



Training

Lancaster County, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), York Technical College and the local OneStop office have teamed to provide Call Center Training programs for residents impacted by recent layoffs and closures and to help retrain local residents interested in pursuing a new career field. **These classes are offered at NO COST** to residents who have lost their job and who get WIA Certified. Contact the OneStop Office today and get started!

Where are the classes being taught?

The Call Center Training courses will be taught at the former Thaxton Customer Service Center building located at 1520 Pageland Highway in the new two-story building behind Young America Insurance. The first classes are being held at Lancaster High School while the Thaxton building is being upfit with furniture and computers. The classes will be moved to the Thaxton building in early August.

If you are WIA Certified the classes are offered to you at **no cost**. Others interested in taking the courses can pay a tuition fee to cover the cost of the class, dependent upon how many hours are required.



Thaxton Building – Call Center Training Facility
1520 Pageland Highway, Lancaster, SC

This publication was edited and published by the Lancaster County Economic Development Corporation (LCEDC) in cooperation with the Catawba OneStop Office in Lancaster, York Technical College, Lancaster County Government, and the Workforce Investment Act Board.



Who Do I Contact For Help?

The Lancaster OneStop Office has a team of professionals ready to assist you with obtaining a job in the call center field or other jobs available in the area. They will also assist you with getting WIA Certified and getting into the Call Center Training classes.

The Lancaster Workforce Career Center is located on White Street across the street from Comporium and *The Lancaster News*:

Lancaster Workforce Career Center – OneStop
706 North White Street
P.O. Box 1779
Lancaster, SC 29720
Phone: 803-285-6966 TTY: 771



Call Center Careers & Training

Lancaster County! Get your skills ready for a new and rewarding profession!



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What Skills Do You Need?

Here is a list of skills that most call center companies look for – and what we will help train you in:

- Excellent oral and written communication and interpersonal skills
- Basic computer and telephone operation skills
- Professional demeanor
- Ability to multi-task in a fast-paced, high-volume environment
- Excellent problem-solving skills
- Strong systems skills
- Ability to learn, retain and apply large amounts of product, procedure, policy and system information
- Ability to meet established productivity, effectiveness, training, sales (if applicable) and quality goals
- Ability to work in a highly-structured environment – take scheduled lunches and breaks
- Ability to accept and incorporate constructive feedback
- Flexibility in responding to change or business needs
- Ability to accommodate non-traditional work schedules
- Patience
- Willingness to help peers
- Excellent attendance and punctuality

Call Center & Customer Service Center Careers in Lancaster County

Over the past several months, we have received several visits from companies seeking to place call center operations in Lancaster County. We need you to be ready for when these call centers arrive and begin to hire and train their workforce. We are an attractive location for new call centers due to our close proximity to Charlotte, the large number of available workers, and competitive wage rates.

We believe there will be opportunities for our citizens to obtain and retain jobs in existing and new call center operations locally and in the Charlotte Region. One of the Lancaster County Economic Development Corporation's (LCEDC) top priorities is to recruit new call centers to the community. **As we recruit these companies to our community, it is vital that the workforce have the skills needed to fill these jobs.**

Lancaster County, York Technical College, the Workforce Investment Act Board, and the local OneStop office have already started call center training classes.

The training courses will be taught at the former Thaxton Call Center building at 1520 Pageland Highway behind the Young America Insurance building. **We just need you to take advantage of these programs and be trained and ready when these companies begin the process of seeking and hiring skilled workers.**

All you need to do is to visit the OneStop Office on White Street in Lancaster and ask them to get you WIA Certified and into the Call Center Training courses. At the start of the process you will be tested and the courses will take anywhere from 36-hours to 120-hours to complete and earn your certificate.

What is a call center?

You have most likely called a call center many times in your life. You may have made an airline reservation, called for directory assistance, ordered a product or called for technical support on a recent purchase. The call center is the place where your telephone call is answered.

Depending on how many phone calls are received, call centers may be very small or extremely large. Some companies need thousands of employees to handle the large volume of calls they receive from customers.

A call center is like any other office environment where you will find many people talking on the phone and working with computers. The key difference is that in a call center the employees' primary job is to take calls and help customers. When they finish with one customer, they move on to the next customer that is waiting in line.

On a busy day, employees in a call center (called customer service representatives or customer service agents) may take more than 100 phone calls. The number of calls that a customer service agent takes depends on the length of each call and their work schedule. On average call times last from three to four minutes, with about one minute of "after call wrap-up" to complete any unfinished work related to the call.

For More Information Visit Us At: www.lancasterscworkstraining.com



Lancaster Workforce Career Center OneStop
706 North White Street
P.O. Box 1779
Lancaster, SC 29720



Continue

I Want To Get Into The Call Center Training Program, Where Do I Go, What Do I Do Next?

If you want to pursue a call center career and take advantage of the training program there are two things you must do first:

1. Go visit the OneStop Office on White Street in Lancaster and ask to get WIA Certified. WIA Certification is a process where people who have lost their job are eligible for training programs and job assistance at no cost to them.
2. Once you are WIA Certified or if you already ARE WIA CERTIFIED, simply tell the staff person at the OneStop that you want to get into the Call Center Training Program. The OneStop staff will then get you into the next scheduled class once you've been verified as WIA Certified.

Some of the other services available for job seekers are:

- initial and comprehensive assessment of skills and aptitudes
- resume development
- job search assistance
- career information
- financial aid assistance
- assistance with GED



What you need to know about call center careers.

