

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT LOCAL PLAN

Capital Region Workforce Development Board

JULY 1, 2020 – JUNE 30, 2024

Table of Contents

Section 1: Workforce and Economic Analysis.....	2
Section 2: Strategic Vision and Goals.....	
Section 3: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies	
Section 4: Program Design and Evaluation	
Section 5: Compliance.....	

Section 1: Workforce and Economic Analysis

1.1 A descriptive analysis of the regional economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(A)]

The Capital Region's unemployment rate for December stood at 4.6%, representing just over 27,000 people. While this was a vast improvement from the pandemic-era high of 11.1% in April of 2020, it was still nearly double the 2.4% rate in December of 2019. And of course this does not factor those not working who are not included in the count.

On the demand side, for the 30 days ending March 9, 2021, there were over 40,000 job openings posted online. The top ten position types in demand by occupation were: Retail Salespersons, Registered Nurses, First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers, Fast Food and Counter Workers, Stockers and Order Fillers, First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Software Developers, Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel, Customer Service Representatives, Maintenance and Repair Workers, General, and Social and Human Service Assistants. Looking at the employers related to the most postings, the industries are health care, retail, financial services, education services, and professional, scientific and technical services. (These all align with the Workforce Board's Target Industry list developed using labor market intelligence analysis).

Over 20,000 of these openings are full-time. (although some 15,000 are unspecified by the employer in the postings). Nearly 11,000 of those specified require only a high school diploma or less, while 7,200 require a Bachelor's degree and 1,400 require an associate's degree.

This data shows that there is wide variety in the skill sets needed by the region's employers. Unfortunately, it also indicates a preponderance of low-income, high-turnover positions.

**Majority of data attributed to JobsEQ*

1.2 A descriptive analysis of the knowledge and skills required to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment requirements for in-demand industry sectors and occupations. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(B)]

As appropriate, a local area may use an existing analysis, which is a timely current description of the regional economy, to meet the requirements of this section. Local areas are encouraged to utilize regional economic development strategic plans in the identification and prioritization of industry sectors.

The top 10 in-demand certifications are: Basic Life Support (BLS), Registered Nurse (RN), Driver's License, Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), Advanced Cardiac Life Support Certification (ACLS), Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), First Aid Certification, Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), Medical Assistant Certification (MA), and Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA).

The top 10 training programs related to real-time and sort-term demand are:

Nursing, Business, Computer Science, Accounting, Business Administration, Engineering, Finance, Marketing, Information Systems, and Social Work.

Identified hard skills in demand are: Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Office, Ability to Lift, Health/Wellness, Microsoft Word, Sales, Microsoft Outlook, Teaching/Training, School, Personal Computers (PC).

Finally, the most sought after soft skills are:

Communication (Verbal and written skills)

Cooperative/Team Player

Customer Service

Self-Motivated/Ability to Work Independently/Self Leadership

Organization

Detail Oriented/Meticulous

Adaptability/Flexibility/Tolerance of Change and Uncertainty

Problem Solving

Supervision/Management

Ability to Work in a Fast Paced Environment

****Data attributed to JobsEQ***

1.3 An analysis of the local workforce, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(C)]

The estimated size of the region’s labor force is 571,868. As stated prior, some 95% of that number is employed in some fashion. 2.06% of the population, or 20,381 are recorded as speaking English less than well in the US Census. Our region is fortunate to have net of in-commuter over out-commuters, with the difference at +56,953. 389,568 people live and work within the region, compared to 100,396 who commute out with 157,349 commuting in.

Approximately 288,000 people, or 36% of those 18 and older have a high school diploma or less, with 88,472 not achieving the diploma.

Looking at the characteristic of the currently unemployed however can present a starker snapshot. For example, the percentage of those with a high school diploma or less is 52% by comparison. We can also see racial and gender disparities in the unemployed, with 51% being black compared to 38% being white, and 51% being women compared to 49% being men. The largest percentage of the unemployed remain to be from the accommodation and food services category, one year after the pandemic started, followed by administrative and support.

1.4 An analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the region to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in the region [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(D)]

The Board’s Title I service provider programs and operations are well suited to address the skills needs of jobseekers and employers in accordance with the policies and procedures established locally. It starts with

the thoughtful consideration by the Board’s Strategy and outcomes Committee in considered eligible training provider program applications to ensure that the providers are meeting in-demand needs at quality level. Our strong collaboration with regional Adult Education ensures that those without a diploma can easily access GED assistance as well as other adult basic education offerings. Our robust library of workshops both online and in person can address a wide variety of basic skill enhancement areas. Thanks to new local leadership and change in mindsets, our collaboration with community college programs continues to evolve for the benefit of all. Talent Development Specialists and Career coaches don’t just “case manage” but assist customers in mapping the career path that is most suitable for them based on a variety of assessments and observational considerations. Occupations in-demand are cross-walked to more easily understandable terms along with typical employer names that are associated, as well as the wages. This helps customers make informed decisions about their service plan. We blend work experiences with training opportunities to provide a contextualized experience. This is effective in engaging the job seekers because of the paid incentives.

1.5 An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in 1.4 and the capacity to provide these services [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(D)]

(Strengths are discussed above in 1.4). At present we have capacity due to the fact that the recently unemployed have yet to show significant interest in pursuing employment or taking advantage of training opportunities. Approximately 90% of visitors to our workforce center between July and December of 2020 have only sought assistance with their unemployment claims. This can likely be attributed to continuation of extended unemployment benefits, the job search requirement being waived by the Governor for over a year now, health concerns related to COVID safety in the workplace and child care concerns for those with children at home in virtual learning. We are taking advantage of this current lack of interest to revamp our service delivery model by participating in the pilot of Network 2 Work championed by the Governor’s Workforce Advisor and the Virginia Community College System. This will help program staff overcome a weakness perceived that process must be stringent and “regulatory”. The technology behind Network 2 Work will also enhance the referral process and matching of supportive service to provide more wrap around assistance and allow customers to better focus on their skills development plan. And the set is predicated on high-wage jobs that are curated locally by the employer relations manager.

