

VIRGINIA PYS 2024-2027

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I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

This is a combined plan

COMBINED PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM(S)

Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)

Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))

Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et seq.)

Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)

Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))

B. PLAN INTRODUCTION OR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Governor Spanberger's focus on ensuring Virginia is the best place in the country for business and the best place to work is a bold vision for a workforce development system that is responsive to the needs of Virginia's workers and employers. This system must meet individuals where they are and invest in creating and sustaining quality careers. Through innovative partnerships across a network of state agencies, training providers, and employers, the Commonwealth's workforce system prepares Virginians for the jobs of the future by centering skills-based training that:

- Anticipates the workforce needs of a modern and evolving economy; and
- Responds to workers' needs, eliminates barriers to success, and meets workers where they are.

Led by the Virginia Department of Workforce Development and Advancement (Virginia Works), the Commonwealth's workforce agency, in partnership with local workforce areas and communities, employers, and many other state agencies, Virginia's system takes a coordinated, forward-looking, and dynamic approach to ensuring all Virginians have access to career development tools and resources. These resources will help those workers achieve their career goals, whether they are just starting their careers, looking for a mid-career pivot, or were dislocated.

Virginia is developing robust job training, with the goal of leading the nation in Work-Based Learning (WBL) and Registered Apprenticeship (RA). Virginia is particularly focused on ensuring that veterans, service members and their family members are supported during their career transitions. The Commonwealth also supports former federal workers and contractors by creating targeted, responsive career coaching, job training, and resources for those impacted federal cuts. Virginia's workforce system is investing in job training for justice-involved individuals, with Virginia Works implementing its new Opportunity Advocates program. Virginia Works and its partners also work closely with employers to help them attract, develop, and retain talent, standing up new sector strategies that truly look to future demand in Virginia's local areas, in such

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varied industries as nuclear energy, maritime, health care, and pharmaceutical manufacturing. There is more detail about these and other initiatives across the State Plan.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) helps the Commonwealth meet the needs of Virginia’s workers. This Combined State Plan (Plan) integrates workforce activities among core and non-core program partners, public and private workforce shareholders, and others in the Commonwealth who strive to achieve workforce outcomes that put people first. Virginia Works oversees the coordination and performance measurement of workforce development programs across the Commonwealth (both those within the agency and those which reside in other state agencies). Additional information about Virginia Works is available at www.virginiaworks.gov.

Virginia’s vision for the delivery of workforce development services guides all activities outlined in this plan:

Virginia’s workforce system empowers every Virginian to access and advance in quality careers and connects employers to top talent that strengthens business competitiveness and innovation in the Commonwealth’s dynamic economy. Together, we operate a responsive and accessible workforce system and partner network, designed to expand opportunity and support all communities across the Commonwealth, with nation-leading innovation and a focus on people at its core.

Virginia embraces five strategic goals for the workforce system. These goals are:

GOAL 1	Prepare Every Virginian for Quality Careers Equip Virginians with the technical and durable skills and credentials needed to access and advance in career pathways that provide competitive, family-sustaining wages & benefits; a safe and healthy working environment; and a visible trajectory for continuous learning and meaningful skill use, with particular focus on high-demand industries and populations facing structural barriers.
GOAL 2	Connect Virginia’s Employers to Top Talent Directly connect Virginia businesses to a workforce with skills matched to their needs and enable businesses to effectively attract, develop, and retain Virginians , supporting the growth of the Commonwealth’s leading-edge economy and competitiveness as the best place to do business.
GOAL 3	Lead the Nation in Work-Based Learning and Registered Apprenticeship Scale Registered Apprenticeship , on-the-job training, paid internships, and other work-based learning models to serve as primary pathways to employment and reemployment, meeting Governor Spanberger’s commitment to expanding earn-and-learn opportunities for every Virginian.
GOAL	Operate an Accessible, Responsive, and Innovative Workforce System

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Reduce structural, administrative, geographic, and technology barriers that can prevent Virginians from accessing services, with the Virginia Works network of partners integrating and collaborating across programs and service models. Pilot and implement innovative and data-driven programs, services, and initiatives that allow for a continuously learning system with people at its center.

GOAL

5

Expand Outreach, Engagement, and Workforce Resilience

Increase access, engagement, and outcomes in Virginia's workforce system for **underserved populations, job seekers facing systemic barriers, and individuals impacted by industry disruption**, including former federal workers and contractors, through specialized outreach, navigation, and wraparound supports.

The core programs in the Plan include:

- The Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth program authorized under Title I-B of WIOA and administered by Virginia Works
- The Adult Education and Family Literacy program authorized under Title II of WIOA and administered by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)
- The Wagner-Peyser Employment Services program authorized under Title III of WIOA and administered by Virginia Works
- The Vocational Rehabilitation programs authorized under Title IV of WIOA and administered by the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and the Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI)

Additionally, non-core programs included in this Plan are:

- Career and technical education (CTE) programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 administered by VDOE
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) administered by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for Workers program administered by Virginia Works
- Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program administered by Virginia Works
- Unemployment Insurance program administered by the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC)
- Registered Apprenticeship (RA) administered by Virginia Works
- Senior Community Service Employment (SCSEP) administered by DARS

Virginia Works is coordinating with those groups and others to increase communication and efficiency; reduce duplication and confusion; and achieve meaningful outcomes for all individuals and employers who engage the system. Beyond this set of partner programs, Virginia Works has convened and operates a 16-agency

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Workforce Brain Trust, inclusive of additional key partners in delivery of workforce services, including the Virginia Department of Corrections (DoC), Virginia Community College System (VCCS), Virginia Health Workforce Development Authority (VWHDA), Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR), and more. For Virginia, this approach unifies the efforts of educators; career coaches; vocational rehabilitation professionals; economic developers; veterans' organizations; those working with reentering or formerly incarcerated Virginians; legislators and other elected officials; business leaders; and state government staff. This unity of purpose benefits all Virginians and employers by making the system easier to navigate and more relevant in today's rapidly changing job market.

This Plan is required by WIOA, which was signed into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA authorizes four core programs in Virginia's workforce system, the state's one-stop system, and the Virginia Board of Workforce Development (VBWD).

Members of the Governor's staff, members of the Secretary of Labor's staff, workforce services partners, the VBWD, and the Virginia Commonwealth University Center for Public Policy (CPP) collaborated to develop the goals and strategies in this Plan. All partners collaborated throughout the winter and spring of 2026 to develop the 2026-2027 Combined State Plan modification based on stakeholder feedback, evaluation of the Commonwealth's ongoing work, and the expertise of the program partners.

II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

A. ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

1. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

(A) ECONOMIC ANALYSIS. THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST INCLUDE AN ANALYSIS OF THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND TRENDS IN THE STATE, INCLUDING SUB-STATE REGIONS AND ANY SPECIFIC ECONOMIC AREAS IDENTIFIED BY THE STATE. THIS MUST INCLUDE—

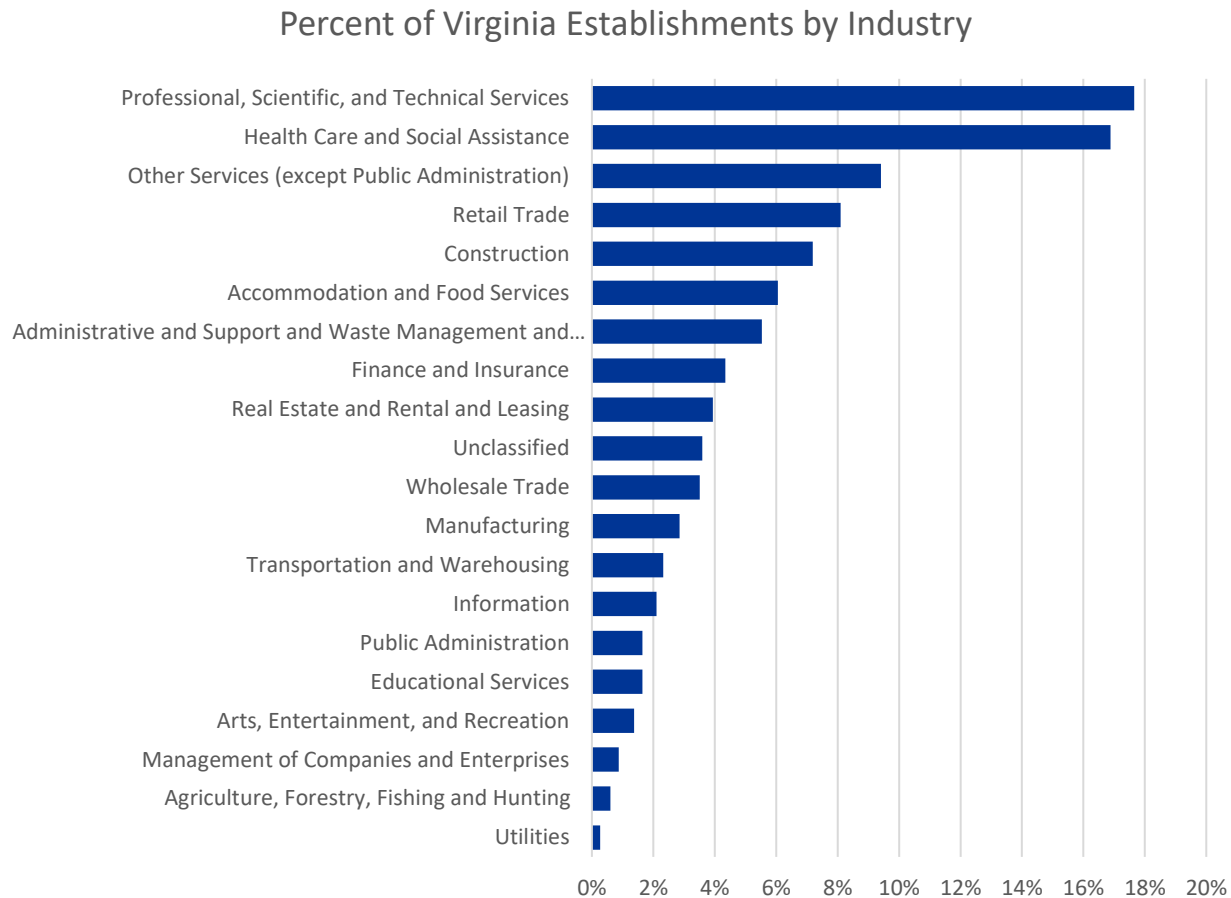
(I) EXISTING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS. PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF THE INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS FOR WHICH THERE IS EXISTING DEMAND.

(II) EMERGING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS. PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF THE INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS FOR WHICH DEMAND IS EMERGING.

Industry Landscape

Recent employment data sheds light on Virginia's industry growth and future labor market needs. According to Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) data, Virginia's average covered employment during the months of April, May, and June 2025 was 4,163,533.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of total Virginia establishments for the 21 industry sectors, indicating the primary employment industries in the Commonwealth.

Figure 1. Percent of Virginia Establishments by Industry

Source: *Virginia Works, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q2-2025.*

Virginia's primary industries of employment remain concentrated in:

- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Other Services
- Retail Trade; Educational Services
- Construction

Altogether, these five industries account for over half (52.5%) of the state's total employment.

With half a million jobs, the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industry was Virginia's largest employer in PY 2024; Virginia employs more individuals in that industry than the national average. Health Care and Social Assistance has grown rapidly in recent decades into a leading source of service-sector jobs in the Commonwealth, aligning with national trends. Over the 2022–32 decade, many of the fastest growing occupations are projected to be in the healthcare field.

In contrast, the industries of Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction; Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting; and Utilities employ the fewest Virginians, collectively representing just under one percent (0.9%) of the state's total employment.

In Figure 2, the share of establishments by industry sector tells a similar story, with the largest share of establishments (17.6%) in Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, and the second largest share (17.0%)

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in Health Care and Social Assistance. Other Services (9.4%), Retail Trade (8.0%) and Construction (7.1%) are the next largest industry sectors in terms of establishments.

Figure 2. Virginia Change in Industry Establishment, 2024 to 2025

Industry	2024 Share of Establishments	2025 Share of Establishments	Change
Unclassified	3.5%	3.8%	0.3%
Health care and social assistance	16.7%	17.0%	0.3%
Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	5.4%	5.5%	0.1%
Manufacturing	2.8%	2.8%	0.0%
Information	2.1%	2.1%	0.0%
Public administration	1.6%	1.6%	0.0%
Accommodation and food services	6.0%	6.0%	0.0%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	1.4%	1.4%	0.0%
Utilities	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%
Educational services	1.6%	1.6%	0.0%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	0.6%	0.6%	0.0%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Finance and insurance	4.3%	4.3%	0.0%
Management of companies and enterprises	0.9%	0.9%	0.0%
Retail trade	8.0%	8.0%	0.0%
Transportation and warehousing	2.4%	2.3%	-0.1%
Wholesale trade	3.5%	3.5%	-0.1%
Real estate and rental and leasing	4.0%	3.9%	-0.1%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	17.8%	17.6%	-0.2%
Construction	7.3%	7.1%	-0.2%
Other services (except public administration)	9.6%	9.4%	-0.2%

Source: Virginia Works, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q2-2025.

Figure 3 compares the share of employment and share of wages of each industry, showcasing which of Virginia’s growth industries also has high wages. Virginia private sector wages rose nearly ten percent annually during the summer of 2025. In Virginia, these trends may be attributed to the rapidly growing adoption of artificial intelligence and other productivity-increasing technologies in the workplace. The Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industry is the highest paying industry and the largest contributor to the statewide economy. It accounts for 18% of Virginia establishments (highest), 12% of employment (2nd highest), and 20% share of wages (highest). By contrast, Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation and Food Services are the two lowest paying industries, accounting for less than five percent of statewide wages, despite comprising over 11% of all jobs in the Commonwealth.

Figure 3. Virginia Employment and Wage Share by Industry, 2nd Quarter 2025

Industry	Share of Employment	Share of Total Wages	Difference
Professional, scientific, and technical services	11.6%	20.4%	8.8%
Management of companies and enterprises	2.2%	4.1%	1.9%
Finance and insurance	3.5%	5.5%	1.9%
Public administration	6.6%	8.4%	1.9%
Information	1.8%	3.3%	1.5%
Wholesale trade	2.7%	3.8%	1.1%
Utilities	0.5%	0.7%	0.2%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%
Construction	5.5%	5.5%	0.0%
Real estate and rental and leasing	1.5%	1.4%	0.0%
Unclassified	0.5%	0.4%	0.0%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	0.3%	0.2%	-0.1%
Manufacturing	6.2%	6.0%	-0.2%
Transportation and warehousing	4.2%	3.8%	-0.4%
Other services (except public administration)	3.4%	2.7%	-0.7%
Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	6.2%	5.2%	-1.0%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	2.2%	1.1%	-1.1%
Health care and social assistance	13.4%	11.7%	-1.7%
Educational services	9.3%	7.3%	-2.0%
Retail trade	9.7%	5.1%	-4.6%
Accommodation and food services	8.6%	3.2%	-5.4%

Source: Virginia Works, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q2-2025.

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QCEW data also provides insight into the industrial landscape of Virginia’s LWDAs. Table 1 shows the top two industries by LWDA.

Table 1. Top Employing Industries in Virginia Workforce Development Regions

LWDA	Topmost Employing Industry	Second Most Employing Industry
Southwestern Virginia (LWDA 1)	Health Care and Social Assistance	Retail Trade
New River/Mt. Rogers (LWDA 2)	Manufacturing	Educational Services
Greater Roanoke (LWDA 3)	Health Care and Social Assistance	Manufacturing
Shenandoah Valley (LWDA 4)	Manufacturing	Health Care and Social Assistance
Crater Area (LWDA 5)	Health Care and Social Assistance	Retail Trade
Piedmont (LWDA 6)	Educational Services	Health Care and Social Assistance
Central VA (LWDA 7)	Health Care and Social Assistance	Manufacturing
South Central (LWDA 8)	Health Care and Social Assistance	Educational Services
Capital Region (LWDA 9)	Health Care and Social Assistance	Retail Trade
West Piedmont (LWDA 10)	Health Care and Social Assistance	Manufacturing
Northern Virginia (LWDA 11)	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	Health Care and Social Assistance
Alexandria/Arlington (LWDA 12)	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	Public Administration
Bay Consortium (LWDA 13)	Health Care and Social Assistance	Retail Trade
Hampton Roads (LWDA 14)	Health Care and Social Assistance	Retail Trade

Source: Virginia Works, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q2-2025.

Occupational Landscape

Figure 4 displays the most recent annual Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) from 2024 for the top five employing major occupation groups in Virginia. OEWS estimates an employment count of 4,064,640 for Virginia as a whole.

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Office and Administrative Support Occupations rank undeniably first in terms of employment levels, employing nearly 450,000 Virginians, or 11% of Statewide Employment. This is followed closely by Business and Financial Operations Occupations; Sales and Related Occupations; Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations; and Transportation and Material Moving Occupations.

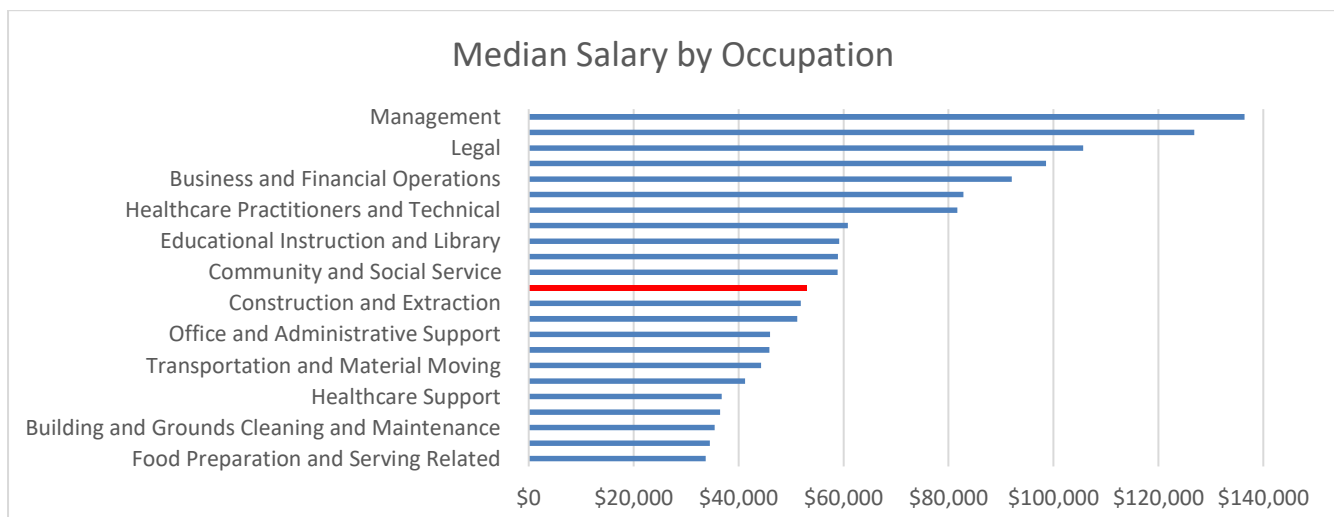
Figure 4. Top Five Virginia Occupations by Employment



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, 2024.

Statewide, the median [annual](#) salary for all occupations is \$53,020, which is higher than four out of five of the top employing occupations (all but Business and Financial Operations). Figure 5 shows the median salary for all 22 major occupation groups and illustrates the overwhelming proportion of high paying jobs being concentrated mainly in the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services. The top six occupations listed below are all from that industry, with median salaries in the \$82,000-\$136,000 range. The lowest median salary reported was for Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations at \$33,710, followed by Personal Care and Service Occupations at \$34,510 and Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations at \$35,440. The highest median salary was predictably for Management Occupations at \$136,430 followed by Computer and Mathematical Occupations at \$126,830 and Legal Occupations at \$105,700.

Figure 5. Median [Annual](#) Salary by Occupation in Virginia (Red line is overall median)



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Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, 2024.

Statewide OEWS data is also broken down by industry, which provides information on the top employing industry for each major occupation group, allowing Virginia Works to see which industries benefit from skills development programs and partner effectively with employers in those industries.

Table 2. Top Employing Industries by Type of Occupation in Virginia

Occupation	Top Employing Industry
Total, All Occupations	Health Care and Social Assistance
Management Occupations	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	Public Administration
Community and Social Service Occupations	Health Care and Social Assistance
Legal Occupations	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	Educational Services
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	Health Care and Social Assistance
Healthcare Support Occupations	Health Care and Social Assistance
Protective Service Occupations	Public Administration
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	Accommodation and Food Services
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services
Personal Care and Service Occupations	Other Services (except Public Administration)
Sales and Related Occupations	Retail Trade
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	Health Care and Social Assistance
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
Construction and Extraction Occupations	Construction
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	Construction
Production Occupations	Manufacturing

Occupation	Top Employing Industry
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	Retail Trade

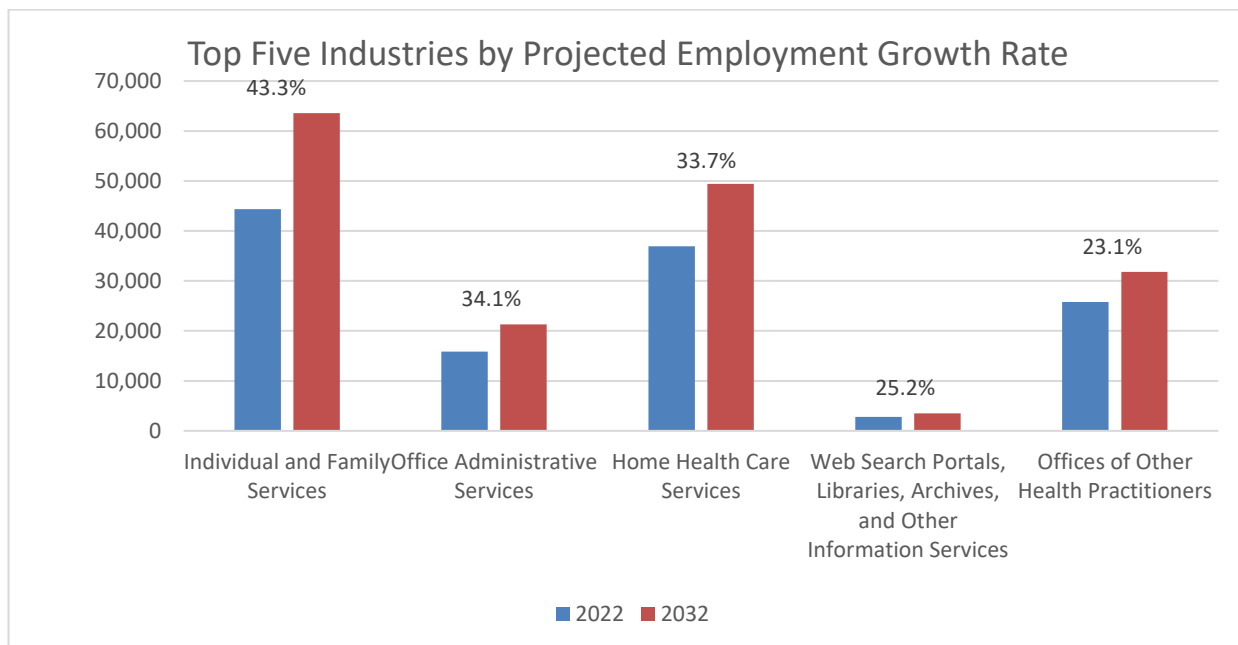
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, 2024

Looking Ahead

Virginia Works produces long- and short-term employment projections for industries and occupations in the Commonwealth. Figures 5 and 6 show the top five growing and declining industries as of the most recent 2022 – 2032 long-term employment projections.

Figure 5 shows projected employment growth by industry subsector. Healthcare and social assistance is projected to have large job growth and be a fast- growing industry sector. Employment growth in this sector is expected to be primarily driven by both the aging population and the growing prevalence of chronic conditions, such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. Demand for in-home care will contribute to this growth (33.7 percent growth rate). Healthcare administration is projected to also due to the industry's dependence on record-keeping, scheduling, billing, and patient intake processes. Over the past decade, employment in Individual and Family Services has risen and that trend is projected to continue (43.3 percent growth rate). Offices of Other Health Practitioners is another example (23.1 percent growth rate).

Figure 5. Top Five Industries in Virginia by Projected Employment Growth Rate

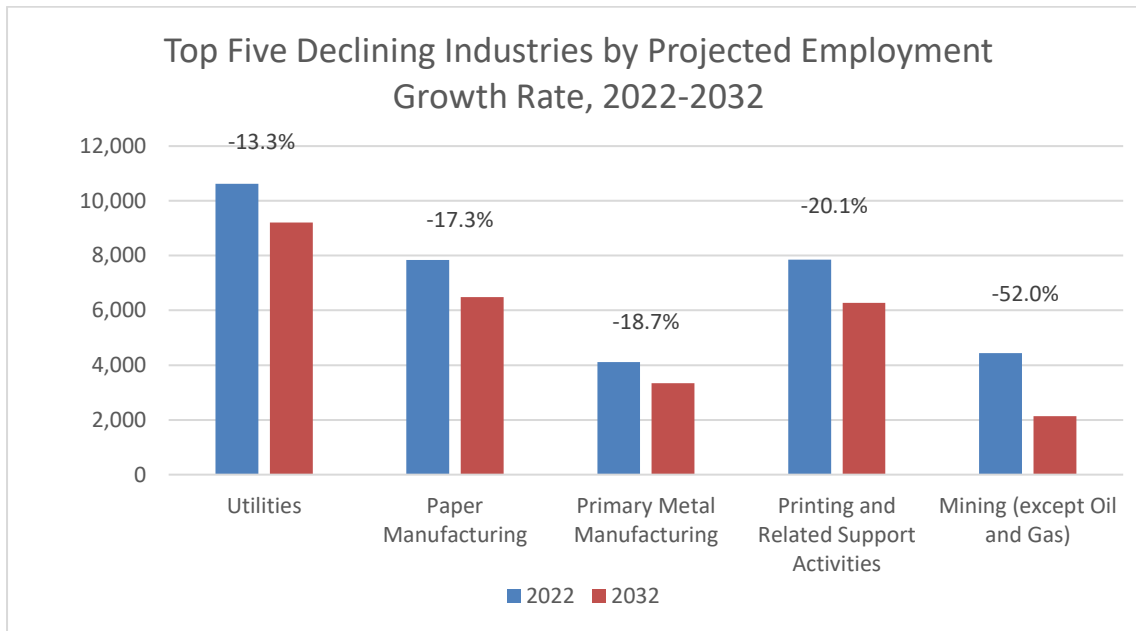


Source: Virginia Works 2022 – 2032 Long-Term Projections

Figure 6 shows projected decline in employment by industry subsector. The use of paper in newspapers, periodicals, and documents has declined over the last decade and it is projected that this trend toward the use of digital information sources will continue in the years to come. Projected employment declines in Paper Manufacturing (-17.3 percent) and Printing and Related Support Activities (-20.1 percent) are examples of this trend. Technical support activities, however, may add jobs as the new technology is adopted. Increasing demand for energy may be positive for coal mining, but alternative sources are expected to increasingly contribute to meeting this need. Like manufacturing continues to be impacted by automation, it is projected that mining and forestry will also be impacted as it adds another layer of efficiency to production processes, quality control, and supply chain logistics. Mining declines (-52 percent) are expected to be driven in part by

productivity gains through the adoption of emerging technologies, such as robotics and drones, used in extraction.

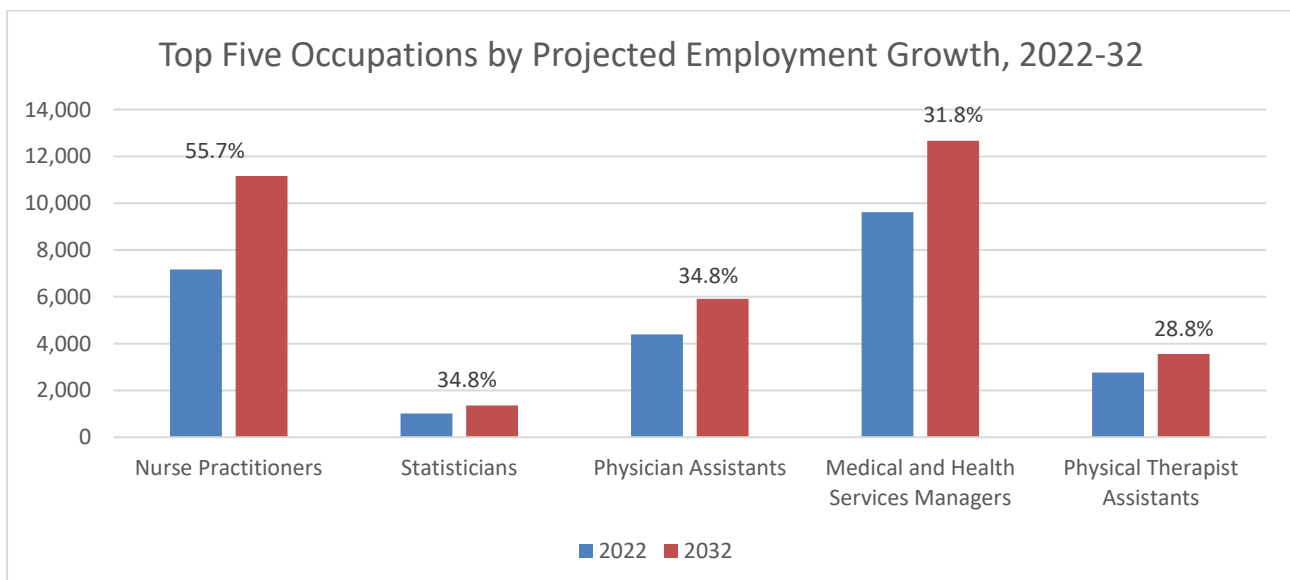
Figure 6. Top Five Declining Industries in Virginia by Projected Employment Growth Rate, 2022-2032



Source: Virginia Works 2022 – 2032 Long-Term Projection

Many of the fastest growing occupations from 2022–2032 are projected to be in the healthcare field, reflecting a national trend of rising healthcare demands. Several healthcare occupations may see rapid growth over the next ten years, including nurse practitioners (+55.7 percent), physician assistants (+34.8 percent), and physical therapist assistants (+28.8 percent). The top healthcare occupations by projected growth combined are projected to add nearly 10,000 new jobs to Virginia.

Figure 7. Top Five Occupations in Virginia by Projected Employment Growth, 2022-32



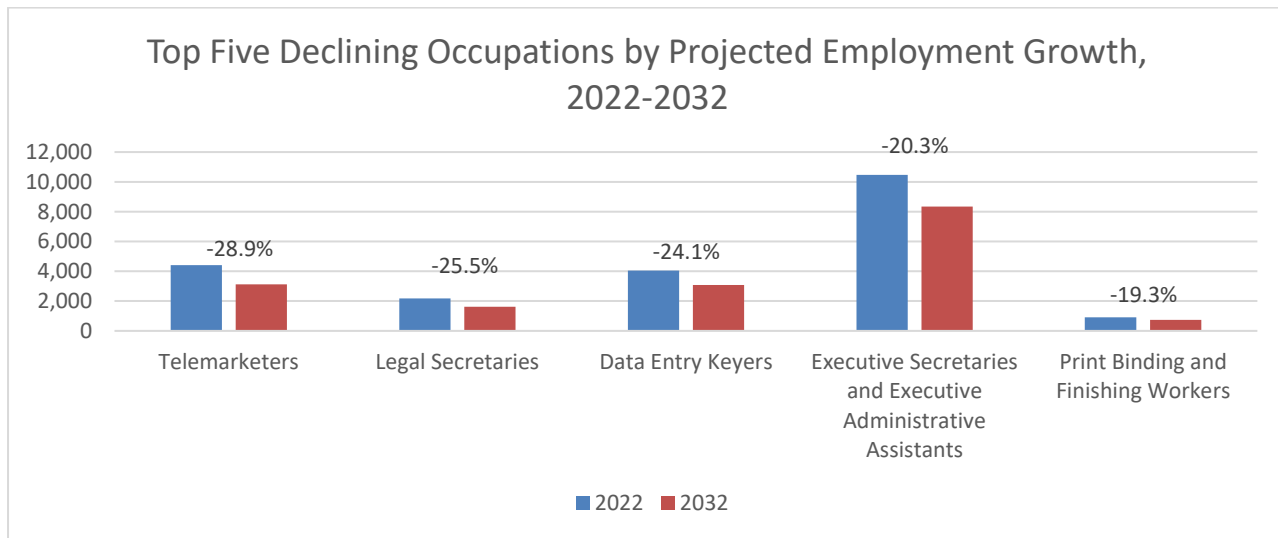
Source: Virginia Works 2022 – 2032 Long-Term Projections

Many of the fastest declining occupations from 2022–2032, as shown in Figure 8, are projected to be impacted by the adoption of new workplace technologies, particularly artificial intelligence. While lower wage occupations were most susceptible to earlier waves of technological change, some occupations like computer and mathematical, legal, and financial occupations have significant share of AI job risk.

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Figure 8 illustrates that several of these types of administrative occupations could see rapid job declines over the next ten years, including legal secretaries (-25.5 percent), data entry keyers (-24.1percent), and executive secretaries and executive administrative assistants (-20.3 percent).

Figure 8. Top Five Declining Occupations by Projected Employment Growth in Virginia, 2022-2032



Source: Virginia Works 2022 – 2032 Long-Term Occupational Projections

(III) EMPLOYERS' EMPLOYMENT NEEDS. WITH REGARD TO THE INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS IDENTIFIED IN (A)(I) AND (II), PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS, INCLUDING A DESCRIPTION OF THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES REQUIRED, INCLUDING CREDENTIALS AND LICENSES.

Employers' Employment Needs

Table 3 below gives an overview of employers' needs by industry, focusing on the top 10 employing industry sectors in the State. Skills, certifications, and technologies listed are based on employer self-identification in the Virginia Workforce Connection. The top industries are listed below by percentage of total jobs.

Table 3. Virginia Employer Needs Information, by Industry

Accommodation and Food Services

8.5% of total jobs | 9,402 Jobs Available | 19,190 Employers | \$18.42 Average Hourly Wage

Top 5 Skills	Customer Service	Leadership development	Food Preparation	Welcome patrons	Cash handling
Top 5 Certifications	ServSafe Alcohol Certification	Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	Food Handlers Card	Commercial Drivers License (CDL)	TIPS Certification
Top 5 Occupations (Employment within Industry)	Fast Food and Counter Workers (85,350)	Waiters and Waitresses (57,110)	Cooks, Restaurant (38,810)	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers (21,320)	Cooks, Fast Food (16,890)

Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services

6.2% of total jobs | 9,445 Jobs Available | 17,534 Employers | \$27.03 Average Hourly Wage

Top 5 Skills	Customer service	Advanced cardiac life support	Consultative Selling	Risk management	Administer medications
Top 5 Certifications	Registered Nurse (RN)	Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	Advanced Cardiac Life Support Certification (ACLS)	Certified Career Coach	Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)
Top 5 Occupations (Employment within Industry)	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners (32,110)	Security Guards (22,910)	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers (17,480)	Customer Service Representatives (12,630)	General and Operations Managers (7,310)

Construction

5.8% of total jobs | 4,780 Jobs Available | 22,552 Employers | \$31.15 Average Hourly Wage

Top 5 Skills	Customer service	Developing new business	Risk management	Purchase orders	Preventative maintenance
Top 5 Certifications	Commercial Drivers License (CDL)	Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	Construction Health and Safety Technician (CHST)	Project Management Professional (PMP)	BICSI Registered Communications Distribution Designer (RCDD)
Top 5 Occupations (Employment within Industry)	Construction Laborers (21,980)	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers (17,370)	Electricians (16,660)	Carpenters (14,940)	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers (9,860)

Educational Services

9.4% of total jobs | 14,585 Jobs Available | 5,179 Employers | \$32.55 Average Hourly Wage

Top 5 Skills	Customer service	Background investigations	Curriculum development	Supervises employees	Assess students
Top 5 Certifications	Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	Registered Nurse (RN)	Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification	Commercial Drivers License (CDL)	CPR/AED Certification

Top 5 Occupations (Employment within Industry)	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education (37,640)	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education (28,470)	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary (28,280)	Substitute Teachers, Short-Term (21,840)	Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education (18,410)

Health Care and Social Assistance

13.8% of total jobs | 26,840 Jobs Available | 53,783 Employers | \$33.08 Average Hourly Wage

Top 5 Skills	Customer service	Discharge planning	Educate patients	Evaluates patient care	Administer medications
Top 5 Certifications	Registered Nurse (RN)	Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	Advanced Cardiac Life Support Certification (ACLS)	Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification	Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)
Top 5 Occupations (Employment within Industry)	Registered Nurses (66,400)	Home Health and Personal Care Aides (60,370)	Nursing Assistants (40,680)	Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants (18,620)	Medical Assistants (14,440)

Manufacturing

6.0% of total jobs | 7,691 Jobs Available | 8,970 Employers | \$29.67 Average Hourly Wage

Top 5 Skills	Customer service	Developing web based applications	Welding	Financial planning	Developing new business
Top 5 Certifications	Commercial Drivers License (CDL)	Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)	CompTIA Security+ Certification	Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA)	Certified Public Accountant (CPA)
Top 5 Occupations (Employment within Industry)	Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators (15,090)	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers (8,900)	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand (8,050)	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers (7,070)	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers (6,040)

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

11.4% of total jobs | 36,257 Jobs Available | 55,363 Employers | \$56.94 Average Hourly Wage

Top 5 Skills	Customer service	Risk management	Developing new business	Data analytics	System design

Top 5 Certifications	Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)	Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA)	CompTIA Security+ Certification	Certified Public Accountant (CPA)	Systems Security Certified Practitioner (SSCP)
Top 5 Occupations (Employment within Industry)	Software Developers (54,750)	Management Analysts (37,720)	Project Management Specialists (21,080)	Accountants and Auditors (19,340)	General and Operations Managers (18,690)

Public Administration

6.5% of total jobs | 3,387 Jobs Available | 5,199 Employers | \$43.02 Average Hourly Wage

Top 5 Skills	Customer service	Crisis intervention	Word processing	Typing	Financial management
Top 5 Certifications	Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	Commercial Drivers License (CDL)	First Aid Certification	Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)	Nationally Certified Emergency Medical Technician (NREMT)
Top 5 Occupations (Employment within Industry)	Business Operations Specialists, All Other (21,560)	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers (18,530)	Managers, All Other (13,770)	Correctional Officers and Jailers (10,820)	Computer Occupations, All Other (10,670)

Retail Trade

9.5% of total jobs | 16,681 Jobs Available | 25,450 Employers | \$20.34 Average Hourly Wage

Top 5 Skills	Customer service	Inventory management	Dusting	Inventory control	Cash handling
Top 5 Certifications	Commercial Drivers License (CDL)	ASE Parts Specialist – Automobile Parts Specialist (ASE P2)	Food Safety Manager Certification	Pharmacy Technician Certification (CPhT)	Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
Top 5 Occupations (Employment within Industry)	Retail Salespersons (89,340)	Cashiers (67,250)	Stockers and Order Fillers (50,270)	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers (27,290)	Customer Service Representatives (12,420)

Transportation and Warehousing

4.3% of total jobs | 1,397 Jobs Available | 7,268 Employers | \$31.71 Average Hourly Wage

Top 5 Skills	Customer service	Delivers mail	Maintains records	Preventative maintenance	Financial reporting
Top 5 Certifications	Commercial Drivers License (CDL)	FAA Airline Transport Pilot (ATP)	Project Management Professional (PMP)	SHRM Cerified Professional (SHRM-CP)	Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR)
Top 5 Occupations (Employment within Industry)	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (31,360)	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand (19,120)	Light Truck Drivers (12,620)	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators (12,220)	Postal Service Mail Carriers (8,110)

(B) *WORKFORCE ANALYSIS*. THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST INCLUDE AN ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT WORKFORCE IN THE STATE AND WITHIN VARIOUS STATE REGIONS, INCLUDING FOR POPULATIONS WITH BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT DESCRIBED IN THE FIRST PARAGRAPH OF SECTION II. ANALYSIS MUST INCLUDE—

(I) *EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT*. PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF CURRENT EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT DATA, INCLUDING LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES, AND TRENDS IN THE STATE.

Employment and Unemployment

According to Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) data, the civilian labor force in Virginia dipped to 4,552,621 in July 2025 from the previous July. After 2 years of growth, the labor force held relatively steady over the year due to an influx of workers despite a softening of the national economy.

Table 4. Virginia Employment and Unemployment

Unemployment Statistic	July 2024	July 2025	1-Year Actual Change	1-Year Percent Change
Labor Force	4,584,953	4,552,621	-32,332	-0.7%
Number of Employed	4,455,142	4,389,908	-65,234	-1.5%
Number of Unemployed	129,811	162,713	32,902	25.3%
Unemployment Rate	2.8%	3.6%	0.8%	28.6%
Labor Force Participation Rate	65.9%	64.9%	-1.0%	-0.015%

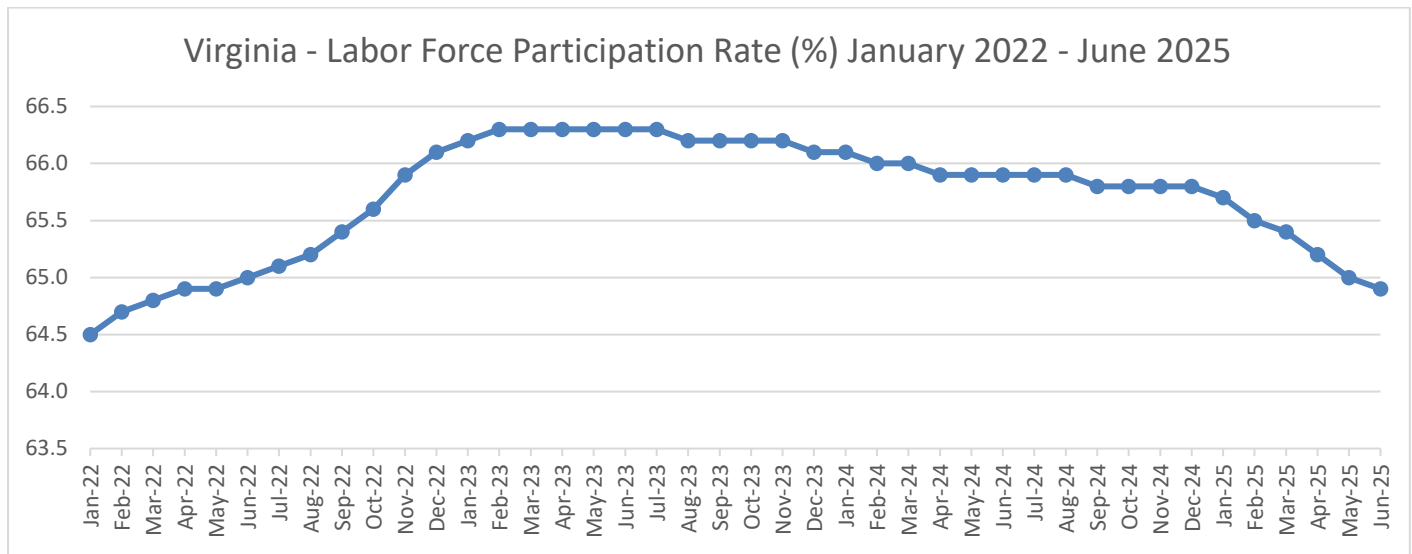
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (Seasonally Adjusted).

LAUS provides comprehensive data on the labor force based on household interviews conducted each month for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Also known as “the household survey,” LAUS distinguishes between whether a person is employed, unemployed, or not in the labor force.

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As Figure 9 tracks, labor force participation increased significantly through 2022, then peaked at very high levels in 2023 but began to level off. By mid-2024 it decreased, and even more significantly through 2025 in Virginia.

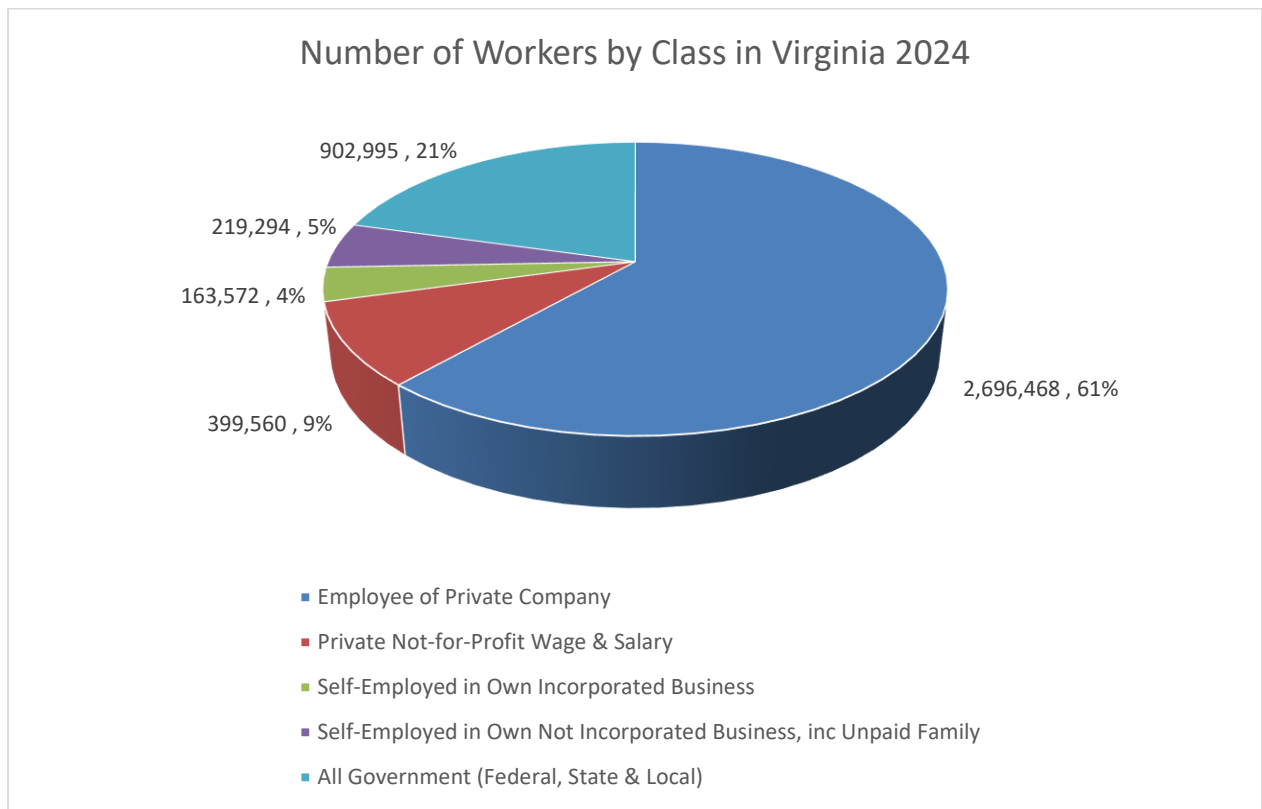
Figure 9. Virginia - Labor Force Participation Rate



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (Seasonally Adjusted)

Figure 10 below shows the number of workers by class for Virginia’s employed civilian (not covered by regular unemployment insurance) population 16 years and older (4,381,889). Most are private company workers (61%), but government workers are 21% of the total Virginia workforce, despite attrition in recent years. Nine percent are private not-for-profit wage and salary workers. The remaining 9% of workers are classified as self-employed, including both incorporated and unincorporated businesses.

Figure 10. Number of Workers by Class (Sector) in Virginia 2024



Source: US Census Bureau [American Community Survey 2024 1-Year Estimates](#)

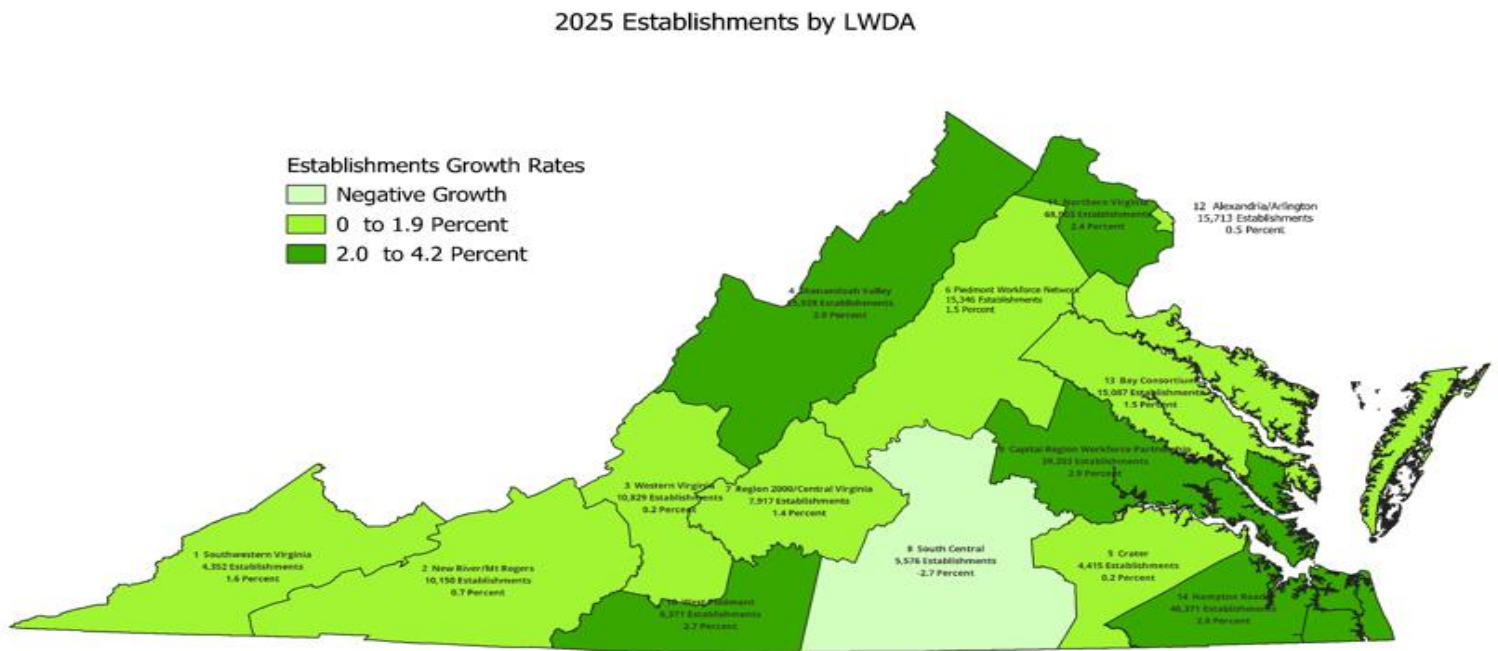
Table 5 illustrates the employment situation in the LWDAs. Approximately half of LWDAs (7 out of 15) have an unemployment rate above the state level of 3.8 percent. As of July 2025, the lowest regional unemployment rate is 3.3% in the Piedmont Region (6), well below the state average of 3.8%. The highest unemployment rate (5.3%) was measured in both the West Piedmont (10) and Greater Roanoke (3) regions. These rates reflect some regions' struggles related to the decline of manufacturing and traditional goods-producing industries. This data also shows evidence of struggles in other regions of the state.

Table 5. Employment Situation, Virginia Local Workforce Development Areas

Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) – As of July 2025	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
1) Southwest Virginia	65,005	61,639	3,366	5.2%
2) New River/Mt. Rogers	172,593	165,330	7,263	4.2%
3) Greater Roanoke	81,337	77,015	4,322	5.3%
4) Shenandoah Valley	287,479	277,364	10,115	3.5%
5) Crater Area	81,893	78,282	3,611	4.4%
6) Piedmont	239,801	231,816	7,985	3.3%
7 Central Virginia	126,558	121,398	5,160	4.1%
8) South Central	78,799	74,995	3,804	4.8%
9) Capital Region	647,463	624,033	23,430	3.6%
10) West Piedmont	81,337	77,015	4,322	5.3%
11) Northern Virginia	1,240,076	1,194,986	45,090	3.6%
12) Alexandria/Arlington	258,110	248,706	9,404	3.6%
13) Bay Consortium	284,590	273,773	10,817	3.8%
14) Hampton Roads	860,875	826,515	34,360	4.0%
Virginia	4,590,043	4,415,242	174,801	3.8%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (Not Seasonally Adjusted).

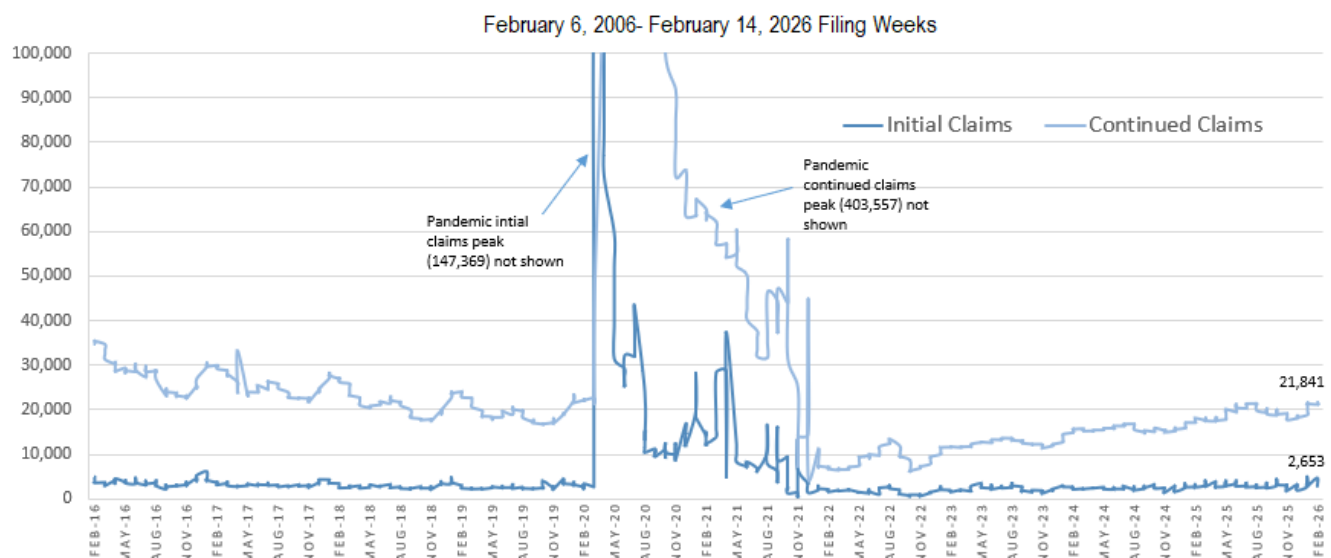
Figures 11-13, below, showcase how concentrated Virginia's employment, population, and establishments is in the Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads, and CapThe continued story of concentration of population, establishments, employment, and wages in LWDAs like Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads, and Capital Region Workforce Partnership. Figure 11 shows establishment number and growth rate in each LWDA. The areas with the highest percentage change in number of establishments included the South Central region, which is encouraging given that the area comprises a small proportion of the state population, meaning that the economy in this area shows potential for an uptick.

Figure 11. Payroll Businesses in Virginia LWDA Regions

Source: Virginia Works, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Q1-2025

Unemployment Insurance

Figures 12 and Table 5 below show Virginia Works data on weekly initial and continued claims over a twenty-year span and in more recent filing weeks. Claims trended gradually upward during fiscal year 2025 but have maintained what are considered generally normal levels. The benefit week ending February 14, 2026, saw 2,653 initial claims and 21,841 continued claims. For context, during the May 16, 2020, filing week - and the height of pandemic shutdowns - continued weeks peaked at just over 400,000 claims.

Figure 12. Virginia Weekly Unemployment Insurance Claims Activity, 2/2016 – 2/2026

Source: Virginia Works. Not seasonally adjusted.

Table 5. Virginia Unemployment Claims Activity Comparison

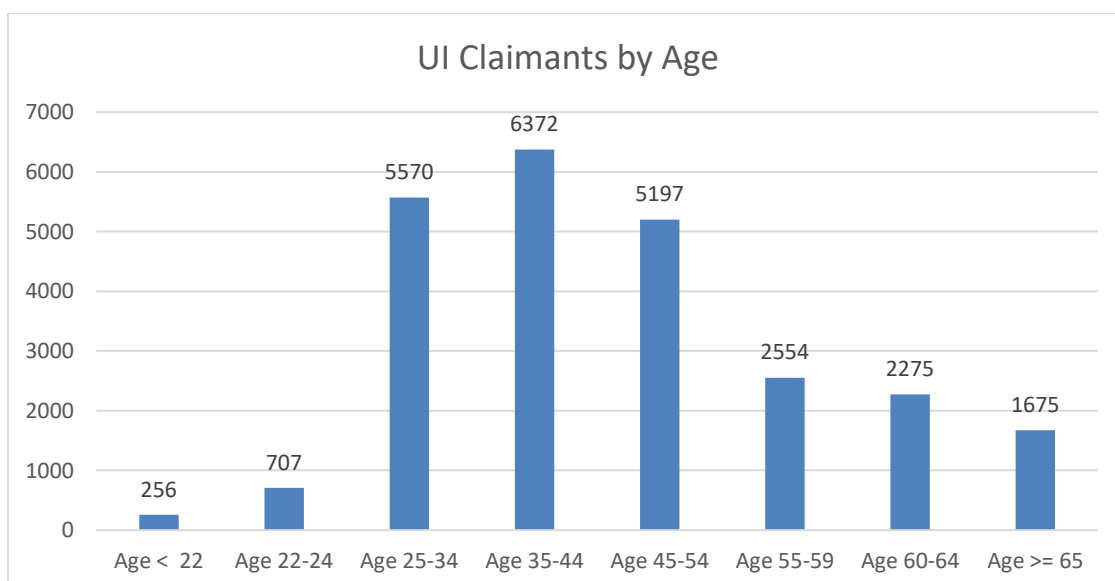
Unemployment Claims Activity Comparison				
	Week Ending 02/14/2026	Week Ending 02/07/2026	Week Ending 01/31/2026	Last Year 02/15/2025
Initial Claims	2,653	4,592	2,683	2,899
Initial Change (%)	-1,939 (-42.2%)	+1,909 (+71.2%)	-980 (-26.8%)	-246 (-8.5%)
Continued Claims	21,841	21,291	21,403	17,579
Continued Change (%)	+550 (+2.6%)	-112 (-0.5%)	+177 (+0.8%)	+4,262 (+24.2%)

Source: Virginia Works, ETA-539 report

There were 2,653 initial claims filed during filing week, which ended on February 14, 2026. Over the last three years, Virginia has experienced some of the lowest initial unemployment claims in decades, consistently remaining well below the long-term historical average of 5,500 per week. In PY 2024 (from July 2024 to June 2025), about \$307 million was paid in unemployment benefits for 148,809 initial claims and 1,055,795 continued claims. The average weekly benefit amount received by claimants for the first quarter of 2025 was \$352. Compared to a statewide average weekly wage of \$1,617.94, this made for a wage replacement rate of 21.8%. As the continued claims graph indicates above, the total number of continued claimants increased year since 2023. Claimants increased by 28.7% in the program year 2025 as compared to program year 2024, and by 23.4% in program year 2024 as compared to program year 2023.

While most labor force participation measures indicate lower participation for female individuals in Virginia, females made up 53% of initial claims in June 2025. Generally, the industries and occupations with the largest number of claims tend to have more female employees on average (as indicated in Tables 6 and 7), which likely contributes to the higher number of females claimants compared to male claimants overall.

Figure 13 examines unemployment insurance claimants in Virginia by age. For most of the “primary age” categories, the number of claimants is relatively even for June 2025.

Figure 13. Virginia UI Claimants by Age (June 2025)

Source: Virginia Works ETA 203 report

The top five occupations by number of claimants for 2025 have remained the same year-over-year, with Management and Office & Administrative Support switching the top two spots. The top five industries by number of claimants for 2025 have also remained the same from last year, with Manufacturing and Retail Trade switching fourth and fifth places.

Table 6. Top 5 Occupations in Virginia by Number of Claimants

Top 5 Occupations by Number of Claimants			
June 2025 Occupations	Claimants	June 2024 Occupations	Claimants
Management	3,426	Office and Administrative Support	2,976
Office and Administrative Support	3,391	Management	2,832
Computer and Math	2,675	Computer and Math	1,480
Business and Financial Operations	2,202	Business and Financial Operations	1,415
Sales and Related	1,386	Sales and Related	1,223
Total, All Occupations	24,617	Total, All Occupations	18,459

Source: Virginia Works ETA 203 report

Table 7. Top 5 Industries in Virginia by Number of Claimants

Top 5 Industries by Number of Claimants			
June 2025 Industries	Claimants	June 2024 Industries	Claimants
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	4,241	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,064
Administration and Support, Waste Management, and Remedial Services	1,859	Administration and Support, Waste Management, and Remedial Services	1,711
Healthcare and Social Assistance	1,605	Healthcare and Social Assistance	1,237
Manufacturing	1,401	Retail Trade	1,136
Retail Trade	1,307	Manufacturing	1,051
Total, All Industries	24,617	Total, All Industries	18,915

Source: Virginia Works ETA 203 report

(II) LABOR MARKET TRENDS. PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF KEY LABOR MARKET TRENDS, INCLUDING EXISTING INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS.

Labor Market Trends

Virginia labor market conditions in PY 2025 remained resilient and ready to adapt to new economic challenges, including rapid technological change and an uncertain federal employment outlook. Job growth trends continue to indicate slowing conditions. As the overheated labor market of recent years cooled, labor markets were less tight, with labor force participation trending lower.

However, Virginia's wages finally outpaced inflation in the period from July 2024 to July 2025. During this time, private-sector average weekly earnings rose by nearly ten percent, while consumer price inflation shrank. With increasing inflation in 2026, Virginia continues to consider affordability a key challenge for residents across the Commonwealth.

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Indicators of job dislocation were moderate during FY 2025. Virginia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in July 2025 edged up by 0.1 points to 3.6 percent, which is 'full employment' to many. The number of layoffs and discharges in Virginia was 37,000 in June, which was up by nearly a quarter over the year but down by 23 percent from five years earlier. Also, in line with historical trends, Virginia Works announced that 2,624 unemployment insurance weekly initial claims were filed during the week ending August 09, 2025, which was well below the long-term historical average of 5,500 per week. It is likely that the federal government layoffs played a large part in the June numbers.

The number of Virginia job openings continued to show strength, totaling 246,000 open positions in June 2025. Comparing open positions to the number of unemployed indicates that there were 0.7 unemployed per job opening in the Commonwealth during that time, compared to nearly one unemployed per job opening nationwide. JOLTS data also indicates that Virginia's churn rate (a measure of movement from job to job) has trended downward in recent years, driven by slowing trends in hires and job quits, with moderate layoffs. However, the federal government sector remains a stark exception to this general rule, Virginia lost over 23,000 federal jobs in 2025.

Technology, including Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Virginia's heavy concentration of federal government contractors, technology firms, and data centers, particularly in the Northern Virginia corridor, means that new technology, including AI, adoption may impact parts of the Commonwealth's local economy faster and more deeply than in many other parts of the country, as indicated by a January 2026 study commissioned by the Virginia Chamber of Commerce (<https://vachamber.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Virginia-AI-Report-Final263.pdf>). Anticipated use of new, potentially disruptive technologies by businesses more than doubled, rising from seven percent to 16 percent. Alongside potential productivity gains and new job creation, many of the administrative, analytical, and support roles that form the backbone of Virginia's workforce significant pressure as organizations integrate technology tools into their operations. Workers displaced from stable, well-paying mid-level technical and clerical roles may struggle to find comparable opportunities, especially outside the Northern Virginia tech hub, and AI-driven automation in warehousing, transportation, and customer service could affect workers across Virginia who have fewer local alternatives and less access to the kind of retraining infrastructure available in urban centers. Rural communities, already contending with economic headwinds, may feel the disruption most acutely without targeted investment in education and transitional support.

Federal Government Impacts

2025 brought deep uncertainty for workers and communities across the Commonwealth. Federal reduction-in-force announcements, rising layoffs, resignations, and a wave of retirements created instability in households, neighborhoods, and local economies in Virginia, with Northern Virginia workers experiencing the most intense disruption. Federal workers and contractors in Virginia faced sudden job loss, anxiety about the future, and difficult decisions about retirement or career transitions as federal workforce changes unfolded.

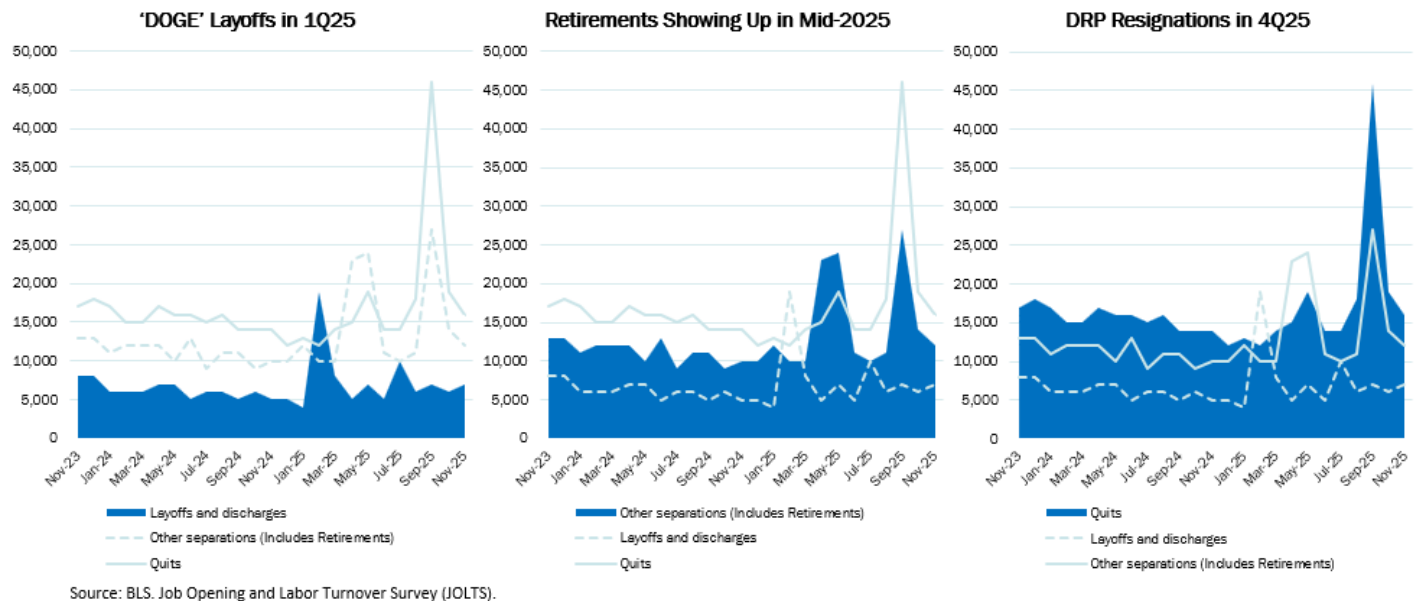
According to BLS data, federal layoffs peaked sharply in February 2025 before easing later in the year. Retirements — captured in the federal government's "Other separations" category — nearly doubled in April and May, reflecting both planned and accelerated exits by employees navigating uncertain conditions. Federal hiring hit ten-year lows in June and July, leaving thousands of vacant roles unfilled and reducing opportunities for both new entrants and displaced workers seeking reemployment.

