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Virginia Works and Marymount University Host *Career Forward* event to Support Federal Workers

RICHMOND - Virginia Works, in partnership with Marymount University, regional workforce and industry partners, and the Virginia Employment Commission, yesterday convened **former federal workers and federal contractors for *Career Forward***, a full-day, hands-on event dedicated to helping displaced federal employees chart their next career steps with clarity, confidence, and community. **More than 40 leaders and experts from across 25 organizations** came together to share their time, talent, and commitment to support this essential sector of Virginia's workforce.

With thousands of federal employees and contractors across the region navigating employment uncertainty, the summit provided practical tools, targeted coaching, and direct access to employers and industry leaders across both, public and private sectors. The event took place at Marymount University in Arlington, Virginia with opening remarks by **Virginia Secretary of Labor Jessica Looman** and **Marymount University President Dr. Irma Becerra**.

The event brought together sector spanning learning opportunities from skill translation and career branding sessions to workshops on AI driven job tools, financial planning, improv at work, setting up a small business, and personalized transition strategies. Participants connected directly with industry experts from fields such as cybersecurity, healthcare, education, finance, design, and government. The event also showcased powerful stories of reinvention through a *Pivot Point* panel, reinforcing the breadth of pathways available to this highly skilled segment of the workforce.

"Virginia is home to the nation's second largest concentration of federal workers." said **Nicole Overley, Commissioner of Virginia Works**. "Their skills, discipline, and commitment to service are exactly what employers across every industry need right now.

Following a period marked by great uncertainty, Career Forward is our promise to this community that we will walk with them every step of the way during this time of transition."

"Having served as a federal employee, I have a deep appreciation for the talent, perspective and dedication federal workers bring to public service," said **Melissa Smith, Commissioner of the Virginia Employment Commission**. "Their experience navigating complex systems and delivering for the public is invaluable and we are proud to learn from them and support them through this work. Their insights will help strengthen how we design and deliver services here in Virginia, ensuring we continue delivering service that is clear, reliable and centered on people."

"This was an emotional day for many in attendance. Participants expressed deep gratitude for this event, for sharing stories of career pivoting, for offering tips on successfully landing new employment, and for giving them hope and encouragement as they navigate what comes next," said **Glenn Davidson, Chief Strategy Officer at Marymount University**.

The event reflects a unique collaboration among state agencies, higher education, workforce boards, career coaches, and private-sector partners, all working toward the shared goal of helping federal workers stay, grow, and thrive in Virginia.

Virginia Works has prioritized direct support for former federal employees and contractors by expanding job-placement partnerships, strengthening employer engagement across the Commonwealth, and developing tools and hosting events specifically designed to translate federal experience into a broad range of public, private, and nonprofit career paths.

Additional resources, including career coaching, virtual job fairs, and sector-specific learning opportunities, are available at Virginia Works' *Virginia Forward* webpage available at: virginiaworks.gov/virginia-forward.

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