehensive quantitative analysis of labor, industry, and education conditions in Pflugerville and the larger Austin-Georgetown-Round Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The results of this analysis were presented as an interactive data visualization (delivered separately). A brief description of the subjects covered in the data visualization is provided in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Overview of Interactive Deliverable Menu



WORKER AND RESIDENT DYNAMICS	OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE	STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY ALIGNMENT	EDUCATION AND TRAINING ASSETS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Nodes Map. Visual representation of resident workers and jobs. • Commuting Patterns. Trends and commuter demographics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry Employment. Growth trends and location quotients. • Occupational Employment. Growth trends and flow of workers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Opportunity Area Profiles. Strategic opportunity area definitions and key characteristics of the workforce, including in-demand job skills, desired qualifications, occupational demographics, and earnings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awards and Program Completions. Data by institution, field of study, and detailed program area. • Apprenticeships. Trends by industry sector, demographics, and union and veteran status. • Career and Technical Education. Participant data by regional school districts and program area.

Source(s): TIP Strategies, Inc.

In addition to the four target industries identified in the CEDS—advanced technology and innovation, life sciences, software and information technology (IT), and retail—the data analysis was expanded to include opportunities in the skilled trades. Job postings in these five strategic opportunity areas (SOAs) were reviewed to gauge current employer demand. This method identifies in-demand occupations more accurately than outdated industry staffing patterns by using carefully selected job postings to pinpoint the most sought-after roles and specialized skills in each of the five SOAs (see Figure 3, page 3).

The quantitative analysis was complemented by stakeholder engagement to gather qualitative feedback on the current state of the workforce in Pflugerville. Stakeholder engagement was accomplished through two employer roundtable sessions and several one-on-one interviews with leaders who have a vital role in supporting Pflugerville’s workforce, including Pflugerville Independent School District (ISD), City of Pflugerville staff, Opportunity Austin, Workforce Solutions Capital Area, and local small business owners. Several common themes emerged from the roundtables and interviews that shed light on the challenges that Pflugerville employers face in attracting, retaining, and developing talent. These themes, coupled with insights from TIP’s national portfolio of talent-driven engagements, informed the study recommendations.

Figure 3. In-Demand Occupations in Pflugerville's Strategic Opportunity Areas

Based on an analysis of job postings in the Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA, May 2022–April 2024.

ADVANCED TECH. & INNOVATION	LIFE SCIENCES	SOFTWARE & IT	RETAIL	SKILLED TRADES
Software Developers	Registered Nurses	Software Developers	Retail Salespersons	Construction Managers
Industrial Engineers	Medical Assistants	Computer Occupations, All Other	First-Line Supervs. of Retail Sales Workers	Project Management Specialists
Computer, All Other	Medical & Health Services Managers	Sales Reps, Non-Tech. & Scientific Products	Food Service Managers	Laborers & Material Movers, Hand
Project Management Specialists	Licensed Practical & Vocational Nurses	Data Scientists	Fast Food & Counter Workers	Automotive Service Techs. & Mechanics
Civil Engineers	Health Technologists & Technicians	Marketing Managers	Cashiers	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General
Marketing Managers	Home Health & Personal Care Aides	Database Administrators	Waiters & Waitresses	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
Mechanical Engineers	Dental Assistants	Project Management Specialists	First-Line Supervs. of Food Prep & Services	Cost Estimators
Architectural & Engineering Managers	Medical Secretaries	Computer User Support Specialists	Customer Service Representatives	Construction Laborers
Data Scientists	Physical Therapists	Management Analysts	Stockers & Order Fillers	Electricians
Electrical Engineers	Nursing Assistants	Web Developers	General & Operations Managers	Heating & Refrig. Mechanics & Installers

Source(s): US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); Lightcast 2024.1—Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): Job postings include non-staffing, unique, active job postings for full-time, part-time, and flexible positions, excluding internships, between May 2022 and April 2024 in the Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA, which includes Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis, and Williamson Counties.

The resulting 10 recommendations are outlined in more detail in the following section and are designed to strengthen Pflugerville's workforce development efforts. Each recommendation includes a summary of supporting data and qualitative input, detailed strategies for implementation, and illustrative case studies or additional resources to support execution. These recommendations, based on extensive community input and a thorough analysis of workforce barriers and opportunities, provide a framework for fostering a robust talent pipeline in Pflugerville through a collaborative approach. With these recommendations, PCDC, City leadership, and their education and workforce training partners will be well equipped to achieve the City's talent goals. Indicators of progress will include higher enrollment and completion rates in career and technical education (CTE) programs, increased educational attainment, and improved household incomes among Pflugerville residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following 10 recommendations offer Pflugerville community leaders a comprehensive strategy to accelerate workforce development. Certain recommendations have been marked as top priorities for various timeframes—short term, medium term, and long term.

1. CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Align career and technical education (CTE) programming to in-demand, high-quality jobs in Pflugerville. **MEDIUM TERM**

CTE programs are an essential component of a secure talent pipeline, helping young students gain skills in a supervised classroom environment to prepare for the real work world. Pflugerville ISD's (PfISD) CTE programming is already well known among area employers. But to effectively address evolving workforce needs, the City's schools must position their CTE programs to support in-demand job opportunities in Pflugerville's strategic opportunity areas (SOAs). Stakeholder engagement validated this need, as advanced technology and innovation employers highlighted their preference for entry-level workers with baseline industry knowledge. Further, employers conveyed their desire to build better connections with the talent pipeline at PfISD, suggesting CTE programs as platforms for developing partnerships.

Data analysis revealed strong opportunities to better align Pflugerville's CTE programming with in-demand occupations. For example, among those in the skilled trades SOA, Electricians* represent one of the fastest growing and most in-demand occupations, with a 94.7 percent increase in total employment across the Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA from 2013 through 2023. Not only is this occupation in high demand but it also represents a middle-skill job that offers a living wage for a single adult, making it an attractive option for students and young adults seeking vocational training. Despite the high demand for this occupation, PfISD does not offer an Electrical CTE program, while other nearby school districts (Austin, Leander, and Round Rock ISDs) do (see Figure 4). As the City seeks to expand its CTE offerings, it is crucial that programming is in alignment with local in-demand, high-quality job opportunities.

