

54 Accelerating Talent Development via Cross Sector Collaboration



With a panel of Work Ready Community champions, episode 54 explores innovative strategies and real-world examples of how partnerships between industries, educational institutions, and government agencies are reshaping workforce development. *Accelerating Talent Development via Cross Sector Collaboration* features panelists from Nebraska, Ohio, and Mississippi in the August 2024 edition of *WRC-Live!* Discover how these collaborations are breaking down silos, fostering skill growth, and creating a more adaptable and resilient workforce.

Voices of Excellence on Episode 54



Lyndsie Gibbs
Metropolitan Community
College of Omaha



Alex Lovrien
Metropolitan Community
College of Omaha



Justin Burch
Delta Compass



Mike Longo
Ohio Means Jobs
of Lorain County



Tina Gridiron
ACT
Panel Moderator



Fred McConnell
ACT WRC
Host of WRC-Live!

Links and Resources

- [Episode 54 of the Podcast](#)
- [ACT Work Ready Communities](#)
- [ACT Workforce Solutions](#)
- [2024 ACT Workforce Summit](#)

Transcript of Episode 54

[Opening Jingle and Music]

Tina Gridiron: Skills-first hiring is making a difference every day. The more we can help organizations focus on ~~that pathway of~~ identifying skills and hiring for skills, the better our individuals and our communities will be.

Justin Burch: We are on the verge of ~~likely within the next nine days of~~ making the largest economic development announcement ever in the Mississippi Delta.

Alex Lovrien: Multiple on and off ramps for students is crucial ~~because our workforce, our students,~~ this is their lives. They may need to get off for a little bit and then have the ability to jump right back on.

Mike Longo: It was a way of taking what might have been impacting our outcomes negatively, and putting something in place to encourage folks to take their time and take it seriously.

Lyndsie Gibbs: It helps you with staff sustainability. It helps you with just growing your effort to be bigger and larger. Every single round that you go.

Jasen: Episode 54 of Ready for Work is an enlightening journey of Work Ready Community champions that accelerate talent development through cross sector collaboration

[Jingle] Let's get Ready for Work!

Jasen: Thanks for joining us on Ready for Work. This is Jasen Jones. A fundamental role of a Work Ready Community is collaboration across a wide range of partners and assets that make up the workforce ecosystem. In this episode of Ready for Work we hear from WRC champions Lyndsie Gibbs and Alex Lovrein of Metropolitan Community College in Omaha; Justin Burch from Delta Compass; and Mike Longo of Ohio-Means-Jobs Lorain County. Facilitating the conversation is Tina Gridiron here at ACT. Each quarter, ACT offers an exclusive webinar for Work Ready Communities called WRC-Live. We'll join in at Tina's introduction of the program. We'll wrap up episode 54 with Fred McConnel on the upscale experiences planned for the upcoming ACT Workforce Summit in Atlanta.

Tina Gridiron: Thank you so much, Jasen. It is great to be with our Work Ready Communities folks today and to have four amazing leaders that are engaged in community collaboration as part of the Work Ready Communities network. This session is a *take-two* of a conversation we had in DC at the Jobs for the Future conference. We invited individuals to participate in this panel, one, because a few of them were in are involved in a grant project that the E-C-M-C Foundation is supporting, where ACT gets a chance to highlight some of the great work that leaders in three communities are putting into action to see more learners from diverse backgrounds engaging in skill development and engaging in success in the workforce.

We are excited about the E-C-M-C grant and the opportunity to lift up our Work Ready Communities under the umbrella of foundation support. This session also was able to benefit from ACT's collaboration with Opportunity at Work for the Tear the Paper Ceiling project that Jasen already shared. And we were excited to be able to join forces with Opportunity at Work to just raise our level of awareness across the JFF network and across our Work Ready Communities network.

What we know is that skills first hiring is making a difference every day. And the more we can help organizations focus on that pathway of identifying skills and hiring for skills, the better our individuals and our communities will be. And so, we're excited about today's session. Jasen already introduced our panelists for today so I'm just going to jump in and invite our panelists to respond to our first question and to provide any background information about your organization around the work that you do. As you answer the first question, we wanted to curate some of the milestones that communities are achieving through the collaboration of their Work Ready Community effort.

We know that collaboration can take takes a lot of work. Strong collaboration takes a lot of work. And the success that we're seeing across our Work Ready Communities network is exciting, but we want to highlight what are some of the milestones that have been achieved in each one of your communities. We're going to start with my colleague Mike, and then go to Justin and end with Lindsay, just to share a few of the milestones that have been achieved through your Work Ready Communities effort.

