



VIRGINIA CAREER WORKS

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

LOCAL WORKFORCE AREA PLAN
DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE

SEPTEMBER 2020

PREPARED BY THE:
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT GROUP
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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

VIRGINIA WORKFORCE LETTER (VWL) NO. 20-08

TO: Local Workforce Development Boards

FROM: George Taratsas, Director, WIOA Title I Administration and Compliance 

SUBJECT: Requirements for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Local Workforce Development Area Plans

DATE: September 30, 2020

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this letter is to provide Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) guidance on the development and submission of local area plans under Title I of WIOA.

PERSONS EFFECTED:

- Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs)
- Partner Agencies in the Local Workforce System

REFERENCES:

- Virginia Board of Workforce Development Policy No. 200-03 Duties of Local Workforce Development Boards
- Virginia Board of Workforce Development Policy No. 200-06 Designation of Regions and Planning Requirements
- Virginia Board of Workforce Development Policy No. 403-01 Business Services Requirements
- Virginia Board of Workforce Development Policy No. 300-02 One Stop Service Delivery
- Commonwealth of Virginia WIOA Combined State Plan July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2024
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Sections 108 and 188
- Code of Virginia §2.2-2670 & §2.2-2472
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; Employment and Training Administration; Labor; Final Rule, 20 CFR Part 670.500 through 659.580

BACKGROUND:

Title I, Chapter 2, Section 108 of WIOA establishes the requirement that each Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) shall develop and submit to the Governor a comprehensive four-year local plan, in partnership with the appropriate chief elected official.

Under 20 CFR Part 679.500, the WIOA Rules and Regulations state the local plans shall be comprehensive four-year action plans designed to:

- Develop, align, and integrate service delivery strategies
- Support the State's vision and goals, as described in the Virginia Combined State Plan

The local plans shall set forth the strategy to:

- Direct investments in economic, education, and workforce training programs to focus on providing relevant education and training to ensure that individuals, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment, have the skills to compete in the job market and that employers have a ready supply of skilled workers
- Apply job driven-strategies in the one-stop delivery system
- Enable economic, education, and workforce partners to build a skilled workforce through innovation in, and alignment of, employment training, and education programs

WIOA requires local plans to be consistent with the Virginia Combined State Plan. The vision, goals, and strategies included in the Plan for July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2024 are listed in Appendix B.

Local plans must address each of the elements noted in Local Plan Template in Appendix D. It is not necessary to address the policy emphasis areas separately from the specific plan content elements. Local areas are encouraged to incorporate responses to the strategic planning guide in Appendix A, as appropriate. The state recognizes that many local areas have already engaged in robust strategic planning activities with local and regional workforce stakeholders. In those instances where strategic workforce planning efforts are already underway, this VWL should be used to ensure alignment with those efforts. For those local areas that are not already engaged in such activities, suggestions for implementing strategic planning activities are included in the guide.

The WIOA Title I Administrator will lead the local plans review process on behalf of the Governor and present the results Governor's Chief Workforce Advisor and the Virginia Board of Workforce Development.

GUIDANCE:

Appendixes A-E provide specific guidance.

LOCAL AREA PLAN SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL TIMELINE:

Event	Date
VWL with Local Plan Guidance Packet Released	September 30, 2020
Local Plans Due to WIOA Title I Administrator	March 1, 2021
Local Plan Evaluation Period	March 2 through April 3, 2021
Initial Approval Status and Summary Feedback Provided to LWDBs	April 10, 2021
Response from LWDBs Due (as needed)	May 11, 2021
Second Local Plan Evaluation Period (as needed)	May 12 through June 11, 2021
Presentation of Local Plan Review Results to VBWD	June 18, 2021
Final Approval Deadline	June 30, 2021

Program Year (PY) 2021 WIOA Title I formula allocations will be dependent on the approval of each LWDA plan.

APPENDIXES:

Appendix A – How to Create a Strategic Local Workforce Development Board Plan Under WIOA

Appendix B – Virginia Combined State Plan 2020-2024 Executive Summary

Appendix C – Submission Instructions

Appendix D – Local Plan Template

Appendix E – Strategic Plan Action Plan Template

INQUIRIES:

Submit inquiries regarding this VWL to the WIOA Title I Administrator:

Director, WIOA Title I Administration and Compliance
Arboretum III
300 Arboretum Place, Suite 200
Richmond, VA 23236
Email: WIOA@vccs.edu

APPENDIX A

HOW TO CREATE A STRATEGIC LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD PLAN UNDER WIOA

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD GUIDE TO STRATEGIC PLANNING

BACKGROUND

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires Virginia to develop a Combined State Plan (CSP) every four years to outline how the Commonwealth will implement its workforce development vision and goals. Additionally, Local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) are required to develop their own regional plans based on the CSP. Rather than focusing on the work already completed, these strategic plans must demonstrate how the local WDBs is going to implement workforce development initiatives over the next four years. This guide will help local WDBs create their plans.

