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SOUTH CAROLINA  
STATE OF THE STATE

INITIATIVE FOR  
WORK FORCE EXCELLENCE  
BRIEFING MATERIAL



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Governor Carroll A. Campbell, Jr.

January 20, 1988



# State of South Carolina

## Office of the Governor

CARROLL A. CAMPBELL, JR.  
GOVERNOR

POST OFFICE BOX 11369  
COLUMBIA 29211

January 20, 1988

Dear Legislator:

As Governor I have become increasingly concerned about illiteracy in South Carolina and its impact on our work force and our citizens. South Carolina's business and industry cannot continue to compete effectively in today's marketplace unless employees have the ability to read, write, calculate, solve problems and process information. An estimated one out of every five adults in South Carolina has not gone to school beyond the 8th grade. While most of these individuals are working, their lack of basic skills often keeps them in lower paying jobs.

Because of the urgency that I believe exists in addressing illiteracy, I have prepared a plan to address literacy and work force excellence. The Initiative will neither create new bureaucracies nor disrupt the present delivery system; it will augment and make accountable the efforts currently in place.

The two major points of this Initiative are to substantially expand the number of programs at the work place, and to increase private sector support and involvement through business round tables to ensure programs offer services tailored to business need. An Executive Summary is attached for your information. Initial funding for this Initiative I am proposing will be provided by a JTPA grant awarded by the State Private Industry Council to the Governor's Office.

I urge your support of this Initiative because it offers a unique opportunity for business, industry and state human service programs to join together to make adult education and literacy training a key resource in maintaining a competitive economic climate in South Carolina.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carroll A. Campbell, Jr.".

Carroll A. Campbell, Jr.  
Governor

## **SOUTH CAROLINA INITIATIVE ON WORK FORCE EXCELLENCE**

The need for states to develop programs emphasizing adult basic skills training and retraining is recognized nationally. Nowhere is the impact of illiteracy felt more strongly than in the workplace. The Council of State Planning Agencies reports that three-fourths of all jobs in the year 2000 will require workers to create and process knowledge, but it is estimated that presently one-third of the nation's work force with high school diplomas are functionally illiterate.

The National Alliance of Business provides additional evidence that states need to adopt strategies to raise employee basic skills at the workplace. They found that "the inability on the part of many individuals to work productively in today's technological economy has resulted in higher unemployment, increased welfare dependency, increased crime, drug dependency and other social disorders, a larger gap between rich and poor, and between minorities and non-minorities."

South Carolina's business and industry cannot continue to compete effectively in today's marketplace unless their employees possess the skills and abilities to cope with demands placed on them by technological changes in the workplace. The level of knowledge and adaptability required goes beyond simple reading and math skills to problem solving and information processing. These "portable skills" noted by the Councils of State Policy and Planning Agencies are easily adapted to change in job demands.

The State Development Board asserts that the quality of the work force is one of the most important locational factors for all categories of industry. Though the skill levels vary by type of industry, even entry level jobs are requiring high school level skills.

### **Scope of Illiteracy in South Carolina**

It is difficult to measure the extent of illiteracy in our state, and even more difficult to determine the number of employed people whose skills need upgrading. However, those who have not been educated beyond the 8th grade represent a definable

population with which to begin. In South Carolina, one out of every five adults has completed no more than 8 years of school. Table 1 shows a breakdown of South Carolina's population 18 and over by years of schooling and race. The percentage of the black population with 8 years or less of school is higher than whites, though a greater number of whites have not attended school past the 8th grade. According to research completed by groups like the Southern Growth Policies Board, the demographics of South Carolina's literacy and basic skills problems are similar to those of other southern states.

