

SHAPING CHARLESTON'S GLOBAL FUTURE



CHARLESTON
COUNTY • SC
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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MISSION STATEMENT

To lead the advancement of sustainable economic growth and global competitiveness, while delivering shared prosperity and an exceptional quality of place.



FROM THE DIRECTOR



Wow, 2025 has been a whirlwind of a year!

It's been a remarkable year filled with momentum, renewal, and a shared commitment to shaping the future of Charleston County. Returning to CCED to serve as Executive Director has been an honor, and I am inspired every day by the determination, creativity, and collaborative spirit that define our businesses and partners.

This year, we celebrated 11 public announcements, each one demonstrating a strong vote of confidence in Charleston County. These projects reflect the strength of our workforce, the reliability of our infrastructure, and the supportive environment we continue to build for companies of every size. They also reflect something deeper. They show that Charleston County is a place where businesses can grow, where people have access to meaningful opportunities, and where communities can prosper.

CCED was also recognized with two Excellence Awards from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC), which underscores our team's dedication to service and innovation. Several team members were honored for individual achievements as well. I could not be prouder of the leadership and heart that our staff brings to this work every day.

As we look ahead, CCED is beginning a new chapter with our existing industries and community partners. Together, we are expanding access to career pathways, strengthening support for local businesses, and improving the conditions that allow all residents to benefit from economic growth. Organizations such as Lowcountry Local First, the Charleston Digital Corridor, and the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce continue to be essential partners in this mission.

Our focus is clear. We will advance economic growth, strengthen our competitive position, and continue building a Charleston County that offers opportunity for everyone. I invite our partners, industries, and residents to join us in this work. Let us pursue excellence, support innovation, and build a future that reflects the very best of our community.



With gratitude and optimism,

Merle Johnson
Executive Director

2025 CHARLESTON COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS



Charleston County has a Standard & Poor's (S&P) bond rating of AAA and a Moody's Investors Service rating of AAA. These high ratings are evidence of excellence in fiscal management for a county government.

AAA

Exceptionally
Strong

Fitch

Aaa

Exceptional

Moody's

AAA

Exceptionally
Strong

Standard
& Poors



Kylon J. Middleton
Chair - (District 6)



Larry Kobrovsky
Vice Chair - (District 2)



Herbert R. Sass, III
(District 1)



Robert L. Wehrman
(District 3)



Henry E. Darby
(District 4)



Teddie E. Pryor, Sr.
(District 5)



C. Brantley Moody
(District 7)



Joe Boykin
(District 8)



Jenny Costa Honeycutt
(District 9)

Bill L. Tuten - County Administrator

2025
ANNOUNCEMENTS



Charleston County continues to be a place where companies choose to grow, invest, and strengthen their commitment to the region. This year, new and existing industries announced projects that support jobs, investment, and long-term confidence in our community.



New Jobs:
442



Capital Investment:
\$146.5 Million

EXPANDED in Charleston County



“As a family-owned business, we’re thrilled to expand our operations in Charleston County. This community has been incredibly supportive, and we’re excited to continue serving the local businesses and industries here. Our expertise in steel, stainless steel and aluminum fabrication, combined with our commitment to quality and customer satisfaction, makes us well-suited to meet the region’s diverse needs.”

- Alpha Sheet Metal Works, President
Joseph W. Schady



“Holy City Linen is proud to be an integral part of Charleston’s tourism economy, and this expansion will enable us to process 30 million pounds of laundry within a year, directly supporting the hotels and businesses that make Charleston a world-class destination.”

- Holy City Linen, Owner
Ann Son



INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS



INFRASTRUCTURE

Significant progress was made on multiple regional infrastructure projects that strengthen mobility, safety, and economic competitiveness. The new I-26 interchange into Palmetto Commerce Park was completed ahead of schedule and under budget. Its urban diamond design will relieve traffic congestion, support new residential development, and improve access to the county's premier industrial park. Remaining funds will be reinvested into the Airport Connector Road project, which will create a safer and more direct connection to Charleston International Airport.

