Collaborating to Address Regional Workforce Challenges: A Roadmap

Last updated September 3, 2024

Better Jobs, Vibrant Economies, Healthier Communities - Together

Why are you reading this document?

The Commonwealth faces a health workforce crisis. Industry-focused workforce partnership is a solution.

What's the point? You might call it a collaborative, a network, a coalition, or a collective impact model – but a single organization cannot create a talent pipeline of trained workers to meet industry needs. Employers, educators, non-profits/philanthropy, and government must work together as partners to collectively enhance the health science talent pipeline.

○ **Places workers in good careers in Virginia.**

○ **Strengthens the health industry & Virginia economy.**

○ **Improves access to health services.**

2
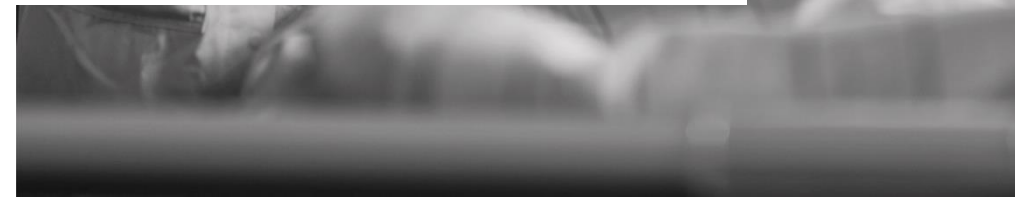
Launching and scaling your team is a journey. This roadmap is your guide:

HOW TO USE THIS roadmap

1. Given the complexity of the workforce ecosystem and local/regional nuances, this document is a framework to simplify that complexity, but NOT "the only way" to produce valuable outcomes.

2. There is no "one size fits all" approach to solve workforce challenges. This resource is meant to inspire ideas and action, recognizing that regions have unique challenges and strengths that will shape their workforce efforts.

3. This roadmap includes details on a number of the most common activities related to starting, building, and scaling a workforce partnership. Not all topics will be relevant to every reader or regional team.

HOW IT WAS CREATED

This roadmap was created through a joint project with the Commonwealth of Virginia and Claude Moore, and was informed by:

50+ *workforce stakeholders*

4 *in-person site visits to GO Virginia Region 2, Region 3, and Region 5*

Secondary research of workforce data, Virginia resources, national workforce models, and evaluation

Guiding Principles

Sector-based workforce partnerships take many forms. The Guiding Principles embedded throughout this roadmap are what it all comes down to, regardless of how your efforts evolve. We suggest you pay particular attention to them!

What is the sector partnership model?

You might call it a partnership, network, collaborative, ecosystem, coalition, or a collective impact model...

Whatever you call it, it's a **team of people across organizations working together** to prepare the workforce of today & the future.

IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The concept of a "sector strategy" or "sector partnership" is often used to describe industry or employer-led efforts to solve workforce shortages or skill gaps.

Typically galvanized by one initial convening entity, a cross-organization team comes together to define the challenge, design programs or initiatives to solve it, source funding, and administer and evaluate them.

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF INDUSTRY & EMPLOYERS

While there are countless players in the workforce ecosystem who serve individuals, if they do so without active engagement from the employers who are expected to hire and retain them, their efforts may not ultimately be successful. Having an employer(s) at the table, actively engaged, and committed is ***the*** critical pillar of success.

Guiding Principle #1:
One size does not fit all

What works in Northern Virginia may not work in Southern Virginia. What works in Staunton may not work in Richmond.

Workforce partnerships are collaboration between employers within the same industry, educators, government, philanthropy, non-profit, and community organizations that focus on key issues related to the target industry in their region.

Partnerships are business-driven, locally led, and are empowered to make decisions and act based on the unique needs of their community.

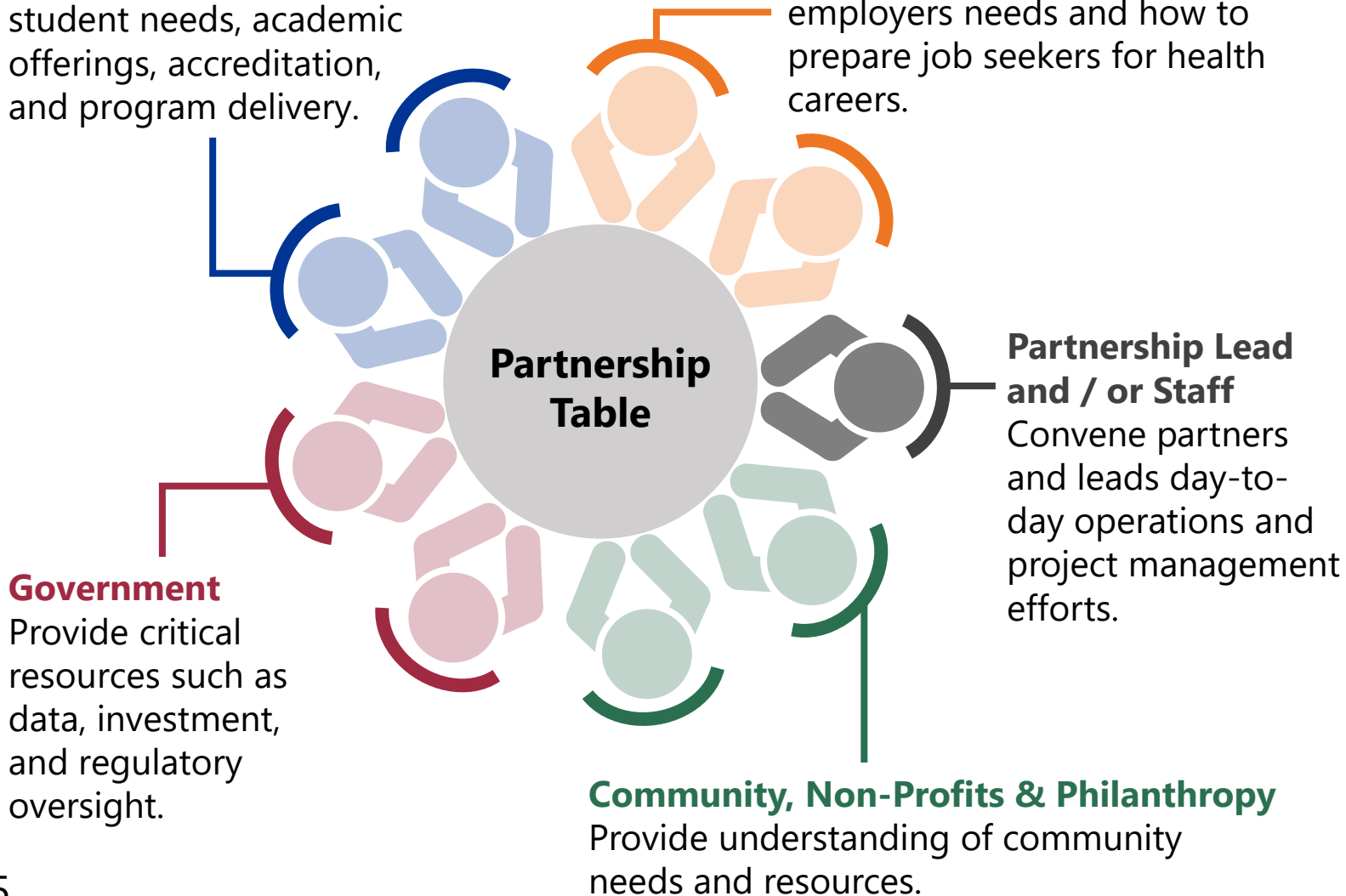They act as a coordinating body to address industry workforce needs.