1.6 Describe and assess the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area including activities for youth with disabilities, which must include an identification of successful models of such activities. Please include:

- Local area’s strategy for ensuring the availability of comprehensive services for all youth
- How the area will identify and select successful providers of youth activities and delivery of the fourteen youth program elements required under WIOA
- Strategies to ensure that all eligible WIOA youth receive access to the required program elements and activities during their enrollment in the WIOA youth program
- How the required program design elements will be addressed as part of the development of youth service strategies
- Strategies to identify, recruit, and retain out-of-school youth, and efforts to ensure the required percent of WIOA youth funds are expended
- Policy regarding serving youth who do not meeting income eligibility guidelines, including appropriate referrals
- Efforts to coordinate with Job Corps, youth opportunity grants where applicable, registered apprenticeship programs, local offices on youth, and other youth services, including those administered through community colleges and other higher education institutions and local human services agencies
- Efforts taken to ensure compliance with applicable child labor and safety regulations

- Pay-for-performance policy as applicable

The Capital Region Workforce Partnership seeks to support youth and young adults in our region through intentional collaboration. The program actively seeks the support of other organizations to facilitate sharing of best practices, research and most importantly youth job seekers and employers, to coordinate work and life readiness initiatives and to reduce duplication and maximize efficiency and resources.

Over the past couple of years, the board has engaged in conversations with the leaders in areas of the most vulnerable populations in our region, such as the homeless provider networks as an example. Those conversations, created a pathway for services chart that is maintained by the board but updated by the provider as organizations are realized and engaged. See attached chart for list of service providers.

The local area utilizes several strategies to identify, recruit and retain out of school youth such as:

- **Employ trusted liaisons to reach and recruit youth and youth adults to include a dedicated outreach staff person, advocacy organizations by youth barriers, religious, community and civic organization and business.**
- **Conduct outreach to raise awareness of the program use strategic and strength-based marketing and outreach to inform and empower the community about youth workforce services offered;**
- **Develop and maintain relationships with referral sources and develop a broad set of referral sources for the program;**
- **Design program infrastructure and procedures that consider out of school youth needs and provide responsive and respectful services that recognize the varied barriers of the out of school needs and;**
- **Continuously monitor and solicit feedback from participants, partners and employers to ensure continuous quality improvement in recruitment, retention, and program quality.**

Once youth and young adults are in the program, staff use CRWP Service Policy 112 to ensure the 14 program elements are provided including the program design element and co-enrollment in other funding streams.

As part of the local monitoring and the onboarding process of all work experience sites, the board along with its contract conducts periodic reviews of the spaces youth and staff conduct workforce services as outlined in CWRP Service Policy #104.

The local workforce is fortunate to have partnerships including our board, ad-hoc committees, local CTE programs, the business solutions team, the local community college, job corps recruitment center and registered apprenticeship. These groups frequently meet to discuss partnership opportunities and ways to avoid duplication of services.

The local area does not use pay for performance contracts.

1.7 Describe and assess the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area, including:

- Access to and delivery of career services (basic, individualized, and follow-up)
- The area's definition of self-sufficiency to be used when determining eligibility for intensive and training services for employed individuals
- The area's definition of hard-to-serve populations with additional barriers to employment

In the post-pandemic environment all career services are available through a virtual platform we launched in May of 2020 during the period that our centers were physically closed. The virtual experience can start with the virtual orientation, or customers can head straight to our "One Flow" system. Eligibility can be determined securely through encrypted technology and then enrolled by staff. From there the experience is just as if they had physically walked in to a center. Customers would receive initial and then more in-depth assessment to determine immediate job search suitability or whatever interventions may be helpful. Targeted job search assistance can be provided including how and where to search, what are in-demand jobs, help with online applications, resume and interview tips, supportive services and basic job readiness enhancement such as social media tips or basic computer skills. Case-by-case a customer may move on to more intensive services like work experience, or training opportunities which could include ITAs, on-the-job training or customized / contract training. Since our centers re-opened physically in July of 2020, the experience is the same for walk-in customers with the exception that resource room benefits can be obtained.

The Board's policy allows enrollment of anyone that is 18+, eligible to work in the US and registered with selective service as the flow with no regard to income. Priority of service is factored after enrollment per VCCS guidance along with local policy, starting with Veterans and then low income or basic skills deficient for adults services. Self-sufficiency as a benchmark is set in policy and predicated on the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) "Living Wage Calculator" which factors the various expenses needed to maintain the standards that are considered essential to support a household. Items such as childcare, groceries, housing, medical, transportation and taxes are factored on a jurisdiction-specific basis. For example, Richmond's wage for a single adult is calculated at \$16 per hour.

Hard-to-serve populations are considered as follows: Basic skills deficient, low-income and/or not at self-sufficient wages, long-term unemployed, people experiencing homelessness, those with a disability, ex-offender status, English as a Second Language, foster care or aged out of foster care, and pregnant or parenting teens.

Section 2: Strategic Vision and Goals

2.1 Describe the local board’s strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment). The goals should relate to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance (found here: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/performance/performance-indicators>) to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(E)]

Our Vision: To serve as a premier gateway for workforce resources connecting people to jobs and employers to talent in Virginia’s Capital Region.

