

STRATEGIC PLAN
Fiscal Year
2025-2029



**PATHWAYS
TO SUCCESS**



**Empowering Potential.
Building Careers.**

Eckerd.org

A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

Valued Stakeholders:

For more than 50 years, Eckerd Connects has built a legacy of empowering individuals to overcome barriers and unlock their potential. Founded by Jack and Ruth Eckerd, our organization has remained committed to creating opportunities for those most in need. Today, as we look toward the future, we are using the lessons learned from five decades of service to meet the evolving demands of individuals and communities across the country.

Our FY 2025-2029 Strategic Plan is a forward-looking blueprint, designed to address pressing societal needs while staying true to our mission of fostering resilience and self-sufficiency. This plan brings together our best practices by combining community-based support, workforce training, and educational pathways to create sustainable, transformative outcomes. According to recent insights from the Strada Education Foundation, Aspen Institute and Jobs for the Future, the pathways to success are shifting. More Americans are pursuing skills-based training and workforce development instead of traditional four-year college degrees, reflecting a need for affordable and practical development paths that lead to well-paying careers.

Eckerd Connects is uniquely positioned to address these trends. As one of the only non-profits operating both in the Job Corps and workforce development service areas, we are committed to providing innovative, client-focused solutions. With expanded access to upskilling programs, partnerships with industry leaders, and proven models of support, we're adapting to meet the immediate needs of today's workforce and the long-term aspirations of tomorrow's leaders. Whether it's helping a young adult reconnect to education, preparing families for economic stability, or forging partnerships with forward-thinking organizations, our goal is clear: to empower potential and build pathways to success for all.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Together, we will pave the way for a brighter, more inclusive future.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Eric Beck
Chair, Board of Directors



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Dennis".

David Dennis
President and CEO



Our Non-Profit Legacy: Empowering Potential Across Generations

Eckerd Connects was founded on the vision of creating meaningful opportunities for those most in need. Starting with therapeutic wilderness camps that provided transformative experiences for youth, Eckerd Connects adapted over time, evolving into a community-based organization with a national impact. Today, this legacy continues through our work with families, children, youth, and adults in workforce development, operations of Job Corps campuses, and family support services. Through these initiatives, Eckerd Connects has empowered more than 376,000 individuals over the last 56 years to realize their potential.

As the world changes, so do the needs of those we serve. At Eckerd Connects, we are continually innovating to meet emerging challenges. For example:

- The U.S. has a vast reservoir of untapped talent among young people ages 16 to 24, many of whom face barriers to employment. In 2021, nearly 4.7 million young Americans in this age group were disconnected from both school and work (U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee, 2023).
- Fewer Americans are choosing traditional four-year colleges, with many now seeking practical, affordable paths to rewarding careers through job training and workforce development. According to a recent article by USA Today, many high-paying jobs today do not require a college degree, further underscoring the demand for accessible career pathways.

Our commitment extends beyond youth. By expanding access to upskilling and career development opportunities for individuals of all ages, Eckerd Connects is helping to build a resilient workforce equipped for today's evolving demands.

Empowering potential requires adaptability, and we remain dedicated to evolving our services to support those who seek to unlock new opportunities, overcome barriers, and build brighter futures. Eckerd Connects remains a testament to Jack and Ruth's vision, transforming lives and fostering success across generations.



"After an accident, I didn't know how to get back on track. Eckerd Connects helped me find a job and work towards my GED, all while supporting my young daughter. The assistance they provided, like helping me get my car on the road, truly changed our lives for the better."

– Jesus, Workforce Development



"After struggling to afford college, Job Corps helped me earn a tuition-free education at the Jacksonville campus. I completed the Clinical Medical Assistant trade and now I'm enrolled at Florida State at Jacksonville on track to become a Registered Nurse, thanks to their support."

– Jameisha, Job Corps Graduate



MISSION

Empowering individuals to overcome barriers, realize their potential, and build successful lives and careers. Through programs in workforce development, Job Corps training, and family support, Eckerd Connects provides individuals with the tools and support they need to thrive.



VISION

To be a national leader in empowering potential and building pathways to success. Eckerd Connects is committed to creating lasting, positive change in the lives of individuals, families, and communities by providing access to education, career opportunities, and supportive resources.



VALUES

- Respect for all.
- The client always comes first.
- We hold ourselves accountable for strong outcomes.
- We engage others from a strength-based perspective.
- We are good financial stewards.
- We build lasting partnerships.
- We have the courage to change.