Charts 14-16 illustrate that the drop in federal positions was not driven by layoffs alone but by a combination of layoffs, early or unexpected retirements, and a significant rise in resignations toward the end of 2025. Some of these quits may reflect workers who delayed their departures to receive severance, while others chose to leave during prolonged furloughs or in response to workplace instability. The federal hiring freeze

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implemented in January 2025, further strained the workforce by limiting job mobility, slowing backfilling, and reducing income flows to communities.

Figures 14-16. Federal Government Labor Turnover During 2025



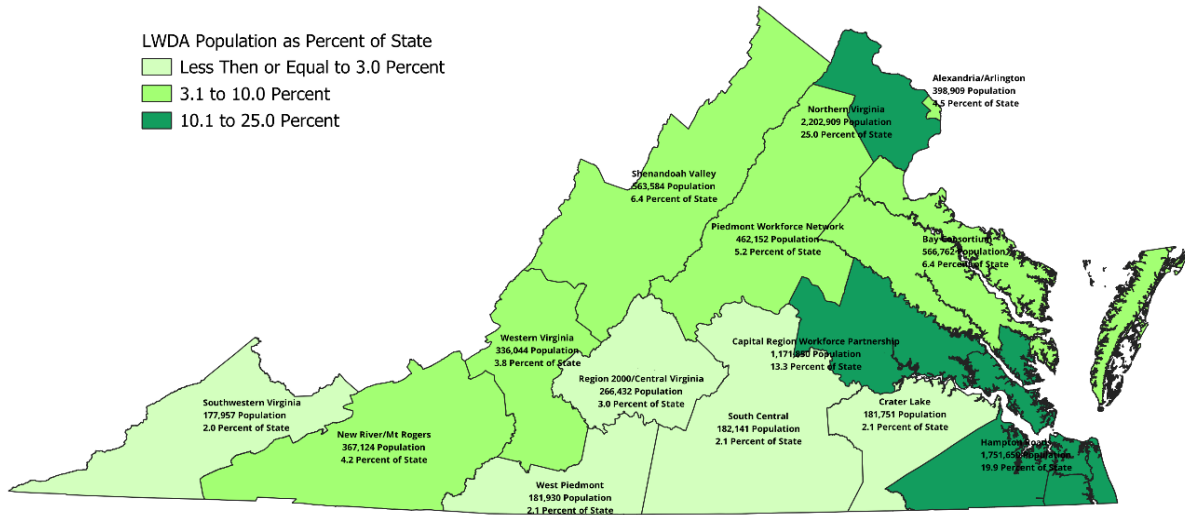
Together, technological and layoff trends continue to impact economic output, affect consumer confidence, and create ripple effects for families and regions reliant on federal employment. Amid these challenges, Virginia’s state and local government employment growth during PYs 2024 and 2025 provided some stability, offering new opportunities and helping to bolster the Commonwealth’s overall workforce resilience during a turbulent period.

III. EDUCATION AND SKILL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE

Virginia’s Workforce Demographics

US Census Bureau figures show that the population of Virginia grew by 0.9% (76,510) to 8,811,195 between July 1, 2023, and July 1, 2024. Of this population, 2.5 million self-reported as male during that time and 2.6 million self-reported as female.

Figure 17 shows the population density by LWDA region. Virginia’s population is most dense in the Northern Virginia, Capital, and Hampton Roads regions. Much of the state remains quite rural, which represents both a potential challenge and an opportunity for those regions to develop cutting-edge service delivery and business partnerships.

Figure 17. Virginia Population Density by LWDA Region

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The 2024 Census indicated Virginia's population over 65 increased from 1,498,931 in 2023 to 1,550,385 in 2024. The percentage of people 65 and over increased their share of total population moving from 17.2 percent in 2023 to 17.6 in 2024. This aligns with national aging trends, as well.

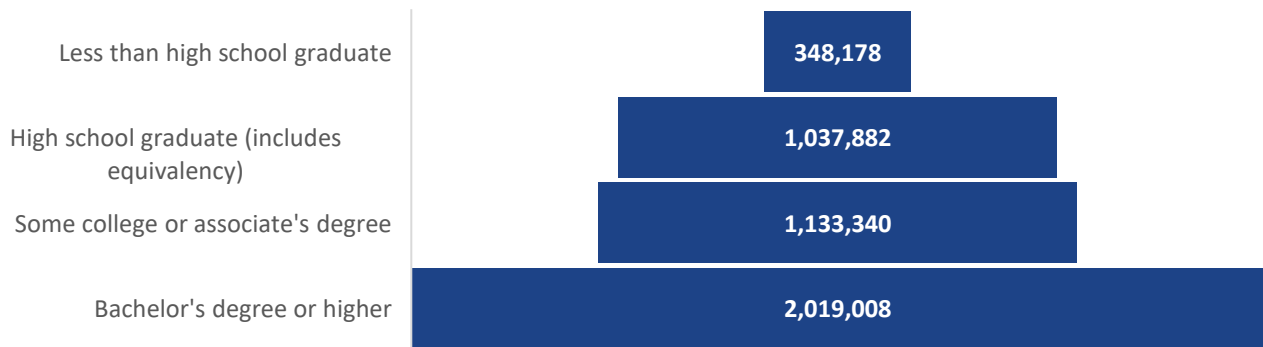
The racial makeup of the state shifted slightly during this time as well. The percentage of White individuals in the Commonwealth decreased from 59.8 to 59.3. The Black or African American population also decreased from 18.4 to 18.2. Asian percentage increased from 6.9 to 7.2% in the one-year period. Although not race, but ethnicity, persons of any race identifying as Hispanic increased from 11.1 % to 11.6%.

Educational Attainment

As outlined in Figure 17, 2.5 million Virginians over 16 do not have at least a bachelor's degree, as compared to the 2 million that do. This represents an opportunity for the workforce system to engage with those individuals if they are interested in pursuing further post-secondary credentials.

Figure 18. Virginia Population Educational Attainment (16+)

Population By Educational Attainment (16+)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 8 provides an overview of how educational attainment is distributed across the various LWDAs.

Table 8. Virginia Regional Labor Supply by Educational Attainment

Local Workforce Development Area	Potential Candidates	Percent of Total Candidates
Southwestern Virginia (LWDA 1)	11,306 total	
Less than High School	186	1.64%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	2,662	23.54%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	773	6.84%
Vocational School Certificate	509	4.50%
Associate's Degree	1,162	10.27%
Bachelor's Degree	3,294	29.12%
Master's Degree	2,298	20.32%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	422	3.73%
New River/Mt. Rogers (LWDA 2)	12,338 total	
Less than High School	237	1.87%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	3,301	26.02%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	912	7.20%
Vocational School Certificate	568	4.48%
Associate's Degree	1,367	10.78%
Bachelor's Degree	3,497	27.57%
Master's Degree	2,361	18.61%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	95	.075%
Greater Roanoke (LWDA 3)	12823 total	

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Local Workforce Development Area	Potential Candidates	Percent of Total Candidates
Less than High School	228	1.78%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	3,333	25.98%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	890	6.94%
Vocational School Certificate	627	4.89%
Associate's Degree	1,411	11.00%
Bachelor's Degree	3,514	27.39%
Master's Degree	2,379	18.54%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	441	3.44%
Shenandoah Valley (LWDA 4)	11935 total	
Less than High School	157	1.32%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	2,609	21.85%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	766	6.42%
Vocational School Certificate	547	4.58%
Associate's Degree	1,220	10.22%
Bachelor's Degree	3,627	30.38%
Master's Degree	2,552	21.37%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	457	3.83%
Piedmont Workforce Network (LWDA 6)	13148 total	
Less than High School	164	1.23%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	2,775	20.86%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	828	6.22%
Vocational School Certificate	-	-
Associate's Degree	1,368	10.29%
Bachelor's Degree	4,177	31.40%
Master's Degree	2,908	21.86%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	512	3.85%
Central VA (LWDA 7)	11,714 total	
Less than High School	168	1.43%

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Local Workforce Development Area	Potential Candidates	Percent of Total Candidates
High School Diploma or Equivalent	2,750	23.47%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	778	6.64%
Vocational School Certificate	534	4.56%
Associate's Degree	1,239	10.57%
Bachelor's Degree	3,446	29.41%
Master's Degree	2,364	20.17%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	435	3.71%
South Central (LWDA 8)	12,009 total	
Less than High School	176	1.47%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	2,788	23.21%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	790	6.58%
Vocational School Certificate	549	4.57%
Associate's Degree	1,278	10.64%
Bachelor's Degree	3,540	29.47%
Master's Degree	2,440	20.31%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	448	3.73%
Capital Region Workforce Partnership (LWDA 9)	13,371 total	
Less than High School	181	1.35%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	2,991	22.36%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	907	6.78%
Vocational School Certificate	612	4.58%
Associate's Degree	1,456	10.89%
Bachelor's Degree	4,044	30.23%
Master's Degree	2,702	20.20%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	478	3.58%
Northern Virginia (LWDA 11)	14,548 total	
Less than High School	157	1.08%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	2,637	18.12%

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Local Workforce Development Area	Potential Candidates	Percent of Total Candidates
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	844	5.80%
Vocational School Certificate	578	3.97%
Associate's Degree	1,400	9.62%
Bachelor's Degree	4,737	32.55%
Master's Degree	3,588	24.66%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	607	4.17%
Alexandria/Arlington (LWDA 7)	12,916 total	
Less than High School	142	1.10%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	2,347	18.16%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	742	5.74%
Vocational School Certificate	520	4.02%
Associate's Degree	1,210	9.37%
Bachelor's Degree	4,219	32.65%
Master's Degree	3,164	24.49%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	572	4.43%
Bay Consortium (LWDA 13)	14,333	
Less than High School	188	1.31%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	2,966	20.69%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	904	6.31%
Vocational School Certificate	634	4.42%
Associate's Degree	1,456	10.16%
Bachelor's Degree	4,483	31.27%
Master's Degree	3,146	21.94%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	556	3.88%
Crater Area (LWDA V)	11,703 total	
Less than High School	157	1.32%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	2,676	22.52%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	769	6.47%

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Local Workforce Development Area	Potential Candidates	Percent of Total Candidates
Vocational School Certificate	-	-
Associate's Degree	1,253	10.54%
Bachelor's Degree	3,569	30.03%
Master's Degree	2,470	20.78%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	449	3.78%
Hampton Roads (LWDA 14)	25,580 total	
Less than High School	307	1.20%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	5,678	22.20%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	1,702	6.65%
Vocational School Certificate	1,201	4.70%
Associate's Degree	2,867	11.21%
Bachelor's Degree	7,660	29.95%
Master's Degree	5,223	20.42%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	942	3.68%
West Piedmont (LWDA 10)	12,434 total	
Less than High School	218	1.75%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	3,194	25.68%
Some College or Some Technical or Vocational School	857	6.90%
Vocational School Certificate	608	4.89%
Associate's Degree	1,403	11.28%
Bachelor's Degree	3,388	27.24%
Master's Degree	2,339	18.80%
Doctorate Degree or Specialized Degree (e.g., MD, DDS)	427	3.43%

Source: Virginia Works, Virginia Workforce Connection

As seen below in Table 9, candidates on Virginia Workforce Connection, Virginia's labor exchange site, tend to be much more experienced compared to what is required by many job postings. Virginia must find a way to increase the number of candidates for employers who have the highest number of openings, such as the employers advertising for occupations listed in Figure 3. To respond to this need, Virginia Works has launched its *Returnships* program, an employer-driven reimbursement-based grant opportunity that will connect seasoned professionals (40+) with career training and opportunities. Virginia has a well-trained workforce that is eager to find new positions, and this program, along with many other specialty programs in the Commonwealth, are designed to support those workers.

Table 9. Estimated Labor Supply and Demand for Selected Occupations

Subject	Job Openings	Potential Candidates	Potential Candidates per Job Opening
Statewide Total	175,259	28,833	0.16
Top 6 Occupations by Job Openings			
Registered Nurses	9,139	97	0.01
Computer Systems Engineers/Architects	8,259	876	0.11
Retail Salespersons	3,256	304	0.09
Software Developers	3,669	473	0.13
Computer Occupations, All Other	8,259	876	0.11
Customer Service Representatives	3,960	1,316	0.33
Educational Attainment			
No Minimum Education Requirement	847	0	0.00
Less than High School	0	581	-
High School Diploma or Equivalent	4,552	8,181	1.80
1 Year of College or a Technical or Vocational School	23	966	42.00
2 Years of College or a Technical or Vocational School	29	836	28.83
3 Years of College or a Technical or Vocational School	31	340	10.97
Some College	0	1	-
Vocational School Certificate	67	1,444	21.55
Associate's Degree	1,250	3,613	2.89
Bachelor's Degree	4,213	7,290	1.73
Master's Degree	893	4,781	5.35
Doctorate Degree	191	633	3.31
Specialized Degree (e.g. MD, DDS)	47	159	3.38
Not Specified	163,116	6	0.00

Subject	Job Openings	Potential Candidates	Potential Candidates per Job Opening
Work Experience			
Less than 1 year	641	1,544	2.41
1 Year to 2 Years	170,505	592	0.00
2 Years to 5 Years	1,578	1,900	1.20
5 Years to 10 Years	459	3,500	7.63
More than 10 Years	174	21,297	122.40

Source: Virginia Works, Virginia Workforce Connection

(IV) COMPARISON OF ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYTICAL CONCLUSION. DESCRIBE AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR MEETING HIRING, EDUCATION, AND SKILLS NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE ECONOMY COMPARED TO THE ASSETS AVAILABLE IN THE LABOR FORCE IN THE STATE.

Overall labor market conditions

As outlined in Parts II and III above, Virginia is a large, economically diverse economy, with legacy strengths in service industries like finance, information, and government. These industries faced headwinds during the end of PY 2024, with the prospect of continued uncertainty due to economic cooling, technology-related uncertainty, and federal layoffs. As a result, the economic attainment and wage rate of dislocated workers continues to shift. Among workers age 25 and older, jobless rates are generally higher for people with less formal education. However, the U.S. unemployment rate increased over the year for those with more education

Virginia continues to model a responsive and continually improving workforce system underpinning all its programs, particularly those in direct response to major labor market shifts. With a focus on sector strategies and career pathways initiatives that align with its five goals, Virginia Works assists employers in hiring for key occupations. The workforce system also helps employers retain workers through incumbent worker training, allowing them to fill positions internally by expanding the skills and education of their current staff. Virginia Workforce Connection, the Commonwealth's labor exchange website, lets employers post jobs, review applicants, and take advantage of many other helpful features. These features allow workforce development professionals, employers, and job seekers alike to view employer needs by industry sector or occupation.

Virginia Works and its partners host job fairs and other recruiting solutions to promote employers to targeted communities. Virginia Works is closely aligning this work with Governor Spanberger's *Executive Order Number Five: Establishing an Economic Resiliency Task Force to Address Impacts of Federal Actions on Virginia's Economy and Workforce*. This Executive Order tasks Virginia's government to develop programs to support dislocated federal workers, contractors, and other impacted individuals. Virginia Works is leading on this effort, launching Virginia Forward in early 2026, a website dedicated to providing resources to those federal workers. Agency leadership is conducting a statewide listening tour, engaging dislocated federal workers, contractors, and others impacted by the federal job cuts. The agency also partnered with the District of Columbia (DC) and Maryland workforce system leaders to launch *Pivot with a Purpose*, a one-day career event hosted in DC, focused specifically on mid-to senior-level professionals navigating career transitions, including federal employees. This event allowed workers to network with employers, learn about workforce system services, and begin their transition into new roles that fit their skills sets. Due to this event's success, Virginia Works will continue to hold similar events across the regions of Virginia most impacted by federal layoffs.

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Virginia also provides a wide array of labor market information to its partners and stakeholders to inform decision-making and enable employers to strategically build their workforce for success. Through sector strategies, Virginia's workforce system focuses on high-demand industries and occupations and directly align occupational skills training and other workforce development services with the needs of those employers. The Commonwealth's workforce system leads several sector-specific programs that respond to regional employer needs, such as: *Facilitating Career Pivots into High-Demand Occupations*; *Employer-Led Training for High-Demand Sectors*; *Initiative to Strengthen Regional Healthcare Workforce*; *Maritime and Nuclear Workforce Accelerator*; and *Advanced Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Apprenticeship Accelerator*. Many of these programs also support the Commonwealth's Goal 3: Lead the Nation in Work-Based Learning and Registered Apprenticeship. Finally, Virginia's workforce system teams with other state agencies to bring about a more skilled workforce with initiatives like transferable licensure. It also works with K-12 schools, community colleges, and universities to align educational programming with future employer needs.

Virginia's workforce system focuses on reaching all of Virginia's labor force by targeting traditionally underserved segments of the population and communities. This includes aiding groups like veterans and the previously incarcerated. Virginia's workforce system also provides services to discouraged workers on the sidelines, to young workers who are just starting their careers and to older workers who may need help staging their second act. The Commonwealth continues to add thousands of jobs every month, and many Virginians benefit from the services of Virginia's workforce system that help them plan their career path along with needed skills and education that may help them earn enough income to own a home, start a family, or enjoy their retirement years in economic security. Improving Virginia's labor force also means delivering high value services to parts of the state that have often been underserved, like rural areas and inner cities. Together, these trends show that Virginia continues to navigate some economic challenges but relies upon its workforce strengths and economic diversity for continued resilience and adaptability in the face of evolving labor market conditions.

B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

Vision

Virginia's workforce system empowers every Virginian to access and advance in quality careers and connects employers to top talent that strengthens business competitiveness and innovation in the Commonwealth's dynamic economy. Together, we operate a responsive and accessible workforce system and partner network, designed to expand opportunity and support all communities across the Commonwealth, with nation-leading innovation and a focus on people at its core.

Goals

GOAL 1	Prepare Every Virginian for Quality Careers Equip Virginians with the technical and durable skills and credentials needed to access and advance in career pathways that provide competitive, family-sustaining wages & benefits; a safe and healthy working environment; and a visible trajectory for continuous learning and meaningful skill use, with particular focus on high-demand industries and populations facing structural barriers.

GOAL 2	Connect Virginia's Employers to Top Talent Directly connect Virginia businesses to a ~~skilled workforce with skills matched to their needs~~ and enable businesses to effectively attract, develop, and retain Virginians , supporting the growth of the Commonwealth's leading-edge economy and competitiveness as the best place to do business.
GOAL 3	Lead the Nation in Work-Based Learning and Registered Apprenticeship Scale Registered Apprenticeship , on-the-job training, paid internships, and other work-based learning models to serve as primary pathways to employment and reemployment, expanding earn-and-learn opportunities for every Virginian .
GOAL 4	Operate an Accessible, Responsive, and Innovative Workforce System Reduce structural, administrative, geographic, and technology barriers that can prevent Virginians from accessing services, with the Virginia Works network of partners integrating and collaborating across programs and service models. Pilot and implement innovative and data-driven programs, services, and initiatives that allow for a continuously learning system with people at its center.
GOAL 5	Expand Outreach, Engagement, and Workforce Resilience Increase access, engagement, and outcomes in Virginia's workforce system for underserved populations, job seekers facing systemic barriers, and individuals impacted by industry disruption , including former federal workers and contractors, through specialized outreach, navigation, and wraparound supports.

Virginia's workforce development system is committed to providing all Virginians with opportunities to receive high-quality, flexible, and responsive education and training for in-demand jobs. System coordination allows the Commonwealth to provide better services and training; effectively measure outcomes; optimize its programs; and create good, high-paying jobs for Virginians.

To achieve our goal of preparing Virginia's workers for current and future career pathways, we will ensure that all programs are responsive to individuals' needs. We will collaborate across the system to ensure all Virginians—including individuals with barriers to employment, veterans, unemployed workers, and youth—have access to high-quality services. Virginia Works and its local partners will provide in-person and virtual service delivery, educational programming, and employer engagement activities.

All the services and programs described in the Plan are expected to meet or exceed Virginia's 6 Core Workforce Development Metrics, which are:

1. Number of participants trained

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2. Total number of participant job placements
3. Total program cost
4. Participant job retention rate
5. Program cost per placement (or participant if program does not place individuals)
6. Starting and progressed wage growth

Additional information regarding these metrics is found in our Systemwide Workforce Metrics at the Local Level policy, accessible here: viriniaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/VBWD_24-01_Systemwide_Workforce_Metrics_at_the_Local_Level_FINAL.docx.pdf.

Performance Goals

A template for Virginia's core program performance baselines can be found in Appendix 1. Final performance measures for future years are negotiated pending final rules, review, and approval by the administering state agency and the governor's office.

Assessment

Virginia's workforce system creates and scales quality workforce development programs to better equip Virginians with the skills they need to succeed in the workforce of the future. By creating responsive programs that are centered in sector strategies and developing a WBL approach to training, the Commonwealth anticipates workers will have the opportunity to develop skills that meet future employer demand.

To do this, Virginia Works collaborates across all key partners to engage in regular program evaluation, which involves:

- Confirming a shared definition of what people-centered workforce development means for the Commonwealth with common goals and outcomes;
- Balancing centralized strategy and regional flexibility by consolidating some programs and processes across the Commonwealth, while providing guidelines that allow regions to flexibly address their unique worker and employer needs;
- Providing goals, metrics, performance incentives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that encourage programs to stay connected and aligned with employer needs; and
- Sharing data strategy and coordination between workforce development programs with a centralized portal for data gathering and sharing, while developing a longer-term data and analytics strategy that increases responsiveness and accountability.

Virginia Works will continue to monitor these evaluation measures to ensure they accurately reflect the Commonwealth's priorities.

In between these large-scale evaluations, Virginia uses several strategies to assess the overall effectiveness of its workforce development system. These assessments include performance evaluation and continuous improvement strategies at the state and local system levels; at the plan implementation level; and at the program level.

Virginia uses a combination of levers to ensure it maintains an effective evaluation and feedback mechanism to drive system improvements. Code of Virginia §2.2-214.3 delineates the workforce responsibilities of the Secretary of Labor. This legislation established several evaluation opportunities and assessment mandates for Virginia's workforce system.

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The Secretary of Labor is required to:

- Conduct annual evaluations of the performance of workforce development and training programs and activities and their administrators and providers, using the performance measures developed through the strategic planning process. The evaluations shall include, to the extent feasible:
 - A comparison of the per-person costs for each program or activity
 - A comparative rating of each program or activity based on its success in meeting program objectives
 - An explanation of the extent to which each agency's appropriation requests incorporate the data reflected in the cost comparison described in clause (i) and the comparative rating described in clause (ii)
- Submit biennial reports, which shall be included in the governor's executive budget submissions to the General Assembly, on improvements in the coordination of workforce development efforts statewide. The reports shall identify:
 - Program success rates in relation to performance measures established by the Virginia Board of Workforce Development (VBWD)
 - Obstacles to program and resource coordination
 - Strategies for facilitating statewide program and resource coordination
- Establish measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the local workforce development boards and conduct annual evaluations of the effectiveness of each local workforce development board. As part of the evaluation process, the Governor shall recommend to such board specific best management practices

In addition, according to Code of Virginia §2.2-2472, the VBWD is required to:

- Evaluate the extent to which the state's workforce development programs emphasize education and training opportunities that align with employers' workforce needs and labor market statistics, and report the findings of this analysis to the governor every two years
- Conduct a review of budgets, which must be submitted annually to the Board by each agency conducting federal and state funded career and technical and adult education and workforce development programs that identify the agency's sources and expenditures of administrative, workforce education and training, and support services for workforce development programs.

C. STATE STRATEGY

How These Strategies Were Developed

The Virginia Commonwealth University Center for Public Policy in the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs facilitated conversations with representatives from the Office of the Governor, the Workforce Braintrust, the VBWD, Virginia Works, VEC, VDOE, VDSS, DARS, DBVI, and LWDAs to collaboratively develop strategies for implementing workforce development programs in Virginia under Governor Spanberger's Administration. These strategies were developed to be consistent with the key priorities outlined in the Training and Employment Guidance Letter NO. 07-25 released January 26, 2026.

In 2025, Virginia Works also partnered with other agencies that work with the workforce system (VEC, DARS, DOC, DBVI, DPOR, Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), VDOE, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), GoVirginia, VCCS, Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP),

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Virginia Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity (SBSD), Department of Veterans Services (DVS), VDSS, Virginia Department of Health Professions (VDHP), and Virginia Innovation and Partnership Collaboration (VPIC)) to create a strategic plan, with several “Moonshot 2030” goals that helped inform the Plan’s strategies and goals. This strategic plan (<https://virginiaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Virginia-Works-for-Everyone-Strategic-Plan-2025-2030-v1-3.pdf>), along with its Moonshots, is a living document that continues to shift as Virginia Works identifies new opportunities to better support Virginia’s workers and align with the Governor’s vision.

The following Plan section showcases how these strategies are continually deployed to support the Commonwealth’s overarching vision of a system that empowers all Virginians while connecting employers to top talent. More details about the activities aligned with each strategy can be found in Section 2 of this plan

Strategies for PYs 2024-2027

Goal 1: Prepare Every Virginian for Quality Careers

Equip Virginians with the technical and durable skills and credentials needed to access and advance in career pathways that provide competitive, family-sustaining wages & benefits; a safe and healthy working environment; and a visible trajectory for continuous learning and meaningful skill use, with particular focus on high-demand industries and populations facing structural barriers.

Key Strategies:

- Create, pilot, implement, and continuously refine a set of leading-edge, people-centered career services applied across all programs, designed to meet workers where they are and address their needs. These services range from self-directed to fully facilitated workshops and are intended to empower the individual with career navigation information and tools relevant to their experience, needs, and aspirations at every level of their career journey. The creation of these modernized career services approaches is underway in partnership across key WIOA programs (Rapid Response, Title III Wagner-Peyser) and with broader system partners in Virginia (i.e. community college system). Some examples include:
 - Enhanced self-guided toolkits for job seekers starting their first career, navigating a layoff or other pivot, looking to gain training and skills, and more;
 - A *Career Connections* e-newsletter that includes a worker-focused success story; relevant program information; helpful strategies related to skill-building, interviewing, and other career services; and a summary of upcoming hiring events, sent monthly to over 150,000 Virginians registered in the Virginia Workforce Connection.
 - Guided workshops and other offerings for individuals needing fast orientation to programs and resources, such as dislocated workers;
 - Virtual job clubs and sector salons, designed as communities of practice for active job seekers wanting sustained support and connection, particularly within specific sectors.
- Pilot upskilling options on technology literacy and skill development that meet Virginia’s workers where they are. This includes the adaptation of VirginiaHasJobs.com into a series of Skills Hub pages built in partnership with employers and sector coalitions (i.e. Skilled Trades with Virginia’s unions, Fair Chance with DOC) and expansion of “Get Clearance Ready” training for security clearance-required roles.

Additional examples of this work include:

- Virginia’s future-ready “moonshot” team, comprised of representatives from Virginia Community College System, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, Virginia Department of Corrections, Virginia Department of Education, Virginia Department of

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Veteran Services, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Virginia Office of Education Economics, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, Virginia Department of Social Services, Department of Professional & Occupational Regulation, and Virginia Works The partners are working together to support and advance AI literacy and digital literacy initiatives across the career journey. One initiative the team launched is Virginia Works' partnership with Google to provide access to 10,000 free credentials on AI and prompt engineering via Grow with Google courses that provide self-guided technology training. These courses are accessible here: virginiahasjobs.com/ai

- AI Part II: Into the Classroom is a statewide professional learning initiative focused on expanding AI literacy and instructional confidence for Virginia's classroom educators and support staff. Additional information is available here: vassonline.org/ai-part-ii-into-the-classroom/#:~:text=The%20Virginia%20Association%20of%20School,priorities%2C%20and%20local%20division%20needs.
- Virginia Works is working with DHCD, DOC, and other system partners to expand broadband access and digital skill-building in partnership to ensure all Virginians can participate in digital learning and remote work, including within correctional facilities.

Goal 2: Connect Virginia's Employers to Top Talent

Directly connect Virginia businesses to a workforce with skills matched to their needs and enable businesses to effectively attract, develop, and retain Virginians in quality careers.

Key Strategies:

- Work with employers to train for the jobs of the future by aligning skill-building initiatives and sector strategies aligned to Virginia's economic development strategy, which prioritizes knowledge work, logistics, and manufacturing, as well as the non-traded sectors of health sciences, construction, and education
 - Virginia Works is leading implementation of six sector-focused Communities of Practice, informal groups that help staff become better subject matter experts on industry trends and needs, aligning training content with evolving employer needs across high-demand industries.
 - The Maritime and Nuclear Workforce Accelerator program was launched in late 2025, which is an employer-driven training reimbursement program focused on career pathways in shipbuilding and ship repair; nuclear energy; and allied manufacturing. Building on the best-in-class approach of VEDP's Talent Accelerator program, this \$2M program funded by Governor's WIOA Title I Reserve funds starts with employer needs assessment to build the workforce system's industry knowledge and partnerships and define sector strategies that support these two major components of Virginia's economic development strategy, and then partners directly with business to build out training programs that respond to those employer needs.
 - The Regional Healthcare Initiative, a collaboration between Virginia Works, Brightpoint Community College, University of Virginia, and the Claude Moore Foundation, focuses on supporting regional coordination to strength the healthcare workforce through convening stakeholders, completing needs assessment, and creating healthcare pathways.
- Enhance business services by developing a collaborative, coordinated partner network and employer-focused messaging and tools, such as Virginia's new Talent Solutions Guide, and connecting regularly with sector partners, either directly or through industry associations. Develop and improve collaborations between local economic development partners, LWDBs, Business Solutions Teams (BSTs), community colleges, CTE, Virginia Works, and local DSS to develop occupational skills training programs and provide support services to participants.

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- In partnership with over 15 agencies that are part of the Workforce Brain Trust as well as the 14 LWDAs, Virginia Works created and launched v1 of the Talent Solutions Guide, highlighting programs that employers can access organized by the talent lifecycle (Develop -> Hire -> Retain). The Guide offers a comprehensive suite of talent solutions designed to support employers at every stage of their business, educate employers on the best practices for hiring and retaining talent, and inform them about the many services Virginia's workforce system has available to assist them in growing their business and talent pools.
- In tandem with the release of the Talent Solutions Guide and in partnership with VEDP and the Virginia Chamber Foundation, Virginia Works has designed a new six-part employer webinar series that will run through December 2026. The kick-off to the webinar series was held in early 2026 with over 500+ registrants. Sessions will be hosted bimonthly and are designed to engage employers as active participants in the workforce system, with interactive components and subject matter expert discussion on topics like transportation, childcare, work-based learning, retention strategies, and more. Over this calendar year, it is Virginia Works' intent to formalize the Virginia Talent Network as a collaborative network to allow state partners to showcase comprehensive talent solutions to employers.
- Virginia Works has begun hosting monthly BST meetings to break down cross-team silos and ensure business services are aligned with broader Virginia workforce goals, as well as to share information for program leadership.
- Virginia Works is coordinating with each of the local workforce areas to run Regional Employer Summits, Virginia Works has also hosted annual workforce summits 2025 – Together for Talent employer summit drawing 200+ stakeholders in September, during National Workforce Development Month.
- Establish quantitative and qualitative mechanisms for ongoing employer needs assessment, outcomes measurement, and satisfaction measurement at scale, including quarterly satisfaction surveys and labor market scanning to keep services aligned with business demand and continuously track and improve employer satisfaction with Virginia Works services. Measure outcomes for employers to determine program effectiveness, performance over time, and opportunities for improvement. Virginia Board of Workforce Development policy Systemwide Workforce Metrics at the Local Level policy applies to all services provided through Virginia's one-stop centers. This policy establishes implementation of key performance metrics that apply to local delivery of workforce development services. These metrics provide a holistic and outcome-oriented view of service delivery at the local level. This work is supported by the Workforce Data Quality Initiative grant provided by DOL ETA. This policy is available at viriniaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/VBWD_24-01_Systemwide_Workforce_Metrics_at_the_Local_Level_FINAL.docx.pdf.
 - Implement a statewide employer CRM system to improve the speed, depth, and breadth of targeted employer outreach and follow-up, sustaining improvement in employer engagement year-over-year.
- Reimagine layoff aversion services into proactive Talent Concierge services for employers navigating workforce transitions, improving job retention and deepening employer engagement.
- Track and forecast workforce supply and demand, using the Workforce Data Trust, partnership with Virginia's Office of Education Economics, and credential-to-occupation mapping tools to track program outcomes and forecast labor market gaps. Virginia uses these tools to guide training program design, including Workforce Pell implementation.
- DPOR fast-track professional licensure to accelerate workforce entry and streamlining employer-facing regulations

Goal 3: Lead the Nation in Work-Based Learning and Registered Apprenticeship

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Scale Registered Apprenticeship, on-the-job training, paid internships, and other work-based learning models to serve as primary pathways to employment and reemployment, meeting Governor Spanberger's commitment to expanding earn-and-learn opportunities for every Virginian.

Key Strategies:

- Launch an employer-focused, Commonwealth-wide awareness effort around experiential and WBL in partnership with the Innovative Internship Program, Virginia's Community College System, and other state and local partners — building relationships with employers to identify, co-develop and sustain WBL opportunities across all sectors. Some ongoing initiatives include:
 - Virginia's work-based learning "moonshot" team, comprised of representatives from Virginia Community College System, Virginia Department of Education, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Virginia Office of Education Economics, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, Virginia Department of Social Services, Department of Professional & Occupational Regulation, and Virginia Works, who are working together to build a WBL catalog and toolkit for employers, convene together quarterly for "days of collaboration," and are mapping connections between programs (i.e. pre-apprenticeships and internships).
 - Integrated Education and Training (IET), which provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and training for career pathways. In PY 2024-2025, Virginia Adult Education served 3,380 English language learners who had already earned a professional degree or credential.
 - The Maritime Industry Pre-Hire Training Program in CCWC GoVA Region 5, which brings new and returning workers into the labor force through short-term, industry-aligned training tied to real employer demand. Using labor market data and employer partnerships, the program creates direct entry points into high-demand careers, supports career advancement pathways, and reduces barriers to employment—expanding participation and upward mobility across the regional workforce system.
 - The Commonwealth's Advanced Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Apprenticeship Accelerator is an employer-driven training reimbursement program focused on the pharma cluster. Each employer will receive reimbursement for employer-directed Related Technical Instruction for new Registered Apprenticeships established in this sector.
- Increase access to Registered Apprenticeships for all Virginians in all corners of the Commonwealth. Some initiatives that will particularly impact underserved populations include:
 - Supporting Virginia's rural communities by investing in rural healthcare Registered Apprenticeship programs through the Rural Health Transformation effort. Virginia Works is part of Virginia's RHT program specifically focused on "earn to learn" programs and increasing access to RA programs for underserved Virginians in rural areas by working with healthcare industry employers to start or expand Registered Apprenticeship programs in related occupations and grow long-term infrastructure around RA programs, employer support, and apprentice recruitment, retention, and long-term career growth in rural Virginia.
 - Continuing to expand Registered Apprenticeship programs for second chance citizens by supporting partnerships between VDOC, Virginia Works, and VDOE.
 - Continuing to expand the number of RA programs and sponsors available in the Commonwealth in high-demand industries via the HIRED Fund, an employer-driven training reimbursement program focused on statewide Registered Apprenticeships, using Title I Governor Set-Aside funding.
- Enhance partnerships between the workforce system and community colleges to expand Registered Apprenticeships, including degree apprenticeships, that respond to local employer needs.

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- Several of Virginia's community colleges provide related technical instruction (RTI) for select pathways, often in the trades, culinary, and childcare sectors. As the RTI provider, these colleges work closely with Virginia Works and employers, enhancing these existing partnerships.
- Tidewater Community College became the Commonwealth's first college designated as a Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor. The college leads not just RTI but the full apprenticeship program, coordinating with business partners for all related on-the-job training (OJT). Community Colleges that serve as sponsors are well-positioned to provide students opportunities to earn stackable credentials and develop degree apprenticeship programs.
- Continue to develop work-based learning opportunities for young people in the Commonwealth, both in and out of school.
 - Virginia Works is currently working to enhance Virginia's apprenticeship readiness and youth apprenticeship offerings. Virginia Works is collaborating with RA intermediaries and sponsors to develop a set of pre-apprenticeship standards to ensure high-quality training that articulates into a Registered Apprenticeship program, particularly for historically underserved individuals and priority populations.
 - Several school districts across Virginia serve as Registered Apprenticeship sponsors; Fairfax County Public Schools and Roanoke County Public Schools both consistently place youth in high-demand occupations. These school district sponsorships demonstrate effective interagency coordination, where districts co-own supervision, scheduling, and RTI alongside employers.
- Develop Registered Apprenticeship programs within the Commonwealth's workforce system and in state agencies, showcasing how effective those programs can be in developing talent and modeling the earn-and-learn approach.
 - Virginia Works developed a Career Navigator Apprenticeship program, which prepares the worker to become a qualified Career Navigator through OJT and RTI. This program not only provides training opportunities to individuals across the local areas; it helps the workforce system to attract and retain Career Navigators, who are vital for system success.
 - Virginia is expanding public sector apprenticeship offerings by establishing the DHRM State Government Internship Coordinator /sb 1062: Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) to establish and employ a State Government Internship Coordinator to attract high quality interns to the service of the Commonwealth with the goal of developing such interns as employees upon the conclusion of the internship and the intern's education. The bill also requires DHRM to establish and administer a system to provide professional development opportunities for state agency interns, intern supervisors, and human resources staff.

Goal Four: Operate an Accessible, Responsive, and Innovative Workforce System

Reduce structural, administrative, geographic, and technology barriers that can prevent Virginians from accessing services, with the Virginia Works network of partners integrating and collaborating across programs and service models. Pilot and implement innovative and data-driven programs, services, and initiatives that allow for a continuously learning system with people at its center.

Key Strategies:

- Coordinate across agencies and local areas to improve system service delivery, building on the partnerships within the Workforce Brain Trust – a 16-agency group that shares goals, progress, and initiatives systemwide and ensures program alignment to the Governor's vision for the Commonwealth's workforce. The Brain Trust serves as a convener and best practices network; with both leadership-level monthly meetings and quarterly "Commonwealth-wide Workforce Town Halls," this group of agencies shares best practices and lessons learned from programs, amplifies opportunities for collaboration, referrals between programs, and local-level support; produces the Workforce Ecosystem Map of programs across the Commonwealth; and drives strategic initiatives that require

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multiple agencies to work together. As part of the Brain Trust, four “moonshot” teams of cross-agency representatives also work together as accelerators and system enablers, driving coordinated innovation across Virginia’s workforce ecosystem. These teams bring together experts from multiple state agencies, to rapidly design, test, and scale solutions in areas. Rather than operating as standalone programs, the Moonshot teams function as highspeed collaboration engines, identifying barriers, aligning policies and processes, and advancing statewide standards and tools that strengthen every part of the workforce system. Their cross-cutting structure ensures that innovations developed in one area can be applied consistently across all programs and partner organizations.

- Local Areas 13 and 14 are engaged in a cooperative redesignation of Gloucester County to the Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board (LWDA 13) and Accomack and Northampton Counties to the Hampton Roads Workforce Council (LWDA 14). These counties will now be in local areas that better reflect their geographies and industries, improving service delivery both to workers and employers.
- Virginia Works is creating easy-to-use digital program reference guides and standard operating processes (SOPs) to empower all team members and partners with standardized program information and ways of operating and is working to upskill and cross-train all agency team members on all programs, services, and the latest technology to build a more responsive, integrated workforce system.
- Virginia Works has launched a variety of in-house upskilling and professional development initiatives, including the Commissioner for the Day program; traveling town halls that visit a different workforce center and LWDA each month; Career Navigator Bootcamps; and additional experiences with emphasis on client services, communication, and accountability, to strengthen frontline capacity for outreach and engagement.
- The Piedmont area developed a partnership, known as Jobs Plus, with the Charlottesville Housing Authority. This partnership is designed to minimize housing insecurity by teaching financial literacy and ensuring program participants have access the housing authority’s resources.
- Lead Virginia’s workforce system in using metrics and outcomes data to drive continuous improvement, with feedback loops to continuously improve workforce system offerings, and communicate the value of programs to stakeholders, employers, and most importantly, Virginia’s workers.
 - In response to Virginia legislation (e.g., § 2.2-214.3 and § 2.2-2037), Virginia Works initiated a phased, outcomes-driven framework for the Commonwealth Workforce Metrics, which sets core metrics for all workforce programs in Virginia. Approximately 65+ programs are part of the data-gathering and process improvement process. Virginia achieved a 100% response rate across eight rounds of data collection. In fiscal year 2025, 58% of programs met or exceeded their job placement goal and 69% met or exceeded their people trained goal. The metrics dashboard is accessible here: viriniaworks.gov/im-a-workforce-partner/commonwealth-workforce-metrics.
 - Virginia is defining and measuring return on investment (ROI) for specific programs and include in annual impact reports for stakeholders, ensuring accountability and transparency for underserved populations served. Recent ROI reports on Registered Apprenticeship, Title I, and Title III can be found here:
 - DBVI Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors leverage Career Index Plus to provide comprehensive wrap around support during the informed choice process of service provision. In doing this, DBVI consistently reviews and understands credentials needed for career advancement, reviewing labor market information in relation to the individual's current position and role for job retention, and has a robust informed decision-making policy to assist in mitigating and barriers to employment (perceived or otherwise).

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- Virginia Works continues to enhance LMI data on its website, sharing up-to-date Commonwealth-specific data with a user-friendly interface. This data includes quarterly census of employment and wages; current employment statistics; industry projections; occupational employment and wage statistics; occupational projections; and local area unemployment.
- Virginia Works continues to enhance cross-agency data sharing via the Workforce Data Trust, sharing data across partners to support collective goals, and is partnering with the Virginia Employment Commission to implement enhanced wage records.
- Virginia Works is creating and launching a comprehensive Virginia Works operations dashboard to track and manage system capacity — enabling real-time visibility into service delivery performance.

Goal 5: Expand Outreach, Engagement, and Workforce Resilience

Increase access, engagement, and outcomes in Virginia's workforce system for underserved populations, job seekers facing systemic barriers, and individuals impacted by industry disruption, including former federal workers and contractors, through specialized outreach, navigation, and wraparound supports.

Key Strategies:

- Continue to launch programs with accessibility at their core, particularly for priority populations. This includes expanding multilingual outreach and service delivery; targeting outreach to populations with low labor force participation, including individuals in substance use recovery, veterans with barriers to work, justice-involved individuals, opportunity youth, individuals with disabilities, and older workers; providing assistive technology and inclusive employment services through coordination with DARS and DBVI; and ensuring all workforce service delivery is ADA-compliant and accessible through strong cross-agency collaboration.
 - Virginia's workforce system continues to collaborate across agencies to support justice-involved citizens. Virginia Works and Virginia's Department of Corrections launched the Opportunity Advocates program in 2025, which uses General Assembly funds to promote career development work with second chance individuals. Since the program's inception in fall of 2025, the program has provided services to 1632 supervisees have received outreach information, 778 supervisees have registered with the VAWC, and 217 supervisees have been enrolled in Wagner-Peyser. The workforce system will continue to facilitate partnerships between employers, community organizations, and correctional institutions to expand second-chance hiring; expand technology access within correctional facilities to enhance program offerings and prepare individuals for reentry; support wraparound services including transportation, childcare, and legal aid to reduce barriers to sustained employment; and partner with the DOC on career and technical education and work certification programs that prepare individuals for meaningful employment upon release.
 - Virginia's workforce system, led by Virginia Works' JVSG team in collaboration with Virginia's Department of Veterans Services and other partners, is working to establish and operate a Veterans' Portal to support transitioning service members and veterans into training and employment opportunities across the Commonwealth. Virginia Works secured \$1M in additional JVSG program funding to expand staffing and enhance veteran employment services and has been working in partnership with DVS on statewide and regional virtual hiring events for Veterans throughout the year. Virginia is also #1 in nation for HIRE Vets Medallion program, with over 200 employer awardees (23% of employer awards nationwide).
- Address affordability barriers that prevent workforce participation and lowering costs for families in order to increase the Commonwealth's economic competitiveness.
 - Virginia is expanding the capacity of high-quality childcare through workforce development strategies that grow the childcare talent pipeline via Registered Apprenticeship programs;

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supporting housing stability through coordination with DHCD; addressing transportation barriers through programs such as Drive 2 Work, mobile workforce service deployment, and virtual service delivery options; and integrating supportive services screening into all workforce intake processes so that cost-of-living barriers are identified and addressed proactively.

- Southwestern Virginia works closely with its reentry and substance use recovery populations by using WORC grant funds to provide peer recovery, transportation, and other wrap-around services for individuals with substance abuse issues. This region has also invested in Cars 2 Work program, which provides used vehicles to individuals with transportation barriers.
- Engage comprehensive supports from across Virginia's workforce system to serve as a cornerstone of the Commonwealth's economic resiliency efforts, as directed by the Governor's Economic Resiliency Task Force established under Executive Order 5.
 - The workforce system has responded to Federal worker displacements by deploying Rapid Response services and enhanced career transition programs for displaced federal workers and contractors, particularly in Northern Virginia and the National Capital Region, where concentrations of federal employment are highest. Virginia Works will expand public-private partnerships to create employer-driven reemployment pipelines and will track this emerging dislocated worker population through dedicated reporting within the Workforce Data Trust.
- Implement a comprehensive omnichannel client experience — digital, in-person, and hybrid — including a strategic redesign of American Job Centers' service delivery models (hours, staffing, mobile access, surge support).to ensure access for all, for Virginia's most rural or hardest to reach residents.
 - Co-locate services in existing community hubs, such as libraries, schools, and faith-based locations. Ensure each of these locations is accessible and the individual can contact a WIOA career navigator and any required partners easily, even if they are not located onsite.
 - Expand virtual services to meet Virginians where they are, leveraging online tools to connect workers with jobs, share training opportunities, and provide information on the workforce system's programs.
 - Explore mobile one-stop and service delivery systems, providing opportunities for extremely rural communities in the state to access the workforce system and expanding geographic access statewide.

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

State Board Functions

The VBWD is a business-led board that acts as the principal advisor to the Governor. The Board provides strategic leadership, direction, and oversight to the workforce development system and its efforts to create a strong workforce system that supports Virginia's workers and is aligned with employer needs.

Governance

The Board is appointed by the Governor and includes a diverse representation of members from across the Commonwealth. In alignment with WIOA requirements, most of the Board is comprised of private sector business leaders (including the chairperson) from a wide variety of industries. The Board also includes state and local elected officials; Cabinet-level officials from various agencies who deliver and direct workforce services and programs; and representatives of the workforce itself, including labor organizations and community-based organizations that serve populations with barriers to employment.

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The Board is led by an executive director and is supported by a staff director and a staff person from each agency or department that receives workforce training dollars. The lead policy analyst for workforce, who is a member of the governor's workforce team, supports the staff cohort. The Board Executive Director is supervised by the Secretary of Labor.

Decision Making Process

The VBWD is committed to transparency in its work and has bylaws that reflect its intentions related to sharing information regarding meetings and activities with the public subject to provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. The Board continues to update those bylaws to reflect shifting priorities and workforce system alignment. The Board is required to meet at least quarterly. The Board's open meetings make information regarding the activities of the Board available to the public. This information includes its work plan and historical record of minutes and presentations, which are available at <https://viriniaworks.gov/im-a-workforce-partner/learn-more-about-the-virginia-board-of-workforce-development/vbwd>.

To comply with state "sunshine provisions," the Board and any subcommittee authorized to take official action on behalf of the Board must do the following:

1. Take official action and engage in deliberations only at meetings open to the public. "Official action" includes making recommendations, establishing policy, making decisions, and/or voting on matters of Board business. "Deliberations" are discussions of Board business necessary to reach decisions.
2. Ensure that all meetings are held in an accessible location for individuals with disabilities and that all information is provided in accessible and alternate formats.
3. Give public notice of meetings in accordance with applicable state code provisions, including public notice in advance of any special meeting or rescheduled regular meeting.
4. Ensure that votes of Board members be publicly cast and, in the case of roll call votes, recorded.
5. Keep written minutes of all public meetings, including date, time and place of the meeting, members present, the substance of all official actions, a record of roll call votes, and the names of any citizens who appeared and gave testimony.

All members of the Board serve a public interest and trust role and have a clear obligation to conduct all affairs in a manner consistent with this concept. All decisions of the Board are to be based on promoting the best interest of the state and the public good. Accordingly, all members of the Board are subject to the provisions of the State and Local Government Conflict of Interest Act.

Each Board member files a financial disclosure statement with the Virginia Ethics Commission as a condition of assuming membership and then, annually while serving as a Board member. Any Board member with a potential or actual conflict of interest must disclose that fact to the Board as soon as the potential conflict is discovered and, to the extent possible, before the agenda for the meeting involving the matter at issue is prepared.

There are four standing committees that guide the Board:

- **Executive Committee:** Oversees Board functions
- **Customer Opportunity & Success Committee:** This committee focuses on enhancing opportunity and success for both primary customer groups—individual job seekers and employers. The committee works to align services across the workforce system, bridging education, training, and employment to strengthen Virginia's talent pipeline.
- **Operations & Performance Committee:** Formed by combining functions of the former Operations Committee and the Performance and Accountability Committee, this committee develops and

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recommends policies to improve the operational effectiveness of Virginia's public workforce system. It monitors and evaluates performance outcomes to ensure accountability and support continuous improvement by aligning system operations with measurable results.

- **Reports & Special Initiatives Committee:** This committee oversees the development and review of recurring Board reports, required deliverables, and mandated studies. It also leads and supports special initiatives as directed by the Governor's Office and the General Assembly, ensuring timely and strategic responses to evolving workforce needs.

When policies dictate a decision needs to be voted on, quorum rules apply, and a simple majority vote will determine if the item is approved. The committee Chair (or Co-Chair) will report the activities of the committee to the Executive Committee at each Board meeting. When appropriate, the Executive Committee will recommend an item voted on in the standing committee, for a full board vote.

The VBWD governance structure and decision-making process is directed by the Board Bylaws (viriniaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/VBWD-Bylaws-Effective-September-19-2025.pdf) as well as other Board policies. Where guidance is not clearly specified in either the Bylaws or policies, Robert's Rules of Order are referenced.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY

A. CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE'S STRATEGY

The Commonwealth is dedicated to implementing its strategies, outlined in Sec. II(C), through a variety of core program activities. These activities are coordinated by Virginia Works, VDOE, DARS, DBVI, the VEC, and VDSS.

Goal 1: Prepare Every Virginian for Quality Careers

Equip Virginians with the technical and durable skills and credentials needed to access and advance in career pathways that provide competitive, family-sustaining wages & benefits; a safe and healthy working environment; and a visible trajectory for continuous learning and meaningful skill use, with particular focus on high-demand industries and populations facing structural barriers.

Strategy: Create, pilot, implement, and continuously refine a set of leading-edge, people-centered career services applied across all programs, designed to meet workers where they are and address their needs.

Virginia is dedicated to creating a responsive, adaptive workforce system. Leadership works with local experts to hone its services and create new offerings that respond to economic shifts that impact workers. These services range from self-directed to fully facilitated workshops and are intended to empower the individual with career navigation information and tools relevant to their experience, needs, and aspirations at every level of their career journey. The creation of these modernized career services approaches is underway in partnership across key WIOA programs (Rapid Response, Title III Wagner-Peyser) and with broader system partners in Virginia (i.e. community college system). Some of these modernized career services include guided workshops and other offerings for individuals needing fast orientation to programs and resources, such as dislocated workers, including those enrolled in Title I programs.

Through strategic co-location, collaboration, and coordination, Virginia's workforce system provides expedient and effective assistance through a "no wrong door" approach, ensuring that every individual who engages with Virginia's workforce system finds an offering that fits their needs. Customers can access workforce services through virtual means as well as through in-person offerings at our one-stop centers. As required by WIOA, the core partner programs are co-located at all comprehensive one-stops to ensure services are aligned to serve client needs. Many core program partners are co-located with community organizations or provide shared services via online programs; the system is designed to meet workers where they are. These virtual

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sites also provide job seekers with enhanced self-guided toolkits to help them determine what services they may need. Virginia has also developed virtual job clubs and sector salons, which are designed as communities of practice and augment Title III Employment Services. The Commonwealth continues to develop custom resources for priority populations, including individuals who have been dislocated from the federal workforce.

Trained frontline staff, known as Career Navigators, aide individuals in finding a program or set of programs that work for them, often co-enrolling individuals into multiple programs at once. Staff will also refer individuals to supportive services, creating a comprehensive plan that responds directly to what the client needs to enter into a quality career and remain. Many clients initially co-enroll in Title I and III services through the Virginia Workforce Connection (VaWC), which serves as the system of record for employment services information. The VaWC is also used by partners to co-enroll individuals into WIOA programs that provide employment services, education, and job training.

To facilitate smooth, people-centric co-enrollment, local Virginia Works, VDOE, DARS, DVBI, and VEC workforce professionals meet regularly to communicate priorities, solve problems, and continually provide services to customers. State and local VDSS professionals are also included in these meetings to maximize coordination in the provision of wrap-around services to qualifying customers. These regular meetings, as well as the meetings of the local and state workforce boards, allow partners to communicate opportunities and challenges and adjust to service delivery when needed.

- To effectively engage youth, the LWDBs have youth committees whose activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Provide information and assist with planning, operational oversight, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth
- Recommend policy direction to the local board for the design, development, and implementation of programs that benefit all youth
- Recommend the design of a comprehensive community workforce development system
- Recommend ways to leverage resources and coordinate services among schools, public programs, and community-based organizations serving youth
- Recommend ways to coordinate youth services and recommend eligible youth service providers
- Provide ongoing leadership and support for continuous quality improvement for local youth programs

One successful partnership between Virginia Works and an LWDA is the *Skilled Trades Rapid On-Ramp Network for Growth (HR Strong)*, a program administered by Hampton Roads Workforce Council in partnership with Virginia Works. The program is designed to grow the pipeline of skilled workers in critical skilled trade industry sectors. This program is designed to reach underserved communities. Virginia projects that 80 percent of program completers will be placed with a regional employer, earning a family-sustaining wage.

Goal 2: Connect Virginia's Employers to Top Talent

Directly connect Virginia businesses to a workforce with skills matched to their needs and enable businesses to effectively attract, develop, and retain Virginians in quality careers.

Strategy: Establish quantitative and qualitative mechanisms for ongoing employer needs assessment, outcomes measurement, and satisfaction measurement at scale.

Core Program data mechanisms are coordinated via state and LWDBs. The VWDB policy 24-01 *Systemwide Workforce Metrics at the Local Level* applies to all services provided through Virginia's one-stop centers. This

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policy establishes implementation of key performance metrics that apply to local delivery of workforce development services. These metrics provide a holistic and outcome-oriented view of service delivery at the local level. This work is supported by the Workforce Data Quality Initiative grant provided by DOL ETA.

Strategy: Lead Virginia's workforce system in using metrics and outcomes data to drive continuous improvement, with feedback loops to continuously improve workforce system offerings, and communicate the value of programs to stakeholders, employers, and most importantly, Virginia's workers.

Virginia Works gathers and shares baseline and ongoing data around six key metrics for all programs to assess how effectively programs serve workers. This effort allows system leaders, workers, and employer partners to see performance trends over time and paint a complete picture of Virginia's workforce investments. Outcomes are made available at <https://virginiaworks.gov/im-a-workforce-partner/commonwealth-workforce-metrics/>.

The core six metrics include:

- Total number of people trained
- Total number of job placements
- Job retention rate
- Program cost per placement
- Starting wage
- Progressed wage

In addition, Virginia Works partners with other agencies to implement the Workforce Data Trust, a cloud-based, open-source integration platform developed with funding from a U.S. DOL System Integration grant. The data trust – as well as a growing suite of associated applications and analytic tools – is overseen by the Virginia Workforce Data Governance Board, an entity chaired by Virginia's Chief Data Officer and comprised of agencies contributing financial and data resources to support the collaborative environment. The agencies currently sharing data include Virginia Works, VDOE, VEC, DARS, DBVI, VDSS, VCCS, VEDP, the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), SCHEV, and DVS. This shared data allows partners to work more closely, providing shared information that allows all agencies to better understand the workforce system's services and individual outcomes, leading to improved service delivery for all of Virginia's workers.

Strategy: Enhance business services by developing a collaborative, coordinated partner network and employer-focused messaging and tools and connecting regularly with sector partners, either directly or through industry associations. Develop and improve collaborations between local economic development partners, LWDBs, Business Solutions Teams (BSTs), community colleges, CTE, Virginia Works, and local DSS to develop occupational skills training programs and provide support services to participants.

Each LWDB is required to have a Business Services Team (BST) responsible for driving local sector strategies, providing local employers with human resources solutions, and identifying methods to reduce regional skills gaps. BSTs are cross-agency, cross-programmatic groups comprised at the discretion of local workforce leaders that include representatives from each of the core partner agencies and several optional partners, as appropriate. These teams provide a comprehensive array of services to businesses to maximize the efficiency and expertise of system partners. Virginia Works has begun hosting monthly BST meetings to break down cross-team silos and ensure business services are aligned with broader Virginia workforce goals, as well as to share information for program leadership.

In partnership with over 15 agencies that are part of the Workforce Brain Trust as well as the 14 LWDBs, Virginia created and launched an initial draft of the Commonwealth's Talent Solutions Guide, highlighting programs that employers can access organized by the talent lifecycle (Develop -> Hire -> Retain). The Guide

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offers a comprehensive suite of talent solutions designed to support employers at every stage of their business; educate employers on the best practices for hiring and retaining talent; and inform them about the many services Virginia's workforce system has available to assist them in growing their business and talent pools. BSTs continue to leverage the Talent Solutions Guide while connecting with employer partners.

The Commonwealth continues to work closely with employers to launch sector strategies that respond directly to their needs, helping employers to train their own workers, investing in their growth and retention. *The Virginia Maritime and Nuclear Workforce Accelerator* launched in early 2026. This employer-driven upskilling program is designed to support maritime, nuclear energy, and aligned sectors, which are key industries in Virginia's coastal regions. This program provides employers with up to \$100,000 to support costs of training, funded by Governor's set-aside funds. Virginia Works is engaged in similar sector strategies across the Commonwealth, aligning with employer needs. *The Commonwealth's Advanced Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Apprenticeship Accelerator* - an employer-driven training reimbursement program focused on the pharma cluster and funded by Governor's set-aside funds. Each employer will receive reimbursement for employer-directed Related Technical Instruction for new Registered Apprenticeships established in this sector.

Goal 4: Operate an Accessible, Responsive, and Innovative Workforce System

Reduce structural, administrative, geographic, and technology barriers that can prevent Virginians from accessing services, with the Virginia Works network of partners integrating and collaborating across programs and service models. Pilot and implement innovative and data-driven programs, services, and initiatives that allow for a continuously learning system with people at its center.

Strategy: Lead Virginia's workforce system in using metrics and outcomes data to drive continuous improvement, with feedback loops to continuously improve workforce system offerings, and communicate the value of programs to stakeholders, employers, and most importantly, Virginia's workers.

Data is central to aligning Virginia's core programs and ensuring their continued success. The team has coordinated an outcomes-driven framework for data provision. This framework's centerpiece is the Commonwealth Workforce Metrics, which sets core metrics for all workforce programs in Virginia, including WIOA core programs. Approximately 65+ programs are part of the data-gathering and process improvement process. Virginia achieved a 100% response rate across eight rounds of data collection. In fiscal year 2025, 58% of programs met or exceeded their job placement goal and 69% met or exceeded their people trained goal. All outcomes, including ROI reports, are available at Virginia Works' website so all partners, including employers and workers, can see up-to-date information.

Goal 5: Expand Outreach, Engagement, and Workforce Resilience

Increase access, engagement, and outcomes in Virginia's workforce system for underserved populations, job seekers facing systemic barriers, and individuals impacted by industry disruption, including former federal workers and contractors, through specialized outreach, navigation, and wraparound supports.

Strategy: Implement a comprehensive omnichannel client experience — digital, in-person, and hybrid — including a strategic redesign of American Job Centers' service delivery models (hours, staffing, mobile access, surge support) to ensure access for all.

Virginia's frontline workforce staff consistently ensure everyone who needs services is referred to the correct programs. Partner agencies use customer relations management tools and other tracking mechanisms to ensure that customers move smoothly and fruitfully through the workforce development system. To provide those services, workforce professionals make sure customers are referred to the eligible programs that provide

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the services they need. This positive handoff and return cycle is called affirmative referral, and Virginia Works ensures all workforce staff are trained in this people-centered approach to service delivery.

Further, Virginia is expanding virtual services to meet Virginians where they are, leveraging online tools to connect workers with jobs, share training opportunities, and provide information on the workforce system's programs. These virtual services are designed to augment those that an individual may receive at a brick and mortar one-stop. The Commonwealth is also exploring mobile one-stop and service delivery systems, which will provide opportunities for those in rural communities to access the workforce system without having to find transportation to travel to the region's brick and mortar sites. These services remain high-quality and cross-programmatic; Virginia continues to expand its workforce system so it meets individuals where they are.

Strategy: Address affordability barriers that prevent workforce participation, consistent with Governor Spanberger's directive that lowering costs for families is an economic competitiveness issue.

Virginia is focused on providing all workers with the resources they need to succeed in employment and training activities aligned with the core programs in this plan. LWDBs are often the centerpiece of this strategy, aligning with local organizations and partner programs to respond to specific needs in their communities. One way the Commonwealth does this is by focusing on high-quality childcare for all of Virginia's workers. In Abingdon, EO, a nonprofit community partner, transformed a former Kmart in the area into a regional workforce and childcare hub, which was funded by a public-private-philanthropic partnership. This hub hosts EO's Career Commons workforce simulation center, a K-12 career exploration tool, along with Virginia Works services and Shared Services Alliance, which provides back-office support for childcare operators across the local area. This hub also includes a 25,000 square-foot childcare facility and classrooms for early childhood education. Youth enrolled in the county's early childhood education CTE program also complete courses and OJT at the facility.

Virginia is also dedicated to helping connect individuals with transportation so they can attend training and go to job sites. Local areas enroll WIOA Title I recipients in necessary transportation programs. The Southwest Region also participates in a Cars 2 Work program, which provides used vehicles to individuals who need transportation to work.

B. ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN

Goal 1: Prepare Every Virginian for Quality Careers

Equip Virginians with the technical and durable skills and credentials needed to access and advance in career pathways that provide competitive, family-sustaining wages & benefits; a safe and healthy working environment; and a visible trajectory for continuous learning and meaningful skill use, with particular focus on high-demand industries and populations facing structural barriers.

Strategy: Collaborate across key system partners like the Virginia Department of Education and employers to identify, scale, and invest in career pathway exploration programs, CTE education, digital literacy and emerging technology skills, and dual enrollment programs throughout a young person's K-12 education.

Virginia Works collaborates closely with other program partners to provide services to individuals and to provide solutions to Virginia's workforce challenges. A sample of the programs administered by other agencies that are aligned partners in this Plan includes:

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- Learning Excellence in Academic Programs (LEAP)

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- Learning Independence Feeling Empowered (LIFE)

LEAP is a five-week program that gives rising high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to assess their college-readiness skills. Additional information about LEAP is available at www.dbvi.virginia.gov/documents/LEAP_Brochure.pdf. LIFE is a four-week residential training program that provides basic training in the skills of blindness and advocacy. Additional information about LIFE is available at www.vrcbvi.virginia.gov/programs.htm. Title IV leadership in DBVI regularly collaborates with the LEAP and LIFE leadership in DBVI and one-stop service providers to align the implementation of their respective programs where appropriate.

VDOE

- Microsoft IT Program
- Path to Industry Certification
- PluggedIn Virginia
- Workplace Readiness Skills Assessment

VDOE offers the above skills training programs and assessments that connect education-seekers to career pathways. Additional information on the Path to Industry Certification is available at www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/k-12-standards-instruction/career-and-technical-education-cte/industry-credentialing. Additional information on PluggedIn Virginia is available at www.ietblueprint.com/pluggedinva.

Title II leadership in VDOE regularly collaborates with the leadership of the above programs in VDOE and one-stop service providers to align the implementation of their respective programs where appropriate. In addition to co-enrollment within WIOA programs, many participants are enrolled in the above programs while they are also enrolled in Title II programs.

VDOE also serves as an important partner in implementing registered apprenticeships across the commonwealth. Virginia's apprenticeships are often embedded in its K-12 systems, with several districts and schools serving as RTI providers and three as program sponsors. These include Fairfax County Public Schools (sponsor), Hanover Center for Trades & Technology, Roanoke County Public Schools (sponsor), Stafford County Schools (sponsor), Wise County Career & Technical Center, and Roanoke Technical Education Center. District sponsorships allow for responsive, flexible programs and ensure that schools have co-ownership of outcomes. Virginia has a sophisticated Career and Technical Education (CTE) infrastructure, with trained career counselors and educators embedded in sponsor districts, who guide students to and through apprenticeship pathways. Existing Youth RA programs developed with K-12 providers include electrician, HVAC, plumber, carpenter, and small engine technician programs, aligning with employer demand.

VCCS

- Institutes of Excellence
- Non-Credit Workforce Training
- Workforce training programs

VCCS regularly collaborates with the leadership of the above programs and one-stop service providers to align the implementation of their respective programs where appropriate. In addition to co-enrollment within WIOA programs, many participants are enrolled in the above programs while they are also enrolled in Title I programs.

Virginia sees secondary career and technical education (CTE) and training as vital and relevant in the development of students. Virginia's CTE program provides a statewide system of career pathways that brings together secondary, postsecondary, workforce development, and employers. These partnerships focus on high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations that strengthen the economy. Using a statewide

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career clusters model, the state ensures delivery of modern, rigorous, and flexible programs that offer global competitiveness.

VCCS will be instrumental in implementing Workforce Pell programs, in partnership with Virginia Works. The community colleges already serve as important partners in registered apprenticeship programs across the state, with one, Tidewater Community College, acting as an intermediary program sponsor. Others are RTI providers working closely with employer sponsors.