While each local area in the Commonwealth is different and has unique needs of its WDB, this guide provides a common set of processes to develop a strategic plan that best fits your community. This guide can be adapted to your needs and used to guide your process in a manner that offers the best chances for success.

Local WDBs have an opportunity with WIOA to change the identity of the workforce system from what many employers see as a social service to a highly valued talent resource. This change can only happen if the culture of the system changes from within. Strategies, policies, and investments made by the local WDBs must drive this change. Partner organizations must see themselves as part of a team with common goals and clear roles to play in achieving them. With innovative thinkers, local opinion leaders, and leaders of business and industry playing an active role in developing strategies, a local WDB can become a powerful economic driver for a community. A customer centric system is key to creating this environment. Our definition of customer must include the employers who have jobs to fill. Understanding how businesses want to work within the workforce system is crucial to the system's success.

Before you review the Local Plan Template, examine this guide with local WDB members and key stakeholders who will be integral to the creation of the plan. Consider how the processes suggested in this guide will help you create a strategic local plan that will serve the region as a useful tool for success.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO LOCAL WDB STRATEGIC PLANNING

Engage Stakeholders

Do not develop the strategic plan in isolation. Engaging regional stakeholders in the development of the strategic plan will allow for the creation of a better and more complete plan.

Manage the Process

Consider utilizing internal facilitators, or enlisting a consultant, to facilitate the planning process. Encourage participants to take ownership to ensure accountability from planning through implementation and evaluation. Facilitators bring:

- Specialized exercises to encourage input, provide clarity in the process, and inspire “out-of-the-box” thinking
- A fresh, impartial perspective to navigate internal politics and keep the conversation constructive
- The ability to keep the focus on the big picture and away from the day-to-day details

Engage the Right People in the Right Setting

Identify the people who need to be at the table for the planning session(s) and work with them effectively. Schedule and conduct the sessions either virtually or at locations convenient to all attendees. If meeting in person, select a location that allows all individuals to see and hear one another easily while allowing for social distancing requirements.

Speak the Language

Establish a common planning vocabulary that is standard with all participants. Here are the important strategic planning terms:

- **Mission** –What we do, for whom, and the benefits derived
- **Vision** – How the world will be different if we accomplish our Mission
- **Environmental Scan** – Understanding the broader context that influences our work
- **Goals** – Broadly defined objectives that, when combined, advance the Local WDB toward its Vision
- **Strategies** – Methods for achieving the Goals
- **Metrics** – Measure the progress made in meeting the Goals

PREPARING FOR THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Engage Stakeholders

A strategic plan developed through an open and inclusive process stands a significantly better chance of successful implementation and achieving the goals expressed in the document. A critical success factor in strategic planning for a multi-partner system is creating a sense of ownership among a wide range of individuals and organizations. Because the talent development system is much broader than a few federal funding streams, the WDB's status as a go-to resource for talent is often more dependent on its ability to influence the decisions of others.

In a "system" designed to serve customers, which include business and industry as well as students, workers, and unemployed Virginians, successful implementation depends on buy-in from a variety of organizations directing numerous funding streams. A great local WDB has the potential to influence these organizations by creating an environment of cooperation and collaboration. If our process only addresses the funding streams we control, we will not provide our customers with the comprehensive approach they want and need to succeed.

Creating buy-in

The most effective way to expand the influence of the WDB is through an intensive input process. By allowing others to provide the WDB with insight and recommendations, the WDB can enrich its understanding and expand its influence beyond what it controls directly.

Not every idea or concept will or should make it into the final document. Providing others with an opportunity to be heard can go a long way when asking them to embrace the adopted strategies, commit their resources, and provide enthusiastic support for implementing action items.

Who should be engaged?

