

# Call center training begins on Monday

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By Jenny Arnold

Some Lancaster County residents hit hardest by the nation's economic downturn will be able to receive call center training later this month.

York Technical College, in partnership with Lancaster County Economic Development Corp., will begin offering classes in Lancaster to prepare residents for call center and customer care jobs.

The first four-week class begins Monday at Lancaster High School and is filling up fast, according to York Tech officials. Workforce Investment Act-qualified residents and the public will be accepted into the training.

Registration for the training is available online at [www.yorktech.com](http://www.yorktech.com), by phone at (803) 325-2888, in-person at York Technical College in Rock Hill or at off-campus centers in Chester or Lancaster counties.

Future call center training classes will be held at the Lancaster County Education Center, 1520 Pageland Highway.

The program's curriculum will include courses explaining the mechanics of a call center, the essentials of customer service and database training.

York Tech's call center and customer care certificate will also provide trainees with skills in problem resolution and writing. The certificate is designed to improve keyboard and data-entry skills, and help students be more professional and effective communicators.

Lancaster County Economic Development Corp. has identified a large candidate pool for training in Lancaster County, all of whom are Workforce Investment Act-certified. These are people who have lost their jobs due to layoffs or closures.

LCEDC President Keith Tunnell said there are between 600 and 700 WIA-certified people in the county.

Cost of the 120-hour class is \$559, but some students may be able to opt out of the computer component and tuition will be adjusted. Other students will receive WIA funding to take the class, said Ernie Green, dean of York Tech's Off Campus Centers.

Twenty students will be enrolled in the first class at LHS. Future classes, which begin Aug. 24 and Sept. 21, will be open to 20 to 25 students, Green said.

Lancaster's County's jobless rate in May was 18.5 percent, the sixth-highest rate in the state, according to the latest figures available from the S.C. Employment Security Commission. The

percentage of county residents classified as jobless has been in double digits for more than a year.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of customer service representatives is expected to grow quickly in the coming years in industries such as hospitality and travel, telecommunications, information technology and public safety.

County Council unanimously approved \$75,000 in funding for the call center training at a recent meeting. Council voted Monday to enter into a one-year lease agreement with Ross Properties, York Tech and the Workforce Investment Act division of the Council of Governments for the call center training facility.

It will be located in one of the old Thaxton buildings on S.C. 9 Bypass.

As for when a call center may set up shop in Lancaster County, Tunnell said Lancaster County Economic Development has been speaking with an interested company, but no announcements have been made.

For details about the training, call Ernie Green at (803) 475-2833 or e-mail him at [egreen@yorktech.com](mailto:egreen@yorktech.com).

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