Goals:

- 1. Foster connections, partnerships and collaborations among businesses, educational institutions, community organizations and workforce entities so that solutions are demand-driven with the “buy-in” and engagement needed to ensure success of efforts.**
- 2. Identify and regularly validate priority, critical and emerging industry sectors in the region and align programs, community services and resources to effectively and efficiently address the current and future workforce needs through regular communication, career pathways and new training as necessary.**
- 3. Ensure that all job seekers, businesses and partners have equitable and comprehensive access to workforce development services, factoring items like transportation, housing, childcare, K-12 education and community services.**
- 4. Enhance community and business awareness and usage of the Virginia Career Works system and its partners in the Capital Region, and demonstrate the value for customers**

2.2 Describe how the local board’s strategic vision and goals will support the strategies identified in the Virginia Combined State Plan (found here: <https://virginiacareerworks.com>).

The Combined State Plan will be posted in fall 2020.

2.3 Describe how the local board’s vision and goals align with and/or supports the vision of the Virginia Board of Workforce Development (VBWD) (found here: <https://virginiacareerworks.com>).

The VBWD approved their 2020-2023 Strategic Plan in September 2020.

Click here to enter text.

The local area’s goals are in direct alignment with the state’s – focusing and aligning around the themes of wages, business engagement, skills, raising awareness of the workforce system and collaboration among partners.

2.4 Taking into account the analyses described in 1.1 through 2.3, describe a strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs and required partners to align resources available to the local areas to achieve the local board’s strategic vision and goals. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(1)(F)]

The broadness in the general themes of our goals is the best strategy for affecting change and advancement considering that all of our local partners have their own regulations, funding requirements and internal policy-making arms. So much past failure at the national, state and local level can likely be attributed to trying to merge efforts and consolidate, but in reality, greater success can be achieved in setting diverse goals where everyone can see “their place at the table” to move the meter within their existing organizational parameters.

Partners will be asked to consider contributing to a scorecard that can show collective impact in advancement of the Board’s vision and goals.

2.4 Describe the local board strategic plan designed to combine public and private resources to support sector strategies, career pathways, and career readiness skills development.

1. Foster connections, partnerships and collaborations among businesses, educational institutions, community organizations and workforce entities so that solutions are demand-driven with the “buy-in” and engagement needed to ensure success of efforts.

- **Maintain active involvement in the Regional Workforce Coalition and collectively and independently contribute to execution of action items within its Blueprint document to advance access, engagement, readiness and retention efforts.**
- **Establish or connect with sector-based advisory groups that consist of local employers, educational institutions, industry professionals and parents in the development of business and education partnerships.**
- **Promote the development of partnerships among training partners and postsecondary educational providers, in developing skill development programs, including soft skills training, stackable career pathways, certificate programs and accelerated diplomas that lead to family sustaining jobs**
- **Develop professional development opportunities, learning events and other resources that create a community of workforce development for service providers, non-profits and other key stakeholders in the region.**

2. Identify and regularly validate priority, critical and emerging industry sectors in the region and align programs, community services and resources to effectively and efficiently address the current and future workforce needs through regular communication, career pathways and new training as necessary.

- **Convene or partner in sector conversations and partnerships in key regional industries to better understand needs and emerging industries.**
- **Map career pathways for each identified industry sector.**
- **Analyze Data including current labor force intelligence, labor market trends and real-time jobs information, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment.**
- **Promote entrepreneurship and small business development.** • **Expand career pathway opportunities, including work-based training opportunities and integrated programs of study, that lead to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings**

3. Ensure that all job seekers, businesses and partners have equitable and comprehensive access to workforce development services, factoring items like transportation, housing, childcare, K-12 education and community services

- **Work with the regional workforce coalition, local governments, regional economic development partners and community-based organizations to compile a regional asset inventory to identify gaps and prioritize housing, transportation and childcare services needs in the region to be shared with elected state/federal officials**
- **Serve as an advocate to build awareness of critical issues that affect workforce development, such as infrastructure needs like housing, transportation, and internet access**
- **Expand workforce opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to career advancement through improved career services, career pathway programs and expansion of bridge programs.**
- **Ensure that career pathways have various on and off ramps for different skill and experience levels to reach the widest array of students and jobseekers, including providing additional options to individuals with barriers to employment.**
- **Work with Chambers of Commerce, SHRM, Metropolitan Business League and other similar groups to ensure small and minority-owned businesses are aware of and able to benefit from workforce system resources.** • **Identify and create opportunities to better connect with local secondary school divisions; to include teacher and parent organizations, to increase career awareness and workforce readiness at all levels.**

4. Enhance community and business awareness and usage of the Virginia Career Works system and its partners in the Capital Region, and demonstrate the value for customers

- Engage subject matter experts to develop and deploy effective audience-specific and cross-medium approaches to outreach and awareness.
- Enhance access to services by partnering with libraries, community-based and faith-based organizations.
- Enhance and expand connections with local economic development organizations for collective advocacy and networking
- Promote open communication and information-sharing among local and regional workforce and community partners that creates trust that leads to natural, no cost awareness, referrals and sharing of resources.
- Create dashboards, regular success stories and other tools that benchmark success against established goals and other value-added benefits of the workforce system.

Section 3: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

Please try to answer the questions in Section 3 in approximately twelve (12) pages. You will not be penalized for going over the page limit. Many of the responses below, such as targeted sector strategies, should be based on strategic discussions with the local board and partners.