The simplest answer is anyone who has an interest in the workforce system. Because of the nature of the system, there are some stakeholder groups that are especially important during the planning process. Those groups have knowledge, experience, and a value proposition for a better way of developing talent:

- Chief elected officials
- Business and industry leaders
- Mandated agency partners
- Frontline staff
- Economic development organizations
- Chambers of Commerce
- Organized labor
- Education and training providers
- Community-based organizations
- Parents and guardians, students
- Unemployed individuals
- Society for Human Resource Management

Engagement tactics

There are a wide range of techniques for gathering input and building ownership of the strategic plan among stakeholders. Local WDBs should consider using some or all of these engagement tactics:

One-on-one interviews with key decision makers is an effective way to explore topics in depth and identify opportunities for collaboration. Identification of barriers to success and opportunities to align are some of the outcomes to be expected from successful interviews.

A group discussion of stakeholder representatives about a single or very small number of topics can create a dynamic exploration of common goals, promotion of collaboration, and build confidence in the WDB's process of inclusion. The ideal group size is between eight and 12 individuals led by a facilitator who does not have a real or perceived agenda beyond leading the group in a productive discussion. Focus groups can reveal challenges and opportunities for collaboration. Creating group agreement is a desired outcome, but not the ultimate measure of success. In some cases, simply opening lines of communication that never existed can be a sign of success.

A large gathering of stakeholder representatives can produce input from interested parties at all levels in the system, depending on the invitation list. In addition to the opportunity to communicate ideas and concepts to those in attendance through presentations, speeches, and panel discussions, a forum designed to gather input should also include one or more interactive exercises. Often, attendees are divided into smaller groups of 6-12 participants each. These smaller groups can respond to a strategic question, brainstorm innovative ideas to solve a challenge, or develop a list of concerns, resources, barriers to success, etc. Groups report out to the larger group and a facilitated discussion may or may not follow.

A survey, usually web-based, is a good way to collect both objective and subjective data if there are a limited number of questions and simple responses are desired. Response rates, distribution lists, and a lack of opportunity to ask clarifying follow up questions are some of the limitations of this type of input, but it does allow for a larger number of individuals to participate in the planning process.

Follow up

When individuals volunteer their time, energy, and ideas to help create a strategic plan, most will want to know how their input is used and have an opportunity to see the results of the process. Following up with these volunteers demonstrates the value the WDB places on their participation, can lead to further participation in the future, and can impact the WDB's ability to implement, influence, and expand its reach.

To achieve effective follow up, collect stakeholder names, addresses, phone numbers, or email addresses at each input activity. A master list of plan contributors should be created, maintained, and used to push out communications about the plan.

Manage the Process

It is often valuable to use an internal or external facilitator who can help manage the entire planning process and lead sessions. The WIOA Title I Administrator will provide funding up to \$10,000 for each local WDB that hires an external facilitator to support their strategic planning process. Hiring a facilitator requires careful consideration to maximize the investment of your financial and human resources in the planning process.

Why use a facilitator?

Experienced facilitators act as a neutral third party to support the achievement of the desired result. A facilitated session is a highly structured meeting in which the facilitator guides the participants through a series of predefined steps to arrive at a result that is created, understood, and accepted by all participants.¹

An experienced facilitator has a unique set of training and experience grounded in group dynamics and decision-making. An experienced, professional facilitator can help you:

- Manage strong opinions and guide people to consensus
- Create a comfortable forum where all participants are able to share their ideas and perspectives in a constructive manner
- Serve as a content neutral party that leads the process, ensuring participants that decisions are not based on predetermined outcomes
- Explore creative options when issues are complex and ready solutions are not apparent
- Apply expertise on the dynamics of group decision-making to speed the collaborative process
- Establish and maintain a focus on tangible results

Guidelines for external facilitators

To ensure consistency across all local WDB plans, the WIOA Title I Administrator requests all external stakeholders follow these guidelines:

1. Facilitators do not create the strategic plan in isolation. The local WDB, in consultation with Chief Elected Officials and stakeholders, must create the strategic plan while the facilitators guide the process.
2. Facilitators help the local WDB engage as many stakeholders as feasible in the strategic planning process
3. Facilitators help the local WDB and stakeholders understand the difference between an operational plan and a strategic plan
4. Facilitators provide the local WDB with the tools needed to implement the strategic plan

¹ Wilkinson, M. *The Secrets of Facilitation: The SMART Guide to Getting Results with Groups*, (2004) Jossey-Bass, p. 23

When should I call PMG?