Table 1  
POPULATION OVER 18 WITH 8 YEARS OR LESS OF SCHOOLING

	<u>TOTAL POPULATION</u>	<u>8 YRS OR LESS OF SCHOOL</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION WITH 8 YRS. OF SCHOOL OR LESS</u>
<u>White</u>			
Males	758,250	137,973	18%
Females	807,687	136,928	17%
Total White	1,565,937	274,901	18%
<u>Black</u>			
Black Males	269,301	91,322	34%
Black Females	325,620	99,377	31%
Total Black	594,921	190,699	32%
Grand Total	2,160,858	465,600	22%

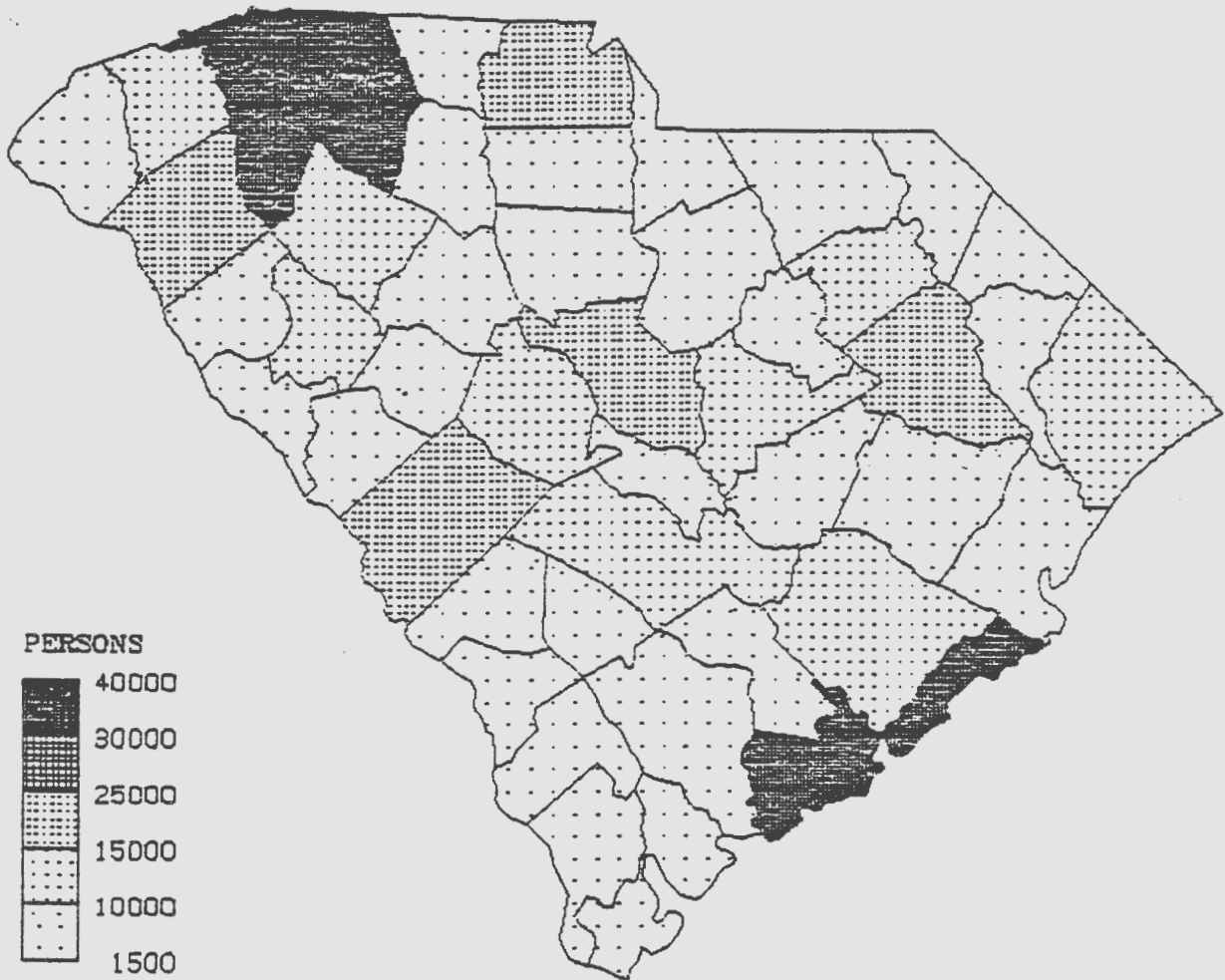
Source: 1980 Census

The geographical distribution of persons 18 years old and over with 8 years or less of school education is displayed in Figure 1. This map shows that the concentration of functional illiterates is in the most urban and industrialized counties of the state.