Who comes together in a partnership model?

Educators
Provide understanding of student needs, academic offerings, accreditation, and program delivery.

Employers
Deliver understanding of employers needs and how to prepare job seekers for health careers.

Partnership Lead and / or Staff
Convene partners and leads day-to-day operations and project management efforts.

Partnership Table

Government
Provide critical resources such as data, investment, and regulatory oversight.

Community, Non-Profits & Philanthropy
Provide understanding of community needs and resources.

Guiding Principle #2:
Make it a win-win-win

What is in it for my organization? For the team to thrive, there needs to be a clear value-add for each organization.

For...

- *Employers,* the partnership can increase their access to needed skills and individuals, improving operations and bottom line. Provides single table at which to work with public entities

- *Job seekers,* the partnership can provide clearer pathways to in-demand careers in their community

- *Educators,* the partnership can provide partners to help equip students for work

- *The community,* the partnership can improve access to health services

What can partnerships achieve together?

As local/regional teams, partnerships will have different focus areas by design. They most successfully achieve the following:

1 Shape education and training programs to meet industry needs

2 Increase outreach and exposure to students and job seekers

3 Improve utilization of resources and build education and training capacity

4 Communicate policy & regulatory challenges and shape solutions

Guiding Principle #3:
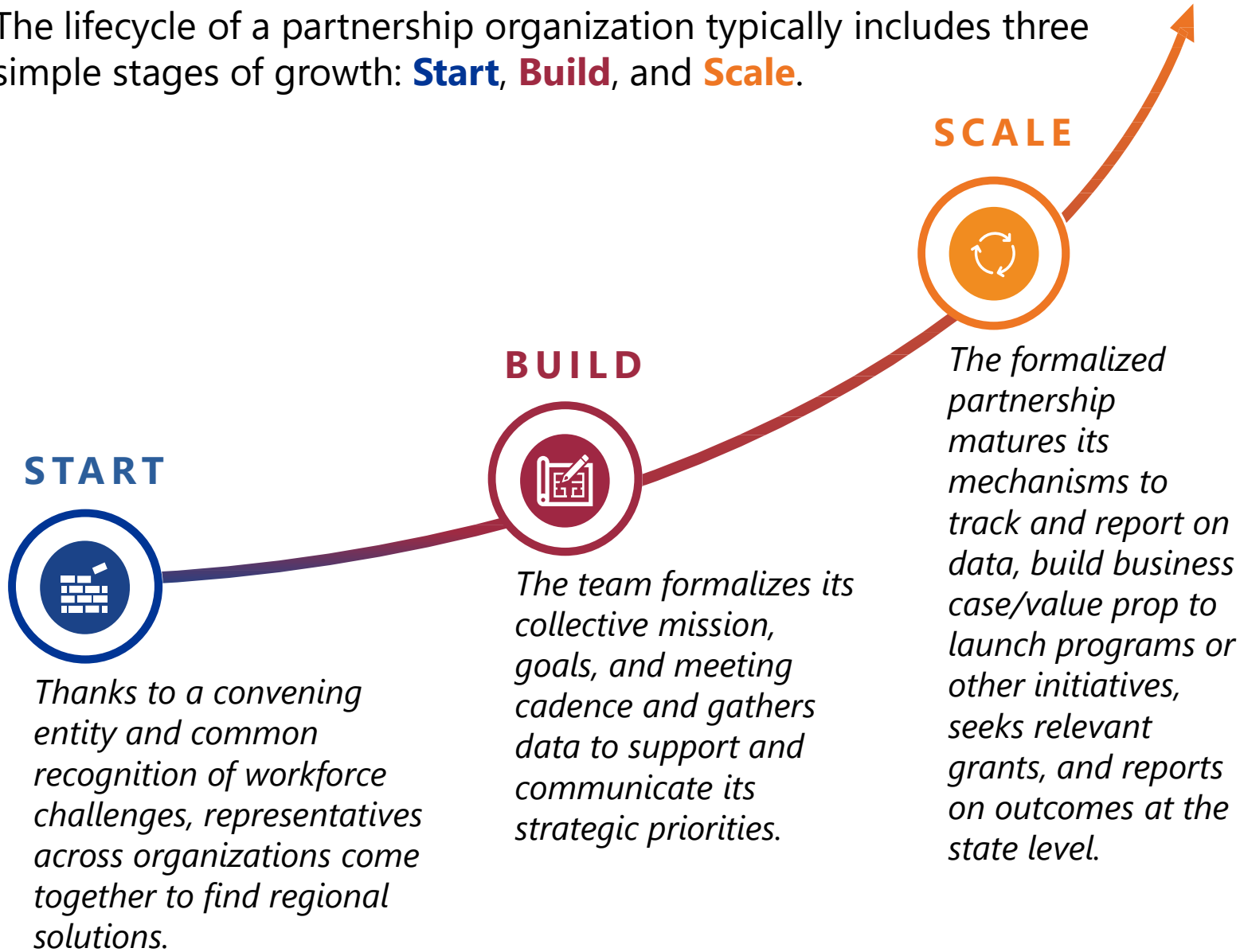**Small wins can make a big impact**

