



COMMUNITY NEED

# Community Need Summary — Richland County, SC

Energe Foundation is developing workforce readiness, digital literacy, and community support programming for underserved and low-income youth and adults, with an initial focus on Richland County, South Carolina. The data below establishes a reasonable, evidence-based need for practical employment preparation, technology access/skills, and pathways to greater economic stability.

## Community Snapshot

|                             |                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Population                  | 434,956 estimated residents (July 1, 2025)                                                   |
| Poverty                     | 15.8% of residents in poverty (2020–2024)                                                    |
| Median household income     | \$63,784 (2020–2024, 2024 dollars)                                                           |
| Labor-force participation   | 62.1% of residents age 16+ in the civilian labor force (2020–2024)                           |
| Broadband subscription      | 90.4% of households have broadband (2020–2024)                                               |
| Computer access             | 96.7% of households have a computer (2020–2024)                                              |
| Education                   | 92.2% high-school graduate or higher; 40.7% bachelor’s degree or higher (age 25+, 2020–2024) |
| Columbia metro unemployment | 4.0% in July 2026 (BLS preliminary metropolitan-area estimate)                               |
| Employer base               | 9,426 employer establishments and 169,733 jobs in Richland County (2023)                     |

## Need Statement

Richland County combines economic opportunity with persistent barriers. A 15.8% poverty rate indicates that many residents may face financial instability even in a county with a substantial employer base. At the same time, a 90.4% broadband subscription rate means a notable minority of households remain disconnected from reliable home broadband. These conditions support a practical model that combines job-readiness instruction, digital literacy, professional communication, interview preparation, employment paperwork, workplace expectations, and connections to community and employer resources.

Energe Foundation's planned five-week Job Readiness Program is designed to address these barriers through small-cohort instruction for participants age 16 and older, digital literacy integration, practical assessments, resume and interview preparation, and employer/HR participation when available. Because the Foundation is in its startup stage, this summary describes community need and planned programming; it does not claim participant outcomes that have not yet occurred.

## Sources

- U.S. Census Bureau, QuickFacts: Richland County, South Carolina (2020–2024 ACS-derived measures and July 1, 2025 population estimate): [census.gov/quickfacts](https://census.gov/quickfacts)
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Metropolitan Area Employment and Unemployment, July 2026 results (Columbia metro, preliminary): [bls.gov/news.release/metro.t01.htm](https://bls.gov/news.release/metro.t01.htm)

*This summary is updated annually as newer Census/BLS/local workforce data become available.*