Mike: Great. Thank you, Tina, and thank you for inviting me to be able to share information about our initiative here in Lorain County. As mentioned, I'm the director of the Lorain County Workforce Development Agency, and my agency oversees the operation of our American Job Center here in Lorain County.

We're actively engaged with many partners. But when I think about some of the milestones, we launched our initiative back in 2016, we attended the academies in 2015 and it was back in the day when we did have to travel a bit. But we were fortunate during our involvement. We got to visit Mobile, Alabama, and Chattanooga, Tennessee. We were also in Fred's hometown of Atlanta, Georgia, and then Evanston, Illinois. So, a very interesting scattering of cities to be able to explore and visit, but also to learn best practices, from the ACT team.

Since we've launched our initiative we are nearing 5,000 folks assessed in our American Job Center. So, I think we're just shy of 5,000 folks just from our efforts. And out of those individuals, we see about a 75% rate of individuals who do earn a National Career Readiness credential. And there's still that 25% or so that don't earn the credential that we're always trying to figure out how we can help them improve their outcomes. We have close to 400 employers since we launched the initiative who have recognized the value of what we're doing.

And we built the whole, Work Ready Community initiative into the customer flow of our American job center. So, it's our ability to work with job seekers, work with folks who might be trying to access funding through the American Job Center, to go to school. And trying to make sure people have the skill level that would be needed to be successful and offering ways of helping them improve their skills if, potentially, they don't have the level that's expected, either from employment opportunities, or training programs that they're trying to get into.

And then I would say that from the involvement we have seen, what I would attribute to the fact that we built all this into the flow, definite improvement of performance when it comes to the number of folks who earn credentials from the programs we help them get into in a higher success of good qualified individuals that are being sent to the employers in our community.

Tina: Thanks for sharing, Mike. I really appreciated your comments around improving the flow so that individuals will be able to see success or see forward progress. That whole flow process makes a big difference. So, thanks so much for sharing the milestones that you are seeing in your community. We're going to turn it to Justin to share a little bit about milestones in the Delta.

Justin: Thanks, Tina. Hi everybody. Justin Burch with Delta Compass. We are a regional economic development and inclusion intermediary. So, mainly working at the intersection of rural and Bi-POC populations. I'm sure as many of you have read or seen some of the data. The delta is one of the most stigmatized places within the country, mainly because of the disenfranchisement of Bi-POC populations.

The Delta was an early adopter of ACT Work Ready Communities embedding it not only in our K through 12 system, but in post-secondary access. And all of this under an equity lens of removing education as a proxy for skills. We knew that we were never going to be able to compete with more, urbanized centers or more affluent places around the South.

But we knew that we had a population here and we knew that they had skills, even if they couldn't show that they had attained a bachelor's degree or beyond. So, we were actually one of the first counties in the United States, if not the first, Jason and Fred correct me, who actually achieved our sustainer level under Work Ready Communities and then was able to utilize that in our framework as we're recruiting industries to the Delta to create jobs and opportunities around livable wages and income.

One of our really big milestones in that effort, and we actually received feedback from the employer why they came here. We landed a direct foreign investment from Australia. A company called Nufarm moved here to the Mississippi Delta. They invested tens of millions of dollars and they created over 150 jobs within our region.

But when they were having to look at places to go, a lot of the rural communities could not buy the labor shed [study] to fulfill the need of the employer. We were one of the few in the country who could sit here and demonstrate that, and qualify that, we did have that population within the Mississippi Delta. I'm still under an NDA and I still can't announce it and it's driving me insane. But we are on the verge of likely within the next nine days of making the largest economic development announcement ever in the Mississippi Delta.

And a lot of that is squared away with the fact that we are finally able to compete with our neighbors by showing that we have a skilled population. So I think in terms of trying to drive that equity lens, trying to think through more inclusion, not just from, populations that have been disenfranchised like minorities or women, but also when we think about rural equity is it's a whole new tool in our tool belt to compete with. In my area, it's going to be the Memphis to Little Rock to Jackson to New Orleans. But we have to think about those spaces in between. And we finally feel like we have a tool in our tool belt to do that.