It's about outcomes, not process or ownership.

Partnership models should focus on what they are able to achieve today and recognize that workforce efforts are iterative and will improve over time as the partnership evolves.

Working together to coordinate and complement efforts will break down silos, reduce duplication, and improve outcomes.

6

How do partnerships evolve?

The lifecycle of a partnership organization typically includes three simple stages of growth: **Start**, **Build**, and **Scale**.

SCALE

BUILD

START

Thanks to a convening entity and common recognition of workforce challenges, representatives across organizations come together to find regional solutions.

The team formalizes its collective mission, goals, and meeting cadence and gathers data to support and communicate its strategic priorities.

The formalized partnership matures its mechanisms to track and report on data, build business case/value prop to launch programs or other initiatives, seeks relevant grants, and reports on outcomes at the state level.

7

Guiding Principle #4:
Organic growth is good

It's hard to put forth exactly one recipe for what makes a partnership "successful" – and that's okay.

The Blue Ridge Partnership for Health Science Careers was established in 2019 by a core group of dedicated employers, educators, and community leaders.

Today, the partnership engages ~75 leaders across a variety of committees aligned to their strategic goals focused on academic planning, student engagement, advancing IT and workforce analytics, and others.

Learn More: BRPHSC_WhoWeAre_Flyer.pdf (virginiahealthcareers.org)

Blue Ridge Partnership
for Health Science Careers

Important to remember: The diversity of our Commonwealth

Partnership models will reflect the nuances of their local communities and regional economies. Some factors to consider are...

Rural or Urban

Rural, urban, and suburban communities have different resources and challenges.

Employer Landscape

Employer needs vary and the types of health science employers will vary by region.

Education & Training Assets

Each community will have unique education & training resources and will offer different programs region-to-region.

Population Demographics

Who are the community members that would benefit from workforce programs, where do they receive information, and what are their needs?

Geographic Size & Infrastructure

Ability to access resources can be a challenge for large regions with widely distributed resources.

Guiding Principle #5:
It isn't rocket science

At the end of the day, a "partnership" is truly that – just a team working together with a common vision.

Project Quest was started in 1992 in San Antonio, TX by a partnership of employers, education institutions, and community partners focused on upskilling residents for in-demand healthcare careers. In 2023, Project Quest:

- Worked with nearly **2,400 individuals**

- Program graduates realized a **200% wage increase**, moving from an average wage of $15,553 pre-program to $46,6482 post-program

8

What indicates "success" for a partnership?

It can be hard to define progress or success for a partnership or its discrete programs. Some indicators and long-term outcomes include:

EARLY PROGRESS INDICATORS
Measuring priorities and the partnership as an organization

Diversity of organizations involved in the partnership & continued engagement over time

Impact of priority programs/initiatives launched by partnership

Progress towards strategic goals as articulated by partnership

EXPECTED ONGOING OUTCOMES
Measuring the partnership's impact on the region & industry

Job placements increase in critical workforce segments

Retention rates increase across key roles for every employer

Vacancies decrease in critical workforce segments

Accessibility of meaningful careers increases for jobseekers

9 Additional guidance on metrics and measurement can be found in the roadmap Build section, on page 20.

Guiding Principle #6:
Data informs everything

George Mason University Center for Health Workforce supports multiple GO Virginia Regions in leveraging data to inform regional decision making:

- Providing data to understand labor demand and workforce gaps

- Establishing processes to track and validate multiple data sources, with ability to collect deidentified employer data

- Supporting partnership strategy development and priority setting of partnership activities

- Interpreting data and conducting analysis to measure partnership impact

GM GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY®

Navigating this roadmap to meet you where you are today

This roadmap organizes helpful detail and reference material on activities that occur the three stages of growth: **Start**, **Build**, and **Scale**.
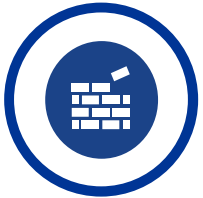
SCALE
Grow sustainably

BUILD
Increase impact

START
Get organized

What do these icons mean?