The Virginia Commonwealth University Performance Management Group (PMG) facilitated the creation of the 2020-2024 WIOA Combined State Plan with the Virginia Board of Workforce Development and multiple stakeholder groups. Contact PMG at pmg@vcu.edu for consultation regarding the local WDB plans on the following topics:

- How to align the local plan with the state-wide plan
- How to reach consensus in creating the strategic plan
- How to use the strategic plan to complete the LWDB plan template

When should I call the WIOA Title I Administrator?

The WIOA Title I Administrator is always available to answer questions and provide support regarding workforce development topics. When creating your local plan, contact the Administrator at wioa@vccs.edu with questions regarding:

- WIOA and related regulations
- Program design
- The requirements of the local plan
- How to find the data needed to complete parts of the local plan template

Engage the Right People in the Right Setting

Local WDB leadership should meet to determine the scope of work, planning objectives, and a planning schedule. Additionally, they should identify a Strategic Planning Team.

The Strategic Planning Team should be a small group that leads the entire process. They provide oversight, keep colleagues and stakeholders informed about the process, and do the majority of the preparation work. The Team may include:

- Local WDB leadership
- Chief elected officials
- Representatives from local government agencies
- Representatives from the local business communities
- Any other key stakeholders

Strategic Planning Team Member Roles and Responsibilities

Suggestions for roles and responsibilities include:

Strategic Planning Champion

The Champion legitimizes and supports the planning process and rallies others as needed. This role typically is filled by a senior leadership member.

Responsibilities:

1. Work with the Local WDB to establish goals for the planning process and determine who should participate in the process
2. Personally invite colleagues to participate
3. Discuss with participants expectations for the planning process and roles during implementation
4. Be the point of contact and common thread from preplanning through implementation

Strategic Planning Project Manager

The Project Manager ensures the strategic plan is completed on time with all its necessary requirements.

Responsibilities:

1. Prepare a work plan for the completion of the strategic planning process
2. List all tasks to be completed, with corresponding timelines, deadlines, and dates for meetings
3. Work with the Coordinator to plan meetings and stakeholder engagement sessions

Strategic Planning Coordinator

The Coordinator is in charge of planning session logistics:

Responsibilities:

1. Work with the Strategic Planning Champion and Project Manager to develop and disseminate agendas
2. Consult with the Strategic Planning Team to establish ideal session dates/times; coordinate schedules with session participants
3. Find appropriate in-person or virtual venues for planning sessions
4. Finalize catering services (if needed)

What to look for in a venue (in-person or virtual):

1. Conveniently located or easy software to use
2. Enough space for social distancing
3. Tables to split the group into smaller working groups or the ability to use virtual breakout rooms
4. Supplies such as flip charts and markers or the ability to use virtual whiteboards
5. A/V accessibility
6. Broadband accessibility of attendees

Strategic Planning Author:

The Author takes the finalized language and put it into one document to form a coherent plan:

1. Collects finalized language
2. Proofreads all language
3. Adds language and other information into an accessible document
4. Ensures the final document is accessible to stakeholders

What Makes a Plan Strategic?

This guide demonstrates how to develop a strategic plan, rather than a tactical plan. What differentiates tactical solutions from strategic solutions?

Strategic Solutions Ask Why and What

While tactical solutions simply ask how individual programs serve customers, strategic solutions focus on ensuring the bigger picture of the workforce system operates as a comprehensive, integrated, and streamlined system for all workers and businesses. Strategic thinkers ask why we have been using the same initiatives year after year and what innovative operations could we implement to serve the system as a whole.

Strategic Solutions Connect Activities to Mission, Vision, and Future Needs

Rather than simply reviewing current workforce and occupational data, strategic solutions use this data to set goals, generate performance improvements, and ensure system excellence.

Strategic Solutions Focus on Emerging Economic Trends and Labor Market Patterns

Rather than only focusing on current conditions, strategic solutions simultaneously plan for projected future needs. Those with a strategic mindset develop strong industry partnerships to support Local WDB decision-making.

Strategic Solutions Build System Capacity and Long term Relationships

Tactical solutions simply manage processes in day-to-day operations. Strategic solutions guide system development by defining goals and supporting connections between core programs and businesses.

Strategic Solutions Emphasize Regional Planning and Alignment

While tactical solutions focus on short-term successes, strategic solutions develop system performance measures that take into account the regional economic development strategies, the development of career pathways, and work-based learning opportunities for long-term success.

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

1. Kick-Off Meeting

Hold a meeting of the Strategic Planning Team to begin the planning process. All members of the committee should attend. At this meeting, you may cover:

- Introductions and teambuilding
- Purpose of the strategic plan
- Planning process and timeline
- Roles, responsibilities, and expectations
- Communication
- Next steps

2. Document Collection

Collect relevant documents, plans, and other materials related to workforce, economic development, education, etc. Sources may include economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, community colleges, local governments, regional planning organizations, or community-based organizations and non-profits.

