

# **VIRGINIA'S TALENT SOLUTIONS GUIDE**



**V.1**

**2026**

This catalog was proudly produced through partnership across many agencies serving Virginia's employers and workforce ecosystem.





A photograph of a man and a woman walking down a modern office hallway. The man is on the left, wearing a blue plaid blazer, a white shirt, a patterned tie, and light-colored trousers. The woman is on the right, wearing a light blue blazer, a white shirt, and dark trousers. They are both smiling and looking towards the right. The hallway has a white ceiling with recessed lighting and a light-colored floor. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter.

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# INTRODUCTION

Whether you're a startup looking to hire your first employees, an established company seeking to upskill your workforce, or a business working to reduce turnover, Virginia offers a comprehensive suite of talent solutions designed to support your success at every stage— and at no cost to you.

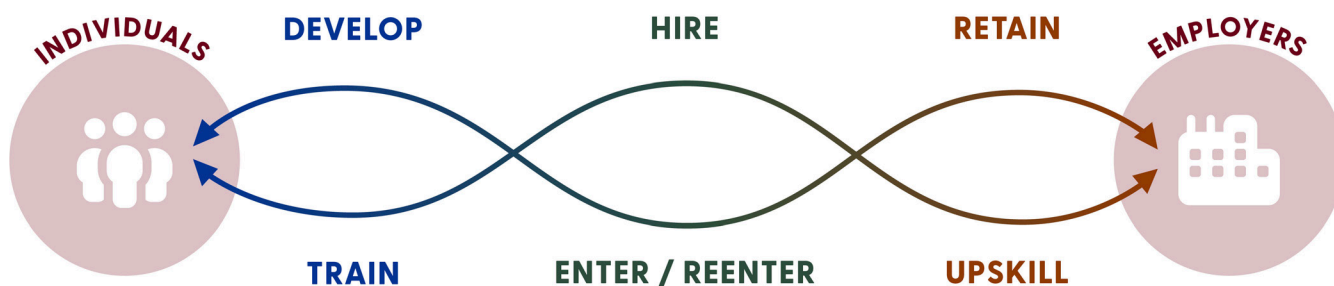
This catalog highlights Virginia's talent services within three core aspects of your talent lifecycle: **Hire, Develop, and Retain**—plus essential bonus tools to help you make informed and data-driven decisions for your workforce.

Virginia's 4.5 million-strong workforce is one of the Commonwealth's greatest assets—highly skilled, diverse, and ready to meet the demands of a rapidly changing economy. With skills across every sector and untapped talent pools of Virginia offers employers a workforce that serves as the foundation for growth, innovation, and long-term success.



## How to Get Started

- 1. Identify Your Needs:** Review the programs and identify which align with your current business challenges and goals.
- 2. Plan Ahead:** Many programs require application and approval. Contact designated POCs early in your planning process.
- 3. Leverage Multiple Programs:** Businesses may benefit from combining several programs. Your Virginia Works representative can help you develop an integrated talent strategy.
- 4. Stay Connected:** Joining Virginia business networks and maintaining relationships with workforce development professionals will help you stay informed about new programs and opportunities.







## **PART 1: PLAN**

# IDENTIFYING YOUR TALENT NEEDS

*“What types of skills and workforce are available to fit the talent needs of my business?”*

*“How much should I pay new employees to be competitive in my area?”*

*“What is the future projected growth of my industry across the Commonwealth?”*

## Virginia’s Labor Market Data Resources

Virginia’s labor market teams offer a wide range of data and insights to support your business at each stage of planning:

- **Workforce Planning & Forecasting:** Leverage occupational projections and current employment trends to anticipate future staffing needs, identify potential skill shortages, and plan training investments. The data helps you stay ahead of labor market changes rather than reacting to them.
- **Competitive Intelligence:** Benchmark your compensation packages against regional and industry standards using OEWS data. Understanding local wage premiums and industry standards helps you attract and retain talent while managing labor costs effectively.
- **Location & Expansion Decisions:** Evaluate different Virginia regions using comprehensive economic indicators, labor force characteristics, and industry concentration data. Identify the best facilities based on workforce availability and economic conditions.
- **Grant Writing & Economic Development:** Strengthen funding applications and economic development proposals with authoritative labor market data. Virginia’s Labor Market Information resources provide the statistical foundation needed for compelling business cases and grant applications.
- **Skills Gap Analysis:** Compare current workforce capabilities with projected industry needs to identify training and development priorities. Use this intelligence to partner effectively with educational institutions and training providers.



# IDENTIFYING YOUR TALENT NEEDS



## How we can help:

- **Virginia Works' - Economic Information & Analytics (EIA)** Our EIA team delivers comprehensive labor market intelligence through state-wide employment data collection, analysis, and publications, serving as your one-stop resource for making data-driven business decisions.
- **The Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE)** offers a unified source of analysis on talent creation and development, providing actionable insights for policy, education, and workforce implementation. VOEE supports institutions of higher education, workforce partners, and economic development agencies with research and analytics to guide strategic decision-making.

## 1. Start with your industry

Focus on data most relevant to your targeted industry sector employment trends and challenges, occupational projections for your key roles, and wage data for positions you're hiring.

- Comprehensive employment and wage data is available by industry and geographic area, providing the most complete picture of local labor markets.
- Detailed wage data is available by occupation and geographic area, including Virginia Works' enhanced data products that provide additional insights beyond standard federal reporting. Use this for competitive salary analysis, budgeting, and recruitment planning.

## 2. Incorporate Labor Market Information (LMI) data for annual planning

Use LMI data to guide your annual planning, budget development, and strategic decision making.

- Occupational growth projections are available for both long-term (2022-2032) and short-term (2023-2025) to identify emerging opportunities and potential labor shortages in your industry. Use projections to validate expansion plans and workforce development investments.
- Track employment trends, wage inflation, and industry projections to anticipate changes before they impact operations.

## 3. Monitor key labor market indicators regularly

Stay informed about trends that impact your business by reviewing essential labor market indicators. This helps with timing expansion decisions and understanding seasonal employment patterns.

- Track monthly employment and earnings data by industry sector to identify hiring trends and gauge economic momentum in your market area.



## Key Publications & Reports

- **Virginia Occupational Career Resource Guide:** Comprehensive resource providing information on career choices, education requirements, job application processes, and career planning.
- **Labor Market Dashboard:** Labor Market Dashboard available on [virginiaworks.gov](https://virginiaworks.gov) business environment.
- **Statewide Economic Analysis Report:** Annual economic report on Virginia's labor market with industry insights and workforce demographics.



<https://virginiaworks.gov>



# SPOTLIGHT: CAREER PATHING AND WORKFORCE PLANNING 101

## What is Career Pathing?

Career pathing is the strategic process of mapping potential advancement routes within your organization, helping employees visualize their professional growth while aligning individual aspirations with business objectives. It creates clear progressions from entry-level positions to senior roles across different functions and departments.

## What is Workforce Planning?

Workforce planning is the systematic process of analyzing current workforce capabilities, forecasting future talent needs, and developing strategies to bridge gaps. It ensures your organization has the right people with the right skills in the right roles at the right time to achieve business goals.

## Why Both Matter

These interconnected practices drive employee engagement, reduce turnover costs, improve succession planning, and create a more agile organization. Companies with structured career paths see 40% lower turnover rates and 25% higher employee satisfaction scores!