The vast majority of the people who have completed 8 years or less of school are

Figure 1

PERSONS (18 yrs.+ ) WITH 0 TO 8 YEARS OF EDUCATION



SOURCE: 1980 CENSUS FILE - STF4

working. Discounting for retirees and those unemployed, it is estimated that about 16% of the work force has 8 years or less of school. This represents a group of at least 307,000 people who could benefit from literacy training and adult education in the workplace.

These data indicate the magnitude of how many people across the state are prevented from qualifying for better job opportunities because they lack basic skills. Even if workers have more than an 8th grade education, they may not have the skills necessary to compete in a changing work force. For these and other individuals, it does not matter whether they failed to complete high school, 8th grade, or whether they have a high school diploma. This implies a much greater need for work force training than the population identified above. A 1975 University of Texas study of the competency levels of employed adults identified 20% of the adults tested as illiterate with an additional 34% whose competencies were minimal.

Those workers who have completed the 8th grade or less and those who have completed school but lack the necessary basic skills for today's jobs are the targeted population for the Work Force Initiative.

These are in effect a group of "working poor" who, due to their lack of basic skills are qualified for relatively low paying jobs. They will not be able to raise their income and standard of living until they acquire basic skills needed to improve or remain in their changing jobs. These persons are the ones who will most likely desire to participate in specialized work force development initiatives.

The Adult Education and Literacy programs which presently offer basic skills opportunities do not have the capacity to increase substantially the level of service necessary to serve the needs of the underemployed work force and their employers. A brief analysis of the services each program provides will illustrate the limitations placed on our present system.

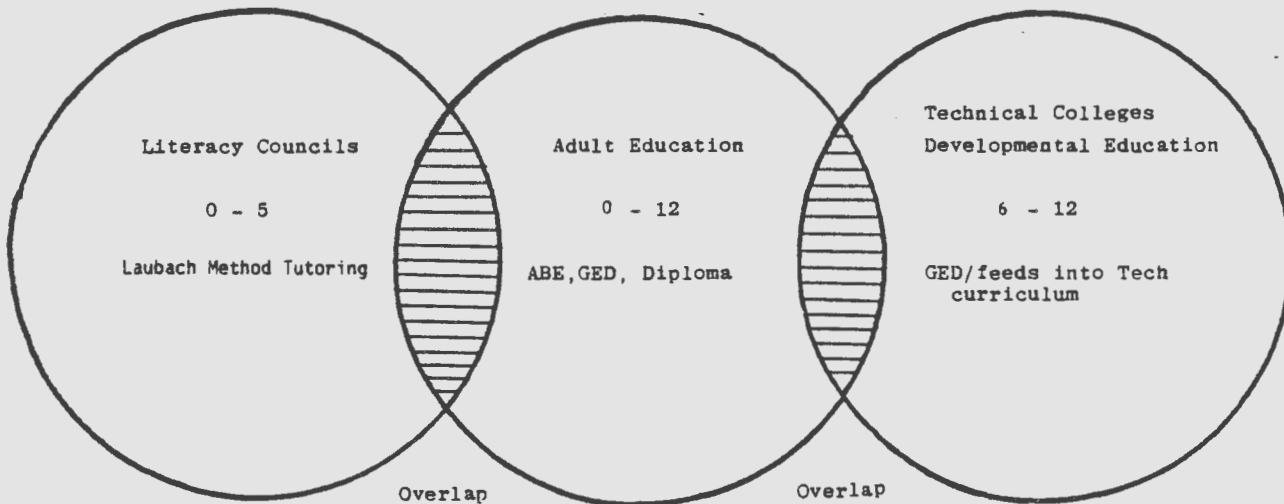
## Current Efforts in Adult Education/Literacy

There are three major service providers in Adult Education/Literacy: Technical College Developmental Education, Literacy Councils and Adult Education. The total number of persons served in these three programs exceeds 70,000 people annually. The range of services offered covers 0-12th grade levels. While each program is distinctly separate, it is conceivable that a student could be completely educated by moving incrementally from one program to the next.