3.1 Provide a description of the workforce development system in the local area that identifies:

- The programs that are included in that system
- How the local board will work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs to support alignment to provide services, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006
- How the local board coordinates and interacts with Chief Elected Officials (CEO)

[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(2)]

The local workforce system is comprised of the partners that provide required programs under WIOA. In addition to the Board's adult, dislocated worker and youth programs this includes: Adult Educations, Community Colleges to include John Tyler and Reynolds and their Community College Workforce Alliance, Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, Departments of Social Services, Virginia Employment Commission. Additional partners in collaboration include the Department for Blind and Vision Impaired, Department of Veterans Services, Richmond Office of Community Wealth Building and United Way of Greater Richmond and Petersburg.

The required partners' services are detailed in the Memorandum of Service and are either offered on-site in the centers or through referrals, information sharing and use of technology. The MO drives how the Board works with the partners to align services. The Board also convenes the core partners monthly (Titles 1, III, III and IV of the WIOA) monthly at the local management level to ensure the services are aligned and collaboration exists at the staff level

The local board collaborates in sharing membership on the Finance Committee. In addition, there are two members who serve as both alternatives to the CEO and on the Workforce Board. Additionally, the Board chair attends CLEO meetings as scheduling permits. The Board and CEO have an annual joint session in December of each year. Finally, both meeting agendas include staff sharing what the other body has done at their most previous meeting.

3.2 Describe strategies and services that will be used in the local area to:

- Facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs
- Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area
- Better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development
- Strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs

These strategies and services may include the implementation of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies, designed to meet the needs of employers in the corresponding region in support of the strategy described in 2.1.

The local board generally services as the “regional convener” and each regional convener shall develop, in collaboration with other workforce development entities in the region, a local plan for employer engagement. VBWD Policy No.13-01 Business Service Requirements for Local Workforce Investment Areas outlines the role and requirements of Local Workforce Areas and Virginia Workforce Centers in providing services to business customers, and presents required actions by the LWDA in regard to implementation of business services to enhance the business customer’s outcomes and satisfaction with the workforce system through Business Services Teams.

[WIOA Sec. 108(b)(4), Code of Virginia 2.2. Chapter 24 Section 2.2-2472.1]

The Local Board’s emerging partnership with ChamberRVA through the Regional Workforce Coalition is perhaps the most valuable resource in terms of connecting with employers in terms of their convenings of industry – specific roundtables. The ability to join in these sessions is powerful as the chamber has long been considered the voice of the business community. To paraphrase a television ad, when they talk, people listen. Rather than try to convene our own sessions, which may not yield much turnout based on the lack of awareness cited elsewhere in this plan, it will be far more effective and efficient for us to go where businesses are already gathering and sharing information on their workforce needs.

We will also use the input from our recent employer survey to drive strategies that better meet expressed needs. Highest ranking needs were prioritized as lack of hard skills and soft skills in both new hires and for exhibiting those traits among the recently hired as far as retention. Child care and transportation issues also ranked high. Finally, most employers seem to rely on in-house training resources so we will explore with the community college and other training providers ways to raise awareness of and usage of system

Our region’s Business Solutions Team is a collaborative effort between the Capital Region Workforce Development Board and its local government and non-profit partners. Working together as a team, it allows us to support larger and more complex projects than individual organizations can handle. This also gives employers the bonus of being able to interact with just one person, knowing that the information is then disseminated to the entire region.

With a team of over 15 organizations and an email network of over 800 workforce professionals, we’re able to handle recruitment, job fair, training, consultation, and outplacement needs. Our team is also frequently utilized by economic development to support businesses that are new to the region, or even new to the country.

As far as enhancements to linking with unemployment insurance we will work with the VEC to design and implement more effective methods to connect claimants with career services sooner.

3.3 Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with economic development activities carried out in the region in which the local area is located (or planning region), and promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(5)]

The Board and its service providers have a strong connection with most of the locality economic development offices and routinely collaborates on projects or otherwise connect to share information and resources. We also work regularly with both the Greater Richmond Partnership and

the area liaison from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership. These organizations participate on the Business Solutions Team and it is becoming more frequent for us to be called upon to assist with meeting workforce needs of existing businesses and in cases where prospects are considering the area. The key to maintaining these relationships is to manage expectations, communicate clearly and deliver on commitments that are made, or identify as soon as possible when an unexpected diversion may present itself. Finally, a follow-up loop for feedback will further enhance our ability for continuous improvement. Trust is key in our continuing to be seen as a value-add.

3.4 Describe how the local board coordinates education and workforce investment activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(10)]

The local board's emerging primary post-secondary partner is the community colleges as envisioned in many ways by the Commonwealth. (Past leadership challenges at both organizations served as a roadblock to such collaboration in the past and the fruits of new leadership are now being realized). In addition to the Community College Vice President of Workforce serving on the Workforce Development Board, we were recently asked to add a representative to the college's Perkins Advisory Board. The Workforce Board and Community College collaborated on and received a Go Virginia grant in the early days of the pandemic to launch a technology platform for virtual services expansion. This effort has now morphed into the region becoming one of three pilot areas partnering with the state to launch Network 2 Work, which is both a technology solution and service delivery model. The Board and College leadership serve as Co-Chairs of the Regional Workforce Development Coalition which is bring together major workforce efforts beyond federal compliance into great community awareness and advancement of unified efforts to better serve businesses and job seekers. The Board has also recently added Virginia Commonwealth University representation to its Strategy and Outcomes Committee and will be seeking a representative from Virginia Union University as well to establish and enhance partnership opportunities with more post-secondary institutions.

The Board's main connection to secondary education remains its strong connections and working relationships with the local school divisions' Career and Technical Education representatives. We also maintain a seat on the regional Adult Education advisory board.