### Key Components of Effective Career Pathing

- **Skills Mapping:** Document required competencies for each role level, creating clear development targets for employees to work toward.
- **Multiple Pathways:** Design lateral, vertical, and diagonal movement options including management tracks, individual contributor paths, and cross-functional opportunities.
- **Transparent Criteria:** Establish clear promotion requirements including performance metrics, experience thresholds, and skill demonstrations.
- **Regular Reviews:** Conduct quarterly career conversations to assess progress, adjust goals, and identify development opportunities.

### Key Components of Effective Workforce Planning

- **Current State Analysis:** Audit existing talent through skills assessments, performance data, and demographic analysis to understand your baseline capabilities.
- **Future Demand Forecasting:** Project workforce needs based on business strategy, market trends, growth plans, and anticipated retirements or departures.
- **Gap Identification:** Compare current capabilities against future requirements to pinpoint critical skill shortages and surplus areas.
- **Action Planning:** Develop targeted strategies including hiring, training, succession planning, and restructuring to address identified gaps.



## Implementation Best Practices

- **Leadership Alignment:** Ensure executives champion both initiatives and allocate necessary resources for successful implementation across all departments
- **Manager Training:** Equip supervisors with skills to conduct meaningful career conversations and support employee development planning.
- **Technology Integration:** Leverage HRIS systems and career development platforms to track progress and maintain comprehensive employee development records.
- **Communication Strategy:** Regularly share opportunities, success stories, and program updates to maintain visibility and employee engagement.

## Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- **One-Size-Fits-All Approach:** Different roles require different development timelines and pathways based on complexity and organizational needs.
- **Neglecting High Performers:** Ensure your best employees have clear advancement opportunities to prevent losing top talent to competitors.
- **Short-term Focus:** Balance immediate staffing needs with long-term strategic workforce development and succession planning.
- **Inadequate Feedback:** Provide regular updates on progress and transparent communication about available opportunities and requirements.

## Measuring Success

Track key metrics including internal promotion rates, time-to-fill positions, employee engagement scores, and retention rates among high-potential employees. Conduct annual surveys to assess program effectiveness and gather feedback for continuous improvement.

## Quick Start Actions

1. **Map Current Roles:** Document all positions and their interconnections within your organizational structure.
2. **Survey Employees:** Understand career aspirations and identify skill development interests across your workforce.
3. **Analyze Gaps:** Compare current capabilities with strategic business needs over the next 2-3 years.
4. **Pilot Program:** Launch career pathing in one department to test processes and gather learnings.
5. **Scale Gradually:** Expand successful practices organization-wide while incorporating lessons learned.

**Remember:** Effective career pathing and workforce planning require ongoing commitment and regular refinement as your business evolves and grows.





## **PART 2: DEVELOP**

**BUILDING SKILLS AND UNLOCKING POTENTIAL**

**Engaging in development of the future workforce pays off for you: it drives productivity, innovation, and employee satisfaction while positioning your business for future growth.**

Talent development must start before you plan to hire.

## On-the-Job Training (OJT)

- **What it is:** A reimbursement program that helps offset the cost of training for new hires while they learn essential job skills on-site.
- **How it works:** Employers receive financial reimbursement for training costs while new employees earn wages as they develop job-specific competencies.
- **Best for:** Businesses hiring for roles requiring specialized skills or when standard training programs don't meet your specific needs.
- **When to apply:** Before hiring new employees or when creating new positions.
- **Getting started:** Contact your local Virginia Works center to discuss eligibility requirements, reimbursement rates, and application procedures.

## FastForward

- **What it is:** A direct pipeline to graduates of Virginia Community College System's short-term, industry-focused training programs.
- **How it works:** Access a talent pool of candidates who have completed accelerated training in high-demand fields like healthcare, IT, advanced manufacturing, and skilled trades.
- **Best for:** Filling positions in growth industries where traditional degree requirements may not be necessary but specialized skills are essential.
- **When to apply:** When you have open positions in participating program areas.
- **Getting started:** Visit [FastForwardVA.org](https://FastForwardVA.org) to browse available graduates by program and region, or contact participating community colleges directly.



[FastForwardVA.org](https://FastForwardVA.org)



[www.vedp.org](https://www.vedp.org)

## Virginia Jobs Investment Program (VJIP) - Retraining Programs

- **What it is:** Financial assistance to offset the costs of retraining employees as your business evolves with new technologies or processes.
- **How it works:** Receive funding support to upskill existing workforce as they adapt to changing job requirements.
- **Best for:** Businesses implementing new technologies, expanding into new markets, or restructuring operations requiring different skill sets.
- **When to apply:** Before beginning training initiatives—applications must be submitted prior to training commencement.
- **Getting started:** Contact VEDP representatives early in your planning process to discuss qualification criteria and application requirements.

## DOD SkillBridge Program

- **What it is:** The DOD SkillBridge program connects transitioning military service members with industry partners for real-world job experience.
- **How it works:** Service members are granted up to six months of permissive duty-free of cost to the employer—to focus solely on training with approved industry partners. These industry partners offer real-world training and in-demand work experience while having the opportunity to evaluate the service member's suitability for future employment with their organization.
- **Best for:** Organizations hiring for roles where you want the flexibility to determine if the individual is going to be the right match for your organization after training.
- **When to apply:** Anytime.
- **Getting started:** If you are interested in becoming an industry partner, please visit [skillbridge.osd.mil](https://skillbridge.osd.mil) for more information.

## Success Story

Day & Zimmerman, located in Virginia Beach, works closely with the Virginia Community College System to develop career paths for students into their workforce. "We are getting great people," says Eugene Thompson, Fleet Director.



# BUILDING YOUR TALENT PIPELINE IN-HOUSE

## What is work-based learning?

- Examples include internships, registered apprenticeships, On-the-Job training funds, and fellowships.
- Risk-free talent evaluation through structured work experiences that benefit both candidates and employers.
- Candidates gain real-world experience and demonstrate their work ethic, while you evaluate potential future employees without long-term commitments.
- Allows businesses to “try before you hire” for those seeking to build a talent pipeline for future needs.
- Helpful before making permanent hiring decisions, especially for entry-level or career-change candidates.

## Internships VA

- **What it is:** Internships are a proven model for employers to gain early access to emerging talent, foster a culture of learning and innovation, and strengthen their long-term recruitment pipeline.
- **How it works:** VEDP offers technical assistance for all employers and financial support up to \$7,500 per intern for small and midsize businesses to develop or expand paid internship programs.
- **Best for:** For-profit and non-profit employers in all industries wanting to strengthen their talent pipeline through internships.
- **When to apply:** When planning to launch new internship programs and expand or improve existing internship programs.
- **Getting started:** Visit [vedp.org/incentive/internshipsva](http://vedp.org/incentive/internshipsva) for listing of Regional Internship Managers, helpful resources on finding interns and developing a quality program, available training, and matching grant details.



[vedp.org/incentive/internshipsva](http://vedp.org/incentive/internshipsva)

## Registered Apprenticeship (RA) Programs

- **What it is:** A proven earn-and-learn model that combines on-the-job training with classroom instruction to develop skilled workers.
- **How it works:** Apprentices work full-time while completing structured training programs, typically lasting 1-4 years, culminating in nationally recognized credentials.
- **Best for:** Employers in skilled trades, manufacturing, healthcare, IT, and other industries requiring specialized technical skills but also perfect for education, finance, and human resources.
- **When to apply:** When planning for future workforce needs or facing skills shortages in technical roles.
- **Getting started:** Virginia’s apprenticeship consultants can help you develop programs, identify training partners, and navigate registration requirements.