“We founded Eckerd Connects with one goal: to create a mission-driven organization dedicated to empowering those who need it most. From the beginning, our vision was to build a place where individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances, could find hope, opportunity, and the tools to succeed. We believed that by offering guidance, support, and access to education and skills training, we could help people transform their lives and reach their fullest potential.”

“Thanks to Eckerd Connects, I can give my grandsons the stability and security they deserve. Their support guided us every step of the way.”

–SM, Child & Family Services Client





Building on a Legacy of Impact: Eckerd Connects' Strategic Goals for Lasting Change

Eckerd Connects aspires to be the leading provider of education, skills building, and employment programs that empower individuals to overcome barriers and build thriving careers. We are committed to creating solutions that drive success for those who face significant obstacles in accessing sustainable career pathways.

Meeting the National Need: Eckerd Connects' Unique Strengths

As a national non-profit, Eckerd Connects uniquely reinvests in its programs to drive innovation and deliver client-focused solutions that ensure the highest quality of service. With millions of young people, families, and communities across the nation facing barriers to economic stability, the demand for accessible, impactful programs is more urgent than ever. To achieve our vision, we will expand the number of individuals we serve, with a focus on Job Corps and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) – funded programs.



Improving Outcomes for Those We Serve

Eckerd Connects is committed to delivering a consistent, high-quality program model across all services, ensuring that every individual benefits from a proven, impactful approach. By setting measurable goals and tracking organization-wide outcomes, we aim to make a meaningful, lasting impact in the lives of our clients.



Expanding Our Reach to Support More Young People

Our goal is to grow WIOA and Job Corps programs, equipping young people with essential skills, education, and employment opportunities. As a recognized leader in these fields, we focus on high-quality, skills-based programs to unlock the potential of youth ages 16 to 24.



Building Solutions to Address Critical Social Challenges

Eckerd Connects is uniquely positioned to tackle complex societal issues at scale. By focusing on high-impact solutions for our target populations, we take on a proactive role as problem-solvers, creating sustainable impact and addressing root causes.



Developing a Strong Foundation to Support Our Mission

Eckerd Connects is expanding its organizational infrastructure, building essential capabilities, and investing in leadership development to ensure long-term success. This foundation enables us to create lasting impact for those we serve.



“Since being in the training of Office Administration for the past ten months, I am currently at 90% and have obtained over 26 certifications in my trade, all primary, allowing me to land a solid career with great benefits. Potomac Job Corps has helped me in positive ways such as friendship, communications and interpersonal skills. I want to say thank you.”

– Noah (Potomac Job Corps)



Our Vision for the Future: Innovation, Impact and Collaboration

Over the next five years, Eckerd Connects is committed to expanding our national non-profit reach and enhancing our role in solving critical societal challenges. Our FY 2025-2029 Strategic Plan is focused on innovation, sustainable impact, and collaborative solutions that empower individuals and communities nationwide. As we work to make this vision a reality, we recognize that Eckerd Connects cannot achieve these goals alone. We invite partners—employers, educational institutions, and workforce organizations—to join us in this mission, helping create a future where each person is equipped to achieve their full potential.


Strategic Focus Areas and Investments

To achieve these ambitious goals, the Board and staff of Eckerd Connects are fully focused on four key strategic priorities. The Eckerd Connects Board has approved investments totaling \$12.6 million over the next five years to support these priorities. Of this amount, the National Foundation of Youth (NFY) has committed \$2.0 million annually for the next three years, representing a total investment of \$6.0 million.

Call to Action for Potential Funders:

This is a pivotal moment to partner with Eckerd Connects. Together, we can:

- Strengthen transformational programs that empower individuals to achieve their goals.
- Expand innovative solutions that address critical societal challenges.
- Build sustainable infrastructure that supports long-term growth and success.

A photograph of Darrell Green, a Black man with a shaved head, wearing a tan blazer over a black turtleneck. He is speaking and gesturing with his hands. The background is a blurred event space with large blue and white text on a wall, including "SKILLS ENHANCEMENT", "LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH", "TRANSPORTATION", "HEALTH", and "YOUR".

“Eckerd Connects has a legacy of service rooted in continual growth and adaptation, meeting the future workforce and career needs of those with untapped potential. This focus on growth is essential for achieving lasting impact.”

– Darrell Green, Eckerd Connects
National Ambassador and NFL Hall of Famer



“As the skills gap in the U.S. widens, CVS Health recognizes the important role externships, which offer on-the-job training with classroom instruction, play in building a pipeline of future skilled talent... By working with Job Corps, we are able to provide traditionally underserved groups with opportunities for employment at CVS Pharmacy, as well as help build a talented and diverse workforce for our company.”