Finally, we will be establishing an annual "forum" for current and potential eligible training providers in the region to bot raise awareness of the Board and its services as well as to continually educate the providers on the various rules and regulations governing the eligible training provider network.

3.5 Describe how the local board will collaborate on local workforce investment activities with the community colleges in their area in the planning and delivery of workforce and training services.

The WDB connects with the two community colleges that service our region through the Community College Workforce Alliance. Specific examples include:

- Programs of training: The Board has recently renewed some 30+ programs to the eligible training provider list as viable and effective offerings for our job-seeking customers to consider.

These programs all align with occupations on the Board’s targeted industry list and ensure effective investment of Board training resources.

- **Grants Collaboration: The Board and CCWA have long partnered on grant opportunities to expand upon the portfolio of employment and training resources available within the region, where need far surpasses traditional resources at our disposal. These have included efforts in entrepreneurial training, on the job training and incumbent worker training. We will continue to identify grant opportunities with the colleges and additional partners that support career pathway strategies.**
- **CCWA’s active participation in Board membership, service on Board committees and the regional Business Solutions Team.**
- **More recently we have through grant opportunities been working with CCWA to develop cohorts of WIOA participants to enroll in logistics and CDL training as a group. This provides an added benefit of peer connectivity among the students. We will expand on the success of these initial efforts into additional in-demand fields such as health care, manufacturing, the trades and information technology.**
- **As mentioned elsewhere, Board and Community College leadership co-chair the Regional Workforce Coalition.**

In addition to continuation of the above, the Board will seek to connect employers who are interested in board-funded training assistance to CCWA for exploration of possible credentials and certificates that may be connected to such training to mutually benefit our customers and the Commonwealth in achieving its goals of more credential attainment

3.6 Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities in the local area with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(11)]

Part of the reasoning for selecting the location of our new Richmond West Workforce Center was its proximity to public transportation. Within eye distance of the center are bus stops serving multiple bus lines because of the location along the Broad Street corridor, not to mention an easily manageable distance to two Pulse stations. Our strong relationship with our region’s elected officials serves as the best opportunity to advocate for enhanced public transportation expansion in the region. Through our enhanced relationships with United Way we have gained knowledge of and access to a wider variety of non-profits, many of which include transportation as a feature.

3.7 Describe the plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of services provided by the State employment service under the Wagner-Peyser Act and services provided in the local area through the one-stop delivery system, to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(12)]

We rely on our partners at the Virginia Employment Commission who administer Wagner-Peyser, who do fully participate in our Core Partners team locally. It will remain to be seen in this unprecedented time of massive unemployment claim processing, backlogs and adjudications if and to what level they will be able to provide basic career services in our center’s resource room. As a result of COVID safety protocols, management of customer flow in these resource rooms has become an even more critical component of center operations. We will collaborate with VEC leadership local on a regular basis to determine what commitments they will be able to make in terms of provision of

basic career services for job seekers, and management of the state’s “job order” system in Virginia Workforce Connection as a service to businesses that are interested in its usage. In addition, the VEC will be asked to participate actively in the Business Solutions Team to assist the team with job matching for employers and other team services.

3.8 Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities in the local area with the provision of adult education and literacy activities, including a description of how the local board will carry out the review of local applications. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(13)]

Our regional adult education partners provide a staff presence in each of our workforce centers, offering tutoring, testing, GED opportunities and information about other services. We are afforded an opportunity to review and comment on applications in concert with the state-level Adult Education office and draw on a subset of Board members with expertise in the education field, along with the Director to conduct the reviews.

3.9 Describe how the local plan shall:

- Specify the policies and protocols to be followed by all the region’s workforce development entities when engaging the region’s employers
- Address how the region’s workforce entities will involve employers in the formation of new workforce development activities
- Identify what activities will be undertaken to address employers’ specific workforce needs

The Business Solutions Team (BST) is committed to conveniently providing our customers with quality information and services in manner that ensures ease of access, seamless referrals and timely responses. Although there is a designated BST Coordinator, the BST operates on a “no wrong door entrance protocol” This means any team member that initiates or receives the initial contact is the single point of service for that business. The receiving team member may elect to transfer single point of service designation to the BST coordinator. Team members agree to share “leads” from businesses with the BST coordinator so the team can be informed, or notify the entire team directly. Within two (3) business days of business contact, the receiving team member or BST coordinator will follow up with the customer and inform them of an initial plan of response. If the need cannot be met, the customer shall be notified, and provided any possible referrals that may be of assistance.

Team members commit to consistent levels of customer service that include clarity in communication, timeliness in responding and an overall user-friendly experience in accessing information, being made aware of available services and efficiently receiving those services when possible. By managing the customer’s expectations in this manner from start to finish, the team will not “over promise and under deliver”. The BST will survey customers at least quarterly to respond to a customer satisfaction survey. The team will collectively review responses and adjust practices and procedures accordingly.

Gathering intelligence from the business community in general will be conducted through targeted surveys, convening directly or participating in industry roundtables conducted by partners and collaboration with economic development. When working with specific employers, an individual “service plan” is typically developed – which involves listening to needs, trying to draw out additional information and then best matching a services menu to meet the needs. This may include but not be limited to recruitment and hiring assistance, training resources, incentive options,

information of tax credits and labor market information.

3.10 Describe how the direction given by the Governor and the local board to the one-stop operator to ensure priority for adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient.

Information collected at initial and more detailed assessments is recorded and maintained to ensure that should resources become limited, priority can be given to those that have been identified as low income or basic skills deficient. This ensures that the most valuable services can be reserved for those most in need.

Section 4: Program Design and Evaluation

4.1 Describe how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(3)]

The Board's Operations committee is charged in part with devising strategies to meet needs of the those with barriers to employments, and the various hard-to-serve populations defined elsewhere in this plan.

