

# Workforce Development: Soft Skills Training Initiatives in the City of Charlottesville



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## **I. Executive Summary**

As the US economy shifts away from technical manufacturing jobs, soft skills<sup>1</sup> become more valuable. The challenge is that technical skills can be trained, but soft skills are more difficult to impart. Economic development offices across the country are asking how to teach soft skills, but there has been very little research on what is effective. Some argue that soft skills programs in schools would be most effective; however, many economic developers need to teach soft skills to people who are already in the workforce. Many nonprofits and cities have formal training classes for soft skills, but few have studied the measurable success. Yet, social psychologists have studied the effect of mental health and self-esteem on soft skills in the workplace, and that research could impact how Charlottesville approaches training unemployed individuals for the workforce.

Our recommendation is to improve the opportunities to develop soft skills for low-income, low-skilled employees in the City of Charlottesville. This can be broken down into a short-term and long-term approach. In the short-term, Charlottesville should continue to put resources towards providing workforce readiness through hard-skill training programs because it has been proven to be critically important for employment. In addition, the City should supplement the existing city-sponsored and nonprofit-sponsored training programs with more focused, soft skills training. At the same time, the city should partner with local, existing resources to provide more holistic training programs that focus on bolstering self-esteem and mental health. These partners would include training opportunities provided by local nonprofits, the Women’s Initiative, the Darden School of Business, and the Contemplative Sciences Center on Central Grounds. In the long-term, the city should partner with the local public schools to encourage them to expand current soft skills training as part of its curriculum for students, starting as early as elementary school.

## **II. Description of Focus Area**

The issue being addressed in this analysis is the soft skill development opportunities in the City of Charlottesville. This study is specifically tailored for the use of Ridge Schuyler, Dean of Community Self-Sufficiency Programs at Piedmont Virginia Community College.

A community’s economic vitality involves more than the number of jobs available in a city. Cities must ensure that the skill of the available workforce, including both hard and soft skills, meet the demands and expectations of existing and potential employers. At present, the City of Charlottesville has identified in the *Growing Opportunities Report* that the lack of soft skills for low-income workers is a notable barrier to employment of its unemployed, underemployed, and low-income residents (Workforce Development Strategic Action Team, 2013). A lack of soft skills is cited as a primary reason that graduates of the Growing Opportunities (GO) Program are not hired or do not successfully retain employment (Demchack, 2016).

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this paper, we define “soft skills” as the following commonly cited character attributes: motivation, perseverance, tenacity, creativity, self-control, and the ability to work productively in groups (Heckman, 2006; Heckman et al, 2006; Deming, 2015). “Soft” skills are also commonly referred to as “non-cognitive” skills or “social” skills.

Although acknowledgement of the problem is a critical step in addressing this issue, further tangible action should be taken to develop programs to assist potential and existing employees in bolstering their soft skill repertoire. Across the nation, cities, businesses, and nonprofits are implementing soft skills programs with a broad scope and using diverse methods. While consensus exists on the benefits of soft skills training, there are few empirical studies on the most effective methods. As the new dean of Community Self-Sufficiency Programs at Piedmont Virginia Community College, Ridge Schuyler is uniquely positioned to develop and implement initiatives that decrease barriers to employment for low-income, underemployed or unemployed workers by improving soft skills development initiatives in the City of Charlottesville.

The goal of soft skills development is to increase employment opportunities for low-skilled workers by addressing a common barrier to gainful, sustainable, living-wage employment. This report has the following goals:

1. To describe the significance of soft skills in securing long-term, gainful employment opportunities.
2. To identify short term and long-term action strategies to introduce and further enhance soft skills development initiatives.
3. To provide information on existing public and private resources for creating or enhancing soft skills development, which can be found in the Supplemental Materials.

### **III. Context and Importance of the Problem**

Recent research suggests that soft skills, mental health, and employment are intricately linked and have a reciprocal relationship to one another. If one corner of the well-being triangle is missing or weak, the entire structure is negatively impacted.

