**2017 - 2022**

# Impact Report

**5 years leading tech talent
development in South Carolina**

BUILD
CAROLINA

## MISSION

to advance South Carolina's tech community through demand-driven training, connection and support

## VISION

a thriving, accessible tech talent ecosystem in South Carolina

## VALUES

opportunity, community, collaboration, agility, diversity and impact

# Table of Contents

# Introduction

In less than five years, Build Carolina was envisioned, launched, and scaled to become South Carolina's leading non-profit organization for the tech community - the most valuable pool of talent for the future of our state.

By the close of 2022, Build Carolina had launched and currently runs three programs, each aiming to help more people unlock skills training and careers in the technology industry: SC Codes, Carolina Code School, and Develop Carolina. However, the organization isn't here to create programs for the sake of creating programs. Build Carolina is greater than the sum of its parts - it keeps a constant finger on the pulse of the tech talent ecosystem.

**Why does the mission of Build Carolina matter? Why is this work so vital? Technology is at the center of our collective future of work - in South Carolina and beyond. Helping people build skills today that will unlock technical career paths increases economic mobility, improves educational systems, and illuminates new career opportunities.**

This 5-year impact report will share a high-level overview of Build Carolina's impact on the tech community and the tech talent ecosystem. It will include incredible stories of impact that bring life to the numbers shared here.

Behind every impact measure shared in this report are dozens more that aren't shared. This document offers just a glimpse of the important work of the Build Carolina team. It is intended to be shared with everyone involved in this work - funders, learners, potential learners, alumni, guest speakers, community advocates, potential investors, board members, mentors, employer partners, and more.

# Message from our Executive Director

Since 2017, it has been my honor to build an organization with core values that align with my own: opportunity, community, collaboration, agility, diversity, and impact.

I am excited to share Build Carolina's impact over the last five years. Our team has helped remove so many barriers that keep people from accessing opportunities. We've helped remove unnecessary requirements in hiring, educated our communities on cultural barriers and representation biases, helped learners access education and training, helped remove financial barriers and given learners a community of care and support.

This work has been done in community with many others, and we are grateful for all who have made these outcomes possible. The journey has only just begun!

*Our team has helped remove so many barriers that keep people from accessing opportunities.*

*Lelia King*
*Executive Director*
*Build Carolina*

# Measuring impact

At Build Carolina, we focus on a handful of priority impacts that align best with our mission, vision, and values. As this report covers our first five years in operation, it will also cover five years of impact. Here's a look at what we track and why these impacts are important.

## 01. Exposure to skills and careers

Marian Wright Edelman, Founder and President of the Children's Defense Fund, said it best: "you can't be what you can't see." If our community does not see what it looks like to gain highly technical skills and to work in technical careers, then we will fall behind - in educational ranking, in competitive advantage, and in our ability to advance economic mobility.

## 02. Course completion

We measure course completion in several ways, including by counting both the number of learners who completed a module on the free SC Codes platform, and the number of learners who graduated from one of our advanced programs. Our ability to help learners complete courses and understand their next steps is a big part of how we fulfill our mission.

## 03. Job placement

Beyond just personal and professional impact, the Build Carolina mission has financial impact. When more people gain technical skills and access high-growth career pathways, they not only ensure financial freedom (and even break generational cycles of poverty to create wealth), they access economic mobility, which is a win for the entire community.

# 5 years of impact

**Since launching in 2017, Build Carolina has made the following impact:**

**56,000+** people exposed to coding skills and tech careers through classes, presentations, website engagement, courses and event attendance