Tina: Justin, thanks so much for sharing. The journey that you've been on, a couple of things I hear in your remarks. One, that intentionality around inclusion from a rural perspective of inclusion from a diverse perspective for a BiPOC community, all of that is intentional work. And then the data that you were able to bring to bear that then made Australia take a second look very exciting, to see those two elements as, contribute to the milestones of your community. Thanks so much for sharing. We're going to turn it now to my dear colleague Lindsay to share a bit about the milestones that are rising to the top for the Work Ready Community effort.

Lyndsie: Lindsay Gibbs, I'm the Director of Career Skills and Workforce Programs at Metropolitan Community College. We are actually the largest community college in our state. We serve four different counties and also serve the largest populations within those four counties in the entire state. So, we got a lot of folks we're working with and a lot of major businesses we're working with.

So, some of the milestones that I was going to tap into, we work really closely with our American Job Center, with our different government agencies, to ensure that at the end of the day individuals who want educational pathways that lead to gainful and sustainable employment, that they have the ability to do so. And by doing so, we partner really heavily with office space. We have classroom space at our American Job Center just for ease of referrals.

And then we like to focus on what we do really, really well. One thing that, our college does really well is education and training. We have multiple pathways for anybody depending on where they are in their learning journey. We have everything from starting with English language learning, GED, you want to do noncredit training programs, all the way up to your typical, credit programs to your degree programs. So, which also provides lots of opportunity for different starting points, but also multiple different exit points as well, depending on what somebody's journey looks like.

In the partnership with our American job center, we offer the National Career Readiness certification right there on site. We're also working with the adult and youth services through WIOA so that way that is hopefully going to be their assessment that they will utilize in order to become eligible for services. They use a different assessment right now. We're not going to phase out that assessment. It's just an added element. A lot of the reasoning behind that is a lot of folks that are coming into the American Job Center and they already have their high school equivalency.

They are looking for work. So how do we gauge if somebody is ready to work? How do we gauge what their skill sets look like? And a great tool to use is the national credit a certification for that? And so what MCPs has done with that is let's take the national correctness certification. Let's look at somebody scores.

But then let's look at the training programs that we have that we know folks are ready to enter. They have the fundamental knowledge. If they don't, that's okay. We can start building developmental courses or getting them the skills and knowledge, getting them ready before they enter that training program. And on the end of that training program, a part of work ready communities is our business engagement piece.

So we actually have folks that are talented at our American Job Center, but also with our college that are intentional about their business engagement, their business outreach strategies, to ensure that anybody that's coming through our doors that is wanting to get into gainful, sustainable employment. We have employers on the other side that not only are part of the Work Ready Communities initiative but are also willing and wanting to take a look at our students regardless of where they're at in their educational journey.

I think Work Ready Communities really helped open up that door. We have a lot of big four-year institutions in our area that we compete with. When we have some really big powerhouse businesses here in Omaha that not only has several relationships with us but also some relationships with the other colleges as well.

We like to say that we're the better college, to be quite frank. So just kind of tapping into that, utilizing Work Ready Communities has really just helped expand our business partnerships. From that, we've been able to land several contracts with some businesses where we are helping train either on site, we are bringing people to us, or we're partnering, collaborating, split-cost models, making sure that their employees have an educational opportunity to bridge up as opposed to staying where they're at and potentially leaving that business to go to a different business later on.

And then on top of that, we also have recognized that a lot of our individuals in our four-county area - Nebraska has a really low unemployment rate - but where we are situated, we have actually pockets of really high unemployment rates in some of those pockets look like upwards to 10% of unemployment. So, just recognizing that a lot of the individuals that we're serving through our American Job Center and through Metropolitan Community have barriers.

We've built in tons of supportive services, not only in conjunction with our American Job Center, but also internally to the college, to ensure anybody who wants access to education will have access to education. And we have that open door policy where they can walk in. Let's talk. Let's do some career planning. Let's ensure that you know how it's going to be paid.

We have funding. Who has this funding? Who has that funding? Okay. Do you have a roof over your head? How are you going to pay your bills? Let's make sure that we have all of those things put into place before they actually start on their educational journey, and ensuring they have all their needs met. So really Work Ready Communities helped open up a lot of doors for us to ensure that we have everything we need to ensure we have the workforce, but also the training programs that we need, and then the business partners we need, in order to make all of that come to life.

Tina: Wow. Thank you so much for sharing, Lindsay. What I was hearing is that the community college is absolutely a powerhouse for skills as well as academic training for individuals as they're on their journey. I often hear individuals in the post-secondary arena talk about the opportunity to get workforce credentials and connections, but also to ladder up to future academic or educational opportunities. And it sounds like you all are seeing some great results integrating both the training and skill space, but also the academic advancement and opportunity space. So, thanks so much for sharing.