For example, soft skills play a critical role in improving an individual's prospects for acquiring and successfully maintaining meaningful employment, as well as provide opportunities to increase lifetime earning potential (Borghans et al, 2014; Heckman, 2012; Rural Futures Institute, 2016). Additionally, chronic unemployment has a negative impact on an individual's mental health. Without strong mental health, an individual is unlikely to exhibit strong social (soft) skills (Brand, 2015; Caplan et al, 1989; Fiori et al, 2016; Hahn et al, 2015).

While acquiring soft skills is not a panacea for resolving unemployment, research suggests that soft skills training can improve employment challenges and should be part of a holistic workforce development approach. Ideally, soft skills training should incorporate a mechanism to boost self-esteem because strong self-esteem is a key component to helping individuals improve their mental health. Mental health, in turn, affects the ability to acquire and exhibit soft skills (Cannett, 2013; Goldsmith et al, 2012; Martin et al, 2012; Shamir, 1986; Whitehead, 2016).

#### ***Significance of Soft Skills in Employment and Wage Growth***

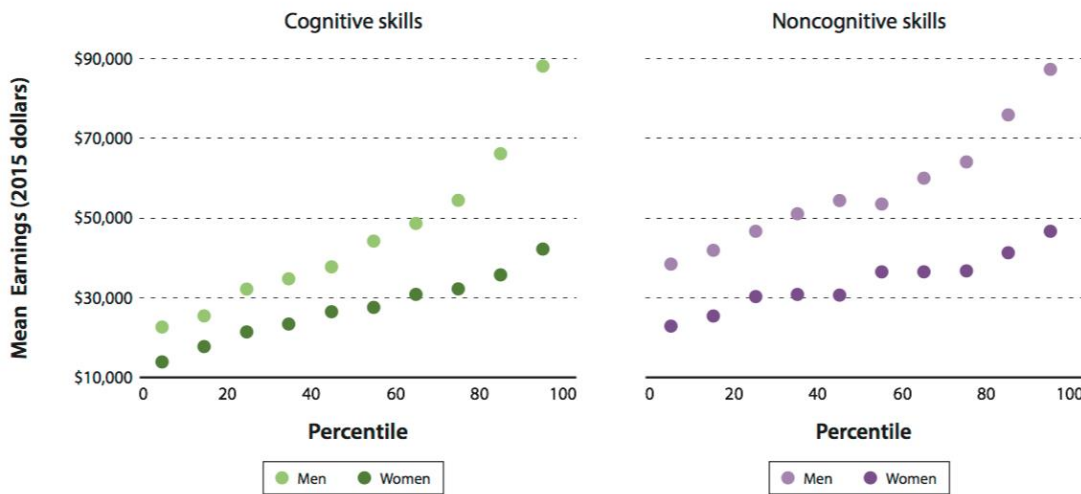
Soft skills are becoming increasingly critical in positioning workers for both employment success and increasing their lifetime earning potential. According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, employment and wage growth over the last three decades has been particularly strong for jobs requiring high levels of both cognitive and social [soft] skills (Deming, 2015). Since 1980,

jobs with high social skill requirements have grown by nearly 10 percentage points as a share of the U.S. labor force while less social jobs shrank by about 3 percentage points (Deming, 2105).

*Figure 1* below represents a critical finding on the importance of soft skills in increasing earnings (Schanzenbach et al., 2016).<sup>2</sup> People who have more developed soft skills<sup>3</sup> earn more wages during their lifetime than those who do not. As shown in the right panel, a 10 percent increase in soft skills are associated with about a 7 percent increase in earnings for both men and women. Comparatively, soft skills significantly affect lifetime earnings at nearly half the rate of hard skills. (Schanzenbach et al., 2016)

It is apparent from this recent research that both hard skills and soft skills play a critical role in shaping economic outcomes for individuals (Schanzenbach et al, 2016). As a result, it is critical that the City of Charlottesville identify opportunities to both provide and increase soft skills development programs in order to bolster and complement existing workforce development initiatives.