VDSS

- Virginia Refugee Resettlement Program
- Great Expectations Community College Tuition Grant
- Community Action Agencies (CAA)
- Family Engagement Services (FES)

Virginia's Refugee Resettlement Program connects eligible refugees with support services. Additional information on the Refugee Resettlement Program is available at www.dss.virginia.gov/printer/family/ons/services.cgi.

Great Expectations provides tuition grants to those who were in foster care, in the custody of a social services agency, or in a special needs adoption at the time of their high school graduation or GED completion. Additional information on Great Expectations is available at www.dss.virginia.gov/fmf/educational.html.

CAAs funded by CSBG work to increase the self-sufficiency of individuals experiencing poverty. The current list of CAAs can be viewed at <https://www.vacap.org/agencies>. These agencies provide support services to individuals seeking workforce development services in all parts of the Commonwealth. Virginia requires CAAs to coordinate the provision of services at the local level. They work with city, county, schools, non-profits, and other local and regional organizations to avoid duplication of services with other providers. CAAs participate in local social service and regional coalitions and taskforces to coordinate services. They submit annual community action plans to the state, which describe coordination efforts with other organizations (including those in the workforce development system). Examples of this coordination include: CAA representation on LWDBs and the provision of support services through local one-stop centers.

FES provides case management to noncustodial parents facing challenges in housing, transportation, food insecurity, mental health, substance use, or other barriers to help them to provide better financial support for their children. This can help them to fulfill their child support requirement while reducing other barriers to employment.

The Virginia workforce program leadership team includes VDSS leadership so that the above programs are included as a part of workforce program implementation and collaboration across the Commonwealth.

Goal 3: Lead the Nation in Work-Based Learning and Registered Apprenticeship

Scale Registered Apprenticeship, on-the-job training, paid internships, and other work-based learning models to serve as primary pathways to employment and reemployment, meeting Governor Spanberger's commitment to expanding earn-and-learn opportunities for every Virginian.

Strategy: Launch an employer-focused, Commonwealth-wide awareness effort around experiential and work-based learning in partnership with the Innovative Internship Program, Virginia's Community College System, and other state and local partners — building relationships with employers to identify, co-develop and sustain WBL opportunities across all sectors.

Virginia will be the top state for work-based learning opportunities by 2030, as it continues to implement best-in-class WBL opportunities to connect more Virginians to quality careers.

Virginia's WBL "moonshot" team, comprised of representatives from VCCS, VDOE, VEDP, VOEE, SCHEV, VDSS, DPOR, and Virginia Works, is working to build a WBL catalog and toolkit for employers, convene together quarterly, and are mapping connections between programs (i.e. pre-apprenticeships and internships).

Since December 2025, VEDP has led *InternshipsVA*, a program designed to provide students with WBL opportunities and employers in in-demand fields with workers. *InternshipsVA* helps employers create high-quality, paid internships for individuals in school, with the goal of hiring them after program completion. This creates tangible career pipelines for Virginia's young people while keeping talent in Virginia after graduation. Employers with 150 or fewer Virginia employees are eligible for grant matching funds, which are provided by the Commonwealth's Innovative Internship Fund and Program. The program's vision aligns with Virginia's WBL vision, that all students at Virginia's colleges and universities can participate in at least one paid internship opportunity before graduation.

Virginia has also developed high-quality aerospace related program known as the Virginia Space Grant Consortium. This consortium has several programs for students, including scholarships and fellowships; summer academies; NASA internships; and other trainings. Over 22000 K-12 students have been impacted by this program, whether through its career exploration or WBL offerings. The program has yielded 6,000 paid STEM internship programs.

The commonwealth has also invested WIOA Title I set-aside funds in WBL. One program, *Employer-Led Training for High-Demand Sectors and Occupations (VAULT)* is a reimbursement-based grant opportunity that provides \$60,000 to each LWDB for employer-led upskilling in high-demand sectors. Training can either be in incumbent worker training (IWT), OJT, or other WBL programs (except for work experiences). This was launched in late 2025. Another program funded by set-aside funds is the *Returnships* program, a training program targeted at individuals over 40 years old who are returning to the workforce after an absence or engaging in a career pivot. Employers can be reimbursed for training, salaries, and other costs for hiring experienced individuals in project-based, advisory, and operational support roles.

Virginia also used set-aside funds to launch the *Maritime and Nuclear Workforce Accelerator Program* in late 2025, which is an employer-driven training reimbursement program focused on career pathways in shipbuilding and ship repair; nuclear energy; and allied manufacturing. Building on the best-in-class approach of VEDP's Talent Accelerator program, this \$2M program funded by Governor's WIOA Title I Reserve funds starts with employer needs assessment to build the workforce system's industry knowledge and partnerships and define sector strategies that support these two major components of Virginia's economic development strategy, and then partners directly with business to build out training programs that respond to those employer needs.

Virginia wants to ensure that all individuals have access to quality WBL, no matter their educational background. To do this, the Commonwealth leverages its Title II funding to provide Integrated Education and Training (IET), which provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and training for career pathways. In PY 2024-2025, Virginia Adult Education served 3,380 English language learners who had already earned a professional degree or credential. These programs are particularly helpful in tandem with pre-apprenticeship programs, which are often the first step an individual takes in preparing for one of Virginia's best-in-class apprenticeship offerings.

Strategy: Increase access to Registered Apprenticeships for all Virginians in all corners of the Commonwealth.

Virginia knows that Registered Apprenticeships (RA) are the gold standard for WBL, and the Commonwealth continues to work closely with employers to stand up these programs, for both youth and adults. According to the *Virginia Registered Apprentice Program Economic Impact and Return on Investment* report, published August 2025, from 2020 through 2025, nearly 10,000 Virginians completed an RA program. Program participation steadily increased during that time, from 10,569 active apprentices in Q1 FY 2020 to 13,742 in Q2 FY2025. These programs have provided \$17.1 million in program impact across Virginia (wages, second effect industry spending, and increased household spending).

Virginia's RA programs are administered by Virginia Works through a network of regional service offices and technical outreach staff. At the LWDA level, BSTs are the organizing structure used to engage employers and deliver workforce services to industry partners. RA representatives are vital members of the local BSTs and work in partnership with other system partners (e.g., DARS and VDOE). Virginia Works and the local BSTs collaborate to identify RA opportunities. Virginia Works has launched several apprenticeship programs since its inception, including youth apprenticeships; apprenticeships for career counselors and other frontline workforce staff; and sector-specific apprenticeship programs, which will be discussed throughout the Plan. In early 2026, Virginia Works leveraged HIRED funds to provide grant funds to apprenticeship sponsors. RA consultants located in field offices throughout the Commonwealth collaborate with one-stop partners and employers to establish and expand RA programs. The Virginia strategy for RA service design and delivery involves referrals from workforce partners (e.g., workforce centers, case managers from DARS, VDSS, and VCCS) to Virginia Works or to the RA Consultant that serves that locality. Making and receiving referrals for program participants, participating in joint engagement efforts, and participating in business services activities at the local level are all ways in which RA aligns its activities with other workforce partners. Consistent follow-up by the LWDA ensures that quality work-based training needs of both the employer and the participant are met.

RA programs are rigorous and often require pre-existing knowledge of math, writing, and other, occupation-specific skills before an individual can enroll. To reach its goal of improving RA access for historically underserved populations, including those who may not have completed high school or need extra support, the Commonwealth has developed a pre-apprenticeship definition, which it plans to launch in partnership with training providers and employers. The state can work with employers to develop pre-apprenticeship standards using that definition, which would align pre-apprenticeships with the skills apprentices need to be successful. Virginia continues to seek opportunities to gain funding in this space.

RAs can be particularly effective when combined with sector strategies; to this end, Virginia has used a combination of grant and WIOA discretionary funding to develop RAs that respond to employer needs across the state. Some of these include:

- *The HIRED Fund*- Support for qualifying employer-driven training reimbursement program focused on statewide registered apprenticeships, particularly in teacher education, early childhood education, clean energy, care economy, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and repair and maintenance sectors.
- *Advanced Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Apprenticeship Accelerator*- An employer-driven training reimbursement program focused on the pharmaceutical cluster. Each employer will receive reimbursement for employer-directed Related Technical Instruction for new Registered Apprenticeships established in this sector. This program is launching in 2026.
- *Rural Health Transformation (RHT)*- Virginia Works is part of Virginia's RHT program specifically focused on increasing access to RA programs for underserved Virginians in rural areas by working with healthcare industry employers to start or expand Registered Apprenticeship programs in related occupations and grow long-term infrastructure around RA programs, employer support, and apprentice

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recruitment, retention, and long-term career growth in rural Virginia. This program is funded by \$20,000,000 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Funding will help employers stand up these programs and will provide apprentices with wrap-around supportive services at up to \$5,000 per apprentice. The program is launching later in 2026.

- *VADOC Apprenticeships*: VADOC has developed RA for adult inmate students who are ready for release. This program leverages workforce training using its CTE program instruction to provide students with training in construction, barbering, cosmetology, culinary arts, and other careers. Inmates who complete one of these RA programs have a recidivism rate of 7.3%, ten percent lower than Virginia's overall rate of 17.6% (which is the lowest in the nation).
- *Public Sector RAs*: Virginia Works developed a Career Navigator Apprenticeship program, which prepares the worker to become a qualified Career Navigator through OJT and RTI. This program not only provides training opportunities to individuals across the local areas; it helps the workforce system to attract and retain Career Navigators, who are vital for system success. Virginia is also expanding public sector apprenticeship offerings by establishing the DHRM State Government Internship Coordinator /sb 1062: Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) to establish and employ a State Government Internship Coordinator to attract high quality interns to the service of the Commonwealth with the goal of developing such interns as employees upon the conclusion of the internship and the intern's education. The bill also requires DHRM to establish and administer a system to provide professional development opportunities for state agency interns, intern supervisors, and human resources staff.
- *Regional RA programs*: By integrating Virginia's apprenticeship program with its workforce development agency, the Commonwealth is able to align apprenticeship programs with LWDB needs and develop targeted apprenticeships that respond to employer demand. Some examples of programs that work regionally include:
- *Expanding Talent through Registered Apprenticeship (ExTRA)*, which is administered by the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research and specializes in supporting Southern Virginia workers and employers. ExTRA has registered more than 40 apprenticeship program occupations since 2022, including the first EMT and Paramedic RA in Virginia. The program has also helped employer partners register over 150 apprentices. A
- *The Virginia Rural Information Technology Apprenticeship Grant Program*, administered by the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, which focuses on small, rural information technology businesses headquartered and operating in southwestern Virginia.
- *Youth RAs*: Virginia's apprenticeships are often embedded in its K-12 systems, with several districts and schools serving as RTI providers and three as program sponsors. These include Fairfax County Public Schools (sponsor), Hanover Center for Trades & Technology, Roanoke County Public Schools (sponsor), Stafford County Schools (sponsor), Wise County Career & Technical Center, and Roanoke Technical Education Center. District sponsorships allow for responsive, flexible programs and ensure that schools have co-ownership of outcomes. The Commonwealth also partners with community colleges for RTI, and, in one case, the college acts as an apprenticeship sponsor (Tidewater Community College). Virginia has a sophisticated Career and Technical Education (CTE) infrastructure, with trained career counselors and educators embedded in sponsor districts, who guide students to and through apprenticeship pathways. Existing Youth RA programs developed with K-12 providers include electrician, HVAC, plumber, carpenter, and small engine technician programs, aligning with employer demand and this application's priority sectors.

Virginia's Youth RA system has strong employer engagement anchored in construction trades and facilities services. Sponsors with the largest active youth cohorts are clustered in the trades, with readiness to host youth apprentices in electrical, HVAC, plumbing, carpentry, sheet-metal, culinary, welding, and automotive pathways. Virginia has 96 active Youth RA sponsors; the largest have an

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average of 8 active apprentices, including G.J. Hopkins Lacy; Fairfax County Public Schools; Varney, Inc; Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center; and G&H Contracting.

Goal 5: Expand Outreach, Engagement, and Workforce Resilience

Increase access, engagement, and outcomes in Virginia's workforce system for underserved populations, job seekers facing systemic barriers, and individuals impacted by industry disruption, including former federal workers and contractors, through specialized outreach, navigation, and wraparound supports.

Strategy: Continue to launch programs with accessibility at their core, particularly for priority populations.

This includes expanding multilingual outreach and service delivery; targeting outreach to populations with low labor force participation, including individuals in substance use recovery, veterans with barriers to work, justice-involved individuals, opportunity youth, individuals with disabilities, and older workers; providing assistive technology and inclusive employment services through coordination with DARS and DBVI; and ensuring all workforce service delivery is ADA-compliant and accessible through strong cross-agency collaboration.

Virginia's workforce system has launched key collaborations with agencies that serve second chance citizens, with the goal of getting more individuals straight to work after release. Virginia Works and Virginia's Department of Corrections launched the Opportunity Advocates program in 2025, which uses General Assembly funds to promote career development work with second chance individuals. Since the program's inception in fall of 2025, the program has provided services to 1632 supervisees have received outreach information, 778 supervisees have registered with the VAWC, and 217 supervisees have been enrolled in Wagner-Peyser. The workforce system will continue to facilitate partnerships between employers, community organizations, and correctional institutions to expand second-chance hiring; expand technology access within correctional facilities to enhance program offerings and prepare individuals for reentry; support wraparound services including transportation, childcare, and legal aid to reduce barriers to sustained employment; and partner with the DOC on career and technical education and work certification programs that prepare individuals for meaningful employment upon release.

The Commonwealth also provides inmates with CTE training while they are still inside. These vocational programs, which are co-administered by a VADOC and VDOE, utilize hands on learning in concert with critical knowledge growth to provide students with skills in construction, technical careers, and other careers. All programs lead to an industry-recognized certification.

Virginia also prioritizes workforce programs that serve veterans. Virginia's Department of Veterans Services leads the *Virginia Values Veterans (V3)* program, which trains and certifies employers on national best practices to hire, train, and retain veterans and military-affiliated job seekers. This program also provides transition assistance for veterans, including employment, entrepreneurship, and career readiness. V3 is run at a regional level, in one of the Department of Veterans Services' seven regions. It has certified 3,500 organizations who have hired more than 135,000 veterans. Virginia's workforce system, led by Virginia Works' JVSG team in collaboration with Virginia's Department of Veterans Services and other partners, is working to establish and operate a Veterans' Portal to support transitioning service members and veterans into training and employment opportunities across the Commonwealth. Virginia Works secured \$1M in additional JVSG program funding to expand staffing and enhance veteran employment services and has been working in partnership with DVS on statewide and regional virtual hiring events for veterans throughout the year. Virginia is also #1 in nation for *HIRE Vets Medallion* program, with over 200 employer awardees (23% of employer awards nationwide).

Aligning with Programs Identified in (A)

Workforce professionals working in the programs identified in (A) collaborate and align with the workforce professionals described in this section by working under the same vision, goals, and priorities and regularly providing one another with updates on service delivery.

Virginia Works reduces the duplication of services by aligning workforce development programs within the same agency. Professionals that work on different programs under the same agency report to the same leadership for unified direction and ways to avoid duplication of services. This also allows the agency to align resources to more efficiently serve Virginians.

Virginia also uses the Workforce Data Trust to collect all workforce development data to measure the performance of the whole system. Further, this cohesive hub-and-spoke model brings greater connection between the workforce and education systems. This coordinated approach has broken down silos between workforce and education programs and aligned them to a unified purpose.

In addition, state level programs listed in section (A) continuously communicate with one-stop operators to inform them of resources available for workers. Virginia will continue to coordinate with other organizations to develop workforce initiatives that respond to individuals' unique barriers, such as those that serve youth and justice-involved individuals. For instance, in 2025 Virginia Works launched a partnership with Virginia Department of Corrections to use funds allocated by the General Assembly to work directly with justice-involved individuals.

C. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS

Goal 4: Operate an Accessible, Responsive, and Innovative Workforce System

Reduce structural, administrative, geographic, and technology barriers that can prevent Virginians from accessing services, with the Virginia Works network of partners integrating and collaborating across programs and service models. Pilot and implement innovative and data-driven programs, services, and initiatives that allow for a continuously learning system with people at its center.

Strategy: Coordinate across agencies and local areas to improve system service delivery, building on the partnerships within the Workforce Brain Trust.

Individuals seeking workforce system services often face multiple barriers and need easy, streamlined services that provide resources and clear next steps. Virginia is modeling this need for streamlined services without program silos at the state level through its Workforce Brain Trust, a 16-agency group, which serves as a convener and best practices network; with both leadership-level monthly meetings and quarterly "Commonwealth-wide Workforce Town Halls," this group of agencies shares best practices and lessons learned from programs, amplifies opportunities for collaboration, referrals between programs, and local-level support; produces the Workforce Ecosystem Map of programs across the Commonwealth; and drives strategic initiatives that require multiple agencies to work together. As part of the Brain Trust, four "moonshot" teams of cross-agency representatives also work together as accelerators and system enablers, driving coordinated innovation across Virginia's workforce ecosystem. These teams bring together experts from multiple state agencies, to rapidly design, test, and scale solutions in areas. Rather than operating as standalone programs, the Moonshot teams function as highspeed collaboration engines, identifying barriers, aligning policies and processes, and advancing statewide standards and tools that strengthen every part of the workforce system. Their cross-cutting structure ensures that innovations developed in one area can be applied consistently across all programs and partner organizations.

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Virginia Works is creating easy-to-use digital program reference guides and standard operating processes (SOPs) to empower all team members and partners with standardized program information and ways of operating and is working to upskill and cross-train all agency team members on all programs, services, and the latest technology to build a more responsive, integrated workforce system.

At the service provision level, Virginia's workforce system utilizes a shared service delivery mode that uses common intake and assessment processes; common performance metrics; an affirmative referral model; and universal professional development for front line providers of career and supportive services. This service delivery model allows for the coordination of activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, people-centered services to all customers.

Goal 5: Expand Outreach, Engagement, and Workforce Resilience

Increase access, engagement, and outcomes in Virginia's workforce system for underserved populations, job seekers facing systemic barriers, and individuals impacted by industry disruption, including former federal workers and contractors, through specialized outreach, navigation, and wraparound supports.

Strategy: Engage comprehensive supports from across Virginia's workforce system to serve as a cornerstone of the Commonwealth's economic resiliency efforts, as directed by the Governor's Economic Resiliency Task Force established under Executive Order 5.

One of Governor Spanberger's first actions when she took office in Virginia was to release Executive Order 5, which established an Economic Resiliency Task Force. This Task Force has several priorities, including promoting job opportunities for fired federal employers and contractors. The federal government is a major employer in Virginia, however, in 2025 the Commonwealth saw a drop of more than 20,000 positions, which directly impacts these workers and their families. Changing priorities in federal contract spending has also impacted state employment.

Virginia's workforce system is coordinating with partners to develop a suite of tools for displaced federal workers. The workforce system has deployed Rapid Response services and enhanced career transition programs for displaced federal workers and contractors, particularly in Northern Virginia and the National Capital Region, where concentrations of federal employment are highest. Virginia Works will expand public-private partnerships to create employer-driven reemployment pipelines and will track this emerging dislocated worker population through dedicated reporting within the Workforce Data Trust.

Virginia also partnered with Maryland and Washington, DC workforce leadership to host *Pivot with a Purpose*, an event in DC that brought together dislocated federal workers and contractors, employers, and other partners. Throughout the day, workers networked, received resources about workforce services, and participated in a variety of workshops. Virginia will continue to host this full-day events to help displaced federal workers and contractors determine how they can best use their skills in new industries. Virginia's workforce leadership continues to host listening sessions both virtually and across Northern Virginia, asking displaced federal workers and contractors to share how the Commonwealth can support their career transitions. Virginia will use the information gathered in these sessions to shape support and resources for that population.

Strategy: Continue to launch programs with accessibility at their core, particularly for priority populations.

Accessibility remains central to Virginia's workforce system and its core mission. This includes expanding multilingual outreach and service delivery; targeting outreach to populations with low labor force participation, including individuals in substance use recovery, veterans with barriers to work, justice-involved individuals, opportunity youth, individuals with disabilities, and older workers; providing assistive technology

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and inclusive employment services through coordination with DARS and DBVI; and ensuring all workforce service delivery is ADA-compliant and accessible through strong cross-agency collaboration.

Many of the individuals seeking workforce policy services in Virginia face barriers to employment, such as language barriers, transportation, and childcare needs. When those with barriers to employment enroll in a workforce program, they either receive or are referred to partner programs that provide supportive services. To provide support services, LWDBs, in consultation with one-stop partners and other community service providers, implement policies that ensure coordination that provides individuals with the supports they need. Frontline workforce staff communicate closely with service providers and document any support services provided to program participants. Examples of supportive services offered can include employment-related necessities such as uniforms or tools, transportation, childcare, dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments. Supportive services may also include employment-related necessities such as payment of fees for employment and training related applications, as well as educational testing and certification costs. The VBWD policy on the Provision of Supportive Services is available at virginiaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Policy-401-05-Change-1-Provision-of-Supportive-Services.pdf.

Virginia supports all workers and works to ensure that even those who have been historically disconnected from the workforce system have access to needed services.

Rural Access

Virginia has large rural areas, which are often underserved. Individuals in these areas must often travel miles to reach a one-stop location to receive services, and many face transportation barriers that make this incredibly difficult. Virginia Works, along with its partners, continues to develop a responsive system that meets workers where they are, with more centers co-located in community spaces, like libraries, unused retail space, and faith-based locations. The Commonwealth continues to expand its virtual workforce services, launching micro-sites and expanding Virginia Has Jobs, its labor exchange site, to include enhanced resources. Virginians can now access AI training tools, learn data skills, and take courses in core skills to succeed at work. The system is also exploring mobile services, which would meet workers in their communities directly.

Second Chance Citizens

As highlighted in Sec III(a)(2)(B), Virginia has worked across agencies to develop a robust set of programs expressly designed to support individuals who are incarcerated or recently released. Virginia Works and VADOC launched Opportunity Advocates, which uses General Assembly finds to promote career development opportunities for second chance individuals. Virginia Works, VADOC, and other partners work closely to provide CTE and even RAs for incarcerated individuals. The Commonwealth also provides supportive services for those individuals, including Drive 2 Work, a nonprofit program that works with low-income and previously incarcerated individuals to get their driver's license.

Adult Education

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) Program is an integral component of Virginia's implementation of WIOA; AEFLA provides services to individuals with barriers to employment, including a lack of high school degree or equivalent.

AEFLA providers are investing in six major state priorities:

- Developing and delivering a career pathway model
- Ensuring the availability of correctional education in every region
- Offering integrated education and training opportunities
- Collaborating to provide service to those with low levels of literacy
- Realizing the full implementation of standards-based instruction
- Integrating workforce preparation activities in all programming types

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These priorities support Virginia's priority of eliminating barriers to employment so workers can enter career pathways that lead to success. Regional adult education administrators serve on local workforce boards and committees, and as such, they are actively engaged in decision-making about local implementation of the state strategies and enacting an integrated service delivery approach for shared clients.

Individuals with Disabilities

Assistive technology is a supportive service that can help individuals of all ages and abilities acquire the appropriate, affordable assistive and information technologies and services needed to substitute for functions lost through disability, or to supplement/enhance existing functions to expand employment and independent living opportunities. DARS administers the Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS). VATS is a statewide program authorized and funded by the Assistive Technology Act of 2004. VATS was established to increase awareness, accessibility, and acquisition of assistive technology. VATS contracts with the Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment & Endowment (F.R.E.E.) to provide Durable Medical Equipment (DME) collection and re-assignment programs in all four regions of the Commonwealth served by DARS. Customers can be referred to assistive technology services through online services and by visiting one-stop centers around the Commonwealth.

One-stop partners provide customer support to enable individuals with disabilities to navigate among multiple services and activities, including resource coordination (Integrated Resource Teams) and braiding of differing funding streams. VR state grant programs and local Business Services Teams partner with employers to improve participant employment outcomes. VR services also provides regular training to support system partners' staff in the identification and delivery of services to individuals with disabilities. The VBWD policy on the provision of Services to Individuals with Disabilities is available at viriniaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/VBWD-Policy-600-03-Services-to-Individuals-with-Disabilities-Change-1.pdf. The integrated service delivery, co-enrollment, common screening, affirmative referrals, and generally collaboration discussed in (A) demonstrate the methods used to coordinate the delivery of comprehensive services to all customers, especially those with disabilities. Customers can access services virtually or in-person and be enrolled in their qualifying services that day or within just a few business days. A common intake system allows the customer's information to be shared with core and one-stop partners to quickly determine which services each customer needs and connects them with workforce professionals who can deliver those services.

Veterans

As highlighted in Sec III(a)(2)(B), Virginia has developed several apprenticeship and other training programs that specifically serve veterans. The Commonwealth also ensures that all veterans who enter in to a one-stop location, whether brick and mortar or virtual, have access to all veterans employment opportunities. Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVERS) are fully integrated into the one-stop centers and work hand in hand with WIOA staff to ensure priority of service to veterans; Virginia recently hired several new LVERS to bolster services to veterans across all local areas. One-stop staff conduct the necessary triage to identify eligible veterans, eligible persons, and other populations designated by the U.S. Secretary of Labor. Services are provided to them according to their needs. LVERS provide a unified community process that advances employment opportunities for transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses. LVERS connect these customers to opportunities in their area so that they may find employment with businesses in their local areas. Opportunities available to transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses include:

- Employer hiring events
- Employability workshops
- Job interview, resume, and employment application assistance
- Occupational skills assessments

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- Technology resources
- Education and training opportunities
- Occupational certificates and credentials
-

Scale what works: Advance programs and services with proven success

To further the goals of providing effective services to customers, Virginia evaluates program and service success according to six key metrics:

- Total number of people trained
- Total number of job placements
- Job retention rate
- Program cost per placement
- Starting wage
- Progressed wage

These metrics provide a holistic and outcome-oriented view of service delivery at the local level. These universal metrics allow for all partners to work together towards these common goals. Collecting and reporting this data across the system allows for the identification of programs or services that require additional investment to ensure comprehensive, high quality, customer-centered services are provided. The VBWD policy on Systemwide Workforce Metrics at the Local Level is available at viriniaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/VBWD_24-01_Systemwide_Workforce_Metrics_at_the_Local_Level_FINAL.docx.pdf.

D. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

Goal 2: Connect Virginia's Employers to Top Talent

Directly connect Virginia businesses to a workforce with skills matched to their needs and enable businesses to effectively attract, develop, and retain Virginians in quality careers.

Strategy: Establish quantitative and qualitative mechanisms for ongoing employer needs assessment, outcomes measurement, and satisfaction measurement at scale, including quarterly satisfaction surveys and labor market scanning to keep services aligned with business demand and continuously track and improve employer satisfaction with Virginia Works services.

Actionable labor market information is provided by the Virginia Works Economic Information and Analytics (EIA) group. Their work ensures that quality data is available for state, regional, and local system partners to evaluate the needs of priority targeted industry sectors; to understand short- and long-term demand by occupation; and to access critical employer recruiting activity information. This information is accessible through the agency's website at www.viriniaworks.com. Frontline staff are also trained to use this labor market information to help individuals review their options and decide on a career path that works for them. Virginia Works is also using this LMI to create new sector training programs and inform strategic partner discussions. By looking not just at Virginia's economy now, but at its growth industries and jobs of the future, the Commonwealth is creating a workforce system that is not just responding to industry needs but developing a proactive system with career pathways built for workers in mind.

Strategy: Work with employers to train for the jobs of the future by aligning skill-building initiatives and sector strategies aligned to Virginia's economic development strategy.

To provide workforce services to individuals across the Commonwealth, Virginia Works coordinates with employers and industry leaders to develop training curriculum that responds to their skills needs. Virginia has received feedback in the past that job seekers who completed training programs did not always demonstrate those necessary skills when hired by businesses. By aligning the training program to the needs of businesses and involving employers in the curriculum development process, Virginia's employers will

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be able to hire more qualified job seekers. The agency and its partners continue to work with employers not just to provide training opportunities but to ensure training programs lead to good jobs and career pathways. One example of such alignment is the Virginia Maritime and Nuclear Workforce Accelerator, which launched in early 2026. This employer-driven upskilling program is designed to support maritime, nuclear energy, and aligned sectors, which are key industries in Virginia's coastal regions. This program provides employers with up to \$100,000 to support costs of training, funded by Governor's set-aside funds. Virginia Works is engaged in similar sector strategies across the Commonwealth, aligning with employer needs.

As highlighted across Sec III(a)(2), Virginia's LWDBs work closely with employer partners to develop WBL and other training opportunities that respond to those employer needs. Virginia sees this as an opportunity not only to help employers fill skills gaps; employers invest in worker training and growth.

Strategy: Enhance business services by developing a collaborative, coordinated partner network and employer-focused messaging and tools, such as Virginia's new Talent Solutions Guide, and connecting regularly with sector partners, either directly or through industry associations.

Each LWDA is required to have a BST whose responsibility is to drive sector strategies within a locality, provide local employers with human resources solutions, and identify methods to shrink regional skills gaps. BSTs are cross-agency, cross-programmatic groups comprised, at the discretion of local workforce leaders, of representatives from each of the core partner agencies, as well as several optional partners, including economic development professionals. These teams provide a comprehensive array of services to businesses to maximize the efficiency and expertise of the system partners. The Business Services Requirements Policy 403-01, Change 1 can be found at virginiaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/VBWD-Policy-403-01-Business-Services-Requirements-Change-1.pdf.

To assist with the overseeing, enhancing, and providing continuous improvement to business services provided in Virginia, the Commonwealth has launched a statewide BST. This team is working with the Brain Trust to establish and regularly update Virginia's Talent Solutions Guide. As outlined in Section III(2)(A), this Talent Solutions Guide offers a comprehensive suite of talent solutions designed to support employers at every stage of their business; educate employers on the best practices for hiring and retaining talent; and inform them about the many services Virginia's workforce system has available to assist them in growing their business and talent pools. BSTs continue to leverage the Talent Solutions Guide while connecting with employer partners.

The statewide BST consists of representatives from:

- Virginia Works
- VDOE
- VEC
- DARS
- DBVI
- DOC
- VEDP
- VDSS
- DVS
- A LWDB Executive Director
- Representative with a leadership role from a local BST (e.g., local business service team coordinator)
- A business member from a LWDA (will be selected annually)
- A business member from the VBWD

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- A State Labor Federations representative from the VBWD

The following minimum standards are required and must be evident and practiced in the delivery of services to business customers in each LWDB. The state-level BST will facilitate the solutions to ensure these standards are implemented.

- The LWDA one-stop Operations Partner Agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) shall identify the role of each partner and reflect the strategic goals of the LWDA for business services as identified in the WIOA local plan. The agreement must include:
 - Standardized timeframes to respond to business inquiries and subsequent contact to deliver specialized and collaborative solutions to meet business customer needs. Alternative options must be provided if the LWDA cannot provide an affirmative response to the business customer's initial request.
 - The LWDA will implement a business satisfaction tool agreed upon by the state level BST to assist in demonstrating continuous improvement
- LWDA business service partners must have clear, convenient, and easily accessible content and outreach materials (including web-based content) for business customers that provides:
 - A list of all business products and services
 - Contact information for a business to contact through the identified "single point of contact" protocol
- BSTs will document they are working and making progress towards shared goals

Business Services for the LWDBs will be evaluated using the following metrics:

- A shared vision and strategy for business services shall be included in the Virginia Career Works MOU and signed by all active partners
- A single point of contact protocol documented in the Virginia Career Works MOU
- A Written Communication Plan shall be included in the Virginia Career Works MOU
 - A unified approach and message that is focused on the workforce system instead of a program specific approach
 - An outreach plan based on sector strategies identified in the local plan
 - Identification of locally available resources and channels for outreach and how they will be used
 - The role of each partner in performing outreach activities
 - A method for determining how effective outreach efforts have been locally
 - A description of additional partnerships to assist in communications and outreach to businesses including business roundtables, business advisory councils, or existing business visitation programs through economic development entities
 - Standardized timeframes to respond to business inquiries and subsequent contact, in order to deliver specialized and collaborative solutions to meet business customer needs
- A policy or procedure shall be established to ensure partner staff within the Virginia Career Works are aware of the procedure for business services referral
- A method to collect Business Services satisfaction data based on criteria and tool to be provided by the State WIOA Title I Administrator
- The website must include standard point of contact protocol including updated contact information for businesses and list of business services available within the LWDA

E. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS

Goal 1: Prepare Every Virginian for Quality Careers

Equip Virginians with the technical and durable skills and credentials needed to access and advance in career pathways that provide competitive, family-sustaining wages & benefits; a safe and healthy working environment; and a visible trajectory for continuous learning and meaningful skill use, with particular focus on high-demand industries and populations facing structural barriers.

Strategy: Collaborate across key system partners like the Virginia Department of Education, VCCS, and employers to identify, scale, and invest in career pathway exploration programs, CTE education, digital literacy and emerging technology skills, and dual enrollment programs throughout an individual's K-12 education and postsecondary programs.

Virginia has taken a fully integrated and comprehensive approach to ensure that publicly funded education and training institutions align with the workforce system's goals. These institutions are vital access points for individuals seeking workforce system services. Central to Virginia's strategy to engage educational institutions as they align workforce training and education programs to employer needs is the Workforce Credentials Grant (WCG) program that has been established in the Code of Virginia and fully funded by state General Funds. This program, called FastForward, supplements the federally funded workforce development programs by providing incentives to individuals to complete training and obtain credentials in in-demand jobs. Additional information is available at www.fastforwardva.org.

Further, Virginia Works aligns closely with its Department of Education, VCCS, and SCHEV partners to create a workforce system that serves Virginians from kindergarten well into their careers. Virginia Works leads the Virginia Brain Trust, a monthly huddle where WIOA core partners meet with other workforce system partners, including Department of Education and VCCS, to align on the system's strategic goals. These Brain Trust meetings allow partners to discuss the system's Moonshot goals, which were initially defined in Virginia Works' 2025-2030 Strategic Plan (<https://viriniaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Virginia-Works-for-Everyone-Strategic-Plan-2025-2030-v1-3.pdf>). This allows staff to coordinate to respond to statewide priorities, such as serving displaced federal workers or brainstorm how to best serve rural areas. The Commonwealth anticipates that these intentional, close relationships between state agencies will lead to more innovative career pathways and service delivery that responds to worker needs.

To increase engagement with CTE in the regions, LWDBs are required to have at least one representative from a local school division represent CTE on their board. VDOE has made efforts to increase the collaboration between the boards and CTE programs and has directed their CTE directors to include local board members in their advisory committees. Furthermore, CTE directors are involved in the development of sector strategies, joining regional training events, and contributing to virtual workgroups.

VCCS provides primary oversight for postsecondary Perkins and the implementation of CTE programs in the 23 colleges located on 40 campuses across the Commonwealth. The principal objective to provide and maintain a system of comprehensive community colleges through which appropriate educational opportunities and programs, to accomplish the purposes set forth in the Code of Virginia, shall be made available throughout the Commonwealth. Additionally, each college in VCCS has a local board. The purpose of each local College Board is to keep the community colleges responsive to the needs of their service areas.

According to VCCS policy, CTE programs are designed to meet the increasing demand for technicians, semi-professional workers, and skilled crafts-persons for employment in many industries and businesses. These programs, which normally require two years or less of training beyond high school, may include preparation for agricultural; business; engineering; health and medical; industrial; service; and other

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technical/occupational fields. The curriculum is planned primarily to meet the need for workers in the regions served by the community colleges, but VCCS may designate certain community colleges as centers to serve larger areas of the Commonwealth in offering expensive and highly specialized occupational and technical education programs.

All community colleges maintain a workforce development division headed by a vice president, dean, or director who is charged with analyzing and addressing business and industry needs for a skilled workforce within the college's local service area. These workforce leaders work collaboratively within the institution to plan, develop, and maintain occupational/technical education programs at the colleges. Curriculum advisory committees consist of representatives from business, industry, and labor. The committees work to keep courses and programs relevant to the workplace and to provide students and faculty with relevant career entry requirements. Experiential learning through registered apprenticeships, internships, cooperative education, service, and project-based learning provides students with opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in a real-world context.

Through publicly funded programs like *FastForward*, Virginia's Community Colleges collaborate with workforce partners to provide career development activities, integrated education and training, coaching and advising, and supportive services to students and clients of Title I, Title II, DARS, and VDSS programs. This collaboration aligns the goals of workforce development, shares resources, and capitalizes on the strengths of workforce partners.

Strategy: Pilot upskilling options on technology literacy and skill development that meet Virginia's workers where they are.

Virginia is leveraging state and local investments for workforce development programs that focus on the future of work. One example is the College Partnership Laboratory Schools (Lab Schools) established by the Virginia General Assembly in 2022. These public schools stimulate the development of innovative education programs for preschool through grade 12 students. Five Lab Schools have been proposed so far.

One of them is the CodeRVA Regional High School, which aims to prepare a diverse population of students for college and careers in computer science through personalized, integrated, and applied learning. CodeRVA uses blended and project-based learning to develop students' self-management skills while integrating academic content, agile workplace methodologies, and internship experiences that provide a pipeline of critical thinkers prepared to enter college or Richmond's growing tech sector. Students enter CodeRVA via a lottery system designed to remove admission barriers and create a student body representative of the Richmond region. Students graduate with a Virginia high school diploma, an Associate Degree from VCCS, industry certifications, and as many as 360 hours or more of practical information technology work experience. Additional information is available at coderva.org and doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/specialized-instruction/laboratory-schools.

Goal 3: Lead the Nation in Work-Based Learning and Registered Apprenticeship

Scale Registered Apprenticeship, on-the-job training, paid internships, and other work-based learning models to serve as primary pathways to employment and reemployment, meeting Governor Spanberger's commitment to expanding earn-and-learn opportunities for every Virginian.

Strategy: Continue to develop work-based learning opportunities for young people in the Commonwealth, both in and out of school.

Virginia is expanding opportunities for youth to participate in WBL, including RAs, and credential attainment programs. Virginia already has 34 school divisions participating in Youth Registered Apprenticeships (YRA)

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that integrate CTE curriculum with real job experiences. Participants complete at least 2,000 hours of on-the-job training before getting their journey worker certificate. High school students who are already enrolled in CTE programs at their school typically get started as apprentices in their junior or senior year. YRA participants receive:

- Exposure to industry with high-demand career
- Paid employment
- Opportunity for college credit
- Mentorship from a master in the field
- Safety education

Virginia Works collaborates with LWDBs to facilitate peer-to-peer webinars showcasing their local area youth program design and shared individual best practices including pre-apprenticeship under the work experience program element. Virginia Works will continue to provide yearly regional training and program monitoring to ensure the LWDBs understand the components of a registered apprenticeship program that includes the following elements:

- Training and curriculum that aligns with the skill needs of employers in the economy of the State or region involved
- Access to educational and career counseling and other supportive services, directly or indirectly
- Hands-on, meaningful learning activities that are connected to education and training activities, such as exploring career options, and understanding how the skills acquired through coursework can be applied toward a future career
- Opportunities to attain at least one industry-recognized credential
- A partnership with one or more registered apprenticeship programs that assists in placing individuals who complete the pre-apprenticeship program in a registered apprenticeship program

The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) is the Commonwealth's coordinating body for higher education. SCHEV makes budget and policy recommendations to the governor and the General Assembly, coordinates initiatives across public two-year and four-year institutions, and maintains student-level data for policy and research. SCHEV leads a statewide strategic plan for higher education in Virginia - The Virginia Plan for Higher Education - with the objective of becoming the best-educated state by 2030. Key elements of the plan that relate to workforce include:

1. Recognizing all credentials of value (industry credentials, certificates, and apprenticeships) and not just degrees
2. Providing affordable access to higher education for all through further alignment and leveraging of state and federal resources
3. Tracking outcomes of students, including the average wages over time and the percent of students that earn competitive wages three years after completing a program

Additional information on this strategic plan is available at schev.edu/research-publications/strategic-plan.

Postsecondary Partner Programs on the Eligible Training Provider List

The state workforce board adopted an expansive policy allowing institutions that are exempt from certification by SCHEV to participate as an eligible training provider. This policy is available for review at: virginiaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/VBWD-Policy-404-01.2-Eligible-Training-Provider-List.pdf. Five categories of providers may apply for inclusion on the state eligible training provider list:

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1. A postsecondary educational institution that is eligible to receive federal funds under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and that provides a program that leads to certification or license or college certificate, associate degree, or baccalaureate degree.
2. A postsecondary school that offers formal instructional programs with curricula designed primarily for students who have completed the requirements for a high school diploma or its equivalent. Such schools include programs of academic-vocational, vocational, and continuing professional education that may lead to a certification or licensure. This category excludes avocational and adult basic education programs.
3. An entity that carries out related instruction under the National Apprenticeship Act that is recognized by Virginia Works. See RAP section for additional information on how RAPs may opt in to the ETPL.
4. A provider of a program of occupational training services that under Section 23.1-219 of the Code of Virginia is exempt from certification as a postsecondary school such as a professional or occupational training program regulated by another state or federal governmental agency other than the SCHEV, any school, institute, or course of instruction offered by any trade association or any non-profit affiliation of a trade association on subjects related to the trade, business, or profession represented by such association.
5. A provider of adult education and literacy activities under Title II of WIOA, if these activities are provided in combination with occupational skills training

F. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS

Goal 1: Prepare Every Virginian for Quality Careers

Equip Virginians with the technical and durable skills and credentials needed to access and advance in career pathways that provide competitive, family-sustaining wages & benefits; a safe and healthy working environment; and a visible trajectory for continuous learning and meaningful skill use, with particular focus on high-demand industries and populations facing structural barriers.

Strategy: Collaborate across key system partners like the Virginia Department of Education, VCCS, and employers to identify, scale, and invest in career pathway exploration programs, CTE education, digital literacy and emerging technology skills, and dual enrollment programs throughout an individual's K-12 education and postsecondary programs.

Virginia has taken bold steps to improve access and attainment of industry-recognized postsecondary credentials. The Governor, SCHEV, and the Chancellor of VCCS have all established goals and aligned resources to support credential attainment in the Commonwealth. The following programs implement these goals.

G3 (Get a Skill, Get a Job, Get Ahead)

In 2021, the Virginia General Assembly established the G3 program for the Commonwealth's community colleges. The program provides tuition assistance for students with a household income that's less than \$100,000. G3 is available for select programs in five of Virginia's most in-demand industries, including Early Childhood Education, Healthcare, Information Technology, Public Safety and Skilled Trades (construction and manufacturing). Students receiving G3 funding are on a stackable pathway that will lead to a certificate (and eventually an associate degree) that has immediate value in the job market. Additional information is available at virginiag3.com.

Credit for Prior Learning for Virginia's Veterans

Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) is offered at Virginia Community Colleges through a service model that involves conducting a Prior Learning Assessment for each individual that requests a review of any previous military

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experience or training, work experience, or other professional training to see if college credit can be obtained towards a given program of study. Each college uses different options to make that assessment, including the American Council on Education recommendations with recognition for military and workforce training, national exams (i.e., College Level Examination Program), and/or portfolio development. This assessment service allows an individual to complete his or her program of study or training more quickly and inexpensively, increasing the likelihood that greater numbers of individual learners will complete credentials.

Military Medic and Corpsman Program (MMAC)

Continuing to make Virginia the most veteran-friendly state in the nation, the legislature established the MMAC program, which provides recently discharged service members with specialized medical training, an opportunity for employment at major Virginia healthcare systems, a pathway to licensure and long-term medical careers, and a solution to acute healthcare staffing shortages in Virginia's healthcare industry. Additional information is available at dvs.virginia.gov/employment-transition/military-medics-corpsmen-mmacc-program.

HIRE VETS NOW Credentialing

This DVS initiative is funded through a grant from Altria and in collaboration with the Virginia Veterans Services Foundation (VSF), the Community College Workforce Alliance (CCWA), and other community college workforce programs. The initiative provide assistance to service members and veterans with no other source of funding to cover the costs of industry-recognized credentials. Additional information is available at vachamber.com/foundation/hirevets.

FastForward (WCG)

This program established Virginia's first statewide program to provide non-credit workforce training for industry certifications and occupational licenses aligned to regionally available jobs, offering access to middle class wages and beyond. FastForward created a revolving fund, administered by the SCHEV, to support student grants for non-credit workforce training targeted to industry certifications and licenses. The fund incentivizes community colleges and regional higher education centers to support students in completing their programs and attaining credentials through a first of its kind pay for performance funding formula.

To encourage Virginians attaining industry certifications and occupational licenses to attain additional postsecondary education credentials, higher education institutions participating in the program adopt a policy for the awarding of college credits to any student who has earned a noncredit workforce credential that is applicable to a student's college certificate or degree program requirements.

The VBWD produces and publishes a list of high demand occupations, found here: voee.org/virginia-high-demand-dashboard. Eligible institutions are required to evaluate regional labor market needs and identify related credentialing programs.

CTE High-Quality Work-Based Learning Guide

Legislation (8VAC20-131-100) revised in 2019, in accordance with the Profile of a Virginia Graduate, requires that all secondary schools' offerings include participation in work-based learning experiences and opportunities to earn workforce, career readiness, and industry credentials.

The Virginia Board of Education was required to review and revise, in consultation with stakeholders, its CTE High-Quality Work-Based Learning Guide to expand the opportunities available for students to earn credit for graduation through high-quality work-based learning experiences, such as job shadowing, mentorships, internships, externships, and RAs. Virginia's High-Quality Work-Based Learning is comprised of school-coordinated workplace experiences that enable each student to explore their career goals and interests, and apply classroom instruction in a real-world business or service-oriented work environment. Additional information is available at doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/k-12-standards-instruction/career-and-technical-education-cte/hqwbl.

Goal 3: Lead the Nation in Work-Based Learning and Registered Apprenticeship

Scale Registered Apprenticeship, on-the-job training, paid internships, and other work-based learning models to serve as primary pathways to employment and reemployment, meeting Governor Spanberger's commitment to expanding earn-and-learn opportunities for every Virginian.

Strategy: Increase access to Registered Apprenticeships for all Virginians in all corners of the Commonwealth.

The VBWD has established an On-the-Job Training (OJT) policy (found at virginiaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/VBWD-403-03-Change-1-OJT-FINAL.pdf) that provides the framework and guidance for the state and local workforce development systems to use OJT, as a standalone work-based learning activity or in collaboration with other training programs, such as RA or incumbent worker training, in a consistent and effective manner under the parameters set forth in the WIOA.

One of Virginia Works' key goals is to conduct outreach efforts that focus on OJT and RA programs and their benefits to the worker, employer, and Virginia's economy. All apprentices registered by sponsors in Virginia work toward their journey worker certification at the completion of their apprenticeship program. The shortest programs combine 2,000 hours of training with 144 hours of related technical instruction (RTI). Curriculum review by education specialists within Virginia Works ensures that the RTI is high-quality and is relevant to the RA occupation, regardless of the source. While the goal of RTI in an apprenticeship is to provide the apprentices with information relevant to their occupation, sponsors are free to include relevant training that may allow apprentices to pursue a degree (Associates, or in some instances a Bachelors) as part of their program, with that education sometimes continuing after the apprenticeship itself has been completed.

The VBWD approved VBWD Policy 404-01.2 Eligible Training Provider List (found at <https://virginiaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/VBWD-Policy-404-01.2-Eligible-Training-Provider-List.pdf>) related to the inclusion of RAs to the state's ETPL. The ETPL identifies the state's available training programs on which specified WIOA funds (e.g., individual training accounts) can be spent. All RAs are automatically eligible for inclusion on the ETPL but must request to be added. RAs on the ETPL receive exposure and marketing of programs to workers and provides a sponsor with the opportunity for new sources of support by the many workforce programs in their communities. Workforce partners may help with the recruiting and screening of qualified candidates who are eligible to receive WIOA funding to support apprentice training, such as related technical instruction, on-the-job training, customized training, incumbent worker training, and supportive services for the apprentice, e.g., tools, boots, testing fees, and transportation assistance.

Virginia Works continues to conduct outreach with the high schools and school divisions to promote OTJ and RA. Any employer who hires a high school student appropriately can use the RA model. The CTE curriculum supports the Youth Registered Apprenticeship (YRA) program.

More detail on specific programs and partnerships can be found in Sections III.2(A) and III. 2(B).

G. COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Goal 2: Connect Virginia's Employers to Top Talent

Directly connect Virginia businesses to a workforce with skills matched to their needs and enable businesses to effectively attract, develop, and retain Virginians in quality careers.

Strategy: Enhance business services by developing a collaborative, coordinated partner network and employer-focused messaging and tools, such as Virginia's new Talent Solutions Guide, and connecting regularly with

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sector partners, either directly or through industry associations. Develop and improve collaborations between local economic development partners, LWDBs, Business Solutions Teams (BSTs), community colleges, CTE, Virginia Works, and local DSS to develop occupational skills training programs and provide support services to participants.

To best serve individuals looking for quality career opportunities, Virginia Works is closely aligned with economic development activities. The system is employer-led, and Virginia sees workforce development as a clear economic development strategy. Virginia continues to align industry sector strategic goals, attainment of workforce training, skills and credentials, and career sustainability with the engines of the Commonwealth's economic development and growth.

The Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) is the state economic development authority for the Commonwealth of Virginia. VEDP collaborates with local, regional, and state partners to encourage the expansion and diversification of Virginia's economy. VEDP works to accomplish these objectives through a variety of activities, including marketing and lead generation; business retention, expansion, and attraction; trade development; business intelligence; competitive benchmarking; site development; performance-based incentives; and talent solutions. The Code of Virginia charges VEDP with the duty to encourage the coordination of the economic development efforts of public institutions, regions, communities, and private industry. Its strategic plan for economic development in Virginia is available at vedp.org/strategicplan.

VEDP offers and administers two discretionary incentive programs for eligible companies: the *Virginia Jobs Investment Program (VJIP)* and the *Virginia Talent Accelerator Program*. Virginia offers companies the option to choose the workforce incentive that's best for their economic development project.

VJIP is a discretionary incentive that provides consultative services and funding to companies creating new jobs or experiencing technological change. Launched in 1965, VJIP reduces the human resource development costs of new and expanding companies. Funding and coordination with regional workforce partners are offered to streamline company recruitment and training. VJIP is one of Virginia's most widely used economic development incentives.

The *Virginia Talent Accelerator Program* was launched in partnership with VCCS in 2019. The Virginia Talent Accelerator Program is a service-based discretionary incentive designed to deliver customized, turnkey, recruitment, and training solutions that are specific to a company's unique needs, processes, and culture. As a discretionary incentive, the Virginia Talent Accelerator Program is for new or expanding company projects and comes at no cost to the business. With strong support from the Governor and General Assembly, VJIP and the *Virginia Talent Accelerator Program* are completely state funded, which demonstrates Virginia's commitment to enhancing job opportunities for its citizens.

In addition, the Virginia Office of Education Economics (VOEE) at VEDP coordinates data analysis on workforce development and higher education alignment. VOEE partners use these analyses for policy development and implementation related to talent development. Their high-demand occupations dashboard, created in partnership with the VBWD, is available at: voee.org/virginia-high-demand-dashboard.

Further, GO Virginia is a bipartisan, business-led economic development initiative that incentivizes collaboration between business, education, and government. The Growth & Opportunity Board, responsible for awarding allotted funds to relevant projects, oversees Regional Councils, who submit project ideas to the Board for approval. The aim of each approved project is to create more high-paying jobs so that we can diversify and strengthen Virginia's economy. One GO Virginia initiative, called *Talent Pathways*, aligns educational curricula with employer needs and embeds internships, apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities in

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the curricula. Talent Pathways that address identified regional workforce shortages and skills gaps or that meet projected workforce needs in high-growth sectors also receive priority. Additional information is available at govirginia.org.

B. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

The Virginia Workforce Connection

The Virginia Workforce Connection (VaWC) is a comprehensive software application used for assisting clients and tracking Workforce Development Services within the Commonwealth. It is used by Virginia Works for WIOA Title I and Title III programs. VaWC, found at vawc.virginia.gov, is the web-based, public employment service established to assist employers in finding qualified workers and to assist workers in finding suitable jobs.

The system provides integrated services via the Internet for individuals, employers, training providers, workforce staff, and one-stop partners. There are no fees charged to the employer or applicant for these services. Using the VaWC, job seekers look for jobs compatible with their skills. Employers can use the system to request one-stop center staff assistance for screening and referring applicants to job openings and access critical labor markets.

The application was developed by an organization known as Geographic Solutions Incorporated (GSI) and is marketed as a virtual one-stop. VaWC is configured to work within the design and limitations of several DOL programs for the tracking of client services, case management and federal reporting. The Virginia Workforce Connection is the system of record in Virginia for the WIOA Title I programs, as well as, Wagner Peyser (Title III) and Trade Adjustment Act programs. The system is also a resource used to publish Virginia's ETP information as well as other Labor Market Information.

The state management information system of record for Title II is the LACES by LiteracyPro database. LACES is a cloud-based system that allows users to set baselines, track progress and goals, and facilitates data reporting to state and federal agencies.

The system of record for Title IV used by DARS is Aware, "a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) case management system" developed by Alliance Enterprises. Aware is designed specifically for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies. Aware provides DARS with a system for managing caseloads and helps eliminates redundant data entry.

Individuals may register with VaWC either with the assistance of staff at a one-stop or through the virtual self-service interface. Either source of registration would allow the individual to independently access information and services surrounding employment. Virtual services have been helpful for those who have trouble reporting in person to a one-stop center/Workforce Services Office. Job seekers are encouraged to register with the assistance of a staff member so that they can be enrolled in Wagner-Peyser and have their eligibility checked for additional job services. This allows individuals to access the full suite of workforce offerings available to them, including supportive services, training opportunities, and job search workshops.

In summary, DOL guidance and state policy encourage program collaboration and system efficiency where possible. VaWC was designed and configured with this concept in mind. The individual client has a single point of entry and a single record within the system. This record is accessible to program staff as the client navigates workforce programs and services, improving system effectiveness and allowing for smooth transitions between programs and services.

Challenges and Opportunities

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Establishing a unified and consistent approach to state workforce operating systems and policies has been a high priority for the Commonwealth. While workforce staff is moving vigorously toward achieving these outcomes, several persistent challenges are ahead:

- Government agencies and policymakers are slow to embrace technology, resulting in sporadic investment and adoption
- Technology is not viewed as integral to service delivery or programmatic success
- As a result of decades of compounding technical debt, chronic underinvestment, and an overwhelming reliance on closed-source, vendor-owned solutions, the time it takes to build dedicated systems makes them obsolete before they are implemented
- State merit staff requirements may be confusing to workforce professionals within and outside the official state workforce agencies

2. THE STATE POLICIES THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES (FOR EXAMPLE, CO-ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND UNIVERSAL INTAKE PROCESSES WHERE APPROPRIATE). IN ADDITION, PROVIDE THE STATE'S GUIDELINES FOR STATE-ADMINISTERED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO A ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND ANY ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR ONE-STOP PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS.

VBWD policies support the implementation of workforce development strategies in the Commonwealth and can be found at virginiaworks.gov/im-a-workforce-partner/learn-more-about-the-virginia-board-of-workforce-development/policies. This site includes links to both board policy and supporting guidance issued by Virginia Works in the form of Virginia Workforce Letters. The VBWD is in the process of reviewing and updating policies based on recent federal and state policy changes. Virginia Works continues to update its policies to align with the agency's directives and priorities. Please note that all policies listed below will soon be migrating to the new Virginia Works website (virginiaworks.gov) to align with the system rebrand.

Virginia Works, in its capacity as administrator of WIOA Title I programs, provides Technical Assistance (TA) through a one-stop system support team comprised of subject matter experts from partnering agencies, local workforce development boards, and WIOA Title I program staff. LWDBs, through their staff, will immediately alert policy staff at Virginia Works of any situation involving a conflict between partner agencies that could influence the quality of Center services. Further, Virginia Works leadership coordinates monthly town halls, wherein they meet with local staff and learn more about the operations on the ground at Virginia's 14 workforce areas. Due to this close collaboration with local areas, Virginia Works is fostering an environment of open communication and learning.

The VBWD, supported by a cross-agency staff workgroup, advises the Governor in determining a long-term, equitable, and stable method of funding infrastructure. The VBWD One-Stop Center Funding policy establishes the method of allocating costs among partners for infrastructure costs if there is an impasse in local negotiations. This policy is available here: virginiaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Policy-20-01-One-Stop-Center-State-Funding-Mechanism-Policy.pdf.

In Virginia, the job centers are referred to as one-stop centers or Virginia Career Works Centers. VBWD policy 300-02 *One-Stop Delivery: Comprehensive and Affiliate*, defines and describes the requirements for comprehensive and affiliate one-stop career centers in Virginia. This policy can be accessed here: www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-300-02-One-Stop-Delivery-FinalSigned.pdf.

All local workforce development areas are provided with a one-stop center MOU template, which includes, among other requirements, provisions for partners' contributions to the one-stops. The template can be accessed here: www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Official-Template-VA-One-Stop-Center-

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MOU-8-23-2021-1.pdf. The Resource Sharing Agreement begins on page 20. The Requirements for Local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) policy can be accessed here: virginiaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Policy-300-03-Requirements-for-Local-MOU-FINAL_Signed.pdf. The one-stop Cost Allocation Plan policy can be accessed here: www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-300-05-approved-by-VBWD-1.pdf.

Virginia Works continues to improve its co-enrollment numbers and policies. The agency continues to develop policies and technical assistance to encourage co-enrollment, particularly between WIOA and RA programs. The Commonwealth is in compliance with required WIOA DW and TAA co-enrollment. VBWD 19-01 *Mandatory WIOA Title I-Trade Co-Enrollment*, details the steps to facilitate co-enrollment where local case management between WIOA Title I Case Managers and TAA Case Managers is designed to be as seamless as possible by coordination through team meetings or calls with the clients and by integrating a co-enrolled service strategy into the IEP. Once an individual is deemed TAA Eligible and the comprehensive assessment is completed by WIOA Title I Case Manager, the TAA Case Manager should take primary responsibility for case management while the individual is in TAA funded training. The WIOA Title I Case Managers and TAA Case Managers should co-staff cases regularly to provide updates on the needs of individuals, including the need for the appropriate supportive services as available under LWDB policy. Upon completion of the TAA related training, the appropriate staff should assist the participant with job placement into an appropriate career. Upon successful placement in employment and closure of the case, all programs will receive credit for the placement and outcomes. During this process, the participant should not experience being frequently passed between various case managers. This policy is available at virginiaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/VBWD-19-01-Change_1_Mandatory-WIOA-Trade-Co-Enrollment-VBWD-Policy_FINAL.pdf.

TA

Virginia Works provides regular, responsive TA to local boards, chief elected officials, and one-stop partners. The WIOA Title I Administrator provides technical assistance workshops to the local areas at a minimum of twice a year regionally. These workshops aid in the areas of performance reporting; financial reporting; VaWC System data entry; service strategies for adult, youth, and dislocated workers; and monitoring. The WIOA Title I Administrator Staff provides customized TA to the local areas by responding to questions they receive via email or phone. Virginia Works also provides ongoing TA for specific programs— such as sector partnerships, RAs, and other specialized services— to ensure that all workers are receiving high quality support that responds to their needs.

Professional Development

Each local workforce development area has a Learning Coordinator who serves as a system link to the one-stop centers and their partners. Overall, the state's professional development activities will depend on the support of the following partners:

The WIOA State Learning Administrator:

- Serves as the liaison between the LWDBs, State and Local Learning Coordinators, and VBWD
- Maintains the professional development plan current, facilitate the implementation of the plan, and identify existing resources to support the plan
- Periodically conducts a statewide assessment on training needs for the main functional teams: customer service, career/job seekers, employer/business services and Leadership/Management (to include LWDB and staff to LWDB)
- Provides training opportunities statewide for constant system development when deemed necessary

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- Communicates to the field available training/professional development opportunities that are focused on meeting the core competency areas
- Assists with keeping the Virginia Workforce Development System Course current and relevant

Virginia Workforce Network partner entities and agencies:

- Designate a State Learning Coordinator
- Develop processes and identify resources to support professional development
- Participate in the development of a professional development plan and provide professional development opportunities for staff and/or support staff attendance at workforce development conferences and trainings
- Promote the value for professional development and certification to one-stop partners and document partners' commitment via local plans and MOU
- Maintain and support the Learning Coordinator's role
- Provide recognition of certifications/professional development accomplishments

Local Learning Coordinator:

- Assists in the "learning process" for the one-stop staff
- Identifies and keeps track of staff that are required to be certified and staff that have completed certification requirements
- Monitors participants' progress and provide encouragement
- Works with immediate supervisors to provide staff the additional support needed
- Provides progress updates to one-stop manager
- Alerts state coordinator of issues and concerns that can't be resolved locally
- Assists the State to identify training opportunities and resolve any concerns that cannot be resolved locally

Partner Programs in the One-Stops

In Virginia, comprehensive one-stop centers have the following requirements:

1. A physical location where both job seeker and employer customers can access the programs, services, and activities of all required one-stop partners

2a. Appropriately trained, full-time staff present to deliver workforce services from each of the following programs:

- WIOA Title I—Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth programs
- WIOA Title III—Wagner Peyser employment services
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants-funded staff (including Disabled Veteran Outreach Program or Local Veterans Employment Representative staff)

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2b. The presence of the following programs on a regular basis. Access to program resources when staff is not on site must be specifically addressed in the negotiated MOU and describe how individuals served at the Center will be provided access:

- WIOA Title IV—Vocational Rehabilitation services, which will participate by having a staff presence on a regular basis with at least one office/cubicle in at least one comprehensive one-stop career center in each local workforce development area, providing regular training to support system partners staff in the identification and delivery of services to individuals with disabilities and through strategic investments in hardware and software to support the delivery of staff-supported services and self-service clients in the comprehensive one-stop center's Resource Room
- WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Literacy services.

2c. Access to the following programs and the access strategy must be specifically addressed in the negotiated MOU:

- Virginia Works– Registered Apprenticeship
 - Carl Perkins Career and Technical Education – Postsecondary Training
 - Non-Credit Workforce Training provided by VCCS
 - Trade Adjustment Assistance
 - TANF and the Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare (VIEW)
 - SNAP E&T
 - Other programs authorized under title I of WIOA, including Job Corps; YouthBuild; Native American programs; and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker programs
 - The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
 - Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) employment and training activities
 - Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) employment and training activities
 - Programs authorized under state unemployment compensation laws
 - Second Chance Act programs
1. Full access to career (basic and individualized) and training services
 - a. Access is defined as (1) having partner program staff physically present at the one-stop career center appropriately trained to provide information to customers about the programs, services, and activities available through partner programs; and/or (2) providing direct linkage through technology to program staff who can provide relevant information and/or services.
 2. A full array of labor market information for job seekers, including online access to tools and resources
 - a. This information shall be provided by Virginia Works through the Virginia Workforce Connection and virginiaworks.gov. It may be supplemented with local tools and resources.
 3. Access to programs, services, and activities during regular business days and hours
 - a. Program access strategies must include consideration for program access during non-traditional hours

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4. A referral processes in place for employers and job seekers to have access to specialized or other services available through partner programs and service providers
 - a. These processes must be documented in the partner MOU

WIOA also allows affiliate one-stop centers. In Virginia, an affiliate one-stop center has the following requirements:

1. At least two or more partner programs with a physical staff presence at the location
 - a. An affiliate one-stop center does not need to provide access to every required one-stop partner program, although it is encouraged that remote access be provided, such as program partner electronic intake forms and appointment scheduling at other locations
 - b. The frequency of the physical presence of various program staff at the affiliate one-stop center is determined at the local level through arrangements with program partners
 - c. At each affiliate one-stop center, a program partner lead shall be identified. This lead could be any partner described in sections 2a-2b. This encourages an expansive and inclusive network of physical one-stop center locations.
2. Wagner-Peyser employment service sites cannot be affiliate one-stop career centers unless they are collocated with another program partner
 - a. Another partner program may not include the partner administering the Jobs for Veterans State Grant Program (JMSG), Trade Act Program, or unemployment insurance programs.

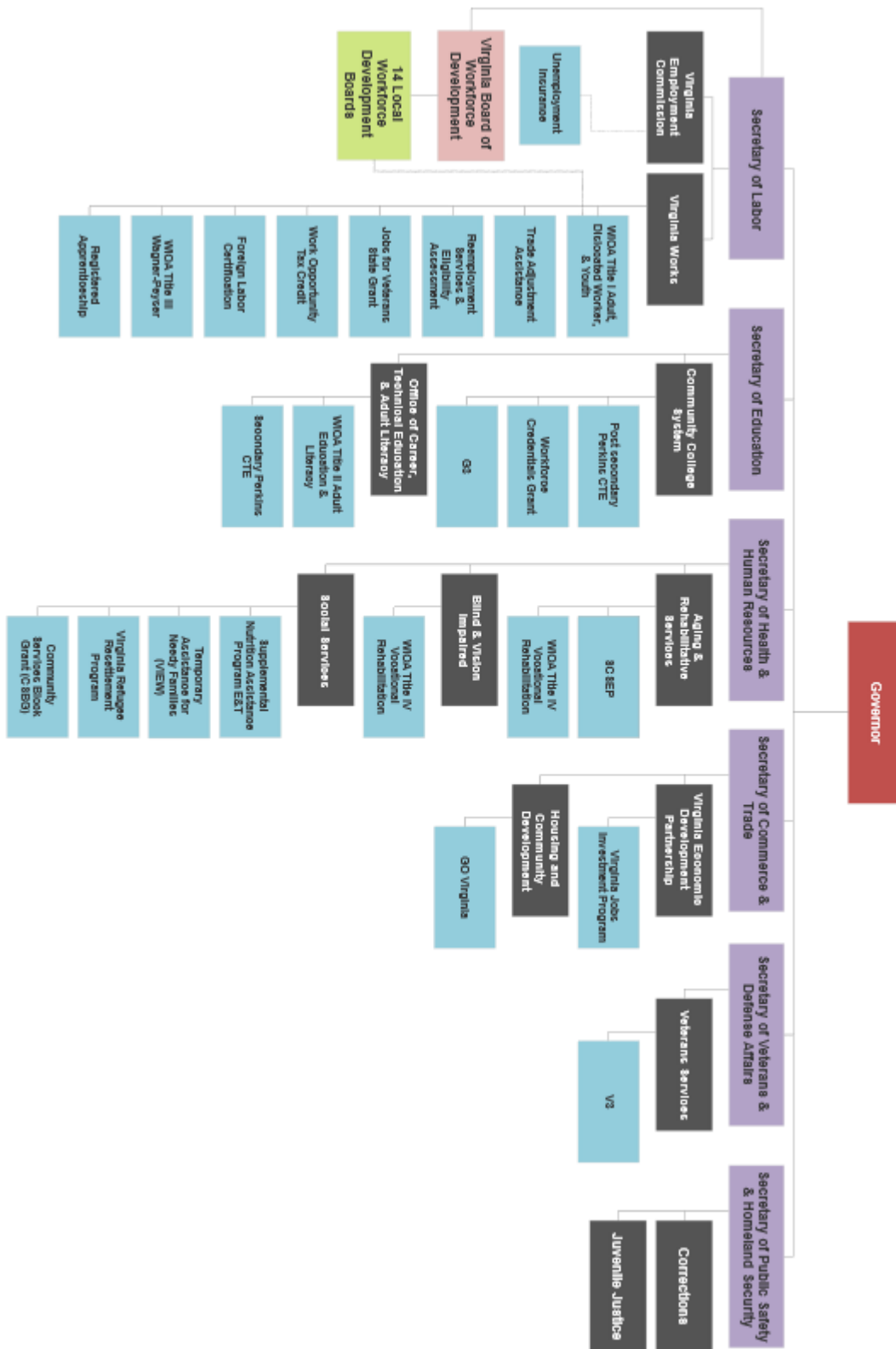
If Wagner-Peyser employment services are provided at an affiliate site, there must be at least a WIOA Title I service provider at the affiliate site with staff physically present more than 50 percent of the time the center is open, in addition to any other partners as established in the local workforce area plan.