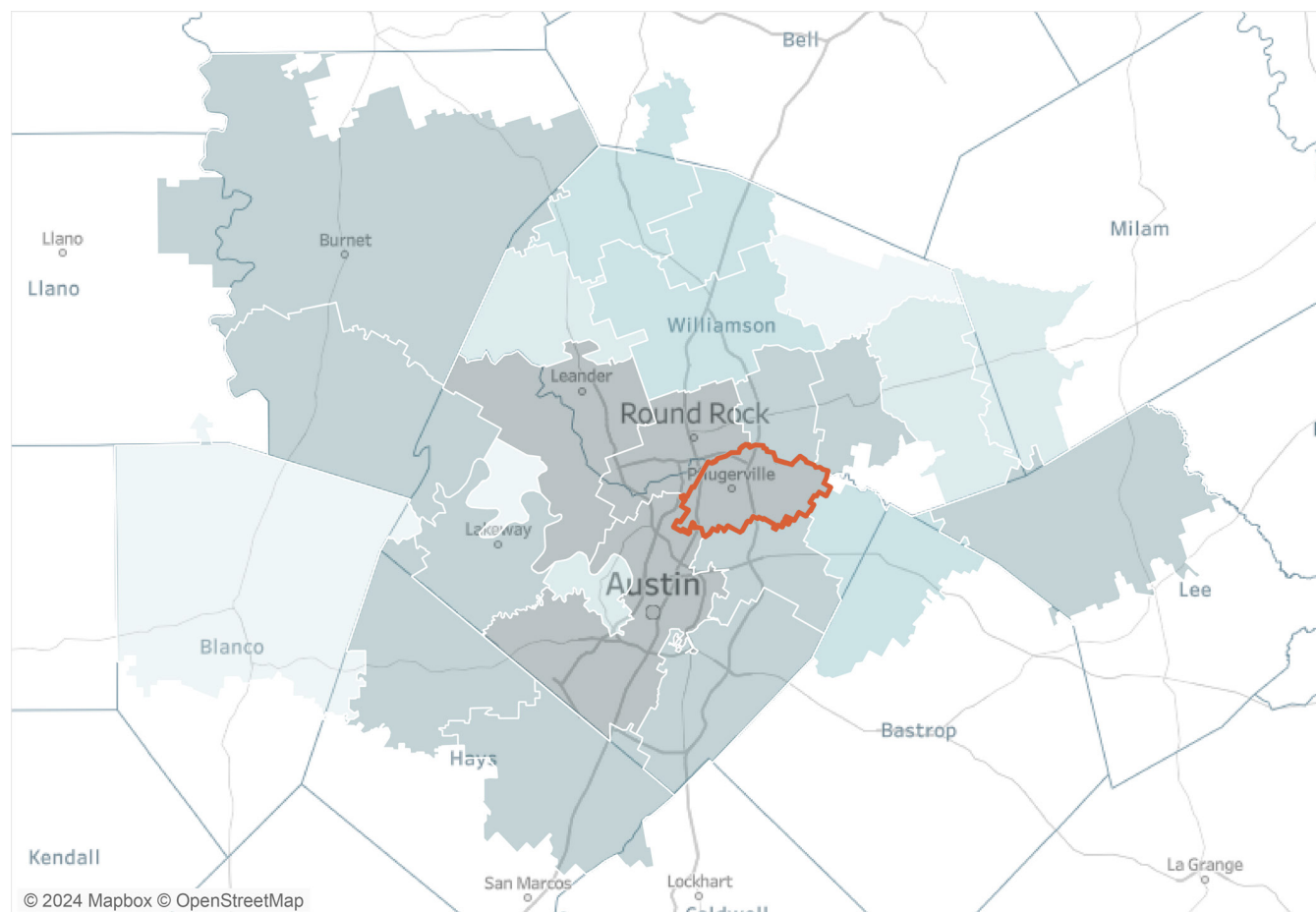
STRATEGIES

- 1.1.** Help establish an Electrical CTE program or an electrical pre-apprenticeship program with PfISD to support the skilled trades SOA.
- 1.2.** Support the P-TECH Computer and Information Technology Academy at Connally High School to connect local students to high-demand IT industry-based and postsecondary credentials.
- 1.3.** Bolster the talent pipeline for SOAs by scaling CTE programs, such as Culinary Arts for retail and Healthcare Therapeutics and Diagnostics for life sciences.
- 1.4.** Scale PfISD's Engineering CTE offerings related to the advanced technology and innovation SOA by helping establish programs in Advanced Manufacturing and Machinery Mechanics* and Welding (see recommendation 4, page 11).
- 1.5.** Offer concurrent CTE training in entrepreneurship, teaching students the basic skills needed to begin and operate a business in any of the SOAs as they gain experience in a given industry (see recommendation 7, page 16).

* Throughout the report, formal titles for occupations and training programs are capitalized according to state or federal naming conventions. This includes titles like Electricians and Computer User Support Specialists from the federal [Standard Occupational Classification \(SOC\) System](#). CTE programs recognized by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) during the analysis are also capitalized, along with specific fields of study from the federal [Classification of Instructional Programs](#). Names not aligned with these standards are not capitalized. Note that the [TEA has refreshed some CTE program names](#); for instance, Advanced Manufacturing and Machinery Mechanics is now called Robotics and Automation Technology.

In addition to meeting the need for CTE programming for skilled trades, like Electricians, offering CTE programs aligned with each of the SOAs means a better equipped workforce that is poised to fill high-demand, high-quality local jobs. This alignment signifies to employers that Pflugerville's K–12 education system and economic development partners have a coordinated and unified effort to enhance students' career readiness and prepare the workforce for tomorrow. Leveraging partnerships among employers and CTE programs benefits both parties: schools get updated, industry-relevant programming, while employers gain access to a tailored talent pool.

Figure 4. Electrical Programs in Travis and Williamson Counties School Districts



ELECTRICAL CTE PROGRAMS			
School District	Learners	Completers	Completion Rate
Austin ISD	30	12	40%
Leander ISD	17	≤10	29.4%
Round Rock ISD	≤10	≤10	100%
Pflugerville ISD	0	N/A	N/A

Source(s): Lightcast 2024.1—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; Texas Education Agency (TEA); TIP Strategies, Inc.
 Note(s): Completion rate is the ratio of completers to learners. Five is used as an estimate in the calculation where the number of learners or completers is 10 or fewer.

Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley Pre-Apprenticeship Electrician Program

In spring 2023, Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley received a Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) grant to collaborate with Blinn College on an electrician pre-apprenticeship bridge program. Program participants gain the knowledge needed to pass the Registered Apprenticeship entrance exam, earn an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 10 card, and receive a certificate from the National Center for Construction Education and Research. The TWC Pre-Apprenticeship Pathways grant funds up to six months of basic skills instruction and requires grantees to provide documentation enabling program completers to enter a Registered Apprenticeship directly. This state funding helps educational institutions expand pre-apprenticeship programs and foster talent development in high-demand fields.

AmTech Career Academy

Amarillo Independent School District's CTE center, AmTech Career Academy, opened in fall 2021. Construction began in early 2018 to redevelop a 200,000-square-foot distribution center into a state-of-the-art facility. During that process, the Amarillo City Council approved a request for the Amarillo Economic Development Corporation to match a \$50,000 grant from TWC for aviation job training and welding equipment for the CTE center. AmTech's programs, developed with input from the community, parents, and local business leaders, address industry and talent gaps. The academy now offers over 30 career pathways across nine categories, including health sciences, culinary arts, skilled trades, and manufacturing. AmTech has expanded through partnerships with employers like Pantex, the largest employer in the Texas Panhandle. In 2022, Pantex donated \$10,000 to support AmTech's esports and robotics programs and volunteered staff for mock interviews and project supervision.

Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) Grant Program

Awarded every other year, the [JET Grant Program](#) assists grantees with purchasing and installing equipment for CTE courses that will eventually lead to a license, certificate, or postsecondary degree in a high-demand occupation. School districts must partner with a public junior, state, or technical college to be eligible for the JET grant. In early 2024, TWC awarded three Central Texas school districts—Academy ISD, Robinson ISD, and Temple ISD—with more than \$700,000 total to help them procure equipment to train over 600 students in fields such as welding, licensed vocational nursing, and medical assistantship. This funding allows CTE programs to utilize up-to-date equipment in the classroom, better preparing students for real work environments.