3. Stakeholder Engagement

When scheduling your chosen stakeholder engagement tactics, provide enough advance notice to allow for participation by as many individuals as possible. Even virtual events require advanced planning by many of your stakeholders. No matter what methods of input you select for inclusion in the process, it is important to provide those invited to participate with:

- An estimate of the time commitment involved
- A brief explanation of how the results will be used
- What to expect during the interview, focus group, or forum
- Acknowledgement of the importance of their contribution
- Recognition that although everyone has a chance to be heard, it is not possible to include every idea in the final plan
- A thank you for their participation

4. Strategic Planning Team Meetings

In subsequent team meetings, you'll take the information gathered during the document collection and stakeholder engagement tactics to develop the strategic plan. The team will determine the strategic plan mission, vision, core values, goals, and strategies. Additional details about this process is provided in the next section.

5. Plan Writing

All materials prepared as a result of each of the preceding tasks should be provided to the plan author in preparation for the writing of the first draft of the strategic plan. Recommended components of the plan are outlined in the Local WDB plan template.

6. Public Comment Period

The draft plan must be posted and a notice provided in accordance with the state and local standards to allow for public review and comment on the contents of the plan. This can usually be accomplished by posting the document on the Local WDB's website with an email address supplied for people to submit feedback. Special notices of the plan posting should be sent to those who participated in the process, including stakeholders.

A compilation of feedback should be created with comments about content separated from those regarding grammar, punctuation, and formatting. The comments about content should be provided to the Local WDB along with a copy of the draft plan document.

7. Plan Submission

Once the draft plan has been updated with the relevant stakeholder feedback, the strategic plan must be submitted to the Virginia Community College System by the deadline outlined in the Virginia Workforce Letter. Virginia Board of Workforce Development (VBWD) staff will review the plan and submit it to the VBWD for approval.

8. Final Plan Edits, if Applicable

VBWD staff may return the plan to your region if adjustments are required before the VBWD's approval. Those adjustments will be requested according to the timeline outlined in the Virginia Workforce Letter.

CREATING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Mission, Vision, Environmental Scan

Participants: Strategic Planning Team and other identified participants

Process Tips

- a. Limit the number of participants for the mission, vision, core values, and environmental scan discussions
- b. Someone in each working group should record group consensus in a master document. The same should be happen with the results of the larger group discussion.
- c. Master guides can be referenced on the following days of the session, and also provide the foundation for the final summary.

1. MISSION STATEMENT

PURPOSE: Determines what you do, for whom, and the benefits derived – the reason you exist.

PROCESS: As a group, discuss your Local WDB’s mission and how your region connects into the VBWD’s greater mission. Review the discussion questions on page 15. Reach consensus among participants on a final Mission Statement and record it.

2. VISION STATEMENT

PURPOSE: Presents a compelling picture of what will result if the Local WDB is successful in fulfilling its mission. The vision statement connects your reason for being (your mission) and the strategy you will develop to reach your goals (strategic plan). It should be an inspirational, lofty, but attainable picture of your department’s future success

PROCESS: Define what it means for your WDB to be successful. Review the discussion questions on page 16. Use the themes coming out of this discussion to craft/revise your Vision Statement. Reach consensus among participants on the Vision Statement’s final wording and record it.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

PURPOSE: The environmental scan provides insight regarding the dynamic context within which you do your work. It takes into account the opportunities (enablers) and challenges (constraints) facing the region both within and outside of your WDB (i.e. scarce resources, cultural and leadership challenges, policy changes, etc.) The scan should include a facilitated discussion around the region’s strengths and opportunities for growth, and challenges given the internal and external enablers and constraints.

PROCESS: Divide into smaller working groups to discuss the environment. Review the discussion questions on page 17. Instruct the groups to record the consensus answers, as well as the list of strengths/opportunities and challenges. These will inform the goal, initiative, and metrics discussions.

Goals, Strategies, and Metrics

Participants: Strategic Planning Team and a cross-sectional representation of regional stakeholders.