Refer to the colored icons at the top right corner of each page to let you know where you are in the lifecycle of the organization:

START

BUILD

SCALE

Develop programs and initiatives aligned to goals

Socialize your story

Build more sophisticated business cases for investment

Refine, evolve, and continually improve processes

Build consensus around potential priorities

Create a simple action plan to maintain momentum

Formalize financial processes

Align and formalize roles and responsibilities

Identify resources in the region

Formalize the strategic plan

Host the team's first meeting

Engage and enlist the team

Set SMART goals prioritized by workforce needs

Explore multiple funding avenues
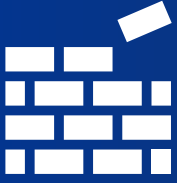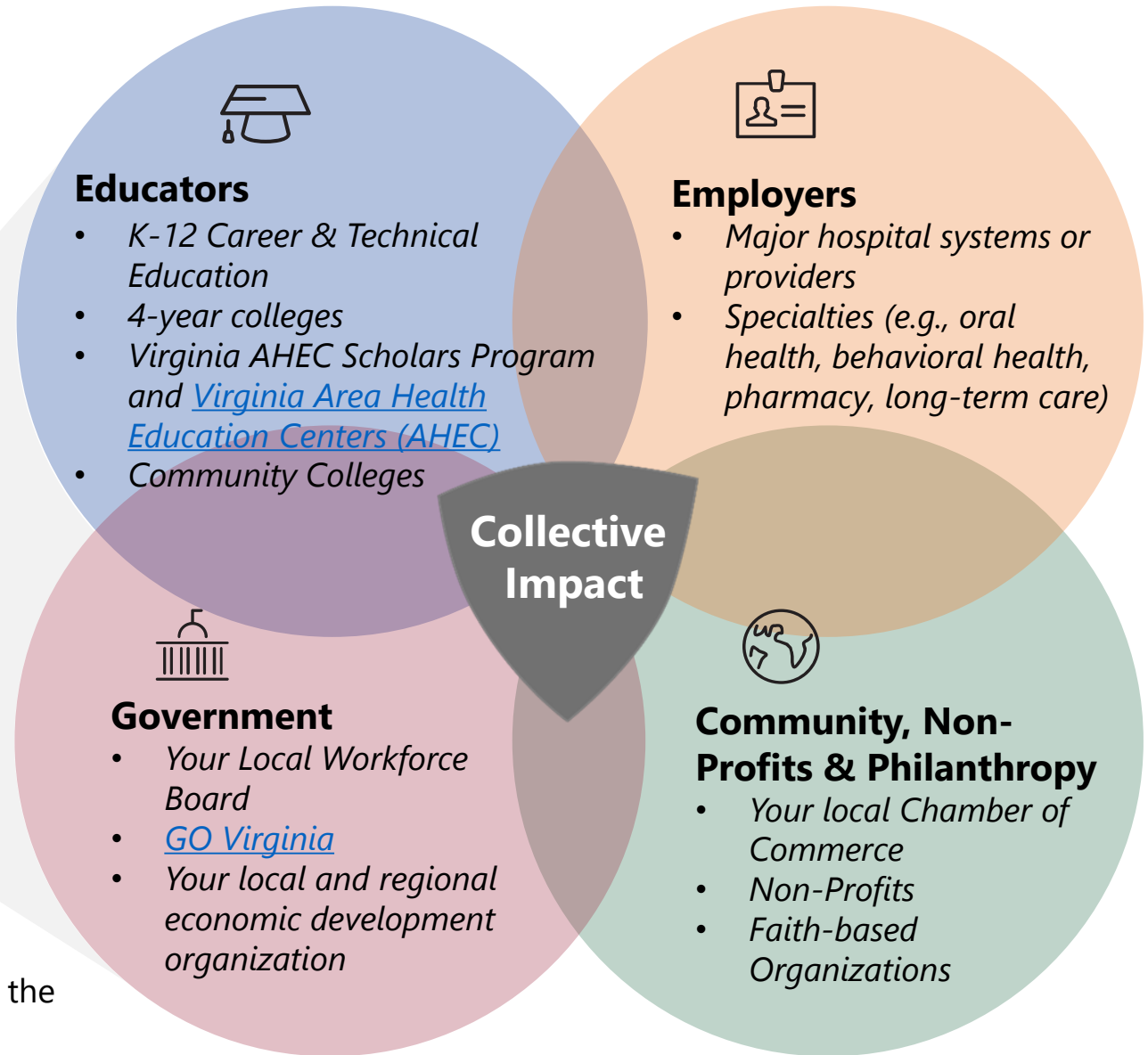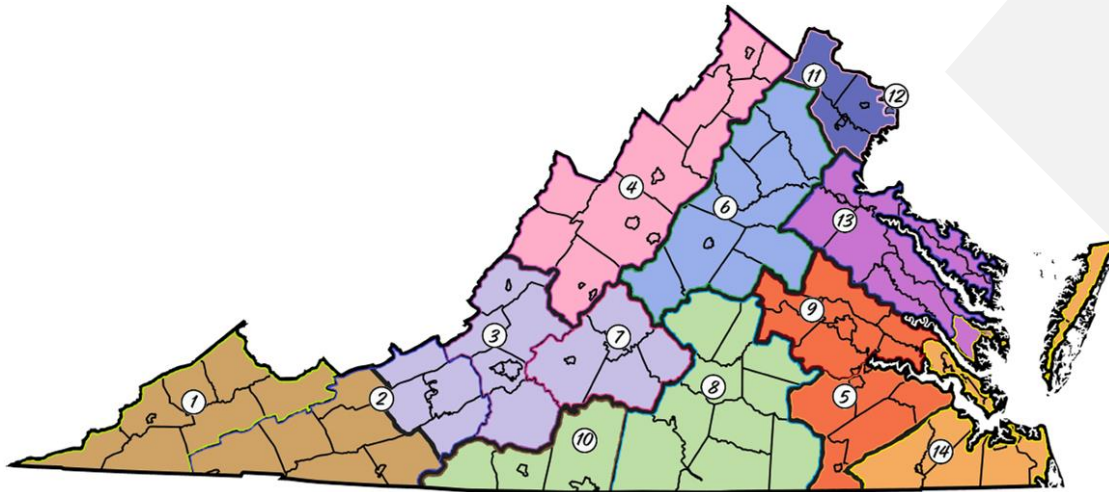
10

Start

This section explains how the group initially forms and grows from the perspective of the initial convener, including the process of recruiting partners and developing a shared understanding of workforce needs and priorities from the perspective of the employers.

