

DECIDE DEKALB
BUSINESS RETENTION &
EXPANSION

2023 REPORT



BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION PROGRAM

The Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program allows Decide DeKalb to assist in connecting existing businesses with information, primarily through on-site or virtual company visits.

The BRE Team offers complimentary assistance to DeKalb County businesses, helping them grow and stay local which strengthens our economy and community. By gaining insights into local businesses, Decide DeKalb and our partners can provide solutions for challenges like workforce, funding, and permits.

The expansion of the PepsiCo Beverages facility in DeKalb (pictured above), is predicted to create 136 new full-time jobs, which will make it one of Pepsi's largest manufacturing facilities by 2025.



Decide DeKalb is the primary economic development driving force to attract, expand and retain businesses in DeKalb County, Georgia. Decide DeKalb works with its partners, stakeholders, and the business community to spur capital investments, encourage job growth, and create business sustainability within the county. Decide DeKalb provides a variety of services and leverages partner relationships to improve the quality of life for over 759,000 residents.



STRONGER TOGETHER

In order to help solve challenges facing businesses, Decide DeKalb works closely with a variety of local stakeholders. Thank you for your support and for being a valued partner in our journey. Together we can achieve great things!





DEKALB PROFILE

Population



759,000+

Diversity



54% of Residents are
People of Color

Education



44% of residents 25
years old and up
have a bachelors
degree

Median Household Income



\$64,000

64 Languages Spoken

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

Emory Healthcare
Emory University
Centers For Disease Control (CDC)
Children's Healthcare Atlanta
Cox Enterprises
State Farm Insurance
InterContinental Hotels Group
Veterans Affairs Medical Center



ADVISORY COUNCILS

DeKalb County is building a network of Advisory Councils to hear directly from industry experts. These Councils focus on DeKalb's key sectors: Healthcare & Life Sciences, Technology, and Advanced Manufacturing & Logistics. To further support DeKalb's business growth, a Film and Entertainment Industry Advisory Council will be added in 2024.

The goals of the Councils are to:

- Promote awareness of resources and training currently available
- Advise Decide DeKalb on issues relevant to the future of careers and the skills and needs of each targeted sector
- Provide greater awareness of the successes of DeKalb County businesses
- Act as a conduit for information and ideas between the groups' individual members

Participating companies and organizations for the Councils includes: Metro Atlanta Chamber, Centers For Disease Control, Emory University and PepsiCo.

Complementing these targeted industry Councils is Advocate DeKalb, which fosters a collaborative exchange between Decide DeKalb and an interdisciplinary group of advisors, serving as a platform for shared learning and mutual feedback.



HEALTHCARE & LIFE SCIENCES COUNCIL



TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL



MANUFACTURING & LOGISTICS COUNCIL





TRENDS & OPPORTUNITIES

In a proactive approach to address challenges faced by DeKalb businesses, Decide DeKalb has leveraged feedback from Advisory Council Members. This feedback has provided critical insight into emerging trends currently impacting DeKalb's business community.

WHAT BUSINESSES ARE SAYING ABOUT WORKFORCE

The talent landscape is shifting, and many organizations are struggling to find and keep qualified employees.

HOW DECIDE DEKALB IS ADDRESSING THIS OPPORTUNITY

Decide DeKalb and WorkSource DeKalb have partnered together to develop an innovative program, MADE In DeKalb, which stands for Manufacturing, Automation, and Distribution Emerging in DeKalb, which equips teachers with tools and knowledge to engage students in careers in these fast-growing industries in DeKalb County and beyond.

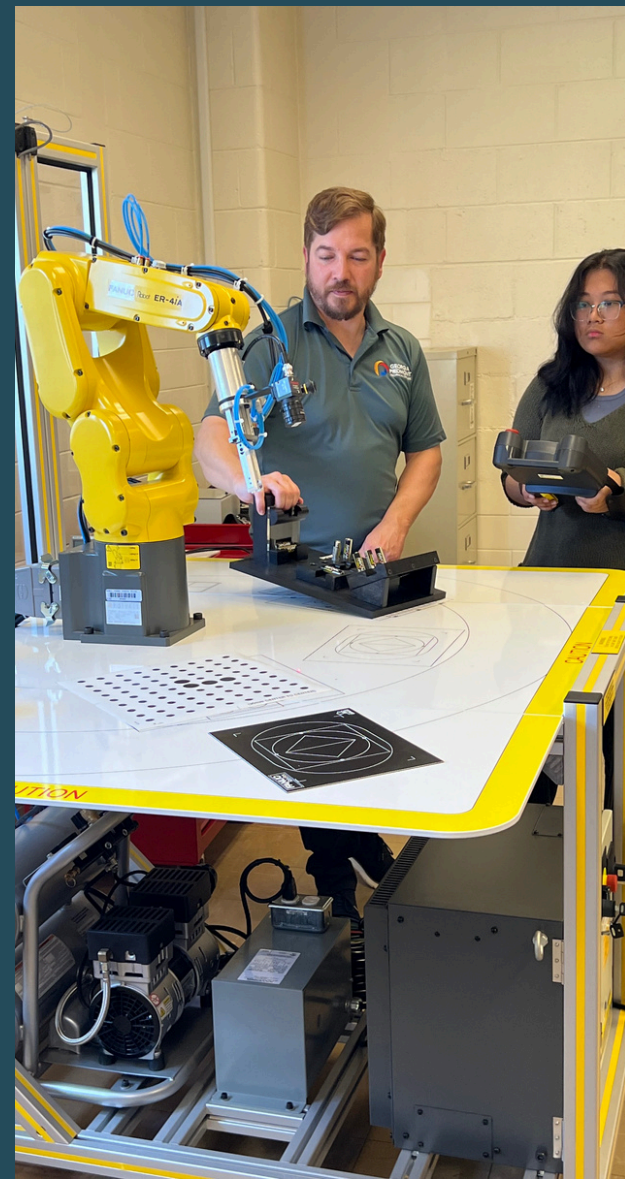
Additionally, through our industry council collaborations, Decide DeKalb gains valuable insights into specific workforce needs, allowing us to develop additional targeted programs like the Industry-Ready DeKalb Pre-Apprenticeship initiative that provides graduating High School Seniors the skills for rewarding careers in manufacturing.