Figure 2 shows the basic programs, their services, and the overlap that exists.

Figure 2

### CHARACTERISTICS AND OVERLAP OF SERVICES IN THREE MAJOR ADULT LITERACY/EDUCATION PROGRAMS



SOURCE: Division of Employment and Training Interviews

Program-overlap occurs with literacy councils in some areas where adult ed funds a literacy coordinator when council already has a staff and program in place. Duplication also occurs in the reporting of numbers from all programs. There is an overlap between Tech, developmental and adult ed programs. Both institutions offer the same levels of instruction though approaches are different.

The numbers of people served annually have not increased significantly in Adult Education and Technical Colleges' Developmental Education, although the number of enrollees in volunteer literacy programs has risen since 1980. Table 2 illustrates enrollment levels for all 3 providers, and Figure 3 shows an increase in literacy council enrollment.

**Table 2**

**ADULT EDUCATION ENROLLMENT IN S.C.  
FY 1979-86**

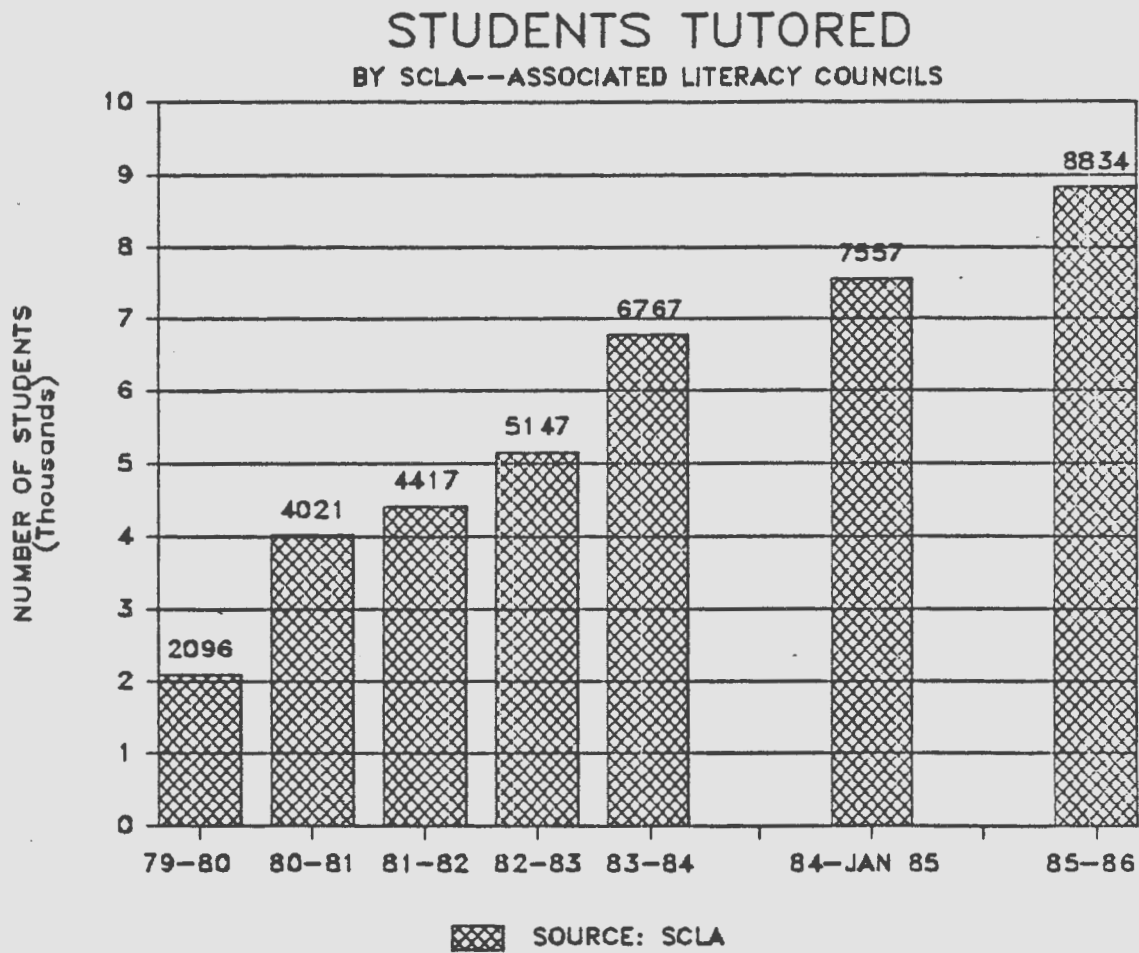
	<u>FY 1980-81</u>	<u>FY 1981-82</u>	<u>FY 1982-83</u>	<u>FY 1983-84</u>	<u>FY 1984-85</u>	<u>FY 1985-86</u>
Total Enrollment in State Department of Education Adult Education Programs	54,529	47,955	49,701	47,928	46,382	48,740