We're going to move to our second question. And just so that my panelists are ready, we're going to have Justin go first, then Lindsay, then Alex, and end with Mike for question two and for question two, we want to hear from our leaders, what are one or two things that educators on the call today, workforce partners on the call today, or even employers on the call today. What should they consider as they build a robust community effort as they seek to strengthen their community effort within the Work Ready Communities network? What are one or two things that these leaders should consider as they're building a robust community effort. Justin?

Justin: And you know, it might not be applicable to everybody, I really sort of pull, Rural's *chair to the table* in these conversations. But one of the things that we have been stressing as you're building out these public-private partnerships is the absolute need to embed data, share agreements, defining terms, to where they are common across your collaborative and they are culturally appropriate. One of the big things we're seeing, especially as money comes down for initiatives like ACT Work Ready Communities, or anything else that's coming down from Hill-facing agencies and private philanthropy.

Oftentimes when they're going to rural, what they're really getting is backbone data, which is not showing the scale or effectiveness of a lot of these initiatives in rural communities. But by having those data-share agreements to where we can aggregate outputs and outcomes across the board. At the end of these initiatives, I think are really what are helping us to achieve that better return on investment, for the pipeline going up.

The other big thing that I would just stress is, we have been doing this now for over 11 years, and just understanding that your collaborative will evolve. It might make sense for some partners

during some years. It might not make sense for them. For some years we've had partners who have hopped off, and they have hopped right back on a couple of years later.

So just understanding that sometimes you got to have that flexibility. We always just really advocate that you have a backbone that can speak across multiple different sectors, whether that's private or public. We love to see workforce investment boards at the table. We love to see equity-minded work-facing non-profits at the table, of course, post-secondary institutions. But last and not least, ensuring that there are employers who are helping you co-design and making hiring commitment throughout the effort is absolutely essential.

So those are our sort of recommendations. And I think Tina and Fred and Jasen's team can certainly point any of you who have interest to some quality demonstration sites, like the ones that are on the call today, who've developed the proof points and the longevity and the sustainability of this work for now over a decade. So, don't feel intimidated. Don't feel like you got to recreate the wheel. There's lots of work out there that is easily recreated in your own communities.

Tina: Thanks, Justin. We're going to turn to Lindsay.

Lyndsie: Great things that Justin said. I agree on the data sharing stuff. One of the things that I would just highly recommend is a better understanding of braided funding. You have what happens very often is a new initiative begins and then funding runs out and Oh no! What do we do? Oh no! We have to lay off these folks or the program no longer exists. People come looking for the program and the program's not there.

Braid your funding. Be strategic in the beginning. Part of braiding that funding is also having relatable, deliverables, outcomes. It helps you with staff sustainability. It helps you with just growing your effort to be bigger and larger every single round that you go. It truly has been what's at the core of all the work we have done.

I've been at the college going on ten years now and I have been self-funded the entire time, which means I have gone from grant to grant to grant. However, every grant I've worked on has had very similar work. We are building blocks and building blocks to where we are right now. So that is my best advice. Especially if you're going to shoot for the stars, you're going long term. Just make sure that everything you do is going towards a common mission and a common goal. And then when you start with that end in mind, things become sustainable long term.

Tina: Thanks so much, Lindsie. Alex.

Alex: Yeah. Thank you. And like Lindsie said, I agree with everything she said and Justin. One of the things I think is important to think about when building the community effort is being intentional about the pathways. Having that tiered approach, multiple on and off ramps for students, because there needs to be an understanding that our workforce, our students, this is their lives. So they may need to get off for a little bit, and then have the ability to jump right back on. And then having those support systems embedded into the programs. Much like Lindsie said with the braided funding, we also have the braided supportive services through our partnership with Nebraska Department of Labor, Department of Health and Human Services, with the SNAP Employment and Training Program, the Community College Gap Assistance Program. So just having all of these supportive services is going to really serve the students and encourage completion, while welcoming them back at the end, when they decide it's time to come back.

Tina: Mike?

Mike: The advantage of going last is like it's a yeah! All of what they said, right! But honestly, we didn't meet before the meeting in a sense of sharing what we would each respond. What I had noted was to talk about the fact that it is partnerships, and true partnerships, that make this work. Recognizing that, you know, all the way from the beginning, we had the support of key partners in our community, including our county chamber of commerce, our local community college, our local career tech education center, our county's community and economic development department, and our WIOA provider.