Process Tips

- a. Consider providing an opening summary of the mission, vision, and environmental scan discussions from the first session(s).
- b. Ground the planning work in the results of the environmental scan to boost awareness of the current landscape and the themes and trends affecting the region and the Commonwealth.
- c. The facilitator should guide the group to combine similar goals to arrive at a manageable number in less time

1. GOALS

PURPOSE: What does the Local WDB want to achieve over the next four years? What does success look like? The goals should be easy to understand and represent continuous improvement potential, not “on-off” projects or activities. Goals are a tool to stretch the WDB to reach beyond its current accomplishments and continually strive for more going forward. Great goals are aspirational, but attainable.

PROCESS: Discuss what the group wants workforce development to look like in the region four years from now. Discuss how the WDB will get to that point. Review the discussion questions on pages 18-19. Reach consensus and record responses.

Think about...

1. How the CSP’s goals fit into the region’s vision for the future
2. How the group can create goals that reflect the region’s opportunities and strengths

2. Strategies

PURPOSE: How can the Local WDB achieve their goals? What projects and programs should we continue, build upon, or initiate? Strategies outline the actual work of the WDB to promote accomplishments toward the defined mission, vision, and goals. They usually have a long-term focus with higher ambitions than any one task could complete. Their implementation refers to a coordinates series of actions that will take place over a specified period of time.

PROCESS: Determine what action steps are needed to reach the goals developed in the previous session(s). Review the discussion questions on page 20. Divide the goals evenly among the working groups, and instruct them to develop regional strategies for their assigned goals.

Have them designate a timeframe (short, mid, and long-term), the resources necessary to complete the strategy, and to assign a priority to achieving the goal.

3. METRICS

PURPOSE: How will you know the Local WDB has successfully met its goals? The WDB is NOT looking for, “how many,” but instead, “what impact?”

What makes a quality metric?

- Provide a gauge for leadership to track how well the WDB is meeting its goals, not strategies.
- Good metrics reflect outcomes – how well you are doing in pursuing your Mission and Vision. Short-term measures of activities can be useful, but should reflect stepping-stones leading to outcomes measures.
- Strong metrics allow leadership to quickly assess and adapt the WDB’s direction. They give leadership a tool to account for evolving budget/resource/programmatic realities and make necessary course corrections before the next planning period.

PROCESS: Assign each “goals and strategies” working group the same goals they previous worked on. Ask each group to determine how success will be measured. Review the discussion questions on page 21. Reach consensus and record.

4. ACTION PLAN

PURPOSE: What needs to be done? An action plan should provide a “how-to guide” or a “road map” for the Local WDB champions to lead the implementation of the goals and strategies that have previously been identified. Action steps should be specific and direct tactics that build toward accomplishing strategies. An effective action step clearly states what the individual task is, who is responsible for completing the task, and when the task will be completed.

PROCESS: Assign each “goals and strategies” working group the same goals and strategies they previous worked on. Ask each group to determine action steps needed to achieve the strategies, goals, and plan vision. Reach consensus and record decisions in Appendix D: Strategic Plan Action Plan Template. Please note, this action plan is not part of the local plan submission document.

How to use the action plan

Once the action plan has been created, it requires ongoing updates. When regularly reviewed and updated, the action plan serves as a tool for effective implementation. The action plan advises the Local WDB:

- What steps are required to implement the strategic plan’s goals and strategies
- Who is responsible for completing the steps and what the timeline for completion is
- Which steps have been successful and which steps require additional support
- How successful the strategic plan is, when viewed overall

To use the action plan effectively, review the plan at each Local WDB meeting. This review will allow the WDB to determine if the action steps are on schedule and where additional support may be needed.

MISSION STATEMENT – WHY DO WE EXIST?

Virginia Board of Workforce Development: Codified Purpose

The purpose of the Board shall be to assist and advise the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Chief Workforce Development Advisor in meeting workforce development needs in the Commonwealth through recommendation of policies and strategies to increase coordination and thus efficiencies of operation between all education and workforce programs with responsibilities and resources for employment, occupational training, and support connected to workforce credential and job attainment.

Local Workforce Development Boards: Codified Purpose

As a "regional convener," the local workforce development board is responsible for coordinating business, economic development, labor, regional planning commissions, education at all levels, and human services organizations to focus on community workforce issues and the development of solutions to current and prospective business needs for a skilled labor force at the regional level.

1. What is the purpose of our Local WDB? Whom do we serve?

VISION STATEMENT – WHAT ARE WE WORKING TOWARD?

Virginia Combined State Plan Vision Statement

During the life of this plan, we will improve economic opportunity for all Virginians by serving those who are not yet earning a sustainable wage and, as important, by focusing the resources and mechanisms of our workforce system to recruit people into the workforce and connect them to businesses in high demand industries.