**Figure 1: Comparison of Cognitive and Noncognitive Skills in Earnings at Age 35-48**



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (n.d.b).

Note: The x-axis shows the within-sample percentile rank of the mean score of equal-sized cognitive and noncognitive score bins. The Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT), shown in the left panel, is a general measure of trainability and is used to determine eligibility for enlistment in the armed forces. The right panel shows a combined index of the Rotter Locus of Control scale, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale, and Deming's (2015) social skills index; these scales aim to measure attitudes about work and reward, self-esteem, and general social skills, respectively. Respondents were age 16–24 when they reported scores in 1981. The y-axis shows, for each of the score bins, respondents' mean wage earnings across 2000, 2002, and 2004, restricted to those who reported earnings in at least one of those three years, and adjusted to 2015 dollars.



<sup>2</sup> In *Figure 1*, the left panel shows that a 10 percentage point increase in non-cognitive abilities as measured by the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT), is associated with about a 15 percent increase in earnings for men and an 11 percentage point increase for women.

<sup>3</sup> In this study, soft skills are measured by a combined three-fold index of: social skills, self-esteem, and the extent to which a person believes that her own actions, as opposed to forces outside of her control, determine rewards and success in life.

### ***The Reciprocal Relationship between Unemployment and Mental Health***

Prolonged joblessness has a negative impact on mental health and well-being. While it is difficult to untangle the causality between these two related issues, it appears that when controlling for prior mental health factors, long-term unemployment *does* have a negative impact on emotional well-being (Goldsmith and Diette, 2012). This is fundamentally different than the disappointment that results from losing a job or missing a specific opportunity. While emotional and social reserves allow a healthy person to overcome occasional setbacks, prolonged unemployment saps these resources and fatalism and social withdrawal can set in, making it more difficult to re-enter the workforce.

Studies show that there is a strong connection between lack of confidence and risk aversion. One who is unsure of oneself is far less likely to undergo a stressful situation, such as a job interview, in pursuit of a potential reward. In fact, even in stress-free cognitive tests, those who are less confident are less likely to offer responses (Kaufman, 2001). If one does make it to a job interview, lack of confidence can undermine one's chances. Unconscious behaviors related to fear of rejection include poor posture, pessimistic responses to questions, speaking too quietly and unwillingness to offer examples of success in previous engagements. An unwillingness to be noticed can easily cancel out job qualifications or paper credentials.

Self-esteem is an important characteristic for getting a job, but it also contributes to success within a position. Those who are self-assured tend to be more willing to take risks and propose new approaches to problems so they are more valued within their teams. Confident people are also more likely to ask for--and receive--rewards for their work and opportunities for advancement.

When considering promotions and leadership potential, confidence is definitely a factor. In fact, in many situations *confidence* matters as much as *competence* (Kaufman, 2001). If a job requires interaction with the public or a client, an employee must *be* and *seem* assured about the value of their (and their company's) work. In that way, one employee's low self-esteem can hurt the rest of the team.

Many employers specifically measure confidence in their evaluation protocols, and almost all do so unconsciously by rewarding those who seem charismatic or those who have leadership potential. Good jobs, those that offer benefits, advancement, and stability, require a strong sense of self-esteem.

Finally, there is also evidence that those who are confident are better able to cope with adversity and still perform well under stress if they are, for example, slightly ill. Those who are confident will be more problem-focused in their coping (Solove, Fisher and Kraiger, 2015). Self-esteem is an important driver of success on and off the job.

## IV. Proposed Action Strategies

### *Short Term*

#### ***Strategy 1: Implement Mental Health Interventions***

##### **Action Step 1: Holistic Approach to Mind and Body**

*Recommendation:* Charlottesville training programs should consider a professional development program with a holistic approach to maximize mental and physical health.