What was referenced by some of the other guest is true when you want to have a very successful collaborative. When you all have an understanding, at least, of what these tools can be used to do, it's definitely a way of making sure that the employers in your community are familiar. Because most of us are dealing with employers in some form, one way or another. Be it our community development department, talking to employers and connecting them with our system and being able to *talk the talk*. Recognizing that Site selector magazine when they rate the states this is a factor of how many folks have National Career Readiness credentials in your state. It all just plays into the message that we're trying to get across.

The other thing, in a sense of cost and braiding cost, I know we were able, outside of the partners that I mentioned, are the partners of our American Job Center who share in the cost of providing various services. We have those partners agreeing that they cover those costs through our memorandum of understanding which is required of our center. Each partner is picking up a share of the cost of the assessments of the National Career Readiness credentials we issue and the tools we have in place to help people remediate and improve their scores. So you have to have everybody buying in, agreeing to it in order to really make the collaborative work the way that it should work.

Tina: What I'm hearing from our panelists, if you're taking notes. Common data sharing agreement, a braided funding structure, a braided community support structure, intentional engagement with your employer, and, memorandum of understanding that is a blueprint for how we're going to work together, are all strategies, are all elements that help to build trust, that help to increase transparency, that help to undergird, put an anchor in the ground, if you will, for the project, for the collaboration, if you will, to move forward.

I really appreciated, Justin's comment that the collaboration will evolve over time and that you must be flexible so that folks and organizations can have on ramps and off ramps and then on ramps again as we move forward, building trust and building a strong community effort. We have one more question for our three panelists, and we are going to start with Alex, then go to Mike and end with Justin.

If there were any challenges or hurdles that you overcame through the life of your project so far, what hurdles or challenges have you overcome and what might you share with others on this call so that they, too, would be able to handle and overcome their hurdles and challenges? We're going, of course, to start with Alex, go to Mike and end with Justin.

Alex: Thank you. I think any time you're building a collaboration, you you're going to encounter communication challenges. You're going to encounter, all sorts of, prioritizing, and competing priorities between the different partners. So really opening up those communication lines, being very intentional about the end goal. Going back to what I said a moment ago, building those pathways with multiple on and off ramps, but ensuring that every on or off ramp, is meaningful right to the employer and to the students. And it is addressing our workforce needs.

Tina: Thanks so much, Alex. Mike?

Mike: While we may face hurdles, nothing has been so extreme when I think about hurdles, like, you know, an example could be when we first started the initiative, we found many of the young people we were working with who we were trying to provide the assessment to, not taking it seriously, finishing the assessment in a very short period of time, and not taking the time to really show us what their skills were.

When we think about approaches to how we address that particular issue is we built incentives into our youth program where we use some of our WIOA youth money, and when youth earn a national career readiness credential we give them a monetary reward. If they improve their national career readiness credential by taking, either the time to spend in the ACT WorkKeys Curriculum site or through a classroom, with an instructor that we have through a contract with our local ABE provider and that effort to improve their scores. They take the assessment again and do improve their NCRC level.

That would earn them another monetary reward. So it was a way of taking what might have been impacting our outcomes negatively, and putting something in place to encourage folks to take their time and take it seriously. We're also using those same sort of incentives now through the E-C-M-C grant. You know, we received some money through the grant and we're using it to incentivize adults.

And the way our money is does not allow us to incentivize adults. But this now opens up the door to another funding stream to encourage folks to improve their scores and to ultimately impact their ability to better at what we might be funding them for to go to school to do. And that could be anything from, you know, learning how to be a truck driver to learning how to be a nurse and showing that they have those basic skills in their discipline, to try to focus on improving their outcomes if they need to do so.

Tina: Thanks, Mike. We're going to turn it over to Justin for the last word.

Justin: I think for us, it's also learning that during the course of this evolution, you'll learn that different sectors are coming to this with their own agendas. And of course, post-secondary is looking to get enrollment numbers up. Employers are looking to fill empty seats. And nonprofits are looking to increase, the livable wages for low to moderate income folks. So that was a challenge for us. Because, again, as it evolves, you'll see different funding strategies come in, you'll see some dry up, you'll see things change. Some people might be interested early on who aren't as engaged later on. But really for us, how we solution and some of that was creating a Northstar for all partners.

And a common reminder that every output is also a heartbeat. And that's why we are all sitting around that table is we want to ensure, at the end of the day, no matter what, that people from the low moderate income class are being able to get a credential, and that that credential is going to lead them to have livable wage employment, and that there was a way to check the boxes for all partners needs, throughout this process.