Virginia is exploring all options for service delivery at comprehensive, affiliate, and virtual one-stops. Virginia is a large state with many rural communities, and Virginia Works recognizes that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to serving individuals across the Commonwealth. The agency continues to implement more virtual services and work with local community centers to co-locate services.

3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW

A. STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION

This organizational chart Virginia Works, which now administers most of the core workforce programs, along with RAs. The Secretary of Labor, whom the Governor has designated to manage the workforce system, oversees Virginia Works. The state workforce board is a strategic entity that operates outside of any one agency and works with the Governor to provide system-spanning policy recommendations, strategic direction to the one-stop service delivery system, and performance oversight.



The six core programs in the plan are administered by four agencies: Virginia Works (Title I & Title III), the Virginia Office of Career Technical Education and Adult Literacy (Title II), and DARS and DBVI (Title IV).

The Secretary of Labor has responsibilities in state code for the implementation of WIOA and the Combined State Plan. Virginia uses a hub-and-spoke service delivery strategy, which delivers services throughout its 14 local workforce areas using a network of 51 one-stop centers, cross-agency Business Service teams, field-deployed program specialists, and local office-based social service agencies. Virginia currently requires that

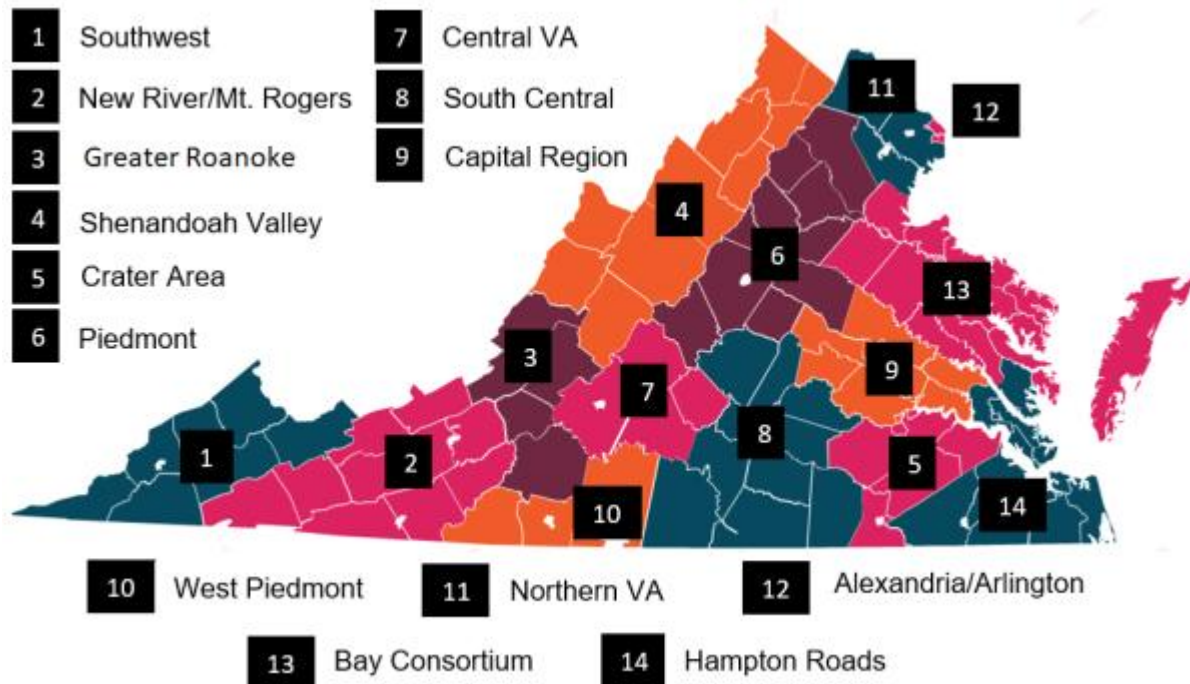
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each local workforce area have at least one comprehensive one-stop center, which provides access to core partner programs and memorandums of understanding with other system partners.

Local Workforce Areas (LWDA) and Workforce Boards

The one-stop service delivery system in Virginia includes 14 local workforce areas that support a network of comprehensive and affiliate one-stop centers. These serve as hubs where individuals and employers can access services. LWDAs serve as regional conveners of workforce system resources.

Virginia Career Works Regions



Please note, LWDA 13 (Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board) and LWDA 14 (Hampton Roads Workforce Council) are undergoing an approved redesignation of Gloucester County to the Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board (LWDA 13) and Accomack and Northampton Counties to the Hampton Roads Workforce Council (LWDA 14). This will help those local areas to better serve the individuals in those counties.

Southwest Region (Area 1)

Buchanan County
Dickenson County
Lee County
Russell County
Scott County
Tazewell County
Wise County
Norton City

The Southwest Workforce Development Board operates the WIOA Title I Adult program for the seven counties and one city in Southwest Virginia. The adult program meets employer needs by helping customers upgrade skills, obtain employment, improve job retention, and increase earnings. These services include training and assistance in obtaining industry recognized credentials in in-demand occupations and help with re-entry into employment in high-growth industries.

New River/Mt. Rogers Region (Area 2)

Bland County
Carroll County
Floyd County
Giles County
Grayson County
Montgomery County
Pulaski County
Smyth County
Washington County
Wythe County
Bristol City
Galax City
Radford City

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board strengthens the region's workforce by promoting opportunities for people of New River/Mount Rogers Area to reach and maintain economic self-sufficiency while increasing the availability of a trained and skilled workforce for area businesses and assisting service providers in improving the level of training and services offered to clients.

Greater Roanoke Region (Area 3)

Alleghany County
Botetourt County
Craig County
Franklin County
Roanoke County
Clifton Forge City
Covington City
Roanoke City
Salem City

The Greater Roanoke Workforce Development Board, serving the Blue Ridge region, is one of 14 federally mandated organizations in the Commonwealth overseen by the VBWD in compliance with WIOA. Members of the Greater Roanoke Workforce Development Board represent the community leaders from business, education, local government, and service providers. The Board's mission is to cultivate a dynamic workforce development system that stimulates economic development.

Shenandoah Valley Region (Area 4)

Augusta County
Bath County
Clarke County
Frederick County
Highland County
Page County
Rockbridge County
Rockingham County
Shenandoah County
Warren County
Buena Vista City

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Harrisonburg City
Lexington City
Staunton City
Waynesboro City
Winchester City

The Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board (SVWDB) was established in 2000 to provide oversight and administration of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in the Shenandoah Valley. The SVWDB acts as a catalyst to provide seamless services among various workforce programs and provides community leadership around workforce issues. In this capacity, the SVWDB assumes five strategic roles as convener:

- Convener to bring together business, education, economic development, organized labor, and community and faith-based organizations to focus on regional workforce issues
- Workforce analyst to research, disseminate, understand, and act as the repository for current labor market and economic information and trends
- Broker to bring together systems to solve problems or broker new relationships with businesses and workers
- Community voice to advocate for the importance of workforce policy, providing perspective about the need for skilled workers
- Capacity builder to enhance the region's ability to meet workforce needs of local employers, develop workers, and build a stronger community

Crater Region (Area 5)

Dinwiddie County
Greensville County
Prince George County
Surry County
Sussex County
Colonial Heights City
Emporia City
Hopewell City
Petersburg City

The Crater Regional Workforce Development Board (CRWDB) strives to increase employment opportunities and to ensure the integration of services to prepare individuals to meet the needs of business and industry across the Crater region. CRWDB oversees workforce development activities in conjunction with community partners.

The CRWDB administers two comprehensive one-stop centers and one satellite office for employers and job seekers across the Crater Region. These centers help businesses find qualified job seekers, while providing one of the most efficient ways to retain existing employees by training them to keep pace with industry standards.

Piedmont Region (Area 6)

Albemarle County
Culpeper County
Fauquier County
Fluvanna County

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Greene County
Louisa County
Madison County
Nelson County
Orange County
Rappahannock County
Charlottesville City

The Piedmont Workforce Development Board is part of a partnership in the region. The partnership combines the resources and staff of the Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development (the Partnership), the Central Virginia Small Business Development Center (CVSBDC), and the Piedmont Workforce Network (PWN). This partnership provides five core services for business decision makers and its local partners:

- Research and Analytics: Comprehensive, customized economic, demographic, labor, property, logistics, and infrastructure research
- Site Selection Assistance: one-stop site selection (search, analysis, and facilitation) services for start-up, expanding, satellite, or relocating facilities
- Entrepreneurial Support: Training and technical assistance with information, seminars, and individual counseling
- Existing Business Service: Collaboration with state and local partners for training, infrastructure, finance, and other solutions
- Workforce Development Solutions: Developed for employers and job seekers including recruitment, screening, training, and placement services

The Piedmont Workforce Development Board has the central role of providing leadership and direction on local strategic workforce issues, identifying local needs, and developing strategies to address those needs. The Piedmont Workforce Development Board has 34 members, 19 of whom are business representatives. Other members include representatives of education, economic development, labor, community-based organizations, and Workforce Center required partners.

Central Region (Area 7)

Amherst County
Appomattox County
Bedford County
Campbell County
Bedford City
Lynchburg City

Central Virginia Workforce Development Board is an interwoven network of organizations with a centralized vision to provide regional development leadership within the 2,000 square miles that surround Lynchburg. It provides a single point of contact to the public and private sector for regional planning services, economic development, marketing, and workforce training.

South Central Region (Area 8)

Amelia County
Brunswick County
Buckingham County
Charlotte County

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Cumberland County
Halifax County
Lunenburg County
Mecklenburg County
Nottoway County
Prince Edward County

The South Central Workforce Development Board collaborates with partners to provide local businesses and all citizens with employment, job training, support services, and more. The purpose of our one-stop centers is to integrate partner services and coordinate resources for job seekers, employers/business, skilled workers, training, and, where appropriate, incumbent workers.

Capital Region (Area 9)

Charles City County
Chesterfield County
Goochland County
Hanover County
Henrico County
New Kent County
Powhatan County
Richmond City

The Capital Region Workforce Development Board works to increase private sector employment opportunities and to ensure the integration of services to prepare individuals to meet the needs of business and industry in the Richmond region. The partnership also oversees the activities authorized under WIOA.

By developing and maintaining a quality workforce, and by serving as the focal point for integrated local and regional workforce development initiatives, the partnership aims to transform the workforce development system to advance the economic well-being of the region.

West Piedmont Region (Area 10)

Henry County
Patrick County
Pittsylvania County
Danville City
Martinsville City
South Boston City

The West Piedmont Workforce Development Board funds and monitors the region's four Virginia Workforce Centers and numerous employment services and training programs for employers, jobseekers, and the youth. The Board and sub-recipients are equal opportunity employers/programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Northern Region (Area 11)

Fairfax County
Loudoun County
Prince William County
Fairfax City
Falls Church City

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Manassas City

Manassas Park City

The Northern Virginia Workforce Development Board (NVWDB) is a team of private and public sector partners who share a common goal: to promote Northern Virginia's economic prosperity and long-term growth and to help fund comprehensive employment and training services to area employers, job seekers, and youth.

Area operations are administered by the SkillSource Group, Inc. (SSG), a separate nonprofit entity of the NVWDB with its own Board of Directors. SSG shares in the mission and goals of NVWDB, while also serving as fiscal agent and an entity that pursues additional funding sources for the board. These dollars further sustain and create workforce development initiatives for all current and future employers and job seekers throughout the region. SSG is a non-profit organization serving Northern Virginia Employers and Job Seekers offering a wide range of free job placement, training, and educational services to employers, job seekers, and incumbent workers.

Alexandria/Arlington Region (Area 12)

Arlington County

Alexandria City

The Alexandria/Arlington Regional Workforce Council serves as the local Workforce Development Board under WIOA. The Council's mission is to advance workforce development programs and initiatives that achieve sustainable economic growth in Alexandria City and Arlington County.

The Workforce Council provides oversight over WIOA services at the region's two workforce centers: the Alexandria Workforce Development Center and the Arlington Employment Center. These services include financial support for college tuition and vocational certifications; subsidies for transportation, books, and fees while in school; and uniforms for employment.

Bay Consortium Region (Area 13)

Accomack County

Caroline County

Essex County

King and Queen County

King George County

King William County

Lancaster County

Mathews County

Middlesex County

Northampton County

Northumberland County

Richmond County

Spotsylvania County

Stafford County

Westmoreland County

Fredericksburg City

The Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board administers the federally funded WIOA Program that serves adults and youth from low-income families (economically disadvantaged) and other eligible workers who have lost their jobs. The Bay Consortium supports public/private partnerships involving local government, business and industry, labor, education and training institutions, employment services, and community support organizations.

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Hampton Roads Region (Area 14)

Isle of Wight County
Norfolk City
Southampton County
Portsmouth City
Chesapeake City
Suffolk City
Franklin City
Virginia Beach City
Gloucester County
James City County
York County
Hampton City
Newport News City
Poquoson City
Williamsburg City

The Hampton Roads Workforce Council is responsible for developing workforce policy and administering workforce development initiatives. The Council oversees federally funded workforce development programs, which assist businesses in accessing qualified workers and jobseekers in finding suitable job openings and bolstering their earning power through training.

B. STATE BOARD

The State Board (VWDB) is established as a policy board in the executive branch of state government. The purpose of the Board is to assist the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Secretary of Labor in meeting the 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. It is a required body under WIOA and has specific federal and state statutory functions. It is a strategic entity which resides in the Governor's office, independent from any single workforce agency or program.

Board Membership

Except for legislative members, Board members are appointed by the Governor or dictated by the Code of Virginia, which is compliant with the requirements of WIOA. All required board members (including ex-officio) have voting privileges. Membership categories include:

- Secretary of Labor
- Two members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates and two members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. Legislative members shall serve terms coincident with their terms of office and may be reappointed for successive terms.
- The Secretaries of Commerce and Trade; Education; Health and Human Resources; Veterans Affairs and Defense Affairs; and Public Safety and Homeland Security; or their designees, each of whom shall serve ex officio
- The Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System or a designee, who shall serve ex officio
- Additional members are appointed by the Governor, who must ensure that the composition of the Board satisfies the requirements of the WIOA. The additional members shall include:
 - Two local elected officials

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- Eight members who shall be representatives of the workforce, to include (i) three representatives nominated by state labor federations, of which one shall be a representative of a joint-labor apprenticeship program; and (ii) at least one representative of a private career college
- Non-legislative citizen members representing the business community, the total number of whom shall constitute a majority of the members of the Board and who shall include the presidents of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce and the Virginia Manufacturers Association or their designees and the remaining members who are business owners, chief executive officers, chief operating officers, chief financial officers, senior managers, or other business executives or employers with optimum policy-making or hiring authority who industry sectors that represent the Commonwealth's economic development priorities. Business members shall represent diverse regions of the state, to include urban, suburban, and rural areas, and at least two members shall also be members of local workforce development boards.

Virginia Board of Workforce Development Roster (as of February 2026)

Member Name	Affiliation
Abigail Spanberger	Governor of Virginia
Business Representatives	
Xavier Beale, Chair	VP Human Resources and Administration HII, Newport News Shipbuilding
Louise Welch, Vice Chair	Chief People Officer Vistaprint
Hobart “Hobey” Bauhan	President Virginia Poultry Federation
Antwon Brinson	President Culinary Concepts AB
Beau Correll	CEO Correll Law Firm, PC
Paul Denham	CEO Southern Air, Inc.
Blair Durham	Co-Founder & CEO Black BRAND
Cindy Free	Industrial Rehab Coordinator Atlantic Orthopaedic Specialists Physical Therapy

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Member Name	Affiliation
Andrew Glowatsky	Dir. of Reliability and Supply Chain operations Church and Dwight Co., Inc.
Don Haller	Associate General Counsel, Retired
Debora Harvey	Executive Director Heavy Construction Contractors Association
Hugh Joyce	President James River Air Conditioning Company
Kunal Kumar	President, Pooja Group, Inc.
Keith Martin	Interim President & CEO The Virginia Chamber of Commerce
Jim Monroe	Chief Customer Officer OneTrust
Lara Overy	Commissioner of Revenue, City of Williamsburg
Yolanda Shields	Founder, Yesbuilds; Adjunct Faculty, Shenandoah University
Cheryl Spraberry	President Advanced Integrated Technologies & Surge Force
Zuzana Steen	Director, Academic and Community Relations Site Leadership Team Member Micron Technology Virginia, Inc.
Fred Thompson	Chief Administrative Officer, Thompson Hospitality Co-Founder & Chair, Opportunity Scholars
My Lan Tran	Executive Director Virginia Asian Chamber of Commerce
Brett Vassey	President and CEO, Virginia Manufacturer's Association
Workforce Representatives	

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Member Name	Affiliation
Mark A. Barth	President & CEO Goodwill of Central and Coastal Virginia
Bo Bundrick	Director of CTE & Workforce Development Louisa County Public Schools
Doris Crouse-Mays	President Virginia AFL-CIO
David Doré Designee Corey McCray President, Paul D. Camp Community College	Chancellor, Virginia Community College System
Mark Dreyfus	President, ECPI University
Richard Hatch	CWA Staff Representative Communication Workers of America
Jason Parker	President VA Building Trades
Padmanabhan Seshaiyer	Professor and Director, George Mason University
Jeff Sluss	Executive Director SkillsUSA Virginia Foundation
Travis Staton	President and CEO, EO Companies
Elected Officials	
Jessica Looman	Secretary of Labor
Carrie Chenery	Secretary of Commerce and Trade
Marvin Figueroa	Secretary of Health and Human Resources, Title IV Representative
Cal "Cash" Jackson-Green	Councilman, City of Virginia Beach
Stanley Meador	Secretary of Public Safety & Homeland Security
Tammy Mulchi	Senator, 9 th District

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Member Name	Affiliation
	Senate of Virginia
Stephanie Reed	Councilwoman, City of Lynchburg
Dr. Jeffery Smith	Secretary of Education, Title II Representative
Kathy Tran Secretaries	Delegate, 18th District, Virginia House of Delegates
Timothy P. Williams	Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs

The current Board roster is available at viriniaworks.gov/im-a-workforce-partner/learn-more-about-the-virginia-board-of-workforce-development/board-leadership/board-members.

Board Activities

According to the Code of Virginia § 2.2-2472, the Board shall undertake the following actions to implement and foster workforce development and training and better align education and workforce programs to meet current and projected skills requirements of an increasingly technological, global workforce:

1. Provide policy advice to the Governor on workforce and workforce development issues to create a business-driven system that yields increasing rates of attainment of workforce credentials in demand by business and increasing rates of jobs creation and attainment
2. Provide policy direction to local workforce development boards
3. Assist the Governor in the development, implementation, and modification of any combined state plan developed pursuant to the WIOA
4. Identify current and emerging statewide workforce needs of the business community;
5. Forecast and identify training requirements for the new workforce
6. Recommend strategies to match trained workers with available jobs to include strategies for increasing business engagement in education and workforce development
7. Evaluate the extent to which the state's workforce development programs emphasize education and training opportunities that align with employers' workforce needs and labor market statistics and report the findings of this analysis to the Governor every two years
8. Advise and oversee the development of a strategic workforce dashboard and tools that will inform the Governor, policy makers, system stakeholders, and the public on issues such as state and regional labor market conditions, the relationship between the supply and demand for workers, workforce program outcomes, and projected employment growth or decline. The Virginia Employment Commission, along with other workforce partners, shall provide data to populate the tools and dashboard
9. Determine and publish a list of jobs, trades, and professions for which high demand for qualified workers exists or is projected by the Virginia Employment Commission. The Virginia Employment Commission shall support the VBWD in making such determination. Such information shall be published biennially and disseminated to employers; education and training entities, including associate-degree-granting and baccalaureate public institutions of higher education; government agencies, including the Department of Education and public libraries; and other users in the public and private sectors
10. Develop pay-for-performance contract strategy incentives for rapid reemployment services consistent with WIOA as an alternative model to traditional programs
11. Conduct a review of budgets, which shall be submitted annually to the Board by each agency conducting federal and state funded career and technical and adult education and workforce development

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programs, that identify the agency's sources and expenditures of administrative, workforce education and training, and support services for workforce development programs

12. Review and recommend industry credentials that align with high demand occupations, which credentials shall include a credential that determines career readiness
13. Define the Board's role in certifying WIOA training providers, including those not subject to the authority expressed in Article 3 (§ 23.1-213 et seq.) of Chapter 2 of Title 23.1
14. Provide an annual report to the Governor concerning its actions and determinations under subdivisions 1 through 13
15. Create quality standards, guidelines, and directives applicable to local workforce development boards and the operation of one-stops, as necessary and appropriate to carry out the purposes of this article.

4. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNERS

A. ASSESSMENT OF CORE AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNER PROGRAMS.

Virginia is committed to developing an increasingly evidence-based approach to workforce development to ensure its programs continue to meet workers where they are and serve the whole individual through robust partnerships. Virginia Works has invested in new performance management tools to expedite this continuous improvement process. Virginia's Workforce Data Trust tracks participants' journey through the workforce development system in real-time, enabling the coordination and optimization of service delivery across partner programs. This secure integration platform also allows administrative data to be leveraged for the rigorous evaluation of program efficacy.

Insights surfaced through analysis are accessible to staff and the public through a performance dashboard, helping to nurture a culture of data-driven decision making across the organization. In support of that aim, the Secretary of Labor recommends the following hierarchy of evidence be considered for purposes of program evaluation and grant making:

- Strong evidence: meaning at least two evaluation reports have demonstrated that an intervention or strategy has been tested nationally, regionally, at the state- level, or with different populations or locations in the same local area using a well-designed and well-implemented experimental design evaluation (i.e., Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)) or a quasi-experimental design evaluation (QED) with statistically matched comparison (i.e., counterfactual) and treatment groups. See <https://CLEAR.dol.gov> for full definitions of strong or moderate study design. The overall pattern of evaluation findings must be consistently positive on one or more key workforce outcomes. The evaluations should be conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.
- Moderate evidence: meaning at least one evaluation report has demonstrated that an intervention or strategy has been tested using a well-designed and well-implemented experimental or quasi-experimental design showing evidence of effectiveness on one or more key workforce outcomes. The evaluations should be conducted by an independent entity external to the organization implementing the intervention.
- Preliminary evidence: meaning at least one evaluation report has demonstrated that an intervention or strategy has been tested using a well-designed and well-implemented pre/post-assessment without a comparison group or a post-assessment comparison between intervention and comparison groups showing evidence of effectiveness on one or more key workforce outcomes. The evaluation may be conducted either internally or externally.
- Pre-preliminary evidence: meaning there is program performance data for the intervention showing improvements for one or more key workforce outputs or outcomes.

Promising Performance-driven Strategies for Procurement and Grant making

- Award preference points to providers offering models supported by high or moderate causal evidence
- Develop contracts that pay directly for outcomes, exploring potential flexibility around award sizes, time periods, and performance measures
- Build a growing base of evidence by promoting, conducting, and financing evaluation
- Improve internal and external transparency regarding funding and program performance

Assessment of Core Programs

Virginia Works employs a Performance and Evaluation Coordinator whose responsibilities include statistical analysis of WIOA Title I data for accountability purposes, as well as the development of a local statistical adjustment model. The local model includes many of the same predictor variables used in DOL's statewide model. Local labor market data was used to account for regional differences among Virginia's 14 LWDA's. As required by WIOA, the newly developed local model was used to inform the PY 2026-2027 performance measures. Furthermore, summary reports were developed to provide comparisons between actual performance, adjusted performance, and negotiated goals for each performance indicator, by LWDA. These tools will be helpful for the evaluation of Title I performance at both the state and local level.

In support of Title I performance evaluation, detailed reports have been developed to inform local staff about the specific participants who are included in each performance measure. These are distributed to local staff on a quarterly basis, in addition to the local reports generated through WIPS. Using these reports, local performance can be analyzed by various demographic categories and participant characteristics. Virginia plans to continue exploring additional data-driven initiatives that allow for a deeper analysis of WIOA performance to highlight program successes and uncover opportunities for improvement.

The Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) each provide the opportunity for agency specific customer feedback during their service provision processes. These agency specific customer surveys allow for an in-depth analysis of the specialized services provided.

The Virginia Workforce Connection, an electronic service provision and tracking tool and the state system of record for Title I and Title III, offers customers the opportunity to complete a satisfaction survey once they have received WIOA Title III services. Both employers and job seekers can respond to the survey.

The Title IV general vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency, DARS, works in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to assess the perspectives of Title IV VR consumers who have not yet entered employment. This innovative approach permits real-time assessment of services, allowing issues to be addressed prior to consumers exiting the program. Each month, a stratified sample based on office proportion is used to ensure that the sample matches as closely as possible the population proportions for DARS' offices as of survey selection. DARS also offers consumers the option of completing either a paper or online survey. The Title IV VR agency that serves individuals who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind, DBVI, partners with its SRC for DBVI in reviewing the effectiveness of, and individual satisfaction with the VR services provided. All eligible individuals, who receive services, are provided the opportunity to participate in VR program evaluation through a customer satisfaction survey. The survey is provided with several ways for individuals to respond, in paper form by mail, online, or by telephone.

The Title II Adult Education program is a decentralized, grant-funded network of providers, each of which has mechanisms to solicit and collect customer (student) feedback and suggestions that are acted upon by the grant administrative team.

Assessment of one-stop partner programs

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The Code of Virginia delineates the workforce responsibilities of the Governor, the Secretary of Labor, and the VBWD. This legislation reinforces federal requirements and establishes several responsibilities and functional roles that support Virginia's workforce system. These include oversight, assessment, evaluation and a continuous improvement strategy at the state, local area, and program level.

One-Stop Delivery System Partner Program Annual Assessment

The statewide WIOA Title I monitoring team conducts an annual review of activities in the local workforce development areas, including the activities of the one-stop partners and Plan partners. This review includes a customer satisfaction survey for job-seekers and employers at each one-stop location. Customer satisfaction surveys are made available to the job seeking customers through various means, such as available in the resource room in paper and electronic versions, offered to customers at the end of workshops/meetings/events in either an electronic or printed format, and some are made available on the LWDA website as well. The business customers are also offered an opportunity to provide customer service feedback at the local level after each event/provision of service. Virginia also relies on the agencies providing specialized workforce services to develop and implement agency specific customer satisfaction surveys.

Currently the one-stop center customer service feedback results are only generalizable to the individual populations for each individual LWDA, while DARS and DBVI customer feedback is specific to the customers receiving their unique program services respectively. Each LWDB has a process for collecting, analyzing, and incorporating the customer satisfaction survey results into their daily operations. The survey results are collected and analyzed by program managers or one-stop operators. The results are shared with the partner team members, and any resulting actions needed to improve operations are implemented through the appropriate partnership of one-stop staff.

Quality

The VBWD is required to evaluate the extent to which the Commonwealth's workforce development programs emphasize education and training opportunities that align with employers' workforce needs and labor market statistics and report the findings of this analysis to the governor every two years. The state workforce board policy related to Quality Standards for programs operating in the one-stop center establishes a balanced scorecard approach to monitor customer relations, operations, professional development, and resource management.

In customer relations, the policy advances concepts like "no wrong door," collaborative service delivery and programmatic continuum, affirmative referrals, and total customer satisfaction. The operations section of the policy drives four priority service areas – intake; assessment and screening; job placement; training and skills development; and employer outreach and business services. Professional development is a critical factor for success. Each center must develop and execute a professional development strategy to benefit the partners.

Effectiveness

The Secretary of Labor is required to monitor, in coordination with the VBWD, the effectiveness of each one-stop center and LWDB.

The Secretary also is required to conduct annual evaluations of the performance of workforce development and training programs and activities and their administrators and providers, including:

1. A comparison of the per-person costs for each program or activity
2. A comparative rating of the per-person costs for each program or activity

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3. An explanation of the extent to which each agency's appropriation requests incorporate the data reflected in the cost comparison described in clause (1) and the comparative rating described in clause (2).

The Secretary also provides a report to the Legislature detailing the career and technical education and workforce development program's performance against state-level metrics.

The VBWD is required to conduct a review of budgets, which must be submitted annually to the Board by each agency conducting federal and state funded career and technical and adult education and workforce development programs, which identify the agency's sources and expenditures of administrative, workforce education and training, and support services for workforce development programs.

They also maintain a Performance Committee to develop the metrics and measurements for publishing comprehensive workforce score cards and other longitudinal data that will enable the Virginia to measure comprehensive accountability and performance.

Improvement of Programs

- The Secretary of Labor is required to:
 - Submit biennial reports, which shall be included in the governor's executive budget submissions to the General Assembly, on improvements in the coordination of workforce development efforts statewide. The reports shall identify (i) program success rates in relation to performance measures established by the VBWD, (ii) obstacles to program and resource coordination, and (iii) strategies for facilitating statewide program and resource coordination.

B. PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Under the direction of the Office of the Secretary of Labor, surveys were developed focusing on the financial components of the programs (programs, local regions, etc.) supporting WIOA as well as costs associated with technology used to support and/or deliver services to clients. This information enabled the Office to develop a comprehensive picture of the financial and technology components and highlighted where additional information and collaboration is needed to enhance the understanding of WIOA services within the Commonwealth. The VBWD was provided summary information from the analysis of the survey results and offered guidance and direction on how to supplement future assessments so that actionable strategies can be developed as the information currently available, while helpful, needs to be supplemented.

Therefore, the Secretary of Labor and the VBWD will conduct a comprehensive assessment of service delivery by the one-stop core programs in Virginia. The assessment will examine data from the last three years for both individual and business services.

C. EVALUATION

How Virginia will Conduct Evaluations and Research Projects on Activities under WIOA Core Programs

Virginia will conduct evaluations and research projects in accordance with the U.S. Department of Labor evaluation principles of rigor, relevance, transparency, independence, and ethics, as described in the State Workforce Agency Evaluation Toolkit. Virginia will develop an evaluation plan that is vetted by key stakeholders and includes high-level research questions and an evidence portfolio. Virginia will conduct evaluations and research projects that assess the implementation, outcomes, impact, and cost of the workforce system and individual programs. Currently, Virginia is conducting a workforce system study with outside consultants. Results of the study will be reported to VBWD and a copy of those results will be provided to then DOL when available.

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How Evaluations and Research Projects will be Coordinated with State and Local Boards and with State Agencies

When beginning evaluations and research projects, Virginia will provide draft evaluation plans and objectives to state and local boards and state agencies to review and provide feedback. The final evaluation plan and objectives will be developed from this feedback. State and local boards and state agencies will be notified of the methods of evaluation and the timeline for evaluation to avoid a duplication of efforts and time to better coordinate partner activities. State and local boards and state agencies will be provided with evaluation status updates and interim reports to provide transparency in the evaluation process and coordinate efforts with key stakeholders. The final evaluation report will be provided to state and local boards and state agencies. The state board will vote on the implementation of recommendations provided in the report and provide guidance to the local boards and state agencies for this implementation.

In the 2021 workforce system evaluation, the above standards were implemented to coordinate with state and local boards and state agencies.

How Evaluations will be Coordinated with the Evaluations Provided for under WIOA

The Secretary of Labor and the VBWD will utilize the results of the assessment referenced in III. b.4.C of this Plan to complete a comprehensive evaluation of core program services delivered through Virginia's one-stop centers. This effort will include participation by the VBWD's staff which represent the core programs under WIOA and additional programs, such as veteran's workforce services and other civilian workforce reentry programs, that Virginia considers core to the workforce development system.

The assessment evaluation will also include information obtained from assessments conducted by federal agencies such as the Department of Labor and Department of Education.

Once the evaluation of the effectiveness of the core programs and one-stop partner programs is completed, the state will review its strategies and policies and make appropriate adjustments to improve service delivery. The evaluation will also serve to make appropriate updates to Virginia's Combined State Plan.

Also, the evaluation and resulting actions, such as policies to be implemented across Virginia's workforce development system and changes in strategies, will be shared with the federal agencies. A follow-up evaluation of policy implementation results will also be conducted by the VBWD in future years.

5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS

I. YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 128(B)(2) OR (B)(3)

Youth Funding Formula: There is a requirement (the "Hold Harmless" provision) in the Act (Section 128[b][2][A][ii]) that no LWDA shall receive less than 90 percent of that LWDA's average relative share of Youth funding for the preceding two years.

The Youth funding factors and their respective weights, as specified in the Act, are as follows:

- Unemployment in Areas of Substantial Unemployment – (33⅓ percent):
- The relative number of unemployed persons in an ASU within a LWDA compared to the total number of unemployed persons in ASUs in Virginia. (Source: VEC)
- Excess Unemployment – (33⅓ percent):

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- The relative number of excess unemployed persons within a LWDA compared to the total number of excess unemployed persons in Virginia. (Source: VEC)
- Economically Disadvantaged Youth – (33⅓ percent):
- The relative number of disadvantaged youth in the LWDA compared to the number of disadvantaged youth in Virginia. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2000 Census)

II. ADULT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) OR (B)(3)

Adult Funding Formula: There is a requirement (the “Hold Harmless” provision) in the Act (Section 133[b][2][A][ii]) that no Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) shall receive less than 90 percent of that LWDA’s average relative share of Adult funding for the preceding two years.

The Adult funding factors and their respective weights, as specified in the Act, are as follows:

- Unemployment in Areas of Substantial Unemployment (ASU) – (33⅓ percent):
- The relative number of unemployed persons in an ASU within a LWDA compared to the total number of unemployed persons in ASUs in Virginia. (Source: VEC)
- Excess Unemployment – (33⅓ percent):
- The relative number of excess unemployed persons within a LWDA compared to the total number of excess unemployed persons in Virginia. (Source: VEC)
- Economically Disadvantaged Adults – (33⅓ percent):
- The relative number of disadvantaged adults in the LWDA compared to the number of disadvantaged adults in Virginia. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2000 Census)

III. DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) AND BASED ON DATA AND WEIGHTS ASSIGNED

Dislocated Worker Funding Formula: The current factors and respective weights that make up Virginia’s Dislocated Worker formula are as follows:

- Continued Claims – (20 percent): Relative number of an area’s unemployment insurance claimants from the Commonwealth’s regular unemployment compensation system as compared to the sum of all areas for Virginia. (Source: VEC)
- Excess Unemployment – (10 percent): Relative number of an area’s unemployed above the 4.5 percent unemployment rate level as compared to the sum of all areas. (Source: VEC)
- Initial Claims – (10 percent): Relative number of an area’s Initial unemployment insurance claimants as compared to the sum of all areas. (Source: VEC)
- Declining Employment – (20 percent): Relative number of an area’s employment losses in those industries (two-digit North American Industry Classification System Sectors) which experienced a decline in annual (July through June) employment over the most current five-year period (as determined by QCEW data derived from unemployment insurance tax records) as compared to the sum of all areas. (Source: VEC)
- Agricultural Employment Loss – (5 percent): Relative estimated number of an area’s agricultural workers lost as compared to the sum of all areas. (Source: BEA)

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- Long Term Unemployed – (15 percent): Relative number of an area’s regular unemployment compensation claimants receiving benefits for greater than fifteen weeks as compared to the sum of all areas. (Source: VEC)
- Final Claims – (20 percent): Relative number of an area’s claimants receiving final payments under the regular unemployment compensation system as compared to the sum of all areas. (Source: VEC)

B. FOR TITLE II

I. DESCRIBE THE METHODS AND FACTORS THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL USE TO DISTRIBUTE TITLE II FUNDS.

During program year 2025-2026, the VDOE conducted a multi-year competition for the 2026-2030 cycle. The Virginia Department of Education’s process closely follows 34 CFR part 463, Subpart C. Grants are awarded for a multi-year period (Sec. 463.20(a)) to eligible providers (Sec. 463.23), that use the funds to provide adult education and literacy services (Sec. 463.20(b)). The VDOE ensures that the competition process provides direct and equitable access to all potential providers (Sec. 463.20 (c)) by announcing the competition broadly, hosting a pre-bidders webinar, providing an email address to receive questions, and publicly posting Frequently Asked Questions and Answers leading up to the submission deadline.

Federal regulations in 34 CFR Sec. 463.23 require that applicants must be able to demonstrate effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy services to be eligible to apply for AEFLA funds. The VDOE applied this screening process to the multi-year competition. Applications were screened to determine demonstrated effectiveness based on data submitted by applicants for program year 2024-2025. Only the applications that met the requirements for demonstrated effectiveness were advanced for full review. During the full review process, the remaining applications were reviewed by teams of reviewers organized by the VDOE. In addition, the applications were also reviewed by local workforce development boards to ensure that proposed activities were aligned with local plans as required by 34 CFR 463.21(a-c). Ultimately, the decisions to award are made by the VDOE based on the recommendations by the local workforce development boards and the VDOE teams of reviewers.

Demonstrated effectiveness guidelines laid out in 34 CFR Sec. 463.24, which require applicants to report performance data in three content areas (reading and writing, mathematics, and English language acquisition) and post-exit indicators, were published as a recorded tutorial and released publicly as the first phase of the competition. For applications submitted by a consortium, effectiveness data was required to be included and identified from each consortium member and labeled with both the locality and region identified. For applications submitted by a single entity, only data demonstrating effectiveness by the applicant was required.

Applicants deemed eligible to submit an application were required to address sections outlined in 34 CFR 463.22 (a 1-8), including responding to 13 federal funding considerations, submitting a program design, and providing plans for incorporating the priorities outlined in the Combined State Plan. Further discussion of the requirements for the competition is included in the section of the Plan titled, Program-Specific Requirements for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act programs.

The AEFLA funds are distributed based on federal guidelines in WIOA Sec. 222. Of the basic award amount, no less than 82.5 percent must be distributed for local adult education activities under Sections 231 and 225, up to 12.5 percent may be used for state leadership activities, and up to five percent may be used for state administration. A separate amount is awarded to states for funding Section 243, integrated English literacy and civics education (IELCE). Five percent of this amount is used for state administration and the remaining 95 percent is distributed for local IELCE activities. The total funding amount for regional programs, including state contributions, is determined by using a needs-based formula that takes into account Census estimates of the number of working age adults (18-64 years of age) in the region without a high school diploma or its equivalent. Funds are distributed according to this formula (80 percent) plus a base amount (20 percent) of

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operational funding that all grantees receive to ensure sufficient resources are available to run a high-quality program regardless of size.

Applicants apply to provide services in one or more of the 22 adult education regions in the state. These regions correspond to the state's legislated planning districts and are largely aligned within Virginia's system of 14 local workforce areas. In some cases, adult education regions are congruent with local workforce development areas; in other cases, multiple adult education regions operate within a single local workforce development area. Applicants must provide details in their proposed budgets of how they plan to meet the administrative requirements outlined in 34 CFR Sec. 463.26 which includes a planned contribution to the infrastructure costs of the one-stop delivery system (Sec. 463.26 (e)). Should applicants find the five percent administrative cap imposed on AEFLA program funds too restrictive, they may include in their application a detailed request to negotiate an exemption to the cap as allowed in Sec. 463.25. The VDOE considers these requests during budgetary reviews of the submitted competitive and continuation applications. Continued funding is based on a grantee's success in demonstrating continuous improvement and meeting state performance benchmarks. VDOE's monitoring system allows grantees that are unable to meet the state's performance benchmarks to continue to receive funding with the expectation that probationary requirements are met as a condition of continued funding.

II. DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ENSURE DIRECT AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO ALL ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS TO APPLY AND COMPETE FOR FUNDS AND HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ENSURE THAT IT IS USING THE SAME GRANT OR CONTRACT ANNOUNCEMENT AND APPLICATION PROCEDURE FOR ALL ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS.

The most recent competition for AEFLA funds took place to award providers for the 2026-2030 cycle. Eligible applicants for Section 231 and state matching funds submitted applications to serve as fiscal agents for regional programs, to provide instruction at all six adult basic education (ABE) and adult secondary education (ASE) educational functioning levels (EFLs) plus English language acquisition (ELA) activities where there is a demonstrated need. Eligible applicants for Section 225 funds competed separately and were required to demonstrate a community need and active partnership with a regional or local correctional facility. Eligible applicants for Section 243 funds competed separately and were required to demonstrate a community need for the IELCE services. The regional structure ensures full coverage of the Commonwealth and involvement by local school divisions and stakeholders as part of a regional Memorandum of Understanding.

VDOE, along with various partner agencies, ensures that identical grant announcements are made and widely distributed across the Commonwealth through a variety of venues and by a variety of methods, including postings on established listservs and social media. Requests for proposals (RFPs) are announced in an official Notice of Availability containing information about the availability of funds and the application process is published in the Superintendent of Public Instruction newsletter which is archived publicly, posted on the state grants repository, and a prepared article is shared with partners such as the Virginia Community College System, the Virginia Literacy Foundation, and the Association of Workforce Development Boards who then share across their networks.

The RFP is posted on the VDOE website for download. A public pre-proposal webinar is held after the public release of the RFP. All inquiries about the competition or application process are managed as public information. Inquiries are accepted through a central email address, sorted into categories, researched, and answered in sets posted to the VDOE adult education webpage. Each complete submission from an eligible applicant is reviewed on its individual merits and all submissions are evaluated using the same standard measures. Each LWDB is required to assign members to review and score applications for their area, and these scores, along with the feedback, are taken into consideration by the reviewers who are organized into panels.

C. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

DARS receives 87 percent and DBVI receives 13 percent of Section 110 funds and any other federal formula grant funds available to the Commonwealth of Virginia for vocational rehabilitation services under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. DARS and DBVI work cooperatively to fully utilize all available federal funds. Either commissioner may request a renegotiation of the percentages at any time.

This distribution of funds between the two agencies is not grounded in policy or percentages of individuals with disabilities in different populations as much as it is an historical approach that has not been adjusted over the years.

6. PROGRAM DATA

A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

Currently, Virginia's core workforce programs operate on three different client data platforms. Virginia has begun implementation of the Virginia Works Hub. The Virginia Works Hub provides a mechanism for common intake and affirmative referrals. The Virginia Works Hub seeks to reengineer a legacy state cross-agency and cross-program intake application that will result in a master client index across the various WIOA programs in Virginia. The Virginia Works Hub hopes to solve the inherent design limitations of the legacy systems with an emphasis on customer-centric design.

As referenced throughout the Combined State Plan, Virginia's Workforce Data Trust, established by Code with participating programs and services, tracks participants' journey through the workforce development system in real-time, enabling the coordination and optimization of service delivery across partner programs. This secure integration platform also allows administrative data to be leveraged for the rigorous evaluation of program efficacy. It establishes a central repository of data from all workforce programs and services for interoperability between management information systems, performance reporting and sharing information between workforce partners.

Virginia Works is currently soliciting proposals from qualified firms to provide a technology solution for the offering and management of workforce services to individuals and businesses in the Commonwealth of Virginia (Workforce Technology Hub), provide project management through the implementation process, and provide ongoing maintenance and support for the system. One of the focuses of this project is a common front-end/registration portal that integrates with the workforce systems of record data systems enabling both streamlined intake and service delivery across all programs. The foundation of this system will be the Workforce Data Trust. Virginia Works plans to utilize the workforce management hub statewide with the expectation that both citizens and employers will access the system.

Virginia Works is currently soliciting proposals from qualified firms to provide a technology solution for the offering and management of workforce services to individuals and businesses in the Commonwealth of Virginia, provide project management through the implementation process, and provide ongoing maintenance and support for the system. Virginia Works plans to utilize the workforce management hub statewide at all Virginia Works physical locations and remotely. Along with all Virginia Works employees, several thousand citizens and employers will also access the system.

The Virginia Works Hub will provide an integrated referral process among the four WIOA Titles and includes TANF and SNAP E&T Services. Job seekers will benefit from a single workforce system registration and request for services. The agency systems will receive referral information to initiate intake appointments. Also, the Virginia Works Hub will provide visibility into how a client has utilized resources available to them in the workforce system and the service outcomes. To regulate this effort, a governance board has been created chaired by the Governor's Chief Data Officer. This decision-making body consists of representatives from each agency that shares data or supports the system. The Board's mission is to provide direct oversight, leadership,

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and support for the continuous development of the system as well as use the collected data to review the performance of the workforce system through analytics.

Virginia has technology systems in place that serve as the system of record for the various WIOA core programs. These systems, such as the Virginia Workforce Connection provided by Geographic Solutions, capture, and report all activities related to participants served through Virginia's one-stop centers. These systems meet all federal reporting requirements including completing and submitting the Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) reports.

The reports provided by the current systems used by Titles I and III, DARS and DBVI (Title IV), and Adult Education (Title II), are also used to inform the stakeholders, including the state and local workforce development boards, of performance results, including performance results in comparison to the performance measures established in this Combined State Plan for the various core programs.

Virginia is also in the process of implementing the Virginia Career Works Virginia Works Hub that will serve as the access portal to workforce development services for Virginians. The individuals seeking services will complete online forms to provide information that return a referral to the appropriate program services that best meet their needs. The Hub will serve as a data trust that reports service outcomes to stakeholders to enable strategy adjustments to improve service delivery across Virginia's workforce development system. This technology solution will serve all WIOA core programs as well as TANF and SNAP program services.

B. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS

Currently, each workforce program administrator evaluates its program in isolation to the other system partners. The direction for Virginia is clear, workforce programs will be evaluated (and by extension, the success of participants assessed) as a collective.

Starting in September 2025, Virginia Works has reported to the VBWD by September 30th of each year on the metrics listed below for each one-stop service within each LWDA for the previous performance year ending June 30th. These performance metrics apply to local delivery of workforce development services across the Commonwealth, including all of Virginia's comprehensive and affiliate one-stop centers. These metrics are:

- Number of participants trained
- Total number of job placements
- Total program cost
- Job retention rate
- Program cost per placement (or participant if program does not place individuals)
- Starting and progressed wage growth

The metrics are intended to provide a holistic and outcome-oriented view of service delivery at the local level, in addition to the data already captured at the statewide level. The VBWD policy on the Systemwide Workforce Metrics at the Local Level is available at virginiaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/VBWD_24-01_Systemwide_Workforce_Metrics_at_the_Local_Level_FINAL.docx.pdf.

C. USE OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) WAGE RECORD DATA

Confidentiality and disclosure of wage records are governed by the regulations at 20 CFR Part 603. These regulations permit the VEC to enter into data sharing agreements with public officials in the performance of their public duties and stipulate the agreement terms, including safeguards and security requirements, payment of costs, and periodic audits conducted by the VEC. The VEC is prohibited from using grant funds to cover disclosure costs.

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After a data sharing agreement is executed, the VEC creates an account on VEC's secure FTP server for secure transfers of the wage requests and wage results files. The wage results file includes wage and employer information along with NAIC codes at a cost of \$100 per file. Requests for wage record data are handled by VEC's Information Control unit.

The VEC intends to pursue UI Wage Record Agreements with neighboring states to improve the data sets supporting the outcomes of employment and wages. Additionally, the Commonwealth intends to integrate the UI Wage record system into the Workforce Data Trust for purposes of outcome assessment to the maximum extent allowable under state and federal law.

D. PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

The Commonwealth of Virginia (COV) uses the Information Security Standard (SEC 501-09)[1], developed by the Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA), as the baseline for information security and risk management practices across the state. These baseline practices include, but are not limited to, agency regulatory requirements, information security best practices, and the criteria defined in SEC 501-09. VITA regularly reviews and updates the state Information Security Standard to ensure that information systems used to support COV agency data collection and reporting are sufficiently managed and protected, especially with respect to the collection and reporting of personal identifiable information (PII).

The state Information Security Standard was created using the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Special Publication 800-53 rev. 4, Recommended Security Controls for Federal Information Systems and Organizations, as a framework.

The COV Information Security Program consists of the following Control Families:

- AC - Access Control
- AT - Awareness and Training
- AU - Audit and Accountability
- CA - Security Assessment and Authorization
- CM - Configuration Management
- CP - Contingency Planning
- IA - Identification and Authentication
- IR - Incident Response
- MA – Maintenance
- MP - Media Protection
- PE - Physical and Environmental Protection
- PL – Planning
- PS - Personnel Security
- RA - Risk Assessment
- SA - System and Services Acquisition
- SC - System and Communications Protection
- SI - System and Information Integrity
- PM – Program Management

These component areas provide a framework of minimal requirements that agencies use to develop their agency information security programs with a goal of allowing agencies to accomplish their missions in a safe and secure environment. Each component listed above contains requirements that, together, comprise the Information Security Standard.

This Standard recognizes that agencies may procure IT equipment, systems, and services covered by this Standard from third parties. In such instances, Agency Heads remain accountable for maintaining compliance

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with this Standard and agencies must enforce these compliance requirements through documented agreements with third party providers and oversight of the services provided.

Each Agency Head is responsible for the security of the agency's IT systems and data. Each Agency Head must designate an Information Security Officer (ISO) for the agency, no less than biennially. An agency must have a Privacy Officer if required by law or regulation, such as Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and may choose to have one where not required. Otherwise, these responsibilities are carried out by the ISO.

The Privacy Officer provides guidance on:

1. The requirements of state and federal Privacy laws, including but not limited to Section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (34 CFR Part 99: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA))
2. Disclosure of and access to sensitive data, including PII
3. Security and protection requirements in conjunction with IT systems when there is some overlap among sensitivity, disclosure, privacy, and security issues

For wage records matching, each agency must enter into a Restricted Use Data Agreement (RUDA) with VEC. Because data matching requires the transmission and handling of PII, the RUDA identifies the security protocols with which the VEC and the agency requesting the data match must follow to conduct the data match, including the transmission of sensitive data between agencies.

[1] Commonwealth of Virginia Information Technology Resource Management – Information Security Standard

7. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS.

A. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT THE PRIORITY OF SERVICE PROVISIONS FOR COVERED PERSONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE JOBS FOR VETERANS ACT, CODIFIED AT SECTION 4215 OF 38 U.S.C., WHICH APPLIES TO ALL EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS FUNDED IN WHOLE OR IN PART BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.

At the one-stop center point of entry, veterans and military spouses are given an opportunity to self-identify as an eligible veteran or otherwise covered person. Posters will be displayed at entry providing instructions and explanation of Priority of Service and asking covered persons to self-identify to one-stop staff as such. Additionally, one-stop intake staff will ask customers to self-identify as a covered person.

All covered persons in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, receive priority of service in the One-Stop system. In practice, this means serving veterans immediately and ensuring that they are prioritized for receiving individualized career services and training services, as needed and identified. Customers identifying as veterans and eligible persons are asked about length of service and potential barriers to employment as part of the intake process. Veterans and eligible persons meeting eligibility requirements and possessing a USDOL-VETS designated significant barrier to employment must be connected to a Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program specialist for services and case management immediately.

While veterans and other covered persons receive priority of service for all DOL-funded job training programs and services to include WIOA Title I Programs, the covered person must still meet each program's eligibility criteria to receive services under the respective employment and training programs. a. For income-based eligibility determinations, amounts paid while on active duty or paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for vocational rehabilitation, disability payments, or related VA-funded programs are not to be considered as income in accordance with federal law.

Priority of Service in relation to WIOA is provided using the following order:

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First priority is to veterans and other covered persons who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals whose basic skills are deficient would receive first priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds.

Second priority is given to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.

Third priority is given to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.

Fourth priority is given to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

The Veterans' Priority of Service policy can be accessed here: <https://virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-600-01-Veterans-Priority-of-Service-FinalSigned.pdf>. The policy describes the definition of "covered person," and states that veterans and eligible spouses are given priority over non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training and placement provided under a qualified job training program

B. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL MONITOR PRIORITY OF SERVICE PROVISIONS FOR VETERANS.

Virginia Workforce Letter 18-04 Change 3 describes how Virginia will monitor the provision of priority of service to veterans. The VBWD monitors compliance with the priority of service provision. LWDBs are required to develop policies and procedures for providing and improving the integration of priority of service into existing service delivery strategies. All one stop centers are required to prominently display, in all public areas, signage that informs individuals of the priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses. Compliance with local priority of service policies is regularly monitored by the local board monitors. The Letter is available at https://virginiacareerworks.com/current_virginia/vwl-18-04-change-3-priority-of-service/.

C. DESCRIBE THE TRIAGE AND REFERRAL PROCESS FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS AND OTHER POPULATIONS DETERMINED ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SERVICES FROM THE JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS (JVSG) PROGRAM'S DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM (DVOP) SPECIALIST/CONSOLIDATED POSITION.

Virginia Works has established guidance on how to determine covered persons and covered persons with significant barriers early in the one-stop intake process. This involves cross-training all one-stop staff, with particular emphasis on staff responsible for triage, on the importance of immediately serving and connecting veterans to services and supports. There is, and will continue to be, prominent signage in all one stop centers informing customers that covered persons receive priority of service.

Through the Jobs for Veterans State Grant, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists help veterans and eligible persons with significant barriers to employment successfully navigate the job market and receive the support they need to return to the workforce. When a covered person comes into the One Stop Career Center, they are screened at intake to determine if they have a qualifying employment barrier to employment. One Stop Career Centers utilize a standard form, the DVOP Eligibility Screening Tool, to determine if the client:

- Is interested in receiving one-on-one career assistance;
- Has any barriers to employment exist;
- Should be referred to a DVOP.

Individuals should also be screened for eligibility to other workforce programs to ensure that they have access to the widest range of services possible. One-stop intake staff must refer veterans and covered persons who are not eligible for, or who do not want or need, DVOP specialist services to other workforce programs, as appropriate.

8. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Virginia's one-stops comply with the physical and programmatic accessibility provisions of section 188 of WIOA and applicable provisions of the ADA of 1990 through the development and implementation of statewide policies, including one-stop Certification, the continuing work of the statewide Accessibility Taskforce, the provision of training and support for staff in the Virginia Career Works Centers and their partner agencies, participation in grant opportunities targeted to individuals with disabilities, and through the evaluation of customer service, including for individuals with disabilities, as part of the continuous improvement process.

The VBWD has issued several statewide policies that positively impact accessibility in the one-stop centers and across the partner agencies. *VBWD Policy 600-03, Change 1: Services to Individuals with Disabilities* provides guidance to the Virginia public workforce system regarding the provision of services to individuals with disabilities through the one-stop system, in compliance with all requirements of WIOA. This policy can be found here: virginiaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/VBWD-Policy-600-03-Services-to-Individuals-with-Disabilities-Change-1.pdf. This policy provided the framework, requirements, and procedures for ensuring accessibility and accessible service delivery throughout the Virginia Career Works Network. The VBWD also issued *Policy 300-06, Change One: One-stop Certification* to provide requirements and procedures for certifying Virginia's comprehensive and affiliate workforce centers. This policy is available here: virginiaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/VBWD-Policy-300-06-Change-2-American-Job-Center-Certification-Process-Final-7.1.24.pdf. *VBWD Policy 300-06, Change 1* includes the all required criteria for accessibility compliance.

Evaluations of physical and programmatic accessibility must include how well the one-stop ensures equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities to benefit from one-stop services. The American with Disabilities Act and WIOA Section 188 establish guiding standards. Evaluations of accessibility include:

- a. Provision of reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities
- b. Verification that reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures are made where necessary to avoid discrimination against persons with disabilities
- c. Administration of programs in the most integrated setting appropriate
- d. Communication with persons with disabilities is conducted as effectively as with others
- e. Provision of appropriate auxiliary aids and services, including assistive technology devices and services, where necessary to afford individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, the program or activity
- f. Verify that programmatic and physical accessibility exists.
- g. Identify how services will be made available to customers outside regular business hours, including whether physical one-stop center access is available outside regular business hours
- h. There is at least one Title I staff member present at the one-stop center at all times during business hours
- i. Regular business hours are clearly visible outside of the one-stop center building
- j. The local Equal Opportunity Officer periodically reviews policies and procedures regarding accessibility and equal opportunity and provides staff training and updates
- k. The required Equal Opportunity tagline is included on all documents 12. There is a process in place for customers to file Equal Opportunity complaints/grievances and a process for addressing these complaints/grievances when they are filed Verify that programmatic and physical accessibility exists."

Implementation of VBWD Policy 300-06, Change1 *One-stop Certification* includes *Attachment A: Virginia One-Stop Certification Application*, which provides the process and tool to use in the certification of Virginia's comprehensive and affiliate workforce centers. This policy and its attachment details how Local Workforce Boards are to assess and ensure the physical and programmatic accessibility of their facilities, programs,

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services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. Moving forward, the VBWD will continue to update current policies and develop new policies as appropriate, to ensure the accessibility of the Virginia Career Works Centers and their partner agencies.

Virginia will continue to conduct continuous improvement for disability access through the evaluations of internal and external customer service feedback collection and analysis. Each of the 14 LWDBs have an external customer service evaluation process through which data is collected regarding customer service experiences for job seekers and businesses, which includes feedback opportunities regarding service to individuals with disabilities. The one-stop centers also have internal staff feedback processes that allow for identification and resolution of any issues identified by staff that may impact services provided to individuals with disabilities. Finally, each training that is provided offers an opportunity for staff feedback as well, providing a process for additional evaluation and improvement of service access and delivery for all customers, including individuals with disabilities.

Virginia's accessibility implementation efforts have opened a cross-agency conversation that is taking the Commonwealth beyond a compliance checklist mentality to a focus on enhancing accessible service delivery across Virginia's one-stop network. Moving forward, Virginia will continue to pursue additional opportunities to collaborate with federal, state, and local partners to enhance the Virginia Career Works infrastructure and Virginia's capabilities to provide high quality, accessible service delivery for individuals with disabilities throughout the Commonwealth.

9. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The one-stop certification process and ongoing monitoring efforts document how one-stop centers address the needs of English language learners. One-stop centers' certification process includes a review of these assurances and supporting documents by the local workforce development boards as well as cross-agency document review and monitoring, conducted at all one-stop centers in 2020-2021. LWDB plans require an access strategy as well as local policy guidance to ensure LEP individuals will have meaningful access to all programs and services and are able to participate effectively regardless of their ability to speak, read, write, or understand English.

Removing language barriers has been a continued TA, resource-sharing, professional development, and cross-agency training topic. The system is working to address the needs of ELLs at both the strategic and operational levels. At the strategic level, Virginia Works continues to monitor system level data and working to develop strategies to address ELL population barriers across partners and programs. At the operational level, the LWDBs and partners are working to improve outreach and enrollments for the ELL populations in their respective areas. As a part of these efforts, English language learners will be made aware of the opportunity to enroll and/or co-enroll in all the core programs for which they are eligible through targeted multi-lingual outreach activities, such as partnerships with ELL serving community organizations, the Department of Education Adult Education and CTE programs, and others to get the word out about ELL accessible programs, provision of multi-lingual outreach materials, LWDA websites having a language translation feature or language selector, on-site multi-lingual center signage, and hiring of multi-lingual staff to provide services to better meet the needs of the ELL populations.

IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

Virginia recognizes the advantages of closer collaboration and coordination. Given the complexity of the workforce system, structured coordination and planning activities are imperative. There are several current interactions between partners, and plans are in place to further strengthen the alignment of activities.

State Workforce Board Composition

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The composition of the state workforce board is purposeful, designed to ensure cross-agency and cross-program alignment, and is a platform for joint planning and coordination between core and other programs. With cabinet-level representation by the Secretary of Labor and Secretaries of Commerce and Trade, Education, Health and Human Resources, as well as the chancellor of VCCS, the Board will strengthen its position as a hub for dialogue regarding overarching state strategies and policy. The Board meets quarterly to direct the strategic initiatives of the workforce system and discuss the implementation of the Combined State Plan goals and strategies. Representatives from the local workforce boards attend the state board meetings as well.

Virginia Works

At the state level, representatives from the key Combined State Plan partners (Virginia Works, VDOE, VEC, DARS, DBVI, VDSS) meet quarterly to coordinate the implementation of the CSP goals and strategies. Going forward, this team will include ad-hoc members of this team from other workforce-related agencies, including DJJ, DOC, and Veterans Services.

Regional Workforce Partners

Virginia continues to build capacity for partners to better identify and solve workforce challenges in local areas and to strengthen local workforce boards, especially in serving their role as a regional convener. Virginia Works meets at least monthly with LWDBs and leads monthly town hall meetings from local areas across the Commonwealth, in an effort to connect with all local partners and enhance system cohesion.

LWDBs meet frequently to implement the directions of the state board and collaborate with one-stop operators and other service delivery partners regularly to oversee implementation, solve problems, and direct strategic resources.

State and local workforce leadership will continue to hold monthly conference calls to discuss challenges and methods for overcoming those challenges to service delivery. These conference calls were started during the COVID-19 pandemic and all parties found these calls to be an effective method for efficient communication and collaboration. Going forward, state and local workforce leadership will collaborate in-person annually to identify key priorities for local service delivery, effective methods of implementation, and needed resources.

V. COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS)

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;	Yes
2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;	Yes
3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and	Yes

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The State Plan must include	Include
commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;	
4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;	Yes
5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;	Yes
6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3);	Yes
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;	Yes

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The State Plan must include	Include
8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;	Yes
9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;	Yes
10. The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);	Yes
11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and	Yes
12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.	Yes

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Regions and Local Workforce Development Areas

The Commonwealth of Virginia has 14 Local Workforce Development areas. See the following link for a map of the regions and local workforce development areas in the Commonwealth of Virginia: <https://virginiaworks.gov/im-a-workforce-partner/workforce-partners/>.

1. Southwest: Norton, Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Tazewell, Wise
2. New River/Mt. Rogers: Bristol, Galax, Radford, Bland, Carroll, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Montgomery, Pulaski, Smyth, Washington, Wythe
3. Greater Roanoke: Covington, Roanoke, Salem, Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, Franklin, Roanoke
4. Shenandoah Valley: Buena Vista, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Staunton, Waynesboro, Winchester, Augusta, Bath, Clarke, Frederick, Highland, Page, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Shenandoah, Warren

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5. Crater: Colonial Heights, Emporia, Hopewell, Petersburg, Dinwiddie, Greensville, Prince George, Surry, Sussex
6. Piedmont: Charlottesville, Albemarle, Culpeper, Fauquier, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, Orange, Rappahannock
7. Central: Bedford, Lynchburg, Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Campbell
8. South Central: Amelia, Brunswick, Buckingham, Charlotte, Cumberland, Halifax, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Prince Edward
9. Capital: Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, Powhatan, City of Richmond
10. West Piedmont: Danville, Martinsville, Henry, Patrick, Pittsylvania
11. Northern: Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, Manassas Park, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William
12. Alexandria/Arlington: Alexandria, Arlington
13. Bay Consortium: Fredericksburg, Accomack, Caroline, Essex, King and Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, Northampton, Northumberland, Richmond, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Westmoreland
14. Hampton Roads: Chesapeake, Franklin, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Isle of Wight, Southampton, Virginia Beach, Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, Williamsburg, Gloucester, James City, York

WIOA Section 106 identifies local area designation as a responsibility of the Governor which is to occur through consultation with the VBWD, as well as local boards and chief elected officials. Identifying and designating regions is referenced as part of the development and continuous improvement process of workforce development systems in the state.

WIOA is clear that for the state to receive an allotment of funds the Governor shall approve requests for initial designation for any area in good standing that was designated as a local area for the purpose of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 for a two-year period preceding the enactment of WIOA. This initial designation has been in place for the first two full program years following the date of enactment of WIOA.

The VBWD is in the process of reviewing and updating many of the below policies and is on track to update them by the end of 2024. The following is the process the Commonwealth of Virginia used in designating local areas:

Reference: VBWD Policy 200-01 Change 1, Designation of Local Workforce Development Areas - <https://virginiaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Policy-200-01-Change-1-Designation-of-Local-Workforce-Development-Areas.pdf>

Consistent with WIOA section 106(b)(4), the VBWD, in consultation with Local Boards and CEOs, reviews all requests for local workforce development area designation using established policies and procedures, and makes a recommendation to the Governor. In reviewing initial designation requests VBWD shall evaluate the extent that requested areas meet the following:

1. Are consistent with labor market areas in the state;
2. Are consistent with regional economic development areas in the state; and
3. Have available the federal and non-federal resources necessary to effectively administer activities under provisions of the WIOA, including whether the areas have the appropriate education and training providers, such as institutions of higher education and career and technical education schools.

WIOA section 106(b)(2) outlines the criteria by which a Governor must designate a local workforce development area under Initial Designation. WIOA section 106(b)(3) outlines the criteria by which a Governor must designate a local workforce development area under Subsequent Designation. Even under an application for Initial Designation, the CEOs shall utilize a public consultation process and outline how the local workforce development area follows the three criteria outlined above.

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The procedures for designating local workforce development areas are outlined below:

Initial Designation: For the first two full program year following the date of enactment of WIOA and clarified through the WIOA Final Rule to mean Program Years 2016 and 2017 (July 1, 2016-June 30, 2018), the Governor shall approve a request for designation as a local workforce development area from any area that was designated as a local area for purposes of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 for the 2-year period preceding the date of enactment of this Act, performed successfully, and sustained fiscal integrity.

Subsequent Designation: After the period of Initial Designation, the Governor shall approve a request for Subsequent Designation as a local workforce development area from such local area, if such area:

- a) performed successfully;
- b) sustained fiscal integrity; and
- c) in the case of a local area in a planning region, met the requirements of local planning regions outlined in the WIOA.

Performed Successfully Defined: For subsequent local area designation the term

“performed successfully” means that the local workforce development area met or exceeded the levels of performance the Governor negotiated with the Local Workforce Development Board and CEO for core indicators of performance as described at 20 CFR 677.155(a)(1)(i) through (vi) for the two most recently completed program years, and that the local area has not failed any individual measure for the last two consecutive program years (Reference 20 CFR 679.260(b)).