**3,000+** coding courses completed

**91** graduates of full-time, advanced courses

**94%** job placement rate (in 2022)

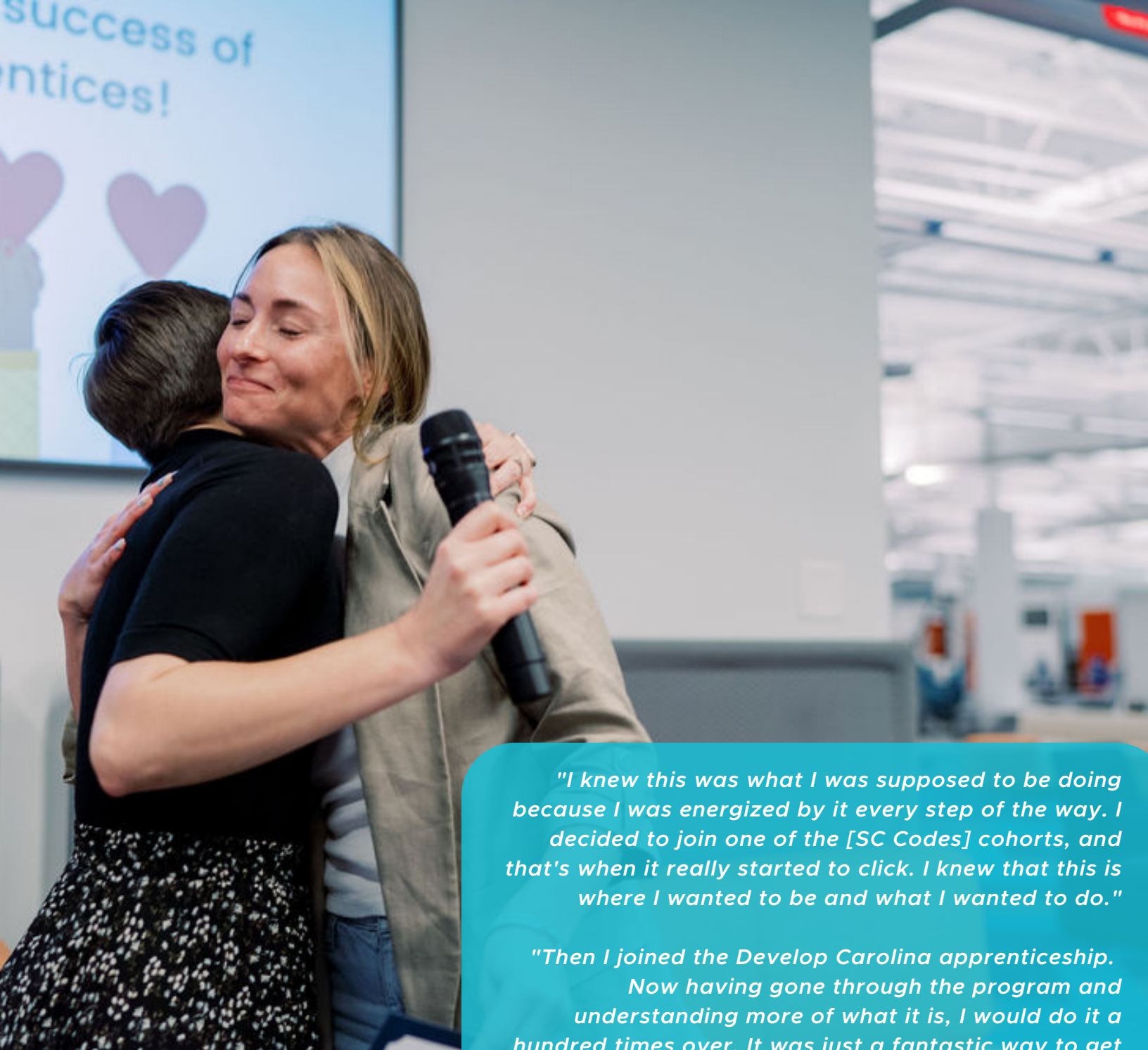**185** volunteers engaged through mentorship, committee involvement and guest speaking opportunities

**250+** events, information sessions, virtual cohorts, classes, Meetups and press conferences held

"I didn't expect the industry to be as welcoming as it is. We have a good network and community we can lean on, reach out to, and who will vouch for us. I wasn't used to the amount of flexibility that comes along with the career, and I also wasn't used to employers actually valuing their employees this way. So many people to want you to succeed."

Eric Warren, 2021 Carolina Code School graduate
Software Engineer, Morehouse School of Medicine

*"I knew this was what I was supposed to be doing because I was energized by it every step of the way. I decided to join one of the [SC Codes] cohorts, and that's when it really started to click. I knew that this is where I wanted to be and what I wanted to do."*

*"Then I joined the Develop Carolina apprenticeship. Now having gone through the program and understanding more of what it is, I would do it a hundred times over. It was just a fantastic way to get my foot in the door."*

Janie Warren, SC Codes learner and 2022 Develop Carolina apprenticeship graduate
Software Engineer, Booz Allen Hamilton

