



**Opportunity & Prosperity:** The Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce supports policies that increase opportunity and economic mobility for our community through encouragement of a balanced and sustainable economy and the reduction of barriers to fulfilling employment

- Local, State and Federal
  - o Alleviate workforce shortages through policies that remove barriers to hiring including for those individuals who have been justice involved and community members who have been disconnected from rewarding opportunities.

North Carolina faces a workforce shortage of both quantity and quality of workers. The current workforce has a significant gap left by an insufficient talent pipeline and inadequate support for community members who have been disconnected from rewarding opportunities. Our growing economy requires a greater number of workers with the needed skills and credentials to support development.

Increasing support for employers and the regional talent pipeline by removing employment barriers includes:

- Advocating for second chance hiring and supporting employers who hire and train those with previous justice involvement.
- Creating a stronger workforce by partnering with community colleges and other stakeholders to encourage credential and post-secondary degree attainment aligned with business needs.
- Providing connections and resources for community members who seek to reenter the workforce, and the employers who will ultimately hire them, through programs such as Inclusive Hiring Partners (IHP) and Accelerate Buncombe.

While workforce needs are impacted by many complex issues the regions talent pipeline will be improved by removing barriers to training, certification, and employment. The Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce supports removing these barriers so that every member of our community may join the workforce with quality training and preparedness.