Fiscal Integrity Defined: The term “sustained fiscal integrity” means that the USDOL Secretary has not made a formal determination that either the grant recipient or the administrative entity of the area mis-expended funds due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration for the 2-year period preceding the determination. (Reference 20 CFR 679.260(c)).

Requirements of Local Planning Regions: The policy and procedures for the designation of regions and planning requirements may be found in VBWD Policy 200-06.

Virginia Local Workforce Development Area Initial Designation Process

The process outlined below is to be followed by a unit or units of local government seeking initial designation of local workforce development areas under the WIOA.

Step 1. The local government unit(s) seeking designation of an initial local workforce development area(s) should coordinate and consult with the CEOs of the local areas (county commission for a single county local area or the consortium for multi-county local areas) and existing local workforce development boards.

Step 2. If a decision is made by the local government unit(s), in coordination with the CEOs, to seek initial designation under the WIOA, the local government units must undertake a formal public comment period and provide documentation of the results of the formal public comment period with the designation request to partners, including existing local workforce development boards. The formal comment period must allow for comments by businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, and the public at-large.

Step 3. The request for initial designation of a local workforce development area under WIOA shall include the following information:

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1. How the proposed local workforce development area is aligned with labor market areas including information on growth industries and occupations in the local labor market.
2. How the proposed local workforce development area is aligned with a regional economic development area within the Commonwealth of Virginia.
3. How the proposed local workforce development area can effectively administer activities under provisions of the WIOA with available federal and non-federal resources, including a description of area education and training providers, a description of how the available resources will be made available for training activities, and a description of the percentage of overall resources administered by the local area that will be dedicated to training activities.

Step 4. After submission of the initial designation request, the Virginia Board of Workforce Development will review the request and provide a consultative opinion and recommendation for the Governor. As required by the WIOA, the Governor will use the consultation of the Virginia Board of Workforce Development and consult with CEOs prior to designating local workforce development areas in Virginia. The Governor may rely on the submissions from the requestor(s) as meeting the requirement for consultation with CEOs, including the public records of meetings and any recorded votes or resolutions regarding the designation request.

Virginia Local Workforce Development Area Subsequent Designation Process

Subsequent designation occurs every four years, consistent with the submission of the State's Combined Plan and Local and Regional Plans. **Local Areas seeking subsequent designation as a WIOA local area do not need to submit an application per 20 CFR 679.250 (e).**

Virginia Works will review the Local Workforce Development Area to determine if the Local Area performed successfully, sustained fiscal integrity, and if in a planning region, the local area met the regional planning requirements and make a recommendation to the Governor.

The Governor must approve the request if the criteria are met for the 2 most recent program years. The Governor may review a local area designation at any time to evaluate whether that the area continues to meet the requirements for subsequent designation.

State Appeal Procedures: Pursuant to WIOA section 106(b)(5), a unit(s) of local government may submit an appeal to the Virginia Board of Workforce Development. The appeal shall be in writing in a letter addressed to Virginia's Secretary of Labor with a copy sent to the Executive Director of the Virginia Board of Workforce Development. The letter shall describe the reasons why the decision by the Governor should be reconsidered, with specific data being provided to back-up the appeal and be signed by the CEOs for each county involved in the appeal.

As specified in 20 CFR 683.630(a)(2), the Virginia Board of Workforce Development must provide an opportunity for a hearing and prescribe appropriate time limits to ensure prompt resolution of the appeal. The Virginia Board of Workforce Development must conduct a hearing and make a determination of designation within 90 calendar days of receipt of the request. At least 10 calendar days prior to the hearing, the designated local contact person shall electronically receive a notice of the hearing.

The notice shall inform the local contact/board of the following:

- Date, time, and place of the hearing;
- The reason that the WIOA local workforce development area designation was denied, including the pertinent sections of the WIOA and any federal regulations involved;
- That the affected parties may be represented at the hearing by an attorney or other representative;

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- That the parties are entitled to a written decision of findings to be issued within 30 calendar days after the date of the hearing; and
- That the local area has the right to appeal to the Secretary of the United States Department of Labor (USDOL)

Federal Appeal Procedures: If the state level appeal does not result in a designation, the unit(s) of local government or grant recipient may request a review by the Secretary of USDOL to determine if procedural rights were granted or if the minimum criteria of WIOA Section 106(b)(2) or Section 106(b)(3) were met. This appeal must be filed no later than 30 days after receipt of written notification of the denial from the Virginia Board of Workforce Development. The appeal must be submitted according to the details and requirements outline in 20 CFR 683.640. As a result, the US DOL Secretary may require that the area be designated as a local area. A written decision of the final determination will be issued to the Governor and the appellant.

Commonwealth of Virginia Process for Redesignating a LWDA

Reference: VBWD Policy 200-07, Change 1, Process for Requesting Local Workforce Development Area Redesignation; Redesignation Assistance - <https://viriniaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Policy-200-07-Change-1-LWDA-Redesignation.pdf>

Consistent with WIOA section 106(b)(6), the Virginia Board of Workforce Development (VBWD) will consider all requests for local area redesignation. While the WIOA statute contemplates requests for redesignation for local areas that are part of a planning region, the VBWD will consider requests for redesignation for local areas within a planning region and for local areas that may not be part of a planning region but can provide other appropriate justification for the change. Justification for redesignation may include factors that demonstrate the extent that requested areas meet the following:

1. Are consistent with labor market areas in the state;
2. Are consistent with regional economic development areas in the state; and
3. Have available the federal and non-federal resources necessary to effectively administer activities under provisions of WIOA Title I, including whether the areas have the appropriate education and training providers, such as institutions of higher education and career and technical education schools.

Requests for redesignation and redesignation assistance shall be consistent with policies and procedures outlined in Policy 200-01 and Policy 200-06.

The process outlined below is to be followed by a unit or units of local government seeking redesignation of local workforce development areas under the WIOA.

Step 1. The local government unit(s) seeking redesignation of local workforce development area(s) shall gain agreement of redesignation with the chief elected officials of the local areas (county commission for a single county local area or the consortium for multi- county local areas) impacted by the proposed redesignation and associated existing local workforce development boards.

Step 2. If a decision is made by the local government unit(s), in coordination with the chief elected officials, to seek redesignation under the WIOA, the local government units must undertake a formal comment period and provide documentation of the results of the formal comment period with the redesignation request. The formal comment period must allow for comments by businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, and the public at-large.

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Step 3. The request for redesignation of a new local workforce development area under the WIOA must be submitted to Virginia's Secretary of Labor and the Executive Director of the Virginia Board of Workforce Development and include the following information:

1. How the proposed local workforce development area is aligned with labor market areas including information on growth industries and occupations in the local labor market.
2. How the proposed local workforce development area is aligned with a regional economic development area within the Commonwealth of Virginia.
3. How the proposed local workforce development area can effectively administer activities under provisions of the WIOA with available federal and non-federal resources, including a description of area education and training providers, a description of how the available resources will be made available for training activities, and a description of the percentage of overall resources administered by the local area that will be dedicated to training activities.

Step 4. After submission of the redesignation request, Virginia Works will review the request and provide a consultative opinion and recommendation for the Governor and Virginia Board of Workforce Development. As required by the WIOA, the Governor will use the consultation of the Virginia Board of Workforce Development and consult with chief elected officials prior to redesignating a local workforce development area. The Governor may rely on the submissions from the requestor(s) as meeting the requirement for consultation with chief elected officials, including the public records of meetings and any recorded votes or resolutions regarding the redesignation request.

Step 5. Along with the redesignation request, the applicant for redesignation shall also submit a request for redesignation assistance (if needing such assistance), along with a budget and justification for the request that includes proposed activities to facilitate a transition to the redesignated local area. Transition assistance activities may include:

1. Convening sessions and conferences;
2. Renegotiation of contracts and agreements; and
3. Other activities deemed appropriate for redesignation by the VBWD.

Step 6. The VBWD and Virginia Works shall jointly consult on the redesignation assistance request and make a determination. Virginia Works shall monitor expenditure of funds and ensure appropriate use of such funds in supporting redesignation of the new local area(s).

Step 7. Once the Governor formally approves the redesignation request, redesignation funds shall be available based on an approved budget by Virginia Works.

Step 8. The local area and Virginia Works will determine the need to conduct status meetings to ensure a seamless transition through an open and collaborative partnership.

Commonwealth of Virginia Process for Identifying Regions

Reference: VBWD Policy 200-06 Change 1, Designation of Regions and Planning Requirements -

<https://viriniaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Policy-200-06-Change-1-Designation-of-Regions-and-Planning-Requirements.pdf>

The provisions on identifying regions are contained in WIOA section 106(a). The WIOA prescribed process for identifying regions includes consultation with: (1) local workforce development boards, and (2) chief elected officials. In order to identify regions, the WIOA requires the state to identify factors to be used, which, when applying, may or may not align to current local workforce development areas.

Factors Used to Determine the Identification of Regions in Virginia

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The factors outlined below are meant to promote a collaborative process whereby the data collection and analysis of the factors for determination of regions are shared between state and local workforce partners. To that end, Virginia shall utilize the following factors in determining regions:

Factor 1: Single Labor Market. Labor markets can be national, regional or local in nature. For purposes of aligning labor markets with regions, Virginia shall use state labor market information (LMI) as a foundational source of data and recognizes that labor markets do not necessarily align with county or local workforce development area borders. As a result, other sources of data for determining regional labor market alignment include Census Bureau information and Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Factor 2: Common Economic Development Area. Economic development activities occur at the state, regional, and local levels. For purposes of aligning economic development areas with regions, Virginia shall use data and alignment from sources such as the Virginia Economic Development Partnership. Other sources for determining regional economic alignment include sector initiatives undertaken by Virginia, other regional economic initiatives undertaken, and infrastructure investments tied to economic development activities.

Factor 3: Federal and Non-Federal Resources to Carry Out WIOA Activities. In identifying the efficacy of carrying out WIOA activities, Virginia shall take into account the following indicators: (1) the availability of funding to provide training activities in a region and the extent to which training funds are more readily available in various regional alignments; (2) the availability of education and training providers in a region; (3) administrative efficiencies that could be gained by operating as a region; (4) resources available among partner programs to operate the one-stop system; and (5) non-federal resources available in a region to support workforce development activities.

Factor 4: Population Centers. Virginia shall utilize available data on population centers to align regions. Much research and literature has focused on the idea of regional population clusters as hubs of innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic activity. In factoring population centers, indicators such as population density, increases or decreases in population (migration), and linkages to sector strategies will be used. Utilizing population centers does not prohibit regions that are rural in nature; in fact, it ensures that regions that are more rural in nature have factored available resources and workforce development activities in their planning.

Factor 5: Commuting Patterns. Many residents of Virginia live in one location while working in a different city or county. Commuting patterns offer an opportunity to better align to labor markets based on where people work and where employers may be concentrated. The commuting pattern factor should provide data complementary to population center and labor market data and form a more comprehensive look at regional alignment.

Factor 6: Industrial Composition and Sector Alignment. Virginia has engaged in a number of sector strategies and industry initiatives. It is important to align regions to industry clusters that provide a focus for developing a highly skilled and productive workforce through education, training and other services. Data should demonstrate how regional alignment will enhance support to sector and industry clusters and meet business' needs for a skilled workforce.

Factor 7: Community College Regions. Virginia's community colleges are a vital source of education, training and skills upgrading for residents and businesses of the state. In addition, it is important for the local workforce development system to coordinate activities and approaches with local community colleges, such as sector strategies, career pathways implementation, and business engagement strategies. Therefore, regions should align as closely as possible to community college service areas. It is likely that two or more community colleges will be within the boundaries of a workforce region.

Utilizing these seven factors, various regional alignments may be considered and proposed by a number of workforce system stakeholders such as state policymakers, State and Local Board members, state and local workforce staff, partner program staff, business and industry partners and workforce and education associations. In

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order for Virginia to consider and designate regions, a formal proposal shall be submitted to the Virginia Board of Workforce Development that includes a recommendation for region designation, a rationale for the region designation recommended using the seven factors, and a description of why the regional alignment proposed is in the best interests of the state, business and industry, and workers and job seekers.

Virginia has designated each local area as its own region. This does not preclude two adjacent local workforce areas from voluntarily coming together for the purpose of engaging in a regional planning process that results in one or more of the outcomes described in WIOA, excluding joint negotiations of performance levels. Those interested local boards, with the support of their local elected officials, must notify the state workforce board of their interest and intended outcomes.

Local workforce development boards may request that their local areas be designated as a planning region by submitting a request to Virginia Works. The local board request must be based on the factors identified in this policy. Virginia Works will review the request for compliance with federal and state requirements as well as to this policy. Virginia Works will make a recommendation to the Virginia Board of Workforce Development for consideration on whether to approve the request to be identified as a planning region.

Planning regions are subject to the regional planning requirements outlined in 20 CFR 679.510(a)(2). Once identified, planning regions will remain in effect as long as federal and state requirements for planning regions continue to be met. The Governor may review planning regions at any time to evaluate whether the planning region continues to meet the requirements of being identified as such.

One-Stop Center State Funding Mechanism

The VBWD Policy 20-01 provides guidance on appeals relating to determinations for infrastructure funding. If a LWDB, Chief Elected Official (CEO), or partner program disagrees with the State determination of the local area infrastructure agreement, an appeal may be submitted to the Governor's Chief Workforce Advisor in writing no later than 30 days after having received notice of the SFM determination. All appeals submitted to the Governor's Chief Workforce Advisor in writing shall state the basis for the appeal and shall include any documentary evidence that the local WDB would like reviewed prior to rendering a decision.

The Governor's Chief Workforce Advisor shall review the documentary evidence presented by the CEO and LWDB and shall request any additional information or conduct any investigation necessary to render a decision. A decision will be made based on the written record and shall be rendered within 30 days after receipt of the appeal.

Reference: VBWD Policy 20-01, One-Stop Center State Funding Mechanism - <https://virginiaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Policy-20-01-One-Stop-Center-State-Funding-Mechanism-Policy.pdf>

The VBWD is in the process of reviewing and updating this policy. This process is expected to be complete by the end of 2026.

2. STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

The Commonwealth has a process through the Virginia Board of Workforce Development, Virginia Works, and the state code for policy development to affect Virginia's Workforce Development System. The Virginia Works website is structured to inform stakeholders of public policies that are promulgated by the VBWD and the Title I Administrator.

The VBWD policies provide direction for the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB). The VBWD assists and advises the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Secretary of Labor in meeting workforce development needs in Virginia. Policies for the statewide workforce development system are located on the Virginia Works website under the policies section (<https://www.virginiaworks.gov/policies>). In 2026, the VBWD is in the process of reviewing, but not limited to, the following policies:

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- VBWD Policy 403-01 Business Services Requirements
- VBWD Policy 403-04 Incumbent Worker Training
- VBWD Policy 403-02 Rapid Response Activities: Layoff Aversion Assistance
- VBWD Policy 401-05 Change 1 Provision of Supportive Services

In September 2025, the VBWD voted to changed VBWD Policy 300-07 One-Stop System Brand (<https://viriniaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/VBWD-300-07-One-Stop-System-Brand-Effective-9.19.2025.pdf>) to transition the system brand from Virginia Career Works and align it with Virginia Works. The implementation of this brand change is occurring throughout the 2026 calendar year.

Some of the key policies and guidelines for the Commonwealth of Virginia statewide workforce development system include the following:

- a. VBWD Policy 200-01 Change 1 - Designation of Local Workforce Development Areas Revision 1.
<https://viriniaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Policy-200-01-Change-1-Designation-of-Local-Workforce-Development-Areas.pdf>
- b. VBWD Policy 20-02 Membership, Responsibilities, and Certification of Local Workforce Development Boards.
<https://viriniaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Policy-20-02-Local-Workforce-Boards-w-Attachment-A.pdf>
- c. VBWD Policy 200-06 Change 1 - Designation of Regions and Planning Requirements.
<https://viriniaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Policy-200-06-Change-1-Designation-of-Regions-and-Planning-Requirements.pdf>
- d. VBWD Policy 200-07 Change 1 - Process for Requesting Local Workforce Development Area Redesignation; Redesignation Assistance.
<https://viriniaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Policy-200-07-Change-1-LWDA-Redesignation.pdf>
- e. VBWD Policy 300-06 Change 2: American Job Center Certification Process
<https://viriniaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/VBWD-Policy-300-06-Change-2-American-Job-Center-Certification-Process-Final-7.1.24.pdf>
- f. VBWD Policy 404-01.2 Eligible Training Provider List
<https://viriniaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/VBWD-Policy-404-01.2-Eligible-Training-Provider-List.pdf>
- g. VBWD Policy 600-01: Veterans' Priority of Service
<https://viriniaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Policy-600-01-Veterans-Priority-of-Service-FinalSigned.pdf>
- h. VBWD Policy 600-03 Change 1: Services to Individuals with Disabilities
<https://viriniaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/VBWD-Policy-600-03-Services-to-Individuals-with-Disabilities-Change-1.pdf>
- i. VBWD Policy 403-02: Rapid Response Activities: Layoff Aversion Assistance
<https://viriniaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Policy-403-02-Rapid-Response-Final.pdf>
- j. VBWD Policy 19-01 Change 1: Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Co-Enrollment with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Dislocated Worker Program
https://viriniaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/VBWD-19-01-Change_1_Mandatory-WIOA-Trade-Co-Enrollment-VBWD-Policy_FINAL.pdf
- k. VBWD Policy 403-01 Change 1: Business Services Requirements
<https://viriniaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/VBWD-Policy-403-01-Business-Services-Requirements-Change-1.pdf>

Virginia Workforce Letters

Virginia Workforce Letters (VWL) are administrative policy documents for LWDB that were historically issued by the Virginia Community College System, as the previous administrator of WIOA Title I for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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With the creation of the new workforce agency, these administrative policy documents are in the process of being transferred to Virginia Works. Guidance on the administration of the statewide workforce development system specific to Title I of the WIOA are located under Current Virginia Workforce Letters and Archived Virginia Workforce Letters sections on the Virginia Works website. [Virginia Works - Virginia's Workforce Development Agency](#). Virginia Works is in the process of reviewing and updating many of the below VWL. Our review and update timeline is listed below.

Virginia Workforce Letters scheduled for review and administrative update by Virginia Works by September 30, 2024

- 14-17, Change 3: Minimum Training Expenditure Requirement
- 15-01, Change 2: Procedure for Establishing Training Provider Eligibility
- 15-02, Change 2: Eligibility Guidelines
- 15-04: Methods of Administration
- 15-05, Change 1: WIOA Discrimination Complaint Process
- 16-02, Change 1: Local Area WIOA Funds Transfer Procedures
- 16-05, Change 2: Incumbent Worker Training
- 16-06, Change 1: Eligible Training Provider and Programs List
- 16-07: Program Income
- 16-08, Change 1: Equipment Management-Acquisition, Inventory, and Disposition
- 16-09, Change 1: WIOA Grievance and Complaint Process
- 16-11: Youth in Need of Additional Assistance and In-School Youth 5% Limitation Barrier
- 16-12: 5% Income Exception for WIOA Youth Programs
- 17-05, Change 1: Application for Statewide Rapid Response Funds
- 18-04: Change 3 Priority of Service
- 19-06: Change 1 Oversight and Monitoring
- 20-07: Change 2: VaWC and Electronic Case Files
- 20-08: Requirements for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Local Workforce Development Area Plans

Some of the key administrative guidance documents for Virginia's statewide workforce development system include the following:

a. VWL 15-02, Change 2, Eligibility Guidelines.

[VWL-15-02-Change-2.pdf](#)

This administrative guidance document provides eligibility guidelines for the adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs under the WIOA of 2014.

b. VWL 15-04 Methods of Administration.

www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-15-04-Methods-of-Administration.pdf

This administrative guidance document provides a reasonable guarantee that all of Virginia's WIOA Title I financially assisted programs, activities and recipients comply with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirements stipulated under Section 188 of the WIOA.

- c. VWL 23-1 2023 Poverty Guidelines and 70 percent Lower Living Standard Income Levels and Use of Economic Self-Sufficiency under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

[VWL-23-01-2023-Poverty-Guidelines-70-Lower-Living-Standard-Income-Levels-Self-Sufficiency-Final-1.pdf](#)

This administrative guidance document provides the current Poverty and 70 percent Lower Living Standard Income Levels to be used in determining eligibility under the definition of low income.

- d. VWL 14-17, Change 3: Minimum Training Expenditure Requirement.

[VWL-14-17-Change-3-FINAL.pdf](#)

In accordance with Code of Virginia §2.2-2472.2, this administrative guidance document provides the minimum Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker local area formula funds expenditure requirement for training leading to recognized postsecondary education and workforce credentials aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area or region. All LWDBs are required to ensure that at least 40 percent of their formula-allocated expenditures in a program year are expended on allowable training costs in the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. This letter provides guidance on allowable costs towards meeting the required minimum 40 percent expenditure rate.

- e. VWL 15-05 Change 1 WIOA Discrimination Complaint Process

[VWL-15-05-Change-1-WIOA-Discrimination-Complaint-Process.pdf](#)

The purpose of this document is to communicate the requirement of grant recipients to adopt and make public procedures providing for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging violations of the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provision of the WIOA.

- f. VWL 20-08 Requirements for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Local Workforce Development Area Plans

[VWL-20-08-Requirements-for-WIOA-Local-Workforce-Development-Area-Plans.pdf](#)

The purpose of this document is to provide LWDBs with procedures and guidance on development and submission of local area plans under Title I of the WIOA.

- g. VWL 16-02 Change 1 Local Area WIOA Funds Transfer Procedures

[VWL-16-02-change-2-Local-Area-WIOA-Funds-Transfer-Procedures-Final.pdf](#)

The purpose of this document is to describe the procedure for initiating a request to transfer funds between the adult and dislocated worker streams under a particular allocation cycle by LWDBs.

- h. VWL 20-07 Change 2: VaWC and Electronic Case Files

This workforce letter provides Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) and their service providers guidance regarding the uniform electronic documentation of participant records, required naming conventions for participant documents uploaded into the system of record, adding and removing of participant documents to the system, standards for case note quality, and timely data entry requirements.

[VWL-20-07-Change-2-VaWC-and-Electronic-Case-Files-Final.pdf](#)

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i. VWL 16-05, Change 2 Incumbent Worker Training

[Microsoft Word - VA Works VWL 16-05 Change 2 Incumbent Worker Training.docx](#)

The purpose of this document is to provide LWDAs with procedures and guidance on Incumbent Worker Training requirements, appropriate data entry, and performance measure reporting. This guidance applies to incumbent worker training programs that receive funding through incumbent worker training contracts with an employer that are supported by the WIOA Title I-B statewide and local formula funds to training adults and dislocated workers, including those with disabilities.

j. VWL 16-06, Change 1 Eligible Training Provider and Programs List

[VWL-16-06-Change-1-ETPL-7-13-2017Final.pdf](#)

The purpose of this document is to provide LWDAs with procedures and guidance on eligibility requirements for Eligible Training Providers (ETPs) and the programs they offer. This letter provides additional information on ETP program performance measurement and reporting. This guidance applies to all state-approved ETPs and their state-approved programs that receive funding through Individual Training Account services (ITAs) supported by the WIOA Title I-B funds to train adults and dislocated workers, including those with disabilities.

k. VWL 16-07 Program Income

[Microsoft Word - VWL 16-07 Program Income.docx](#)

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on reporting program income and meeting cash expenditure requirements under the WIOA.

l. VWL 16-08 Change 1 Equipment Management-Acquisition, Inventory, and Disposition

[VWL-16-08-change-1-Equipment-Management-Acquisition-Inventory-and-Disposition-Final.pdf](#)

The purpose of this document is to communicate requirements and procedures for the acquisition, inventory, and disposition of equipment.

m. VWL 16-09 Change 1 WIOA Grievance and Complaint Process

[VWL-16-11-Youth-in-Need-of-Additional-Assistance-5-Limitation-Barrier.pdf](#)

The purpose of this document is to communicate the requirement of grant recipients to establish and maintain procedures providing for the prompt investigation and equitable resolution of grievances and complaints alleging violations of the WIOA.

n. VWL 16-11 Youth in Need of Additional Assistance and In-School Youth 5% Limitation Barrier.

[VWL-16-11-Youth-in-Need-of-Additional-Assistance-5-Limitation-Barrier.pdf](#)

The purpose of this document is to provide local workforce areas with guidance regarding the use of Youth in Need of Additional Assistance as a barrier for In-School Youth (ISY) and Out-of-School Youth (OSY) Programs. The document also provides guidance on the use of the Five Percent (5 percent) Limitation when determining eligibility of In-School Youth (ISY) program services under Title I of the WIOA.

o. VWL 16-12 5% Income Exception for WIOA Youth Programs

[Microsoft Word - VWL 16-12 5% Income Exception for WIOA Youth Programs.docx](#)

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The purpose of this document is to provide LWDAs and partners guidance on the use of the five percent (5 percent) income exception for youth participants in accordance to the WIOA.

p. VWL 17-05 Application for Statewide Rapid Response Funds

[VWL-17-05-Application-for-Statewide-Rapid-Response-Funds.pdf](#)

The purpose of this document is to communicate application procedures and requirements for the request of Statewide Rapid Response funds for Dislocated Worker Services and Layoff Aversion Services.

q. VWL 18-04, Change 3 Priority of Service

[VWL-18-04-Change-3-Priority-of-Service.pdf](#)

The purpose of this document is to provide LWDAs guidance on serving individuals under the Priority of Service requirements in accordance with the WIOA.

r. VWL 19-06, Change 2 Oversight and Monitoring

[VWL-19-06-Change-2-Oversight-and-Monitoring_signed.pdf](#)

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to LWDAs regarding the requirements for monitoring, oversight, and evaluation necessary to ensure compliance with the WIOA, applicable Federal laws and regulations, and state and local guidance.

Governor's Set-Aside Funds

Consistent with Sections 128 and 133 of WIOA, 15 percent of the non-general funds received for the administration of Title I of WIOA is reserved by the Governor in a fund to support administration of the Title I programs and to support statewide strategic workforce initiatives. At the end of the federal allotment cycle, unobligated Rapid Response funds are transferred to the Governor's fund, consistent with Section 134 of WIOA. The investment strategy and budget for the fund is determined by the Governor, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor and the Commissioner of Virginia Works no later than the first day of the federal program year for WIOA Title I. The investment strategy is consistent with required and allowable activities under Section 134 of WIOA. By December 15 of each year, the Secretary of Labor reports on the use of funds and generated outcomes to the Chairs of the state House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees.

Governor's set-aside funds will generally be used to fund the administration of WIOA Title I, including program development activities, technology systems to meet performance and participant services reporting requirements, and oversight/monitoring activities specific to WIOA Title I.

The set-aside funds will also be used for the following:

1. Promote the Governor's vision and goals through strategic investments in Virginia's workforce development system operations, capacity, and infrastructure
2. Provide competitive grant award opportunities to build capacity across the workforce system and drive enhanced partnership
3. Evaluate program performance and efficacy to enable the optimization of service delivery
4. Support the required operations of the VBWD
5. Conduct evaluations of activities under the WIOA title I core programs to promote continuous improvement, research and test innovative services and strategies, and achieve high levels of performance and outcomes, as required by 20 CFR 682.220.

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Virginia Works has developed a process to manage and quickly respond to mass layoffs, closings and potential closings that precipitate substantial increases in the number of unemployed individuals in a given workforce development area. This process begins with state-coordinated rapid response activities. Upon receipt of notification of a plant closing or substantial/mass layoff, the state Rapid Response team or Rapid Response Regional Coordinator will notify the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) and the Chief Elected Official (CEO) of the activity. The Rapid Response team works with the affected company to gather information regarding the impacted population.

Using this information, Rapid Response staff, along with the LWDB or its designee(s), develops a plan of action for Rapid Response and other services available from the American Job Centers, Virginia Community College System, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, and other state and local programs. This plan may include aversion strategies and a schedule to provide onsite services (such as job fairs, resume and interviewing workshops) to the laid-off workers by the Rapid Response team. In developing this plan, it may become apparent that a majority of the targeted population may have serious barriers to re-employment that will require intensive and training services. If this is the case, Title I Administration Team staff will work with the local board to determine whether adequate resources exist to serve the additional dislocated worker population with the available WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker formula funding allocated to the LWDA, or other resources, such as those from partner programs within the Virginia workforce system, the surrounding community, the company or companies involved, or unions. In the event that funds from other sources are determined insufficient to cover the anticipated cost of the services, the Governor's Secretary of Labor will consider, pending availability, the awarding of funding from the state Rapid Response resources using the Rapid Response Fund Application process per VWL 17-05, Change 1.

Virginia's focus is on averting layoffs through rapid reemployment activities. To achieve the goal of rapid reemployment, additional staff and technology supports are being utilized to better connect impacted workers with open positions close to their homes that match their previous employment or other transferable skills. This investment strategy of Rapid Response funds is intended to help facilitate the connection between dislocated workers and open positions to minimize the amount of unemployment experienced and document the potential savings to Virginia's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund.

Layoff aversion strategies implemented to address at risk companies and workers

Layoff aversion strategies that have been implemented to address at risk companies and workers include using an early warning system (e.g. economic forecasting groups) to identify and track firms and industrial sectors that may be in trouble or benefit from early economic development assistance; provide pre-feasibility studies to assess whether it is possible to continue the business operation and under what conditions; promote incumbent worker training; and collaboration with partners for technical assistance (e.g. Small Business Development Centers, Seminars and Workshops to etc.). These strategies are outlined in the following link: [Microsoft Word - Policy 403-02 Rapid Response Final.docx](#)

In regards to the incumbent worker training strategy, the state has issued policy establishing guidelines for the local boards to reserve and use up to 20 percent of the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker formula funds allocated to the LWDA to pay for the federal share of the cost of providing a training program for incumbent workers. This policy information is located in VBWD 403-04 *Incumbent Worker Training* policy and the supporting VWL 16-05, Change 2 ([VWL-16-05-Change-2-Incumbent-Worker-Training.pdf](#)).

Virginia's Rapid Response system for responding to disaster situations is integrated in Virginia Works disaster response framework. When disasters strike, Virginia Works coordinates with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) in executing a response. This includes assisting individuals who need to file for Disaster Unemployment Assistance. Given that work sites may be impacted by the disaster, VEC and Virginia Works will work with community partners to find alternate locations to assist in providing information and services to employees.

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Relationships have been made by local Rapid Response Coordinators with their VDEM Regional offices so they know who to contact in the event of a disaster and can integrate into the larger response framework being executed by VDEM. Regional contact phone trees have been established to ensure that contact can be maintained between program partners in the event that prolonged closures keep workforce partners out of their work offices. If needed, Virginia will work closely with workforce partners and the LWDB(s) to apply for funding through the National Dislocated Worker Grants to assist the impacted communities.

The Governor of Virginia is the Director of Emergency Management (VA Code § 44-146.17). During a declared emergency, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management reverts under the operational control of the Governor. During this time, the Department coordinates and administers disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery plans and programs with the proponent federal, state, and local government agencies and related groups (VA Code § 44-146.18). Therefore, when providing Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters, Virginia will coordinate with FEMA and other entities as necessary to provide services.

The Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act of 2015 (TAARA 2015) (Pub. L. 114-27), at Section 406, terminated the TAA Program on July 1, 2022. This termination is not a cliff termination, but rather a phase-out termination. The termination provisions prohibit the Department from investigating or certifying petitions for TAA. However, States are required to continue to provide workers access to the benefits and services of the TAA Program and encouraged to continue to conduct outreach to eligible workers. Although reauthorization has taken longer than anticipated, the Department continues to support the Administration and Congress in their efforts to reauthorize the TAA Program. (TEGL 07-23)

Virginia provides early intervention on behalf of those workers for which a TAA petition has been filed. This process begins with state-coordinated rapid response activities. Upon receipt of notification of a facility closure or substantial/mass layoff or potentially TAA affected worker group, the state Rapid Response team or Rapid Response Regional Coordinator will notify the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) and the Chief Elected Official (CEO) of the activity. The Rapid Response team (VEC (which includes TAA), Economic Development, and LWDB) will work with the affected company to gather information regarding the impacted population.

Using this information, the Rapid Response team, along with the LWDB or its designee(s), will develop a plan of action for Rapid Response and other services available from the American Job Centers (including TAA services), Virginia Works, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, and other state and local programs. This plan may include aversion strategies and a schedule to provide onsite or virtual services (such as job fairs, resume and interviewing workshops) to the laid-off workers or potentially TAA affected workers by the Rapid Response team. In developing this plan, it may become apparent that a majority of the targeted population may have serious barriers to reemployment that will require basic and individualized career services. Trade Navigators attend these meetings and assist the companies in filing TAA Petitions.

How Virginia disseminates benefit information

The Rapid Response team provides an overview of the Trade Act Program to all businesses served. Virginia Works, which coordinates Rapid Response Services and administers the Trade Act Program, provides briefings delivered to management and dislocated workers, including potentially affected TAA workgroups. In this briefing, the TAA representative and/or Rapid Response Representative explains resources and TAA benefits available. The inclusion of Virginia Works provides an immediate connection to Trade Act Program benefits and services. Once a TAA petition is certified, Virginia Works collaborates with the trade-affected employer obtaining a separation list of those workers attached to the certification that have suffered a lack of work separation due to no fault of their own. Written notices via mail or email are sent to all appearing on the separation list informing them of upcoming informational sessions concerning benefits under services under TAA or if a direct contact is needed providing the link to a TAA Case Manager. The separation list is also used by TAA Case Management for aggressive outreach to those affected to

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ensure all have a full understanding of the program answering/addressing any questions or concerns that the TAW might have about TAA and giving encouragement to enroll into the program.

For worker groups on whose behalf a TAA has been filed, the Commonwealth of Virginia provides early intervention to potentially trade-affected worker groups who meet the WIOA definition of dislocated workers. These individuals may receive services through the WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker program and other Virginia workforce system partner programs, as appropriate, prior to their certification of eligibility to apply for benefits and services under the Trade Act programs. This early intervention is mandated within the law as defined in the TAA Final Rule of September 21, 2020, in addition to state policy found in VBWD 19-01 Mandatory WIOA Title I-Trade Co-enrollment.

According to VBWD Policy 19-01, "A majority of the individuals who may be covered in a Trade Petition will likely qualify for services from the WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker Program as outlined in VWL #15-02, Change 2: Eligibility Guidelines. The provision of WIOA services should not be delayed while a TAA certification is pending. There may be cases where a potentially TAA eligible individual may not be eligible for WIOA Title I services due to selective services status and these cases should be addressed on a case-by-case basis." Therefore, if a worker has been dislocated and is waiting for TAA eligibility determination, that person can be enrolled as a dislocated worker and receive eligible services under WIOA Title I. These services may include Career Services (Basic, Individualized, and Follow-up Services) as defined by WIOA.

To ensure better communication about potential TAA activity to staff in the field, Virginia Works will maintain clear and prompt internal communications on all TAA petitions filed, certified, or denied. WIOA Title I staff distributes this information to the appropriate LWDBs to share with their staff.

WIOA Title I and TAA have regular communication to ensure that co-enrollment is occurring by having weekly referrals of TAA impacted workers taking advantage of benefits to the appropriate local workforce development board. Referrals are provided to the State Rapid Response Coordinator, who ensures that the referrals are passed along to LWDB Executive Directors and other designees for case evaluation and co-enrollment.

How Virginia ensures the provision of appropriate career services to workers in the groups identified in TAA petition

Dislocated workers determined TAA eligible must be co-enrolled in TAA. The Virginia Co-Enrollment Directive as described in VBWD Policy 19-01 provides early intervention to assist Dislocated Worker eligible and potential TAA eligible individuals. The policy is available at [VBWD-19-01-Change 1 Mandatory-WIOA-Trade-Co-Enrollment-VBWD-Policy FINAL.pdf](#). The TAA Final Rule of September 21, 2020 mandates co-enrollment of all Trade Affected Workers unless services and benefits are declined by a TAW or if a TAW's selective services status is of question.

According to VBWD Policy 19-01, if an individual has already been identified as Trade-eligible and/or is in receipt of their Trade entitlement letter, they shall be co-enrolled in the WIOA dislocated worker program for receipt of intensive services, beginning with formal assessment. Through case management and staff coordination, the TAA will be responsible for training and then WIOA and/or Labor Exchange will handle post-training placement, with WIOA case managers also ensuring required follow up services. This should not result in a participant being aware that they are being transferred from and among separate programs, but rather, be accomplished through case management, partner staff coordination, and staff management and tracking of funding sources being used.

Documentation of participation in a Rapid Response event is provided to all participants who attend either Rapid Response services or a Trade Benefits Rights Interview. This additional information helps expedite the eligibility for WIOA Dislocated Worker services as well as the co-enrollment process with the Trade program. Workforce center staff have been trained not to wait for the completion of the Trade petition investigation before serving the potentially Trade certified worker, because the petition investigation may take up to 40 days or longer for DOL to complete, with another five weeks after employer certification for workers eligibility to be determined. Individuals

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who have lost their job or received notice of a pending lay off, are first and foremost dislocated workers and should be served as such.

At a minimum, the following are to be provided, along with standard basic services provided at the American Job Center including:

1. Assessment
2. Provision of labor market information
3. Training providers available on the WIOA eligible training provider list

The Commonwealth is taking further steps to strengthen partnership for the provision of services across all WIOA programs by providing training on a regular basis to front line staff and follow up with LWDBs. This will continue to include emphasizing co-enrollment and eliminating duplicate services for delivery of seamless services to DLW/TAW.

The TAA program is a required partner in the one-stop delivery system, established under section 121 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Therefore, given that the TAA program is part of the broader workforce system and a key goal for the TAA program is to ensure that trade-affected workers are able to successfully return to work. Consistent with the Governor-Secretary Agreement, the States agree to use funds obligated under the TAA Annual Cooperative Financial Agreement (CFA), to carry out the TAA program, including:

1. Ensuring integration of the TAA program into its one-stop delivery system
2. Using the centers in this system or network as the main point of participant intake and delivery of TAA program benefits and services
3. Ensuring the terms of the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the Local Workforce Investment Boards, as established under WIOA section 121(c) will apply to the assistance provided by other one-stop partners to TAA participants. [Trade Act Sec. 239 (a) as amended by WIOA section 512 (hh)]

How Virginia will use funds that have been reserved for Rapid Response to provide services for every worker group that files a TAA petition

Rapid Response services are delivered during all Trade Benefit Orientations to ensure compliance with TAA Section 221(a)(1)(A). The Rapid Response funds, pending availability, is utilized to provide assistance to local workforce areas in situations where the layoff event results in a need beyond the availability of local resources, including TAA assistance. The VBWD Policy 403-02, Process for Additional Funding for Dislocated Worker Activities, provides the process for the distribution of additional funding for dislocated worker services funded by Rapid Response and other non-local formula funding.

VBWD Policy 403-02 communicates the Commonwealth's policy regarding the process for distribution of additional funding for dislocated worker services funded by Rapid Response and other non-local formula funding; and addresses when and how Rapid Response Funds will be made available to local workforce development areas impacted by plant closings and major dislocations. The process is as follows:

The Rapid Response Team will work with the LWDB in developing a plan/strategy to provide onsite or online services to the laid-off workers (including worker groups that files a TAA petition). In developing this plan, it may become apparent that a majority of the targeted population may have serious barriers to re-employment that will require intensive and training services. If this is the case, the LWDB may apply for funds under the process outlined in VWL 17-05: Application for Statewide Rapid Response Funds. Once the application is received, Virginia Works must review the application within 10 business days and provide an initial response to the LWDB. Virginia Works reviews the information provided, as well as other relevant documentation including fiscal and participant reports. Factors such

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as the timing of the layoffs, the size of the dislocation, the needs of the affected workers and the amount of funds available determine whether the projected funding will meet the Statewide Rapid Response (25 percent) funds, or some other federal funding.

The following conditions are taken into consideration during the review process:

1. The need for funds must be caused by either a plant closing or major layoff for which the company issued a WARN notification, the closing of an emergency nature where WARN notification was not possible, or be due to a significant increase in the number of unemployed individuals in the area that can otherwise be documented. Funds may also be made available to support TAA co-enrollment when TAA activity is higher than what may be usually accommodated under the usual formula funding available to LWDBs.
2. The need must occur at a time when the affected LWDBs formula funding and other accessible resources are not available or will not become available in the near future and the size of the dislocation must warrant additional funding. Efforts to secure other sources of funding sufficient to meet the need must be documented as unsuccessful.
3. The need must also be based on projections on the levels and types of services necessary, based in part on an assessment of the ability for the target population to be rapidly re-employed prior to intensive and training services and a determination that a large percentage of the affected workforce has barriers to employment.

After questions or issues with an application are addressed, Virginia Works makes a recommendation to the Governor's Office which then provides authorization to release the funds if necessary. Once a decision has been made, the Local Workforce Development Board is notified in writing. At that time, additional information and/or planning documents may be requested, as appropriate, based upon the selected source of funds.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program Assurances

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program is a Required Partner in the one-stop system, established under section 121 of WIOA. However, to receive TAA program funds, States must adhere to the signed Governor-Secretary Agreement, in addition to the terms and conditions provided in the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Annual Cooperative Financial Agreement (CFA) and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Annual Funding Agreement, executed each fiscal year between the State and ETA.

The CFA, which is incorporated by reference into the Governor-Secretary Agreement, explains program requirements, limitations on the use of funds, assurances and other important grant provisions that States must follow to receive TAA program funding for Training and Other Activities (which includes training, employment and case management services, and allowances for job search and relocation and State administration of these benefits and services).

At the beginning of each fiscal year, ETA provides each Cooperating State Agency (CSA) with a CFA for that year, which the CSA is required to execute and submit to ETA's Office of Grants Management. The Unemployment Insurance (UI) Annual Funding Agreement is the mechanism for funding the State administration of TRA and older worker wage subsidies through the State agency that administers the unemployment insurance laws for the State.

B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS

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IF THE STATE IS UTILIZING WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS (E.G., ON-THE-JOB TRAINING, INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING, TRANSITIONAL JOBS, AND CUSTOMIZED TRAINING) AS PART OF ITS TRAINING STRATEGY AND THESE STRATEGIES ARE NOT ALREADY DISCUSSED IN OTHER SECTIONS OF THE PLAN, DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGIES FOR HOW THESE MODELS ENSURE HIGH QUALITY TRAINING FOR BOTH THE PARTICIPANT AND THE EMPLOYER.

As outlined in Goal 3, described in Section II.(C), Work-Based Learning is a key component of Virginia's training strategy.

GOAL 3	Lead the Nation in Work-Based Learning and Registered Apprenticeship Scale Registered Apprenticeship , on-the-job training, paid internships, and other work-based learning models to serve as primary pathways to employment and reemployment, meeting Governor Spanberger's commitment to expanding earn-and-learn opportunities for every Virginian.

Virginia is dedicated to providing WBL opportunities that support workers no matter where they are on their career ladder. While Virginia Works is the State Apprenticeship Agency and WIOA Title I administrator, many Commonwealth agencies have developed WBL and RA opportunities (VCCC, VDOC, VDOE, VDH, etc.). A full description can be found in Sections II and III of this plan. Some key WBL priorities are as follows:

- The Commonwealth continues to support Youth RAs, partnering with school districts and community colleges as both RTI providers and sponsors. Virginia's goal is that by 2030 all young people will have access to an apprenticeship or other WBL experience.
- Virginia knows RA and other WBL models are vital tools to support priority populations, including veterans, second chance citizens, those in rural areas, and other individuals with barriers to employment. As a result, the state has developed cross-agency partnerships to better serve those populations.
- Virginia works closely with employers to develop WBL programs that respond to their needs. By developing programs in partnership with industry leaders, the Commonwealth can ensure workers learn skills that are directly applicable to jobs available today and in the future. This also allows employers to invest in their workers' long-term success, creating quality careers that include embedded career pathways.
- The Commonwealth continues to prioritize RA programs, knowing these are the gold standard of WBL programs. Virginia Works has embedded RTAs in all of its one-stops, aligning RA and WIOA programming and developing seamless handoffs from WIOA to RA and vice versa, promoting co-enrollment opportunities.

Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)

In cases where WIOA ITAs are used, Virginia has developed a robust process by which it approves a training entity to be on the Commonwealth's ETPL. In alignment with WIOA statute, the eligibility and approval process includes performance accountability and continuous improvement. The ETPL Process is located in *VBWD Policy 404-01.2 Eligible Training Provider List*. This policy states that eligible training provider program criteria are developed to ensure that programs on the ETPL meet the minimum quality standards and deliver industry-recognized skills and credentials that provide individuals with the opportunity for career progression. The policy also describes that performance criteria must be met in order to receive funding under WIOA. VBWD Policy 404-01.2 also details that the LWDBs are responsible for identifying their criteria for selecting work-based training contractors in local policy and any performance information required by the state will be

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specified in the policies for those types of training. To ensure the ETPL remains compliant and responsive to system participant demand, Virginia Works hired a full-time ETPL Coordinator.

Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)

The Commonwealth continues to support upskilling via IWTs, knowing that upskilling supports Governor Spanberger's vision of developing a workforce system that empowers Virginians. IWT leverages WBL and classroom learning to help individuals develop new skills that respond to technology and other work shifts. This method is also a retention and lay-off aversion strategy for employers.

Virginia implements IWT through *VBWD Policy 403-04 Incumbent Worker Training*, which describes the use of WIOA statewide and local formula funding to create IWT programs. This policy specifically addresses the means to achieve high quality training that meets the needs of both the participant and the employer. LWDBs must detail incumbent worker training in the business services plan and incumbent worker training will be tracked in the business engagement report and will be reported to the VBWD. Strategies for supporting existing employees develop new workforce skills shall be designed to benefit employers in ways that encourage and support the integration of new technology, increase employee productivity, and support the competitiveness of the company.

On-the-Job Training

To achieve Virginia's goal of 100 percent WBL access by 2030, the Commonwealth continues to support OJT provision both via RA and as a stand-alone training option. *VBWD Policy 403-03 Change 1 On-the-Job Training* describes the use of WIOA funds for OJT. *VBWD Policy 403-03 Change 1 On-the-Job Training* describes how OJT may be utilized to benefit employers in ways that encourage and support the integration of new technology and business processes, increase employee productivity, and support the competitiveness of the company. These programs are also designed with the individual in mind, with flexible options that support employee growth. The VBWD will continue to monitor performance outcomes, such as the number of participants engaged in OJT and other work-based learning; number of companies participating in OJT or other forms of work-based learning; number of workforce credentials earned; number of participants still employed six months after the end of the OJT or other work-based learning; and the number of participants with a change in wages after six months.

The LWDBs must engage in consistent follow-up with both the employer and program participant to ensure that quality work-based training needs of both the employer and the participant are met. Each local WDA has a plan that recognizes the in-demand industries/occupations for the area. Quality delivery of business services is a principal tenant of the local efforts, in addition to providing job seekers with quality training that results in stackable credentials and career pathway progression. Additionally, the Commonwealth is continuously looking for ways to assist the LWDBs by providing professional training and technical assistance opportunities on leveraging relationships with employers, improving outreach, standardizing processes, and ensuring participants are job ready before they enter the work-based employment opportunity

References:

VDWD Policy Number 19-01, Mandatory Trade Co-enrollment: www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-19-01-Mandatory-WIOA-Trade-Co-Enrollment-VBWD-Policy_.pdf

VBWD Policy Number 403-04, Incumbent Worker Training: www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/Policy-403-04-Incumbent-Worker-Training-FINALSigned.pdf

VBWD Policy Number 404-01.2 Eligible Training Provider List: <https://virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-Policy-404-01.2-Eligible-Training-Provider-List.pdf>

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VBWD Policy Number 403-03 Change 1, On-the-Job Training:

www.virginiacareerworks.com/virginia_board/vbwd-policy-403-03-change-1-on-the-job-training/

Virginia Works Strategic Plan 2025-2030: <https://virginiaworks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Virginia-Works-for-Everyone-Strategic-Plan-2025-2030-v1-3.pdf>

Opportunity 2027 Strategic Plan (VCCS): www.vccs.edu/opportunity-2027-strategic-plan/

2. REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

Virginia is expanding the use of the RA program to help narrow the skills gap and develop Virginia's workforce of the future. RA opportunities have long been a part of Virginia's workforce training landscape; by housing the RA program in Virginia Works, the Commonwealth plans to better integrate RAs with other workforce programs, creating a seamless system for program participants. Today there are more than 14,300 apprentices employed by 2,151 sponsors throughout the Commonwealth, though Virginia Works anticipates through its RA Consultant program and continued alignment with WIOA programs, this number will continue to grow over the coming years.

The Virginia strategy for RA service design and delivery involves referrals from workforce partners (e.g., workforce centers, case managers from DARS, VDSS, and workforce practitioners from the VCCS Workforce side) to Virginia Works or to the RA Consultant that serves that locality. Virginia Works has also recently finalized updated RA policy documents around reciprocity; intermediary and employer acceptance; memorandum of understanding; work instruction; credit for prior learning; probationary credit, and electronic process.

Virginia will continue to incorporate RAs into its services and strategies via collaboration with core partners and increased funding resources. A description of RA programs in Virginia can be found in Sections II and III of this plan.

Increased Collaboration with Core Partners

Virginia's RA programs are administered by Virginia Works through a network of regional service offices and technical outreach staff. At the LWDB level, Business Service Teams (BST) are the organizing structure used to engage business and industry and deliver workforce services to industry partners. RA representatives are vital members of the LWDB business service teams and work in partnership with other system partners (e.g., Department of Rehabilitative Services and Department of Education) to support their sponsor businesses and registered apprentices. Virginia Works and the LWDB Business Service teams will collaborate and work in tandem identifying RA opportunities.

Additionally, RAs are incorporated into Virginia's strategy and services via Virginia Works. RTAs are embedded in one-stops, allowing them to work closely with WIOA staff. At the state level, the Commonwealth is taking further steps to strengthen partnerships between Title I and RA programs; in March 2026, Virginia Works held its first VWDB and Apprenticeship Council combined meeting.

The LWDBs will strengthen and increase its partnership with the RA program through its collaboration with the business services team, the coordination of ITAs with Work-based learning Programs, working with One-Stop Services team in providing supportive services with clients, and identifying opportunities to engage businesses. Virginia Works is in the final stages of completing a Talent Solutions Guide to help the LWDBs to train/partner with businesses on the benefits and promotion of apprenticeship as a viable training option for employers. The training for BST members is intended to provide members with a foundational understanding of RA. An informal survey of workforce partners indicated that many were unaware of basic elements of RA, which in turn limited the likelihood that RA was discussed with either businesses or job seeking clients.

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Ongoing training and interaction between BST members and RA Staff is necessary to build the required knowledge base for members to successfully identify opportunities to promote RA.

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are available for individual registered apprentices and can cover the amount allowable in a local workforce investment area for job-related instruction costs (e.g., classroom instruction, distance/online learning, etc.) for eligible dislocated workers or employed workers determined to be in need of training according to their local Comprehensive one-stop Career Center's policies. The VBWD has established policy (VBWD Policy 404-011.2) related to the inclusion of RTI providers in the state's Eligible Training Provider List to ensure that ITAs can be used for that component of RA

Incumbent Worker Training is a mechanism often used to support apprenticeship-related instruction for newly hired and existing workers. Local boards may reserve and use up to 20 percent of the Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to pay for a tiered scale portion of the costs of providing training.

Provision of additional recruiting, placement, and support services is an area of opportunity to increase collaboration with RA. The workforce system covers a range of supportive services – including pre-apprenticeship training, assistance in recruiting and placing apprentices, and tools, books, and other individual supplies for apprentices. Virginia will work with the LWDBs to optimize the use of resources (ITA, support services) in supporting RAs through appropriate referrals to the RA team and funding ITAs and OJTs if applicable.

Policy

The VBWD adopted policy related to the inclusion of RA sponsors and their approved Related Technical Instruction providers on Virginia's Eligible Training Provider (ETP) List. This policy provides eligibility criteria and procedures for including RA programs on the ETP, in accordance with WIOA. This policy is applicable to sponsors of RA training services for adults, dislocated workers, youth, and other populations as defined by WIOA, Title I-B. More information about this policy can be found in Part 3 of this plan section.

Increased Funding Resources:

Virginia has a stated goal to expand the usage of RA as an employment training model in industries that have not traditionally relied on this training method, such as the Pharmaceutical and Maritime/Nuclear RA programs highlighted in Sections II and III of this plan. Virginia has sought and will continue to seek funding opportunities and develop strategies to meet this goal.

One such opportunity is the State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula (SAEF) grant to support a coordinated, national investment strategy that aims to strengthen and modernize the RA Program (RAP) system. The SAEF grant program intends to better support State capacity and planning to create new RAPs while also driving system innovation and reform. The SAEF funding opportunity is part of a five-year investment plan through the U.S. DOL.

The U.S. DOL awarded the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) a SAEF grant to expand the Virginia RA program by creating opportunities for innovation, engagement, and accessibility in Virginia. The DOLI was awarded \$927,372 to carry out grant activities for their SAEF (HIRED - Highlight, Include, Recruit, Engage, Deliver) grant project with a focus on expanding usage of the apprenticeship model in clean energy, early childhood education, and teacher education. The SAEF (HIRED) grant program expanded RA Program opportunities for all Virginia residents with an emphasis on serving veterans, individuals with disabilities, justice-impacted, low-income, and other marginalized populations. Virginia has launched subsequent SAEF rounds and continue to expand this work. In February 2026, the Commonwealth launched SAEF Round 3 HIRED, an expansion grant with \$157.5 thousand available for apprenticeship.

3. TRAINING PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURE

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The Commonwealth of Virginia maintains procedures for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including RA programs through several policy and guidance documents located on the Virginia Career Works website's practitioner's page.

More specifically, the *VBWD Policy Number 404-01.2 Eligible Training Provider List* and *Policy No. 404-02 Change 1 RA Programs*; and the Title I Administrator has issued the guidance documents *Virginia Workforce Letter (VWL) No. 16-06, Change 1: Eligible Training Provider and Programs List under the WIOA of 2014* and *Virginia Workforce Letter (VWL) No. 15-01, Change 2*. Virginia Works has updated these VWL to align with the newly updated policy.

VBWD Policy Number 404-01.2 provides eligibility criteria for providers of training, information, and procedures for implementing the Eligible Training Provider (ETP) requirements in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. This policy is applicable to providers of occupational skills training services for adults, dislocated workers, and other populations as defined by WIOA Title I-B. VWL No. 16-06 Change 1 provides the procedures and guidelines for determining training provider eligibility effective July 1, 2017. This policy applies to training programs provided by the Eligible Training Provider and Individual Training Account Services supported by WIOA Title I funds. RA programs are also addressed in these and other policy documents.

Initial Program Eligibility:

Per VBWD Policy Number 404-01.2, Virginia Works now receives the initial applications for the ETPL and processes the applications, including performance management and updates. The LWDBs are still involved in the process by providing review, input, and initial certification of ETPL programs.

The state's WIOA Title I Administrator is required to maintain the infrastructure to support the state ETPL, including publishing provided information related to cost and performance outcomes, and make it publicly accessible in a user-friendly way to the consumers, other members of the public, and other workforce stakeholders.

Approval by a LWDB places the provider and program on the state ETPL but does not guarantee a local area will fund the approved training activity through the issuance of an ITA. That determination is further based on local policy which must include, at minimum, relevance of training to demand occupations that are in demand regionally, availability of local funds, and likelihood that training will support the individual in meeting their career objectives and employment.

There are five categories of providers who may apply for consideration to be included on the state eligible training provider list:

1. A postsecondary educational institution that is eligible to receive federal funds under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and that provides a program that leads to certification or license or college certificate, associate degree, or baccalaureate degree.
2. A postsecondary school that offers formal instructional programs with curricula designed primarily for students who have completed the requirements for a high school diploma or its equivalent. Such schools include programs of academic-vocational, vocational, and continuing professional education that may lead to a certification or licensure. This category excludes avocational and adult basic education programs.
3. An entity that carries out related instruction under the National Apprenticeship Act that is recognized by Virginia Works,
4. A provider of a program of occupational training services that under Section 23-276.2 of the Code of Virginia is exempt from certification as a postsecondary school such as a professional or occupational training program regulated by another state or federal governmental agency other than the State Council of Higher Education for

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Virginia (SCHEV), any school, institute, or course of instruction offered by any trade association or any nonprofit affiliation of a trade association on subjects related to the trade, business, or profession represented by such association, or

5. A provider of adult education and literacy activities under title II of WIOA, if these activities are provided in combination with occupational skills training.

Programs and providers under category 3 will be granted approval, if requested, following confirmation by Virginia Works that the sponsoring employer and apprenticeship related instruction have been recognized by the state and are active and in good standing. VBWD Policy No. 404-02, Change 1 describes the eligibility criteria and procedures specific to RA programs.

Continued Program Eligibility:

Per VBWD Policy Number 404-01.2, after one full year of eligibility, approved Eligible Training Providers will be required annually to provide basic information for continued eligibility and will submit performance information for all students, including participants whose activities were funded through an ITA to Virginia Works. The policy currently allows for programs to be automatically renewed given that training providers are responsive to the requests to submit performance information on students and meet the state required performance measures for all students. These measures are:

Training Completion Rate	
July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026	65%
July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027	70%
July 1, 2027 – June 30, 2028	74%
July 1, 2028 – June 30, 2029 (and hereafter)	80%

Credential Attainment Rate	
July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026	65%
July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027	70%
July 1, 2027 – June 30, 2028	72%
July 1, 2028 – June 30, 2029 (and hereafter)	75%

Providers are required to submit performance data through the Virginia Workforce Connection. Providers of training who fail to provide the verification and performance information within 90 days of request will be removed from the state eligible training provider list.

A recognized RA program may remain on the ETPL as long as it remains registered and recognized by Virginia Works. Annually, the administrator of Title I funds will provide the RA team a list of approved providers in this category and verify the status of apprenticeship program.

RA Program:

VBWD Policy Number 404-01 Change 1.2 provides the process for adding RA programs to the state eligible training provider list. The RA process and supporting documents reflect the automatic eligibility of all approved RA programs to be included in the State Eligible Training Provider list.

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Virginia Works will initiate contact with the RA program sponsors to provide information about the state's ETP. RA Programs are automatically eligible to be included on the ETP List and are exempt from state and local ETP eligibility requirements and performance requirements.

RA Programs that desire to be included on the ETP List must contact Virginia Works. RA Programs are not automatically included on the ETP List. The RA Program must opt in to be added to the ETPL. National RA Programs are not required to register their apprenticeship program in Virginia. The RA Program is required to submit the following information to be included on the ETP List:

- Occupations included within the RA Program;
- Name and address of the RA Program Employer/Sponsor;
- Name and address(es) of the Related Technical Instructions (RTI) provider(s) and the location(s) of instruction if different from the program sponsor's address;
- The method and duration of related technical instruction;
- The cost of the RTI if the RA sponsor is not providing the instruction; and
- The number of active apprentices in the program Following the receipt of a completed application, Virginia Works will verify that the program sponsor is active and in good standing. Following that confirmation, the RA Application will be forwarded to the WIOA Title I Administrator to add the RA program information to the state ETPL. The RA Program will remain on the ETPL until:
 - The RA Program notifies Virginia Works it no longer wants to be included on the ETPL;
 - The program becomes deregistered under the National Apprenticeship Act;
 - The program becomes deregistered by Virginia Works under Virginia Code (§ 2.2-2046);
 - The program is determined to have intentionally supplied inaccurate information; or
 - A determination is made that the RA Program substantially violated any provision of WIOA Title I or the WIOA regulations, including 29 CFR part 38.

The RA Program may appeal the decision to deny or remove the program from the ETP List by following the appeals processed outline in this policy.

References:

VBWD Policy Number 404-01 Change 1.2 Eligible Training Provider List

<https://virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-Policy-404-01.2-Eligible-Training-Provider-List.pdf>

Registered Apprenticeship [1] Virginia Career Works

4. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR FOR THE ADULT PRIORITY OF SERVICE REQUIREMENT IN WIOA SECTION 134 (C)(3)(E) THAT REQUIRES AMERICAN JOB CENTER STAFF, WHEN USING WIOA ADULT PROGRAM FUNDS TO PROVIDE INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES AND TRAINING SERVICES, TO GIVE PRIORITY OF SERVICE TO RECIPIENTS OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT (INCLUDING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS).

Virginia is approaching the Priority of Service for individual career and training services using the following conditions for Priority of Service, which the state has integrated with its Veterans Priority of Service:

1. Veterans and eligible spouses have priority of service for WIOA and other designated job training programs funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Labor
2. Individualized career and training services must be given on a priority basis, regardless of funding levels, to:
 - a. Public Assistance Recipients

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- b. Other Low-Income Individuals
- c. Individuals who are Basic Skills Deficient

The Priority of Service conditions listed for individualized career and training services apply to WIOA Title I Adult programs.

Priority is given in the following order:

1. Veterans and eligible spouses who are public assistance recipients, or other low-income individuals, or who are basic skills deficient
2. Non-covered persons (who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are in the priority groups for Title I WIOA Title I Adult funds
3. Veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in the WIOA's priority groups
4. Priority populations established by the Governor/ or Local Workforce Development Boards
5. Non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA

The Title I Monitoring Group will review locally developed Priority of Service policies and the implementation of the local policies as part of the annual reviews of local workforce development areas. Virginia's WIOA Title I Administration Team will continue to develop additional program guidance on Priority of Service and to provide training to local workforce development areas and their service providers on a regular basis.

Reference:

VWL 18-04, Change 3 Priority of Service: www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-18-04-Change-3-Priority-of-Service.pdf

5. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S CRITERIA REGARDING LOCAL AREA TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN THE ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS

Virginia has issued guidance, VWL 16-02 Change 2 Local Area WIOA Funds Transfer Procedures. This administrative guidance describes the procedure for initiating a request to transfer funds, up to 100%, between the adult and dislocated worker streams under a particular allocation cycle by Local Workforce Development Boards.

As described in WIOA, LWDBs must submit on letterhead a written or electronic request to transfer funds between the adult and dislocated worker streams to the WIOA Title I Administrator for administrative review and approval on behalf of the Governor. The WIOA Title I Administrator will communicate its determination on the request within 15 business days of receipt of the request.

Transfer requests must include:

1. WIOA program year affected
2. Amount of the proposed transfer
3. A detailed impact analysis indicating the anticipated impact to the program from which funds are being moved and to the program which will receive the funds
4. Documentation that the transfer decision was approved at a meeting of the Local Workforce Development Board or by the executive committee of the LWDB.
5. Transfer requests must be submitted before expenses are incurred

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The impact analysis shall include:

1. Expenditures for the adult and dislocated worker programs for each of the last three years
2. The number of adult and dislocated worker participants enrolled in each program for each of the last three years
3. A narrative describing how the receiving program participants will benefit from the transfer as well as how the impact on the contributing program will be mitigated, including assurance that the remaining participants will be served

To make a determination, the WIOA Title I Administration staff will also review the LWDB's most recent Monthly Expenditure Detail Report (MEDR) for the program year to confirm that sufficient unobligated funds in the source Program funding stream are available to fund the requested transfer.

Approved transfers will result in the requesting LWDB receiving a signed Transfer Authorization from the Virginia's WIOA Title I Administrator. The Authorization does not result in an actual change in the allocation by stream in the original Notice of Obligation. Authorization of transfers and transfer-funded expenditures to date shall be reported by the LWDB on subsequent MEDR for the applicable program year.

Reference:

VWL 16-02 Change 1 Local Area WIOA Funds Transfer Procedures:

<https://viriniacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-16-02-Change-2-Local-Area-WIOA-Funds-Transfer.pdf>

6. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S POLICY ON WIOA AND TAA CO-ENROLLMENT AND WHETHER AND HOW OFTEN THIS POLICY IS DISSEMINATED TO THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS AND REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNERS. TRADE ACT SEC. 239(F), SEC. 235, 20 CFR 618.325, 20 CFR 618.824(A)(3)(I).

VBWD policy mandates WIOA Title I- Trade Co-Enrollment in its Policy 19-01.

The statutory, regulatory, and administrative requirements to co-enroll Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) participants in the WIOA Dislocated Worker (DW) Program are clear:

- Sec. 125. DECLARATION OF POLICY; SENSE OF CONGRESS. (Trade Reform Act of 2002) (a) DECLARATION OF POLICY. — Congress reiterates that, under the TAA program under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974, workers are eligible for transportation, childcare, and healthcare assistance, as well as other related assistance under programs administered by the Department of Labor.

- Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act (TAARA) 2015, Sec. 239 (f):

Agreements entered under this section shall provide for the coordination of the administration of the provisions for employment services, training, and supplemental assistance under sections 235 and 236 of this Act. Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act upon such terms and conditions established by the Secretary in consultation with the States and set forth in such agreement. Any agency of the State jointly administering such provisions under such agreement is a cooperating State agency for purposes of this chapter.

- Governor-Secretary Agreement:

The Department concludes that no additional regulatory language needed in the WIOA rules for compliance with this new requirement, since [adversely affected workers] AAWs are eligible for enrollment in the WIOA dislocated worker program upon request. The States, under the Governor-Secretary Agreement, are bound to the implementation of these rules. The Governor-Secretary Agreement binds the entire executive branch of the

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State government to the terms and conditions of the Agreement and the implementation of the TAA Program.
(TAA Final Rule Preamble)

- TAA Final Rule 20 CFR 618.325(a)(1): September 21, 2020

A State must co-enroll trade-affected workers who are eligible for WIOA's dislocated worker program. Workers may choose to decline co-enrollment in WIOA. A State cannot deny such a worker benefits or services under the TAA Program solely for declining co-enrollment in WIOA.

Co-enrollment Mandated percentage per quarter:

1. Current USDOL established goal is 75 percent co-enrollment measure for PIRL reporting.
2. Increasing up to 100 percent co-enrollment measure for PIRL reporting over time as directed by USDOL for compliance with co-enrollment mandate.

a. States must develop and manage resources (including electronic case management systems) to integrate data, including co-enrollment data, provided through different agencies administering benefits and services to trade-affected workers in order to ensure consistent program administration and fiscal integrity, as well as reliable fiscal and performance reporting. [WIOA section 103(b)(3)].

b. Exclusion to the co-enrollment requirement would be those TAW's not registered with Selective Services and those wishing not to take advantage of WIOA Dislocated Workers Program. If the TAW's wish is not to participate in the WIOA Dislocated Workers Program then the TAW will sign a statement of his or her wish with full understanding that their wish will not eliminate any benefits under the TAA program.

7. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S FORMAL STRATEGY TO ENSURE THAT WIOA AND TAA CO-ENROLLED PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE NECESSARY FUNDED BENEFITS AND SERVICES. TRADE ACT SEC. 239(F), SEC. 235, 20 CFR 618.816(C)

The goal of TAA is to return the Trade Affected Worker (TAW) to suitable employment as quickly as possible in the shortest time. The definition of "suitable employment" is work substantially equal to or at a higher skill level than the worker's past adversely affected employment, and wages for such worker are not less than 80 percent of worker's previous average weekly wage.