*Research:* We have seen that there is a nexus between employment, mental and physical health. Solutions that address the three issues together will be most effective (Bouwine Carlier's, 2014). Research indicates a positive, and mutually independent, correlation between both health and reported self-worth on likelihood to seek paid employment and to succeed in their search (See case study: "Project Iowa").

Several employment programs teach both *physical* self-care skills (such as nutrition, exercise, and drug rehabilitation) and build *emotional* capacities like work-life balance, stress, and anger management. These programs have seen success in improving employment placement and are recommended to continue after finding employment. (See case study: "Work Wellness: The Basics")

Many employers offer professional development programs that emphasize nutrition, physical fitness, work-life balance and even specific practices like yoga and Tai-chi. Those who do not happen to be employed also find empowerment through mind-body practice. We know for certain that practice and repetition builds confidence and reduces stress reactions in threatening situations.

*Implementation:* To establish a holistic approach, professional training classes can implement new content to encourage overall health.

- 1) Consider curriculum that has worked well for promoting overall wellness.
- 2) Partner with local public health officials to understand what resources are available in Charlottesville.
- 3) Encourage technical trainers to devote a portion of their classes to talking about those resources.

##### **Action Step 2: Group Effort**

*Recommendation:* The City could structure its technical training programs to foster relationship development among trainees. This could help enhance an individual's internal network in order to increase potential for success following program completion.

*Research:* Social isolation is one of the most pernicious elements of depression and it is helpful for job seekers to work in pairs or groups. This allows for mutual emotional and even logistical support and constructive criticism--for example interview rehearsals. The Whitehead article (2016) also points out that praising others actually improves an individual's own sense of worth.

*Implementation:* Training instructors could consider how to increase social interaction throughout their classes:

- 1) Evaluate current classes and determine how they can be improved to foster better relationship development among participants.

### **Action Step 3: Stronger Through Service**

*Recommendation:* Charlottesville should consider implementing work projects for trainees where participants can practice a craft and serve their community.

*Research:* Self Esteem can also be obtained through service. Organized volunteer work teaches marketable skills, can be included on resumes, can increase social capital, and help build self-confidence. It can provide a pro-social organizing principle during times when individuals lack the satisfaction that comes from employment. While we know that those with limited income are often the most strapped for time, there is evidence that strategic volunteering can be a smart investment for individuals seeking a quality job.

*Implementation:* We recommend looking for service projects that unemployed individuals can do to build up their resume and decrease the effects from long-term unemployment:

- 1) Take inventory of City-wide service project needs across the city.
- 2) Consider partnering with local nonprofits who regularly need volunteers.
- 3) Create a program where individuals seeking training can earn extra certification for service. This will help build resumes and incentivize individuals to stay active.

### **Action Step 4: Implement Coping Strategies for Job Loss**

*Recommendation:* Charlottesville's soft-skills program should include strategies intended to help individuals cope with job loss.

*Research:* One critical element to coping with job loss is to psychologically prime individuals for how to handle setbacks. Ample empirical evidence indicates that unemployed people often experience helplessness (Caplan et al., 1989). This is then followed by successive failure to find employment. Research also indicates that one critical element to successful reemployment is the presence of "peers and the trainer who could provide support as participants recounted their stories of successes and setbacks" (Caplan et al., 1989).

*Implementation:* To combat this, we recommend soft skills programs include interventions that help individuals:

- 1) Identify situations where setbacks are likely.
- 2) Identify alternative methods for responding appropriately to setbacks.
- 3) Acquire critical skills for overcoming setbacks (Caplan et al., 1989).
- 4) Provide positive social support and reinforcement from peers and trainers in the program.

### **Action Step 5: Develop a Program for Emotional Competencies and Mindfulness**

*Recommendation:* We recommend that Charlottesville develop a program for teaching emotional competencies and mindfulness strategies to unemployed persons.