2. ADULT WORKERS

Support adult workers with a diverse range of training options like upskilling and reskilling opportunities and earn-and-learn models like apprenticeships.

Talent demand is growing rapidly for the identified SOAs in Pflugerville and the Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA. These SOAs—particularly life sciences, software and IT, and advanced technology and innovation—are also transforming in ways that will require workers with more specialized skills and experience. For example, employers in advanced technology and innovation engaged by TIP identified manufacturing technicians, computer numerical control (CNC) machinists, and quality control inspectors as positions that are in high demand but difficult to recruit due to the on-the-job experience required.

Of the top in-demand occupations in Pflugerville’s SOAs, only 10 represent middle-skill jobs, requiring training beyond the high school level but less than a four-year degree. Among these 10, only 3 offer a living median wage for a single adult: Computer User Support Specialists (\$28.91), Licensed Vocational Nurses (\$27.18), and Electricians (\$27.07). The other seven occupations are primed for upskilling opportunities (see Figure 5, page 8). As Pflugerville seeks to expand vocational training opportunities to high school students through a new PfISD CTE campus, a wide range of upskilling and reskilling options for working adults will allow existing low-skill and middle-skill workers to climb into higher income occupations.

Conversations with PfISD’s CTE director and Workforce Solutions Capital Area validated the importance of providing adult workers with a range of training options that fits their needs. By investing in comprehensive upskilling and reskilling programs, including evening classes for adults at the PfISD CTE center, Pflugerville can enhance residents’ career readiness and provide pathways to higher-income careers, supporting sustained professional success.

STRATEGIES

- 2.1.** Leverage the PfISD CTE center as a hub offering upskilling and reskilling in SOAs for Pflugerville’s existing adult workforce (see recommendation 3, page 9).
- 2.2.** Provide adult trainees with the language to translate existing skills for future employability.
- 2.3.** Connect employers to resources and funding for registered apprenticeships and on-the-job training.



To match Pflugerville’s talent demand, stakeholders must support modern training for not only new talent but also for the adult workforce, who may have experience in related fields but need updated skillsets. Taking these steps will ensure that Pflugerville’s working adults have the skills needed to access high-quality, well-paying jobs and meet industry needs.

Figure 5. Selected Middle-Skill Occupations Primed for Upskilling

The living wage in 2023 for a single adult in the Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA was \$23.98 an hour.

OCCUPATION	SOA	HOURLY EARNINGS PERCENTILE				
		10th	25th	Median	75th	90th
Nursing Assistants	Life Sciences	\$13.59	\$14.34	\$15.50	\$17.22	\$19.40
Medical Assistants	Life Sciences	\$15.43	\$17.50	\$19.20	\$21.42	\$23.45
Dental Assistants	Life Sciences	\$15.27	\$17.82	\$21.73	\$23.50	\$27.68
Health Technologists & Techs	Life Sciences	\$17.88	\$18.81	\$22.47	\$28.41	\$38.48
Automotive Service Techs	Skilled Trades	\$12.81	\$16.02	\$22.23	\$31.68	\$38.42
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	Skilled Trades	\$15.11	\$18.42	\$22.50	\$27.69	\$36.26
Heating & Refrig. Mechanics & Installers	Skilled Trades	\$17.14	\$19.48	\$23.46	\$29.22	\$37.72

Source(s): BLS; Lightcast 2024.1—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; Amy K. Glasmeier, Living Wage Calculator, 2024, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT); TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): Data include estimated earnings at the 10th, 25th, 50th (median), 75th, and 90th percentiles in 2023 US dollars.

Socorro ISD’s Community Education Program Model

Some school districts have a dedicated department that provides classroom space and after-hours instructors for adult, family, and community member education. These departments often support integrated education and training (IET) programs, which help adults gain citizenship, acquire English language skills, and obtain a general equivalency diploma while training for a career. Alongside this assistance, the Socorro ISD Department of Community Education in El Paso, Texas, introduced a [Pharmacy Technician](#) course for adult learners in the summer of 2023. Candidates are required to be US citizens, have a high school diploma, and pass English and math tests, with support available through Socorro ISD’s IET program. This community education model could serve as a useful framework for a CTE center offering adult training, with lessons learned in scheduling, instructor recruitment, and eligibility requirements.

Skills Development Fund

The [Skills Development Fund](#) helps businesses train and retrain workers through partnerships with public community or technical colleges, workforce boards, or the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service ([TEEX](#)). Grants of up to \$500,000 (or more for consortia) are available to develop and implement customized training plans for full-time, paid employees. There is a \$2,000 cap on training per employee, and businesses must adhere to reporting requirements. The initiative is administered by TWC, which accepts project proposals year-round for a 12-month grant period.

3. HIGHER EDUCATION

Attract higher education programs to Pflugerville that focus on the advanced skills needed to support local industry.

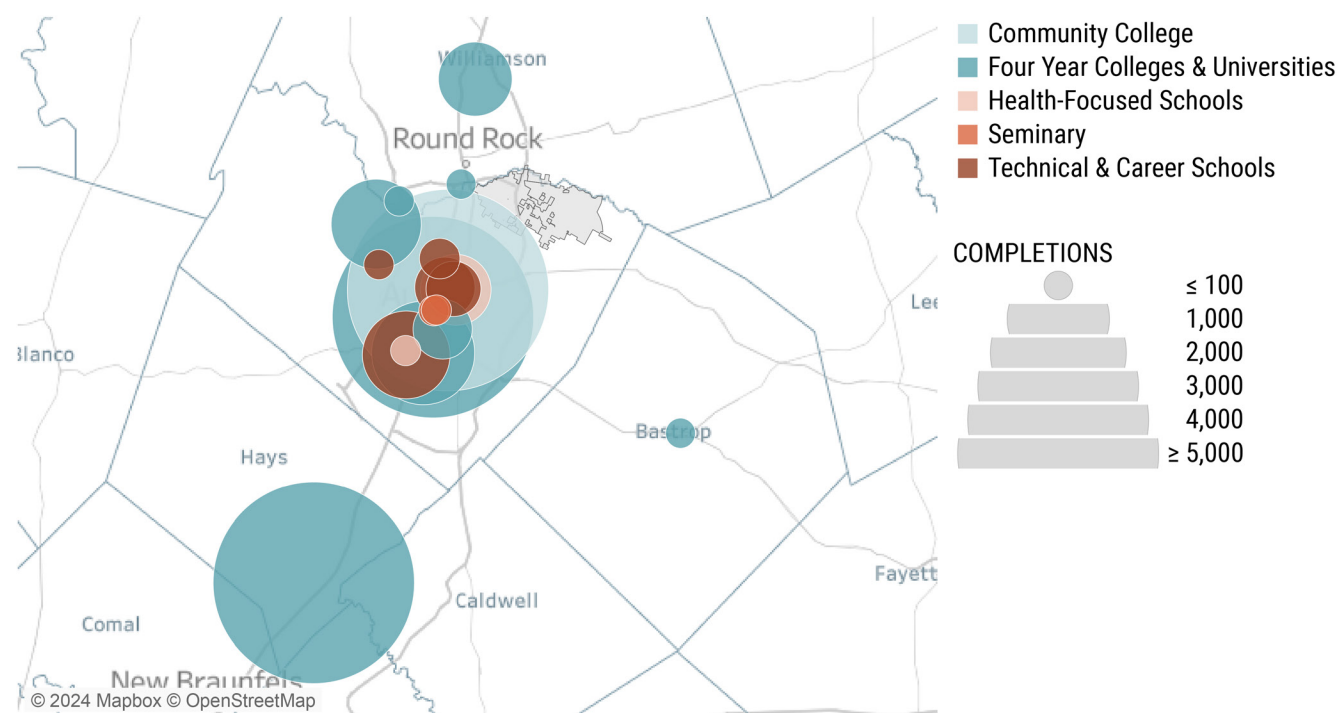
Postsecondary institutions, such as technical colleges and universities, provide a pivotal role in equipping students with the skills needed for high-paying careers. Access to higher education is important to maximize regional opportunities and meet the talent needs of employers in Pflugerville's SOAs, especially advanced technology and innovation.

The Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA is home to many higher education institutions. Local four-year universities, community colleges, and career-based schools saw more than 37,000 program completions in 2022. While Pflugerville is close to this multitude of institutions, none of these completions occurred within the Pflugerville City limits (see Figure 6). With specialized skills such as nursing, programming languages, restaurant operation, and HVAC needed to support growing local industries, attracting a higher education program to Pflugerville can ensure that local workers are equipped with the qualifications required to take top jobs in SOAs.

STRATEGIES

- 3.1.** Recruit a satellite higher education campus to Pflugerville.
- 3.2.** Sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to allow the institution to offer training for adult workers at the PfISD CTE center (see recommendation 2, page 7).
- 3.3.** Consider prioritizing higher education training around PCDC's SOAs like advanced technology and innovation to leverage nearby megaprojects (see recommendation 4, page 11).
- 3.4.** Promote a diverse range of accessible higher education awards offered at a satellite campus in Pflugerville.

Figure 6. Location of General Program Completions at Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA Institutions, 2022

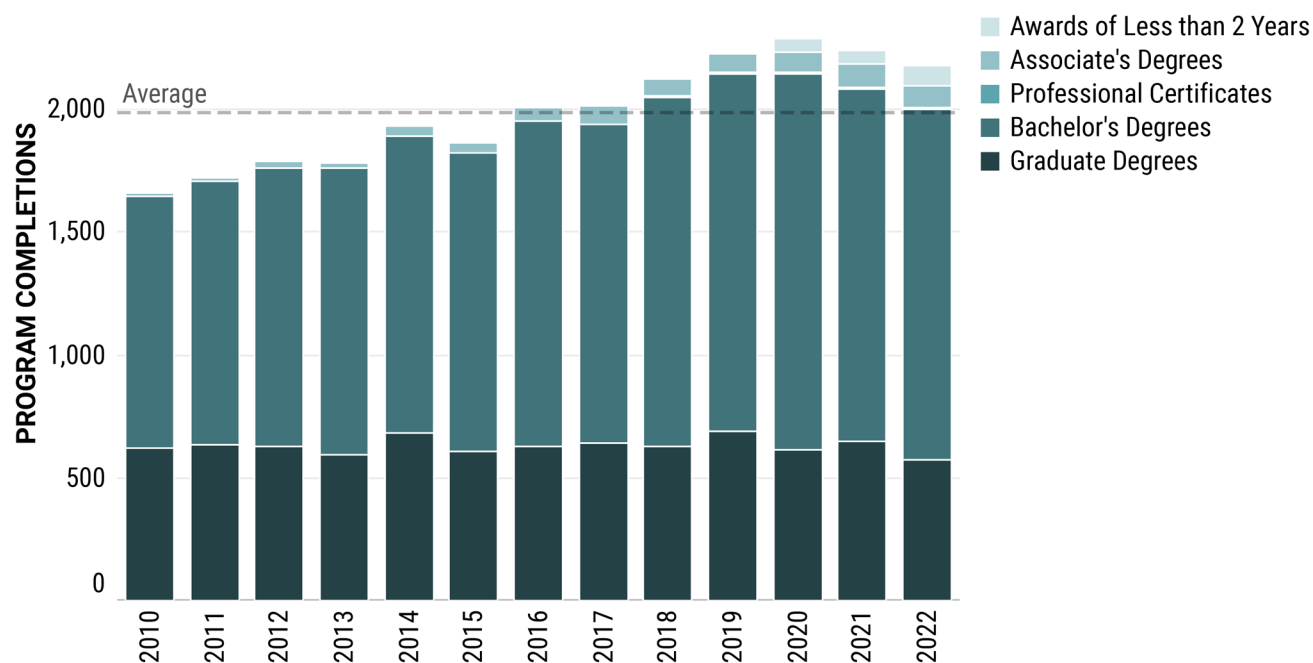


Source(s): National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS); Lightcast 2024.1—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): Includes only general programs with at least 25 average annual completions between 2010 and 2022.

For example, Engineering degree completions in the MSA have fallen since 2020 (see Figure 7). In 2022, the top conferring institutions for these awards were the University of Texas at Austin (1,880 awards), Texas State University (209 awards), and Austin Community College (87 awards). Pflugerville's proximity to major corporate investments in advanced technology and innovation makes it an ideal location for expanding education and training programs in fields like Engineering. Strategically recruiting a higher education program to Pflugerville that focuses on this opportunity can lead to stronger workforce opportunities for Pflugerville residents.

Figure 7. Engineering Completions by Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA Institutions



Source(s): NCES, IPEDS; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Ohio State University at Marion

In 1957, the Ohio State University school system opened a satellite campus in Marion, Ohio, about 45 minutes north of Columbus, to bring higher education opportunities closer to all Ohioans. Initially a technical college, Ohio State University at Marion now includes a health technologies center and a science and engineering building. The satellite campus has catalyzed access to training and upskilling opportunities in high-growth sectors, daily serving 3,000 to 3,500 students and staff in a town of just 35,000 residents. Students can complete an entire undergraduate degree in selected fields including biology and engineering technology. The campus also features a library (which offers access to the full Ohio State University collection) and hosts workforce training and innovation workshops at its corporate enterprise center.

4. ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Collaborate with economic development organizations, industry associations, and workforce entities across the region to meet the sector's talent demands.

Effective talent strategies rely on seamless collaboration among industry, workforce organizations, and education and training providers. Escalating demand for skilled manufacturing and advanced technology professionals in the Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA underscores the need for a unified approach to building a strong talent base. Pflugerville is central to these efforts, geographically and strategically. Partners like Austin Regional Manufacturers Association (ARMA) and Opportunity Austin, both of which participated in stakeholder engagement, are crucial in connecting existing and relocating manufacturers with talent sources and industry resources.

Over the past decade, leading occupations in the advanced technology and innovation SOA have seen a massive increase in demand. All but one of the top 10 in-demand occupations experienced a positive change in employment from 2013 through 2023 (see Figure 8, page 12). Notably, Data Scientists; All Other Computer Occupations; and Project Management Specialists topped the list of largest percentage change in employment over the 10-year span.