The services provided under the TAA program are:

1. Employment and Case Management
2. Training if there is no suitable employment
3. Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA)
4. Job Search Allowances
5. Relocation Allowances
6. Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC)
7. Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA)
8. Referrals to partner agencies as appropriate

Either before or after the informational sessions, a Trade Case Manager will schedule a TAW immediately for an initial assessment. The Trade Case Manager initial assessment includes but is not limited to:

1. TAW registration review in the Virginia Workforce Connection (VaWC)

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2. Creation of the TAA application and enrollment in the Trade Program
3. Employment History Review/documentation of current skill sets matched against current Labor Market Information/Resume Prep
4. Review of the transferability of the current skill sets to the current labor market
5. Review of educational background/levels
6. Development of the Individual Employment Plan (IEP)
7. Trade Case Managers start initial job search efforts with the TAW along with a referral to the Wagner-Peyser (WP) staff. The WP staff will provide TAA case management to help the customer prepare for and obtain suitable reemployment as quickly as possible with the assistance of other appropriate programs, as necessary.
8. If the TAW has significant barriers to employment, TAA Case Managers will make referrals to the Department of Education, Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, and other partner agencies for appropriate services to ensure a positive outcome.
9. The initial assessment with the TAW includes detailed information concerning the benefits of enrollment with the WIOA Dislocated Worker Program. The TAW is notified of the requirement of co-enrollment and notified of the benefits offered under WIOA Dislocated Worker Program, a referral form is completed and issued to the WIOA Title I partner for the referral to WIOA Dislocated Workers Program LWDB Executive Directors. The Executive Directors take the lead to ensure all WIOA operator/s within their service review for enrollment into the Dislocated Worker Program.

After the referral from TAA Case Managers to the WIOA Dislocated Worker Program has occurred:

1. If it is determined, during the TAA Case Managers initial assessment that the TAW must upgrade their skills meet their defined goals, then the TAW will be connected with the WIOA DW program. The request will require a more Comprehensive Assessment for documenting the rationale for TAA to provide training services to the TAW.
2. The Comprehensive Assessment will consist of a Career-Scope/TABE and other approved comprehensive assessment tools.
3. The WIOA Case Manager will incorporate the TAA Case Managers Initial Assessment findings along with the six criteria under the TAA legislations conditions for approval 617.22 in order to issue a recommendation to TAA for consideration of training.
4. The TAA caseworker reviews the WIOA recommendation, the comprehensive assessments and documentation in-person or by video meeting with the TAW to ensure the recommendation that TAA and WIOA have agreed upon will meet the TAW's reemployment goals.
5. WIOA DW Program, Trade Program and TAW must agree upon the recommendation if not then all must revisit findings before proceeding.
6. The TAA Case Manager will generate the necessary training documents, securing the needed contracts with the training provider with all cost of the training (tuition, books, supplies, mileage, testing fees) covered by the TAA Program.
7. The WIOA partner covers Supportive Services (i.e. childcare, mileage if not covered by Trade, vehicle repairs) as needed for the TAW to successfully complete training. (All supportive services must be defined in the local WIOA Dislocated Worker program as to what is and is not covered while in approved training).

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8. Trade Case Managers will oversee the training under TAA with weekly, bi-weekly updates or at a minimum of 30-day updates to the WIOA Case Management to ensure compliance for both programs. Established update periods (weekly, bi-weekly or every 30 days) between the two case managers will be discussed/implemented/adhered to for a seamless delivery of services and program compliance .
9. All training-related documents will be uploaded upon receipt into the document management system for access by the WIOA partner to ensure compliance for both programs.

8. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PROCESS FOR FAMILIARIZING ONE-STOP STAFF WITH THE TAA PROGRAM. 20 CFR 618.804(J), 20 CFR 618.305

VBWD Policy 19-01 requires that all individuals assessed as eligible for TAA programs be co-enrolled to receive WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker services. Virginia Works Title I Administration staff provide training to one-stop staff on the implementation of this co-enrollment policy and the TAA program.

To ensure that the local flow of information is complete and seamless, one-stop center staff are kept fully informed of the local layoff and Rapid Response activities taking place in their respective regions, including when Trade Petitions are filed. This communication happens by sharing Rapid Response activities scheduled in a local workforce development area, and sharing when Trade Petition filings, certifications, and denials are made available to front line staff as soon as possible. Front line staff are signed up for automatic notifications sent through the WARN Log. The State Rapid Response Coordinator and State Trade Act Coordinator collaborate to ensure that the most up-to-date information is provided to local one-stop and LWDB leadership.

Reference: VDWD Policy Number 19-01, Mandatory Trade Co-enrollment: www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VBWD-19-01-Mandatory-WIOA-Trade-Co-Enrollment-VBWD-Policy_.pdf

ADULT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	81.0%	81.0%	81.0%	81.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$8,250	\$8,900	\$8,250	\$9,000
Credential Attainment Rate	75.0%	75.0%	75.0%	75.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	73.00%	79.0%	73.00%	83.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹

DISLOCATED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

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Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	86.0%	86.0%	86.0%	86.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$10,000	\$10,450	\$10,000	\$10,900
Credential Attainment Rate	74.00%	74.0%	74.00%	74.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	71.00%	74.0%	71.00%	78.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹

C. YOUTH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.

1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS OR CONTRACTS FOR YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIBE HOW THE LOCAL BOARDS WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ABILITY OF THE PROVIDERS TO MEET PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES BASED ON PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B)(2)(A)(II) OF WIOA.¹¹ FURTHER, INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE STATE ASSISTS LOCAL AREAS IN DETERMINING WHETHER TO CONTRACT FOR SERVICES OR TO PROVIDE SOME OR ALL OF THE PROGRAM ELEMENTS DIRECTLY.

Virginia requires that LWDBs adhere to federal, state, and local procurement guidelines in awarding grants or contracts for youth workforce investment activities. Upon request, Virginia provides technical assistance, such as reviewing needs determination and cost/benefit analyses, to the LWDBs to assist local areas in determining whether to contract for services. Virginia also provides supporting technical assistance to the LWDBs regarding the criteria to be used in their RFPs for Youth services.

The criteria used to assess the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures is based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program as described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA. In addition to continuous improvement in service delivery, the quality of services provided, improvements in case management, and resource allocation, Local Areas should also take into consideration:

1. If the training program is related to an in-demand occupation, or career pathways identified in the state and local plans; and
2. If the training program results in a recognized credential.

Virginia requires that the LWDBs must be prepared to, and have the capacity to, provide all 14 Youth program elements, whether through direct service provision or indirectly through the procurement process. When the

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LWDB does not directly provide any one of the 14 program elements, then the LWDB must procure that capability to be able to provide that element(s) to its Youth program participants.

The 14 Youth program elements include:

- (1)** Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential;
- (2)** Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;
- (3)** Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience, which may include the following types of work experiences:
 - (i)** Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;
 - (ii)** Pre-apprenticeship programs;
 - (iii)** Internships and job shadowing; and
 - (iv)** On-the-job training opportunities;
- (4)** Occupational skill training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the Local WDB determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in WIOA sec. 123;
- (5)** Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
- (6)** Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors;
- (7)** Supportive services, including the services listed in § 681.570;
- (8)** Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months, that may occur both during and after program participation;
- (9)** Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as provided in § 681.580;
- (10)** Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth;
- (11)** Financial literacy education;
- (12)** Entrepreneurial skills training;
- (13)** Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
- (14)** Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

WIOA Section 681.400 states that while the grant recipient may directly provide youth services, any services awarded through grants or contracts must be awarded through a competitive process. The grant

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recipient/fiscal agent has the option to provide directly some or all of the youth workforce investment activities.

However, as provided in WIOA sec. 123, if a LWDB chooses to award grants or contracts to youth service providers to carry out some or all of the youth workforce investment activities, the LWDB must award such grants or contracts on a competitive basis, subject to the exception explained below at paragraph (b)(4) of this section:

(1) The LWDB must identify youth service providers based on criteria established in the State Plan (including such quality criteria established by the Governor for a training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential) and take into consideration the ability of the provider to meet performance accountability measures based on the primary indicators of performance for youth programs.

(2) The LWDB must procure the youth service providers in accordance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR parts 200 and 2900, in addition to applicable State and local procurement laws.

(3) If the LWDB establishes a standing youth committee under 20 CFR 681.100 it may assign the committee the function of selecting grants or contracts. If LWDBs directly provide youth services and a single entity performs multiple roles (such as fiscal agent, service provider, or one-stop operator) a written agreement between that LWDB and Chief Local Elected Official is required. The agreement must clarify:

- How they will comply with WIOA and corresponding regulations, relevant OMB circulars, and the State's conflict of interest policy.
- Expectations on distinct roles and clear methods of tracking execution and accountability for the distinct roles (TEGL 21-16).

The following criteria shall be incorporated into the evaluation of youth service programs during procurement:

1. The program will have a record of demonstrated effectiveness.
2. The program will not discriminate in any way and will be in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
3. The provider must have the capacity to identify issues that are hindering youth from succeeding in the program and recommend the appropriate support services.
4. The provider must be able to detail how linkages between community, academic, occupational learning, and work experience will be used to enhance youth development and employability. They should also demonstrate the involvement of the business/employer community.
5. The program will maintain a close working relationship with the local One-Stop Career Center.
6. Programs with certifications or licenses as a goal will make arrangements for participants to test for and obtain the certification or license.
7. Any program offering summer employment opportunities must be linked to academic and occupational learning as a complement to overall year-round program goals. Summer employment opportunities operated as a stand-alone Summer Youth Program are specifically prohibited.
8. The provider must establish specific timeframes for evaluation of participant performance, attendance and progress, including level of academic performance, vocational abilities/skills, aptitudes, and interests.
9. The provider must identify process and strategies to be used to ensure that participants receive planned services and reach planned goals and what corrective actions will be available for participants who are not

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meeting the requirement of each activity or goals. The provider must detail the internal systems that will be used to report and monitor programmatic and fiscal activities.

10. The provider must permit federal, state, and local area staff and designated agents to conduct regular monitoring activities, including communication with customers and contractor staff at instructional sites

State monitoring and program reviews, along with evaluations will be used to assess the Commonwealth's criteria compliance and approach to local RFP development.

2. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE ASSISTS LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS IN ACHIEVING RESULTS FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL AND IN-SCHOOL YOUTH. DESCRIBE PROMISING PRACTICES OR PARTNERSHIP MODELS THAT LOCAL AREAS ARE IMPLEMENTING AND THE STATE'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING AND SCALING THOSE MODELS WITHIN THE STATE FOR BOTH IN-SCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH.

Virginia has developed a robust youth services portfolio, aligned with the State Vision and Goals section of this Plan. The Commonwealth integrates youth services throughout its WIOA programming. For instance, The Virginia Board of Workforce Development (VBWD), established the Customer Opportunity and Success Committee to take a unified, customer-centered approach. The committee focuses on enhancing opportunity and success for both primary customer groups—individual job seekers and employers. The committee works to align services across the workforce system, bridging education, training, and employment to strengthen Virginia's talent pipeline and help address youth and young adult workforce development issues. One of the priorities of this group is to provide strategic direction to align core programs and leverage resources among core partners (such as DARS, VDOE, VDSS, and VDJJ) for Out of School Youth (OSY). In addition, the VBWD Customer Opportunity and Success Committee is developing strategies that can be implemented at the state and local level focusing on identifying OSY, enrolling OSY in program services and improving overall outcomes for OSY. For example, Virginia will identify outreach and engagement strategies for opportunity youth, also known as disconnected youth and marginalized young adults, that will result in recommendations around co-enrollment, partnerships, career pathways/sector strategies, program and job retention, and performance metrics and measures.

Further, Virginia recommended that the LWDBs develop and adopt strategies to effectively serve their youth population, such as those described in Sections II and III of this Plan. These strategies should include recruitment, outreach, and youth engagement. LWDBs are encouraged to develop youth-specific career centers that provide programming and services throughout the community, with a primary goal of connecting the disconnected the OSY population to WIOA Title I Youth program opportunities. The State has also recommended that LWDBs may launch youth standing committees, whose activities may include but are not limited to the following:

1. Provide information and assist with planning, operational oversight, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth
2. Recommend policy direction to the local board for the design, development, and implementation of programs that benefit all youth
3. Recommend the design of a comprehensive community workforce development system
4. Recommend ways to leverage resources and coordinate services among schools, public programs, and community-based organizations serving youth
5. Recommend ways to coordinate youth services and recommend eligible youth service providers
6. Provide ongoing leadership and support for continuous quality improvement for local youth programs

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The electronic document imaging and storage system, a feature in Virginia's system of record (VaWC), will allow staff or local areas to upload supporting documentation, helping local areas to transition to paperless record keeping. This new feature also allows the LWDBs to conduct and complete youth eligibility remotely, providing increased access to the OSY population that traditionally would not come into a one-stop center.

Youth Career Pathways

To strengthen Virginia's workforce development system and expand youth and young adult access to high-quality training and employment programs, Virginia has developed two statewide youth and young adult project grants, in addition to its core programming described in Sections II and III of this plan.

The project grants intend to educate parents, students and guidance counselors on the benefits of skilled trades and to increase youth exposure to opportunities of workforce development career pathways programs, such as registered apprenticeships and in-demand occupations. These statewide projects should enable youth (in-school and/out-of-school youth, 14 to 24 years of age) with barriers to employment to gain exposure to in-demand trades and employment opportunities that are available in their local communities.

Virginia's Apprenticeship Pathways Program for Career and Technical Education – This program will promote partnerships between Career and Technical Education (CTE) centers and employers to create Registered Apprenticeship opportunities for students in high-demand fields. CTE centers that establish new partnerships can be reimbursed for equipment, tools, and materials needed to improve hands-on learning, with priority given to centers in rural and underfunded areas.

Virginia's Apprenticeship Pathways Program for Employers – This initiative is to develop or expand pre-apprenticeship and Youth Registered Apprenticeship programs. By offering structured, paid training aligned with industry standards, employers can build talent pipelines while helping Virginians gain valuable skills and credentials.

The traditional strategies and service models used for the adult and dislocated worker population are not always the solutions that meet the needs of the OSY population. Therefore, local youth service providers utilize different assessment tools to improve the youth service decision process, grounded in human-centered design. Service providers ensure the system is responsive to individuals by ensuring that during the assessment process, case managers will develop an individual services plan (ISS) for the customer's needs, based on the assessment and eligibility processes, as well as how the individual service plan supports the attainment of the youth specific performance outcomes. Making the services and the delivery of those services relevant to the individual youth participant will enhance the overall success of the programs in attaining the WIOA performance outcomes, especially for OSY.

To enhance OSY engagement, Virginia's workforce system works closely with state and local marginalized youth organizations that serve runaways and homeless youth; pregnant and parenting youth; subjects of the adult or juvenile justice system, including the Virginia Department of Corrections, juvenile justice, and juvenile probation; foster care partners; and organizations that provide services to youth with disabilities. These actions will increase referrals to and from the YouthBuild, JobCorps program, local CTE programs, and Adult Education programs. Through these collaborative partnerships, the Commonwealth can focus on serving youth most in need; services provided will improve opportunities for these disconnected youth and young adults.

Many of Virginia's LWDBs also implemented the Youth Outreach & Transportation to Learn Program, a promising model that aims to achieve equitable results for both OSY and ISY. The target audiences for this program are opportunity youth and high school students with barriers to employment. The goal of this program is to increase the number and quality of outreach programs used by LWDBs and other organizations to connect students to skilled trade areas available in Virginia.

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Statewide, all youth outreach and marketing projects achieved satisfactory progress, strengthening youth-facing career awareness through enhanced social media engagement and community broadcast outreach. The Transportation to Learn grant was successfully implemented across regions, expanding work-based learning exposure in skilled trades, manufacturing, IT, and offshore wind careers. Participation goals were met or exceeded statewide— including instances where enrollment more than doubled projections— while partnerships between schools and employers were deepened, particularly in rural communities. Summer STEM and career exploration initiatives were fully implemented, serving high school students through employer site visits and career expos.

Virginia Works provides state-level support for service providers as they work to integrate the fourteen WIOA Title I Youth program elements. The commonwealth continues to provide a structure for youth programs to support customers in the attainment of their individual goals as well as WIOA program outcomes. A structured and technical assistance process, where programs, performance, and reporting in the information system will be supported on an ongoing basis by the State. There will be a training process to engage providers and State staff to reinforce program goals and outcomes, as well as to encourage State and local collaboration.

The State will continue to provide yearly Youth program monitoring as well as develop guidance and policy that enhances youth service delivery that does not restrict local innovation, while still maintaining program integrity.

How the state assists local boards

- **Policy and guidance**
 - Issues statewide youth policy, eligibility guidance, and program design expectations (e.g., OSY expenditure requirements, co-enrollment with Adult/Dislocated Worker, and use of work-based learning and supportive services).
 - Provides template forms, sample ISS/IEP language, and case-management standards so local boards can focus on implementation rather than basic design.
- **Targeted youth investments and grants**
 - Uses discretionary funds (e.g., Transportation To Learn, Youth Outreach and Marketing, STEM/ET-Ready initiatives) to help regions pilot and expand youth-focused strategies such as employer field trips, industry camps, virtual reality career exploration, and media-based outreach.
 - Structures these funds with clear outcomes (participants served, business engagement, media products, etc.) and requires local match where appropriate to build ownership and sustainability.
- **Capacity building and technical assistance**
 - Provides statewide training for youth case managers on eligibility, objective assessment, ISS/IEP development, case notes, and performance reporting.
 - Hosts communities of practice where local staff can share curricula, video content, VR tools, and outreach materials instead of recreating them from scratch.
 - Offers one-on-one technical assistance when local boards launch new youth models or need help addressing performance or compliance issues.
- **Data, performance, and continuous improvement**

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- Monitors youth performance (credential attainment, measurable skill gains, employment/education in Q2/Q4) and shares dashboards and comparative data with local boards.
- Uses grant closeout reports and site visits to capture what worked (e.g., high-yield outreach channels, effective scheduling and transportation strategies, strong business partners) and feeds these lessons back into statewide guidance and future funding opportunities.

3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE ASSISTS LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS IN IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIVE MODELS FOR DELIVERING YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING EFFECTIVE WAYS LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS CAN MAKE AVAILABLE THE 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2); AND EXPLAIN HOW LOCAL AREAS CAN ENSURE WORK EXPERIENCE, INCLUDING QUALITY PRE-APPRENTICESHIP AND REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP, IS PRIORITIZED AS A KEY ELEMENT WITHIN A BROADER CAREER PATHWAYS STRATEGY.

The following 14 program elements must be provided by each Local area or made available through local area community partner organizations:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential
2. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include: (i) summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; (ii) pre-apprenticeship programs; (iii) internships and job shadowing and (iv) on-the-job training opportunities
4. Occupational skills training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the local board determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in section 123
5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster
6. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate
7. Supportive services
8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months
9. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate
11. Financial literacy education
12. Entrepreneurial skills training

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13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services
14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training

The availability and delivery of the above Youth Program elements remain an integral part of the LWDA Local Plan, the Youth RFP process, and is addressed in the Commonwealth's response to the establishment of RFP criteria stated in c.1 of this section. The LWDA Local Plans state how these programs will be made available and include an implementation plan. The foundation of the provision of services for youth should be a strong assessment process and referral system based on leveraged partnerships, both within and outside of the Virginia workforce system. The assessment and service plan reflect the needs of the individual customer and must be kept current to adjust to the changing needs of the individual customer. State and local monitoring review the provision of the services to youth and how these services are delivered within a local area.

Virginia has provided regional training to local boards regarding youth eligibility, types of work experience, the alignment of work experiences with individual service strategy goals, work experience regulations, and compliance. Virginia will continue to provide training in work experience and other WBL, particularly in the area of pre-apprenticeships. Virginia Works currently partners with 34 school divisions to establish Youth RAs that integrate CTE curriculum with meaningful WBL opportunities. Virginia Works continues to ensure that WIOA Title I team works strategically with the RA team to support Youth RAs and pre-apprenticeship programs across the state. More information on Youth RA can be found in Sections II and III of this Plan.

Virginia's state workforce system collaborates with LWDBs to facilitate peer-to-peer webinars showcasing their local area youth program design and shared individual best practices, including pre-apprenticeship under the work experience program element. The webinars elucidate 20 CFR § 681.480 - *What is a pre-apprenticeship program and pre-apprenticeship training designed to prepare youth to enter and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program.*

Additionally, Virginia will continue to provide yearly regional training and program monitoring to ensure the LWDA's successfully operationalize the components of a registered apprenticeship program that includes the following elements:

1. Training and curriculum that aligns with the skill needs of employers in the economy of the State or region involved
 2. Access to educational and career counseling and other supportive services, directly or indirectly
 3. Hands-on, meaningful learning activities that are connected to education and training activities, such as exploring career options, and understanding how the skills acquired through coursework can be applied toward a future career
 4. Opportunities to attain at least one industry-recognized credential
 5. A partnership with one or more registered apprenticeship programs that assists in placing individuals who complete the pre-apprenticeship program in a registered apprenticeship program
4. PROVIDE THE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE STATE POLICY FOR "REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO ENTER OR COMPLETE AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT" CRITERION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(III)(VIII) AND FOR "REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO COMPLETE AN EDUCATION PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT" CRITERION FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(IV)(VII). IF THE STATE DOES NOT HAVE A POLICY, DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT LOCAL AREAS WILL HAVE A POLICY FOR THESE CRITERIA.

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State policy was revised to provide language for youth requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment (VWL 16-11, Youth in Need of Additional Assistance Requirements and In-School Youth 5% Limitation Barrier). VWL 16-11 requires each LWDA to define the eligibility criterion “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment” in the LWDA’s local plan and in local policies. Flexibility for LWDA is required to ensure that program delivery is adapted to local needs addressing an individual who is:

1. Enrolled in an eligible education program, but also requires additional assistance beyond that offered by the service provider to complete the activity or program
2. An eligible youth who is near the point of being ready for a job or employment, but requires additional assistance to acquire or retain a job

The additional requirements will be specified by the program operator to avoid failure in the program, a prospective employer to avoid failure in obtaining a specific job, or present employer to prevent an employed youth from losing employment. These additional requirements would need to be documented in the Youth Service Plan.

State guidance for “requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out-of-school youth is primarily located in the following VWLs:

1. VWL 15-02, Change 2, Attachment C, WIOA Youth eligibility: virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-15-02-Attachment-C-WIOA-Youth-Eligibility-Change-2.pdf
2. VWL 16-11 Youth in Need of Additional Assistance Requirements and In-School Youth 5 Percent Limitation Barrier: www.virginiacareerworks.com/wp-content/uploads/VWL-16-11-Youth-in-Need-of-Additional-Assistance-5-Limitation-Barrier.pdf

YOUTH PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	78.0%	79.0%	78.0%	79.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	77.0%	77.0%	77.0%	77.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$5,000	\$5,400	\$5,000	\$5,600
Credential Attainment Rate	69.0%	69.0%	69.0%	69.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	70.0%	73.5%	70.0%	77.0%

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Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR WAGNER-PEYSER PROGRAM (EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)

A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE'S STAFFING MODEL FOR THE PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES USING STATE MERIT STAFF.

Virginia Works will utilize merit staff to provide employment services authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act. This will remain the business practice for the agency regarding all programs and services that are currently using merit staff, as previously required by DOL regulations.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF TO ENSURE STAFF IS ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS

With the guidance of the agency leadership, the Virginia Board for Workforce Development (VBWD), and in cooperation with the core programs and partners identified in this combined state plan, Virginia Works has established a created the **Career Navigator Registered Apprenticeship Program** to build a stronger, more consistent, and more professional workforce pipeline for staff who guide job seekers—especially in high-demand fields like IT. The program responds to several statewide needs and strategic priorities. Career Navigators serve as the primary connection between individuals seeking employment, training providers, and employers. As the role has expanded to include labor market analysis, digital navigation, case management, and cross-agency coordination, the Commonwealth recognized the need for a structured, competency-based training model that supports consistent, high-quality service delivery across all regions.

The RA model provides an earn-while-you-learn pathway that equips new and incumbent Navigators with the knowledge, skills, and practical experience required to deliver customer-centered, data-driven workforce services. By embedding apprenticeship within the workforce system itself, Virginia is modeling the same talent development strategies it promotes to employers statewide.

The creation of the Career Navigator Apprenticeship was driven by several systemwide challenges and opportunities:

- **Growing complexity of workforce services** — Navigators must understand career pathways, industry credentials, supportive services, digital tools, and WIOA policy requirements. Traditional onboarding approaches were insufficient to prepare staff for this breadth of responsibility.
- **Need for consistent statewide service delivery** — Job seekers and employers should receive the same high-quality support regardless of region or partner agency. Apprenticeship establishes a unified competency standard.
- **Workforce system recruitment and retention challenges** — Agencies face turnover and difficulty attracting qualified candidates. Apprenticeship provides a clear, supported career pathway that strengthens the talent pipeline.

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- **Increasing demand for customer-centered, barrier-removal services** — Navigators play a critical role in serving individuals with barriers to employment. Structured training ensures they are equipped to provide equitable, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive support.
- **Alignment with Virginia's apprenticeship expansion strategy** — The Commonwealth has prioritized Registered Apprenticeship as a proven workforce solution. Developing an apprenticeship for Navigators reinforces this commitment and demonstrates system leadership.

The Career Navigator Apprenticeship directly advances the goals and strategies outlined in Virginia's Combined State Plan:

- **Strengthening system capacity and frontline staff development** — WIOA emphasizes professional development for staff delivering career and training services. Apprenticeship provides a standardized, competency-based training model aligned with statewide expectations.
- **Supporting sector strategies and career pathways** — Navigators trained through apprenticeship are better prepared to guide job seekers into high-demand occupations and connect them with appropriate training and supportive services.
- **Improving access and customer experience** — Standardized training ensures that priority populations—including individuals with disabilities, returning citizens, English language learners, and low-income job seekers—receive consistent, high-quality guidance.
- **Enhancing integrated service delivery** — Apprenticeship reinforces cross-agency alignment by ensuring Navigators across WIOA Titles I–IV, partner programs, and regional workforce boards share a common foundation of knowledge and practice.
- **Advancing data-driven decision-making** — The program strengthens staff capacity to use labor market information, performance data, and case management systems to support job seekers and employers.

The RA model ensures Navigators develop the full range of competencies required for effective service delivery. Core components include:

- Understanding career pathways, industry credentials, and training options
- Using labor market information to guide job seekers and inform employer engagement
- Applying case management principles, including assessment, goal setting, and barrier removal
- Navigating workforce systems such as the Virginia Workforce Connection
- Supporting digital literacy and access to technology
- Coordinating supportive services and referrals across partner agencies
- Engaging employers and understanding their talent needs
- Ensuring compliance with WIOA policies, documentation standards, and performance expectations

This competency framework ensures that Navigators are prepared to support both job seekers and employers in a rapidly evolving labor market.

The Career Navigator Apprenticeship strengthens the Commonwealth's workforce system by:

- **Improving the quality and consistency of customer service** across all regions and partner agencies
- **Enhancing employer engagement** through better understanding of workforce needs and regional labor markets
- **Increasing system capacity** to support high-demand occupations and priority populations
- **Supporting modernization efforts** across Virginia Works and partner programs
- **Building a sustainable pipeline of skilled workforce professionals** who can adapt to changing labor market conditions

These improvements contribute directly to WIOA performance outcomes, regional economic development goals, and the Commonwealth's long-term workforce strategy- particularly Moonshot #2 (Workforce Availability & Agility) and #4 (Work-Based Learning).

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Virginia's investment in the Career Navigator Registered Apprenticeship Program is designed to produce long-term, system-wide benefits:

- A **professionalized workforce development field** with clear career pathways
- A **more stable and skilled frontline workforce** capable of delivering high-quality services
- Stronger alignment between **workforce, education, and economic development**
- Improved outcomes for job seekers, including those with barriers to employment
- Enhanced support for employers in high-growth and emerging industries
- A more **integrated, data-driven, and customer-centered** workforce system

By embedding apprenticeship into the fabric of the workforce system, Virginia is building a durable foundation for future innovation, cross-agency collaboration, and economic competitiveness.

3. DESCRIBE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING PROVIDED FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND WIOA STAFF ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES AND REFERRAL TO UI STAFF FOR ADJUDICATION

The majority of UI claims in Virginia are received either by telephone or internet. These claims are processed by VEC employees who receive regular training. The UI Division is committed to working with one-stop and Call Center staff to highlight prominent UI eligibility and qualification issues, and to keep staff apprised of the most efficient mechanisms in which to file for benefits.

The UI Quality Control team is responsible for providing training to workforce services staff. This training includes how to provide basic assistance, as well as Meaningful UI tasks, as described in Part B of this section. The UI trainers also provide "just-in-time" training for unique situations in which workforce staff will need to provide more advanced UI services to customers. The trainings are conducted via webinar, as well as 2-3 classroom sessions, when circumstances allow. Additionally, a series of recorded training events on the new UI system (VUIS) are available to all staff, as necessary.

B. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION AND MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN FILING A CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION THROUGH ONE-STOP CENTERS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA AS A CAREER SERVICE

Virginia Works is responsible for providing a range of services under the provision of meaningful UI. Staff offer **guidance and instruction** to help individuals file for unemployment benefits. They also answer clarifying questions online (the preferred method) or by phone. UI Staff emphasize the use of **ID.me** for Customer Self Service (CSS) and are permitted only to guide, clarify, and support understanding—**not** to file initial, add-on, or reopened claims on behalf of clients. Staff also assist individuals in understanding how to file an **Appeal** through CSS or the online appeal form, again limiting their role to explanation and clarification throughout the process.

In addition, staff provide guidance on Unemployment Insurance Benefits Rights and Responsibilities (BRR), ensuring clients understand eligibility and payment requirements. They maintain strong knowledge of BRR content, clarify specific questions, and explain all requirements needed to maintain UI eligibility. Staff direct clients to the VEC website—including video libraries and FAQs—for further detail, and they review expectations for conducting an appropriate job search and registering in the Virginia Workforce Connection, Virginia's skills match website.

Virginia Works also supports employers who visit the Resource Room by offering guidance on registering for Employer Self Service (ESS) or the State Information Data Exchange System and referring them to the VEC

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website or their Tax Representative when needed. Staff may print PIN letters, VUIS notices, and wage documents after verifying identity with government-issued photo ID, and they may reset Customer Self Service accounts following the same verification process. They assist clients with uploading documents into the CSS portal or faxing materials to VEC Central Records or VEC Appeals. Throughout all interactions, staff are required to protect confidential UI language and ensure that only authorized merit staff have access to it.

Individuals may file claims via telephone by calling the customer contact center or online through the UI Customer Service Portal. Information collected by VUIS is used to generate WP registrations so that claimants do not need to “re-key” the same information multiple times.

Assistance is available through dedicated phone lines connecting directly with the customer contact center, an online chat feature and/or center staff assisting claimants using computers in each center’s resource room.

When large groups of workers are impacted, the Rapid Response team, the Trade team and/or Virginia Works staff provide “how to file your claim” information and demonstration sessions. Virginia Works staff are available to work with claimants with specific assistance needs and may use the language line to assist non-English speaking claimants or TTY equipment to assist claimants that are deaf.

The Commonwealth uses multiple strategies to connect UI claimants and unemployed individuals to the workforce system for provision of reemployment services, including Rapid Response activities, the RESEA program, the Trade program, and the Jobs for Veterans State Grant.

Administered by the Rapid Response activities provide the earliest intervention for workers and businesses experiencing mass layoffs. Virginia Works is responsible for layoff aversion, and the Virginia Works provides re-employment services to workers who are laid off.

C. DESCRIBE THE STATE’S STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UI CLAIMANTS AND OTHER UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS

The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program identifies claimants exiting the military (UCX claimants) and claimants determined by the WPRS model as “most likely to exhaust.” This early intervention strategy identifies claimants within the first five weeks of their claim and schedules them for an initial RESEA session by the seventh week of their claim.

RESEA participants must report to the workforce center in person where they receive a review of their UI rights and responsibilities, an orientation to the workforce system and services available and labor market information relevant to their career choices, assistance completing their job service registration and locating suitable jobs through the Virginia Workforce Connection job matching (labor exchange) system, a UI Eligibility Assessment and review of the work search. Additional reemployment services, such as resume development and job search skills development (interviewing, networking, etc.) will be available based on each claimant's needs, along with referrals to training and supportive services as detailed in each claimant's reemployment plan.

The TAA program is a federal program established under the Trade Act of 1974. The TAA Program provides aid to workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced as a result of increased imports.

The JVSG provides funds to the Commonwealth to serve eligible veterans, as defined in 38 U.S.C. 4101(4) and 4211(4), and other covered persons as defined in 38 U.S.C. 4101(5),4 and to perform outreach to employers. JVSG funds pay for DVOP and LVER staff positions.

Reemployment services are available to all UI claimants through all of Virginia’s comprehensive or affiliate one-stop centers. Guidance and instruction about reemployment services are printed on UI claimants’ confirmation letters and provided through the VEC Call Centers. Instructions about how to apply for UI benefits are also available through the VEC’s website, with links to online application for UI benefits, as well as instructions for

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how to get registered as a job seeker in the Virginia Workforce Connection. Under Virginia UI law, claimants must register for reemployment/job service and register in the Virginia Workforce Connection within 5 days of filing a UI claim. Failure to do so puts benefit receipt in jeopardy. All UI claimants are required to conduct and report weekly work searches to continue receiving benefits. All unemployed individuals are eligible to receive all Wagner-Peyser services and most other services offered by our partners, including job matching, training and education opportunities, on the job training, and registered apprenticeship programs.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE W-P FUNDS TO SUPPORT UI CLAIMANTS, AND THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN W-P AND UI, AS APPROPRIATE INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

When individuals file a UI claim, an electronic interface queries the Virginia Workforce Connection system and either updates the existing Wagner-Peyser registration (active accounts) or creates a new Wagner-Peyser basic registration (inactive and new accounts). Claimants filing by phone are verbally advised to visit the Virginia Workforce Connection to complete and/or update their registration.

Additionally, Wagner-Peyser staff are able to run reports on the Virginia Workforce Connection that show claimants that filed in their region. WP staff call these individuals or send correspondence to ensure that they have completed their VWC registration. If not, the claimant is advised that their UI benefit will be at risk if they are not in compliance within a specific deadline. If at any time, workforce services staff working with claimants discover that the individual is not actively seeking work, the claim is referred to adjudication.

Internet Filers

For claimants that file a regular UI claim via the Internet using the Customer Self-Service System, a basic Wagner-Peyser registration is created during the UI claims process. Staff are then able to run a report inside the Virginia Workforce Connection that displays the UI claimants in their region so that they may conduct outreach. UI claimants may access their Virginia Workforce Connection Dashboard page, where they are able to perform self-service actions such as job search registration, creating a resume, completing skills inventories, posting a resume, and searching for jobs.

Telephone Filers

Claimants completing their UI claim by telephone are verbally directed to go to the Virginia Workforce Connection website (www.vawc.virginia.gov) to complete their job service registration at the conclusion of the claims filing process.

Claimants selected for RESEA (via the WPRS Model) receive assistance updating or completing their job service registration as a component of the Initial RESEA session. Some claimants will make the updates prior to the Initial RESEA session, as requested in the RESEA call-in letter. Other claimants wait for the Initial RESEA session to receive individualized assistance. If the job service registration cannot be completed by the conclusion of the Initial RESEA session, the claimant will be given a specific deadline for completion, after which, the claimant may be referred to Adjudication for failure to meet the registration requirements.

Administration of the work test and eligibility assessments are required components of each initial RESEA session and follow-up session. When a RESEA participant cannot provide work search records, the participant has 48 business hours to provide the records. If the RESEA participant does not provide the records, staff complete a data entry sequence that creates a work task for the Adjudication Team. There is a specific data entry sequence for each of the potential issues identified through eligibility assessments.

The "My Reemployment Strategy" page in Virginia Workforce Connection identifies the number of job openings matching the claimant's desired occupation and recommends the number of applications to be completed based on the number of openings available.

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In addition to the self-service job finding and placement services claimants access through their “My Reemployment Strategy” pages, workforce center business services staff match claimants to open jobs, conduct in-center hiring events and job fairs and refer claimants when working to meet specific employer’s recruitment needs.

Claimants are required to file weekly claims for continued benefits. This may be conducted online or over the phone. Regardless of method utilized, the claimant must answer the following questions:

1. Were you able to and available for work during the week?
2. Were you actively seeking work during the week?
3. Provide the number of contacts you made for work.
4. If you made contacts for work, provide the names of the employers that were contacted.
5. Did you refuse any work or any offers of work during the week?
6. Did you fail to obtain work due to a positive drug test?
7. Did you enter or discontinue school or training?
8. Did you begin receiving or change the amount of any type of pension (including disability pensions) during the week?
9. Did you receive holiday, vacation, or Workman’s Compensation during the week?
10. Did you begin receiving or change the amount of any severance pay during the week?
11. Did you do any work, including self-employment, during the week? If the answer to this question is yes, the claimant is asked to enter the amount they earned before any deductions were made.
12. During the week, did you return to full-time employment? If the answer to this question is yes, then the claimant will be asked to enter the date they started working.

As previously stated, Virginia will use WP funds to assist claimants in finding suitable employment through the Virginia Workforce Connection (the State’s labor exchange database), as well as publicly advertised job fairs and general outreach to employers throughout the Commonwealth. Registration in this labor exchange of UI claimants is required by law with an additional report of work search provided weekly. Within the one-stop center, the WP staff will also make referrals to partner programs to provide training and education programs and other necessary resources to give UI claimants and other individuals registered in the Virginia Workforce Connection the skills necessary to obtain employment.

WP staff will assist each UI claimant to ensure that their background, skills, and interest information in the Virginia Workforce Connection are filled in completely. Each one-stop location has staff trained to assist individuals with digital literacy barriers sign up for and leverage the Virginia Workforce Connection resources. WP staff will determine the level of skills for each UI claimant (based on the information provided on their VWC record) to determine the types of jobs for which the claimant is best suited. Depending on their marketability to open jobs in the Virginia Workforce Connection, WP staff will match them accordingly and/or offer various job fair opportunities to those individuals. Workforce staff sit down with individuals who are entering the Virginia Workforce Connection for the first time to assess their employment and training history, employment goals, and whether they qualify for additional services through Title I partners, including enrollment in education and training programs. If there are no jobs available to match the skills of a UI claimant, he or she will be referred to appropriate partner agencies within the one-stop center, including, but not limited to WIOA Title I (Adult and Dislocated Worker), JVS, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Adult Education partners. Based on an initial

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enrollment screening, if the individual may qualify for services with other one-stop partners, that individual is referred to speak to applicable staff within the one-stop.

THE INDIVIDUAL WITH ENROLLMENT, TRAINING, AND EDUCATION RESOURCES THAT ARE AVAILABLE TO THEM IF THEY DO QUALIFY. E. AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP). EACH STATE AGENCY MUST DEVELOP AN AOP EVERY FOUR YEARS AS PART OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN REQUIRED UNDER SECTIONS 102 OR 103 OF WIOA. THE AOP MUST INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF NEED. AN ASSESSMENT NEED DESCRIBES THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.

1. ASSESSMENT OF NEED. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.

ASSESSMENT OF NEED

Agriculture is Virginia's largest private industry, with an economic impact of over \$82.3 billion annually. This industry provides more than 381,800 jobs in the Commonwealth. Virginia's agricultural production is one of the most diverse in the nation. Many Virginia commodities and products rank in the top 10 among all U.S. states. In 2021, Virginia ranked third nationally for the production of tobacco; fourth in seafood landings; sixth for apples, pumpkins and turkeys measured in head; eighth for peanuts; and ninth for broilers measured in head and pounds.

Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW) are an integral part of the agricultural industry in Virginia. These workers face many challenges and barriers related to employment—such as language, transportation, and childcare—that make it more difficult for them to improve their employment circumstances and standard of living. MSFWs frequently find themselves unemployed or under-employed and many live in poverty. When they do have employment, they are oftentimes required to work long hours at labor-intensive and physically demanding jobs. According to Bureau of Labor Statistics data, agriculture is one of the most dangerous industries. Most MSFWs do not have health insurance and often have limited access to adequate healthcare. Further, it is estimated that at least two thirds of the farm labor force in the United States have fewer than 10 years of schooling, and two thirds speak little to no English. Migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Virginia are predominantly of Hispanic descent, but there is a significant number of Haitian Creole workers, and that population has notably increased over the past three to five years. Jamaicans and South Africans also make up a small portion of the temporary and seasonal agricultural workforce in Virginia. H-2A workers hail from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti, Jamaica, and South Africa.

MSFWs and their families frequently struggle to find suitable, affordable childcare, and many migrant children suffer due to a lack of continuity in school. Although farmworker housing in Virginia is generally well maintained for H-2A use, due to vigilant inspection by Agricultural Specialist staff, Virginia investigates complaints and find instances where migrants occupy housing that does not meet minimum health and safety requirements.

To address the many issues faced by MSFWs in Virginia, the Code of Virginia provides for an Interagency Migrant Worker Policy Committee. This committee, administered by Virginia Works), and chaired by the Virginia Works Commissioner, is comprised of representatives from appropriate state agencies whose services and jurisdictions involve MSFWs and their employers. The Committee addresses and formulates solutions to many of the employment-related issues faced by MSFW and agricultural employers within the Commonwealth.

The table below contains the latest MSFW estimates by county.

MSFW ESTIMATES - Program Year 2023

	Seasonal Farmworkers (<u>Non H-2A</u>)			Migrant Farmworkers (<u>Non H-2A</u>)			H-2A Farmworkers	
	Unduplicated	Peak	Non-working Family	Unduplicated	Peak	Non-working Family	Unduplicated	Peak
State	4,768	4,366	800	2,694	2,601	169	5,490	5,490
Accomack	315	300	180	410	395	35	25	25
Albemarle	68	60	8	75	70	8	164	164
Alleghany	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Amelia	45	40	10	5	5	2	34	34
Amherst	22	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
Appomattox	30	30	10	8	8	0	0	0
Arlington	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Augusta	86	86	0	10	10	0	146	146
Bath	16	16	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bedford	25	25	0	10	10	0	4	4
Bland	20	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
Botetourt	10	10	5	5	5	0	28	28
Brunswick	75	70	15	40	40	15	135	135
Buchanan	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Buckingham	12	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
Campbell	45	45	0	20	20	0	16	16
Caroline	68	54	18	0	0	0	18	18
Carroll	50	50	0	35	35	0	71	71
Charles City	16	16	4	5	5	1	13	13
Charlotte	25	25	0	10	10	0	56	56
Chesapeake	70	60	20	60	50	15	40	40
Chesterfield	50	45	10	15	10	3	25	25
Clarke	10	10	0	0	0	0	4	4
Craig	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Culpeper	90	85	10	30	25	0	18	18
Cumberland	25	25	5	20	20	0	0	0
Dickenson	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dinwiddie	45	40	10	15	10	3	63	63
Essex	25	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fairfax	15	15	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fauquier	25	25	0	10	10	0	13	13
Floyd	20	20	0	5	5	0	26	26
Fluvanna	12	10	0	0	0	0	4	4
Franklin	15	15	0	30	30	0	45	45
Frederick	70	70	0	60	60	0	413	413
Giles	15	15	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gloucester	45	40	8	4	4	0	11	11
Goochland	10	8	2	5	5	0	0	0

MSFW ESTIMATES - Program Year 2023

	Seasonal Farmworkers (<u>Non H-2A</u>)			Migrant Farmworkers (<u>Non H-2A</u>)			H-2A Farmworkers	
	Unduplicated	Peak	Non-working Family	Unduplicated	Peak	Non-working Family	Unduplicated	Peak
State	4,768	4,366	800	2,694	2,601	169	5,490	5,490
Grayson	50	50	0	40	40	0	1,240	1,240
Greene	14	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Greensville	45	45	8	15	15	0	29	29
Halifax	60	60	10	10	10	0	153	153
Hampton	10	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hanover	130	110	25	20	15	5	88	88
Henrico	21	15	5	2	2	2	5	5
Henry	25	25	0	20	20	0	11	11
Highland	8	8	0	0	0	0	5	5
Isle of Wight	25	20	4	45	45	4	70	70
James City	15	15	2	5	5	1	0	0
King and Queen	25	20	0	0	0	0	0	0

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT
MSFW ESTIMATES - 2023

	Seasonal Farmworkers (Non H-2A)			Migrant Farmworkers (Non H-2A)			H-2A Farmworkers	
	Unduplicated Total	Peak Count	Non-working Family Total	Unduplicated Total	Peak Count	Non-working Family Total	Unduplicated Total	Peak Count
King George	280	253	40	25	20	0	98	98
King William	25	20	5	0	0	0	0	0
Lancaster	113	93	20	38	30	0	12	12
Lee	25	25	0	5	5	0	20	20
Loudoun	30	30	0	20	20	0	55	55
Louisa	22	20	0	0	0	0	1	1
Lunenburg	50	50	5	15	15	0	76	76
Madison	50	45	2	30	30	0	12	12
Mathews	16	13	0	0	0	0	4	4
Mecklenburg	140	140	30	90	90	10	201	201
Middlesex	25	20	5	6	6	0	14	14
Montgomery	20	20	0	0	0	0	5	5
Nelson	56	50	5	10	10	0	196	196
New Kent	35	25	8	14	14	3	0	0
Norfolk	12	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northampton	250	210	120	890	875	25	700	700
Northumberland	134	107	26	31	31	0	28	28
Nottoway	20	20	5	10	10	4	5	5
Orange	175	170	20	30	30	0	37	37
Page	20	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
Patrick	80	80	0	20	20	0	30	30
Pittsylvania	105	105	10	30	30	0	340	340
Powhatan	10	10	3	5	5	2	0	0
Prince Edward	15	15	5	10	10	0	0	0
Prince George	25	15	4	2	2	0	0	0
Prince William	20	20	0	10	10	0	6	6
Pulaski	15	15	0	0	0	0	53	53
Rappahannock	25	25	0	20	20	0	6	6
Richmond	70	56	18	0	0	0	20	20
Roanoke	20	20	2	10	10	0	20	20
Rockbridge	24	20	2	0	0	0	20	20
Rockingham	50	50	0	35	35	0	205	205
Russell	20	20	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scott	15	15	0	0	0	0	43	43
Shenandoah	25	25	0	15	15	0	8	8
Smyth	15	15	0	10	10	0	10	10
Southampton	80	65	15	80	80	5	19	19
Spotsylvania	50	40	3	0	0	0	0	0

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT
MSFW ESTIMATES - 2023

	Seasonal Farmworkers (Non H-2A)			Migrant Farmworkers (Non H-2A)			H-2A Farmworkers	
	Unduplicated Total	Peak Count	Non-working Family Total	Unduplicated Total	Peak Count	Non-working Family Total	Unduplicated Total	Peak Count
Stafford	50	40	8	0	0	0	0	0
Suffolk	70	65	15	45	40	15	50	50
Surry	10	10	2	0	0	0	2	2
Sussex	25	15	6	30	30	6	0	0
Tazewell	15	15	0	8	8	0	0	0
Virginia Beach	60	50	8	40	35	5	10	10
Warren	35	35	0	15	15	0	0	0
Washington	15	15	0	6	6	0	10	10
Westmoreland	350	322	35	25	20	0	151	151
Wise	15	15	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wythe	25	25	0	20	20	0	50	50
York	15	12	4	0	0	0	0	0

2. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE STATE MEANS: 1) IDENTIFYING THE TOP FIVE LABOR-INTENSIVE CROPS, THE MONTHS OF HEAVY ACTIVITY, AND THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF PRIME ACTIVITY; 2) SUMMARIZE THE AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS' NEEDS IN THE STATE (I.E. ARE THEY PREDOMINANTLY HIRING LOCAL OR FOREIGN WORKERS, ARE THEY EXPRESSING THAT THERE IS A SCARCITY IN THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE); AND 3) IDENTIFYING ANY ECONOMIC, NATURAL, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT ARE AFFECTING AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE OR ANY PROJECTED FACTORS THAT WILL AFFECT AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE

To develop an accurate assessment of the agricultural activity in the state, an extensive statewide survey of previous and projected agricultural and farmworker activity is conducted by Virginia Works each year. The Assessment of Agricultural Activity is developed in conjunction with input from Agricultural Specialist staff, local office personnel, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Telamon, Virginia Works partners, and members of numerous other organizations with knowledge of agricultural activity and MSFW employment. As of PY2023, approximately 15,000 MSFWs were estimated to be working in Virginia, including 5,300 H-2A workers. The top six labor intensive crops in Virginia for PY 23 are tobacco, apples, vegetables, including tomatoes and potatoes, Christmas trees, grapes, and nursery stock. Production acreage remains consistent or is increasing.

Agricultural employers are facing economic pressures resulting from high inflation that increases costs of crop inputs such as fertilizer and fuel. Labor costs are among the highest of their expenses, and with recent regulatory wage hikes, employers report substantially less profit. Agricultural employers indicate that they are barely able to meet their expenses and that they are not able to transfer higher costs to consumers like non-agricultural businesses can do because of how the commodities market dictates the price they receive for their products.

Virginia experienced record-breaking high temperatures in 2023 as well as severe droughts. Some farms experienced the drying of wells that they use to irrigate crops and water livestock. Some farms have offered alternate scheduling in the hottest part of the season, offering their employees the choice to work in fields during nighttime hours instead of during the sweltering heat of day. Concerns about the changing climate have driven the establishment of new operations engaged in controlled environment agriculture, a technology-based approach toward food production. Such businesses produce crops within an enclosed environment, like a

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greenhouse or a warehouse. Such operations can be located in rural or urban areas and operate on a year-round basis.

Rising temperatures mean there is great concern among worker advocates for safety standards to address heat stress. The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is in the process of developing federal standards, however there is no indication of a completion date currently.

The following tables list the agricultural activity and MSFW employment throughout the nine federally designated crop reporting areas of the Commonwealth. Projections of major labor-intensive crop activity and MSFW availability have been indicated by location and crop.

EASTERN SHORE - Onley

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Tomatoes	Apr-Nov	1700	585	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Nursery	Mar-July	480	265	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Vegetables	Mar-Oct	250	170	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Aquaculture	Sept-Apr	220	220	Yes	Increase	Decrease
Potatoes	May-Jul	90	120	Yes	Stable	Stable
Grapes	Jul-Oct	30	30	No	Stable	Stable

NORTHERN NECK - Warsaw/Fredericksburg

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Vegetables	Jun-Nov	450	300	Yes	Increase	Decrease
Nursery	Feb-Nov	400	300	Yes	Increase	Decrease
Grapes	Mar-Sep	150	125	Yes	Stable	Stable
Aquaculture	Mar-Oct	75	60	Yes	Increase	Decrease

CENTRAL - Roanoke

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Apples	Feb-Nov	100	50	Yes	Stable	Decrease

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Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Tobacco	Apr-Nov	80	25	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Nursery	Feb-Dec	125	75	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Peaches	Apr-Aug	25	25	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Grapes	Mar-Oct	30	30	No	Stable	Decrease
Vegetables	Apr-Oct	30	30	No	Stable	Stable

CENTRAL - Petersburg

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Vegetables	Apr-Nov	200	60	Yes	Stable	Stable
Tobacco	Mar-Oct	125	50	Yes	Stable	Stable
Nursery	Feb-Jun	135	80	Yes	Stable	Stable
Melons	Apr-July	75	75	Yes	Stable	Stable
Grain	Mar-Aug	75	55	Yes	Stable	Stable
Sod	Mar-Oct	35	20	Yes	Stable	Stable
Hemp	Mar-Nov	30	5	Yes	Decrease	Stable

SHENANDOAH VALLEY - Winchester

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Apples	July-Nov	650	200	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Nursery	Feb-Dec	200	180	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Grapes	Aug-Oct	125	60	Yes	Increase	Decrease
Peaches	July-Sept	30	20	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Vegetables	Mar-Nov	160	100	Yes	Increase	Decrease
Peaches	Jul-Sept	40	25	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Sod	Feb-Nov	25	25	Yes	Stable	Stable

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SHENANDOAH VALLEY - Charlottesville

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Apples	Sept-Nov	400	60	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Peaches/ Nectarines	July-Sept	241	20	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Nursery	Jan-June	410	250	Yes	Increase	Decrease
Vegetables	May-Sept	280	57	Yes	Increase	Decrease
Grapes	Aug-Oct	200	75	Yes	Increase	Stable
Hay and Cattle	June-Sept	15	5	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Sod	Mar-Oct	24	5	Yes	Stable	Stable

SOUTHSIDE - South Hill

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Tobacco	Mar-Nov	699	336	Yes	Decrease	Stable
Hay	Feb-Dec	159	100	Yes	Stable	Stable
Nursery	Feb-Aug	97	77	Yes	Stable	Stable
Vegetables	Mar-Jul	70	57	Yes	Stable	Stable
Hemp	Mar-Nov	246	15	Yes	Decrease	Decrease
Sod	Feb-Nov	25	10	Yes	Stable	Stable

SOUTHSIDE - Danville

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Tobacco	Apr-Oct	1072	200	Yes	Decrease	Stable
Vegetable	Jun-Aug	40	10	Yes	Stable	Stable
Nursery	Feb-Aug	60	40	Yes	Stable	Decrease

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Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Hay/Grain	Apr-Oct	40	10	Yes	Stable	Stable
Apples	Aug-Oct	40	20	Yes	Stable	Stable
Sod	Mar-Sept	15	5	Yes	Stable	Stable

SOUTHWEST - Bristol

Crop	Activity Period	Total Employment	MSFW Employment	Labor Shortage	Crop Changes	MSFW Availability
Christmas Trees	Oct-Dec	1377	300	Yes	Increase	Decrease

Total Number of MSFWs during Peak Season	15,000
Total Number of MSFWs during Low Season	5,000
Total Number of Seasonal Workers	5,000
Total Number of Migrant Workers*	8,200
Total Number of H-2A Workers	5,500
Total Number of Year-Round Farm Workers	41,800
All Farmworkers Including Year-Round Farm Workers*	55,000

Christmas Trees	Oct-Dec	1377	300	Yes	Increase	Decrease
Vegetables	Mar-Nov	165	25	Yes	Increase	Decrease
Tree Fruits Grapes	June-Oct	150	100	Yes	Stable	Stable
Tobacco	May-Dec	50	45	Yes	Stable	Decrease
Nursery	Mar-Oct	40	30	Yes	Increase	Stable
Berries	May-Aug	46	10	Yes	Increase	Stable
Hemp	Apr-Nov	20	2	Yes	Decrease	Stable
Cattle	Mar-Nov	24	12	Yes	Stable	Decrease

Virginia Farmworker Estimates for Program Year 2023

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**Includes H-2A workers*

MSFWs-Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers

Migrant worker-a worker who travels to an area to perform temporary or seasonal agricultural labor and is not able to return to his permanent residence each night after work.

Seasonal worker-a worker who performs temporary or seasonal agricultural labor and resides in the area where he is employed.

Year-round farm worker-worker who performs agricultural labor on a year-round basis.

3. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS MEANS SUMMARIZING MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKER (MSFW) CHARACTERISTICS (INCLUDING IF THEY ARE PREDOMINANTLY FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES, WHAT LANGUAGE(S) THEY SPEAK, THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MSFWs IN THE STATE DURING PEAK SEASON AND DURING LOW SEASON, AND WHETHER THEY TEND TO BE MIGRANT, SEASONAL, OR YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS). THIS INFORMATION MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DATA SUPPLIED BY WIOA SECTION 167 NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM (NFJP) GRANTEES, OTHER MSFW ORGANIZATIONS, EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND STATE AND/OR FEDERAL AGENCY DATA SOURCES SUCH AS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

Farmworkers in Virginia, particularly migrant farmworkers, are predominantly of Hispanic descent, but there is also a significant number of Haitian Creole workers and Jamaicans. H-2A migrants come from Mexico, and other Central American countries like Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti and Jamaica and there is also a small number of South African workers.

Although farmworker housing in Virginia is generally well maintained, especially for H-2A use due to vigilant inspection by our Agricultural Specialist staff, there are still instances where migrants occupy housing that does not meet minimum health and safety requirements. Farmworker training opportunities are facilitated primarily by Virginia's WIOA one-stop partners, with particular focus on Telamon, the Virginia operator for the WIOA 167 program.

To address the many issues faced by migrant and seasonal farmworkers Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) leads the Virginia Interagency Migrant Worker Policy Committee, through the Employment Stabilization section of the Virginia Unemployment Compensation Act. This committee, administered by Virginia Works and Chaired by the VEC Commissioner, is comprised of representatives from appropriate state agencies whose services and jurisdictions involve migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their employees. This Committee addresses and formulates solutions to many of the issues faced by MSFW and agricultural employers.

To develop an accurate assessment of the actual number of MSFWs within Virginia, an extensive statewide survey of previous and projected agricultural and farmworker activity is conducted by the VEC each year. The Assessment of Agricultural Activity in the tables in Section E2 is developed in conjunction with input from VEC Agricultural Specialist staff, Virginia Career Works local office personnel, Virginia Cooperative Extension, data published by the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Telamon, and members of numerous other organizations with knowledge of MSFWs.

The following table lists Virginia Farmworker Estimates for Program Year 2023.

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Category	Number
Total Number of MSFWs during Peak Season	15,000
Total Number of MSFWs during Low Season	5,000
Total Number of Seasonal Workers	5,000
Total Number of Migrant Workers*	8,200
Total Number of H-2A Workers	5,500
Total Number of Year-Round Farm Workers	41,800
All Farmworkers Including Year-Round Farm Workers*	55,000

*Includes H-2A workers

MSFWs-Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers

Migrant worker-a worker who travels to an area to perform temporary or seasonal agricultural labor and is not able to return to his permanent residence each night after work.

Seasonal worker-a worker who performs temporary or seasonal agricultural labor and resides in the area where he is employed.

Year-round farm worker-worker who performs agricultural labor on a year-round basis.

According to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, agriculture is Virginia's largest private industry. The industry has an economic impact of \$82.3 billion annually and provides more than 381,800 jobs in the Commonwealth. The industries of agriculture and forestry together have a total economic impact of over \$105billion and provide more than 490,000 jobs in the Commonwealth. Every job in agriculture and forestry supports 1.6 jobs elsewhere in Virginia's economy.

In addition to its tangible benefits such as farm cash receipts and jobs, agriculture provides many intangible benefits. These include recreation, tourism, wildlife habitat, biodiversity, flood mitigation, improved water quality and soil stabilization.

4. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

(A) Contacting farm workers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices on an ongoing basis. The plan must identify the number of full-time and part-time outreach staff positions in the State and must demonstrate that there are sufficient outreach staff to conduct MSFW outreach in each service area of the State and to contact a majority of MSFWs in the State annually. The plan must explain the materials, tools, and resources the SWA will use for outreach.

(B) Providing technical assistance to outreach staff.

(C) Increasing outreach staff training and awareness across core programs including the UI program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues.

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(D) Providing outreach staff professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.

(E) Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.

For the duration of this plan cycle PY 24-27, Virginia Works will use one full-time Agriculture and Foreign Labor Specialist in our offices in Bristol, the Eastern Shore, Danville, Charlottesville/Culpeper, Fredericksburg, Petersburg/Prince George, and Winchester. In addition, Virginia Works has five regional Agricultural Outreach Specialist positions in Bristol, Danville, Eastern Shore/Tidewater, Warsaw, and Harrisonburg. This staff is fully bilingual and spend all their time conducting outreach and providing services to MSFWs working in Virginia. The State Monitor Advocate also conducts field visits to assess outreach performance. All offices utilize the Agricultural Specialist staff full-time for outreach duties during peak seasons for the crop activities in the service areas. All outreach activities are conducted in accordance with the 20 CFR 653.

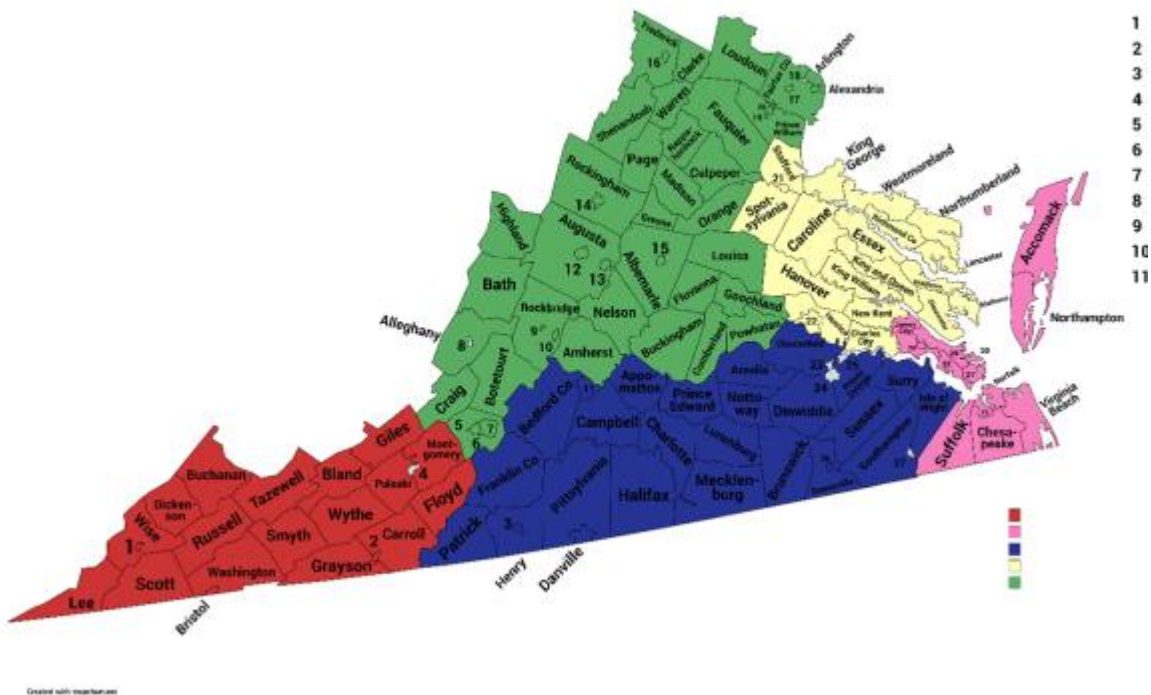
To augment the Virginia Works outreach efforts, staff from the State's WIOA 167 Grantee, Telamon, under an interagency cooperative agreement, will supplement the agency's efforts to contact a majority of the MSFWs in Virginia during the peak of the agricultural season. The map below shows the Virginia Works's Agricultural Outreach Service Areas.

Virginia Employment Commission 2023-2024 Agricultural Services Areas



Map produced by the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement [DWD&A]
Economic Information & Analytics Division, October 2023

Virginia Regional Agricultural Outreach Service Areas



PY 24-27 Outreach Plan Service Areas

Bristol

Agriculture and Foreign Labor Specialist- Deborah Johnston

Agriculture Outreach Specialist-Will Jacobs

200 Bob Morrison Blvd. Suite 100

Bristol, VA 24201

Service Area: Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Lee, Montgomery, Pulaski, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, Wythe

Charlottesville Outreach Service Area

Agriculture and Foreign Labor Specialist-Ricardo Ortiz

210 E. Stevens St.

Culpeper, VA 22701

Service Area: Albemarle, Amherst, Augusta, Bath, Buckingham, Culpeper, Cumberland, Fluvanna, Greene, Goochland, Highland, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, Orange, Rockbridge

Danville Outreach Service Area

Agriculture and Foreign Labor Specialist-Beatriz Gonzalez

Agricultural Outreach Specialist-Logan Lorenzo

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Housing Inspector-Brenda Blankenship

211 Nor Dan Drive

Suite 1055

Danville, VA 24540

Service Area: Appomattox, Alleghany, Bedford, Botetourt, Campbell, Charlotte, Craig, Franklin, Halifax, Henry, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Price Edward, Roanoke

Eastern Shore Outreach Service Area

****Federally Designated Significant, Bi-lingual Office****

Agriculture and Foreign Labor Specialist-Anna Trevino

-Luis Echevarria

25036 Lankford Highway, Unit 16

Onley, VA 23418

Service Area: Accomack, Northampton, Cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Norfolk, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, James City, York

Petersburg Outreach Service Area

Agriculture and Foreign Labor Specialist-Ronda Moreta

4300 Crossings Blvd.

Prince George, VA 23875

Service Area: Amelia, Brunswick, Charles City, Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, Greensville, Hanover, Henrico, Isle of Wight, New Kent, Nottoway, Powhatan, Prince George, Southampton, Surry, Sussex

Fredericksburg Outreach Service Area

Agriculture and Foreign Labor Specialist-Antonia Garcia

Agricultural Outreach Specialist-Andres Ordaz

10304 Spotsylvania Avenue, Suite 100

Fredericksburg, VA 22408

Service Area: Caroline, Essex, Gloucester, King and Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Matthews, Middlesex, Northumberland, Richmond, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Westmoreland

Winchester Outreach Service Area

****Federally Designated Significant Office**

Agriculture and Foreign Labor Specialist-Jesus Diaz

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Agricultural Outreach Specialist- Harrisonburg- in recruitment

Winchester, VA 22601

Service Area: Arlington, Clark, Fairfax, Fauquier, Frederick, Loudoun, Page, Prince William, Rappahannock, Rockingham, Shenandoah, Warren

Staff training is an ongoing process. Initial training for new Agricultural Specialist staff serving in Virginia Works Centers has been and will continue to be conducted on outreach, the employment service complaint system, MSFW definitions, other regulatory requirements, and the Agricultural Recruitment System. Additional training for selected staff, including Local Office Management and District Managers, will be provided through attendance at regional training sessions conducted by the State Monitor Advocate and the Agriculture and Foreign Labor Certification Manager. Training will also be conducted by the State Monitor Advocate for other staff, as needed. Monthly conference calls are conducted with all Agricultural Specialist staff, the State Monitor Advocate, and the Foreign Labor Certification Manager. Agricultural Specialist staff will participate at local grower meetings and combined training will be conducted with Telamon when feasible. Virginia Works will continue to work closely with labor law enforcement agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry, the Virginia Department of Health, and the Central Virginia Legal Aid Society to continue knowledge exchange and to ensure quality services are available to agricultural workers and employers.