At the same time, Charleston International Airport continues to expand to meet the growing needs of travelers, airlines, and the regional economy. The West Gate expansion project is underway and will increase gate capacity, improve passenger flow, and enhance the overall travel experience. This investment supports the airport's long term growth, strengthens regional connectivity, and ensures that Charleston remains accessible for both business and leisure travelers.

Together, these projects reflect Charleston County's commitment to building infrastructure that supports sustained economic growth and a high quality of place.

ADVANCEMENTS IN MANUFACTURING

Manufacturing continues to play a major role in Charleston County's economic success. Nearly 60% of local manufacturing jobs are in aerospace, motor vehicle production, powertrain systems, or shipbuilding. Companies continue to adopt advanced materials, new technologies, and modern processes that move the region forward. Eaton Aerospace received national recognition as the number one most sustainable company on the Investor's Business Daily list of the top fifty most sustainable companies for 2025. Eaton has certified eighty-three percent of its manufacturing sites as zero waste to landfill and has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by thirty-five percent since 2018. Mercedes Benz Vans launched and graduated the first cohort of the MBV Charleston Youth Training Program. This partnership with the Community Resource Center and Charleston County School District provides hands-on experience in automotive manufacturing and creates direct employment pathways for high school seniors.

These initiatives demonstrate a long-term commitment to Charleston County and highlight the strength of our advanced manufacturing sector.

INVESTING FOR OUR FUTURE

Charleston County continues to invest in the infrastructure, innovation, and workforce strengths that make our region globally competitive.

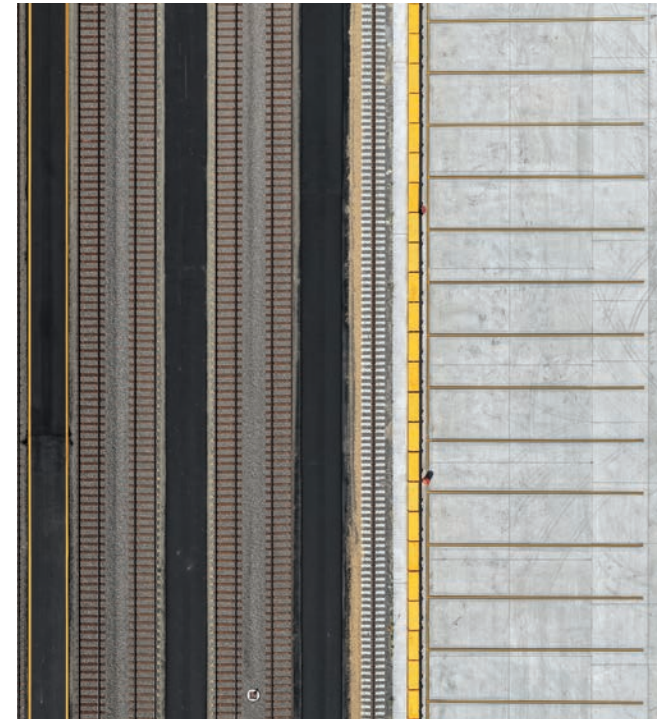
LOGISTICS

Charleston has solidified its role as a global logistics hub, supported by world-class infrastructure and continued investment in capacity and technology. The Port of Charleston maintains the deepest harbor on the East Coast with a depth of 52 feet, and despite challenging global conditions, the port increased its container volume by 3% year-over-year.

The Navy Base Intermodal Facility in North Charleston, supported through \$550 million in state investment, is nearing completion. More than 72,000 feet of track have been installed, buildings and concrete paving are finished, and equipment is currently being commissioned. Once operational, the facility will have the capacity to process one million rail lifts each year and will link directly to Inland Ports' Dillon and Greer.

Modernization and expansion remain top priorities across the sector, with long-term plans to accommodate up to 10 million TEUs. Innovation is also shaping the industry. Eveon Containers, which operates in Charleston, launched Market Monitor, a digital platform that tracks container pricing using more than 60 million data points and historical information dating back to 2022.