To meet this massive increase in demand, more can be done to strengthen the talent pipeline for these jobs, starting as early as high school. While PflISD's Engineering CTE program has high completion rates compared to regional school districts, it lacks other CTE programs to train young students for careers in the advanced technology and innovation SOA. PflISD does not have CTE programs in Welding or Advanced Manufacturing and Machinery Mechanics (now called Robotics and Automation Technology), which can offer critical manufacturing skills according to stakeholders. This underscores the need to expose young people to career opportunities in the advanced technology and innovation SOA.

Additionally, each of the top 10 in-demand occupations typically requires a bachelor's degree. However, the training pipeline in the Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA is not meeting talent needs in recent years. With under 2,200 Engineering degree completions in 2022, higher education institutions would need to graduate over one-and-a-half times the number of students to meet demand for the five engineering-related jobs in the top 10.

As jobs grow in advanced technology and innovation, Pflugerville must align local industry, workforce organizations, economic developers, and educational institutions. Bridging gaps among educators and local businesses by creating and strengthening partnerships with key organizations will ensure the local workforce is adequately prepared to meet the rising demand for manufacturing and advanced technology talent in the region.

STRATEGIES

- 4.1. Continue strong partnerships with Opportunity Austin to support the advanced technology and innovation sector.
- 4.2. Connect local manufacturing employers with industry associations, like ARMA, that can help them tap into the education and workforce talent pipeline.
- 4.3. Increase awareness of and exposure to careers in advanced technology and innovation through career fairs and speaking opportunities in classrooms.
- 4.4. Maintain engagement in regional education partnerships, such as E3 Alliance, to build the advanced technology and innovation education-to-career pipeline in Pflugerville and opportunities throughout Central Texas.
- 4.5. Continue to help Pflugerville employers host educator externs focused on the advanced technology and innovation SOA to help teachers provide context to content.
- 4.6. Encourage programs of study related to the talent demands of the advanced technology and innovation SOA at a future higher education institution in Pflugerville (see recommendation 3, page 9).
- 4.7. Assist PflISD in scaling its existing Engineering CTE program and establishing CNC Machining and Welding CTE programs (see recommendation 1, page 4).

Figure 8. Advanced Technology and Innovation SOA Labor Demand Metrics

RANK	IN-DEMAND ADVANCED TECH. SOA OCCUPATIONS	ANNUAL JOB POSTINGS	2023 JOBS	10-YR. % CHANGE	ENTRY-LEVEL EDUCATION	OJT	WORK EXPERIENCE REQUIRED
1	Software Developers	1,822	25,997	121%	Bachelor's degree	None	None
2	Industrial Engineers	1,233	2,478	142%	Bachelor's degree	None	None
3	All Other Computer Occupations	1,082	10,684	432%	Bachelor's degree	None	None
4	Project Management Specialists	700	14,128	303%	Bachelor's degree	None	None
5	Civil Engineers	687	4,577	75%	Bachelor's degree	None	None
6	Marketing Managers	609	5,073	277%	Bachelor's degree	None	> 5 years
7	Mechanical Engineers	608	1,938	17%	Bachelor's degree	None	None
8	Architectural & Engineering Managers	493	2,486	105%	Bachelor's degree	None	> 5 years
9	Data Scientists	437	2,130	918%	Bachelor's degree	None	None
10	Electrical Engineers	420	2,319	-0.6%	Bachelor's degree	None	None

Source(s): BLS; Lightcast 2024.1—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; US Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Occupational Information Network (O*NET) version 28.2; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): All Other Computer Occupations includes all [computer occupations](#) not listed separately under the federal classification system. OJT is on-the-job training.

Big Country Manufacturing Alliance (BCMA)

BCMA is an organization composed of manufacturers in the Big Country (a multicounty region in northwest central Texas centered on Abilene) that aims to improve the regional industry's talent attraction, retention, and development efforts. BCMA hosts industry roundtables and recruitment events, offers scholarships for manufacturing-related higher education, and promotes workshops and job openings via social media. BCMA's board is led by local manufacturing firms and includes supporting partners such as Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas, the Region 14 Education Service Center, and a local community college.



5. FUNDING

Pursue public, private, and philanthropic funds to invest in workforce development initiatives.

Strong partnerships are essential for securing funding and creating effective programs that address skills gaps and meet employers' needs. PCDC has excelled in leveraging grant opportunities and should continue to support Pflugerville's employers in building their businesses and addressing workforce needs. In conversations with area employers, they suggested that engaging local businesses in efforts to better align training programs with employment demands, for example by providing updated equipment, would help ensure the workforce is trained in current skills.



STAKEHOLDERS SHARED

"We appreciate all of PCDC's assistance with getting the proper licensing and establishing our business."

—Pflugerville small business owners



STRATEGIES

- 5.1. Continue strong partnerships with Workforce Solutions Capital Area to attract workforce training grants to Pflugerville, such as the Texas Workforce Commission's High Demand Job Training Grant Program or the Lone Star Workforce of the Future Fund.
- 5.2. Secure private sector sponsorships to upgrade training facilities with cutting-edge equipment.
- 5.3. Consider exploring donations from high-net-worth individuals or philanthropic organizations to bolster workforce training efforts in Pflugerville.

To support the sustainable implementation of a wide range of workforce initiatives, Pflugerville should tap into diverse pools of funding. Leveraging public, private, and philanthropy funds can advance workforce development goals and yield successful returns on investment.

High Demand Job Training (HDJT) Grant Program

The HDJT Grant Program fosters collaboration among workforce development boards and Type A or Type B economic development corporations for high-demand job training and related workforce activities. The Texas Workforce Commission supports these partnerships by matching economic development sales taxes with up to \$150,000 in funds sourced from the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Lone Star Workforce of the Future Fund (LSWF)

The [LSWF](#) provides public community or technical colleges and nonprofit organizations with up to \$250,000 to help train workers in high-demand occupations. There are over 250 entry-level and middle-skills jobs that are categorized as high-demand, mostly in the finance, information technology, engineering, education, healthcare, skilled trades, and hospitality sectors. These grants can cover up to 60 percent of a program's funding, and at least one-half of the participants must secure a high-demand job with a self-sufficiency wage on completion. Applications for the LSWF are accepted until funds are exhausted.

Ector County ISD and the Permian Strategic Partnership

The US oil and gas sector is projected to add nearly 200,000 jobs by 2040, requiring a skilled workforce to fill these positions. In an effort to supercharge the energy industry's talent pipeline in Texas's Permian Basin, Ector County ISD passed an \$80 million bond resolution in 2023 to build a new CTE center. To support these efforts, the Permian Strategic Partnership (PSP), a group of over 30 energy businesses and higher education partners, pledged an [additional investment of \\$10 million](#) to help with construction, furniture, and equipment. This investment by PSP aims to build a robust future talent pool for the industry, benefiting both the sector and the local community. Groundbreaking for the CTE center is expected in January 2025.

6. TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION

Promote talent attraction and retention by supporting employee recruitment for local companies and investing in Pflugerville's quality of place.

