

The Roanoke Regional Partnership is turning its attention to talent attraction.

In November 2017, the Roanoke Regional Partnership brought on Erin Burcham as the full-time director of talent solutions to increase the region's talent pool. Just as we helped develop outdoor assets into an economic sector and a new community narrative, we are turning our attention to leveraging our talent assets into fuel for growth.

The Roanoke region and its businesses are in a competition for that talent. Overall regional employment is at an all-time high and initiatives such as the Roanoke Innovation Corridor make the need even more acute. Add natural demographic shifts (there are almost 40,000 people in the Roanoke region workforce over 55) and it gets harder to keep up. Businesses know they have to compete not just with other companies but with other parts of the country to attract and retain the best employees.

This region is rich in other assets and perhaps the example of how the outdoors is paying off is the launching point for recognizing and developing them all. Take higher education for example. The 100,000 + students at 25 colleges and universities within a 60-mile radius of Roanoke County are a huge asset that can be leveraged for further economic success. To be sure, every school has long demonstrated economic impact through salaries, expenditures, and in other ways. But consider the economic impact that their most important asset – the students – can have on our region.



The Partnership is convening higher education, regional businesses, and highly skilled job seekers. It is part of a three-pronged strategy: create a pipeline for regional college graduates to feed into local business, attract top talent from around the country to strengthen the workforce, and retain talented high potential workers in the region.

We know that the educated 20-somethings who are driving out of the region on graduation day are the region's best and still least tapped asset. Retaining college students will be our first priority to turn our higher education assets into a pipeline for economic growth.

To make an impact, we need your help! Show your children, friends, and national colleagues that today's Roanoke region isn't exactly the same place they once knew. There is a regional presence of amazing restaurants, [beer](#), music, culture, [outdoor adventure](#), museums, festivals, and more. All at a cost of living 13 percent below the national average. There are even careers waiting to be started at many growing companies. Visit our website Roanoke.org and join our [Get2KnowNoke Facebook](#) group to engage and participate in building our talent capacity.