1. What will this look like from our region's perspective?

Refer to your mission, vision, and your answers to the environmental scan questions to brainstorm a list of strengths, opportunities and challenges to consider when developing your strategy.

STRENGTHS/OPPORTUNITIES

CHALLENGES

GOALS– HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE OUR MISSION AND VISION?

Virginia Combined State Plan Goals

Goal #1: Help individuals gain access to jobs that pay family sustaining wages and provide opportunities for career progression by providing equitable and universal service delivery

Goal #2: Increase business engagement and deliver value to business customers by filling jobs in high demand occupations that are strategic to Virginia’s economy and strengthen Virginia’s regions

Goal #3: Develop a qualified and desirable workforce with the skills, competencies, and credentials that meets the current and anticipated business needs of Virginia

Goal #4: Strengthen outreach and recruitment efforts to promote workforce services and stimulate career awareness

Goal #5: Reduce workforce system barriers through collaborative integration and innovative solutions

- 1. What are the top three to five workforce needs in our region?**

- 2. What are the most important services that the workforce system should continue to provide, change, or begin to offer in the next four years?**

- 3. How can the workforce system be more effectively aligned to promote the state and regional mission and vision statements?**

- 4. How can we align our region’s goals with the state-level goals?**

STRATEGIES – HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE OUR GOALS?

Virginia Combined State Plan – Strategies for Goal #1

Goal #1: Help individuals gain access to jobs that pay family sustaining wages and provide opportunities for career progression by providing equitable and universal service delivery

Strategy #1: Launch a fully integrated common access portal across Plan partners

Strategy #2: Leverage the Accessibility Task Force to ensure universal service delivery

Strategy #3: Use technology to bridge systems to provide universal access

Strategy #4: Develop career pathways for customers that align with the workforce needs of target industry sectors and also provide career advancement opportunities

Strategy #5: Use labor market information to better understand opportunities to improve access

- 1. How will we respond to the top three to five workforce needs in our region?**

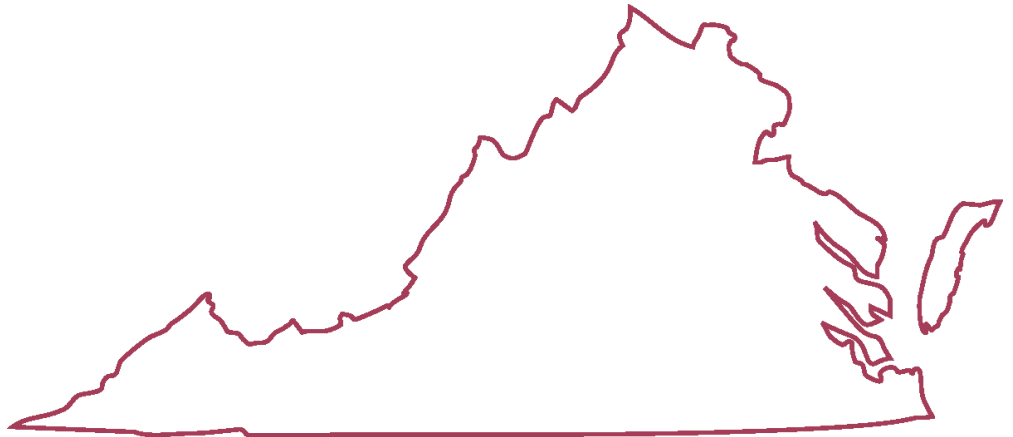
- 2. What do we need to do to continue providing our most important workforce services/ changing these services, or begin offering new services in the next four years?**

- 3. How can the workforce system be more effectively aligned to promote the state and regional Mission, Vision, and goals?**

METRICS – HOW WILL WE KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL?

- 1. After four years, how much progress should we have made towards our goals and strategies?**

APPENDIX B – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Virginia’s Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan (Plan) 2020-2024 envisions a state workforce system in which programs and resources are aligned to achieve the best possible results for Virginia’s businesses and job seekers.

VISION

Guiding the Plan is Governor Ralph Northam’s vision for the delivery of workforce development services:

During the life of this plan, we will improve economic opportunity for all Virginians by serving those who are not yet earning a sustainable wage and, as important, by focusing the resources and mechanisms of our workforce system to recruit people into the workforce and connect them to businesses in high demand industries.