Collectively, these advancements demonstrate the strength of Charleston County's logistics ecosystem in facilitating global commerce.



INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS



DEFENSE

Charleston County is home to South Carolina's largest defense economy. More than \$1.2 billion in defense contracts were obligated in fiscal year 2025. Our strong contractor network, coastal location, and skilled workforce make the region a premier defense hub.

Joint Base Charleston supports more than 90,000 service members, federal employees, dependents, and retirees across four installations. The Naval Information Warfare Center (NIWC) continues to strengthen the region's technology and research assets by employing professionals in cybersecurity, engineering, and other advanced fields.



TECH SECTOR & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Charleston's technology sector continues to exceed expectations with local tech salaries coming in 112% higher than the regional and 129% higher than the state's per capita wages. The Charleston Digital Corridor continues to connect companies, support talent, and provide education and programming at the Learning Center. The Charleston Tech Center remains home to a growing community of technology firms, with plans in place to build a second building in the future.

Entrepreneurship is also gaining momentum, supported by organizations that connect founders to mentorship, talent, and critical business resources. The Charleston Digital Corridor and the Harbor Entrepreneur Center play key roles in fostering innovation and helping startups scale within the region's growing tech and innovation ecosystem.



LIFE SCIENCES

Charleston County continues to strengthen its position as a growing hub for life sciences, supported by advanced manufacturing, research institutions, clinical partners, and an expanding network of innovative companies. The sector benefits from the presence of the Medical University of South Carolina, which anchors a pipeline of talent and research activity, as well as global firms that are investing in product development, production, and high-quality jobs. Companies such as SHL Medical and Charles River Labs continue to expand facilities and capabilities, adding depth to a sector that integrates medical technology, pharmaceuticals, biotech, and specialized manufacturing. With strong partnerships, an educated workforce, and a supportive business environment, Charleston County is poised for continued growth in the life sciences economy.



INDUSTRY CELEBRATIONS



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
 Davis Defense Group
 Ribbon-Cutting
 CHS International Airport Ground-
 breaking on West Gate expansion
 Governor McMaster Signs Tax
 Increment Financing Bill Into Law
 SHL Medical Ribbon-Cutting
 Boeing broke ground on a
 billion-dollar expansion

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
 Low Tide Brewing breaks ground on their expansion
 Shipyard Creek Logistics Center Grand Opening
 Holy City Linen announces expansion
 Charles River Labs announces expansion

BUSINESS CONCIERGE PROGRAM



Charleston County Economic Development's Business Concierge Program serves as the front door for companies navigating growth, expansion, workforce needs, and community engagement. Acting as a centralized connector, the program brings together public agencies, educators, workforce partners, utilities, and business leaders to ensure companies receive coordinated, responsive support at every stage of their lifecycle.

In 2025, the program played a critical role in helping companies expand operations, strengthen their workforce pipelines, and deepen their roots in the community. Through proactive engagement, CCED strengthened relationships with existing employers, responded to emerging needs, and connected businesses to the resources required to remain competitive in a rapidly changing economy.



WORKFORCE FOCUS:

Workforce development remained a primary focus of the Concierge Program. Through partnerships with the Charleston County School District, SC Works, readySC, Turn90, area colleges, and community organizations, CCED helped align education, training, and employment pathways with real-time industry demand. Job fairs, hiring events, and targeted recruitment efforts connected hundreds of residents to career opportunities across aerospace, manufacturing, life sciences, defense, and healthcare.



2025 BUSINESS CONCIERGE IMPACT:

- Over **160** business visits conducted
- More than **125** strategic partner connections facilitated
- **7** workforce hiring and career exploration events supported
- Expansion activity supported across manufacturing, defense, technology, and life sciences
- New industry support added for agribusiness and retail

BUSINESS CONCIERGE PROGRAM



“We are excited to bring ABA to Charleston County. The support we have received has been phenomenal, and we felt welcomed from the very beginning. This new facility will enable us to serve our North American customers better while leveraging Charleston’s robust logistics network and vibrant community. We look forward to exploring ways to contribute locally, building on our experience, and supporting local businesses.”