[virginiaworks.gov/registered-apprenticeship](http://virginiaworks.gov/registered-apprenticeship)

# SPOTLIGHT: THE ROI OF REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

Since 1938, Registered Apprenticeship has remained the leading learning model in Virginia. By combining two key, proven components, on-the-job training with classroom learning (known as Related Technical Instruction), apprenticeship provides a structured program specifically tailored to meet industry needs.

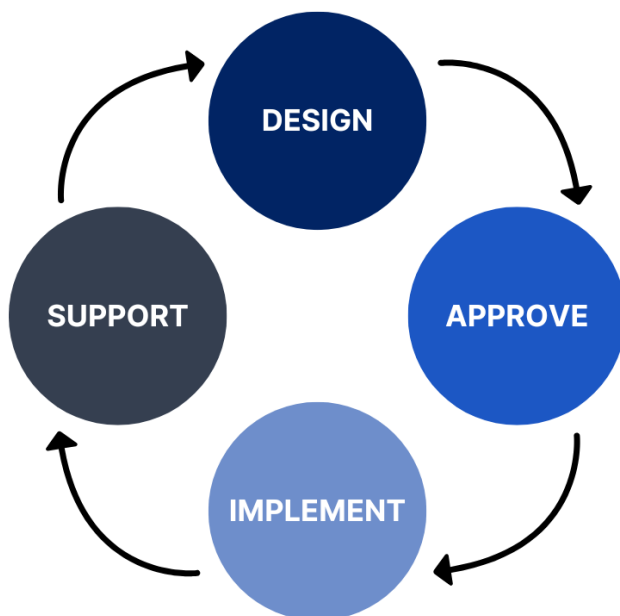
## Starting a Program



viriniaworks.  
gov/registered-  
apprenticeship



www.apprenticeship.gov



### DESIGN

RA Consultants help to identify the employer's needs

- Work Process
- Related Technical Instruction

### APPROVE

RA Consultants support program registration in RAPIDS (national database)

- Self-service User Accounts offer easy, intuitive access.
- Once approved in RAPIDS, Program may begin

### IMPLEMENT

Employer measures:

- Aptitude
- Attitude
- Attendance

### SUPPORT

- National Credential
- New Cohort Process

# REGIONAL SECTOR WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIPS

Based on “Collaborating to Address Regional Workforce Challenges: A Roadmap” - Commonwealth of Virginia and Claude Moore Foundation, September 2024 [viriniaworks.gov](https://viriniaworks.gov)

## What are sector partnerships and how can employers participate?

Sector partnerships are collaborative networks bringing together employers, educators, government agencies, nonprofits, and community organizations to address regional workforce challenges in specific industries. Unlike traditional workforce development efforts, these partnerships are business-driven, locally led, and designed to meet unique community needs rather than following a one-size-fits-all approach.

## Core Partnership Components

### Key Players:

- **Employers** - Provide understanding of skill needs and hiring requirements
- **Educators** - Offer training capacity and student pipeline insights
- **Government** - Supply data, funding, and regulatory support
- **Community Organizations** - Connect workforce programs to local populations
- **Partnership Lead** - Coordinates daily operations and project management

### The Partnership Lifecycle:

Successful partnerships evolve through three distinct stages:

1. **START** - Initial convening, relationship building, and identifying immediate priorities through simple action plans
2. **BUILD** - Formalizing strategic plans, establishing governance structures, developing programs, and securing funding
3. **SCALE** - Creating sophisticated business cases, communicating impact stories, and continuously improving processes

### Funding and Sustainability:

Partnerships typically pursue diversified funding strategies including employer contributions, philanthropic grants, and federal/state government support. Financial sustainability requires either establishing fiscal sponsorship arrangements with existing nonprofits or creating independent legal entities with proper financial controls.

### What Partnerships Achieve:

When functioning effectively, regional partnerships deliver measurable outcomes:

- **Shape education programs** to meet actual industry skill demands
- **Increase outreach** to students and job seekers about career pathways
- **Improve resource utilization** and reduce program duplication
- **Communicate policy challenges** and influence regulatory solutions

Success indicators include increased job placements, improved retention rates, decreased critical vacancies, and greater accessibility to meaningful careers.

### Key Success Principles:

Six guiding principles drive effective partnerships:

1. **One size does not fit all** - Regional solutions must reflect local economic and demographic realities
2. **Make it win-win-win** - Each organization must see clear value in participation
3. **Small wins create big impact** - Focus on achievable outcomes rather than process ownership
4. **Organic growth is good** - Allow natural evolution rather than forcing rigid structures
5. **It isn't rocket science** - Partnerships succeed through simple collaboration with common vision
6. **Data informs everything** - Use workforce analytics to guide decision-making and measure impact



# VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## Adult Education and Family Literacy

- **What it is:** Adult education is a career pathways program that provides instructional services including adult basic and secondary education, English as a second language, high school equivalency preparation, digital literacy, integrated education and training, workplace adult literacy, and employability skills. Coursework and career coaching prepare adult learners for further education, training, and career advancement.

Integrated education and training programs are accelerated, intensive programs designed with an occupational training provider leading to an industry-recognized credential that is in demand in the region.

Employers may implement workplace adult literacy at their place of business for incumbent workers to improve their employees' basic skills, boost productivity and efficiency, and improve communication with coworkers or customers. Employers are encouraged to provide input to customize the curriculum design and contribute to recognitions and rewards for assessments.

Classes are offered across the Commonwealth. More information can be found on the Virginia Department of Education website at Adult Education | Virginia Department of Education.

- **Best for:** Employees who want to upskill or achieve a credential may be referred to their local adult education provider.
- **Who is Eligible:** Adult education serves youths and adults with or without a high school credential who have foundational skill needs. Students younger than 18 must document that they have been released from compulsory attendance in their school division.
- **Getting started:** Visit [doe.virginia.gov](https://doe.virginia.gov) to learn more.



[doe.virginia.gov](https://doe.virginia.gov)



## Success Story

Carilion Clinic, in partnership with the Greater Roanoke Workforce Development Board, created a "Grow Your Own," program that assists current Carilion employees to advance their employment as Certified Medical Assistants. Employees received funding for training and supportive services from the Workforce Board and Virginia Western Community College, and the business received On-the-Job-Training (OJT) reimbursements. At the end of the program, participants were retained as credentialed employees.



