



NEWS RELEASE | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

Contact: Samantha Bagbey
Project Manager
O. 434.793.1753

Friday, January 31, 2025

City hosts inclusive hiring workshop, Untapped Talent

The Danville Office of Economic Development & Tourism (DOEDT) hosted an inclusive hiring workshop, Untapped Talent | Leveraging Inclusion to Fill all Your Open Positions, on Thursday, January 30, 2025, at the Institute for Advanced Learning & Research, Danville.

This event was designed to educate business owners, managers, and human resource professionals on strategies to fill their organization's open positions by tapping into underutilized, overlooked, and underserved workforce groups, including youth, veterans, seniors, previously incarcerated, and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Over 100 community members registered.

"We were thrilled with the engagement of this newly designed workshop, crafted to assist businesses in shaping their hiring strategies," states DOEDT Project Manager, Samantha Bagbey. "Through insights from a panel of experts, a keynote address from Lindsay Wrege, an exhibit hall, and networking opportunities, we aimed to make this workshop an impactful experience for both our industries and small businesses."

The event's keynote speaker was Lindsay Wrege, co-founder of 321 Coffee, a non-profit that currently employs over 60 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, across five coffee shops in North Carolina. Wrege highlighted the importance of inclusive job descriptions and hiring processes, including conversational style interviews and job shadowing. "Disability does not mean less than," stated Wrege.

Participants were also able to hear from 321 Coffee baristas on the importance of inclusive hiring, including stories from their own personal experience working at 321 Coffee. "We are capable of anything and everything," reflected a current employee.

A panel of local experts also presented insights on employing traditionally marginalized community members, highlighting financial incentives, apprenticeship opportunities, and available local resources and organizations. These panelists included: Beth Sullivan (Virginia

Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services), Jessie Vernon (The Institute for Advanced Learning & Research), Monica Karavanic (The Arc of Southside), David Royster (Walraven), and Allison Satterfield (Butcher's Daughter Deli and Market).

"We look forward to continuing this collaboration with entrepreneurs, business owners, and industry leaders throughout the year," says Bagbey. "By hosting further workshops and events, we hope to address key challenges and inspire innovation within their business."

To learn more about workshops and events hosted by the DOEDT, click here:

<https://www.discoverdanville.com/discover-danville-va-for-your-business-resources/>

###

About the Danville Office of Economic Development & Tourism

The Danville Office of Economic Development & Tourism recruits and retains businesses for the Danville area. The office provides information on available sites and buildings, incentives and other financial resources and offers a website designed for the business community: www.discoverdanville.com.