Identify resources in the region

Your workforce ecosystem is complex and includes a variety of players and stakeholders, each with their own roles and goals. **Recognizing existing efforts** and how you can amplify them while addressing unresolved gaps will help your team be seen as a contributor and collaborator rather than competitor.

Educators
- *K-12 Career & Technical Education*
- *4-year colleges*
- *Virginia AHEC Scholars Program and Virginia Area Health Education Centers (AHEC)*
- *Community Colleges*

Employers
- *Major hospital systems or providers*
- *Specialties (e.g., oral health, behavioral health, pharmacy, long-term care)*

Collective Impact

Government
- *Your Local Workforce Board*
- *GO Virginia*
- *Your local and regional economic development organization*

Community, Non-Profits & Philanthropy
- *Your local Chamber of Commerce*
- *Non-Profits*
- *Faith-based Organizations*

Additional detail, points of contact and resources can be found in the roadmap Appendix: Start section, beginning on page 5.

Engage and enlist your team

As you identify potential partners, consider tailoring your message according to what drives them.

For...	Key Messages *How will engaging in this group help them?*
Employers	Engaging in this group will provide access to talent and better align their needs to training and education programs in the community. *What if you're engaging employers who are competing for talent?* Employers can benefit from working together in ways they cannot achieve alone. Though all needing talent, everyone benefits from growing the talent pool.
Educators	Engaging in this group will provide access to resources to build education training capacity and improve outreach and job placement for students.
Community, Non-Profits, & Philanthropy	Engaging in this group will align job seekers with well-suited jobs in their community and improve access to healthcare.

Delivering the Message

You can use and modify the introductory pages of this roadmap to explain what a partnership looks like for your area and why it's important to come together to solve health sciences workforce challenges.
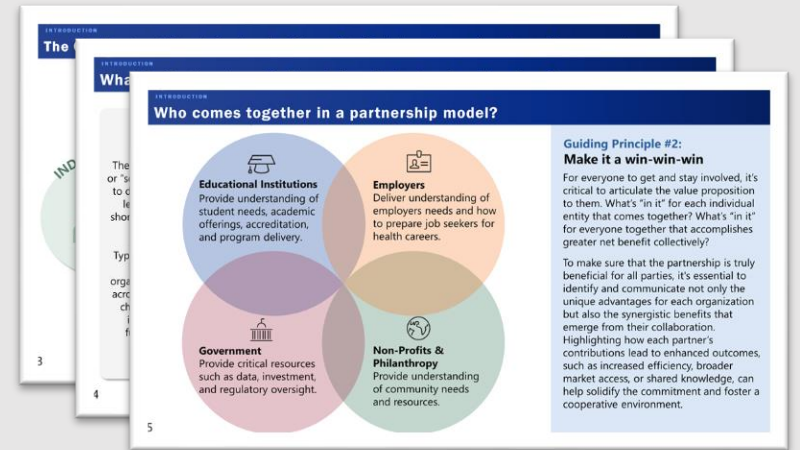
Additional resources are available in the roadmap Appendix: Start section, beginning on slide 4.

Host the team's first meeting

The first meeting sets the foundation for mutual understanding and alignment of initial priorities.

KEY MEETING OBJECTIVES

- Introduce **leaders who have stepped up** to catalyze, coordinate, and champion the partnership team

- Understand **who is in the room**

- Articulate **local health workforce challenges** and develop shared understanding

- Identify **initial priorities and action items**

- Document **action owners** and assign them to a timeline

- Confirm the **next meeting date/time** or at least next steps for scheduling the next meeting

Publicly Available Data

To help inform partnership priorities, the following sources can help a group make data informed decisions:

George Mason University Center for Health Workforce

- Employer Demand Dashboards and data organized by GO Virginia Regions
- Workforce Supply Dashboards
- Virginia Regional Health Workforce Analysis by GO Virginia Regions

Virginia Office of Education Economics

- Virginia High Demand Occupations Dashboard, which can be filtered by 'Health Science' and by Local Workforce Development Area

Additional data resources can be found in the Appendix: Build section, on page 12.

Build consensus around potential priorities

A simple approach like completing the table below, either after the first meeting or over the course of a few meetings, can help organize perspectives and prioritize potential actions.

	Entry-Level *(List roles to prioritize impact on, i.e., X-ray tech, dental assistant, pharm tech, CNA)*	**Mid-Level** *(List roles to prioritize impact on)*	**Top of License** *(List roles to prioritize impact on)*
Train *What can help us increase the # of prepared individuals entering the healthcare workforce within 5 years?*	• List ideas	• List ideas	• List ideas
Recruit *What can help us get more individuals entering the healthcare workforce or moving to the area to take open healthcare jobs within the next 2 years or less?*	• List ideas	• List ideas	• List ideas
Retain *What can help us keep individuals where they are currently employed in healthcare careers?*	• List ideas	• List ideas	• List ideas

15

Create a simple action plan to maintain momentum

Creating a simple and tactical action plan can support accountability, catalyze momentum, and drive progress towards the initial priorities the group identified. A simple but effective action plan outlines specific tasks, assigns responsibilities, and sets deadlines. **It is critical to continually refer back to the action plan as an anchor and guide for each recurring meeting of the group.**

Example Action Plan format:

Meeting Date MM/DD/YYYY Action Items	Action Owner(s)	Target Completion Date
Example: Long term care facility to schedule meeting with community college leader about allowing employees to serve as adjunct instructors at community college to increase nursing program capacity.	Jane Smith	9/15/2024

Action Planning

GO Virginia Region 9 held a partnership kick off meeting that included leaders from Culpeper Public Schools, University of Virginia (UVA) Community Health, and Germanna Community College. The kick-off resulted in an Action Plan capturing immediate action items, which included:

- Culpeper Public School Board approved a Medical Terminology course, planning for Anatomy and Physiology courses, and exploration of dual-enrollment opportunities with Germanna Community College.
- Professional job shadowing for students to learn about EMT and OBGYN nursing opportunities was scheduled within 60 days of kick-off meeting.
- Partners sought grant funds to hire a partnership coordinator.