**ADULT EDUCATION ENROLLMENT IN PROGRAMS WHO  
RECEIVE FUNDS FROM SC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
FISCAL YEAR**

<u>Categories</u>	<u>1979-80</u>	<u>1980-81</u>	<u>1981-82</u>	<u>1982-83</u>	<u>1983-84</u>	<u>1984-85</u>
Technical Colleges	11,103	13,805	12,292	13,822	13,026	12,543
Literacy Councils*	2,096	4,021	4,417	5,147	6,767	7,557
Correctional Inst.	3,527	3,620	3,753	3,929	4,340	3,783
Voc Rehabilitation	<u>3,764</u>	<u>3,321</u>	<u>4,004</u>	<u>4,881</u>	<u>4,288</u>	<u>4,561</u>
TOTAL	20,490	24,767	24,466	27,779	28,421	26,300

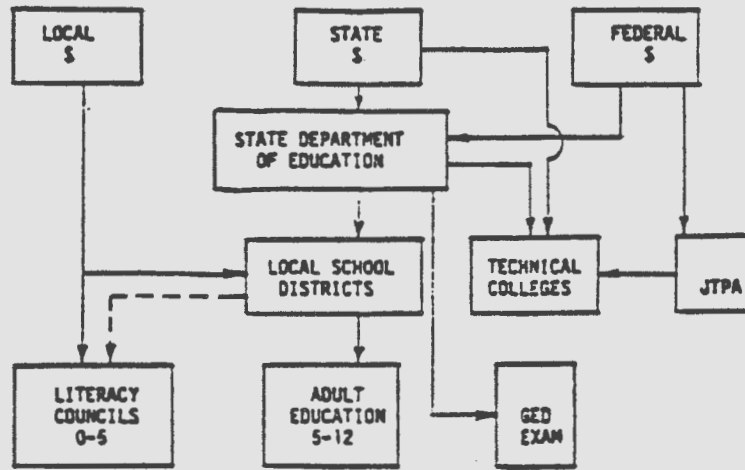
SOURCE: Annual Reports and Rankings of the SC State Department of Education and the  
\*South Carolina Literacy Association.

Figure 3



There are five major issues of concern in present adult education and literacy programs. The first issue for concern in the present delivery system is the overlap and duplication in the programs. There is little sharing of program services and students. There appears to be competition to provide services in many areas of the state because funding is limited and is based on headcounts. The flow of funds from state, local and federal sources is shown in the Figure 4. It should be noted that not all literacy councils receive funds from state and federal sources.