LONG TERM

Attracting and retaining talent is essential for Pflugerville's economic competitiveness. While many cities face challenges in growing and keeping their workforce, investing in quality of place can significantly enhance Pflugerville's appeal to current and prospective employees. This sentiment has served Pflugerville well. Stakeholders in the retail focus group spoke to the City's close community and outdoor recreation amenities as factors that drew them to start their businesses in Pflugerville. By continuing to develop vibrant public spaces, support local amenities, and promote its unique attributes, the City can further expand and maintain its worker base.

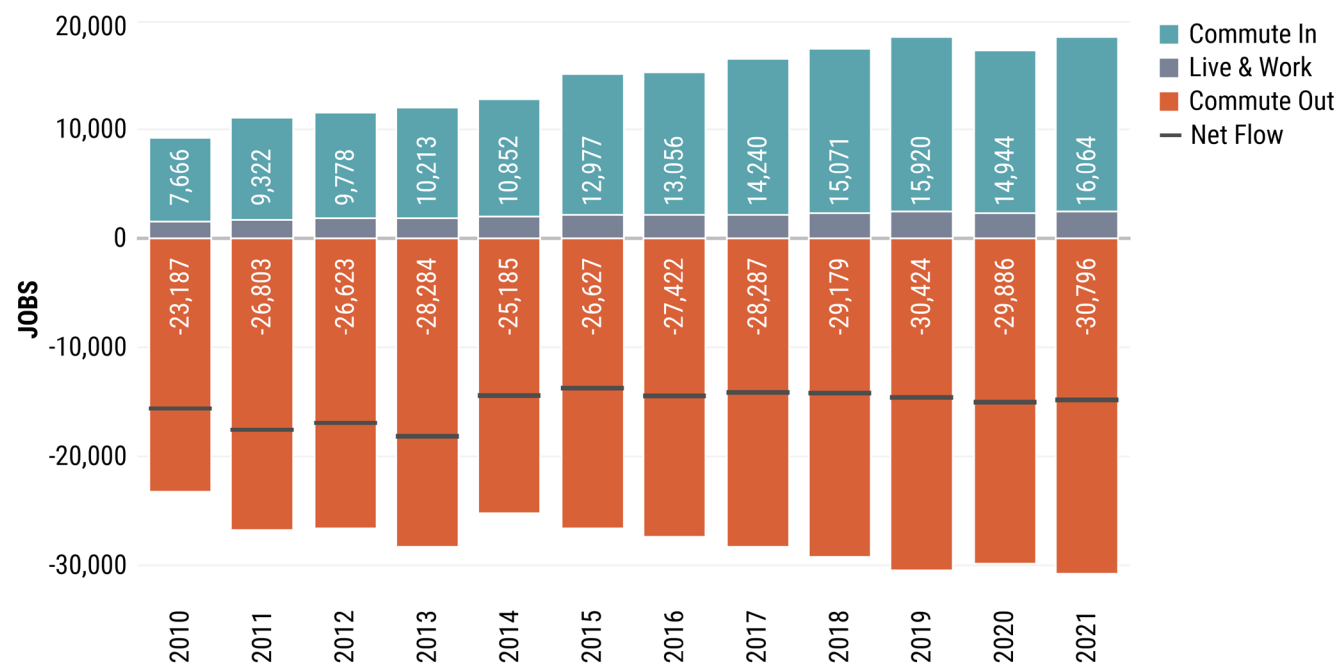
Due to the City's proximity to Austin and other rapidly growing suburbs, Pflugerville is a net exporter of workers across nearly every industry sector. Despite a climbing number of workers who live outside of Pflugerville and commute in, the City has remained a steady net exporter (see Figure 9). As of 2021 (the latest year of available data), over one-half of Pflugerville's working residents are employed in Austin, and more residents commute to Round Rock for work (3,125) than live and work in Pflugerville (2,493). About 93 percent of Pflugerville's employed residents commute outside the City for work. Compared to regional peers, only Hutto (98 percent) and Manor (96 percent) have higher shares of working residents who commute outside of their home city for work.

STRATEGIES

- 6.1.** Engage residents to identify areas near employment nodes (see Figure 10) for quality of place amenities, such as restaurants or outdoor amenities.
- 6.2.** Promote and assist growth of existing amenities like the 55+ miles of Pflugerville trails, Lake Pflugerville Park, Deutschen Pfest, and the Pecan Street Collective vendor market and fair.
- 6.3.** Leverage a marketing campaign for PCDC to include messaging specific to talent attraction.

Figure 9. Commuting Pattern Trend

Flow of workers and residents through Pflugerville, Texas, 2010–2021.



Source(s): Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD), Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES); TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): Only includes residents and workers in Texas.

Shepherd Mountain Bike Park

After the Taum Sauk Reservoir collapse in December 2005, which caused nearly \$1 billion in damage, Iron County, Missouri, turned a tragedy into an opportunity to invest in its quality of place. Using settlement funds, county leaders developed the *Invest in Iron* plan to capitalize on the area's outdoor beauty and build a new attraction: the [Shepherd Mountain Bike Park](#). Opened in April 2021, the park has served as a strong asset for the community. For example, it became the location of a season opener for one of the nation's premier mountain bike racing events, attracting visitors and jobs. The park's success led to winning [nearly \\$1 million](#) in state grants for recreational trails and tourism development. These funds will also support the park's second development phase, adding family-friendly hike and bike trails and other outdoor amenities.

Midland Downtown Farmers Market

The downtown farmers market in Midland, Texas, is the longest-running farmers market in the Permian Basin. Operating year-round on Saturday mornings, the market provides a fun and family-accessible community atmosphere while supporting the local small business economy with exposure and sales. The Midland Downtown Farmers Market (MDFM), a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, relies on vendor fees and donations for funding. As a quality-of-place investment, the Midland Development Corporation (MDC) began financially supporting the MDFM in 2021. The MDFM director [said](#), "We have more than doubled in size of vendors in 2021 from any other year, thanks to support from the MDC."



7. ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Expand support for entrepreneurs in Pflugerville to stimulate new business formation and job creation and to elevate entrepreneurship as a viable career pathway. **SHORT TERM**

Entrepreneurial support is a workforce strategy, as it spurs new job opportunities and local reinvestment. A vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem can bolster Pflugerville's reputation as a dynamic and innovative community and can aid in the attraction of skilled talent. Entrepreneurship can also be a viable career pathway for residents. Stakeholder engagement revealed a growing group of entrepreneurs in Pflugerville's retail SOA who have benefited from resources provided by PCDC. These resources and supports have been instrumental in helping them get their businesses successfully started and anchored in Pflugerville. Building on this success, Pflugerville can introduce additional programs to attract and nurture entrepreneurs and innovators across all SOAs.



STAKEHOLDERS SHARED

"We opened our business in Pflugerville because of the ... ample outdoor amenities, and great community feel."

—Pflugerville small business owners



Expanding entrepreneurial support is crucial for fostering job growth and stimulating the economy. These efforts will reinforce the City's image as a hub for creativity and innovation, uplifting established locals—the hometown heroes—and newcomers alike.