Lewis Cruz took control of his career in 2018 when he decided to learn to code and pursue a career path that would allow him to have a more flexible and financially stable career. He graduated from Carolina Code School, accepted an apprenticeship, landed a contract job, then finally landed his dream position at a mission-driven marketing research firm.
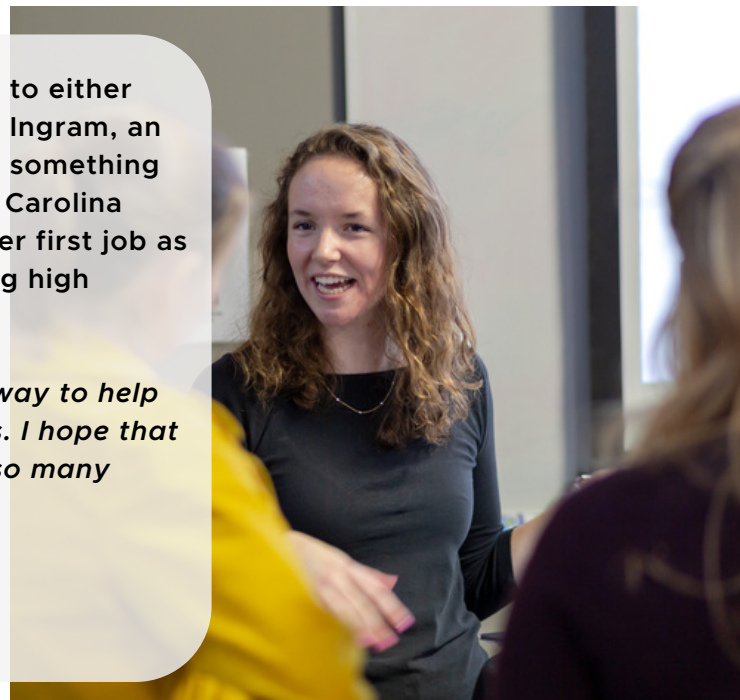
*"The decision that I made to enroll at Carolina Code School is one of the most important and bravest decisions that I've made in my life, and I'm very grateful for it. Five, ten years ago, I never would've thought I'd be able to have such a great job, a great career, and doing it all from my own home."*

Lewis Cruz, 2018 Carolina Code School graduate
Software Developer, Opinions4Good

Most high school graduates are aware of traditional paths to either college or a career. But for 2021 high school graduate Kat Ingram, an opportunity to shadow a developer caused her to explore something different. With the support of her parents, Kat enrolled in Carolina Code School and, after completing the program, landed her first job as a software developer less than six months after graduating high school.

*"Everyone is supportive and continues to go out of their way to help me (or anyone) to understand, learn or make connections. I hope that one day I can help and support those new to coding like so many alumni and cohort members did for me."*

Kat Ingram, 2021 Carolina Code School graduate
Software Developer, MedProcure

After leaving a career in hospitality behind in support of a new career path, Ariana Konhilas graduated with an associate's degree from Trident Technical College and began her career as an apprentice in the Develop Carolina program.

*"I've never felt more seen. All these women [in a session on equity in the workplace] were talking about these experiences that they've had and how they've overcome them. That's why I'm a mentor now. It's leaving a legacy for yourself, for women in tech, for Latino people in tech, for moms. Now, my daughter will say wow, mom, look at you now. You've come so far. I'm so proud of you."*

Ariana Konhilas, 2022 Develop Carolina apprentice
Software Developer, Booz Allen Hamilton

# Program Overview

**SC//CODES**

SC Codes is a learning platform and coding community built to connect South Carolinians to the education and resources they need to unlock careers in technology. SC Codes provides free access to technology education and connects, trains and empowers programmers across our state.

Carolina Code School mentors individuals into professional programmers in an immersive classroom setting. Located in Greenville, Carolina Code School offers a full-time, 12-week Web Development course designed to prepare students for a career in software development.

**CAROLINA CODE SCHOOL**

**DEVELOP CAROLINA**

Develop Carolina is a six-month registered apprenticeship for new software developers who are ready to enter the field as professional programmers. The program includes structured mentorship and curriculum to support new developers while they gain experience in the field with South Carolina's most innovative companies.

# Acknowledgements

These life-changing outcomes are only possible because of the hundreds of people who have supported our work for the last five years. We will never be able to contain in these pages the complete list of supporters, but we want to acknowledge that we could not do this work without help from:

- Build Carolina's board of directors
- Our regional technical advisory committee members
- Our employer partners and host companies
- Our alumni, guest lecturers, and volunteer mentors
- Our site partnerships across the state
- Our strategic advisors and peers
- Scholarship providers and individual donors
- Students and program participants
- Build Carolina funders, including:



*To the Build Carolina team - Mady, Lauren, Kaity, Alex, our teaching assistants, contractors and more: you have built something incredible. Thank you doesn't fully express my gratitude. I am so glad to be on this journey with each of you, and I am so proud of the work of Build Carolina for the past five years. Let's keep going from here, shall we? - Lelia*

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