**Figure 4**  
**Flow Chart - Public Sector Literacy Programs**



Source: Governor's Office, Adapted from the Tennessee 2000 report

Technical Colleges receive a state appropriation and tuition which supports their developmental education classes, and colleges also receive a small amount of federal funds from the State Department of Education. Literacy councils depend heavily on the Department of Education for their share of federal literacy funds.

When Adult Education funds a council, it is with funds which have been appropriated for literacy to local school superintendents who may or may not fully cooperate to distribute those funds to a council.

Councils can request that Adult Ed reimburse them for each student (based on the previous year total) but these funds are not appropriated on a formula basis. The Employment Revitalization Act provides for literacy councils to be funded according to a formula, but some councils have complained that Adult Ed's interpretation of the law is not in line with the intent they perceive the law to make. Upon inspection of the latest available funding levels, it is evident that the literacy councils received less funds on a per-pupil basis than the formula allowed. It is also important to note that only two literacy councils are receiving direct Adult

Education grants.

In many counties, Adult Education funding has completely integrated all literacy council functions into the local Adult Education office. This has exacerbated already sensitive turf issues between Adult Education and Literacy Councils. The South Carolina Literacy Association recommends that all councils be allowed to contract for services with school districts. In Minnesota, which is recognized as having a model program, this method of funding insures fiscal the autonomy of councils, thereby promoting local ownership and participation on the volunteer councils.

A second issue which affects the quality of adult education/literacy services is the priority placed on programs by the lead agencies involved. Technical Colleges are in the business of educating adults for employment. The Department of Education, although it has always offered the adult basic education, high school diploma and GED preparatory programs, is mainly in the business of providing public school K-12 education. According to the Office of Adult Education's report, their programs account for only 1% of the state's education budget. These Adult Education programs are oriented toward the attainment of higher grade level achievements and high school diplomas.

South Carolina's system is in keeping with most states who design their adult education services to comply more with funding regulations rather than on the basis of need. This trend has been recognized by the Education Commission on the States in the Solutions In Progress report.

The third issue is that the Adult Education programs place emphasis on receiving high school diplomas/certificates. However, this is not a motivating factor for those needing immediate skills-upgrading for the retaining of or improving their employment. Also, the high school diploma program particularly fails to provide the immediate results required by employers because it follows the standards set by the Education Improvement Act for hours spent in class and the graduation exit exam. While this program may be useful for individuals lacking a few credits, it could take from four to six years to complete.

Likewise, the GED preparation program targets the passage of the GED exam as the students' primary goal. While a GED is generally required by employers, the GED in itself does not provide specific indicators of a person's readiness to adapt to the needs of the workplace. In contrast, Developmental Education is offered to students who have selected a specific course of study at Technical Colleges, but who have failed to meet certain entrance requirements. Of the 5,014 persons enrolled in developmental education classes in the Fall quarter of 1987, 3,346 students came for one and two developmental courses and attended credit classes as well.

The fourth issue is that adult learners were once school children, and the school system they attended for one reason or another failed to provide an opportunity for their minimal achievement. Thus adults tend to avoid returning to the site or structure of their earlier failures.

This analysis of current delivery systems would not be complete without addressing the fifth issue, which is cooperation among service providers in local communities. The level of service provided by each program varies considerably from school district to district. In some areas the providers cooperate extremely well as in Spartanburg and Greenwood. However, they are in the minority. Other communities have no Technical College or literacy council, and only offer a part-time adult education coordinator. These limited resources increase the need for each provider to become interdependent on the other.

### **The Governor's Proposal**

The goal and purpose of the Initiative on Work Force Excellence is to expand substantially the number of training programs at the workplace. The Initiative is based on present and projected needs of existing and expanding industries. These industries need the employees whose basic skills, problem solving abilities and communication skills are at a level where changes in the workplace and new technologies can easily be applied. The current adult education/literacy programs have a history of successfully educating limited numbers of adults. The demand for a literate and trainable work force, however, exceeds the capacity of our present programs.