This has and will continue to be executed with strong case management services, training in high-growth and in-demand industries, with an emphasis on career pathways and stackable credentials, as well as career navigation and job placement. We have expanded our work experience activities to afford those will limited work experience the opportunity to experience wage earning, and a majority of these activities are resulting in employment offers. Our use of OJTs has also expanded to afford customers the ability to more immediately ear wages while learning the skills they need to successfully advance their career.

The local partners planning group has already engaged in mapping resources within the region that provide workforce development services. The maps includes target populations so that we can identify where hard-to-serve populations are currently access the system, what services they can receive and what opportunities exist for redeploying resources in a more efficient and effective way.

Specifically, partnering with Adult Education in a collaborative assessment environment, will allow for streamlined identification of basic skills deficient individuals. Likewise, enhanced involvement of local Departments of Social Services will better connect low income individuals to the workforce system (itinerant presence in one-stops and improved referral). Since the 2016 plan, where VEC co-location was just starting, they now have a permanent presence in all three centers. This allows better access to those about to exhaust unemployment benefits as well as other long-term unemployed populations

4.2 Describe how the local board will facilitate the development of career pathways, consistent with the Career Pathways Definitions. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(3)]

- **Extensive reliance upon data, from the initial step of selecting industries or occupations for pathway development, through the work of identifying gaps in education and training for the target industries, and finally evaluating how successful efforts to improve educational attainment and economic advancement in those industries have been.**
- **Use of "road maps," jointly produced by educators, workforce development professionals and employers, that show the connections between education and training programs and jobs at different levels within a given industry or occupational sector at different levels.**
- **Clear linkages between remedial, academic and occupational programs within educational institutions, and easy articulation of credits across institutions to enable students to progress seamlessly from one level to the next and earn credentials while improving their career prospects and working within the field.**

- **Curricula defined in terms of competencies required for jobs and further education at the next level, and, where possible, tied to industry skill standards, certifications or licensing requirements.**
- **Emphasis on “learning by doing” through class projects, laboratories, simulations and internships.**
- **Programs offered at times and places (including workplaces) convenient for working adults and structured in small modules or “chunks,” each leading to a recognized credential.**
- **The flexibility to enter and exit education as participants’ circumstances permit.**
- **“Wrap-around” support services, including career assessment and counseling, case management, child care, financial aid and job placement.**
- **“Bridge programs” for educationally disadvantaged youths and adults that teach basic skills like communication, math and problem-solving in the context of training for advancement to better jobs and postsecondary training.**
- **Alignment of both public and private funding sources, such as the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act (Perkins), WIOA and DSS**
- **Target jobs in industries of importance to local economies**
- **Create avenues of advancement for current workers, jobseekers and future labor market entrants**
- **Increase supply of qualified workers for local employers in the target industries**

4.3 Describe how the local board will utilize co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs to maximize efficiencies and use of resources. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(3)]

Network 2 Work and Virginia’s evolving experiment with the My Virginia Journey Portal will both serve as key to implementing more frequent and effective co-enrollments. Technology enhancements will allow for the easy identification of multiple resources to holistically serve the various needs of each jobseeker. With knowledge at the fingertips of each staff member, it will be more efficient and effective to do so. This will extend beyond core partners and better leverage the array of resources we are fortunate to have in the Capital Region. Co-enrollment must be seen first and foremost as a benefit to the customer and not a barrier for staff who may have angst about sharing customers or potential negative impacts to performance. Change can only be driven by top-down communication and honest discussion to gain the buy-in necessary at all levels.

4.4 Describe one-stop delivery system in the local area, including:

- A. The local board’s efforts to ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, and workers and jobseekers. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(A)]

The Board’s Strategy and Outcomes Committee is charged with and regularly reviews service provider performance and other key metrics, in addition to results from customer satisfaction surveys, both jobseeker and business. From this, strategies are discussed and developed to change course where needed, enhance what is being done well and fill gaps that are identified. Board staff also review benchmarks established in annual contracts that are also geared to flagging continuous improvement.

- B. How the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(B)]

The launch in April 2020 of our virtual platform “OneFlow” in response to the COVID crisis has moved us firmly into a new environment of service delivery that enables full engagement with our programs regardless of the ability to get to a physical workforce center. This not only benefits residents of our outer rural counties, but those in inner jurisdictions who don’t have adequate transportation. Individuals are able to take the entire customer journey from orientation, to eligibility to enrollment and through service strategy. When COVID restrictions ease we will also return to a more regular schedule of out stationing of staff and workshops on site in locations like libraries, Departments of Social Services or other locations where individuals gather.

- C. How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA section 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(C)]

Each partner agency is responsible through their respective funding authority to ensure that their programs and services are complaint. The Board manages EO for its Title I programs and one stop center accessibility and overall program compliance in the center through

- D. Describe the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(6)(D)]

Please see our one stop partner Memorandum of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreements.

- E. Describe how one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated technology-enabled intake and case management information system for core programs and programs carried out by one-stop partners [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(21)]

While the state has been leading this effort, which has now taken the form of the My Virginia Journey portal, it has yet to be fully embraced or used locally as its range of functionality at present does not meet needs. We are however one of the 3 workforce areas piloting the Network 2 Work platform which does have a technology component to allow for integrated intake, referrals, tracking and case note functionality. We also understand it will share data with the Virginia Workforce Connection. We plan to launch usage in April of 2021. Locally, we do use some technology that allows cross-usage such as Acuity and One Flow.

- F. Describe the services provided by each partner mandated by federal and state law, and other optional partners.