- ABA Automotive,
Managing Director
Dunya Bulut



YOUR BUSINESS. OUR SUPPORT. ONE UNIFIED APPROACH.

If your business is expanding, hiring, or seeking support, the CCED Business Concierge Team is here to help. Contact us to access personalized guidance, strategic connections, and the resources you need to grow in Charleston County. Info@CharlestonCountyDevelopment.org



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WEEK



Charleston County Economic Development proudly celebrated the International Economic Development Council's 2025 Economic Development Week with the community and businesses that call Charleston County home. CCED hosted a dynamic Economic Development Week, fostering connections, celebrating achievements, and charting a course for continued growth in the county.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- The CCED department visited 30+ businesses throughout the week.
- Hosted the Palmetto Commerce Park Roundtable at Palmetto Logistics Center for businesses to receive updates from CCED, the City of North Charleston, retrainSC, Turn90, Charleston County Public Works, and Colliers.
- Charleston County Council presented a Resolution recognizing May 12-16, 2025, as National Economic Development Week in Charleston County.
- Celebrated the expansion of Alpha Sheet Metal Works in Charleston County! The company's \$3.7 million investment will create 14 new jobs.
- Hosted the Navy Yard Business Meetup at the Clemson University Zucker Family Graduate Education Center. The meeting highlighted Charleston County Navy Yard businesses and fostered connections among industry professionals. Speakers included the SC Ports Authority, SC Department of Commerce, Charleston County Emergency Management, retrainSC, and Turn90.



CCED received two Awards for Excellence from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) for the 2024 Annual Report and Business Resource Guide publication. These awards recognize our dedication to driving economic growth and creating a thriving community. Our organization is honored to be among the best in the industry and grateful for the support of our partners and business ecosystem.



Ashley Richardson, Deputy Director, was recognized as the Charleston Women in International Trade (CWIT)'s Member of the Year for 2025! CWIT champions the role of international trade professionals, particularly women, in Charleston and throughout South Carolina.





“ In a world that’s gone remote, the only way to build a magnetic headquarters, one that attracts the brightest minds in healthcare and AI, is to offer more than just a desk. Charleston County has it all: year-round sunshine, a rising tech scene, and that rare mix of ambition and southern hospitality. It’s the kind of place where work-life balance isn’t just a perk, it’s the point. If we’re going to transform post-acute care, we’re going to do it here. On the beach, in the office and everywhere in between. ”

- Alita, Co-Founder and CEO

Matt Rosa

UNIFIED APPROACH



WHERE BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER

Charleston County's economic success is strongest when business engagement and community well-being move forward together. For years, CCED has served as a connector across industry, partners, and county departments. The creation of the new Community Competitiveness division builds on this foundation by aligning economic development with the community conditions that support long-term prosperity.

Launched in late 2025, this division strengthens CCED's ability to bridge business needs with the systems that influence daily life, including workforce housing, childcare, transportation access, and workforce development. Although the work is just beginning, the division provides a dedicated structure that brings focus, coordination, and strategy to the community side of economic development.

The goal is simple. When residents have access to opportunity, and when employers have the conditions they need to attract and retain talent, the entire county benefits. Community Competitiveness positions CCED to support shared prosperity in a more intentional and measurable way.

VISION: As we strive for excellence, Charleston County Economic Development will be the driving force where economic development and quality of place intersect, creating sustainable prosperity and opportunity for all.

Laying the Groundwork for Impact

With the new division established, CCED has begun building the relationships, insights, and internal alignment needed to carry this work forward. These early efforts reflect how economic development and community priorities will reinforce one another as the division grows.

Strengthening Collaboration Across County Systems

Early coordination with county departments and regional partners is helping define how business insight can inform conversations on housing, transportation, child care, and workforce participation.