WHAT BUSINESSES ARE SAYING ABOUT FUNDING

The current funding environment presents a significant hurdle for entrepreneurs, especially for Black and minority founders.*

HOW DECIDE DEKALB IS ADDRESSING THIS OPPORTUNITY

In 2023, Decide DeKalb got approval to establish a \$2.5 Million Revolving Loan Fund and Technical Assistance Program. When launched, this program will provide much-needed support to DeKalb County entrepreneurs and small business owners.



*Michael E. Kanell, and Mirtha Donastorg. "Black Atlanta Entrepreneurs Struggle To Get Loans, Venture Funds." AJC.com. April 22, 2024



NEW PROGRAMMING BRINGS BIG BENEFITS

One of the objectives of the BRE program is to accelerate economic development in underserved communities. Decide DeKalb launched new programming in 2023 which focused on workforce, technical assistance and funding. Business Resources 101 was held during the spring and fall and the South DeKalb Pop-Up Business Incubator was held in August. The two events reached nearly 300 businesses and provided timely information for those individuals looking to start their journey.

Business Resources 101

Partnering with The Better Business Bureau and the Latin American Association, the Business Resources 101 events were joined by many workforce agencies, technical assistance providers, DeKalb County Government and others to provide business owners with valuable information.

Pop-Up Business Incubator

The South DeKalb Pop-Up Business Incubator offered a unique opportunity for entrepreneurs in August 2023. Held at the New Life Community Center. This one-day event aimed at equipping businesses with the resources they need to secure funding and achieve growth.



LOOKING AHEAD

In 2024, Decide DeKalb remains committed to fostering economic development and supporting businesses of all sizes across diverse industries. Some key initiatives for 2024 include:

1

Establishment of \$2.5 Million Revolving Loan Fund and Technical Assistance Program which will provide much-needed support to small businesses seeking capital

2

Continuation of programming including Business Resources 101 and the Pop-Up Business Incubator to ensure acceleration of economic development in underserved communities

3

Creation of the Advisory Councils will continue to meet quarterly to ensure Decide DeKalb's programs and initiatives align with local business needs



"At Decide DeKalb, we believe strong businesses create strong communities. That's why getting out and visiting our new and established businesses is so important. By understanding their needs and challenges, we can connect them with the resources they need to thrive in DeKalb County."

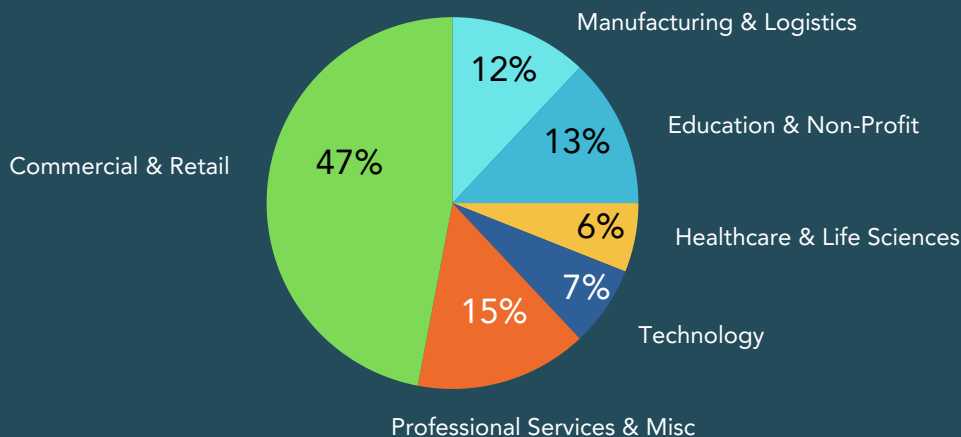
**— Dr. Katrina Young
Business Retention & Expansion
Manager**



CREATING PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

85 BRE visits were completed in 2023

VISITS BY INDUSTRY



"Decide DeKalb remains committed to championing our existing businesses. They are the engine of our community, driving economic growth and fostering an entrepreneurial spirit. By investing in their success, providing resources like workforce development and site selection, and facilitating valuable connections, we can unlock incredible potential and solidify DeKalb County as a launchpad for businesses to flourish and become leaders in innovation."

— Dorian DeBarr
President, Decide DeKalb Development Authority