STRATEGIES

- 7.1.** Continue partnering with regional organizations like Texas Venture Alliance to offer entrepreneurial events like Venture Week.
- 7.2.** Increase the number of participants in the PCDC Entrepreneurship Exchange Network to connect entrepreneurs to networking events, funding, and training.
- 7.3.** Establish a hometown hero program or landing space for former Pflugerville residents to return and launch their businesses.
- 7.4.** Create an entrepreneurial hub in Downtown East or the Pecan District once space is available.
- 7.5.** Leverage the Pflugerville Chamber of Commerce's Ambassadors to mentor young local entrepreneurs.
- 7.6.** Encourage existing CTE training in PflISD to include curriculum on entrepreneurship skills (see recommendation 1, page 4).

StartUp Spokane

[StartUp Spokane](#) supports entrepreneurs in Washington State by offering resources through the city library system. At the Spokane Public Library and throughout the Spokane County Library District, StartUp Spokane provides access to a full-time team of business librarians (both in-person and virtually) and manages a coworking space at a central library location. Along with library amenities, StartUp Spokane publishes curated resources on its website and maintains a strong referral network of legal, financial, and other business service partners. This combination of physical space and free, targeted tools is invaluable for emerging entrepreneurs.

Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE)

NFTE, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, was founded in the late 1980s by New York special education teacher Steve Mariotti who realized that an entrepreneurial mindset—one that leverages creativity and ambition with limited resources—was a strong motivator for his students. Since its founding, NFTE has helped thousands of high school and postsecondary students in underserved communities across the US build an entrepreneurial mindset and pursue a business venture through school curriculum, mentor coaching, and pitch competitions. NFTE's successful alumni demonstrate the viability of entrepreneurship as a career path, with one-half still running their NFTE businesses or earning above their region's median salary.

8. SMALL BUSINESS

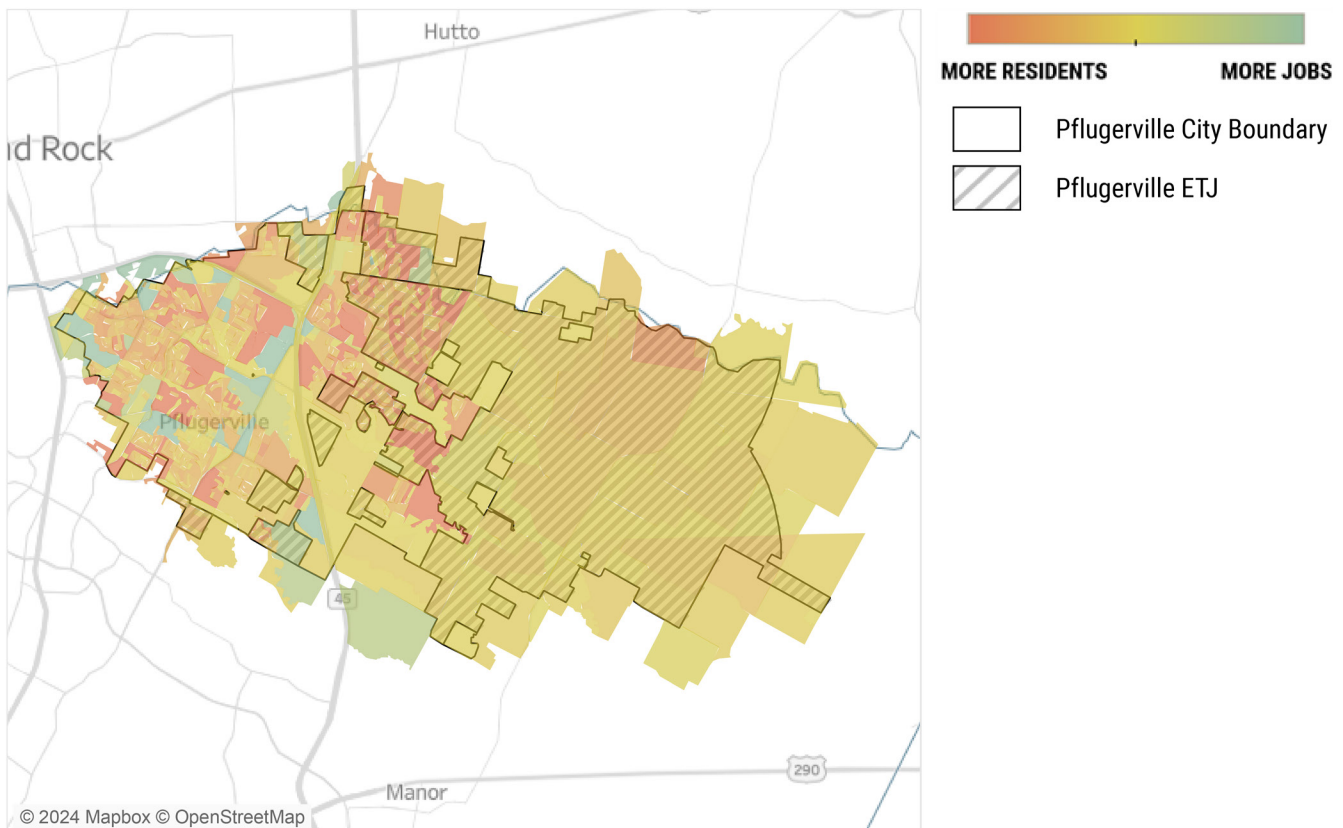
Convene local small businesses to provide networks and tools that address common human resource challenges.

Small businesses are vital to Pflugerville's economy, driving both economic and cultural vitality while providing significant local employment. However, small business owners often juggle multiple roles—manager, worker, and human resource (HR) representative—which can lead to challenges. The Pflugerville retail focus group participants reported difficulties with employee onboarding, offboarding, and recruitment and retention strategies. For example, several participants indicated their company had trialed third-party HR providers and employee benefits firms just to cancel them months later. They expressed the need for a coordinated effort to understand the best practices of HR for small businesses. This need serves as a prime opportunity for the PCDC and partners to better connect small businesses across the City, creating a supportive environment and making it easier for them to share insights.

STRATEGIES

- 8.1.** Host HR roundtables in coordination with the Pflugerville Chamber of Commerce for local businesses to share best practices and lessons learned.
- 8.2.** Develop an employee retention toolkit to help local employers retain high-skilled workers.

Figure 10. Pflugerville Employment Nodes, 2021



Source(s): LEHD, LODS; City of Pflugerville; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): The Pflugerville City Boundary and the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) extent on this map represent boundaries as of April 2024.

Pflugerville is a primarily residential, suburban community, with limited major commercial hubs. As shown in Figure 10 (page 17), the area west of SH 45/SH 130 has seen the development of multiple employment nodes over the past decade as new residential development has sprawled eastward into the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). However, these developing employment-heavy areas are segmented, with physically disjointed activity nodes limiting opportunities for interaction and cooperation among local small business owners. As the City continues to grow, developing employment nodes on previously underutilized land, it will be important to create a network of small businesses, providing tools that allow business owners to overcome common HR challenges and support a Citywide business identity.

By facilitating knowledge sharing and offering practical resources, Pflugerville can strengthen its small business community, build local connections, and ensure a robust economy to support residents.