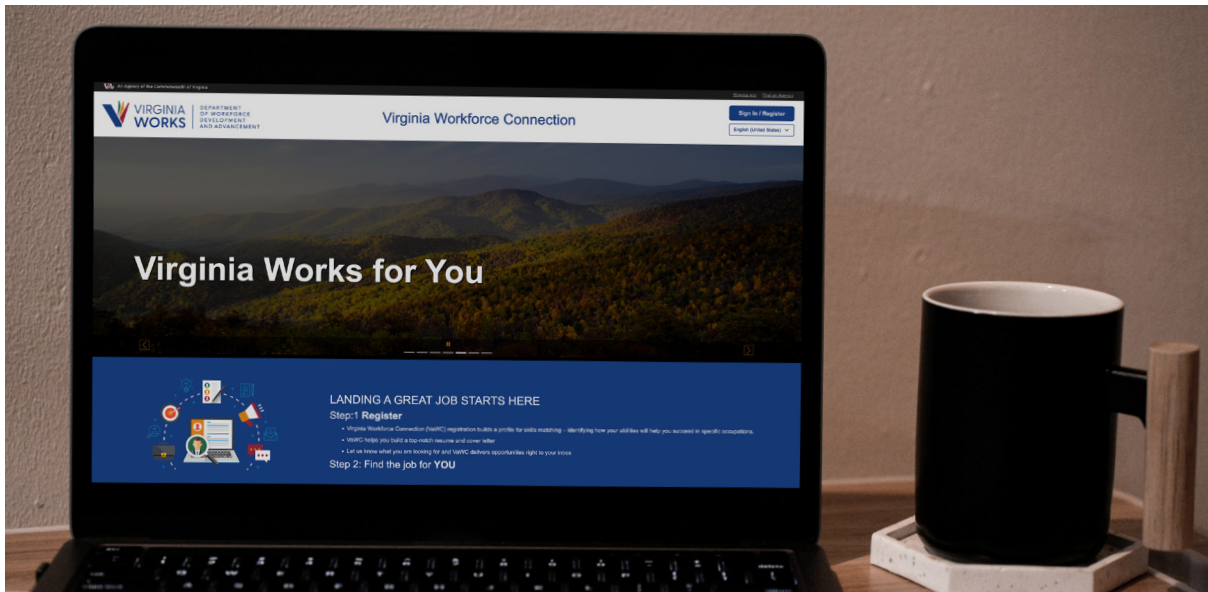


## **PART 3: HIRE**

**SMART STRATEGIES FOR TALENT ACQUISITION**

**Finding and onboarding the right talent is critical to your business success. These programs and services help reduce hiring costs, minimize risk, and connect you with skilled candidates when you need them.**

# SPOTLIGHT: POSTING A JOB ON VIRGINIA'S SITES



## Virginia Workforce Connection

Virginia Workforce Connection ([vawc.virginia.gov](http://vawc.virginia.gov)) is a comprehensive web-based solution that provides a complete set of workforce development, employment and training tools for job seekers and employers within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

## Talent Recruitment & Job Posting

- Employers can find candidates, post jobs, search labor market information.
- Easily register or retrieve your login information to access the Virginia Workforce Connection and post job opportunities.
- Reduce your hiring costs by matching the skills you need to job seekers who have those skills.
- Match the job order against qualified individuals in the VWC active job seeker database and notify them about the opportunity.

## Specialized Support

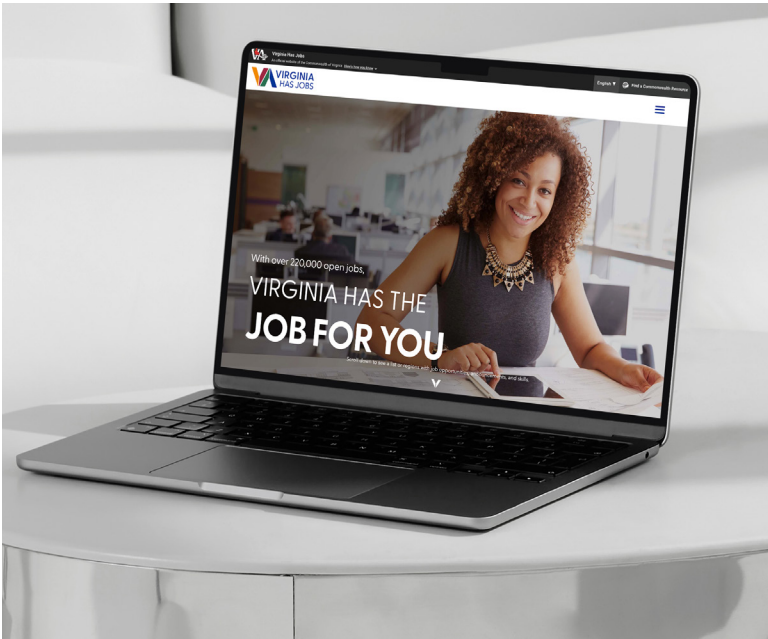
- Veteran Priority Services: Automatic matching and notification to qualified veterans per federal requirements.
- Compliance Assistance: Review the recruitment plan and/or to review changes for the job order to conform to Federal/State laws and regulations.
- Professional staff support for recruitment planning and job posting optimization.



[vawc.virginia.gov](http://vawc.virginia.gov)



# SPOTLIGHT: POSTING A JOB ON VIRGINIA'S SITES



## Virginia Has Jobs

- The Virginia Has Jobs website ([virginiahasjobs.com](https://virginiahasjobs.com)) was created to highlight the top industries, major employers, and high demand occupations in each region of the Commonwealth, and connect job seekers with easy to navigate job search functions and resources for apprenticeships, re-skilling, and training opportunities.
- The site connects individuals to upskilling opportunities through pages focused on the skills

employers say are in demand. Focusing on the growth of artificial intelligence in today's workplace, [virginiahasjobs.com/ai](https://virginiahasjobs.com/ai) promotes low and not cost training through our partnership with Grow with Google. Focusing on Virginia's rapidly growing data technology sector, [virginiahasjobs.com/DataTech](https://virginiahasjobs.com/DataTech) offers curated pathways to help Virginians develop in-demand skills in tools like Python, SQL, and Tableau, and it empowers them pursue meaningful careers in a field that drives innovation across industries.



[virginiahasjobs.com](https://virginiahasjobs.com)

The talent you need exists in every corner of the Commonwealth.

## TANF/VIEW Full Employment Program (FEP)

- **What it is:** Wage subsidies for hiring individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits.
- **How it works:** Employers receive wage subsidies while providing job opportunities to individuals transitioning from public assistance to employment.
- **Best for:** Businesses committed to providing opportunities for individuals overcoming employment barriers while reducing initial hiring costs.
- **When to apply:** Before hiring eligible candidates who are participating in TANF/VIEW programs.
- **Getting started:** Contact [FEP@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:FEP@dss.virginia.gov) or Virginia Career Works center for candidate referrals and subsidy details.

## Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

- **What it is:** Federal tax credits for hiring individuals from targeted populations including veterans, individuals with disabilities, SNAP or TANF recipients, and justice-impacted individuals, among other categories.
- **How it works:** Receive tax credits ranging from \$1,200 to \$9,600 per qualified hire, depending on the target group and hours worked.
- **Best for:** Businesses open to hiring from diverse talent pools while receiving significant tax benefits.
- **When to apply:** At the time of hiring or shortly after—there are strict deadlines for WOTC certification.
- **Getting started:** Work with your Virginia Works representative for details about eligibility requirements, the application, and submission process or go to [wotc.virginiaworks.gov](http://wotc.virginiaworks.gov).

## Virginia Bonding Program

A fidelity bond for employers of at-risk, individuals working in Virginia, with a previous conviction.