Learn more about call centers, what these companies are looking for in employees, and begin the process to learn those skills and be ready for that next call center job when it arrives.

The call center team

Call centers are typically organized in groups. Each team has a defined role in the call center to support a particular type of customer request. For example, in a call center for ordering clothing, one team may support mens' apparel while another team may support teens' or womens' clothing. Each call center is organized differently depending on the types of products or services they support.

Call center agents have a complete support team to assist them in their work. When difficult questions arise, most call centers have a help desk for their agents to use, or the call center provides support from the supervisors in each area. In some cases it is necessary to escalate the call to experts. If all these options fail, it may be necessary to call the customer back with the information they need.

Other types of teams within the call center may include the training group (for training new hires and ongoing training of agents), the quality monitoring team (for monitoring calls for customer service and quality), human resources (for recruiting and hiring call center agents) and the work force management (for scheduling employees to match the work load).

A new age of technology

When call centers first began, it was not unusual to walk into a call center and hear ringing phones. When a customer called, the telephone system would ring the telephone of any agent that was not busy with another call. If more than one call was coming in at the same time, many phones could be ringing.

In today's modern call centers, when a customer calls they wait in line in what is called a "queue." A telephone queue is a holding place for calls until an agent becomes free to take a new call. Since most agents in call centers today wear headsets, you will not hear ringing phones. The waiting call is transferred to the agent that has been idle the longest, and all the agent hears is a tone that alerts them a call is coming through.

Within the call center area, usually on an electronic display board, you can see how many calls are waiting on hold and how long the longest caller has waited. This information helps the agents and managers know when to take special steps to speed up the process or to add more agents to handle calls in queue.

Also commonplace today in call centers is automated attendant technology (Press 1 for sales, Press 2 for ...). This technology allows customers to tell the telephone system the type of call they are placing.

Recall from the earlier discussion on *teams* that the call center is organized in groups supporting different areas. The automated attendant ensures that the customer is routed or directed to the right group to meet their needs.

In some companies, they have taken the automated attendant one step further. Instead of only routing calls, the automated system can help the customer directly. For example, banks have long used these automated systems to provide account information or to initiate transactions such as balance transfers.

In state-of-the-art call centers, you will find speech recognition technology that allows the customer to speak their request and avoid pressing buttons on their telephone.

Want To Learn More? Visit Us At www.lancasterscworkstraining.com



Call Center Training Funded by Lancaster County Government, York Technical College, the South Carolina Department of Commerce, and the Workforce Investment Act



Are your computer skills up to speed? Take advantage of our Call Center Training Courses!

Covering the globe

Not all call centers are centrally located in a single building. Large companies may have many call centers located all around the world. This allows them to handle different time zones and languages. The term for this type of time-zone coverage is "follow the sun." Companies can also route calls to the call center that is the least busy thereby better utilizing their resources and shortening the wait time for customers.

This technology also allows companies to hire around the world. For example, you may be calling in the U.S. and have your call answered in India. In most cases, other than accent differences between regions, you may not be aware that this call was routed to an international location.

Call center management and technical positions

In addition to the front-line employees that work with customers, the call center offers many other jobs in both management and technical areas. Examples include:

- supervisor or team leader
- training development and delivery
- workforce scheduling or quality assurance
- business analyst (reporting and financials)
- process specialists
- human resources
- information technology
- facility design and maintenance

What do call center jobs pay?

It depends on the company and type of call center, but the wage rates for call center employees range from \$9.00 per hour to as much as \$18.00 or more an hour depending on the type of job and experience. Management positions can exceed \$25 per hour or more. The more training and experience you have, the better the pay will be. Almost all of these jobs also include health insurance and other benefits and the companies tend to be employee friendly.

There are more than 50 call centers in the Charlotte area and Lancaster County is working to recruit call centers locally. The key is having the skills necessary to land a call center job from day one – so prepare yourself now and take advantage of programs and services available to you from local agencies.

Computer Skills

The role of the computer in call center careers

Technology plays a major role in the call center. Most call centers will have a computer terminal for each customer service agent to use while taking calls from customers. These computers are used to access customer records, product information, ordering status, transaction history and many other types of data. For medical or technical call centers, these computers will help the customer service agents access medical records or technical data.

For call centers that accept email from customers, computers are the primary tool for the call center agent. A customer service agent will read the email from the customer, access data, conduct research and reply to the customer all from the computer terminal. In state-of-the-art centers, the call center management team has the choice to blend email with phone calls and other customer contact work such as mail, fax and text chat. In this environment, a customer service agent may answer an email one moment and be on the phone for the next customer contact. This is why some call centers use the term "contact center" instead of call center because it is more than just phone calls.

I'm interested...

You can get started by contacting your local OneStop Office. The

Lancaster OneStop Office is located on White Street across from Comporium and the Lancaster News. The OneStop Office has a team of professionals ready to assist you with getting you WIA certified and help you get into the Call Center Training classes. The classes are available at **NO COST** to WIA Certified residents.



...What do I do now?

WIA Certification

Most individuals who have lost their job can become WIA Certified. This means that you are eligible for job training and assistance at no cost to you. If you've lost your job and are interested in the call center classes, go to the OneStop and make sure you get WIA Certified and then ask to be put into the Call Center Training Courses. The OneStop staff is there to help you through this process.