*Research:* Often, individuals who are unemployed experience greater stress and are at higher risk for cognitive impairment (Leist et al, 2013). Hodzig et al. found that a structured intervention in emotional competencies, such as “identifying and expressing emotions, understanding emotions, and regulating one's own and others' emotions,” “can improve perception of employability, job search...and entrepreneurial self-efficacy and improve reemployment success among unemployed participants” (Hodzig et al, 2015). Further, practicing mindfulness focuses an individual’s attention on the present, while acknowledging feelings, thoughts, and the physical state of the body. Studies indicate that using Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBST) training programs help reduce stress in everyday activities while increasing confidence in the ability to find a job (De Jong et al, 2013).

*Implementation:* We recommend creating an emotional competencies and mindfulness intervention:

- 1) Identify key emotional competencies.
- 2) Partner with the Women’s Initiative or the Center for Contemplative Sciences at the University of Virginia to develop a mindfulness curriculum appropriate for unemployed persons seeking long-term employment.
- 3) Teach emotional competencies and mindfulness in tandem with other hard-skills development courses.

### ***Strategy 2: Consider City Resources and Increase Nonprofit Collaboration***

*Recommendation:* We recommend partnering with local nonprofits to advertise their services and consider providing grant opportunities.

*Research:* Charlottesville’s nonprofits are broad reaching in their goals for helping Charlottesville citizens in poverty. Many of these programs are based in local religious congregations and action groups, and some of these programs already offer some soft skills training as part of their curriculum. If a city-sponsored program is not possible, the city could advertise nonprofit information to citizens-in-need about the available programs in the city. Depending on how Virginia law allows for city appropriated grants, Charlottesville could also consider providing grants to nonprofits who offer targeted soft skills training. Some states allow local communities to fund nonprofits, but that is often complicated within state law.

In Charlottesville, there are five nonprofits that offer soft skills training in their services at some capacity. The nonprofits include Jobs for Life, Steps to Success, Apprenticeship Connections, Young Lions, and Journey Volunteer Program. The contact and website information for these organizations can be found in the Appendix (Center for Nonprofit Excellence, 2016).

Nonprofits have the ability to target specific neighborhoods, and they often have a larger volunteer base than a city program. This allows the program to serve more people. Nonprofit programs can be found all over the nation, and the most successful programs have similar tactics for teaching soft skills. Since many of these organizations are based in religious contexts, there is already an expectation to focus on character building as part of the curriculum. Obviously, the city would not be able to fully adopt the religious curriculum, but some of the programs have shown significant success with their program structure and theory. Cincinnati Works is an example of a successful program, where 85 percent of the program graduates from 2005 to 2012 are still employed. The

program focuses on both technical and character training, and the teachers emphasize long-term employment. Graduates are contacted regularly by program teachers to offer further support and counsel after entering the workforce. After the first year on the job, Cincinnati Works helps individuals create new employment goals and offers further training to reach those goals. The program also offers behavioral counseling, mentoring, chaplain services, and anti-violence training (Philanthropy Roundtable, 2015).

For Chicago's Cara Program, individuals are not considered graduates until they have finished their first year of work at their job placements. The program focuses on character development and responsibility as part of the curriculum to help employees keep their jobs. The Cara Program also funds itself through two businesses that they started. These businesses provide work experience to students before assigning them to job placements. The profit from the businesses helps cover the expenses of the program not gathered through donations. Similar to on-the-job training, another nonprofit, Step Up ministry, provides life skills classes over the course of the first year of work at the job placement to supplement the work experience and provide stability (Philanthropy Roundtable, 2015).

STRIVE, a Manhattan based program, focuses almost predominantly on developing soft skills. The program volunteers are often graduates of the STRIVE program or individuals who have also overcome economic difficulties. This allows the participants to relate to program leaders and give them hope that the program can be successful. The program is known for being based on 'tough love', and graduates in job placements are monitored for two years following the classes. The program reports that over 70 percent of graduates stay with their employment. The program costs \$2,000 per job placement (Philanthropy Roundtable, 2015).