- **How it works:** Provides \$15,000 in fidelity bond coverage for the first six months of employment at no cost to employers, protecting against loss, reducing financial risk when hiring justice-impacted individuals.
- **Best for:** Businesses open to second-chance hiring but concerned about potential financial exposure.
- **When to apply:** When offering employment to justice-impacted individuals.
- **Getting started:** Contact the Virginia Bonding Program Coordinator at [Virginia.BondingProgram@vadoc.virginia.gov](mailto:Virginia.BondingProgram@vadoc.virginia.gov).

## Success Story

Southwest Tool Rental in Norton, Virginia is committed to supporting justice-involved people return to the workforce! As a Second Chance Employer, they are providing their team members opportunities to grow and contribute to their community through their work.



# SPOTLIGHT: HIRING VIRGINIA'S VETERAN TALENT

Virginia Works has dedicated staff called **Local Veteran Employment Representatives** who advocate for hiring veteran talent and are your direct, tailored link to a veteran talent pipeline. To learn more about why hiring a vet can benefit your organization and to find veteran talent, please contact your local Virginia Works office.

## HIRE Vets Medallion Program

- **What it is:** The HIRE Vets Medallion award is the only **federal-level** veteran's employment award for recognizing companies and organizations for their commitment to veteran hiring, retention, and professional development.
- **How it works:** Criteria for recognition depend on the award level and by employer size, and include factors such as percentage of veteran staff or leadership programs for veterans.
- **Best for:** Employers who are interested gaining recognition for being champions for veteran hiring, and who want to join the ranks of nearly 200 Virginia Medallion awardees to stand out in attracting veteran talent.
- **When to apply:** Between January 31 to April 30 each year.
- **Getting started:** Go to [hirevets.gov](https://hirevets.gov) for more information on the benefits of this program and how to apply.



## Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Certification Program

- **What it is:** Virginia's **state-level** comprehensive training and certification program that helps employers develop and implement long-term strategies and nationally recognized best practices in recruiting, hiring, and retaining Veterans.
- **How it works:** Participate in free virtual employer training events to learn best practices for hiring military job seekers and military spouses, then earn Virginia certification as a V3- Certified employer. V3 also collects job postings from certified employers and distributes them bi-weekly to veterans and military spouses across Virginia.
- **Best for:** Any size business wanting systematic training on how Veterans can benefit their organization, resources for connecting with Veterans, or wanting to demonstrate their commitment to veteran hiring.
- **When to apply:** Ongoing training sessions are offered regularly throughout the year.
- **Getting started:** Visit [dvsv3.com](https://dvsv3.com) to register for upcoming training sessions or contact the Virginia Department of Veterans Services for certification requirements and program details.



[hirevets.gov](https://hirevets.gov)



[dvsv3.com](https://dvsv3.com)



## Virginia Jobs Investment Program (VJIP) – New Jobs Program

- **What it is:** Cash grant reimbursements to offset recruitment and hiring costs associated with a business expansion.
- **How it works:** Receive financial support for hiring and training new employees when creating new jobs in Virginia.
- **Best for:** Growing businesses, companies relocating to Virginia, or those expanding operations significantly.
- **When to apply:** Before hiring begins and capital investments are made.
- **Getting started:** Contact VEDP representatives early in your expansion planning to understand funding criteria and application deadlines.

## Universal Occupational Licensing Program

- **What it is:** Virginia’s universal recognition system allows qualified professionals licensed in other states to work immediately in Virginia without duplicating licensing requirements.
- **How it works:** Professionals with valid, equivalent licenses from other states can obtain Virginia licensure through streamlined processes, reducing barriers for interstate talent recruitment.
- **Best for:** Businesses recruiting skilled professionals from other states, especially in healthcare, skilled trades, real estate, and other licensed professions.
- **When to apply:** When recruiting out-of-state professionals or when current employees need to transfer licenses to Virginia.
- **Getting started:** Contact the Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR) or relevant licensing boards to understand recognition processes for specific professions.

## Agriculture and Foreign Labor Certification Program

- **What it is:** Specialized assistance for employers to meet their temporary or seasonal labor needs.
- **How it works:** This program enables agricultural and non-agricultural employers to bring foreign workers into the country on a temporary or seasonal basis, depending on certain requirements.
- **Best for:** Employers with proven demands for labor that cannot be met through local job orders on the Virginia Workforce Connection or by U.S. workers.
- **When to apply:** The timing requirements differ, so please contact your local workforce for details.
- **Getting started:** Contact your nearest your local workforce center to discuss your labor needs, understand the program, or to seek other assistance or visit [viriniaworks.gov/im-an-employer/agriculture-and-foreign-labor-certification/](http://viriniaworks.gov/im-an-employer/agriculture-and-foreign-labor-certification/)

## Find Out More



[www.vedp.org](http://www.vedp.org)



[dpor.virginia.gov](http://dpor.virginia.gov)



[viriniaworks.gov](http://viriniaworks.gov)

## DHCD Job Creation Grant

- **What it is:** A 5-year grant program that provides financial incentives to businesses for creating new permanent full-time jobs above their baseline employment levels
- **How it works:** Companies must create at least 4 net new permanent full-time positions above their base year employment total. Base year employment is established from either of the two calendar years preceding the grant year and remains static for the full 5-year term. Eligible positions must pay at least 150% of minimum wage (125% in High Unemployment Areas and for SWaM-certified businesses). Companies must offer to cover at least 50% of employees' health insurance premiums.
- To remain eligible in years 2-5, firms must maintain or increase eligible positions above the four-job threshold.
- **Best for:** Growing businesses that can demonstrate sustained job creation above baseline employment or companies in high unemployment areas or SWaM-certified businesses (which have lower wage thresholds).
- **When to apply:** Applications are processed on grant year cycles (e.g., Grant Year 2024 with base years of 2022 or 2023).
- **Getting started:** Ensure your planned new positions meet wage requirements (150% of minimum wage, or 125% if eligible for reduced threshold). Verify your business type is eligible (not government, retail, food service, personal service, or restricted nonprofits)
- **Learn more here:** <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/vez>



[www.dhcd.virginia.gov](https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov)

## Virginia's Child Care Subsidy Program

- **What it is:** Virginia's Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP) that provides financial assistance to working families for childcare costs. It's available for children not yet in kindergarten (primary eligibility) and other children in the family under age 13 and designed to support employees who need childcare due to work, job search, work-related training, or education
- **How it works:** Families with household income at or below 85% of state average income may qualify (see income thresholds: \$77,455 for family of 2, up to \$164,022 for family of 10). Eligible families pay affordable monthly co-payments based on household income. Once approved, families typically receive care for at least 12 months. Families must select participating childcare providers within the CCSP network. It's available even for employees actively job searching, not just those currently working
- **Best for:** Employees with young children (under kindergarten age primarily, up to age 13 for siblings) whose household income falls within program thresholds
- **When to apply:** Applications accepted year-round, though some localities may have wait lists when subsidy slots are full. Employees should apply even if wait-listed - they'll be notified when slots become available.
- **Getting started:**
  - Employers can inform employees about the program and income eligibility thresholds - direct employees to go here: <https://www.childcare.virginia.gov>. Help employees understand they can apply while job searching, not just after employment, and remind them to have documentation ready: proof of income, work/training activity, and child's information
  - Inform employees they'll need to select from participating childcare providers in the program



[www.childcare.virginia.gov](https://www.childcare.virginia.gov)



# SKILLS FIRST HIRING: A GUIDE FOR VIRGINIA EMPLOYERS

Based on the U.S. Department of Labor's Good Jobs Initiative Skills-First Hiring Starter Kit  
[nextlevelnow.workforcegps.org](https://nextlevelnow.workforcegps.org)

## What is Skills-First Hiring?

Skills-first hiring means evaluating and hiring workers based on the skills, knowledge, and abilities they can demonstrate, regardless of how or where they acquired those skills. This approach focuses on what workers can actually do rather than relying on traditional credentials like four-year degrees as proxies for capability.