Monthly meetings maintain progress and more groups have joined the partnership.

16

Build

This section explains how the group becomes a true partnership – formalizing itself by establishing an organizational structure, governance, a strategic plan, and roles and responsibilities – and begins to tackle bigger challenges by designing and implementing formal programs, initiatives, and efforts with defined goals, metrics, and funding sources.

Move forward: *When do you know you've hit this stage?*

YOUR STRATEGY

Has the group addressed the obvious and easy-to-tackle items in the initial action plan? Are members asking "what's next" and looking for ways to get or stay involved?

If yes, the group may need to invest in creating a strategic plan of prioritized goals and time-bound actions and orient teams towards those actions in a working group or committee structure.

To accomplish this effectively, you may need a facilitator or dedicated time for strategic planning.

YOUR IMPACT

Are you ready to measure discrete/concrete impact to build buy-in from outside organizations?

If yes, the group should focus on aligning activities to concrete metrics or measures, setting targets, and evaluating impact over time.

This may require workforce data expertise or support from outside organizations.

YOUR RESOURCES

Does the team need additional resources (financial, people, processes, other) to meet stated goals?

If yes, the group may need to consider steps toward seeking outside funds. This may include working with a fiscal sponsor or establishing a legal entity to create formal financial processes.

It is recommended to work with a financial professional on these activities.

Formalize the strategic plan

Once the team is ready to build a formal strategic plan, consider a day-long strategy session to flesh it out.

PRE-WORK

1. Create agenda for a half- or full-day meeting and socialize with key attendees in advance.

2. Request that each attendee documents key challenges they see and supporting data informing the challenge (e.g., vacancy rates for key roles).

DAY OF

3. Facilitate planning meeting(s) to align on purpose, goals, and time-bound action items with leadership by key action owners.

4. Build teaming relationships amongst attendees for further trust and commitment to action items.

DAY AFTER

5. Define approach to project management to promote accountability on actions and measures.

6. Confirm how frequently the strategy will be revised and when a new strategic plan will be created again.

WHAT THE STRATEGIC PLAN SHOULD INCLUDE:

Mission & Vision

Mission answers the question of "Why do we exist?"

Vision answers the question of "Where do we want to go?"

Goals

Goals reflect what the partnership wants to achieve to meet their mission and vision.

Actions

Actions state the tactical next steps that will be completed by the partnership to ensure the strategy is successfully executed.

Indicators

Quantitative data to evaluate impact of actions (sometimes called KPIs).

19 Additional strategic plan guidance can be found in the Appendix: Build section, on pages 25-26.

Set SMART goals prioritized by workforce needs

SMART goals should start with the biggest workforce gaps the group has identified and align actions, milestones, and metrics to them.

- **Specific:** Specific goals tell everyone "What needs to be accomplished?" and "Who is responsible for it?"

- **Measurable:** Quantifying goals makes it possible to track progress and outcomes and know when you've reached the finish line.

- **Achievable:** If there aren't clear operational actions that can be taken to achieve the goal, the group may need to focus on other priorities.

- **Relevant:** Goals need to keep the big picture at the forefront. How does this goal contribute to the broader goals of supporting the health sciences workforce?

- **Time-Bound:** The group needs to be on the same page about when the goal should be reached and hold each other accountable to key milestones and deadlines.

1
Goal
Over the next 2 years, increase number of Registered Nurse graduates in our area by 20%

2
Actions
(1 of 3) Launch dual-employment program between local hospital and schools to increase instructors

3
Progress Indicator
Number of students enrolled in Registered Nurse Program

4
Outcome Indicator
Number of Virginia-based Registered Nurse positions filled

20

Measuring progress at this stage

At this point, the group may have access to some workforce data to inform strategic planning and prioritization efforts but may be relying on self-reported data to measure performance such as:

- **Progress on Action Items:** Tracks the completion rate of tasks against planned timelines

- **Establishment of Key Processes:** Tracks progress toward operating key processes (e.g., creation of operational financial processes)

These metrics provide an initial view of a project's progress and are essential for guiding it toward successful outcomes in the beginning stages.

1. How to Formulate a Successful Business Strategy (hbs.edu)
2. How to write SMART goals (with examples) (atlassian.com)

Develop programs and initiatives in alignment with goals *(1 of 2)*

Like the example of the dual-employment program on page 20, a partnership team may design and launch programs or initiatives to meet specific regional needs around **talent attraction, development, hiring, and retention.**

Career Awareness & Pathways

Example: The Blue Ridge Partnership for Health Science Careers has developed a student ambassador program with students from various education programs to share their stories about completing health science certificates.

Career Pathways

Example: To make sure local high schools and educational institutions had the correct information for students looking to enter health science careers, the Blue Ridge Partnership developed a Career Pathway Visual to distribute online and to school counselors. These career pathway visuals outlined the ways to enter a career, as well as local schools and certificate programs for that career. Guidance on developing career pathways can be found in the Appendix: Scale section, on pages 65 – 69.

Education & Training

Example: As part of their curriculum and academic work, the Blue Ridge Partnership for Health Science Careers developed a core curriculum that high schools and pre-collegiate programs could offer to allow for transfer credits into health science careers.