The Initiative proposed here will neither create new bureaucracies nor disrupt the present delivery system. It will augment the efforts of present providers toward overall program expansion and direction, and link program delivery to work force specific programs.

The key to the success of this Work Force Initiative will be significant private sector involvement. Therefore, a partnership between service providers and employers will be developed throughout the State. A state-level, employer roundtable of industry executives will be asked by the Governor to recommend delineation of the roles that Literacy Councils, Adult Education and Technical Colleges will serve for the Initiative.

In addition, local employer roundtables will be appointed by the Governor. These groups will be nominated by local chambers of commerce and development boards and will be made up of leaders from various businesses and industries.

Because local employers look to the local technical colleges for trained or trainable workers, technical colleges will be asked to provide a work force specialist assigned to local roundtables.

A small staff within the Economic Development Division of the Governor's Office will be responsible for acting as a liaison between state and local efforts, and will provide the technical assistance and support needed to build effective roundtables and cooperation between local service providers.

The existing, well-established relationship between technical colleges and employers offers the best opportunity for the rapid expansion of workplace training programs. The role of the work force specialists will be to initiate contact between the three service providers and the employers under the guidance of the local roundtable.

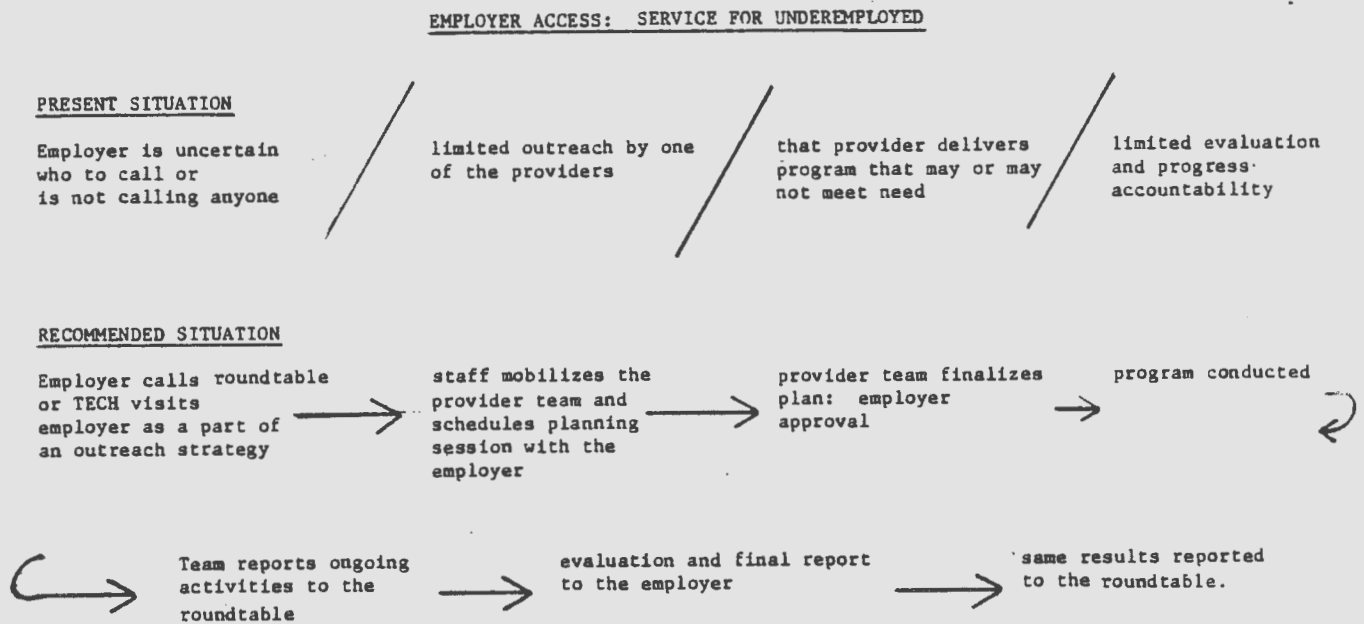
The process will work as a "one-stop" concept: From an employer's standpoint, one contact with the roundtable will yield comprehensive information and specific training strategies for solving their training and development needs. The roundtable work force specialist will be responsible for assembling a provider group that will