This strategy recognizes talent from diverse pathways including associate degrees, apprenticeships, certifications, self-teaching, military experience, and on-the-job learning. Skills-first hiring isn't just about removing degree requirements—it's about building comprehensive evaluation systems that accurately assess job-relevant capabilities.



Skills-first hiring represents a strategic shift for talent acquisition. Virginia employers who embrace these practices position themselves to access broader talent pools, improve retention, and build more capable, diverse workforces that drive long-term business success.

## Why Virginia Employers Should Consider Skills-First Strategies

### Business Benefits:

- **Reduced hiring costs and time:** 81% of employers report faster hiring, 78% see reduced costs
- **Improved retention:** 91% experience better employee retention rates
- **Access to hidden talent:** Nearly half of American workers could be excluded by degree-focused hiring
- **Enhanced performance:** Skills-focused hires often demonstrate higher productivity and job satisfaction

### Competitive Advantages:

- **Larger talent pool:** 30 million workers have skills for jobs paying 50% higher salaries but lack traditional credentials
- **Veteran talent:** Veterans bring transferable skills, quick learning abilities, and strong retention rates
- **Community college graduates:** Access skilled workers from affordable, accessible education pathways

# SKILLS FIRST HIRING: A GUIDE FOR VIRGINIA EMPLOYERS

## IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

### Phase 1: Getting Started (Month 1)

#### Build Internal Support

- Secure leadership buy-in and establish clear goals (faster hiring, improved performance, increased retention)
- Engage current employees and union representatives in identifying skill requirements
- Select an appropriate pilot role that can be broken into discrete skills and responsibilities

#### Choose the Right Position

- Avoid roles with legal/professional degree requirements
- Start with positions that have clearly defined, measurable skills
- Consider beginning with internal promotions before external hiring

### Phase 2: Skill Identification (Months 1-2)

#### Define Core vs. Great-to-Have Skills

- **Core skills:** Critical for day-one success, heavily weighted in hiring decisions
- **Great-to-have skills:** Beneficial but not essential, can often be developed on the job

#### Leverage Resources

- Use O\*Net (Department of Labor) for skill requirements and job tasks
- Review industry-specific frameworks and competency models
- Interview current successful employees about essential skills

#### Create Evaluation Rubric

- Weight core skills more heavily than great-to-have skills
- Establish consistent scoring methods for fair candidate comparison
- Plan multiple evaluation methods for comprehensive assessment





## Phase 3: Skills Evaluation Methods (Months 2-3)

### Multi-Method Assessment Approach

- **Structured interviews:** Use standardized, skills-focused questions and scenarios
- **Hands-on evaluations:** Job-relevant tasks, tool usage, or technical exercises
- **Simulations:** Role-playing exercises that mirror actual work situations
- **Written assessments:** Technical knowledge or scenario-based problem solving

### Ensure Accessibility

- Use plain language in evaluations
- Provide reasonable accommodations for candidates with disabilities
- Offer diverse interview formats (in-person, phone, video)
- Consider sharing interview questions in advance for candidates with anxiety disorders

## Phase 4: Recruitment and Hiring (Months 3-6)

### Craft Effective Job Postings

- Use clear, jargon-free language
- Explicitly state that skills take priority over credentials
- List specific evaluation methods and timeline expectations
- Include salary ranges and encourage diverse experience sharing

### Expand Talent Pool

- Partner with Virginia Career Works centers and community organizations
- Connect with local community colleges and training programs
- Use DOL's universal outreach tools for diverse candidate sourcing
- Leverage Virginia's workforce development network partnerships

### Fair Hiring Practices

- Focus on demonstrated skills rather than credential assumptions
- Avoid salary history requests
- Ensure pay reflects skill level, not educational background
- Maintain compliance with equal employment opportunity requirements





## VIRGINIA-SPECIFIC ADVANTAGES

### State Support Infrastructure

- Virginia Works provides frameworks and resources for skills-first implementation
- Partnership opportunities with community colleges and technical schools
- Access to apprenticeship programs through state and federal initiatives
- Workforce development grants and incentives for innovative hiring practices

### Regional Talent Pipeline

- Strong community college system producing skilled graduates
- Military veteran population with transferable skills
- Growing technology and advanced manufacturing sectors
- Rural communities with untapped talent pools

## Success Story

ABM Aviation has partnered closely with the Loudoun Workforce Resource Center to fill full-time roles with Dulles International Airport. This recently included helping ABM Aviation fill 75 open positions in just a few months using the workforce system's recommended hiring strategies!

## MEASURING SUCCESS AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

### Track Key Metrics

- Time-to-hire and cost-per-hire improvements
- Employee retention rates and performance scores
- Diversity of candidate pool and hiring outcomes
- Employee satisfaction and career advancement rates

### Ongoing Refinement

- Conduct quarterly reviews of hiring processes
- Gather feedback from new hires, managers, and HR teams
- Adjust evaluation methods based on job performance correlation
- Scale successful approaches to additional positions

### Getting Started: Recommended First Steps

1. **Select a pilot position** and engage current employees in skill identification
2. **Partner with Virginia Works** for implementation support and resources
3. **Connect with local community colleges** for candidate pipeline development
4. **Utilize federal resources** including O\*Net, apprenticeship programs, and evaluation tools
5. **Plan for 6-12 months** to fully implement and refine your skills-first approach

# SPOTLIGHT: SECOND CHANCE HIRING

Adapted from the Virginia Consensus for Higher Education in Prison

Justice-involved Virginians offer an untapped solution for companies to address worker shortages and enhance overall performance.

- Worker shortages are related to birth rate declines, and optimizing workforce participation among workforce participation among untapped groups is likely to be a smart strategy for the foreseeable future. (Source: Untapped Talent: Author Jeff Korzenik)
- Virginia has a labor market deficit, with only 47 workers available for every 100 jobs available (Source: U.S. Chamber of Commerce)
- About 10,000 workers enter the Virginia labor market from the Virginia labor market from the Virginia Department of Corrections every year – a cohort the size of our largest state university's graduating class.

Second chance employment has proven to be an effective talent strategy across a variety of industries.

- 85% of human resource professionals and 81% of business leaders report that individuals with criminal records perform the same as, or better than, employees without criminal records (Source: SHRM)
- 82% of managers and 67% of HR professionals report that the value second chance employees bring to their own organization is as high as, or higher than, that of workers without records (Source: SHRM)
- Growing and customizable college and credential programs in Virginia prisons and jails increase the talent proposition of second chance hires.

Supports and incentives exist for employers who practice second chance employment.

- For new hires, the Federal Bonding Program provides \$5,000-\$25,000 fidelity bonds for six months, at no cost to employers, mitigating against theft, forgery, larceny, or embezzlement. (Source: The Federal Bonding Program website)
- Businesses may qualify for tax credits through programs like the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) for hiring individuals with criminal records.