Please reference our one stop partner Memorandum of Understanding.

- G. Identify the Virginia Workforce Center Operator for each site in the local area.

Equus Workforce Solutions holds the contract for one stop operator functions system-wide in the Capital Region.

H. Identify the physical locations of each comprehensive Virginia Workforce Center in the local area, and the co-location strategy for each center (current and planned).

Virginia Career Works – Henrico at 121 Cedar Fork Road in the east end serves as our Comprehensive Center. The following partners have a physical presence: Adult Education (itinerant), Henrico Department of Social Services (itinerant), Title 1 Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth (full-time), Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (itinerant), Virginia Department of Veterans Services (full-time) and Virginia Employment Commission (full-time). While not a workforce partner, the Henrico County Department of Community Corrections also has office space in this center.

I. If applicable, identify the locations of Virginia Workforce Network affiliated sites, partner sites, or specialized centers.

Virginia Career Works – Chesterfield at 304 Turner Road serves as an affiliate with DVS, WIOA Title 1 and VEC onsite full time and itinerant presence of Adult Education and Chesterfield Department of Social Services. The Richmond West Center at 4914 Radford Avenue has the same partners with the exception of Chesterfield DSS.

4.5 Describe the policy, process, and criteria for issuing individual training accounts (ITAs) including any limitations on ITA amounts. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(19)]

Our ITA policy is based on informed decision making by the customers in consultation with their Talent Development Specialist. The policy outlines suitability factors, assessment considerations, coordination of financial aid and expectations. The maximum cap per person is currently \$10,000 for Tier 1 demand occupations as defined by the Board, and then “steps down” to lower amounts for fields that are still in demand under specified criteria. The full policy can be viewed at:

https://vcwcapital.com/wp-content/uploads/106_ITA.pdf

4.6 If training contracts are used, describe processes utilized by the local board to ensure customer choice in the selection of training programs, regardless of how the training services are to be provided. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(19)]

The Board’s policy indicates that contract training will be used for cohorts of eligible participants when it has been determined that the assessments, interests and aptitudes of each individual support the enrollment, that the training times are compatible to their schedule and that they have the ability to benefit.

4.7 Describe process utilized by the local board to ensure that training provided is linked to in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, or in another area to which a participant is willing to relocate. [WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G)(iii)]

Labor market information and consultation with economic development and the business community are key factors used by the Board in this policy-making decision, which in turn becomes operationalized by staff in executing the policy. The Board may also employ economists or labor market specialists at time to further analyze not just raw demand but also factor wages, turnover and other indicators not easily gleaned in a surface level review.

4.8 Describe how rapid response activities are coordinated and carried out in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(8)]

The Virginia Employment Commission's Central Region coordinator manages the efforts of rapid response in our area. The Coordinator receives information from the state coordinator on dislocations which trigger a WARN and attempts to make contact with the company. From there events are scheduled and coordinated with the workforce board's service providers and others. We also participate in other ways such as hosting or coordinating with job fairs and recruitment events either in our centers or offsite at larger venues; and collaborative outreach and awareness efforts. The Rapid response coordinator sits on the Business Solutions team to provide an extra measure of coordination.

Section 5: Compliance

5.1 Describe how the local board meets its responsibilities for oversight, monitoring, and corrective action for WIOA Title I programs.

The local workforce board conducts annual compliance monitoring for both programmatic and fiscal aspects of its contracted service providers, using tools developed in concert with federal and state guidelines and policies. More details are outlined at: https://vcwcapital.com/wp-content/uploads/105_Monitoring_rev2019.pdf.

In addition, more frequent “check-ins”, onsite reviews and requirements for the service providers to file regular progress reports

As a Henrico County department, we are also included in the County’s Internal Audit protocols and are subject to random monitoring by the county’s contracted independent auditor as well.

5.2 Describe how the local board conducts business in accordance with the Sunshine Provisions of WIOA staffing plans for the local board.

All Board and elected official meetings are open to the public with notices posted in advance on the website. Agendas and materials are made available as soon as members receive them. Each meeting has a posted public comment period. The same process is followed for Board committee meetings. During the current state of emergency due to the COVID crisis, meetings are conducted through virtual means in accordance with State Code provisions, with limited on-site attendance available as well following safety protocols.

5.3 Describe the methods and strategies used to ensure timely expenditure of WIOA funds.

As Henrico County employees, local Board staff utilize Oracle financials as the primary method of tracking expenditures against budgets and purchase orders at the Board level. Queries can be made at any time on any idea. Service providers submit monthly detail reports with their reimbursement requests (invoices) that provide real-time information for the Board staff to monitor spending activity by approved budget line throughout the program year.

5.4 Describe the process for neutral brokerage of adult, dislocated worker, and youth services. Identify the competitive process and criteria (such as targeted services, leverage of funds, etc.) used to award funds to sub-recipients/contractors of WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services, state the names of contracted organizations, and the duration of each contract. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(16)]

All Capital Region procurements, regardless of dollar amount, follow the Henrico County Purchasing guidelines which are in full conformance to the Virginia Public Procurement Act. Methods can include small purchases, request for quotes and requests for proposals. Requests for quotes result in an award to the most reasonable and responsive offeror. Request for proposals result in a review committee of Board and CLEO members reviewing proposals against identified criteria and scoring each. Interviews are scheduled with highest-scoring firms for a second round of scoring. Best and final offers are also obtained and then an intent to award is issued. The current holder of Adult and Dislocated Worker services is Equus. The contract runs through June 30, 2022. Equus also holds the one stop operator contract through a separate procurement and it end June 30, 2021. Ross Innovative Workforce Solutions hold the out of school youth contract which runs through June 30, 2021. All contracts are eligible for four annual renewals subject to performance and funding before a new procurement is required.