Supportive Services

Many states have found success in implementing wrap-around services for students and employees to support them. Services like childcare, transportation, housing support, and others can often improve retention in careers and be especially crucial during emergencies such as a loss of transportation.

Develop programs and initiatives in alignment with goals *(2 of 2)*

It may be helpful to consider new programs you launch in the context of Virginia's broader workforce development ecosystem and the dual customers it connects – individuals seeking meaningful, family-sustaining careers and employers seeking the skills and talent they need. A number of programs and services are needed, together, to support workforce needs.

Explore multiple funding avenues

	EMPLOYERS & PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS	PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATIONS	FEDERAL & STATE GOVERNMENT
DESCRIPTION	Workforce partnerships have solicited funding from regional employers and partnership members to support partnership operations. Engaging organizations in the regional partnership could be an initial step before seeking competitive grants.	Philanthropic organizations have demonstrated a commitment to funding regional workforce partnerships.	Federal government organizations such as the U.S. Department of Labor and Commonwealth of Virginia may offer grants or appropriate funding for workforce partnerships.
EXAMPLES	• Requesting partners pay a membership due or provide initial seed funding • Employer grant-making organizations or employer-associated non-profit organizations to provide funding. • Partners making commitment to match funds raised from outside sources	• Claude Moore • Virginia Health Care Foundation • Virginia Community Capital • Virginia Community Healthcare Association	• National Institutes of Health • Health Resources and Services Administration • U.S. Department of Labor • GO Virginia • Virginia Department of Labor • Virginia Department of Health • Virginia Department of Education • Virginia Community College System • Local Workforce Development Boards

Align and formalize roles and responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities for team members should align to the type of prioritized actions that the group has identified.

INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP ACTION?

Is this action item assigned to an individual or a group? If a group is required, a subset of the group may form a working group, task force, or formalized committee to work through the action item.

SHORT OR LONG TERM?

Is this a short-term or a long-term action? (Or, is it high or low level of effort?) If this is a long-term action, consider breaking it down into multiple short-term actions.

ONE-TIME OR ONGOING NEED?

Ongoing needs, such as financial operations, may be recurring and could have a dedicated team to support. Some partnerships refer to these groups as 'standing committees.'

24

More structure details can be found in the Appendix: Build section, on page 31.

Case Study: Blue Ridge Partnership Organizational Structure

The Blue Ridge Partnership for Health Science Careers has developed several standing committees focused on high-priority topics. Examples include:

- Academic Planning
- Join Communications
- Talent Pathways
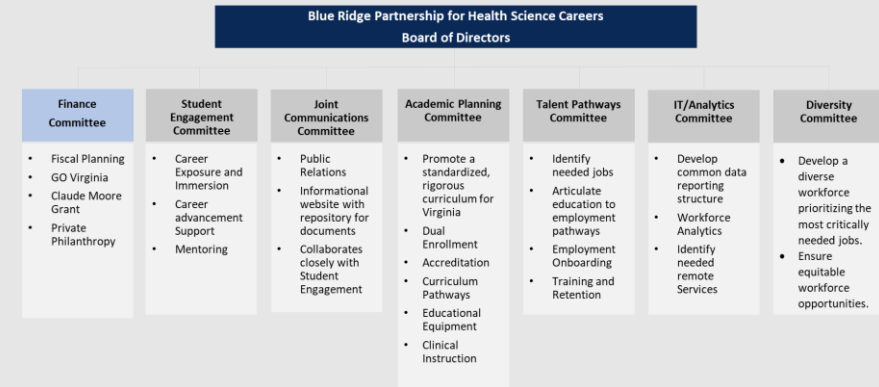
Used with permission from the Blue Ridge Partnership for Health Science Careers.

Formalize financial processes *(1 of 2)*

A first question for the partnership team to consider: Is there a neutral non-profit that organizations will trust with operational needs?

Yes: Operate with Fiscal Sponsor

Workforce partnerships may operate as a project within an existing non-profit entity that provides a legal entity and financial processes.

Why use a fiscal sponsor?

- Offers support when funds are too limited to support accounting needs
- Provides a neutral organization tasked with financial operations

No: Establish a Legal Entity

Workforce partnerships may need to create a legal entity such as a nonprofit to be able to take in funds and distribute those funds accordingly.

Why create a separate legal entity?

- Offers full control over finances for the organization
- Provides more direct access to funds for the organization's use

More financial process details can be found in the Appendix: Build section, on pages 27-30.

Next Steps to Establishing Financial Processes:

1. **Opening a Bank Account:** Partnerships will likely open bank accounts regardless if they operate with fiscal sponsor or establish a legal entity.

2. **Establishing Financial Controls:** Establishing a process for requesting and approving fund distribution will enable the partnership to maintain internal controls to manage finances. Note, Fiscal Sponsors will likely have an established financial process to have funds distributed to the partnership.

3. **Separation of Duties:** It is recommended that partnerships create a separation of duties, meaning the approvers do not transact funds. An independent accounting team should be engaged to oversee financial duties and compliance if establishing a legal entity.

Formalize financial processes *(2 of 2)*

Part of reflecting on the funding resources needed is deciding how to administer them.

Do you need to establish a legal entity?

Yes

Is there a trusted organization in your community that can act as a fiscal sponsor?

Yes

No

Engage Fiscal Sponsor

- Provides existing legal structure and financial processes
- Enables faster process than establishing new legal entity

Create New Legal Entity

- Offers full control over finances for the organization
- Provides more direct access to funds for the organizations use

Establish Financial Controls

Financial controls simply mean a process for raising funds, prioritizing/approving spending, and distributing funds. If you have made it this far, it is *highly recommended* you work with financial profession who can guide you through sound financial management.

26

Scale

This section explains how the partnership scales and sustains itself, including writing more sophisticated business cases for longer-term initiatives and programs, communicating its success story, and refining, evolving, and continuously improving the formalized organization.