Second Chance Hiring: You don't have to go it alone!

- The national Second Chance Business Coalition offers an **On-Ramps Guide** and many excellent resources on their website.
- Virginia reentry programs, workforce development organizations and community colleges can facilitate access to vetted candidates with employment supports. Find local resources mapped on the **Second Chance Business Coalition Website**.



[www.secondchancebusinesscoalition.org](http://www.secondchancebusinesscoalition.org)

The Virginia Consensus partnered with Richmond - SHRM for a free eLearning module on a second chance employment practices.







## **PART 4: RETAIN & GROW**

**KEEPING GREAT PEOPLE AND PREVENTING TURNOVER**

**Investing in your current workforce drives productivity, innovation, and employee satisfaction while positioning your business for future growth. Employee retention is more cost-effective than replacement.**



# SPOTLIGHT: SUPPORTING GROWTH THROUGH THE SMALL BUSINESS ONE-STOP

Virginia's Business One Stop is a comprehensive online platform that serves as the first stop for establishing and managing a business in Virginia. If you need startup assistance, financing options, or certification programs, this site is for you.

## Key Services & Features

- One-time registration fee of \$20 (additional agency fees may apply).
- Interactive system that helps register your business with multiple Virginia state and local agencies simultaneously.
- All business establishment steps organized in one online location.

## Comprehensive Business Support

- Professional experienced business counselors available for assistance
- Resources for planning, developing, and expanding businesses
- Useful links to other state and federal agencies
- Quick guide from business idea to launch

## Who Should Use It

- New entrepreneurs starting their first business
- Existing businesses expanding operations in Virginia
- Out-of-state businesses establishing Virginia presence
- Any business needing to interact with multiple Virginia state agencies

## Bottom Line

Business One Stop serves as a single point of entry designed to be “the first stop a business will need to make” for Virginia business registration and ongoing compliance needs, offering both digital tools and human expertise to support business success.



[bos.sbsd.virginia.gov](https://bos.sbsd.virginia.gov)

**Retaining the talent you have  
is a talent strategy itself.**

## Disability Awareness & Accessibility Training

- **What it is:** Free training and consultation services to help businesses create inclusive, accessible workplaces.
- **How it works:** Expert consultants provide training on disability awareness, workplace accommodations, and accessibility best practices.
- **Best for:** All businesses committed to building inclusive workplaces and tapping into the skilled disability community.
- **When to apply:** Anytime—proactive training is more effective than reactive accommodation.
- **Getting started:** Contact the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) or Department for Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) for training schedules and consultation services.

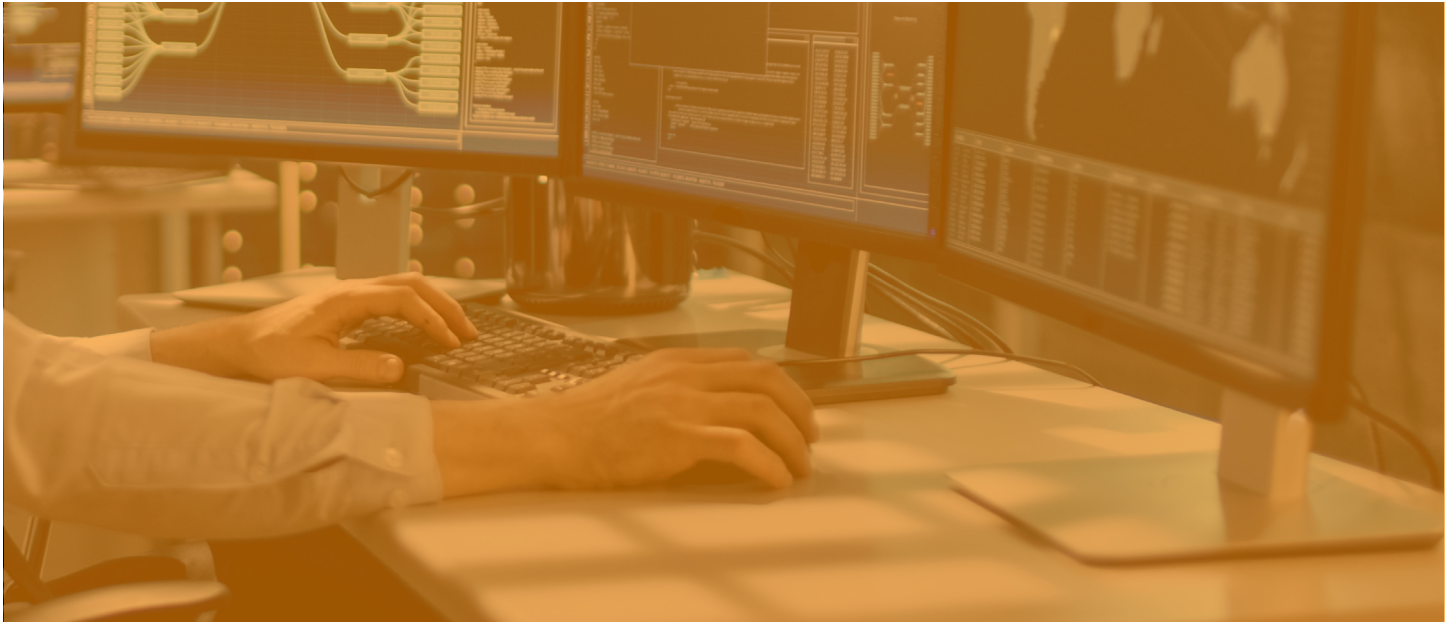
## Virginia Jobs Investment Program (VJIP) - Retraining

- **What it is:** Cash reimbursements to offset training costs for companies undergoing integration of new technologies or processes, changing products lines to keep up with changing market demands, or making substantial changes to their service delivery model requiring new technologies or skills for existing workers.
- **How it works:** Receive financial support for training expenses for existing employees when integrating new technologies.
- **Best for:** Businesses making capital investments directly associated with the retraining efforts.
- **When to apply:** Before beginning training initiatives—applications must be submitted prior to training commencement.
- **Getting started:** Contact VEDP early in your planning to understand qualification criteria and application deadlines.



## Success Story

Fluor, Inc. in Oakwood, Virginia partnered with Southwest Virginia Workforce Development Board to help prevent layoffs by engaging with the Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) program. As a result, their team members were able to upskill and receive their Commercial Driving Licenses (CDLs), thus allowing them to move into new roles without employment gaps!



## Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)

- **What it is:** Financial support to upskill your existing employees, helping them advance in their careers while meeting your evolving business needs.
- **How it works:** Receive funding to offset training costs for current employees, typically requiring employer matching contributions.
- **Best for:** Businesses seeking to promote from within, prevent layoffs due to skill gaps, or prepare for technological changes.
- **When to apply:** Before delivering training—funding must be secured in advance.
- **Getting started:** Contact your local workforce development board to discuss available funding, match requirements, and application procedures.

## Disability Worksite and Technology Evaluations

- **What it is:** Expert consultations and training to build inclusive workplaces.
- **How it works:** An expert will assess the physical and digital workspaces, recommend practical accessibility solutions and assistive technology.
- **Best for:** All businesses committed to building inclusive workplaces and tapping into the skilled disability community.
- **When to apply:** Anytime
- **Getting started:** Contact the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) or Department for Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) for training schedules and consultation services.