Forbes Advisor Benefits Guides

It can be difficult for small business employers to determine which benefits best suit their talent retention needs while remaining affordable and easy to administer. Along with peer discussions and HR outsourcing solutions, employers can look to free publications like *Forbes Advisor* for benefits ideas and implementation tips. [What Are Voluntary Benefits? The Ultimate Guide](#) provides a list of voluntary benefits, such as identity theft protection and pet insurance, with respective costs, as well as step-by-step instructions for implementation at the company. Suggestions include identifying workers' needs and preferences (for example, through a Google form employee survey), conducting an analysis of competitors' job posting descriptions, and researching potential benefits providers. [What Are Fringe Benefits?](#) defines which optional benefits are exempt from IRS taxation, like employee recognition awards and employee discounts.



9. SOFT SKILLS

Provide support to training programs and organizations that focus on soft skills training and development.

Soft skills are integral to success at work, regardless of industry or occupation. Whether in an office or on a manufacturing floor, workforce development experts recognize that soft skills are as important as technical skills. All employees need to collaborate effectively, navigate workplace dynamics, and recover from setbacks. The advanced technology and innovation focus group participants noted that some young workers struggle with effective communication and self-advocacy, validating the need for stronger soft skills development.

Beyond specialized skills that are unique to a given job, soft skills (common skills) frequently appear in job postings across Pflugerville's SOAs. Communication is the top in-demand skill for three of the five SOAs, ranking no lower than fourth across all SOAs (see Figure 11). Customer service, management, leadership, and operations make up a handful of other common skills that are highly sought after by employers across SOAs.

STRATEGIES

- 9.1.** Promote soft skills curriculum, like materials currently being developed by ARMA, that encourage group work and skills development for the top in-demand common skills.
- 9.2.** Advise employers to acknowledge and incorporate soft skills development, such as self-advocacy and independent decision-making, during interactions with young talent, like job fairs, interviews, and internships/training environments.

Figure 11. Strategic Opportunity Area Skills by Rank

Based on an analysis of two years of job postings in the Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA, May 2022–April 2024.

SKILL TYPE: ■ Common ■ Qualifications ■ Specialized

	ADVANCED TECH	SOFTWARE & IT	LIFE SCIENCES	RETAIL	SKILLED TRADES
1	Communication	Communication	Nursing	Customer Service	Communication
2	Management	Sales	Registered Nurse	Communication	Management
3	Leadership	Management	Basic Life Support Cert.	Sales	Customer Service
4	Problem-Solving	Leadership	Communication	Management	Valid Driver's License
5	Operations	Customer Service	Management	Merchandising	Construction
6	Project Management	Problem-Solving	Customer Service	Restaurant Operation	Operations
7	Detail-Oriented	Operations	Leadership	Leadership	Project Management
8	Planning	Project Management	Operations	Lifting Ability	Sales
9	Customer Service	Troubleshooting	Nursing Care	Operations	Detail-Oriented
10	Sales	Planning	Scheduling	Sanitation	Leadership

Source(s): BLS; Lightcast 2024.1—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): Job postings include non-staffing, unique, active job postings for full-time, part-time, and flexible positions, excluding internships, in the Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA between May 2022 and April 2024. Skills included in the chart are present in at least 1 percent of job postings. The Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA includes Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis, and Williamson Counties.

Strengthening the local workforce's soft skills can create nimble workers with common abilities that cut across industries and occupations. As Pflugerville looks to expand opportunities for education and training opportunities, it can also emphasize soft skills development with education partners. Investing in soft skills development will better prepare Pflugerville's workforce for diverse employment opportunities.

Skills to Pay the Bills

[Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success](#) is a curriculum developed by the US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. It provides youth with practice and reflection on soft skills. A facilitator guides students through role-play conversations, activities, and discussions on six key common skills: communication, enthusiasm and attitude, teamwork, networking, problem-solving and critical thinking, and professionalism. When paired with group work and class policies that encourage responsibility and time management, the *Skills to Pay the Bills* curriculum can help students recognize the importance of soft skills in the workplace.



10. WRAPAROUND SUPPORTS

Address wraparound supports like housing, transportation, and childcare to remove barriers to work.

Workers are more than just employees. They are individuals with complex lives who require a range of support services to thrive. Ensuring access to attainable housing options, reliable transportation, and affordable childcare is essential for enhancing workers' well-being and productivity. By investing in comprehensive wraparound systems, communities can create a more inclusive and resilient work environment.

Many stakeholders identified wraparound supports as significant challenges for employees. For example, some retail employers reported that their workers adjusted their work hours or only worked part-time to accommodate childcare needs, with one employer even watching children of employees during their work shifts. While transportation issues were less of a concern for employers in the advanced technology and innovation SOA, retail and restaurant focus group participants found the Pfetch a Ride program helpful. However, housing affordability remains a significant issue, with many retail employers questioning how individuals can afford housing without sharing costs. Workforce Solutions Capital Area noted that the high cost of living, combined with transportation barriers, was threatening to push lower-income residents to the outskirts of the Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA.

STRATEGIES

- 10.1.** Support continued development of a diverse range of attainable housing options.
- 10.2.** Continue promoting the Pfetch a Ride program to support access to work in Pflugerville.
- 10.3.** Encourage local childcare providers to participate in the Texas Rising Star program and accept childcare scholarships for eligible families.

Figure 12. Typical Expenses and Living Wages

Annual (2024) costs of housing, transportation, and childcare in the Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA compared to living wage for MSA households.

1 ADULT			2 ADULTS (1 WORKING, 1 AT HOME)			2 ADULTS (BOTH WORKING)		
0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children
HOUSING								
\$18,322	\$23,207	\$23,207	\$19,722	\$23,207	\$23,207	\$19,722	\$23,207	\$23,207
TRANSPORTATION								
\$10,248	\$11,860	\$14,940	\$11,860	\$14,940	\$17,190	\$11,860	\$14,940	\$17,190
CHILDCARE								
\$0	\$10,247	\$20,477	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,247	\$20,477
LIVING WAGE								
\$49,878	\$82,430	\$102,440	\$67,246	\$79,830	\$88,629	\$67,267	\$91,478	\$111,946

Source(s): Amy K. Glasmeier, Living Wage Calculator, 2024, MIT; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note(s): The living wages included for the 2 Adults (Both Working) households indicate the combined wages needed to support the household.

These challenges extend beyond Pflugerville. Workers across the country encounter high costs of housing near major employment centers, an issue that is often compounded by costs associated with transportation to and from work. In the Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown MSA, typical housing and transportation costs for a single adult are roughly \$1,500 and \$900 per month, respectively (see Figure 12, page 21). Additionally, affordable childcare is a challenge, with annual costs in the MSA exceeding \$10,000 for one child.

Pflugerville has the opportunity to enhance its workforce by investing in attainable housing, transportation options, and quality childcare. Addressing these wraparound supports can improve residents' quality of life and enable fuller participation in the local job market.

Texas Rising Star Program

The [Texas Rising Star \(TRS\) program](#), administered by the TWC, certifies and funds childcare providers who exceed the state's minimum regulatory standards set by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). Providers in TWC's childcare services program must obtain TRS certifications to qualify for childcare scholarships. TRS certifications range from Entry-Level to Four-Star, with higher ratings gaining progressively higher reimbursement rates. Providers are encouraged to pursue higher certifications to demonstrate quality improvement with technical assistance and resources from TWC. Research shows that programs surpassing HHSC's minimum standards are more effective in supporting children's physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development.





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