Socialize your story *(1 of 2)*

As initial programs & initiatives gain traction, capturing the "impact story" and communicating it broadly will help the maturing organization gain visibility, legitimacy, and additional interest from partners. Example may include:

Student, Job Seeker, and Employer Testimonials	Economic & Regional Impact	The Partnership Journey
A qualitative and emotional appeal through individual or single organizations success	Clearly articulated impact to inform investment, policy, and ongoing systematic change	Brings the audience along for the partnership activities to develop a sense of connection

CONSIDER COMMUNICATING YOUR STORY VIA…

Executive Summaries provide key information in a digestible format.

Infographics condense information into visually appealing and easily shared content.

Flyers can be strategically placed in congregate areas for maximum exposure.

Editorial coverage may reach greater audience and provide credibility.

Short- and long-form **videos** can provide engaging content in nearly all virtual marketing channels.

Partnership Toolkits can empower community leaders to spread messaging and awareness.

Using powerful, simple messaging to communicate value up front will help to sustain the coalition of partnership members and attract additional interest and involvement.

BEST PRACTICES TO CONSIDER

Know your key community members
Consider all the stakeholder groups that **need to be engaged.** What do they need to know?

Identify effective messengers
Purposefully assign messengers to various stakeholders. Consider **who the recipients will most likely listen and respond to** and who can best distribute the information.

Understand where to reach target audiences
What is the most **digestible tool** for your audience? (e.g., executive summary, infographic, videos, microsite).

Leveraging existing channels via local workforce development areas

Virginia's workforce development system employs industry-standard communication best practices to effectively engage with their target audiences in their existing environments.

- **New River | Mount Rogers Work Talk Podcast:** Engages with audiences directly within podcast applications, facilitating discussions on topics related to workforce development

- **Hampton Roads Regional Dashboard:** Delivers demographic and workforce data in an accessible and user-friendly format

29

Scaling requires a more significant effort, and a *business case* that includes your "who," "what," "when," "where," "why," "how", and "why not" can give confidence to grant makers or other entities investing in your efforts.

What is a Business Case?

A business case outlines the justification for the initiation of a program or initiative. It presents a clear case, supported by evidence and analysis, for the idea. The primary purpose is to weigh the potential benefits against the costs and risks, providing decision-makers with the information needed to approve, modify, or reject proposed initiatives. A well-crafted business case clarifies objectives, aligns strategic goals with resources, and forecasts the potential return on investment.

Sample Components of a Business Case

The "Why": A problem statement that clearly defines the issue or opportunity that the project aims to address

The "What": A solution and justification that details the proposed solution and provides a rationale for its selection over other alternatives

The Financial Analysis: Presents a detailed financial projection including cost, benefits, and ROI

The "How," "When," and "Where": An implementation plan that outlines the steps, timeline, and resources required to successfully execute the project

The "Why Not": A risk assessment that identifies potential risks and outlines mitigation strategies to manage them effectively

Build more sophisticated business cases for investment *(2 of 2)*

1 — **Identify the Problem**

- **Evaluate workforce data:** Analyze current data to determine areas for improvement
- **Leverage qualitative insights:** Validate challenges with employers and educators
- **Craft a specific problem statement:** Formulate a concise and clear problem statement that encapsulates the core issues that partners agree on

2 — **Articulate the Solution**

- **Propose targeted strategies:** Articulate focused, actionable strategies that directly address the identified issues
- **Detail solution benefits:** Highlight the key advantages and positive outcomes expected from implementing the proposed solution

3 — **Identify Necessary Resources**

- **Determine financial resource needs:** Determine costs and funding sources to determine feasibility
- **Evaluate staffing demands:** Analyze human resource requirements
- **Assess infrastructure and technology needs:** Review the existing infrastructure and/or technology to determine the necessary resources to be successful

4 — **Determine the Expected Outcome**

- **Set clear metrics for success:** Establish quantifiable metrics to measure impact
- **Develop an evaluation framework:** Create a structured framework to systematically assess the performance and outcomes of the solution against the set metrics and goals

31

Refine, evolve, and continuously improve processes

It is not a one-time process to set goals and take actions — teams should monitor outcomes to inform adjustments to accelerate project success and keep partners agile in addressing changing workforce needs.

PERIODICALLY REVIEW WHAT'S BEEN ACHIEVED

- Institute a regular review cadence around the strategic plan and the partnership's SMART goals. What has not been achieved? Are there timeline delays or bigger issues? What is the cause of delays in any areas – and what is the cause of success in others?

BE OPEN ABOUT WHAT COULD BE BETTER

- Regularly solicit feedback from members and externally on how the partnership is working together and meeting its goals. Have any roadblocks been encountered? Are there any dependencies or specific over-dependencies on certain people, processes, programs, etc.?

REVITALIZE TEAMS, GOALS, AND EFFORTS

- Pay attention to any specific working groups or committees that are not achieving their goals and ask why. Ensure that the efforts of each team member are continually connected to the broader goal and efforts. Be open to bringing in new team members or making connections to other efforts to continue evolving the partnership's operating model and impact.

Over time, collective efforts can demonstrate real impact

"A rising tide lifts all boats." Collective impact means positive outcomes for each individual contributor – and most importantly, for the community.

BETTER JOBS.
VIBRANT ECONOMIES.
HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES –
TOGETHER.

Resources for additional information:

Virginia Works
https://virginiaworks.gov/

GO Virginia
https://govirginia.org/

Local Workforce Boards
https://virginiacareerworks.com/local-workforce-boards/

Claude Moore
https://claudemoorefoundation.org/

Blue Ridge Partnership for Health Science Careers
https://virginiahealthcareers.org/

Community Colleges
https://www.vccs.edu/

Additional resources can be found in the roadmap Appendix, from pages 2 - 62.