# SPOTLIGHT: NAVIGATING OUTPLACEMENT, DOWNSIZING, OR CLOSURE

Virginia's Rapid Response program is a pro-active, business-focused, flexible strategy to support employers in the Commonwealth. This program support employers who may wish to retain their workforce but need to take action to remain competitive or businesses who may be concerned about economic factors or sustainability. Rapid Response funded projects include consultation services for business growth or diversification as well as skills development or upskilling for the existing workers. When these resources are leveraged when challenges first appear, we can assist businesses and reduce potential downsizing actions. Additional resources to support employee retention during a slowdown include tools such as the short-term compensation program, a variation of the Unemployment Insurance program that allows for a partial reduction of employees' hours of work as an alternative to laying off workers.

Businesses in the unfortunate situation of downsizing or facility closures are encouraged to contact the Rapid Response team early in the process to support the affected workforce and help provide a smooth transition for workers into new employment.

- Offered completely free of charge, Rapid Response teams come to the employees' location and assist with filing initial unemployment insurance claims and educating impacted workers on navigating the unemployment benefits process through collaboration with the Virginia Employment Commission, to provide stability and continuity to the impacted employees.
- Working in collaboration with local workforce boards and community partners.

Research and Planning Services can include presentations to employees on services available in the region and working in collaboration with local workforce boards organizing hiring events prior to layoff dates. These services can include a broader range of job search services such as resume and cover letter writing, and job application and interviewing skills. Rapid Response teams work with employers and any employee representative to quickly maximize public and private resources to minimize disruptions for companies, affected workers, and communities that are associated with job loss. The ultimate goal of this Rapid Response effort is to maximize and coordinate resources allowing for impacted workers to quickly find their next best job.

*Employers impacted by disaster scenarios can also take advantage of Rapid Response services to help the stress of temporary or permanent job loss.*

# WHERE TO GO FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

## VIRGINIA CAREER WORKS CENTER LOCATIONS ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH

### Our local workforce centers are for you, too!

There are 34 locations across the state, and each center provides services to help local businesses, including the following:

- Job applicant screening and qualified candidate referrals
- Helping employers to review and revise job descriptions
- Valuable and up-to-date labor market facts and projections, such as wages
- Space to conduct job interviews
- Help arranging job fairs

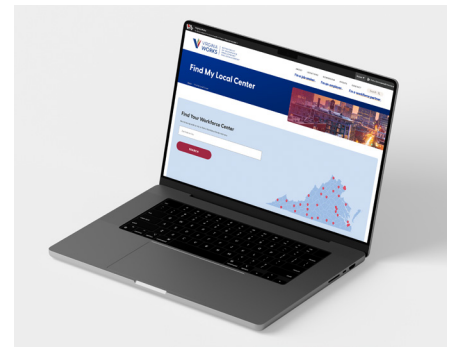
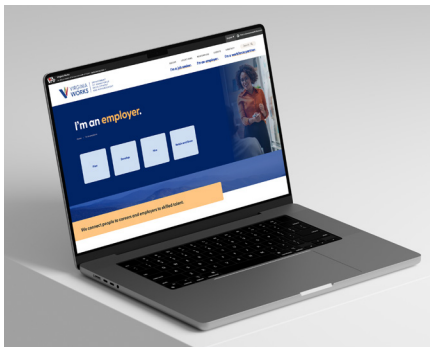
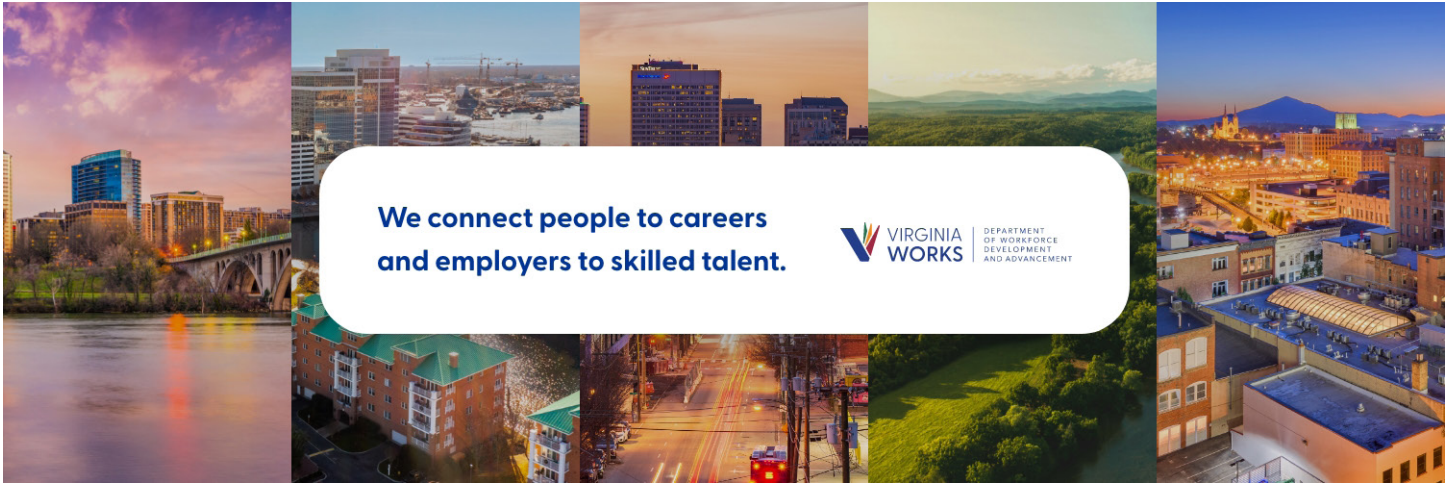
To find a local workforce center near you, please visit [viriniaworks.gov/locations](https://viriniaworks.gov/locations)

## Find Your Regional Business Services Representative

- Alexandria - Cherokee Avenue
- Alexandria - Mark Center
- Arlington County
- Bristol
- Charlottesville
- Chesterfield - Turner Road
- Covington
- Culpeper County
- Danville
- Eastern Shore
- Emporia
- Fishersville
- Fredericksburg
- Galax
- Hampton
- Harrisonburg
- Henrico - Cedar Fork
- Lynchburg
- Martinsville
- Norfolk
- Portsmouth
- Prince George
- Prince William
- Radford
- Richlands
- Richmond
- Roanoke
- Rocky Mount
- South Boston
- South Hill
- Warsaw
- Winchester
- Wise
- Wytheville



[viriniaworks.gov/  
locations](https://viriniaworks.gov/locations)



## Success Story

Businesses engaging in Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) with the Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board include Millers Services, who received \$3,375 to train 16 employees, and Nestle Purina, who received over \$15,000 in IWT funding in one fiscal year!

## Connect With Us



@VAWorks



@virginia-works



@VirginiaWorksOfficial



*Virginia Works (Virginia Department of Workforce Development and Advancement) is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.*

*Virginia Works is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. The Rapid Response program operated by the Virginia Department of Workforce Development and Advancement (aka Virginia Works) is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) - Employment and Training Administration (ETA) through the use of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Dislocated Worker funding (Award FAIN #24A55AW000090) totaling \$12,811,909.00. The dollar amount of Federal funds for this project equal \$3,875, which constitutes 100 percent of the project cost. Zero costs and zero percent of this project were financed by non-governmental source.*