Connecting Business Perspectives to Community Priorities

Through business visits, industry roundtables, and partner engagement, CCED is gathering the insights needed to understand how community conditions influence hiring, retention, and long-term competitiveness.

Identifying Shared Opportunities for 2026 and Beyond

Planning is underway to support initiatives that enhance quality of place, strengthen workforce stability, and advance opportunities for residents across the county.

These early steps form the foundation of a unified approach where business engagement and community development move in tandem. As this work expands into 2026 and beyond, CCED and its partners will continue shaping a resilient, competitive, and opportunity-rich Charleston County.



COMMUNITY BUILDERS



LOWCOUNTRY LOCAL FIRST

Since 2007, Lowcountry Local First has worked to advance local ownership, economic resilience, and inclusive prosperity throughout the Lowcountry. Through advocacy, education, and hands-on business resources, the organization helps ensure that local entrepreneurs have the tools they need to succeed.

Programs such as the Growth Hub provide small business owners with mentorship, training, and access to capital. By encouraging residents and visitors to support locally owned businesses, Lowcountry Local First helps keep dollars circulating within the community. This strengthens neighborhood economies, supports quality jobs, and preserves the character that makes the Lowcountry unique.



TOP:
2025 Chef's Potluck.

ABOVE & RIGHT:
Spring 2025 Academy Graduation.



Sustainability principles, covering aspects related to ecological and social well-being in addition to community engagement, are crucial in shaping a company's long-term objectives and commitment to social responsibility. Functioning as a facilitator of genuine growth and development, Charleston County Economic Development is dedicated to elevating community success and promoting economic growth. Our office serves as a catalyst for local businesses and organizations, offering support and guidance to help them achieve their sustainability objectives.

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Since 1879, the South Carolina Department of Agriculture has served as a champion for the state's farmers, producers, and agribusiness community. Its mission is to promote and nurture the growth of South Carolina agriculture while ensuring food safety and consumer confidence.

Through marketing and market development programs, the department helps producers connect with new buyers and expand into new markets. The Certified South Carolina program strengthens brand recognition for locally grown products. The Agribusiness Center for Research and Entrepreneurship provides training and grant funding for startups and expanding businesses. Specialty crop grants and export assistance programs further support innovation and sustainability across the agricultural sector.

Unitedly, these efforts help sustain both rural and urban economies while preserving the state's agricultural heritage.



LEFT:
Ted Lee, Sherman Mack of Cherry Point Seafood on Wadmalaw Island, Commissioner Hugh Weathers, Blanche Weathers, Matt Lee.

SOCIAL LEADERSHIP



SCHNELLECKE LOGISTICS

Schnellecke Logistics is deeply committed to making a positive impact in the Charleston community through consistent community engagement and environmental responsibility. The company regularly participates in its Care the Neighborhood

Program as a way to encourage volunteerism among team members and leadership.

Since December 2021, Schnellecke Logistics has partnered with the Lowcountry Food Bank, with employees volunteering on a regular basis to address food insecurity across the region. In May 2024, the company launched its Adopt a Park initiative, sponsoring a flowerbed in North Charleston to support neighborhood beautification and public spaces.

Environmental stewardship is also a priority. At its Training Academy, Schnellecke Logistics installed solar panels that generate energy for office equipment and shared spaces. This investment has significantly reduced carbon emissions and reflects the company's commitment to sustainable operations.



SWEATMAN'S GARDEN

Led by owner and creative director Danielle Sweatman, Sweatman's Garden has become a community centered space that celebrates creativity, inclusion, and connection. The venue regularly hosts events that uplift local women, LGBTQ+ artists, and small business owners. These gatherings create visibility, build community, and strengthen Charleston's creative culture.