– David Casey, Senior Vice President, Workforce Strategies and Chief Diversity Officer

Strengthening Our Legacy of Leadership

Eckerd Connects is expanding access to transformational programs that provide individuals with the skills to achieve their educational, career, and personal goals. We’re focused on building partnerships that foster long-term success and broaden our reach in underserved communities.

Expanding Innovative Solutions in Service Delivery

Our commitment to client-centered, innovative solutions ensures that we meet evolving challenges with real-world, impactful programs. Partnerships with industry leaders enable us to provide career pathways and expand critical support services.

- **Eckerd Connects’ Success Awards Program:** Provides scholarships to overcome financial barriers, enabling clients to achieve educational and career goals.
- **Industry Partnerships:** Collaborating with Amazon, CVS Health, Home Depot and other local, regional and national employers will bridge opportunity gaps and create meaningful career pathways.



Program Expansion:
Resources to increase reach in transportation, housing, digital inclusion, and mental and behavioral health programs.

Community Partnerships:
Resources to foster collaborations with local organizations and expand outreach efforts.

Professional Development: Resources to equip staff with advanced skills, ensuring high-quality, client-centered services.



Empowering Potential with a Human-Centered Approach

Eckerd Connects' programs are designed to meet each client's unique needs, promoting resilience and independence. Our services in career coaching, mental health support, and community engagement foster long-term personal and professional growth.

Building Infrastructure to Drive Growth and Impact

We are investing in technology, organizational structure, and leadership development to strengthen our operational foundation. This infrastructure allows us to scale programs and ensure high-quality service delivery.

- **Technology Upgrades:** Resources to improve data-driven decision-making, client engagement, and streamline service delivery. Our new client app allows individuals to track career milestones in real-time, while AI-powered tools provide staff, especially during night shifts, with consistent support.

"Eckerd Connects' commitment to building a supportive infrastructure is creating new opportunities for young people and providing a strong foundation for sustained impact."