*Implementation:* To partner with Charlottesville nonprofits we recommend:

- 1) Contact the five nonprofits to identify potential areas for partnership.
- 2) Consult state law to develop a grant program to support nonprofits teaching soft-skills.
- 3) Contact nonprofit programs in other cities to understand their program structures and philosophy. In the long-run, use this information to construct a city-wide program that compliments the hard-skills training that is already available.

### ***Strategy 3: Implement Impact Analysis and Evaluation Strategies***

*Recommendation:* We recommend ensuring that soft skills training programs in Charlottesville are accompanied by a comprehensive impact analysis and evaluation strategy.

*Research:* Our research indicates that while there is consensus that soft skills training programs benefit low-income individuals, program results are hard to measure and data-driven evidence is lacking (Charoensap-Kelly, Broussard, Lindsly, & Troy, 2015).

Charoensap-Kelly et Al (2015) cite Kirkpatrick's (1959) evaluation model as the most widely used in the field of soft skills training. It focuses on measuring participants' reactions to the training, learning that occurred, behavior changes, and tangible results. Kirkpatrick's model could serve as a basis for soft skills program evaluation in Charlottesville (Charoensap-Kelly, Broussard, Lindsly, & Troy, 2015).

In considering evaluation methods, surveys that include Likert scales are a common method for evaluating soft skills programs. However, David McKenzie, Lead Economist for the World Bank Development Research Group, cites concerns about the “subjectivity” of surveys. His group used interactive exercises to measure soft skills. These activities include group exercises, role-playing exercises, and skills-based interviews (McKenzie, 2014).

Furthermore, a 2014 report by Hanover Research analyzed the challenges of evaluating soft skills training programs in schools. The report’s findings are important considerations for the soft skills programs in Charlottesville. Though the report focused on K-12, it may be applied more broadly. The report finds that “soft skills assessment is highly dependent upon the core academic curriculum” and as such, soft skills assessment should “align” with those in the academic curriculum. It also cites the fact that some educators are uncomfortable with assessing soft skills as it may actually “discourage the development” of these skills (e.g. “collaboration, creativity, and character”) (Hanover Research, 2014).

*Implementation:* Charlottesville can consider metrics to standardize measures of success:

- 1) Create an impact and evaluation strategy based on current research. Ongoing soft skills training evaluation and assessment help strengthen initiatives in Charlottesville and contribute to the overall body of work for the soft skills field.
- 2) Develop evaluation framework and associated metrics for tracking program impact.
- 3) Create surveys and other evaluation tools.
- 4) Implement an evaluation program as soon as possible in order to be able to evaluate trends over time.

## ***Long Term***

### ***Strategy 1: Advocate for PreK-12 and Higher Education Interventions***

*Recommendation:* We recommend designing and implementing a soft skills curriculum at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education level. In order to maximize the benefits of instilling character development in Charlottesville residents, programs must begin at the elementary school level.

*Research:* A longitudinal study conducted by Duke University found that soft skill training, as young as elementary school, can have positive effects on employment and crime rates later in life (Dodge et al., 2015). This randomized study followed roughly 900 high-risk kindergarteners through multiple soft skills training programs, which included parental interventions from kindergarten to 10th grade. Researchers found that students who received soft skills curriculum were less likely to commit crimes later in life and reported higher well-being scores as adults (age 25). Dodge et al. concludes that soft skill and character education between the ages of 6 and 10 had the highest impact.

When looking at the secondary level, research on soft skill development is hard to identify. A Brookings Institution report states that soft skill development in educational settings is hard to measure due to the abstract nature of soft skill development (Whitehurst, 2016). Research conducted on the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) school’s soft skill programming at all

kindergarten through twelfth grade educational settings, found no significant impacts on indicators of student character development (Tuttle et al., 2015). KIPP charter schools are known for implementing holistic approaches to developing student achievement.