Beyond programming, Sweatman's Garden actively gives back through

Companies across Charleston County are demonstrating social leadership by investing in their people, strengthening communities, and protecting the environment. Their commitment to responsible growth shows how business success and community well-being go hand in hand.



community partnerships. The business supports Doors to Dreams through specialty cocktail fundraisers that benefit students at Title One schools. It also collaborates with Charleston's Absent Friends to help fund Charleston's first LGBTQ+ theater.

Signature events such as the Full Moon Market, which features an all-female vendor lineup, create opportunities for empowerment, collaboration, and small business growth. Sweatman's Garden exemplifies how local businesses can serve as both economic and cultural leaders within their communities.



CHUGACH GOVERNMENT SOLUTIONS, LLC

Chugach Government Solutions advances sustainable growth through strategic job creation, capital investment, community engagement, and environmental responsibility. Recent investments in advanced metal fabrication equipment have expanded operations that support U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard missions. Growth at NIWC LANT has created more than 100 new jobs while strengthening professional services capacity in the region.

Chugach remains committed to community service through partnerships with the Lowcountry Food Bank, Lowcountry Orphan

Relief, and Toys for Tots. The company also works with local recycling partners to divert over 200 pounds of electronic waste from landfills and maintains continuous improvement through ISO and CMMI certifications.

Leadership at Chugach actively supports Charleston's defense and innovation environment through service on the Contracts Industry Council, the Small Business Industry Outreach Initiative, and participation in the Eastern Defense Summit. These efforts reinforce the company's role as a responsible employer and a long-term community partner.



INDUSTRY IMPACT AWARDS



Charleston County Economic Development proudly recognizes outstanding companies whose achievements exemplify innovation, growth, community engagement, and long-term commitment to our region. The Industry Impact Awards honor employers across multiple size categories whose investments strengthen our economy, expand opportunity, and improve quality of life throughout Charleston County.

■ SMALL (1-50 EMPLOYEES)



R2P Innovations is a Charleston based company founded with a singular mission to save lives through advanced school security technology. Inspired by the tragedy at Sandy Hook, founder and Chief Executive Officer Tony Deering leveraged decades of expertise

in blast and ballistic protection to develop the R2P Door, the first classroom door tested to United States government ballistic standards and fire rated. Since its founding, R2P Innovations has experienced exceptional growth and national recognition. The company has been ranked the number one fastest-growing manufacturer in the United States and the fastest-growing manufacturer in South Carolina and Charleston. In just three years, R2P grew from two employees to a team of 28 and invested more than \$5 million dollars in advanced manufacturing equipment, along with \$9 million in personal founder investment. R2P proudly manufactures its life-saving doors in Charleston County and remains committed to job creation, innovation, and community investment. With a long-term vision to protect schools nationwide, R2P Innovations continues to deliver meaningful economic and social impact.

■ MEDIUM (51-150 EMPLOYEES)



Low Country Case and Millwork (LCCM) is a second-generation, family-owned commercial woodworking firm that has shaped the Lowcountry's architectural landscape for more than 35 years.

Known for its quality craftsmanship and customer first culture, the company has completed more than 4,000 regional projects across healthcare, education, hospitality, and corporate environments. Over the past three years, the company has doubled in size and grown into a \$15 million organization with 75 employees. Beyond its business success, LCCM is deeply committed to community impact. Over its history, the company has contributed more than \$2 million to organizations such as the Lowcountry Food Bank, MUSC Shawn Jenkins Children's Hospital, My Sister's House, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Ronald McDonald House, and Habitat for Humanity. Through volunteer service, nonprofit partnerships, and capital improvement projects, the company continues to uplift the communities it serves while advancing innovation and craftsmanship.

■ LARGE (151+ EMPLOYEES)



Keel has made a major economic impact in Charleston County through significant capital

investment, workforce growth, and the development of advanced industrial capabilities. The company is investing \$67 million in new facilities, including a modern paint facility, a dedicated fabrication facility for submarine superstructures, and a people-focused building designed to support long-term employee retention. Between September 2024 and September 2025, Keel hired more than 270 full-time employees across its Ladson, Goose Creek, and Yorges Island locations, bringing total employment to more than 587 team members and contractors. The company also demonstrated strong community leadership through support for veteran initiatives, partnerships with local school districts to expand career pathways, regional cleanup efforts, and employee participation in community events. Keel continues to lead through innovation in advanced manufacturing and workforce development while strengthening its role in national defense and long-term regional prosperity.