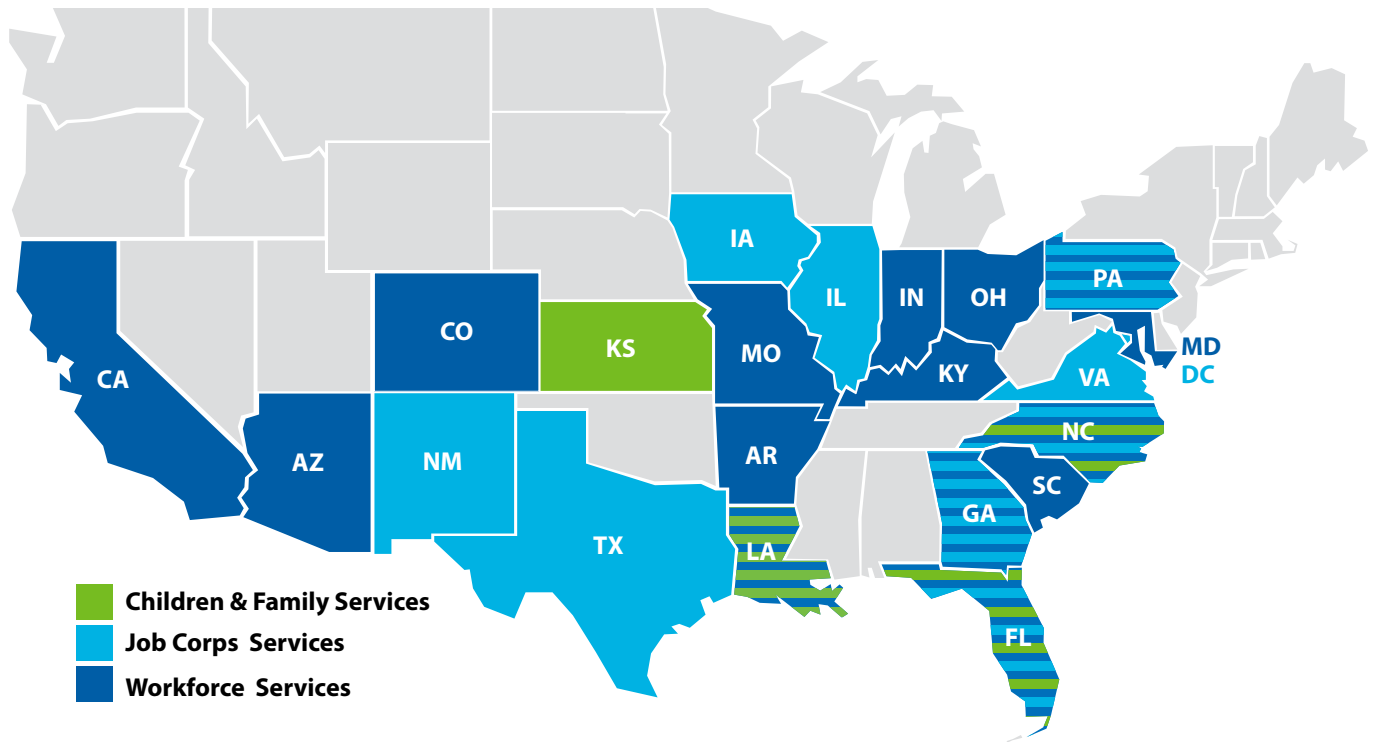
– DC Builds DC



"I sincerely thank Eckerd Connects for all the help they have given me — getting me interviews, honing my resume, sponsoring certifications, and an internship that became a full-time job at a local company."

– Ariel, Workforce Development

DRIVING IMPACT



Eckerd Connects uplifts 23,500+ clients annually supported by 2,059 staff across 21 states and D.C. with total annual revenues of \$244M. Eckerd Connects' service array and locations are highlighted below:

Services	Description	States Served	Served
Child & Family	<p>Services to support youth and families including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Head Start and Homelessness Support • Mental Health & Addiction Wraparound for Youth • Juvenile Justice Wraparound and Day Treatment • Therapeutic Foster Care and Family Preservation • School Substance Use and Violence Prevention • Short-term (120 to 180 days) Residential Care • Private-Pay Therapeutic Camp for Girls 	FL, KS, LA, NC	10,817
Job Corps	<p>Largest residential career development program in the U.S. operating for 60+ years. Program helps young people ages 16 to 24 complete high school, train for high-demand careers, and obtain good-paying jobs.</p>	FL, GA, IA, IL, NC, NM, PA, TX, VA and DC	6,083
Workforce	<p>Helps primarily low-income adults, out-of-school youth, and dislocated workers build skills and connect to employment. Adult and dislocated worker programs include training, skills assessment, job search, and placement. Youth programs serve individuals aged 16 to 24 who may be in or out of school and face various barriers. Our workforce programs help these youth secure essential academic credentials, such as a high school diploma or GED, enabling them to successfully transition into further education and employment opportunities.</p>	AR, AZ, CA, CO, FL, GA, IN, KY, LA, MD, MO, NC, OH, PA, SC	6,728
		21 States	23,628

Join Us In Empowering Potential Nationwide

At Eckerd Connects, our mission extends beyond service delivery. We are dedicated to building pathways to success and creating lasting impact. As we look forward to the next five years, we invite partners—employers, educators, workforce leaders, and community stakeholders—to join us in transforming lives and building resilient communities.

How You Can Make an Impact

Whether you're an employer, educator, or community organization, your support is vital. Together, we can tackle the barriers that limit opportunities and create pathways to success across the country.

Ways to Partner with Eckerd Connects:

- **Collaborate on Training and Employment Initiatives:**
Join us in delivering hands-on training and job opportunities that align with high-demand industries.
- **Support Young Adults:**
Help us expand support services for housing, transportation, mental and behavioral health, digital access, and career coaching.
- **Invest in Workforce Development:**
Contribute to programs like Eckerd Connects' Success Awards, enabling young people and adults to build careers and secure sustainable futures.

Pave the Way for a Brighter Future

Eckerd Connects is committed to measurable, sustainable impact. Together, we can expand opportunities, drive innovation, and empower individuals to reach their full potential.



"Thanks to Job Corps, I completed my trades, gained valuable work experience, and now have a clear path forward. The support I received changed my life."

– Kandrea, Job Corps Graduate

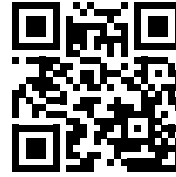
"With Eckerd Connects, we're not just preparing individuals for jobs; we're building pathways to fulfilling careers."

– Colin Newman, Amazon, Director of Workforce & Economic Development



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Building Careers.**

100 N. Starcrest Drive
Clearwater, FL 33765
P: (727) 461.2990
Eckerd.org



Our Founders

Eckerd Connects was founded by Jack and Ruth based on their faith in God and genuine respect for all. That love and passion propelled the Eckerd's devotion to ensure every person is empowered to find their potential and achieve success. As philanthropic visionaries, their vision, leadership, and dedication continues today!



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Revised: January 21, 2025

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