So always keeping that framework of even though we're all here from an economic standpoint, there's also a common moral imperative of why we are in this work. And that's it. It's to get people job ready so that they can be self-sufficient.

Tina: I couldn't have ended our conversation. On a better note. Thank you so much. Justin. Mike. Alex, Lindsay, for sharing your insights and sharing the great work that is happening in your

communities. Leadership matters and collaborative leaders like yourselves are making a difference within our Work Ready Communities Network. We thank you for sharing your time. We thank you for sharing your insights, and I am going to take with me. Every output is a heartbeat. And, and make sure that I keep the thought of the individual success in mind as we do this work.

Fred McConnel: Thank you again to our speakers and panelists. You all did an amazing job in DC. And I think this is a really good encapsulation of that. Thank you so much for the time given us. And hopefully everybody was able to get all of what was shared in DC. Thank you to all of you.

Thank you so much for joining us this Thursday afternoon for WRC-Live! our last session before our workforce summit here in my hometown of Atlanta, Georgia. Hopefully we'll see a good number of you there. It is finally starting to cool down here in Atlanta. ~~We are in a very nice 75 degrees today.~~ So is setting up to be a beautiful October here. And really getting geared up and excited for the summit. ~~We have several speakers on the line today and we have a good session for you today.~~

For my fellow Southerners here on the call and maybe not so Southerner, as you know, probably know the airport real well. I have to make a real quick plug when it comes to efficiency. You may not like it, but it's a straight line from A all the way to International. You hop on that plane train, it's six minutes from one side to the other. So, I have I have fallen in love with our airport. I think people don't like it because they get delayed there. There's a lot you're going to get delayed. That's just the real realities of air travel. So that's a little plug for our airport. But from other Southerners, of course, the Atlanta area is probably well known to you. We're going to be the midtown Atlanta area. So, Midtown Atlanta is kind of out of the beaten path from your normal convention traffic you've seen in Atlanta, mostly conventions and conferences hold it in downtown area. I really love Midtown. Midtown is a little bit further north. It's got a lot of trees. We're known as the city within the trees. This is where I would want to hold the summit. This year is right next to Piedmont Park. We're going to be one block away from Piedmont Park.

Once you get there, everything is going to be walkable. Midtown has got tons of restaurants. It's got lots of walkable areas. You can go to the Botanical Gardens and when I saw that this is an option to us I really jumped at. So, we'll be holding a reception this year on day two, which will be Thursday at the Atlanta Botanical Garden. The Atlanta Botanical Garden is one of our really underrated attractions. We're going to have a reception there. It's going to be walking distance of the hotel. We'll also have some shuttles available to you as well, but a walk will be going right through Piedmont Park and be able to let y'all see the incredible Botanical Garden. Once you're there you're going to be able to wander the entire garden. It was just the fact that our dates lined up and we're able to get in there for this I was really excited about.

Beyond that, of course, we're always going to have really good speakers to share in economic development, workforce development, education, a lot of CTE focus this year, also around our new adult education areas, community colleges, what have you. So, I'm really thrilled to be bringing this year, to Atlanta. Please, of course, reach out to me if you have any questions about things that you want to do while you're here.

Of course, you can go to downtown Atlanta area. We have the aquarium. We have the College Football Hall of Fame, probably about a ten minute drive from where we'll be in the Midtown area. But then, of course, if you want to, it'll be October. The Braves stadium is about 20 minutes north, so there's a lot you can do here in town.

Friday afternoon traffic has surprisingly, and this is really for my other Southerners, because I know this is where, I do have some sticklers. In the past traffic has gotten better on Friday, so we've done a lot when it comes to our overall mass transportation and everything. But I really want to hold midtown Atlanta because once you're in Midtown, hopefully you won't have to get in the car again unless you're going to our attractions.

~~So really excited that this year, thanks to the team for, finally giving in to my request to get it here.~~ I'm really pumped to have it this year and for you to reach out to me. If you have any questions or any recommendations for you or your family as you come visit.

Jasen: That's the voice of Fred McConnel, ACT's Senior Director of Workforce with a hometown perspective of the high-caliber experience that awaits us in Mid Town Atlanta for the 2024 ACT Workforce Summit. Learn more at [A C T dot org slash workforce summit](https://act.org/workforce-summit) and join us for this *lightning in a bottle* convergence of the workforce ecosystem.

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