With this vision, the Governor charges workforce development services providers to engage with populations that historically have been underserved in the Commonwealth. By actively rethinking who is served and how Virginia serves them, service providers can create an equitable distribution of services in the Commonwealth.





STRATEGIC GOALS AND ASSOCIATED STRATEGIES



Goal 1: Help individuals gain access to jobs that pay family-sustaining wages and provide opportunities for career progression by providing equitable and universal service delivery

- a. Launch a fully integrated common access portal across Plan partners
- b. Leverage the Accessibility Task Force to ensure universal service delivery
- c. Use technology to bridge systems to provide universal access
- d. Develop career pathways for customers that align with the workforce needs of target industry sectors and also provide career advancement opportunities
- e. Use labor market information to better understand opportunities to improve access



Goal 2: Increase business engagement and deliver value to business customers by filling jobs in high-demand occupations that are strategic to Virginia's economy and strengthen Virginia's regions

- a. Leverage state and local Business Solutions Teams to ensure coordinated and consistent service delivery
- b. Survey businesses and use labor market information to understand where demand is and skills that are needed
- c. Utilize sector strategies to engage businesses, economic development, education and training providers, and other community organizations, such as chambers of commerce





Goal 3: Develop a qualified and desirable workforce with the skills, competencies, and credentials that meets the current and anticipated business needs of Virginia

- a. Utilize the national skills index to determine the skills that matter to businesses and cross-walk the index to career pathways
- b. Allocate resources to programs and initiatives that demonstrate positive outcomes for participants
- c. Increase co-enrollment to provide customers with the best possible outcome
- d. Strengthen alignment of service delivery with other workforce programs, such as corrections, social services, and veterans services



Goal 4: Strengthen outreach and recruitment efforts to promote workforce services and stimulate career awareness

- a. Enhance brand awareness of Virginia Career Works as the American Job Centers in the Commonwealth
- b. Expand connections between businesses and Virginia Career Works Centers to align services and strategies to meet business needs
- c. Increase utilization of sustainable work-based learning models, including Registered Apprenticeships
- d. Coordinate with workforce partners, including career and technical education (e.g., Perkins V), to promote career readiness through all post-secondary training and education opportunities



Goal 5: Reduce workforce system barriers through collaborative integration and innovative solutions

- a. Include non-traditional, non-mandatory programs as service delivery partners across Virginia's workforce system
- b. Leverage discretionary funds and support innovative initiatives to remove barriers to employment (e.g., affordable childcare, transportation, housing)
- c. Support the development of workforce professionals to improve the capacity of the system
- d. Create opportunities for sharing promising practices among service delivery partners

APPENDIX C – SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Local plans for 2020-2024 must be submitted in PDF format to wioa@vccs.edu no later than 5:00 PM EST on March 1, 2021. The WIOA Title I Director of Administration shall act on the behalf of the Governor to receive the local plans and lead the review process. The submitted electronic copy must contain all required signatures.

Formatting Guidelines:

- Submit the completed Local Plan Template on 8 ½ in by 11 in paper with a one-inch margin on all sides
- Use a standard 12-point font, such as Times New Roman or Arial
- All text must be double spaced
- Use black ink only. Boldface type, underlining, and italics may be used.

A confirmation response will be provided within two business days of receipt. Submissions will be reviewed for completeness, adherence to provided guidelines, content, development, and overall quality by a review committee of workforce development professionals from partner agencies. The results of the local plan review will be made available to the local WDB and Chief Elected Officials.

Each plan will be assigned an initial status of either approved, conditionally approved, or not approved. Technical assistance will be provided for local areas in need of additional support to obtain an approved status.

Local plan review results will be presented to the VBWD at the June 2021 meeting and the VBWD will make approval recommendations to the Governor’s Chief Workforce Development Advisor. Approvals will be issued by the Governor’s Chief Workforce Development Advisor.

All local plans submitted by March 1, 2021 shall be considered to be approved at the end of the 90-day period beginning on the day the WIOA Title I Administrator confirms receipt of the plan, unless a written determination during the 90-day period is made indicating one of the following:

- There are deficiencies in workforce investment activities that have been identified through audits and the local areas has not made acceptable progress in implementing plans to address deficiencies
- The plan does not comply with applicable provisions of WIOA and the WIOA regulations, including the required consultations and public comment provisions, and the nondiscrimination requirements of 29 CFR part 28
- The plan does not align with the State Plan, including with regard to the alignment of core programs to support the strategies identified in the State Plan in accordance with WIOA sec. 102(b)(1)(E) and §676.105