■ COMMUNITY IMPACT

Founded in 2015 in response to growing food insecurity in the Charleston region, Lowcountry Street Grocery addresses food access through a self-sustaining social enterprise model known as Robinhood Economics. The organization leverages sales of high-quality local food to support both consumers and producers while expanding equitable access for families in need. Through sliding scale pricing, SNAP and EBT incentives, and nutrition education, Lowcountry Street Grocery ensures that income and location do not determine a family's access to healthy food. Its core programs include Nell, the mobile farmers market, Community Supported Grocery delivery, and GroceryRx, which connects patients to fresh produce through clinical nutrition prescriptions. Together, these programs work to reduce diet-related illness, strengthen the local food system, and ensure food access is treated as a basic right rather than a privilege.

INNOVATOR AWARD



QuicksortRx is transforming pharmacy procurement for health systems across the nation through its real-time analytics platform that unifies purchasing, compliance, and reimbursement data. Founded at the Medical University of South Carolina and headquartered in Charleston, the company delivers actionable insights that drive significant cost savings and operational efficiency.

Recognized as the number one product for Purchasing Optimization Analytics by the 2025 Best in KLAS Awards, QuicksortRx combines advanced technology with clinical expertise to provide hospitals with immediate visibility into compliance risks, reimbursement trends, and purchasing opportunities. The company pairs its analytics platform with experienced pharmacists who serve as an extension of each client's team, allowing leaders to make faster and more confident decisions that improve financial performance and patient care.

To date, QuicksortRx has enabled more than \$300 million in savings for health systems nationwide. The company continues to position Charleston County as a leader in health data innovation while helping hospitals strengthen their financial sustainability.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AMBASSADOR



ROBBIE LAHMON

Robert “Robbie” Lahmon serves as the Business Services Manager at the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce, where he leads statewide efforts to connect employers with workforce solutions and help job seekers access meaningful career opportunities. His career with the agency began in 2016, and through a series of progressive leadership roles, he has become one of the state’s foremost champions for workforce collaboration.

Throughout his tenure, Robbie has been instrumental in strengthening partnerships between SC Works centers, employers, schools, and community organizations. He played a key role during the COVID response by assisting unemployment claimants and later helped shape regional employer services as both a Business Consultant and the first Lead Senior Business Services Consultant for the Trident region.

In early 2025, Robbie was promoted to Business Services Manager, a role that allows him to guide statewide initiatives, serve as a public spokesperson for the agency, and oversee major partnerships that expand access to employment and training programs. With a background that includes nearly three decades of operations, merchandising, and corporate training in the private sector, Robbie brings a unique perspective that bridges public service and business engagement.

A graduate of Coastal Carolina University with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Government, Robbie is widely respected for his leadership, mentorship, and deep knowledge of workforce programs. His commitment to public-private partnerships continues to shape South Carolina’s workforce system and improve outcomes for employers and job seekers alike.





Powered by Partnerships: The CCED Ecosystem

No single organization drives economic development alone. CCED works across a diverse ecosystem of partners to strengthen competitiveness, support business growth, and advance community prosperity.





ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TEAM



Merle Johnson
Executive Director



Ashley Richardson
Deputy Director



Kedyky (KK) Sherrill
Director of Community
Competitiveness



Gene Borzendowski
Director of Global
Business Development



Lauren Ellis
Strategic Marketing &
Communications Manager



Kip Watson
Director,
Business Research



Scott Kirby
Finance &
Technology Manager



Dayton Ward
Project Coordinator



Tori Simmons
Operations Coordinator

The CCED team
brings together
experience,
creativity, and
service





**CHARLESTON
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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



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