Several government agencies and experts in soft skill development advocate for experiential learning techniques. In order for individuals to internalize interpersonal skills, students must first practice different soft skill techniques. The Office of Disability Employment Policy suggests adopting a curriculum that contains well-designed real-life scenarios that are led by well-trained instructors (Office of Disability Employment Policy, 2010). This role-playing approach allows students to develop the skills needed to navigate difficult social situations.

Masters of Business Administration programs further this idea of experiential learning by advocating the use of role playing case studies, oral presentations, group simulations, and evaluations in program curriculum (Bedwell, Fiore, & Salas, 2014). Although these practices have not been researched in educational settings, research compiled from other disciplines were used to determine the author's recommendation. In order to fully understand the effectiveness of soft skill training in educational settings more research needs to be conducted.

*Implementation:* In order to implement this strategy, the City of Charlottesville should:

- 1) Coordinate soft skills training development with Charlottesville City Schools. Since soft skill development is most effective between the ages of 6 and 10, soft skills curriculum must be adopted in elementary schools.
- 2) Consider contacting the Darden School of Business to understand how they implement soft skills development strategies for older students.

### ***Strategy 2: Introduce Soft Skills Trainings Specific to Refugees and other Communities***

*Recommendation:* Charlottesville is home to a unique and diverse community of international refugees, supported through the efforts of the International Rescue Committee. We encourage the City of Charlottesville to continue to support this community through targeted or enhanced soft skills training to bolster the work of the IRC.

*Research:* Refugees and new immigrants often face challenges to finding jobs that match their skill level. According to a new report by the Migration Policy Institute, approximately two million immigrants in the United States who have college degrees are either unemployed or have low skilled jobs (Migration Policy Institute, 2016). The report argues that this causes individuals to miss out on higher salaries and localities to miss out on potential tax revenue. The authors argue that barriers to employment for high skilled immigrants range from “limited English skills”, to “unfamiliarity with the U.S. labor market”, and “a shortage of education programs to bridge skills deficits” (Migration Policy Institute, 2016).

Several exciting initiatives across the United States offer potential model examples for the City of Charlottesville to consider. The State of Colorado's Refugee Services Program (CRSP) Higher Advantage initiative is a new refugee strategy, that enables “refugees to have a greater degree of choice in their employment prospects, more mobility, higher wages, and opportunity for career progression rather than only entry-level positions” (Higher Advantage, n.d.). This program is a

potentially strong match for a Charlottesville strategy focused on self-sufficiency, as the Colorado model focuses on “motivation, reliability and dependability rather than traditional job-readiness skills”. The state reports that the program is too new to draw conclusions about the success of the program; however initial reports indicate increased employment and job satisfaction (Higher Advantage, n.d.). The Rural Futures Institute’s program in Sioux Falls, SD also offers a good model for city support of soft skills development in refugee and immigrant populations (Rural Futures Institute, 2016).

In addition to the refugee community, the City of Charlottesville can support other communities through specialized job readiness programs. For Example, CAMBA, an organization in New York City, assists specific populations, including the long-term unemployed, people living with HIV/AIDS, HPD Section 8 recipients, SNAP recipients, as well as refugees and asylum seekers. This organization conducts its program in collaboration with various city agencies and the International Refugee Committee (CAMBA, 2016).

*Implementation:*

1. Consider the State of Colorado’s Refugee Services Program (CRS) Higher Advantage initiative as a potential model for Charlottesville.
2. Seek opportunities to support other communities who might see difficulties in finding long-term employment.

## **V. Conclusion**

While there is limited research on statistically significant programs for soft skills training, that does not imply that soft skills training is not valuable. The research shows a correlation between mental health and employability. We believe the City of Charlottesville’s current job development and mental health programming is beneficial to the city’s residents. Charlottesville has many great resources for the unemployed and underemployed populations in the city. Moving forward, the city should consider how to utilize those resources to help fill the soft-skills gap and promote long-term employment.

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