



# Summary and Timeline of Mountain West NC CREATE BRIDGES

## Strategic Planning

March 22, 2022

### Overview

Strategic planning for the Mountain West NC CREATE BRIDGES initiative has consisted of three full Regional Steering Committee (RSC) sessions, held on October 27, 2021, November 8, 2021, and January 26, 2022. These planning meetings followed a year of primary research conducted through interviews, focus groups, and surveys of a random sample of owners and managers of CREATE sector businesses as well as anonymous surveys of CREATE sector employees. A report of actions taken as part of the CREATE BRIDGES initiative in 2020 and 2021 is available on NC State University’s CREATE BRIDGES web page.

The first strategy session focused on strategies designed to strengthen the over 400 CREATE businesses in Jackson, Graham, Swain, and Macon Counties and the Qualla Boundary. The second session brainstormed strategies to develop advancement opportunities for incumbent workers in the CREATE sector. At the third and final full RSC session, stakeholders discussed how Mountain West NC residents might support the CREATE sector there, with particular emphasis on building regional awareness and pride by and among its workforce and its youth.

A number of actions were suggested at each of these sessions – all of which have been captured in the Mountain West NC CREATE BRIDGES Plan of Action (coming soon). Several working group meetings have followed the formal strategy sessions to refine and prioritize actions.

Listed in the table below are strategies identified as priorities for 2022 and spending of the CREATE BRIDGES award. **Most of the recent work has been focused on the Got Your Back Business Summit, scheduled for April 26, 2022.** We are very excited about this training for CREATE business owners and managers. You will be hearing much more about it in the very near future!

### Priority Strategies

Action	Purpose/Metrics	Champions	Timeline	Award
Disseminate <a href="#">SPARK Campaign Flyer</a> to CREATE Businesses	By posting this flyer in business windows, owners reflect a regional commitment to increase respect of CREATE workers by business patrons	Bernadette Peters, Julie Spiro, Elissa Hashemi	Feb-Mar 2022	\$250 (printing)

	Target Participation: 250 of 400 businesses			
Conduct CREATE Business Owner Trainings – The Got Your Back Business Summit	Inform CREATE businesses of strategies to cultivate a healthy work climate and provide professional growth opportunities for their workers  Target Participation: 50 of 400 businesses	Annie Wilson, Wendy Cagle, Tim Black, Kurt Damron, Bernadette Peters, Tonya Snider, Elissa Hashemi	April 26, 2022  Sept 2022	Virtual Swag bags for businesses who attend the training that include: 2 networking events, a resource fair, one on one session with an SBC counselor, membership into a Biz To Biz Portal for constant support, access to recordings of all the workshops, discounts at local wellness centers and a 2 minute commercial for their business that they can use on their website/social media  \$30,000
Build talent pipeline for CREATE sector	Provide opportunities for regional youth and retirees to experience CREATE sector activities  Target Participation: 100	Tiffany Henry, Anna Hair, Angie Dills, Linda Lamp, Russ Harris	Ongoing	\$___ (TBD)
Develop Online and In-Person Networking and Mentoring Opportunities	Engage CREATE businesses in regional collaboration opportunities through Biz to Biz portal and Networking Events  Target Participation: 100 of 400 businesses	Elissa Hashemi, Ann Bass, Christine Lauchner, Bernadette Peters, Julie Spiro	Ongoing	\$___ (TBD)
Conduct Promotional Campaign of CREATE Businesses	Generate loyalty of local businesses by residents	Eric Reece, Elissa Hashemi, Julie Spiro	Ongoing	\$___ (TBD)
Conduct “Secret Shopper” reviews of CREATE Businesses	Engage students to conduct CREATE business reviews  Target Student Participation: 60 (30/Review Period)  Target Businesses Reviewed: 100 (50/Review Period)	Marne Harris, Linda Lamp, Annie Wilson, Elissa Hashemi, Wendy Cagle	May 2022 October 2022	\$5,000
Conduct Soft Skills, Hard Skills, Entrepreneurial, and	Address worker training needs expressed through	Linda Lamp, Annie Wilson,	Sept 2022	\$___ (purchase of VISA gift cards to

Leadership Trainings of CREATE Workers  Include cross-promotional training on Outdoor Economy businesses	surveys. Focus is on building confidence and emotional intelligence and empathy  Target Worker Attendance: 50	Tim Black, Kurt Damron, Ann Bass, Christine Laucher, Elissa Hashemi		incentivize workers to attend trainings)  \$___ (referral bonus to CREATE businesses)  Total: \$35,000
Disseminate “I Talk Flyfishing”, etc. Table Tents and Badges to CREATE Businesses and Workers	CREATE Workers become regional brand ambassadors  Target Participation: 50 of 400 businesses	Bernadette Peters, Linda Lamp, Elissa Hashemi	October 2022	\$5,000 (printing)

We encourage all of you to re-engage with us as we begin implementing these strategies. Do not be surprised if our new CREATE BRIDGES Coordinator, Elissa Hashemi, reaches out to you regarding planning for an upcoming Resource Fair designed specifically for CREATE businesses.

Over the next several months, we will continue to update you on our progress with strategy implementation. Please know that we sincerely appreciate your participation in the earlier research phase of the CREATE BRIDGES process.

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