plan service delivery with each employer. Some employers will need the services of all three providers; some will not. The local roundtables will act as advisors to the service providers and will assist in the development of coordination from their private sector perspective.

Initial funding for the state and local initiative activities will be provided by a JTPA grant awarded by the State Private Industry Council to the Governor's Office. It is not anticipated that the first phases of the Initiative will require additional funding. This is based on the demonstrated experience of models such as the one that exists in Spartanburg and Greenwood Counties.

Figure 5 describes first how the current service delivery system works and the Initiative's effect on this process. The result will be a system that brings employers into the forefront of the design and delivery of worksite-specific training.

Figure 5



Source: Division of Employment and Training

How is this Initiative different from existing workplace programs offered by all three service providers? How can the efforts outlined here improve on the quality of services now offered?

All programs now offered, though successful to some degree, are not focused from a private sector, employer viewpoint. It is crucial for a business or industry to have the flexibility to determine the specific training and developmental programs they need. By establishing business roundtables, the focus of this aspect of adult education can be changed from an educational to an economic development viewpoint. The result will be demonstrated performance and productivity improvements, improved safety, and measurable gains in employee abilities to adapt to new job requirements. Where each provider now approaches an employer individually, the Initiative will offer a combination of services tailored to the needs of that business.

The Initiative will address the five issues raised earlier. The first issue of duplication and turf protection in the present delivery system will be minimized under the direction of the local roundtables as providers are called together to plan workplace specific programs.

The second issue, program priorities for service providers, will be better identified as the local roundtables focus resource utilization toward solving basic skills problems for the working poor.

The third issue, present emphasis on grade level improvement and high school diplomas, will be modified to include immediate training and skills. Under the guidance of the roundtable, modification will result from shifting priorities to include tailored training programs of the workplace.

The fourth issue, adult reluctance to enter a traditional school setting voluntarily, will be overcome by the convenience and familiarity of the workplace. Also, employers will be able to commit additional incentives in wage increases and promotions upon completing the program.

The fifth issue in the service delivery system is cooperation among the three providers in local communities. The State roundtable will recommend delineation of roles and linkages to be formed at the level. Local roundtables will be advised of the overall policy recommendations. These roundtables will counsel with local providers to encourage cooperation and monitor the progress.

## Summary

The Initiative will create an increased demand for all kinds of literacy/adult education services. Linkages that will be forged through the roundtables will create opportunities for pairing and sharing of resources to service the increased demand. For example, in Spartanburg and Greenwood this kind of effort has led to expansion of services without need for additional staff or increased funds. New support for adult basic skills programs will be found through the roundtable's involvement which will enhance each program's ability to expand. The existence of a roundtable to centralize this Initiative's efforts will provide more immediate and faster access for program start up. The emphasis that will be placed on job-specific training will result in more rapid development of skills by employees.

The roundtable will be the guiding organization to assist providers in setting priorities for more effective use of resources. Currently each kind of program sets priorities more according to state and federal funding requirements than community need. Roundtables will provide the balance needed to focus services between effective attainment of goals by providers, employers and the "working poor".

The Governor's Initiative for Work Force Excellence offers a unique opportunity for business, industry and state human service programs to join together to make adult education and literacy training a key resource in maintaining a competitive economic climate in South Carolina. The current programs will be the solid base from which to build a more adaptable and skilled work force. Our efforts will only be as successful as the cooperative spirit exhibited by service providers in linking their resources toward employment opportunities and better quality of life for our citizens.