5.5 Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(15)]

Henrico County serves as both grant recipient and fiscal agent for the Capital Region by agreement of consortium of local elected officials.

5.6 Describe the strategy used by the local board to leverage WIOA funds with other federal, state, local, and philanthropic resources.

The Board in its new strategic plan has as a prime objective and strategy to pursue a non-profit status or similar arrangement such that philanthropic funds can be pursued and leveraged with the variety of federal and local funds we have been able to historically leverage. Our region remains one of the few in Virginia that benefits from a stable and reliable source of non-federal funds from our eight member jurisdictions who a few years ago “normalized” the process for determining their annual funding contributions.

5.7 Indicate the negotiated local levels of performance for the federal measures. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17)]

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	ADULT	DISLOCATED WORKER	YOUTH
<i>Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit</i>	80.50%	87.80%	72.00%
<i>Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit</i>	\$6,000	\$8,700	\$3,500
<i>Measurable Skill Gains</i>	61.20%	68.00%	68.20%
<i>Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit</i>	85.00%	90.00%	62.80%
<i>Credential Attainment Rate</i>	74.00%	70.00%	70.00%

5.8 Describe indicators used by the local board to measure performance and effectiveness of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), contracted service providers and the one-stop delivery system, in the local area. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(17)]

These vary from contract to contract (or agreements) based upon the nature and scope of work. Common themes are progress against stated goals and objectives, financial management, timeliness of responses, customer satisfaction results, compliance with federal, state and local regulations, delivery of products as promised and within expected timelines.

5.9 Provide a description of any replicated cooperative agreements with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. [WIOA Sec. 108(b)(14)]

None additional beyond our partner MOU and collaborative relationship with the Department for

Aging and Rehabilitative Services; along with the Department of Blind and Vision Impaired. Both will also continue to be asked to provide training for workforce center staff as has occurred in the past.

5.10 Describe the actions the local board will take towards becoming or remaining a high-performing board

The Capital Region has been fortunate to excel at meeting or exceeding negotiated performance levels for over 6 consecutive years. One way to maintain our level of excellence not just in federal program results but in other “real-time” outward facing metrics will be development a dashboard to provide at-a-glance information against both internal and external indicators developed through the companion strategic plan that accompanies this document.

5.11 Describe the process for getting input into the development of the local plan and providing public comment opportunity prior to submission. Be sure to address how members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education were given an opportunity to provide comments on the local plans. If any comments received that represent disagreement with the plan were received, please include those comments here. [WIOA Sec. 108(d)]

Inputs into local planning included a business survey launched online, a virtual stakeholder session that included business, workforce and education entities as well as jobseekers/customers of the system. Cross-representation from the Workforce Board membership comprised the Strategic Planning Committee which guided development of plans. Finally, a public comment period was held through posting of the draft document on the Board website.

5.12 Describe professional staff development strategies, including:

- Process used to ensure staff receive continuous training in workforce development practices
- Methods to ensure effective use of the Virginia Workforce Connection system of record and to adhere to timely data entry requirements for WIOA services
- Process to measure staff performance and delivery of high-quality customer service
- Process to meet and maintain staff certification and Virginia Workforce Center certification as required by Virginia Workforce Council Policy 300-06

In signing on to the one-stop MOU, partners in part commit that their respective staff will take advantage of appropriate training, credentialing, and other staff capacity development opportunities that are available. Partners with front-line staff directly serving customers will achieve and maintain workforce development professional credentials as required by the Virginia Board for Workforce. Each entity employing staff will be required to ensure the appropriate level of staff have certifications. Board-contracted service providers have such requirements imbedded in their contracts. The Workforce Board will encourage staff at all levels to pursue online and other learning opportunities.

The one stop operator will also coordinate a schedule of regular staff training opportunities, “lunch and learn sessions” and on-line offerings for center staff.

Title I staff operating under Board contracts will also be offered either based on topics self-identified by staff, and on topics related to federal or state guidance issuances.

Statement of Compliance, Plan Signatures, & Fiscal Agent Designation

We hereby certify that this local plan was developed in accordance with the State guidelines, and that local board activities will be conducted in accordance with this plan and the provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, its attendant regulations and the applicable state laws and policies. We further certify that the plan was developed by the local workforce development board in partnership with the Chief Elected Officials (CEO), and with the benefit of an open and inclusive plan development process and the required public comment period.

Local Area Name / #	
Local Plan Point of Contact:	
Address:	
Phone/e-mail:	

Typed Name & Signature of WDB Chair	Date

Typed Name & Signature of CEO Consortium Chair	Date

The Chief Elected Official(s) designate(s) the following entity as the fiscal agent:

Entity: _____

Contact: _____

Address: _____

Phone/Email: _____

Local Plan Required Attachments

Please provide the links to the documents listed below in the boxes marked “Click here to enter text.” If such links are not available, please include copies of the documents with your submission.

1. Current Chief Elected Official (CEO) Consortium Agreement: **Click here to enter text.**
2. Current CEO-Local WBD Agreement: **Click here to enter text.**
3. Current Local WBD organizational chart **Click here to enter text.**
 - a. Identify board oversight and program administration
4. Copies of executed cooperative agreements between the Local WBD or other local entities and the local office of the Virginia agency/unit administering programs carried out under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination
 - a. **Click here to enter text.**
 - b. Cooperative agreements as defined in WIOA section 107(d)(11)
 - c. Other local entities described in section 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(B))
5. Local WBD Policies: provide the link to all policies on the Local WBD website
 - a. **Click here to enter text.**