Virginia Works maintains an Agricultural Services Unit with a professional, bi-lingual staff that coordinates all phases of the agency effort to provide employment services to agricultural employers and farmworkers. Agricultural Specialists are in eight of our Virginia Works locations and serve agricultural workers and employers throughout the Commonwealth. Agricultural staff are proficient in agency core services, including unemployment insurance assistance and employment services. They all work closely with the state's major grower associations, the Virginia State Horticultural Society, the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, the Farm Bureau, the Virginia Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services, and other interested agencies. One of the objectives of these working relationships is to disseminate information to agricultural employers and workers about the services available from Virginia Works and our partner agencies. With the cooperation of these organizations, the Foreign Labor Services Unit conducts farm labor seminars for agricultural employers on a statewide basis. In addition, participants are given information and updates on the following topics:

Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986

Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act

Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS)

Farm Labor Contractor Registration

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

Child Labor Laws and Pesticide Safety

Agricultural Labor Certifications (H-2A Program)

Unemployment Insurance for Agricultural Workers

For the planning period 24-27, the Agricultural and Foreign Labor Services staff will conduct several seminars around the state for employers who use temporary agricultural labor. During these meetings, potential

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agricultural employers are often identified and their need for MSFW labor discussed. The staff will also attend several grower association conferences and trade shows to disseminate information to employers and plans to attend VA Cooperative Extension grower meetings. On a more technical level, the agency uses various procedures to match agricultural employers and U.S. workers and will use the internet-based Virginia Workforce System for matching jobseekers and employers. This system provides for staff assistance as needed, but also allows both jobseekers and employers to create their own files and find each other. Agricultural job orders, to include H-2A job orders, can be created by employers with final oversight by Agriculture and Foreign Labor Services staff. As a result of the internet-based system, we have created a much wider dissemination of all agricultural job orders. This increase in access promotes the employment of U.S. workers in Virginia agriculture.

Additional resources include the use of the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) for job orders, local and regional circulation of agricultural job orders, close coordination with WIOA service providers, and direct contact with grower associations. The agency's website contains a State Monitor Advocate Section and an Agriculture and Foreign Labor Services Section which has many useful forms, publications and links, a list of the Agricultural Services Staff, copies of active H-2A job orders and information of interest to the agricultural community, including employers and MSFWs. There are also links to Telamon and to other resources to assist farmworkers and agricultural employers. Organizations serving farmworkers may access these sites and make appropriate information available to job seekers.

Virginia continues to be a significant user of the H-2A program. Although some agricultural employers have reduced the number of workers they need in certain crops, they continue to diversify in the varieties of crops grown. We have seen a large increase in the use of this program over the past several years as demand for a legal and stable workforce has grown as the prevalence of traditional migrant workers decreases. We continue to strive to match qualified workers to agricultural openings in Virginia, but this continues to be difficult due to the diminishing migrant population. We hope to expand the use of the Virginia workforce system among agricultural employers and workers alike to better match applicants with job openings.

Agricultural Specialists have been specifically trained in employment services, unemployment insurance and complaint processing and resolution and they are required to attend all Agency training on the provision of basic workforce services, to include the unemployment insurance program. Outreach staff and provide information regarding the unemployment insurance program requirements to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers during outreach and they provide written materials to farmworkers and agricultural employers upon request. They provide Spanish assistance to MSFW claimants and provide claims filing and processing assistance as needed in support of all our Virginia Works offices.

In accordance with WIOA, Virginia's plans for engaging all levels of business include creating a more employer demand-driven system, using various strategic planning efforts to meet the needs of business, using partnerships and leveraged resources-including economic development partnerships-to serve business customers, and supporting entrepreneurs through the workforce system. This approach will benefit MSFWs in Virginia in that we will develop both non-agricultural and agricultural job opportunities and strive to assist workers in their endeavor to obtain their employment related goals. With renewed emphasis on customer relations, operations, resource management and professional development, Virginia Works strives to make the Commonwealth an ideal place to work and conduct business.

Additional training for Agricultural Specialists and other selected staff, including Local Office Management and District Managers, will be provided through attendance at regional training sessions conducted by the State Monitor Advocate and the Foreign Labor Certification Manager. Training will also be provided by the State Monitor Advocate on the Employment Service Complaint system as needed. Monthly conference calls are conducted with all Agricultural Specialist staff, the State Monitor Advocate, and the Foreign Labor Certification

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Manager. Staff will participate in USDOL training, at local grower meetings and combined training will be conducted with Telamon when feasible.

The WIOA 167 Grantee, Telamon Corporation, under a cooperative agreement, will supplement Virginia Works outreach with approximately 2,000 MSFW contacts. Joint outreach activities may be arranged and conducted when possible. For this plan cycle, Telamon Corporation, and any other individual or organization, will be able to refer MSFWs to Virginia Works services listed at <http://www.virginiaworks.gov> and search for employment opportunities through the Virginia Workforce Connection found at <http://www.vawc.virginia.gov>. MSFWs may review job openings at Telamon Corporation and select prospective positions for which they may be qualified. This capability exposes MSFWs to more employment opportunities and ensures that they are better informed about the labor market. Through the self-service system or with the assistance of Telamon Corporation staff, MSFWs can be registered for employment services before they even visit one of the Virginia Works local offices. Collaboration and referrals, team building, and staff training will ensure that MSFWs within the Commonwealth have full access to WIOA and Wagner-Peyser services. Personal meetings at any Virginia Works location can be facilitated by contacting Agricultural staff directly.

In accordance with the Workforce Investment and Opportunities Act, Virginia's plans for engaging all levels of business include creating a more employer demand-driven system; using various strategic planning efforts to meet the needs of business; using partnerships and leveraged resources, including economic development partnerships, to serve business customers; and supporting entrepreneurs through the workforce system. This approach will benefit MSFWs in Virginia by developing non-agricultural and agricultural job opportunities and striving to assist workers in their endeavor to obtain their employment related goals. With renewed emphasis on customer relations, operations, resource management, and professional development, Virginia Works will strive to make the Commonwealth an ideal place to work and conduct business.

5. SERVICES PROVIDED TO FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

Describe the State agency's planned activities for:

(A) Providing the full range of employment services to the agricultural community, including both MSFWs and agricultural employers, through the one-stop centers. This includes:

(i) How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers; and

(ii) How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.

(B) Marketing the Complaint System to farmworkers and stakeholders.

(C) Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System for U.S. Workers to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

Virginia Works will meet the minimum requirements for providing services to MSFWs as listed in 20 CFR 653.112. Virginia Works will provide equitable services for:

- MSFWs referred to jobs.
- MSFWs for whom a service is provided
- MSFWs referred to supportive services
- MSFWs receiving career guidance
- MSFWs receiving job development

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDED THROUGH THE ONE-STOP SYSTEM

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The agency will meet the minimum requirements for providing services to MSFWs as listed below:

Minimum Service Level Indicators	Compliance Levels
Individuals placed in a job	Parity with Wagner-Peyser performance
Median earnings of individuals in unsubsidized employment	Parity with Wagner-Peyser performance
Individuals placed long term in non-agricultural employment	Parity with Wagner-Peyser performance
Reviews of Significant MSFW One Stop Centers	100%
Field checks conducted when 10 or more job orders have been placed through the Agricultural Recruitment System	25%
Outreach contacts per week	40 contacts per week
Processing of Complaints	100%

For the 24-27 planning cycle, Virginia Works will:

- Collect career service indicator data for the career services specified in WIOA sec. 134(c)(2)(A)(xii).
- Collect data, in accordance with applicable ETA Reports and Guidance, on:
 - The number of MSFWs contacted through outreach activities
 - The number of MSFWs and non-MSFWs registered for career services
 - The number of MSFWs referred to and placed in agricultural jobs
 - The number of MSFWs referred to and placed in non-agricultural jobs
 - The percentage of MSFW program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program
 - The median earnings of MSFW program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program
 - The percentage of MSFW program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program
 - The number of MSFWs served who identified themselves as male, female, Hispanic or Latino, Black or African-American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or White
 - Agricultural clearance orders (including field checks), MSFW complaints and apparent violations, and monitoring activities
 - Any other data required by the U.S. Department of Labor

Monitoring

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Both the State Monitor Advocate and the agency's EO staff will monitor Virginia Workforce Centers throughout the year for compliance with MSFW regulations .

The significant local offices in Winchester and on the Eastern Shore will have an annual in-season on-site review by the Regional Monitor Advocate, the State Monitor Advocate, or both together. These offices will maintain at least one fully bi-lingual Agricultural Specialist who will spend the majority of their time in the field during peak harvest for their respective areas.

All other local offices will have on-site reviews done by the State Monitor Advocate as appropriate or will have desk reviews done using data from the agency automated reporting system, using the format suggested by USDOL: "Virginia MSFW Indicators of Compliance, Qualitatively Equivalent and Quantitatively Proportionate Services: ES Services to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Applicants Compared with Services to All Non-MSFWs."

Virginia continues to be a significant user of the H-2A program. Although some agricultural employers have reduced the number of workers they need in certain crops, they continue to diversify in the varieties of crops grown. Virginia Works continues to strive to match qualified workers to agricultural openings in Virginia, but this continues to be difficult due to the diminishing migrant population.

In accordance with WIOA, Virginia's plans for engaging all levels of business include creating a more employer demand-driven system; using various strategic planning efforts to meet the needs of business; using partnerships and leveraged resources, including economic development partnerships, to serve business customers; and supporting entrepreneurs through the workforce system. This approach will benefit MSFWs in Virginia by developing non-agricultural and agricultural job opportunities and striving to assist workers in their endeavor to obtain their employment related goals.

Employment Services Provided to Agricultural Employers

For the upcoming planning period 24-27, the Agriculture and Foreign Labor Services Unit will conduct several seminars around the Commonwealth for employers who use temporary agricultural labor. During these meetings, potential agricultural employers are often identified and their need for MSFW labor is discussed. The Unit will also attend several grower associations conferences and trade shows to disseminate information to employers and plans to attend VA Cooperative Extension grower meetings. On a more technical level, the agency uses various procedures to match agricultural employers and U.S. workers. The agency will use the internet-based Virginia Workforce System for matching jobseekers and employers. This system provides for staff assistance as needed, but also allows jobseekers and employers to create their own files and find each other. Agricultural job orders, to include H-2A job orders, may be created by employers with final oversight by Agriculture and Foreign Labor Services staff. As a result of the internet-based system, we have created a much wider dissemination of all agricultural job orders. This increase in access promotes the employment of U.S. workers in Virginia agriculture.

Additional resources include the use of the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) for job orders, local and regional circulation of agricultural job orders, close coordination with WIOA service providers, and direct contact with grower associations.

At the state level, the Governor has formed a MSFW interagency policy committee to coordinate overall services to MSFWs in Virginia. This committee, which meets quarterly or as needed, brings together agencies which serve the needs of MSFWs. Within this forum, and by way of relationships developed as a result, substantial coordination is provided in order to respond to the local needs of MSFWs and agricultural employers.

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Virginia continues to be a significant user of the H-2A program. Although some agricultural employers have reduced the number of workers they need in certain crops, they continue to diversify in the varieties of crops grown. The agency continues to strive to match qualified workers to agricultural openings in Virginia, but this continues to be difficult due to the diminishing migrant population. The agency hopes to expand the use of the Virginia Workforce System among agricultural employers and workers alike to better match applicants with job openings.

In accordance with WIOA, Virginia's plans for engaging all levels of business include creating a more employer demand-driven system; using various strategic planning efforts to meet the needs of business; using partnerships and leveraged resources, including economic development partnerships, to serve business customers; and supporting entrepreneurs through the workforce system. This approach will benefit MSFWs in Virginia by developing non-agricultural and agricultural job opportunities and striving to assist workers in their endeavor to obtain their employment related goals. With renewed emphasis on customer relations, operations, resource management, and professional development, the agency will work to make the Commonwealth an ideal place to work and conduct business.

Agricultural Specialist staff conduct outreach and provide information to MSFWs on their rights and responsibilities, employment-related laws, and the employment service complaint system. Staff fully describe the employment service complaint system in English and Spanish and utilize third-party interpreter services to provide information in other languages used by MSFWs, such as Haitian Creole. Business cards are provided to MSFWs with contact information if they have a complaint. The State Monitor Advocate has overall responsibility for the operation of the Virginia Works Service Complaint system at the state level. Information on the complaint system is available through all Virginia Works Centers, and each center displays an ETA approved complaint posters in English and Spanish containing contact information for complaint specialists and the State Monitor Advocate. Services for MSFWs include a full explanation of the complaint system and assistance with filing complaints, and staff work to provide resolution to complaints at the local level whenever possible. Our Agency refers complaints and violations to enforcement agencies whenever appropriate.

For the planning period 24-27, the Agriculture Labor Services team will conduct and participate in multiple events around the Commonwealth for farmworkers and for Agricultural employers. They will provide specific information on the use of the Agricultural Recruitment System and on the use of the H-2A program. Staff will attend association conferences and trade shows to disseminate information to employers and plans to attend VA Cooperative Extension grower meetings. On a more technical level, the agency uses various procedures to match agricultural employers and U.S. workers, including using the Virginia Workforce Connection System for matching jobseekers and employers. This system provides for staff assistance as needed, but also allows jobseekers and employers to create their own files and find each other. Agricultural job orders, to include H-2A job orders, may be created by employers with final oversight by Agriculture Services staff. Agricultural clearance orders are publicized on the VDWD's website and are listed on SeasonalJobs.dol.gov.

Additional resources include local and regional circulation of agricultural job orders, close coordination with WIOA service providers, and direct contact with grower associations. In addition, the agency's website <http://www.virginiaworks.gov> contains a State Monitor Advocate Section and an Agriculture and Foreign Labor Services Section with forms, publications and links, a list of the Agricultural Services Staff, copies of active ARS job orders, and information of interest to the agricultural community. There are links to Telamon services and other resources to assist farmworkers and agricultural employers. Organizations serving farmworkers may access these sites and make appropriate information available to job seekers.

6. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

A. COLLABORATION

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The VDWD and the WIOA 167 Grantee, Telamon Corporation, have entered into a cooperative agreement. Telamon conducts outreach and advises MSFWs of the services available at DWDA offices and plans to make approximately 2,000 MSFW contacts. Joint outreach activities are conducted regularly across the Commonwealth. We share booths at job fairs and are co-located in some areas. For this plan cycle, Telamon Corporation, and any other individual or organization, will be able to refer MSFWs to DWDA services listed at <http://www.vec.virginia.gov> and search for employment opportunities through the Virginia Workforce Connection found at <http://www.vec.virginia.gov/virginia-workforce-connection>. MSFWs may review job openings at Telamon Corporation and select prospective positions for which they may be qualified. This capability exposes MSFWs to more employment opportunities and ensures that they are better informed about the labor market. Through the self-service system or with the assistance of Telamon Corporation staff, MSFWs can be registered for employment services before they even visit a one-stop center. Collaboration and referrals, team building, and staff training will ensure that MSFWs within the Commonwealth have full access to WIOA and Wagner-Peyser services. Personal meetings at any Virginia Works location can be facilitated by contacting Agricultural Specialist staff directly.

B. REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT

Virginia Works solicited information and suggestions from WIOA 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program grantees, Virginia Legal Aid, appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested organizations. Before submitting its final outreach plan, Virginia Works provided a copy of this plan to the organizations listed below and allowed 30 days for review and comment. Virginia Works did not receive any comments during this time. If Virginia Works had received comments, it would have taken them into full consideration when formulating the final plan, informed all commenting parties in writing whether their comments were incorporated and, if not, the reasons they were not incorporated.

Max Cerna, Director of Workforce and Career Services

Telamon Corporation

31901 Tri-County Way, Suite 245

Salisbury, Maryland 21804

Ms. Christianne Queiroz, Program Director

Virginia Farm Workers Program

Central Virginia Legal Aid Society

1000 Preston Avenue, Suite B

Charlottesville, VA 22903

Jason B. Yarashes, Lead Attorney & Program Coordinator

Virginia Justice Project for Farm and Immigrant Workers

Legal Aid Justice Center

123 East Broad Street

Richmond VA 23219

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Frederick County Fruit Growers Association

P.O. Box 2735

Winchester, VA 22604

Ms. Jennifer Poole, Executive Director

Virginia Agricultural Grower's Association

P.O. Box 857

South Boston, VA 22592

Mr. Roberto Melendez, District Director

U.S. Department of Labor

Wage and Hour Division

400 N. 8th Street, Room 416

Richmond, VA 23219-4815

Mr. Micah Raub, Program Supervisor

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Office of Pesticide Services

102 Governor Street, Room LL12, Richmond VA 23219

Ms. Julie Henderson, Director. Division of Food and Environmental Services

Office of Environmental Health Services

Virginia Department of Health

109 Governor's Street, 5th Floor.

Richmond, VA 23219

Ms. Brianna Bill, Policy Analyst Senior

Virginia Department of Health

Office of Environmental Health Services

109 Governor St., 5th Floor.

Richmond, Virginia 23219

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Mr. Ed Rossmoore, Executive Director

Rural Family Development

The Virginia Council of Churches

1214 West Graham Road

Richmond, VA 23220

MAS Labor

P.O. Box 507

Lovington, VA 22949

Nikole Cox, Director

Virginia Department of Social Services

1604 Santa Rosa Rd, Suite 130,

Henrico, VA 23229

C. DATA ASSESSMENT

For PY 22, Virginia Works met Equity Indicators for service to MSFWs. Information reported on the LEARS Report, and described therein, is a result of an extrapolation using available data from Local Office Reports, the Virginia Workforce Connection, and longstanding historical service trends.

We expect to demonstrate improvement in overall performance and improvements in serving MSFWs within the one stop environment. We assert that we are providing equitable services to MSFWs in Virginia. We have provided and will continue to provide our Agricultural Specialists and other Wagner Peyser staff with specific training with respect to meeting WIOA performance goals and documenting services within the one-stop system.

D. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

The below tables reflect Virginia Works' most recent performance as outlined in the Commonwealth of Virginia Agricultural Outreach Plan. Virginia state outreach goals are consistently met, however due to staffing shortages, some individual office goals were not met. We have addressed staffing vacancies and have hired four classified agricultural outreach specialists.

MSFW OUTREACH PERFORMANCE BY OFFICE

OFFICE	Total OUTREACH GOAL PY 22 (MSFW+H-2A)	OUTREACH ACHIEVED PY 22	STATUS
BRISTOL	887	1267	Met

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OFFICE	Total OUTREACH GOAL PY 22 (MSFW+H-2A)	OUTREACH ACHIEVED PY 22	STATUS
CHARLOTTESVILLE	674	379	Did Not Meet
DANVILLE	691	1157	Met
EASTERN SHORE	1,472	1,244	Did Not Meet
EMPORIA	577	530	Did Not Meet
FREDERICKSBURG	728	736	Met
PETERSBURG	406	327	Did Not Meet
WINCHESTER	648	667	Met
STATE	6,083	6,135	Met

For PY 22, the State met our outreach goal and Virginia Workforce Connection data indicates that Virginia Works met all the Equity Ratio Indicators and the Minimum Service Level Indicators. Piece rate earnings are not reflected within the system, but based on worker and employer interviews, MSFW wages averaged \$14-\$18 per hour.

MSFW OUTREACH GOALS BY OFFICE FOR PY 23

OFFICE	SEASONAL	MIGRANT	H-2A	TOTAL WORKFORCE	OUTREACH GOAL
Bristol	345	129	1528	2002	1022
Charlottesville	645	200	603	1448	739
Danville	658	288	980	1926	982
Eastern Shore	734	1400	825	2959	1510
Fredericksburg	1098	111	356	1565	799
Petersburg	561	288	488	1337	682
Winchester	325	185	710	1220	623

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OFFICE	SEASONAL	MIGRANT	H-2A	TOTAL WORKFORCE	OUTREACH GOAL
State	4,366	2,601	5,490	12,457	6,357

E. STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE

This plan for agricultural services for the Commonwealth of Virginia was prepared by agency management staff with input from local office managers, Telamon, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Agricultural Specialist staff who directly serve MSFWs and agricultural employers. The State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved this Agricultural Outreach Plan.

WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State will provide labor exchange services under the Wagner-Peyser Act using State merit staff.	Yes
2. The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time (sec 121(e)(3));	Yes
3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser Act services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and	Yes
4. SWA officials: 1) Initiate the discontinuation of services; 2) Make the determination that services need to be discontinued; 3) Make the determination to reinstate services after the services have been discontinued; 4) Approve corrective action plans; 5) Approve the removal of an employer's clearance orders from interstate or intrastate clearance if the employer was granted conditional access to ARS and did not come into compliance within 5 calendar days; 6) Enter into agreements with State and Federal enforcement agencies for enforcement-agency staff to conduct field checks on the SWAs' behalf (if the SWA so chooses); and	Yes

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The State Plan must include	Include
7) Decide whether to consent to the withdrawal of complaints if a party who requested a hearing wishes to withdraw its request for hearing in writing before the hearing.	
5. The SWA has established and maintains a self-appraisal system for ES operations to determine success in reaching goals and to correct deficiencies in performance (20 CFR 658.601).	Yes

WAGNER PEYSER PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	70.5%		70.5%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	70.5%		70.5%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$7,500		\$7,500	
Credential Attainment Rate	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹

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PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAMS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to adult education and literacy programs and activities under title II of WIOA, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

Since the adoption of the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) in 2016, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC) have continued to implement training and technical assistance and institutionalize the use of standards-based instruction (SBI) through practices and grant requirements.

The VDOE competitive grants require that providers demonstrate full implementation of SBI; program monitoring ensures that providers self-assess and document this implementation. The SBI webpage (valrc.org/standards-based-instruction) of the VALRC website provides key links, resources, and technical assistance. Online resources are available to support new instructors every year, including the Resource Guide for New Instructors, which prominently features SBI. The VALRC provides a variety of training options to support new and experienced educators in effective SBI, from foundational training introducing the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) and the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS), to subject-area-specific training that fully integrates standards. Self-paced online training modules, designed to introduce educators to the fundamentals of SBI and the CCR Observation Tools, are available as on-demand training offerings. Standards-aligned professional development (PD) includes a focus on science of reading, available as statewide webinars as well as online and on-site regional trainings.

To accommodate the needs of instructors, the VALRC maintains on-demand webinars, including the *Science of Reading Overview* and a three-part multilevel English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction series *Contextualized Phonics* and *Advancing Alphabetics*. The VALRC staff also support educator-led Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) that include a focus on integrating SBI along with promising program and classroom practices; PLCs are available for ABE/GED® instructors, ESOL instructors, and regional instructional specialists. The VALRC continues to update SBI resources, ensuring alignment with state priorities.

B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL, USING THE CONSIDERATIONS SPECIFIED IN SECTION 231(E) OF WIOA AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 CFR 463 SUBPART C, FUND EACH ELIGIBLE PROVIDER TO ESTABLISH OR OPERATE PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES IDENTIFIED IN SECTION 203 OF WIOA, INCLUDING PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SUCH ACTIVITIES CONCURRENTLY. THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN MUST INCLUDE AT A MINIMUM THE SCOPE, CONTENT, AND ORGANIZATION OF THESE LOCAL ACTIVITIES.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SECTION 203 OF WIOA)

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training that— 1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and 2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Special Rule. Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing

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programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

The AEFLA Section 231 program is a separate competition from other AEFLA competitions. However, it runs on a shared timeline and process for application announcement, submission, screening for demonstrated effectiveness, review, and selection using the criteria as found in Section 231(e) of WIOA and following the regulations in 34CFR 463. The announcement and promotion of the opportunity to apply for Section 231 funds are made in conjunction with the other AEFLA competitions.

The VDOE competed these funds in the spring of 2026 for the 2026-2030 grant cycle. Applications for Section 231 funds must pass the demonstrated effectiveness screening tool that is required of all applicants for AEFLA funds. Applicants must provide data for all content areas in which they have student data and post-exit indicators. Applicants must respond to all considerations specified in Section 231(e) and applicants' responses are evaluated by a panel of external and VDOE reviewers as well as by representatives of their local workforce development board(s). Annual continuation awards during the grant cycle are required to document progress and continuous improvement.

In advance of the 2026 competition, the VDOE reviewed the American Community Survey data to set new enrollment targets and funding allocations for applicants. As part of the application, the VDOE required applicants to use updated demographic, skills, and labor market information (LMI) data to describe the need for service and the unique challenges or strengths of the geographic area and population. Applicants also described proposed data collection and fiscal management procedures and responded to the 13 considerations outlined in Sec. 231(e). Eligible applicants for the Section 231 and state matching funds submitted applications to serve as fiscal agents for regional programs, to provide instruction at all six adult basic education (ABE) and adult secondary education (ASE) educational functioning levels (EFLs) plus English language acquisition (ELA) activities where there is a demonstrated need.

Since 2018, each provider has been required to offer at least one integrated education and training (IET) cohort, and most providers offer multiple cohorts to respond to student interest, ability, and employer need. The regional structure ensures full geographic coverage of the Commonwealth and efficiency of program management.

State priorities for Title II providers for program years 2026-2028 are as follows:

- Improving service and instruction for individuals with disabilities. All provider staff members should be aware of how to greet and serve all individuals from "welcome." This includes accessible websites; front desk interactions; test accommodations upon disclosure of a disability; reasonable accommodations, assistive technology, and universal design practices for instruction and participation; and information referrals for services from other agencies and accommodation requests.
- Incorporating the science of reading into instruction, including research-based practices on adult English language learning. Professional development and ongoing staff support to incorporate the science of reading should be evident for instructors in all content areas. Providers should also have evidence of consideration of this research during curriculum reviews, formative assessment selections, and purchasing decisions. Programs are encouraged to consider how literacy instruction is taught throughout the curriculum, including in occupational training instruction.

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- Implementing standards-based instruction, civics education, and workforce preparation activities in instruction at all levels for all students. Providers must ensure that all instruction reflects the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) and, as appropriate, the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). All students should be receiving workforce preparation activities, including in digital skills, and civics education to prepare students for work and civic participation.
- Utilizing the functionality of the new data system for program improvement. Providers must participate in intensive training and technical assistance during PY2026-2028 to ensure administrators, support staff, and instructors become fully aware of the functionality and features of the LACES data system to support student management, decision-making, local monitoring, and program improvement.
- Enhancing the delivery of career pathway programming and supports. All funded providers must offer at least one integrated education and training (IET) cohort per program year, preferably several to accommodate student interest and ability. IET cohorts must lead to a recognized postsecondary credential in an occupation that is in high demand in their region. Robust programming should support adult career coaching, supportive services, and be offered in alignment with other local stakeholders, including employers. Providers must report program data responsive to the efforts of the Virginia Board of Workforce Development (VBWD).

C. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS
DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL, USING THE CONSIDERATIONS SPECIFIED IN SECTION 231(E) OF WIOA AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 CFR 463 SUBPART C, FUND ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS TO ESTABLISH OR OPERATE PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING CORRECTIONAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IDENTIFIED IN SECTION 225 OF WIOA: • ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES; • SPECIAL EDUCATION, AS DETERMINED BY THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY; • SECONDARY SCHOOL CREDIT; • INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING; • CAREER PATHWAYS; • CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT; • PEER TUTORING; AND • TRANSITION TO RE-ENTRY INITIATIVES AND OTHER POST RELEASE SERVICES WITH THE GOAL OF REDUCING RECIDIVISM. EACH ELIGIBLE AGENCY USING FUNDS PROVIDED UNDER PROGRAMS FOR CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS TO CARRY OUT A PROGRAM FOR CRIMINAL OFFENDERS WITHIN A CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION MUST GIVE PRIORITY TO SERVING INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE LIKELY TO LEAVE THE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION WITHIN 5 YEARS OF PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM.

The AEFLA Section 225 program is a separate competition that runs on the same timeline and processes as described for the other competitions for application announcement, submission, screening for demonstrated effectiveness, review, and selection using the criteria as found in Section 231(e) of WIOA and following the regulations in 34CFR 463. The announcement and promotion of the opportunity to apply for Section 225 funds are made in conjunction with the other AEFLA competitions. The VDOE competed these funds in the spring of 2026 for the 2026-2030 grant cycle.

Applications for Section 225 funds must pass the demonstrated effectiveness screening that is required of all applicants for AEFLA funds. Correctional education applicants must provide data from program year 2024-2025 for all content areas for which they have data as well as the post-exit indicators, although the impact measures will reflect the unique circumstances of the student population. Applicants must respond to all considerations specified in Section 231(e) and applicants' responses are evaluated by a panel of external and VDOE reviewers as well as by representatives of their local workforce development board(s).

The competition conducted in the spring of 2026 required active partnerships with correctional facilities, prioritized instruction and IET services for participants, and awarded no more than 20 percent of the 82.5 percent of the basic grant designated for programming. All providers attest that they meet the requirement to give priority to serving individuals within five years of release.

D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL, USING THE CONSIDERATIONS SPECIFIED IN SECTION 231(E) OF WIOA AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 CFR 463 SUBPART C, FUND ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS TO ESTABLISH OR OPERATE INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION (IELCE) PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 243 OF WIOA.

Describe how adult English language learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, are served in IELCE programs.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be offered in combination with integrated education and training activities found in 34 CFR section 463.36.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

The AEFLA Section 243 IELCE program is a separate competition that runs on the same timeline and processes for application announcement, submission, screening for demonstrated effectiveness, review, and selection using the criteria as found in Section 231(e) of WIOA and following the regulations in 34CFR 463. The announcement and promotion of the opportunity to apply for Section 243 funds are made in conjunction with the other AEFLA competitions. The VDOE competed these funds in the spring of 2026 for the 2026-2030 grant cycle.

Applications for Section 243 funds must pass the demonstrated effectiveness screening that is required of all applicants for AEFLA funds. IELCE applicants may provide data only for the English language acquisition content area as well as the post-exit indicators. Applicants must respond to all considerations specified in Section 231(e) and applicants' responses are evaluated by a panel of external and VDOE reviewers as well as by representatives of their local workforce development board(s) (LWDBs). Applicants must respond to prompts about the population they plan to serve, including documenting the need for English language services in the area as well as describing how they will differentiate service and coordinate with local partners to accommodate learners with little formal education as well as professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries.

Each Virginia adult education provider is required to offer integrated education and training (IET) programming that is responsive to the local labor market as described in the local Workforce Development Board plan as well as being responsive to the interests and abilities of the student population.

In the 2026-2028 WIOA plan, the state priorities include the science of reading; this instruction is to be contextualized to adult language learning principles to ensure that IELCE instructors are supporting rigorous language and literacy learning in all four areas of reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The approval of new assessments by the U.S. Department of Education that are aligned with the more rigorous English Language Proficiency Standards and NRS level descriptors will reinforce and support the critical importance of rigorous instruction in English language acquisition classes. The VDOE and the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center

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(VALRC) will support practitioners to understand the newly approved assessments, align program curriculum to the standards and level descriptors, and provide models and networking opportunities for practitioners in the new grant cycle.

Another state priority is the intentional teaching of civics education and participation for all adult students. Virginia participated in the first cohort of the U.S. Department of Education's Teaching Skills that Matter (TSTM) project and is using the civics component of the TSTM toolkit to support this learning opportunity. This will be the topic of special importance for the IELCE providers who are required to instruct students on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation.

The IELCE providers work closely with their LWDB strategic partners to ensure that workforce preparation skills and IETs are contextualized to the regional and local labor market demands. All providers disseminate recruitment announcements for local businesses, and IET classes often culminate in a job fair, reverse job fair, or mock interviews with local employers.

IELCE providers are integral partners in the one-stop system as more employers recognize the talent available in Virginia's English language learner population. IELCE providers coordinate with the LWDB strategic partners and other community partners, such as refugee resettlement agencies, to provide career and supportive services to immigrant students. During the 2026-2030 grant cycle, the VDOE is committed, with its partners, to continue to expand awareness of the title II program's capacity to connect businesses with the English language learner workforce.

E. STATE LEADERSHIP

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) uses state leadership funds to provide, directly and through cooperative agreement with the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC) at Virginia Commonwealth University, opportunities for professional development (PD) and technical assistance to adult education and literacy practitioners throughout the Commonwealth and will continue to do so.

In support of the requirement in **Sec. 223(1)(a), alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other core programs and One-Stop partners**, the vision of the *Virginia WIOA Combined State Plan* is to "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 connecting them to businesses in high demand industries." To carry out this vision, the VDOE uses state leadership funds to provide technical assistance, training, advising, and resources to eligible providers for offering career pathways and integrated education and training (IET) programming to ensure that adult learners have equitable opportunities to acquire digital, employability, and academic skills, and are prepared for further education, training, or employment.

The VALRC provides several opportunities for career pathways professional learning including providing adult education practitioners with tuition support for the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) Virginia Career Coach Certification. More than 20 adult educators have earned their certifications since the PY 2022-2023 start of this project. The VALRC maintains the IET Blueprint website (<https://ietblueprint.com>) with resources and data to align with the state's IET planning tool, updated maps showcasing the state's planned IET and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) programs, a resource page for Workplace Literacy programming and an IET to Careers page to share supports for transitioning learners through and beyond IETs and into further occupational training and careers.

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In support of the requirement in **Sec. 223(1)(b), the establishment or operation of high-quality professional development (PD) programs**, the vision of the VDOE is for the continuous improvement of instruction and performance in adult education and literacy and support for practitioners in all roles to provide high-quality programming and instruction. The VDOE, through its cooperative agreement with the VALRC, supports both required and permissible state leadership activities as part of a high-quality PD program. PD offerings, aligned with the state priorities, are available in a wide variety of delivery modes and levels of intensity from online courses, webinar series, conference presentations, professional learning communities, and self-paced tutorials and resources. The VALRC maintains the Teaching Across the Board (<https://tab.valrc.org>) website devoted to providing adult education program leadership, staff, and instructors with information, instructional strategies, resources, and accommodations for providing access to effective adult education for all learners seeking adult education opportunities, including adults with disabilities. The VALRC collects and analyzes evaluation forms from PD participants and uses the feedback to inform future topics, modes of delivery, degree of intensity, and evaluates the distribution of their efforts across the providers.

In support of the requirement in **Sec. 223(1)(c), the provision of technical assistance**, the VDOE provides technical assistance and guidance to eligible providers by sharing promising practices on high-quality, research-based instruction and programming; program accountability; and serving effectively as a one-stop partner. Technical assistance needs are solicited from program managers throughout the year and are informed by the results of the VDOE's monitoring and evaluation efforts, described below. The VALRC disseminates resources on best practices through its publications, websites, and listservs and targeted training delivered upon request by providers.

The VDOE contracts with the LACES by LiteracyPro team for the provision of technical assistance and training to providers, offering webinars, videos, in-person training, and data analysis. The VALRC supports the uptake of functionality of the LACES database by coordinating a peer-based Data Analysis Group that, along with the VDOE specialists, create and deliver virtual training on useful analysis tools.

In support of the requirement in **Sec. 223(1)(d), monitoring and evaluation of quality, VDOE uses state leadership and administrative funds to support monitoring and evaluation activities**, which include not only evaluating the quality of and improvement in local adult education activities but also the effectiveness of efforts by the VALRC. The requirement to disseminate information about models and proven and/or promising adult education practices within the state is discussed as an integral component of the work that the VALRC delivers as PD and technical support under 223(a)(1)(b). Refer to the Assessing Quality section below.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE

Many of the activities described above as responsive to state leadership requirements 223(1)(a) through (d) include elements of permissible state leadership activities as well. For example, the procurement of the LACES data management and student information system and associated provider training is an investment of leadership funds under permissible activity (e). The student management information system continues to inform the State's technical assistance by providing data for the State's efforts to assess the quality of providers, discussed in section (F).

Other permissible activities that will be areas of focus during this Plan cycle include the VALRC's work to support practitioners to offer high-quality online distance instruction and disseminate standards-based curricula supports permissible activities 223(2)(b), (c) and (i). Providing technical assistance on implementing IET programming and workplace adult literacy programming for career pathways and ensuring comprehension of the new reporting requirements supports the permissible activities of 223(2)(d) through (g). The VALRC will continue to be the main provider of PD to assist providers in addressing the state priorities of implementing

high-quality, science-based reading instruction for adults as well as instruction for individuals with disabilities, all activities which are responsive to permissible activities 223(2)(c) and (k).

F. ASSESSING QUALITY

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II.

Describe how the eligible agency will take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

Describe how the eligible agency will use evaluations, data analysis, program monitoring, or other methods to improve the quality of adult education activities in the State.

The Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE's) system for assessing the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities is based on six major components, which can occur both consecutively and concurrently throughout the program year: (1) a program self-assessment survey is completed by each provider, (2) the distribution and review of an annual report card for each program, (3) ongoing data monitoring of information entered by each program in the state Management Information System (MIS) and the Online Management of Education Grant Awards (OMEGA) fiscal system throughout the program year, (4) technical assistance meetings, the content of which will be based on 1-3 above, between the VDOE and each funded program, and (5) the identification of programs for monitoring reviews, based on information collected in components 1-3 above, and (6) the identification of providers to participate in a program improvement cohort, based on information collected in activities 1-3 and a shared need for improvement. All of these factors taken together inform the VDOE's assessment of risk and the identification of programs for a monitoring review.

Program Self-Assessment: This survey is completed by all providers annually and is designed to ensure that providers are compliant with the requirements of WIOA and the state priorities. The self-assessment aligns with the site-visit protocol, which reminds programs to maintain documentation and evidence of WIOA requirements and state priorities as well as provides programs an opportunity to note technical assistance needs that the VDOE and Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC) can address.

Data and fiscal monitoring: Data and fiscal monitoring is ongoing throughout the grant cycle with quarterly reports used to monitor benchmarks. The fiscal management system used by the VDOE maintains a detailed record of transactions that is consulted monthly.

Report Cards: The VDOE issues an annual report card to document providers' performance on federal WIOA accountability standards. The report card, a combination of other risk factors, and a rotation schedule are used to identify programs for a monitoring visit.

Technical Assistance Meetings: Virtual meetings are scheduled with programs annually after the self-assessment responses have been received and report cards have been distributed. The conversations with program staff allow the VDOE to combine the quantitative analysis from the report card with the more qualitative responses from the self-assessment to ascertain the specific technical assistance needs of each program.

On-Site, Targeted, Virtual, and Desk Audit Monitoring Reviews: The VDOE has a site-visit protocol that reflects the priorities identified in WIOA and in the combined state plan. The protocol is posted on the VDOE's website. On-site monitoring visits consist of VDOE staff, a peer reviewer from a similar program, and a VALRC staff member. The team travels to the identified site to conduct extensive document reviews, faculty and staff interviews, focus groups with teachers and students, class observations, and a data demonstration. Interviews

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are also held with select workforce partner agency staff and the local Workforce Development Board director(s) to determine progress toward alignment of services among the local workforce agency partners. Reports and requests for corrective action plans, if needed, are drafted and shared with programs in a timely manner to facilitate continuous improvement. A targeted monitoring review is conducted on an as-needed basis and can occur at any time throughout the year. Up to two components from the site-visit protocol are used for targeted monitoring visits. A targeted monitoring visit does not exempt the program from a full in-person site visit. Virtual monitoring uses a modified site-visit protocol and may spread out over a longer period of time than the on-site monitoring visit. A desk audit monitoring review includes an evaluation of local policies and procedures, student records, instructor records, and program reports; a review of financial records; and a verification of adherence to federal and state guidelines, such as student eligibility, assessments administered, and reporting requirements.

The purpose of VDOE's monitoring process is not only to ensure compliant programming and practices, but to learn of solutions to common challenges and promising models and practices that can be shared across the Commonwealth. The VDOE staff uses all monitoring activities to identify areas of success that can be shared via technical assistance, professional development, and communication channels through leadership activity Sec. 223(a)(1)(B), Dissemination of models and practices. To improve the quality of local providers across the state, the VDOE made the transition to a new state management information system in PY2023-2024. The LiteracyPro vendor and the VDOE continue to provide programs with a variety of training and PD opportunities. Recorded webinars throughout the program year cover topics from intake and assessments to NRS tables for MSG and follow-up outcomes tracking. An annual in-person training focuses on quality data input and output. Additionally, an annual year-end data review for each provider covers 45 data points to ensure data is accurate, complete, and valid at end of year closure.

PROPOSED PERFORMANCE TARGETS

	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level
Employment 2nd Qtr	23.0%	TBD	23.5%	TBD
Employment 4th Qtr	25.0%	TBD	25.5%	TBD
Median Earnings	\$7,250.00	TBD	\$7,350	TBD
Credential Attainment	33.70%	TBD	34.5%	TBD
Measurable Skill Gains	37.5%	TBD	38.0%	TBD
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	NOT APPLICABLE	NOT APPLICABLE	NOT APPLICABLE	NOT APPLICABLE

NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS:

EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

Section 427 of the *General Education Provisions Act* (GEPA) ([20 U.S.C. 1228a](#)) applies to applicants for grant awards under this program.

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ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW GRANT AWARDS MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.

Please respond to the following requests for information:

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

The Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE's) vision is that Virginia will maximize the potential of all learners. The mission of the VDOE is to ensure every student has the opportunity to succeed in life. The VDOE continues to be committed to supporting and improving teaching and learning, setting high expectations for all students, and promoting student safety, well-being, and health.

2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

The VDOE continues to ensure equal opportunities to participate for all eligible students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries in federally funded programs. Adult education students identify a number of barriers to participation and employment, including affordable and convenient dependent care, transportation, and internet service.

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

Providers address the identified participation barriers by offering classes in convenient times and locations in communities as well as offering remote and hybrid learning opportunities and libraries of loaner laptops and hot spots. The VDOE continues to identify areas for improvement and to support the implementation of its requirements, guidance, and evidence-based practices.

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

The adult education program continues to support providers to implement high-quality online and in-person instruction that meets the needs of adult learners. The articulated state priorities have been in place since 2024 and have driven a focus on the areas of evidence-based reading instruction, serving adults with disabilities, career pathways programming, and standards-based instruction. Providers are required to speak to their progress toward improving their practices on these issues on an annual basis.

Notes:

1. Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity in order to submit an application.
2. Applicants may identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic

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disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.

3. Applicants may have already included some or all of this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) and page number(s) in their applications or State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.

Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1894-0005. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 3 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering, and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain a benefit. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving this individual collection, send your comments to ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference OMB Control Number 1894-0005. All other comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual form may be addressed to either (a) the

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA.

A. STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL.

1. ALL VR AGENCIES, EXCEPT FOR THOSE THAT HAVE AN INDEPENDENT CONSUMER- CONTROLLED COMMISSION, MUST HAVE A STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL (COUNCIL OR nSRC) THAT MEETS THE CRITERIA IN SECTION 105 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPLICABLE, HAS:

Select A or B:

(A) is an independent State commission

(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council

(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council

2. IN ACCORDANCE WITH ASSURANCE (A)(1)(B), IF SELECTED, PLEASE PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE CURRENT COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL BY REPRESENTATIVE TYPE, INCLUDING THE TERM NUMBER OF THE REPRESENTATIVE, AS APPLICABLE, AND ANY VACANCIES, AS WELL AS THE BEGINNING DATES OF EACH REPRESENTATIVE'S TERM.

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Select 'Edit' to edit the narrative.

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open this link to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field, and start over if needed.

Council Representative	Current Term Number/Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)	1st Term	10/1/2024
Parent Training and Information Center	2nd Term	10/1/2025
Client Assistance Program	1st Term	10/1/2025
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency)	1st Term	10/1/2025
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider	1st Term	10/1/2023
Business, Industry, and Labor	1st Term	10/1/2023
Business, Industry, and Labor	1st Term	10/1/2024
Business, Industry, and Labor	1st Term	10/1/2024
Business, Industry, and Labor	2nd Term	10/1/2025
Business, Industry, and Labor	2nd Term	10/1/2025
Disability Advocacy Groups	1st Term	10/1/2024
Disability Advocacy Groups	2nd Term	10/1/2024
Disability Advocacy Groups	2nd Term	10/1/2025
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	2nd Term	10/1/2023
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)		
State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	1st Term	10/1/2023

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State Workforce Development Board	1st Term	10/1/2023
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio)		

1. IF THE SRC IS NOT MEETING THE COMPOSITION REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION 105(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AND/OR IS NOT MEETING QUARTERLY AS REQUIRED IN SECTION 105(F) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, PROVIDE THE STEPS THAT THE VR AGENCY IS TAKING TO ENSURE IT MEETS THOSE REQUIREMENTS.

The Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (General) currently meets the composition requirements in Section 105(b).

The Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (General) meets quarterly, as required in Section 105(f) of the Rehabilitation Act. Meetings are generally scheduled to occur at the Virginia DARS Headquarters, which is centrally located and provides ample space and administrative support. The location of the meeting is accessible. Interpreter services are provided, and other accommodations may be requested prior to the meeting. The Council, in partnership with Virginia DARS, and in collaboration with advocacy groups, consumers, and their families, continues to ensure quality services for Virginians with disabilities to achieve meaningful employment, self-sufficiency, and independence. Quarterly meetings remain an active and invaluable forum for the Council to provide advice, information, and support for Virginia DARS' vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.

2. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION 101(A)(21)(A)(II)(III) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, INCLUDE A SUMMARY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT (INCLUDING HOW IT WAS OBTAINED) INTO THE STATE PLAN AND ANY STATE PLAN REVISIONS, INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORTS, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS.

Input from the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is essential to improving the provision of vocational rehabilitation services across the Commonwealth. Consulted regarding multiple aspects of the vocational rehabilitation program, the SRC is provided and requests information on a variety of issues including but not limited to the consumer satisfaction survey, reports on various agency initiatives, updates on WIOA performance measures as well as internal dashboards, the VR services portion of the combined state plan, collaborative efforts with workforce and community partners, and the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. The SRC has played a critical role in providing input in these areas as well as others. Through this process of sharing information and feedback the SRC developed the following recommendations that are also included in their annual report and the VR services portion of the combined state plan.

SRC Recommendation 1: DARS shall continue to provide updates on WIOA performance measures, including the goals and targets established for these measures and DARS' progress towards those goals. DARS should provide detailed analysis of available data to the Council related to outcomes, occupations, and data with the expectation that the median hourly wage increases to \$16.00 per hour (\$17.50 per hour in the Northern district) to best align with increases in the minimum wage and the current economy, with the ultimate goal of a living wage of \$20.00 per hour for individuals who are not students with disabilities.

The Council requests that DARS provide a detailed analysis on data related to

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employment outcomes as broken down by occupation and industry sector at the first meeting of 2026.

SRC Recommendation 2: The Council continues to be interested in wage and earnings trends as impacted by clients' access to other benefits and wants individuals who receive DARS services to be empowered to make an informed choice regarding their employment and understand their options. DARS should report on ongoing benefits counseling services and outreach at the second meeting of 2026, including process details, current data, and historical trends. The Council requests that DARS monitor and report the SSI/SSDI status of individuals at application status as compared to closure.

The Council requests that DARS continue to provide and increase parent-focused education and awareness activities, including information about benefits counseling for students with disabilities, in collaboration with partner agencies/organizations (including VDOE and PEATC) and report baseline information to the Council, as available.

SRC Recommendation 3: In order to increase successful closures, DARS should systematically examine barriers to service delivery, paying particular attention to marginalized and underserved populations, including tribal populations, groups experiencing language barriers, rural communities with limited broadband and transportation access, and youth in transition. Targeted outreach should address language access through access to interpretation services and translated materials, technology and transportation support in underserved areas, and increased awareness among families and youth. These efforts, grounded in the CSNA findings, will drive progress toward representative customer demographics, geographic access, and responsive service delivery.

DARS should work to increase accuracy in reporting and directed delivery of services to clients who report a language other than English as their primary language with a goal of a 10% increase in services provided to this population.

DARS should work to establish an enhanced relationship with one Virginia-based tribe for the purpose of sharing information and improving access to VR services.

SRC Recommendation 4: DARS should increase by 40% the number of VR services, including Pre-ETS, provided by Centers for Independent Living across the Commonwealth.

SRC Recommendation 5: DARS will report on business development efforts including collaboration with ESOs, workforce development partners, and businesses that support the hiring of individuals with disabilities with an emphasis on the practices and procedures to onboard these partners at the third SRC meeting of 2026.

SRC Recommendation 6: The Council requests quarterly updates on the winding down of the Pathways grant and efforts to integrate Pathways activities into the VR program.

SRC Recommendation 7: The SRC would like DARS, including WWRC, to continue to expand virtual programs that deliver VR resources and education to those who can benefit from remote learning and services, while identifying and addressing access challenges (including technological literacy) that may prevent some Virginians from fully utilizing these options. The Council requests quarterly updates on the delivery of these services and the impact on credential and

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measurable skill gain measures.

SRC Recommendation 8: DARS should serve more students with disabilities and the Council requests that DARS provides quarterly reports on efforts to serve this population, particularly students with disabilities.

- a. *DARS should continue to increase outreach to local education agencies, families, and students regarding the availability of and access to transition and Pre-ETS services. Increase collaboration between DARS, the Virginia Department of Education, other community partners including providers, and local education agencies.*
- b. *DARS should identify and report on local education agencies in which Pre-ETS is under-utilized and conduct direct outreach in order to increase service availability and delivery. DARS Transition Services should report on any barriers to continued outreach and contemplated or implemented solutions.*
- c. *Data on types of services utilized, geographic trends, and information on the frequency with which students who receive Pre-ETS services move on to VR services should be evaluated and reported to the SRC.*
- d. *DARS should continue to expand work-based learning experiences for transition age youth. DARS should increase by 25% the number of transition age youth participating in work-based learning experiences, with deliberate efforts to achieve increases that are geographically and occupationally diverse.*

SRC Recommendation 9: DARS should review and strengthen its internal data collection processes to improve the accuracy and completeness of information reported to the Council, particularly data on client barriers such as foster care involvement, homelessness, and juvenile justice history.

3. PROVIDE THE VR AGENCY'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS, INCLUDING AN EXPLANATION FOR THE REJECTION OF ANY INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

List each recommendation/input followed by the VR agency response.

DARS seeks input, feedback, and recommendations from the SRC throughout the year, including holding a retreat where the SRC provides formalized recommendations annually. Below is the agency response to recommendations the SRC made at the end of 2024 and were applied in 2025.

SRC Recommendation 1: DARS shall continue to provide updates on WIOA performance measures, including the goals and targets established for these measures and DARS' progress towards those goals. DARS should provide detailed analysis of available data to the council related to outcomes, occupations, and data with the expectation that the median hourly wage increases to \$16.00 per hour (\$17.50 per hour in the Northern district) to best align with increases in the minimum wage and the current economy.

DARS Response 1:

The agency's reported WIOA Measures for PY23- July 2023- June 2024 are as follows:

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2nd quarter after exit: 53% (goal 55%)

4th quarter after exit: 52% (goal 54%)

Median Hourly Earnings 2nd quarter after exit: \$4323 (goal \$3800.00)

Credential Attainment: 61% (goal 45%)

Measurable Skill Gain: 81.1% (goal 89.1%)

The agency's reported WIOA Measures for PY24- July 2024-June 2025 are as follows:

2nd quarter after exit: 54.4% (goal 59%)

4th quarter after exit: 53.9% (goal 57%)

Median Hourly Earnings 2nd quarter after exit: \$4314 (goal \$4173.00)

Credential Attainment Rate: 55.9% (goal 63%)

Measurable Skills Gain: 77.4% (goal 89.0%)

Median Hourly Wages ending September 2025: \$15.00 (same as 2024). All Northern Virginian offices met a median hourly wage of \$16.00.

Primary jobs at Closure in 2025 include:

Stockers and Order Fillers; Customer Service Representatives; Janitors and Cleaners (Except Maids and Housekeeper Cleaners); Laborers and Freight; Stock and Material Movers; Fast Food and Counter Workers; Food Preps and Serving Related Workers; Office and Administrative Workers; Retail Salesperson; Helpers, Dishwashers, Dining Room and Cafeteria Attendant; Cashiers; Child Care Workers.

SRC Recommendation 2: To address the decreasing number of individuals seeking full-time employment, DARS shall seek to maintain the number of hours worked and full-time employment rate of adults who access DARS services with a goal of ensuring that individuals who receive DARS services understand their options through benefits counselling and are able to make an informed choice regarding their employment. DARS should report on benefits counseling services at the first meeting of 2025, including current data and historical trends.

DARS Response 2: Thirty percent (30%) of successful closures in 2025 obtained full-time employment. Benefit counseling continues to occur for each participant entering work activities and/or training.

Services are provided by Work Incentive Specialist Advocates (WISA). WISA are fee for service vendors with DARS/DRS.

There are seventeen (17) specific services a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) may authorize to assist a DRS participant with Social Security Administration (SSA) benefits.

Examples of services are WorkWORLD Analysis, Benefit Planning Query (BPQY), Student Earned Income Exclusion 1619(B), Medicaid Works, Impairment Related Work Expense, Overpayments, Financial Health Assessment (FHA), and Increasing

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Budgeting Skills Utilizing Financial Empowerment Tools.

Seventy-one percent (71%) of DRS participants receiving Work Incentive Specialist Advocates (WISA) services are employed, closed as rehabilitated, or actively engaged in VR services.

SRC Recommendation 3: Equity in the provision of VR services is imperative. In order to achieve successful closures, DARS should examine barriers, successes, and service delivery—paying particular attention to marginalized and underserved populations-- as well as aligning efforts with available Census population and workforce participation data. Outreach should be targeted toward marginalized and underserved populations, working consistently toward representative customer demographics— particularly with regard to race/ethnicity, age, and location. DARS should prioritize outcomes and employment in competitive integrated settings for unserved and underserved populations, including individuals transitioning out of subminimum wage or at risk of entering segregated settings, individuals with mental health conditions, and justice-involved individuals. DARS shall report on their assessment and efforts at the second 2025 SRC meeting.

DARS Response 3: Presentations were shared on this SRC recommendation at the second 2025 SRC quarterly meeting. Activities that occurred under this SRC recommendation are as follows:

The Pathways English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Specialist actively provides language translation, community engagement, and workshop services aimed at supporting our underserved ESOL populations. The Pathways ESOL Specialist also created a Spanish Disability Guide, updated and proofread agency documents to ensure accurate translation.

DRS staff utilize interpreter services through Proprio interpreting services to ensure communication is delivered in the preferred or native languages of participants.

DRS has dedicated Regional Counselors for the Deaf, who communicate in American Sign Language and carry caseloads specifically within this diverse population.

DARS continues to increase access to Individual Placement Supports (IPS) for Virginians with a serious mental health conditions through partnerships with Fairfax Community Service Board (CSB), Chesterfield CSB, Frontier Health, and Henrico CSB.

The Behavioral Health Services Team continues to work with district leadership for collaboration, training, and technical assistance to improve outcomes for individuals with behavioral health conditions. Training opportunities offered and provided include: highlighting criteria, training, resources and employment opportunities for Peer Recovery Specialist (PRS); serving justice involved individuals; as well as affordable housing and housing resources in Virginia.

In September 2022, DARS was one of fourteen (14) states awarded a discretionary grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration to develop and implement the Real Pay for Real Jobs, Education and Outreach, Partnership Development, Provisions of Individualized Services, and Capacity Building (RPRJ EPIC) Project. The purpose of the RPRJ EPIC Project is to help individuals with disabilities currently engaged in subminimum wage

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employment transition to competitive integrated employment (CIE) and to assist youth with disabilities at risk of entering subminimum wage employment when they transition from school to engage in employment in the general workforce.

Accomplishments through September 30, 2025 are as follows: 16 participants enrolled, 8 adults have achieved CIE, 3 youth have been diverted to CIE, 5 participants have been closed Rehabilitated (successful employment).

SRC Recommendation 4: Increase the number of VR services, including Pre-ETS, provided by Centers for Independent Living across the Commonwealth.

DARS Response 4: Information on this SRC recommendation was shared each quarter at the SRC meetings. DARS has been working diligently to strengthen partnerships with the CILs and this effort is apparent in the growing service numbers.

This is a review of services provided each year from SFY 2022-SFY 2025:

PE Pre-ETS Services at CILs by Year	SFY 2022	SFY 2023	SFY 2024	SFY 2025
Access Independence, Inc.	0	0	32	83
Endeppendence Center Inc	1	12	3	20
Endeppendence Center Of N Va	11	109	165	190
Valley Associates For Independent Living	0	0	104	122
Total	12	121	304	415
VR Pre-ETS Services at CILs by Year	SFY 2022	SFY 2023	SFY 2024	SFY 2025
Access Independence, Inc.	0	20	14	50
Clinch Independent Living Services	0	0	0	6
DisAbility Resource Center	0	0		0
Endeppendence Center Inc	2	4	4	7
Endeppendence Center Of N Va	99	205	397	351
Valley Associates For Independent Living	0	47	104	129
Total	101	276	519	543

SRC Recommendation 5: DARS shall serve more students with disabilities and requests that DARS provide quarterly reports on efforts to serve this population, particularly students with disabilities.

DARS Response 5: DARS successfully increased the number of students with disabilities receiving services, particularly pre-employment transition services (pre-ETS). Updates for this recommendation were shared at each SRC quarterly meeting by the DRS Transition teams from both field services and Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC).

- a. *DARS should continue to increase outreach to local education agencies, families, and students regarding the availability of and access to transition and Pre-ETS services. Increasing collaboration between DARS, the Virginia Department of Education, other community partners*

including providers, and local education agencies.

The manager of the Career and Workforce Development Division at the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC);, the DARS Statewide Transition Specialist for Staff Development); ,the DARS Statewide Transition Specialist for Deaf Services;, and the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) Community Engagement Coordinator, presented at the Parent Education Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) Parent and Youth Empowerment Summit. The goals of the Summit were to increase parents' capacity to help their children with disabilities improve their post-secondary outcomes and to increase the capacity of youth to be effective self-advocates. PEATC is committed to reaching all families, educational institutions, and communities to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. PEATC builds positive futures by empowering individuals with disabilities through education and training.

Further partnerships saw WWRC and Division of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) staff present at the VCU Partnership for People with Disabilities (PPD) Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Summer Institute Team Training Cohort XV in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). The goal of the presentation was to highlight the postsecondary transition program options at WWRC in addition to the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) services DARS provides to school divisions throughout the State.

Further outreach was conducted during the summer with the Associate Director for Curriculum, Instruction, and Innovation, Office of Career and Technical Education (CTE) at the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), touring WWRC. with the goal of the tour being to support the possible creation of a specialized VDOE teaching license for WWRC, due to its status as a State Operated Program (SOP).

The Manager of the Career and Workforce Development Division, and the Director of the Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation Transition (PERT) program at the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC); the Assistant Commissioner for Developmental Services at the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Development Services (DBHDS); the Director of Employment Services and Special Programs at the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS); and the Director of Employment Services at SOAR 365 presented at the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Special Education Leaders Academy in Richmond, Virginia.

They were part of a panel presentation to twenty special education leaders and administrators from school divisions throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. The focus of the panel was the Virginia Employment and Education/Training Transition Initiatives at the K-12 public schools, WWRC (Vocational Evaluation, PERT, Workplace Readiness Program, and Vocational Training), DARS, and DBHDS. WWRC was a main focal point of this panel with its initiative on having an industry recognized credential in every workforce driven vocational training program and aligning PERT and the Workplace Readiness Program with pre-ETS.

The Statewide Transition Specialist, participated in the State and Local

Advisory Team (SLAT) meeting where representatives from state and local agencies that provide children's services meet to discuss initiatives, policy and legislative information.

Additional DARS staff participate in the Family Engagement Network (FEN). They work collaboratively with the FEN to increase awareness of DARS for parents of children with disabilities who may benefit from DARS services.

- b. *DARS should identify local education agencies in which Pre-ETS is under-utilized and conduct direct outreach.*

The Transition Team works with the field staff, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), Gear Up Virginia/State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), and the Training and Technical Assistance Centers (TTAC's) to identify underserved areas.

Targeted outreach was held with Transition Day Events planned for Lancaster and King and Queen High Schools for September and October 2025. Also, addressing unmet need, Alleghany High School now has a designated DARS counselor.

DARS hosted a Virginia Capacity Building Institute, in the Summer of 2025. Teams from seventeen (17) school divisions along with the corresponding DARS local field offices came together for two days at WWRC to build relationships and plan services for Students with Disabilities (SWDs) using the Model Best Practices Implementation guide developed by Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) for DARS. The guide can be found at www.Preets.org. Schools were invited based on the need to increase Pre-ETS and transition services to SWDs.

The Deaf & Hard of Hearing Coordinator (DHHC) identified gaps in service areas and developed outreach opportunities through direct engagement. This included initiating and leading meetings between Regional Counselors for the Deaf (RCDs) and local schools to foster understanding and build stronger collaborative relationships essential to Pre-ETS success.

The DHHC acted as a liaison to improve coordination between schools and DARS staff, helping both parties recognize shared goals and align their efforts in support of students. These efforts facilitated staff involvement with the VCU project.

- c. *Data on types of services utilized, geographic trends, and information on the frequency with which students who receive Pre-ETS services move on to VR services should be evaluated and reported to the SRC.*

This information was reported at each quarterly SRC meeting.

Final FFY2025 highlights through September 2025 include:

- 1301 Pre-ETS cases moved from Potential Eligible (PE) to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) compared to 914 Pre-ETS cases moved from PE to VR in FFY2024. (approximately 42.34% increase)

- 3652 Pre-ETS applications were taken in FFY2025 compared to 3474 Pre-ETS applications taken in FFY2024. (approximately 5.12% increase)
- 26,131 Pre-ETS services provided in FFY 2025 compared to 22,915 Pre-ETS services provided in FFY2024. (approximately 14.03% increase)

- d. *DARS should expand work-based learning experiences for transition age youth, preferably while still in school, to improve employment outcomes at graduation.*

DARS recognizes the value of work-based learning experiences and has diligently sought opportunities to expand this service. Updates were provided at the quarterly SRC meetings.

The first Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) Pre-ETS Academy was completed during the week of June 16-20, 2025.

The 1-week Academy focused on the following Pre-ETS standards: Job Exploration Counseling, Work-Based Learning Experiences, Counseling on Educational and Training Options, Workplace Readiness Training, and Self-Determination.

The Transition Team onboarded three new Pre-ETS providers to expand the ability to offer paid Work Experiences to the Southwest District.

The Transition Team coordinated summer work-based learning opportunities with Rappahannock Community College (one week culinary and welding academies) (<https://preets.vcurr.tc.org/beaconsofexcellence/>), Virginia Space Consortium (one week drone academy and drone days), and Intellectual Point (one week virtual STEM academies).

DARS consulted with the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition. The Collaborative (NTACT:C) team offered support and technical assistance to field staff to facilitate and increase work-based learning and summer work experiences for students.

DARS also hosted a quarterly Pre-ETS Community of Best Practice meeting for DARS staff. At these events staff had the opportunity to share ideas, plans, successes and challenges in relation to expanding work-based learning experiences for students. These meetings fostered an environment for staff to brainstorm and solve problems to improve services and outcomes.

SRC Recommendation 7: DARS shall define its existing workforce and examine opportunities for improved employee diversity with respect to populations served, while also recognizing recruitment and retention challenges among its highly skilled direct service workforce.

DARS Response 7:

In partnership with DARS Human Resources, DRS continues to expand outreach efforts to diverse populations in recruiting efforts by utilizing a variety of local

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sources to promote opportunities. This includes college/university collaboration for our Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor classification. Recruitment in different publications for targeted audiences has also been pursued.

The Alternate Hiring Process (AHP) is another method state agencies like DARS may use to help increase the number of individuals with disabilities employed by their agency and increase the diversity of their labor force. DARS not only uses the AHP process for recruitment but is an active participant in the AHP process.

AHP has received over 3955 requests for an AHP Letter (formerly Certificate of Disability) as of August 2025. The Pathways staff at DARS has attempted to contact these candidates, via phone and/or email, since April 2022 to help candidates understand the Alternative Hiring Process and process their letters.

Through the DHRM/ Pathways collaborative model non-DARS candidates that received an AHP are invited to attend an AHP and DARS overview. These overviews started in February 2025. This 2-hour Zoom overview covers the Alternative Hiring Process, DARS services, how to navigate the Virginia Jobs website, guidance on job seeking strategies, and how to organize their job search. Afterwards, the participants receive a follow-up email with helpful job seeking strategy links and attachments. Over Federal Fiscal Year 2025, there were 1282 AHP letter requests and 684 issued from DARS/DBVI and non-VR participants. Seventy-one (71) new Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) cases were opened based off referrals stemming from AHP requests. AHP hiring through March 2025 is as follows: 156 total AHP hires through Executive Branch agencies in the Commonwealth; 45 total AHP hires through Virginia Community College Systems (2 individuals with disabilities); 2 AHP hires from George Mason University. Executive Branch agencies participating in the AHP hiring process include DARS.

SRC Recommendation 8: DARS will report on business development efforts including collaboration with Employment Service Organization (ESOs), workforce development partners, and businesses that support the hiring of individuals with disabilities with an emphasis on the practices and procedures to onboard these partners at the first SRC meeting of 2025.

DARS Response 8: In keeping with SRC Recommendation 8, presentations were made quarterly to the SRC.

DARS continues to promote Windmills by offering monthly and customized sessions. DARS is sponsoring an Innovative Guided Rehabilitation Employer Engagement Training (IGREET) training for ESO staff on the dual customer approach to business development. Seventy-six (76) ESO staff have registered to complete the four sessions facilitated by DARS Business Development Managers (BDMs) beginning in November 2025.

Through the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement (Virginia Works) the Pathways collaborative model has worked towards increasing knowledge of Registered Apprenticeship (RA) for individuals with disabilities. Over the last six months of FFY2025, the following occurred: training on the Pathways grant and DARS services with new Virginia Works consultants; multiple meetings to discuss braided funding and resources; and sharing employer contacts for RA advancement.

Virginia Works and the DARS Pathways to Career Grant have been working on expanding the strength of the partnership which would include access to the National Apprenticeship software (Rapids) for the RA Liaison. This will enable the

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RA Liaison to have access to employee information across the state that has RAs. The Memorandum of Understanding has been drafted, reviewed and signed by both agencies.

In Celebration of National Apprenticeship Week, Pathways in partnership with Virginia Works, Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board, and staff from the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and Wilson Workforce Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) provided a tour for twenty-four (24) participants, including representatives from ComSonics, Colonial Webb, Plumbers & Pipefitters Union Local 10, Atlantic Outreach Group, and Southern Aire. The tour provided an overview of workforce training programs and an opportunity to demonstrate how these programs are meeting the evolving training needs of businesses and to explore potential partnerships that support apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship pathways.

Fourteen (14) DARS and former DARS participants will begin a registered Apprenticeship in November 2025 through Enabled Intelligence in geospatial data annotation with an included federal security clearance paid for by Enabled Intelligence.

- COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CSNA).

Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to provide an assessment of:

1. THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES
RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE,
INCLUDING:

- A. INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES AND
THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED
EMPLOYMENT;

DARS concluded the most recent Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in March 2025. The CSNA was conducted by the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University. The CSNA was conducted using quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry. The purpose of the CSNA was to identify and describe the vocational rehabilitation (VR) needs of individuals with disabilities residing in Virginia. In particular, the CSNA provides information on: 1) the overall performance of DARS as it relates to meeting the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in the Commonwealth; 2) the rehabilitation needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their needs for supported employment (SE) services; 3) the rehabilitation needs of individuals who are minorities, and those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program; the rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities in transition, including their need for pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS); 4) the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; 5) the need to establish, develop and/or improve community rehabilitation programs within the Commonwealth; and 6) the needs of businesses in recruiting, hiring, accommodating, and retaining individuals with disabilities.

The Interwork Institute project team reviewed a variety of existing data sources for the purposes of identifying and describing demographic data within Virginia.

Specifically, the agency and the SRC focused on determining the needs of (1)

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individuals with most significant disabilities, including their needs for supported employment services; (2) individuals who are minorities, including individuals who have been unserved or underserved; and (3) individuals who are served through other components of Virginia's statewide workforce development system. In addition, the need to establish, develop, or improve Employment Service Organizations, also known as community rehabilitation programs, that serve individuals with disabilities was assessed. In general, the process included: a review of pertinent literature; data analysis of internal DARS data via use of the RSA-911; analysis of statewide educational, business and demographic data; and focus groups with employment services organizations, DARS staff, Virginia Department of Education staff, individuals who have received services from DARS and their families. Sources for disability statistics included the American Community Survey (ACS), the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance (BRFSS), the Social Security Disability Benefits Database, and data from the Virginia Department of Education.

In conducting their survey, the Interwork Institute issued and highlighted the following findings and recurring themes when looking at the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment:

1. Lack of transportation is a major barrier to employment for individuals with disabilities, especially in rural areas. Transportation was described as a struggle all over, even though Virginia has some large urban areas where public transportation is more prevalent. There are many rural areas of the state where public transportation is nonexistent. Once consumers find employment, sustainable transportation becomes a challenge due to the cost.
2. Common VR needs identified across all research methods for individuals with the most significant disabilities include:
 - a. Need for job skills/work experience.
 - b. Need for education or training.
 - c. Need to address employer perceptions about employing people with disabilities.
 - d. Mental health concerns.
 - e. Lack of soft skills.
 - f. Concern over benefit loss from working.
3. DARS operates the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC), which provides independent living and vocational training services to individuals with the most significant disabilities in a residential setting. WWRC is an important and essential program for individuals who need intensive workplace readiness training to reenter the workforce.
4. DARS serves a large number of individuals with substance use disorders and mental health impairments. The common VR needs of these individuals include:
 - a. Rapid engagement.
 - b. Training to improve their skills for employment.
 - c. Resources or training to pursue self-employment.
 - d. Connections to resources for housing and other services.
 - e. Job placement assistance, often to address criminal history.

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f. Transportation.

g. Medication maintenance.

h. Placement assistance.

5. Homelessness has become a major barrier for individuals with disabilities in Virginia. The issue became magnified with the onset of the pandemic and has not improved since, especially related to the increase in housing costs. Many individuals cannot afford housing, which affects their ability to engage in employment.

6. There is a need to expand customized employment (CE) in Virginia as a service option for individuals with the most significant disabilities. The agency is working to scale-up this service as part of Real Pay for Real Jobs Education and Outreach, Partnership Development, Provisions of Individualized Services, and Capacity Building (RPRJ EPIC) project, but it has been a challenge to expand and sustain the service.

7. DARS provides extensive supported employment (SE) services to individuals with severe mental illness (SMI). DARS is able to use long-term employment support services (LTESS) funds for extended services for SE. There is a long wait list for Medicaid waiver services in the state, so the availability of LTESS funds is critical for the SE program and timely services to individuals with the most significant disabilities that have a dual diagnosis of a significant mental illness and an intellectual or other developmental disability.

8. There is a need for basic computer skills training for many DARS consumers. The lack of broadband internet service in some rural areas, and the lack of exposure to computer training can be a significant barrier to being qualified for even entry-level employment.

Virginia Population Estimates of Disability

The United States Census Bureau July 1, 2023 Annual Population Estimates of the Resident Population indicated that the total non-institutionalized civilian population for Virginia was estimated at 8,715,698, inclusive of all ages. Of these, 1,106,894 individuals reported a disability, which translates to a 12.7% prevalence rate (+/- 0.2 margin of error) within the state. The percentage of disability reported in Virginia in 2023 was lower in comparison to the percentage of individuals with a disability observed nationwide (13.4%) during the same year. Further, the Annual Disability Statistics Compendium (2023) reported on the difference in employment rates between people with and without disabilities.

Data from the 2024 American Community Survey (ACS-2024), collected by the United States Census Bureau, was used to summarize the most recent disability estimates and demographic information available for the state of Virginia. Findings on disability type from the ACS-2024 are presented by age group (i.e., under 18, ages 18-64, and 65 and older).

For individuals with a disability in Virginia under age 18, cognitive difficulty was the most prevalent (5.8%). Followed by self-care difficulty (1.6%), vision difficulty (0.8%), ambulatory difficulty (0.6%) and hearing difficulty (0.5%).

Among individuals between ages 18 and 64, cognitive difficulty was most prevalent (5.0%), followed by ambulatory difficulty (4.0%), independent living difficulty (3.8%), vision difficulty (2.1%), hearing difficulty (1.8%), and self-care difficulty (1.4%).

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For those 65 and older, ambulatory difficulty was most prevalent in 2024 (19.2%) with rates for other disability types as follows: independent living difficulty (12.4%), hearing difficulty (12.3%), cognitive difficulty (7.2%), self-care difficulty (6.5%), and vision difficulty (5.2%).

The National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research released the 2024 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium in March 2024. The Compendium found that in 2022, Virginia's employment rate for individuals with disabilities, ages 18 to 64 was 44.4 percent and the employment rate was 78.8 percent for individuals without disabilities. The employment gap for Virginia was 34.4 percent. Compared to the 50 states, Virginia's employment gap ranked 18th in the nation (lowest rate to highest rate rank order). In PY 2023, 89.3% of DARS clients served were classified as most significantly disabled. In PY 2024, the percentage of most significantly disabled decreased 1.5% to 82.4%.

In FFY 2024, Virginia had 2,367 cases closed after successful employment for individuals with most significant disabilities. It is estimated that 6,014 cases served would receive supported employment services in FFY 2027, 28.7% of all cases served. The estimated cost per person for supported employment services in FFY 2027 is \$2,276.37, for a total of \$13,690,106.81 (48.8% of total spending).

The 2025 CSNA highlights that DARS provides extensive Supported Employment (SE) services to individuals with severe mental illness (SMI). The data supports this conclusion as DARS provides as much or more SE services than the largest VR programs in the nation. Extended services in SE are provided through ESOs which includes Community Service Boards (CSBs). Some of the vendors are preferred over others due to the quality of their services. The providers who are known for the quality of their services often have waiting lists.

DARS is able to use long-term employment support services (LTESS) funds for extended services for SE. There is a long wait list for Medicaid waiver services in Virginia, so the availability of LTESS funds is critical for the SE program and timely services to individuals with the most significant disabilities.

B. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES AND
INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR
UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

MINORITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Individuals with disabilities who are minorities were a special focus of the 2025 needs assessment.

Gender: Disability rates were slightly higher for females compared to males in both the U.S. and in Virginia according to the ACS-2023. The disability rates were higher in Virginia at 12.5% compared to 12.0% for males. The gender breakdown for clients served in Virginia in 2024 is shown below:

- Male - # served (%) n = 14,195 or 60.4%
- Female - # served (%) n = 9,127 or 38.9%
- Does not wish to self-identify - # served (%) n = 89 or 0.4%

DARS served more males than females in 2024. While self-selection for DARS services has to be considered, females are underrepresented in the DARS population.

Race/Ethnicity: The highest percentage of disability within a minority racial category was observed for Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander persons in Virginia.

According to the 2024 American Community Survey, the estimated average rates of disability among ethnic categories in Virginia is shown below:

- Black/African American: 15.4%
- White alone, not Hispanic or Latino: 14.0%
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race): 8.1%
- American Indian and Alaska Native alone: 14.4%
- Asian alone: 7.1%
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone: Not available
- Two or more races: 9.8%

Race/Ethnic Breakdown of Clients served by DARS in PY 2024 are shown below:

- Black/African American: 32.5%
- White alone, not Hispanic or Latino: 53.1%
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race): 7.0%
- American Indian and Alaska Native alone: 0.2%
- Asian: 2.9%
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone: 0.1%

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- Multiple races identified: 2.8%

The minority race/ethnic groups that are underrepresented in the DARS population include Asians, Hispanics, and Multi-Race individuals. Self-selection for DARS services may play a role in the race/ethnicity of clients served by DARS.

BARRIERS FOR MINORITIES/COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The CSNA sought to address the barriers and employment needs of minority populations. Surveys of individuals, community partners, and DARS staff were conducted. For individuals they were asked a question regarding their preferred language for communication. DARS staff and community partners were provided a list of 23 barriers and asked to identify the barriers to achieving employment goals for clients who were racial or ethnic minorities.

Ninety-five community partners responded to the survey. The first ranking item, “lack of reliable transportation” was selected by about 64 percent of the partners as a barrier to achieving employment goals for minorities. “Limited job skills/work experience” and “lack of education or training” were ranked second and third as barriers to employment goals for minorities by community partners. The top two barriers identified by community partners are the same top two barriers the community partners cited for the general population of DARS’ clients.

Staff selection of barriers to achieving employment goals for minorities had a limited number of differences from DARS staff choices for the general population of DARS clients. Additionally, staff and partners differed slightly in their ranking order of barriers that prevent clients who are racial or ethnic minorities from achieving their employment goals. One hundred eleven staff members responded to the survey, and an equal number of staff selected “language barriers” and “lack of reliable transportation” as a barrier to achieving employment goals for those who are racial or ethnic minorities. “Limited job skills/work experience” and “lack of education or training” rounded out the top four most frequently cited responses by staff. The following is a list of all barriers to employment cited by community partners and staff for clients who are racial or ethnic minorities with ranking from most frequently cited to least by community partners:

- Lack of reliable transportation
- Limited job skills/work experience
- Lack of education or training
- Lack of job search/interview skills
- Language barriers
- Employers’ perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- Lack of soft skills
- Lack of cultural competence
- Other transportation issues
- Concern over loss of Social Security benefits, or other benefits such as

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Medicaid, due to working

- Lack of available jobs
- Lack of technology skills
- Mental health concerns
- Lack of housing
- Lack of childcare
- Criminal record
- Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- Lack of Internet access
- Substance abuse
- Other
- Lack of assistive technology
- Other health concerns
- Lack of attendant care

C. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES SERVED THROUGH OTHER
COMPONENTS OF THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
SYSTEM; AND

DARS is actively engaged at both the state and local level in the Workforce Development System. DARS is represented on the Virginia Board of Workforce Development. A memorandum of understanding is in place with each Local Workforce Development Board and DARS works closely with the American Jobs Centers (AJCs) to assure access to individuals with disabilities.

The VR program currently is co-located as a one-Stop partner in Martinsville, Danville, and South Boston. DARS also has a physical presence in other Workforce Board AJCs. Additionally, DARS has been supporting training on career counseling, motivational interviewing, as well as Customized Employment for our workforce partners.

In FFY 2024, the following number of DARS clients were served by the Virginia Workforce System:

- American Job Centers: n= 201
- Other WIOA Programs in Virginia: n= 1,277
- Wagnor-Peyser: n=29
- Other Virginia State Agencies: n= 37

DARS staff continues to work with the Workforce Development Centers on a consistent basis, however, the 2025 CSNA found that there is variable quality and integration with the Virginia Works program across the state. Co-location appears to contribute to improved and increased instances of braided funding. In addition,

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the partnership with Virginia Works is strong among substance use and behavioral health counselors. . The infrequent use of these centers may be related to staff’s perceived effectiveness of the centers in working with individuals with disabilities since Virginia Works frequently refers individuals who self-identify as having a disability directly to DARS.

The CSNA identified multiple barriers and areas for improving services in cooperation with other Components of the Statewide Workforce Development System including:. :

- Staff training on how to work with individuals with disabilities
- Communicating with DARS counselors
- Partnering more effectively with DARS
- Outreach to individuals with disabilities to increase/improve knowledge of services
- Highlighting successes
- Improve the use of braided funding
- Partner to develop customized training opportunities with employers

D. YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE- EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER IDEA.

Data on students with disabilities (SWD) enrolled either in public school, private school or home schooled for the 2023-2024 school year were obtained from the Virginia Department of Education. There were 185,651 students in grades nine through twelve who were considered to have disabilities in the 2023-2024 school year. The breakdown by disability is shown in the table below:

Disability	Total
Autism	30,468

Disability	Total
Deaf-Blindness	23
Developmental Delay	15,299
Emotional Disturbance	8,603
Hearing Impairments	1,138
Intellectual Disabilities	8,797

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Multiple Disabilities	2,732
Orthopedic Impairments	441
Other Health Impairments	36,525
Specific Learning Disabilities	54,526
Speech or Language Impairments	26,161
Traumatic Brain Injured	415
Visual Impairments	523
Total	185,651

The largest percentage of students enrolled in school year 2023-2024 in grades 9-12 have specific learning disabilities (30%), followed by other health impairments at 20%.

There are 129,835 students between pre-K and 8th grade in Virginia with a documented disability. A plurality (25.2%) of these students have a specific learning disability, followed by those with a speech or language impairment (18.4%), autism (18.3%), other health impairments (17.7%), and developmental delay (11.3%). A smaller number of students have documented intellectual disabilities (3.6%), emotional disturbance (3.2%), or multiple disabilities (1.1%).

DARS SERVICES TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

From FFY 2023-2024, DARS served an average of 5,058 students with disabilities annually. This represents approximately 9.4% of all 9th through 12th grade students with disabilities in Virginia during this time period, according to numbers from the Virginia Department of Education. Assuming similar populations over the next few years, DARS could expect to serve 4,914 students with disabilities during the 2026-2027 school year, and 4,884 students with disabilities during the 2027-2028 school year, based on projections by the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Services. During this period, DARS also opened an average of 3,150 Potentially Eligible cases (students with disabilities who are potentially eligible for the vocational rehabilitation program) each year, with an average of about 1,334 Potentially Eligible students moving on to apply for full vocational rehabilitation services.

The types of impairment for Virginia's students will also change over the next four school years. The number of clients with Autism, intellectual disabilities and learning disabilities are expected to decrease slightly while emotional impairments are expected to increase. This is depicted in the table below:

Year/Disability	Autism	Emotional	Intellectual	Learning Disability
2018	2,120	1,026	1,616	6,657
2020	1,398	1,065	825	5,580
2021	1,509	1,171	767	4,730

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2022	1,685	1,345	823	4,728
2023	1,775	1,395	1,014	4,584
2024	1,793	5,021	1,384	1,130

DARS continues to reserve and expend 15% of its VR grant funds on Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) services for students with disabilities and 50% of its Supported Employment funds for youth with the most significant disabilities.

The 2025 CSNA found that individuals with disabilities for the total civilian noninstitutionalized population ages 25 and older have higher educational attainment than their peers without disabilities for those who have graduated high school (includes equivalency)(31.7% versus 22.3%) and those who have attended college or have an associate's degree (27.7% versus 24.9%). For those with a bachelor's degree or higher, individuals with disabilities in this population have lower educational rates than their peers without disabilities (24.5% versus 45.9%).

Pre-ETS offers students with disabilities an early start at career exploration and preparation for adult life. Beginning at age 14, students with disabilities can connect with VA DARS for Pre-ETS. DARS works with students, their families, their schools and community partners to enrich transition planning and support students with gaining knowledge and experiences necessary so they may make informed decisions about their future. Topics covered through Pre-ETS include:

1) career exploration; 2) work-based learning experiences; 3) exploration of education and training programs for after high school; 4) workplace readiness training to develop social and independent living skills; and 5) self-advocacy.

The 2025 CSNA conducted a survey of community partners and DARS staff and were asked to indicate the barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition from school from a list of 26 barriers. The top three most frequently cited barriers to employment that the Community Partners cited were: limited job skills/work experience; lack of job search/interview skills, and lack of reliable transportation. These barriers are listed in the top four of the most common barriers Community Partners identified for the general population of DARS' clients. Four of the nine narrative comments received in the category "Other" cited "unknown/I do not provide services to youth." The remaining five comments cited lack of family support, uncertain career path to choose, lack of desire to work, parents' unreasonable expectations, and poor DARS counselors. A total of 103 Community Partners responded to the survey.

The top three most frequently cited barriers to achieving employment goals that the DARS Staff cited were parental concerns, limited job skills/work experience and lack of reliable transportation. Three of the top five most frequently cited to barriers to employment cited by the Staff are listed in the top five barriers Staff identified as common barriers to employment for the general population of DARS clients. Two of the top five barriers Staff cited are identified in the Community Partners' top five barrier choices and the items are in a different rank order. Sixteen comments were received in the category "Other". Two comments indicated that the respondent did

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not work with youth. Five comments cited the youth's difficulties transitioning into making adult decisions, lack of motivation and unreasonable expectations regarding work. Three comments cited lack of parental support, and one comment cited parental expectations of a high salary for the child. Two comments indicated the lack of school involvement and referrals from schools starting at 12th grade instead of 9th grade.

The 2025 CSNA identified the needs of youth and students with individuals in transition. All five of the required Pre-ETS services were repeatedly cited as needed for students with disabilities throughout Virginia. Work-based learning experiences were identified as the most needed Pre-ETS service. The CSNA also found that reliable transportation is a major need for transition-age youth. The lack of transportation in rural areas especially was a primary reason for the inability of youth to participate in a vocational rehabilitation plan or Pre-ETS. There is also a need to increase student and family awareness of DARS services, including the possibility of supporting postsecondary education after graduation, if needed to support their employment goal. Finally, the CSNA found that students and youth with disabilities have a greater need for mental health services since the onset of the pandemic.

Through the Cooperative Agreement between DARS and VDOE and the annual review of local agreements, transition career services and Pre-ETS are coordinated under IDEA and seek to address the gaps and unmet needs identified above.

The local school division and DARS assign a representative whose responsibility includes transition planning. Secondary students with disabilities are informed of DARS and Pre-ETS available through DARS starting at age 14. This may occur by means of the student's IEP meeting and other appropriate methods/processes.

A DARS counselor may be invited to students' IEP meetings when VR transition services or Pre-ETS are discussed. When the counselor is unable to attend the meeting, other arrangements will be made for participation, such as a conference call or provision of written information regarding the student's current or planned transition services or Pre-ETS.

The school's primary transition contact and the primary DARS counselor assigned to the school coordinate regular meetings and communications. The school's contact will provide needed student records documenting a student's disability and a signed consent and information release.

The school's primary transition contact will assist DARS staff in accessing the school environment and identifying opportunities to work with students.

DARS is responsible for the coordination, provision, and/or payment of rehabilitative/transition goods and services for eligible or potentially eligible individuals with disabilities in accordance with applicable Federal and State laws, regulations, agency policies, and guidelines. If there are questions as to who pays for a service, DARS and the local school division personnel should discuss whether the purpose of the service is related to an employment outcome or education attainment; and whether the service is customarily provided by the school or by DARS.

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2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

The 2025 CSNA identified the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs (CPRs) in Virginia that serve individuals with disabilities. CPRs in Virginia are referred to as Employment Service organizations, or ESOs.

The following themes emerged in the area of the need to establish, develop, or improve ESOs serving individuals with disabilities in Virginia: 1) DARS relies heavily on ESOs to provide a wide range of employment services to their consumers. There are areas of the state, like Fairfax, where there is a proliferation of ESOs. There are other more rural areas where there are few service providers and some services, like supported employment, are lacking; 2) There is a need to improve the quality of job placements by ESOs. Employment needs to be consistent with the abilities and capabilities of consumers; 3) DARS is embarking on a VBP model geared towards rewarding ESOs for high quality placements; 4) Many ESOs have experienced high turnover, which affects their ability to serve DARS consumers in a timely manner; 5) There is a lack of bilingual staff to provide services at ESOs, which contributes to the low number of Hispanic individuals receiving services; 6) There are very few ESOs currently providing customized employment. It has been a real challenge to implement customized employment in Virginia. Once staff are training, they leave and there is no one left to provide the service; 7) There is a need for more vocational evaluators in the northern Virginia area. Clients can wait six to eight weeks to see an evaluator after being referred by a counselor. This can delay services for individuals desperate to go to work and is not congruent with rapid engagement; 8) There is a need for more workplace readiness services and work adjustment services for consumers, especially those with behavioral health disabilities; and 9) There is a need to expand financial literacy and empowerment services, which are valuable services for consumers, especially related to benefits planning.

Individual Survey Results: Service Providers and Vendors

Individual survey respondents were asked a series of questions identifying their use of DARS referrals; the quality, effectiveness, and responsiveness of their service provider or vendor; and whether or not they would recommend their service provider or vendors to others.

Use of a DARS Referral

The first question asked individual survey respondents to indicate whether or not they received services from a service provider or vendor that they were referred to by DARS. A total of 63 respondents answered the question. Fifty-four percent of respondents indicated that they received service provider or vendor services recommended/referred to by DARS.

Quality of Service from Service Provider or Vendor

Individuals were asked to rate the quality of service from the service provider or vendor. A total of 33 responses were received and 42.4% indicated that the quality of service from the service provider or vendor was “good”.

Effectiveness of Service Provider Services or Vendor

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Individuals were asked to rate the effectiveness of the services from the service provider or vendor. The majority rated the services from the service provider as “effective”. One-third of the respondents indicated that the services were either somewhat ineffective or ineffective.

Responsiveness of Service Provider or Vendor

Respondents were also asked to rate the responsiveness of the service provider or vendor. The margin of difference between “good” and “excellent” in response to the question is narrow (n=1). The majority of respondents rated the responsiveness of the service provider as “good”. An equal number of respondents (n=6) cited either “fair” or “poor” response to the question.

The final question asked of respondents was whether they would recommend their service provider or vendor to others served by DARS. Over 60% of the respondents indicated that they would recommend their service provider or vendor to others.

Community Partner Results: Service Providers and Vendor

Partner survey respondents were asked a series of questions regarding vocational rehabilitation service provider services in order to identify the availability of services to consumers and whether or not the services are meeting the consumers’ needs.

Services Readily Available to DARS Consumers

Partners were provided with a list of 18 items and asked to select the services that are readily available to DARS consumers. One hundred twenty-seven partners responded to the question. Four items were cited by over 82% of partners as services that are readily available to DARS consumers (job search/placement/retention, pre-employment transition services, supported employment, job training). Maintenance or income assistance was cited the least number of times by partners in response to the question.

Services Not Readily Available to DARS Consumers

Partner survey respondents were also asked to indicate which services are not readily available in the area of the state where the respondent works. There was no limit to the number of services that could be chosen. The top five answers for services that are not readily available to DARS consumers are: housing, maintenance or income assistance, health insurance, personal care attendants, and vehicle modification.

Service Providers Meeting Consumer Needs

Partner survey respondents were asked to identify how frequently services providers in the Commonwealth of Virginia were able to meet DARS consumers’ vocational rehabilitation needs. Roughly 47% of the partner respondents indicated that service providers are able to meet the needs of DARS consumers “most of the time”. The next most frequently selected choice of the partners was “some of the time”.

Services That Providers Are Most Effective In Providing to DARS Consumers

Partners were provided a list of 18 items and asked to identify the services that service providers were most effective in providing DARS consumers. There was no limit to the number of services that could be chosen. One hundred and eight partners

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responded to the question. Seventy-three percent of respondents selected supported employment as the service that service providers are most effective in providing to DARS consumers. Job search/placement/retention, pre-employment transition services, job training and disability benefits counseling rounded out the top five responses.

Consumer Needs Services Providers are Unable to Meet

Partner survey respondents were given an open-ended question and asked to identify the vocational rehabilitation needs that service providers were unable to meet in their area. Fifty-eight respondents provided a narrative response indicating various service gaps. The following specific services were noted three or more times in the comments received and a collection of quotes in response to the question; transportation, customized employment, long term support, in-school programming for students and families, benefits counseling, services for individuals with significant disabilities, pre-ETS and mental health.

Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Consumers' Needs

Partners were provided with a list of five reasons and asked to identify the primary reasons why vocational rehabilitation providers were unable to meet consumers' needs. Partners were able to select more than one item if desired. Ninety-four partners answered the question.

In response to the question, 60.6% agreed that there are not enough service providers available in their area. Fifty-five percent cited clients barriers that prevent interactions with service providers that service providers are unable to meet consumers' needs. Twenty-seven comments were received in the category "other" and items cited include lack of communication by DARS counselors with consumers and service providers; lack of individualized services, person-centered plans, and vocational counseling; staff turnover at DARS; transportation; lack of partnerships with employers; and employment budget and willingness to work with DARS.

Top Three Changes that Enable Partners to Better Serve DARS Consumers

Partner survey respondents were presented with a list of thirteen options and asked to identify the top three changes that would enable them to better assist their DARS consumers.

A total of one hundred and two partners provided a response to this question. "More streamlined processes" was the most frequently cited item (36%). "Improved communication with referring DARS counselor" and "smaller caseload" rounded up the top three changes that would enable partners to better serve DARS consumers. Increased options for technology used to communicate with clients was the least frequently cited item in response to this question.

Staff Survey Results: Service Providers and Vendors

Services Readily Available to DARS Consumers

Staff survey respondents were asked a series of six questions regarding rehabilitation service provider and vendor services. The purpose of the questions was to identify the availability of services that DARS refers or recommends to clients

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and to understand whether or not the services are meeting the clients' needs.

Staff were provided with a list of 19 items and asked to select the services that are readily available to DARS clients. A total of 146 staff responded to the question.

Staff and partner results in response to the question are similar, with a slightly different rank order. Seven items were cited by over 83 percent of staff as services that are readily available to DARS clients (supported employment, pre-employment transition services, job search/placement/retention, vocational/postsecondary education, disability benefits counseling, job training, assistive technology).

Services Not Readily Available to DARS Consumers

Staff were asked to indicate what services were not readily available in the area of Virginia where they work. There was no limit to the number of services that could be chosen. A total of 66 staff respondents answered the question.

Over 79% of staff respondents cited "housing" as the top service not readily available to DARS consumers. Maintenance or income assistance, customized employment, personal care attendants and transportation assistance rounded out the top five services that staff cited as not being readily available to DARS consumers.

Staff survey respondents were asked to identify how frequently service providers in the Commonwealth of Virginia were able to meet DARS clients' rehabilitation service needs.

The majority of respondents (67.4%) indicated that service providers were meeting the needs of DARS clients "most of the time". A significantly lower rate of respondents indicated that service providers are meeting the needs of clients "some of the time" (28.3%).

Service Providers Meeting Consumers' Needs

Staff survey respondents were asked to identify how frequently service providers in the Commonwealth of Virginia were able to meet DARS consumers' rehabilitation service needs.

The majority of respondents (67.4%) indicated that service providers were meeting the needs of DARS consumers "most of the time". A significantly lower rate (28.3%) of respondents indicated that service providers are meeting the needs of clients "some of the time".

Service Needs that Service Providers Are Unable to Meet

Staff respondents were provided a list of 19 items and asked to identify the service needs that vocational rehabilitation service providers were unable to meet. There was no limit to the number of services staff could choose. One hundred and fourteen respondents participated in answering this survey question.

Staff cited "housing" as the top service need that vocational rehabilitation service providers are unable to meet. "Customized employment" ranked in the second position by a difference of 14.1% (n=16) from the top item "housing." Although roughly two-thirds of staff (66.4%) identified "mental health treatment" as a readily available service to DARS consumers, almost 30 % of staff identified the service as one of the service needs that rehabilitation service providers are unable to meet.

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Four comments were received in the category "other" and one comment contained the phrase "I don't know." The phrase "helping clients actually apply for jobs" and "work adjustment training" were cited one time. An appeal for DARS to examine services for the deaf and hard of hearing was identified in the remaining comment.

Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Consumers' Needs

Staff were provided with a list of six reasons and asked to identify the primary reasons why VR service providers were unable to meet clients' service needs. Respondents were able to select more than one item if desired. A total of one hundred and eighteen staff answered the question.

Staff (78%) selected "not enough service providers are available" as their first choice of primary reasons why service providers are unable to meet consumers' vocational rehabilitation needs and 42.4% selected "consumer barriers prevent successful interactions with service providers" as their second reason for why services providers are unable to meet consumers' needs. Slightly more than one-fourth of staff cited the item "burden caused by administrative processes" as a primary reason why service providers are unable to meet clients' needs. Comments received in the category "other, please describe" cited items such as transportation, staffing turnover at DARS and with ESOs, agency policies, housing and long waitlists as primary reasons why the service needs of clients are not met by providers.

Most Important Change Service Providers Could Make to Support Consumer Efforts to Achieve Employment Goals

Staff respondents were asked an open-ended question to identify the most important change that service providers could make to support consumers' efforts to achieve their employment goals. A total of 94 responses were received. Content analysis indicated consistent themes regarding improving communication with DARS; addressing transportation needs; hiring more job coaches and improving the quality of the job coaches; DARS creating and providing in-house job coaches; hiring more counselors at DARS; increasing the number of service providers; developing employer relationships and increasing connections with in-demand industries; and DARS hiring staff with ASL fluency and deafness knowledge, skills and abilities instead of paying for a service provider (job coach), interpreter, and their travel times.

The 2025 CSNA identified a need to establish, enhance, or expand community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) in Virginia that serve individuals with disabilities. In Virginia, CRPs are referred to as Employment Service Organizations (ESOs).

DARS relies heavily on ESOs to deliver a wide range of employment services. While areas like Fairfax have numerous ESOs, rural regions lack providers and critical services such as supported employment. There is also a need to improve job placements to ensure they align with consumers' abilities and capabilities. To address this, DARS is implementing a Value-Based Purchasing (VBP) model to incentivize ESOs for high-quality placements.

High staff turnover among ESOs impacts timely service delivery, and a shortage of bilingual staff limits services for Hispanic individuals. Few ESOs offer customized employment, and staff attrition after training hinders

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implementation. Northern Virginia faces a shortage of vocational evaluators, causing delays of six to eight weeks for assessments and slowing rapid engagement efforts.

Additionally, there is a need for more workplace readiness and work adjustment services, particularly for individuals with behavioral health disabilities. Expanding financial literacy and benefits planning services is also essential to empower consumers.

Individual Survey Results: Service Providers and Vendors

Respondents were asked about their experience with DARS-referred service providers and vendors, including service quality, effectiveness, responsiveness, and likelihood of recommendation. Of 63 respondents, 54% received services from providers referred by DARS. Among 33 responses on service quality, 42.4% rated it as “good.” Most respondents found services effective, though one-third rated them somewhat ineffective or ineffective. Responsiveness was generally rated as “good,” with a narrow margin between “good” and “excellent,” while six respondents cited “fair” or “poor.” Over 60% indicated they would recommend their provider or vendor to others.

Community Partner Survey Results: Service Providers and Vendors

The partner survey assessed the availability and effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services for DARS consumers. Of 127 respondents, over 82% reported that job search, pre-employment transition services, supported employment, and job training are readily available, while maintenance or income assistance was least available. Conversely, housing, income assistance, health insurance, personal care attendants, and vehicle modification were most frequently cited as unavailable.

Partner survey results indicate that approximately 47% of respondents believe service providers meet DARS consumers’ vocational rehabilitation needs “most of the time,” while the next most common response was “some of the time.” When asked which services providers deliver most effectively, 73% identified supported employment, followed by job search and placement, pre-employment transition services, job training, and disability benefits counseling.

Despite these strengths, partners reported various gaps in services. Commonly cited unmet needs include transportation, customized employment, long-term support, in-school programming for students and families, benefits counseling, services for individuals with significant disabilities, pre-employment transition services, and mental health support.

The primary barriers to meeting consumer needs include insufficient providers (60.6%) and client-related challenges (55%). Additional issues noted were poor communication, lack of individualized services, staff turnover, transportation, limited employer partnerships, and budget constraints. When asked about changes to

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improve service delivery, partners most frequently cited streamlined processes (36%), improved communication with DARS counselors, and smaller caseloads.

Staff Survey Results: Service Providers and Vendors

The staff survey examined the availability and effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services recommended by DARS. Of 146 respondents, over 83% reported that supported employment, pre-employment transition services, job search and placement, vocational education, disability benefits counseling, job training, and assistive technology are readily available. Conversely, housing was identified as the most unavailable service, followed by income assistance, customized employment, personal care attendants, and transportation.

When asked about service effectiveness, 67.4% indicated providers meet consumer needs “most of the time,” while 28.3% said “some of the time.” Housing was again cited as the top unmet need, with customized employment ranking second. Despite mental health treatment being widely available, nearly 30% reported gaps in this area. Additional comments highlighted issues such as lack of job application support, work adjustment training, and services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The primary barriers to meeting consumer needs include insufficient providers (78%), consumer-related challenges (42.4%), and administrative burdens. Other concerns included transportation, staff turnover, agency policies, housing shortages, and long waitlists. When asked about the most important changes providers could make, staff emphasized improving communication with DARS, addressing transportation needs, hiring and training more job coaches, increasing the number of counselors and service providers, strengthening employer partnerships, and hiring staff with ASL fluency and expertise in deafness.

- GOALS, PRIORITIES, AND STRATEGIES

Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of Section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under Section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. VR agencies must—

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE SRC AND THE VR AGENCY JOINTLY DEVELOPED AND AGREED TO THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES AND ANY REVISIONS; AND

Input from the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is essential to improving the provision of vocational rehabilitation services across the Commonwealth. Throughout the year they are consulted regarding multiple aspects of the vocational rehabilitation program including but not limited to the consumer satisfaction survey, WIOA performance measures, the CSNA, various agency initiatives, and collaborative efforts with workforce and community partners. The SRC provides formal recommendations annually which DARS works to address and provides updates to the Council. Based upon recommendations and feedback from the SRC throughout the year, current WIOA performance measures, a comprehensive analysis of data outcomes, and the CSNA; potential goals, priorities, and strategies were discussed with the SRC at the November 2025 Retreat and Quarterly meeting. Based on those discussions, the goals, priorities, and strategies were revised to reflect the joint intent of DARS and the State Rehabilitation Council.

2. IDENTIFY MEASURABLE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS AND THE BASIS FOR SELECTING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES (E.G., CSNA, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES, SRC RECOMMENDATIONS, MONITORING, OTHER INFORMATION). AS REQUIRED IN SECTION 101(A)(15)(D), (18), AND (23), DESCRIBE UNDER EACH GOAL OR PRIORITY, THE STRATEGIES OR METHODS USED TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL OR PRIORITY, INCLUDING AS APPLICABLE, DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGIES OR METHODS THAT—

- A. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES;
- B. OVERCOME BARRIERS TO ACCESSING VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;
- C. IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES); AND

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D. IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES TO ACHIEVE QUALITY EMPLOYMENT

OUTCOMES.

List and number each goal/priority, noting the basis, and under each goal/priority, list and number the strategies to achieve the goal/priority

Goal 1: Discover and create new opportunities that expand employment options for our VR consumers and that are more effective in meeting our Commonwealth's workforce demands.

Strategy 1.1: Work collaboratively with business and workforce development partners to identify the hiring needs of employers and match those needs with the knowledge, skills, and abilities of our VR consumers. Utilize AI tools to help better match VR consumers to jobs based on their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Strategy 1.2: Support and grow innovative career pipelines through the Pathways project, apprenticeships, and the state alternative hiring practice (AHP).

Strategy 1.3: Offer access and clear pathways to skills, training, and credentials that support good jobs in the community with family sustaining wages.

Goal 2: Prepare VR consumers for the current and future labor market.

Strategy 2.1: Provide services and support leading to expanded education, training and employment opportunities for adult and youth VR consumers. Expand virtual programs that deliver VR resources and education to those who could benefit from remote learning and services, while remaining mindful of technological literacy or access challenges that may prevent some Virginians from fully utilizing these options. Include training programs that focus on expanding digital skills and AI literacy.

Strategy 2.2: Ensure that VR consumers have the necessary credentials to compete for jobs in Virginia's new economy.

Strategy 2.3: Enhance the use of labor market and occupational information by VR staff and VR consumers for career planning and Employment Plan development.

Goal 3: Improve and expand opportunities for youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities, to promote future educational and employment success.

Strategy 3.1: Ensure federal and state funding are maximized by the reservation and expenditure of the required 15% of funds allocated to Pre-ETS.

Strategy 3.2: Maximize the use of talent and skills within the agency by reviewing existing vocational rehabilitation counselor (VRC), administrative, and other staff roles, making any necessary changes to improve the provision of services and outcomes.

Strategy 3.3: Implement improved training to ensure that new counselors have the skills necessary to effectively serve youth.

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Strategy 3.4: Develop and revise processes, guidance, and internal controls for reviewing data as it applies to the 15 % reservation requirement. This includes monitoring expenditures, staff time for Pre-ETS, properly allocating services to Pre-ETS and other elements.

Strategy 3.5: Continue to onboard community rehabilitation providers to provide Pre-ETS. Strategy 3.6: Maximize the use of Pre-ETS authorized activities.

Strategy 3.7: Expand work experiences for transition age youth, preferably while still in school, to improve employment outcomes at graduation.

Strategy 3.8: Develop a Youth Advisory Board to provide consultation to DARS to inform service delivery for Pre-ETS and employment services for students and youth with disabilities regarding gaps in services, including areas of the state the services are lacking.

Strategy 3.9: Identify best practices, create strategies, and partner with other agencies to better serve students and youth with disabilities to ensure a pathway and appropriate services to meet their employment goals.

Goal 4: Ensure accountability and effective performance management.

Strategy 4.1: Effectively and efficiently utilize personnel and fiscal resources to optimize agency performance and the availability of services for VR consumers including a review of staffing and administrative resource utilization.

Strategy 4.2: Provide services that result in meaningful and measurable outcomes through objective assessment of performance and ongoing innovation and process improvement.

Goal 5: Prioritize outcomes and employment in competitive integrated settings for unserved and underserved populations including, individuals transitioning out of subminimum wage or at risk of entering segregated settings after high school and those with mental health conditions.

Strategy 5.1: Develop sustainable services and support for individuals transitioning out of subminimum wage or at risk of entering segregated settings after high school such as peer mentoring supports and family engagement services for VR participants transitioning out of subminimum wage or at risk of entering segregated settings after high school.

Strategy 5.2: Create an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) system to utilize wraparound supports in an organized manner.

Strategy 5.3: Improve employment outcomes for individuals with mental health conditions and substance use disorders by expanding innovative service delivery models such as Individual Placement Supports (IPS) and continue efforts with the US Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) ASPIRE Project.

Goal 6: Expand provider capacity and services to better support and improve outcomes for VR clients through partnerships with the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center, state and local agencies, community rehabilitation providers and other entities.

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Strategy 6.1: Provide peer mentoring/support specialist services to improve engagement and outcomes for individuals with mental health conditions and substance use disorders including collaborating with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to create a service definition for peer mentoring/support specialist, determine acceptable credential for peer mentor/support specialists, and create a system to onboard peer mentors/support specialists.

Strategy 6.2: Improve provider capacity for SE and Pre-ETS by providing training internally and externally to strengthen skills.

Strategy 6.3: Develop SE and Pre-ETS training based on gaps and needs identified in the comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA), Employment Services Organization Performance Report, stakeholder feedback, and program evaluations.

Strategy 6.4: Expand services to areas across the Commonwealth that have limited choice of provider options by: (a) identifying areas of the state where SE services are not readily accessible and (b) establish initiatives to assist existing ESOs to expand into underserved areas.

Strategy 6.5: Increase access to Pre-Employment Transition Services through the expansion of Community Rehabilitation Providers including existing partners Centers for Independent Living (CILs).

Strategy 6.6: Identify and implement effective means to ensure seamless service delivery and supports among the partners, to include American Job Center and Centers for Independent Living.

Goals are necessary for the improvement of any program. To ensure that goals are being met there must be a way to assess if DARS is on track to meet those goals. DARS will continue to employ a variety of tracking and measuring mechanisms to determine if the agency is on track. Many of the strategies listed above have direct measurable elements that will be used to determine if goals are on track or if the agency needs to reevaluate its current position. For example, several strategies, such as credential attainment, are gathered through WIOA measures. Other information is collected and provided to the field on a monthly basis through a scorecard of various measures. In addition, Virginia is preparing to embark on a new CSNA which will provide additional information on the current landscape and where the agency needs to go in the future. DARS also conducts assessments of provider enrollment, business development, client outcomes, and seeks regular input both formally and informally from various stakeholders. Trainings are tracked and regularly reviewed to ensure they are meeting the needs of those attending.

• EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe—

PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED FOR THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS;

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List the goals/priorities and discuss the progress or completion of each goal/priority and related strategies.

Goal 1: Discover and create new opportunities that expand employment options for our VR consumers and that are more effective in meeting our Commonwealth's workforce demands.

Strategy 1.1: Work collaboratively with business and workforce development partners to identify the hiring needs of employers and match those needs with the knowledge, skills, and abilities of our VR consumers.

Walgreens operates a national initiative called the REDI Program—Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative—which provides individuals with disabilities the opportunity to gain hands-on, work-based learning experience in a retail setting. In the fall of 2024, the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) piloted the REDI program in its New River District, Virginia Beach, and Harrisonburg offices.

As part of the launch, the REDI Inclusion Specialist from Walgreens met with over 15 representatives from DARS and various Employment Services Organizations. The meeting focused on how to access and implement the program, review the curriculum and task lists, and share best practices to ensure a successful training experience at Walgreens.

Approximately 10 individuals participated in the pilot program. Following their assessments, 4 participants were offered employment at Walgreens. While the primary goal of the REDI program is to provide training and not direct employment, Walgreens has found the program to be a valuable tool for identifying strong job candidates.

Due to the success of the pilot, the REDI program is now available to all eligible participants across the state of Virginia.

Strategy 1.2: Support and grow innovative career pipelines through the Pathways project, apprenticeships, and the state alternative hiring practice (AHP).

The Pathways Registered Apprenticeship (RA) Liaison collaborated with Virginia Works Registered Apprenticeship Consultants and local DARS field offices to successfully register 5 businesses and 16 apprentices. Key highlights include:

- Hearing Aid Services & Sales – 1st Hearing Aid Technician apprentice in Virginia
- Staunton Augusta YMCA – New apprenticeship – Thrive Together Community Wellbeing Advocate
- Warren County Public Schools - HVAC Technician- Interviewed DARS Candidate & waiting to see if chosen.
- Atlantic Outreach Group - Residential Recovery Advisors. 9 out of 14 apprentices completed apprenticeships and advanced into Peer Recovery Specialist positions.

Pathways continues to partner with the Virginia Department of Education, Virginia Community College System, and workforce development partners to

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launch a food service pre-apprenticeship program. The workgroup has met both virtually and in-person to advance this initiative, which is now accepting applications for October and November 2025 cohorts.

Program Overview:

- Compensation: \$325 total stipend (weekly wages provided during training)
- Duration: 3 weeks
- Program Components:
 - Online coursework
 - ServSafe® Food Handler certification
 - Virtual learning modules
 - Hands-on culinary experience within a local school division
- Outcome: Participants will receive a job interview with the host school division upon completion.

The Pathways grant Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) Liaison has the responsibility of reviewing all the requests that come in for Alternative Hiring Process (AHP) letters which include both DARS/DBVI and non-DARS requesters. Between July 2024 and through June 2025, 1,342 AHP letters were requested and 673 AHP letters were issued. Since April 2022, when the AHP was implemented and through June 2025, there have been approximately 3,726 people that requested letters and a total of 2,057 AHP letters issued.

As the Alternative Hiring Process is for any person that has a disability and not just DARS/DBVI participants, many non-DARS AHP letter requesters have been referred to DARS/DBVI after they learn about how vocational rehabilitative services can help them in their employment journey. Sandy Phipps and Sue Tietjen with Pathways personally refer these individuals to the appropriate offices via email/phone calls. From July 2024 through June 2025, there have been 210 referrals with 105 resulting in opened DARS cases. Therefore, since April 2022 and through June 2025, 545 people have been referred to DARS with 324 resulting in opened DARS cases. These numbers are based on using Pathways as the Referral Source in AWARE.

As the DHRM/DARS Pathways Liaison, Sandra Phipps gathers monthly data from the state's Page Up system about how many state government employees were hired through the Alternative Hiring Process. The data, however, is only from March 2023 as that is when the state converted to Page Up. Therefore, the amount of AHP hires may not truly be reflected as there wasn't a system in place between April 2022 and March 2023 that reflected AHP hires. Between July 2024 and through June 2025, there were 63 new AHP hires in the Executive Branch. 46 hired in Full-Time and 15 in Wage/Restricted positions.

*Not all of these candidates were DARS participants as that is not a requirement for the AHP letter.

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The Virginia Community College System has also adopted the AHP process. Between July 2024 and through June 2025, there were 12 new AHP hires in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS). Please note that the VCCS has only been keeping AHP data since July 2023. Since July 2023 and through June 2025 there have been a total of 48 AHP hires in the VCCS.

Pathways launched a 14-week pilot training cohort specifically for DARS participants who have received an AHP letter and are pursuing administrative careers. The purpose of this pilot is to determine whether grouping individuals with similar career goals enhances their ability to gain the knowledge, training, and experience needed to achieve employment in their chosen field. Developed in partnership with the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC), the cohort utilizes the Professional Administrative Certification of Excellence (PACE) curriculum from the American Society of Administrative Professionals. Participants who complete the program will earn both a certificate and a credential. In addition, Pathways provides weekly programming that includes financial empowerment sessions, VIA Character Strengths training to build resilience, and a Professional Administrative Job Club.

Strategy 1.3: Offer access and clear pathways to skills, training, and credentials that support good jobs in the community with family sustaining wages.

To meet the evolving demands of the Information Technology sector, the Pathways program partnered with Maxx Potential to offer two career exploration opportunities for adults interested in IT:

- Maxx Career Lab: A 15-hour program featuring career exploration, team-based activities, and an informational interview.
- Maxx Virtual Work Experience: A 160-hour hands-on experience in a designated IT role.

This program year, eight participants successfully transitioned into IT-related employment following their involvement in these initiatives.

The Pathways Registered Apprenticeship (RA) Liaison collaborated with local DARS field offices and the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) to identify training sites for participants seeking Related Training Instruction prior to entering formal apprenticeships.

Pharmacy Technician Training

- Penn Foster
- Bremono Pharmacy

NCCER CORE Training

- WWRC & Mountain Gateway Community College
- WWRC (standalone)

Healthcare Certifications

- Atlantic Outreach Group: PRS and Med Tech certifications through in-house training

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The Pathways RA Liaison also partnered with Virginia Works Registered Apprenticeship Consultants to coordinate tours and informational sessions for DARS staff and apprenticeship candidates. Participating organizations included:

- Local Union 26, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), Manassas
- Local Union 10, Plumbers and Pipefitters, Richmond
- Ironworkers Local 5 & 28, Northern Virginia and Richmond
- Phoenix Plumbing
- Southern Air
- Beach Top Bead Welding

Goal 2: Prepare VR consumers for the current and future labor market.

Strategy 2.1: Provide services and supports leading to expanded education, training and employment opportunities for adult and youth VR consumers. Expand virtual programs that deliver VR resources and education to those who could benefit from remote learning and services, while remaining mindful of technological literacy or access challenges that may prevent some Virginians from fully utilizing these options.

WWRC has purchased Canvas, a learning management system (LMS), to expand virtual programs that deliver VR resources and education. For case in point, in Occupational Therapy (OT), a pilot program of virtually delivering a driver's learner's permit course was instituted with Christiansburg High School. Additionally, Canvas is being used internally at WWRC in the Workplace Readiness Program, PERT, and Vocational Training. WWRC staff utilized Canvas to complete an Autism Foundations Course to support students who are neurodiverse. In PY 2024, 14 consumers participated in the following programs: AT Fitting and Training Services, Driving Services, Occupational Therapy Services, PERT Vocational Exploration, Psychological Intervention, and Speech-Language Pathology Services.

Pathways, in partnership with the Virginia Credit Union, offers monthly sessions (4 sessions throughout the month) on Financial Empowerment-Taking Control of Your Money. Each 60-minute zoom session is facilitated by Christopher Woodbury, the VACU Financial Education Program Manager. Since July 2024 and through June 2025, 32 DARS Pathways participants attended.

Pathways offer virtual success seminars which provide young professionals, college students and career switchers/returning workforce candidates with the opportunity to build professional work readiness skills. 82 candidates attended these sessions (Asking for Accommodations, Using AI in your job search, Intro to Linked in and Salary Negotiation).

To expand Registered apprenticeship opportunities and awareness to Virginians with disabilities who may not view Registered Apprenticeship as an option Pathways provide virtual opportunities for participants to learn more about Registered Apprenticeship (RA). This past year 69 participants attended the initial RA overviews and 43 attended additional training on RA covering work processes and information specific to career opportunities.

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Strategy 2.2: Ensure that VR consumers have the necessary credentials to compete for jobs in Virginia's new economy.

The Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) Building Trades program added the following new credential: *National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) Core: Introduction to Basic Construction Skills*. Out of 8 participants, 5 obtained the NCCER Core credential during PY 2024.

The DARS Business Development Managers have set up tours across the state for DARS field staff, participants and partners where they have toured local community colleges, vocational schools, and tours at local businesses to learn of the credentialing programs available. During PY 2024, forty-one tours were conducted.

Strategy 2.3: Enhance the use of labor market and occupational information by VR staff and VR consumers for career planning and Employment Plan development.

Pathways offer Alternate Hiring Process (AHP) overviews to DARS AHP letter recipients to provide guidance to help them successfully apply for state government jobs via the AHP. This 2-hour zoom workshop offered every other week covers the AHP, how to navigate the Virginia Government jobs website, and guidance on job seeking strategies. Afterwards, the participants receive follow-up emails with helpful job seeking strategy links/materials and information about additional Pathways services. From July 2024 through June 2025, 182 DARS/DBVI participants attended an AHP overview.

In February 2025, Pathways started overviews for non-DARS AHP letter recipients to provide guidance to help them successfully apply for state government jobs via the AHP. This 2-hour zoom workshop offered every other week covers the AHP, how to navigate the Virginia Government jobs website, and guidance on job seeking strategies. Afterwards, the participants receive follow-up emails with helpful job seeking strategy links/materials and information about DARS services in case they want to receive vocational services. Often, these individuals stay in contact with Pathways with additional questions and to keep them posted on their progress. Since February 2025 and through June 2025, 58 non-DARS AHP letter recipients attended an AHP overview.

Goal 3: Improve and expand opportunities for youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities, to promote future educational and employment success.

Strategy 3.1: Ensure federal and state funding are maximized by the reservation and expenditure of the required 15% of funds allocated to Pre-ETS.

In FFY 24 DARS exceeded the required 15% reservation for Preemployment Transition services.

Strategy 3.2: Maximize the use of talent and skills within the agency by reviewing existing vocational rehabilitation counselor (VRC), administrative,

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and other staff roles, making any necessary changes to improve the provision of services and outcomes.

In 2023, vocational rehabilitation counselor roles were clarified and specialized into Adult, Student/Youth and mixed counselors to enable greater focus and knowledge base in serving VR and PE clients. We continue to provide role specific training to enhance consumer outcomes in MSG, credential attainment and career pathways.

Strategy 3.3: Implement improved training to ensure that new counselors have the skills necessary to effectively serve youth.

The New Counselor Checklist now includes a prompt for new counselor who are serving students and youth to reach out to the DRS Statewide Transition Specialist for Staff Development. The Statewide Transition Specialist for Staff Development holds individual one on one training for new VRCs. The transition team conducts monthly training that is available for all VRCs providing services to students and youth. In addition, specialized training is provided to Student/Youth Counselors that includes weekly training opportunities, in-person training events and ongoing Community of Practice.

Strategy 3.4: Develop and revise processes, guidance, and internal controls for reviewing data as it applies to the 15 % reservation requirement. This includes monitoring expenditures, staff time for Pre-ETS, properly allocating services to Pre-ETS and other elements.

Processes for Pre-ETS for monitoring expenditures include reviewing expenditures monthly noting trends in services provided, abnormal expenditures, unusual increases in expenditures by local field office and district.

Strategy 3.5: Continue to onboard community rehabilitation providers to provide Pre-ETS.

Over the past year DARS has onboarded 25 providers who can provide Pre-ETS. Some of these were providers that expanded the services they offer to include Pre-ETS.

Strategy 3.6: Maximize the use of Pre-ETS authorized activities.

DARS has used Pre-ETS authorized services to expand access to students, improve service delivery by providers and to deliver high quality training to DARS Student and Youth Counselors. Working with the Virginia Department for Center on Transition Innovations (CTI) DARS has developed a "Model Best Practices Guide for Implementing Pre-ETS". This guide has been used with 10 school districts and DARS offices to develop relationships and ensure effective service delivery. Additionally, DARS and CTI have created a Sequencing Guide for Pre-ETS services to assist counselors in offering Pre-ETS services on a continuum meeting the student where they are.

Strategy 3.7: Expand work experiences for transition age youth, preferably while still in school, to improve employment outcomes at graduation.

1. Transition Team hosts monthly staff professional development sessions including Job Shadowing/Work Based Learning Experiences (WBLE).
2. DARS Celebrated National Job Shadow Month with multiple events across the state.
3. The DRS Transition Team created a fact sheet about WBLE/work experiences that DRS field staff can use as a marketing tool with businesses. The purpose of this document is to increase employer's knowledge of hosting work experiences and thereby increase work experience opportunities for students.
4. Transition Team held a state-wide professional development opportunity in April to provide training on WBLE, the many varieties of WBLE opportunities, the logistics of implementing/authorizing/conducting WBLE, and how to successfully engage students in WBLE.
5. DARS partnered with Center for Transition Innovations to develop a Work Based Learning course for providers.
6. DRS Staff directly provided work-based learning experiences to schools that have underutilized Pre-ETS Services.
7. DARS has worked closely with the NTACT:C team to offer support and technical assistance to field staff throughout the previous year to facilitate and increase work-based learning and summer work experiences for students.
8. Onboarded new Pre-ETS providers who are approved for paid Work Experiences.

Strategy 3.8: Develop a Youth Advisory Board to provide consultation to DARS to inform service delivery for Pre-ETS and employment services for students and youth with disabilities regarding gaps in services, including areas of the state the services are lacking.

The DRS Transition and EPIC teams have begun to develop a statewide Youth Advisory Board. An initial recruitment meeting was held, and attendance was minimal. The team is working on a new strategy for recruitment.

Strategy 3.9: Identify best practices, create strategies, and partner with other agencies to better serve students and youth with disabilities to ensure a pathway and appropriate services to meet their employment goals.

In June of 2025, the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) offered a Pre-ETS Academy to enhance services to students and youth with disabilities. The academy focused on *Job Exploration Counseling, Work-Based Learning Experiences, Post-Secondary Education and Training Counseling, Workplace Readiness Training, and Self-Advocacy Instruction*. Twelve consumers participated in the PreETS Academy for high school students at its inception.

Moreover, in the summer of 2025, WWRC offered Exploration Academies in both Manufacturing and Drone for Youth. During the period July 1, 2025 through October 31, 2025, a total of 26 unique individuals participated in the following academies: Drone License Academy, WWRC Exploration in Drones Academy, and Exploration in Manufacturing.

DARS partnered with the Virginia Department of Education to participate in the first Statewide Transition Leaders Academy STLA. The STLA was a two-day event that brought together – DARS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, LEA Teachers

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and Transition Coordinators. During the two-day collaborative meeting, local teams work together to review best practices, develop collaboration strategies and increase effective partnerships.

DARS Transition Team regularly gives presentations regarding DARS services, including PreETS. Presentations in the last performance year include:

- Parent groups across the state
- Higher Ed Special Education courses
- Virginia Board for People with Disabilities
- VDOE Special Populations Council Meeting
- I'm Determined Youth and Family Summit

DARS Transition team created a Pre-ETS Community of Best Practices (CoP). For DARS vocational rehabilitation counselors school partners and Pre-ETS providers/vendors. CoP meetings are held quarterly.

Transition team attends transition fairs/career fairs throughout Virginia.

The DARS Transition & Education Manager participated in a Web Cast titled "Increasing Technology Awareness and Education during Pre-ETS-An Accidental Finding" with VCU RRTC, Norfolk Public Schools and the University of Kentucky.

DARS continues to work with VCU Center on Transition Innovations across the six DARS districts to develop model best practices that can be replicated across the Commonwealth

The DARS Transition Team participates on the Virginia Capacity Building Institute planning team to plan collaborative events throughout the year.

Participated in the State and Local Advisory Team (SLAT) meeting where representatives from state and local agencies that provide children services meet to discuss initiatives, policy and legislative information

Supported the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) with virtual Pre-ETS training for APSE members, Pre-ETS providers/vendors, and DARS staff.

Designed and implemented *Map Your Future* (MYF), a three-day summer program specifically developed for deaf and hard of hearing students. The program comprehensively covers all five required areas of Pre-ETS and is delivered in a fully accessible format. MYF empowers students through hands-on activities at appropriate age and learning experiences which support their transition planning and career readiness. Twelve students participated in MYF in 2025.

Goal 4: Ensure accountability and effective performance management.

Strategy 4.1: Effectively and efficiently utilize personnel and fiscal resources to optimize agency performance and the availability of services for VR consumers including a review of staffing and administrative resource utilization.

As part of the Field Rehabilitative Services (FRS) Strategic Planning Framework, which began in June 2025 (Phase 1) and is currently in Phase 2 (to conclude July 2026), FRS is currently reviewing and revising practice for all operational process. This includes staffing patterns and workflow optimization to ensure we are effectively utilizing staff and operational resources to

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increase RSA WIOA performance expectations while increasing consumer satisfaction with the VR process and individual employment goals. In Phase 3 (July 1- Dec 30 2026) of the FRS Strategic Framework process, operational and staffing changes will be piloted across the Commonwealth to determine best practice for statewide implementation.

Strategy 4.2: Provide services that result in meaningful and measurable outcomes through objective assessment of performance and ongoing innovation and process improvement.

Virginia vocational rehabilitation performance is measured on required WIOA metrics and additional measures (applications, IPE's, closures) and provided to field leadership monthly, broken down by service district as well as down to the individual counselor caseload level. The leadership team strategizes around any change in performance trends and develops immediate mitigation plans if needed.

In 2025, a longitudinal strategic framework process was launched for VR field offices. We are currently gathering input from staff, stakeholders and through a review of national VR programs to inform any process improvement or innovation in design change we may undertake in our strategic plan to be developed by June 2026.

Goal 5: Prioritize outcomes and employment in competitive integrated settings for unserved and underserved populations including, individuals transitioning out of subminimum wage or at risk of entering segregated settings after high school and those with mental health conditions.

Strategy 5.1: Develop sustainable services and supports for individuals transitioning out of subminimum wage or at risk of entering segregated settings after high school such as peer mentoring supports and family engagement services for VR participants transitioning out of subminimum wage or at risk of entering segregated settings after high school.

In 2022 DARS was one of 14 states awarded a discretionary grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration, to develop and implement the Real Pay for Real Jobs, Education and Outreach, Partnership Development, Provisions of Individualized Services, and Capacity Building (RPRJ EPIC) Project. Nationally known as the Disability Innovation Fund Program - Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment (SWTCIE), the aim of the RPRJ EPIC Project is to help individuals with disabilities currently engaged in subminimum wage employment transition to competitive integrated employment and to assist youth with disabilities at risk of entering subminimum wage employment when they transition from school to the workforce, engage in employment in the general workforce.

The RPRJ EPIC project will build capacity at a local level to improve and expand services to address the obstacles to employment faced by individuals with disabilities. Transitioning from and preventing entrance into subminimum wage employment for project participants will be achieved by building local stakeholder capacity to provide improved services leading to competitive

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integrated employment outcomes. Activities will include 1) building partnerships in local communities including with businesses/employers, 2) increasing current 14(c) employers' capacity to provide evidenced-based services that lead to competitive integrated employment, 3) educating individuals with disabilities and their families about the benefits of employment, including building a family and peer mentor network and 4) engaging local agencies to secure wrap-around services.

Though July 2025 enrollment has increased from 82 at the end of April 2025 to 103 at the end of July 2025. A total of eleven individuals have achieved CIE - eight adults and three youth.

DARS has entered into agreements with EPIC providers to increase their capacity for Customized Employment. Using DIF funds, providers are able to receive supplemental payments for each stage of CE that an individual progresses through.

EPIC Paid Work Experience programming is continuing to build. There are ten individuals who are currently referred or in process of setting up paid work experience.

Strategy 5.2: Create an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) system to utilize wraparound supports in an organized manner.

Through the EPIC Grant DARS is working with George Washington University (GW) to create an IRT system. GW staff assigned to the project are working with local office and EPIC staff to train VRCs and support staff to implement IRTs.

Strategy 5.3: Improve employment outcomes for individuals with mental health conditions and substance use disorders by expanding innovative service delivery models such as Individual Placement Supports (IPS) and continue efforts with the US Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) ASPIRE Project.

DARS has a Behavioral Health Services Team (BHST) that works closely with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to ensure that individual who experience Mental Health Conditions and Substance Use Disorders have effective services. DARS has a long-standing agreement with DBHDS for vocational rehabilitation counselors to work with local community service boards across the Commonwealth. This agreement calls for relationship development, referral processes and quality of services review.

BHST members participate in the Department of Medical Assistance Services' (DMAS) "Right Help. Right Now. Behavioral Health Medicaid Redesign Core Adult and Youth Workgroups." The purpose of this initiative is to redesign Medicaid legacy community mental health rehabilitative services (CMHRS) for both adults and youth to replace/redesign CMHRS services (Intensive In-Home, Therapeutic Day Treatment, Mental Health Skill Building, Psychosocial Rehabilitation, and MH Case Management).

DARS staff participate in the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services' (DBHDS) Employment First Advisory Group (E1AG). The mission of the Virginia Employment First Advisory Group (VA E1AG) is to promote leadership, coordination, and enhanced

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collaboration, among employment professionals and stakeholders, to increase knowledge and understanding of the value of competitive integrated employment in the lives of people with disabilities.

This past year, it has been stressed that the committee is tasked with ensuring that individuals with behavioral health conditions have access to services directed towards competitive integrated employment, as well as individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. An E1AG - Behavioral Health Ad Hoc Group has been established and met for the first time on April 15, 2025. The Ad Hoc Group has been tasked with developing five one-pagers to provide CSB staff and leadership to an overview of the various models of Supported Employment (SE), including Individual and Group Supported Employment, Customized Employment and Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment. Additional one-pagers outline who may benefit from each model, options for becoming a DARS provider of SE, SE provider requirements, and the rate structure for DARS funded SE services.

The Behavioral Health Services Team meets with each of the DRS VR District Directors, Managers, and Unit Supervisors to review how the team can support the districts with collaboration, training, and technical assistance to improve outcomes for individuals with behavioral health conditions. Goals were developed for each district and include behavioral health trainings, resources that would be of benefit to staff, areas for linkage to and/or increased collaboration with community partners. Training topics currently being provided, developed and/or coordinated include Serving Justice Impacted Individuals, Mental Health First Aid, and Trauma Informed Care.

DARS Vocational Rehabilitation Policy and Procedure, [Chapter 4.01 Eligibility](#), was revised March 13, 2025, to further strengthen rapid engagement strategies and allow for expedited eligibility determinations for individuals with mental health (MH) and substance use disorders (SUD) referred by recognized sources. The revised policy now includes the following information:

- If an applicant is referred to DARS by a program or agency recognized as utilizing eligibility criteria that limit participation to individuals with a psychological, mental, emotional, alcohol or other substance use disorder resulting in an impediment to employment, the referral from recognized referral sources may suffice for determining eligibility.
- Recognized referral sources include behavioral health authorities, community services boards, inpatient/outpatient treatment facilities, schools, private treatment providers, Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC), Behavioral Health Courts, etc.

This change will allow the VR counselor to utilize information obtained from the referral form in addition to applicant report, family/support provider report, and counselor observation to complete the participant's eligibility determination.

A report from a licensed provider must be obtained as soon as possible, however, to prevent delays in service provision, the signed report does not have to be obtained prior to determining eligibility for VR services.

IPS teams continue to provide quality employment services to individuals with serious mental health and co-occurring disorders while enhancing collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). Currently there are four active IPS teams across Virginia serving over 250 individuals in IPS in the 2025 performance year.

Virginia Statewide IPS Learning Collaborative has continued for PY 2025, with quarterly training topics related to IPS services, mental health, and recovery-focused employment strategies. IPS Supervisor Meetings has continued for 2025 to provide opportunities for IPS team leaders and program supervisors to come together to collaborate with and learn from their peers, strengthen leadership skills and review best practices in service provision, data tracking, and performance measurement. Virginia remains an active participant in the International IPS Learning Community.

Goal 6: Expand provider capacity and services to better support and improve outcomes for VR clients through partnerships with the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center, state and local agencies, community rehabilitation providers and other entities.

- Business Development Managers across the state invite businesses and partners to tour the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center. There have been over 14 businesses and partners that have attended tours. In the most recent tour, there was an on the spot interview for a Manufacturing Technician trainee. Many of the businesses that attend the tour become part of the WWRC Training Advisory committees.
- The Business Development Manager in the DARS Southwest region, participated in the 2024 Virginia Rural Leadership Institute with the Virginia Rural Center. This institute was an opportunity to visit multiple rural areas of the state and meet with community leaders regarding economic growth and development and opportunities for successful employment outcomes across the state. As a result of the institute, DARS has been working on establishing and maintaining partnerships with several community and business partners across Southwest Virginia. From working with Adult Education partners to Areas 1 and 2 Workforce Development Boards to Industrial Development Authority and Economic Development boards, DARS has educated partners regarding DARS and services offered. To enhance opportunities for successful outcomes, DARS has joined the New River Mount Rogers Workforce Board as a member of the sector strategies planning committee involving healthcare professions, manufacturing, and skilled trades. DARS and the business services team have also partnered with the Virginia Rural Information Technology Apprenticeship at the Southwest Higher Education Center in Abingdon, promoting apprenticeship opportunities to consumers of DARS across Southwest Virginia. DARS is also collaborating with fellow Virginia Rural Leadership Institute member Brian Falin, economic development for Wise County, to meet business partners in the far Southwest areas of Lee, Wise, Scott, and City of Norton. Brian has invited DARS to speak at Chamber events and at Mountain Empire Community College.
- The DARS Business Services team and select placement counselors, facilitated 42 Windmills trainings to over 1697 individuals this performance year, to state and federal agencies, businesses, and community partners. Windmills

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are designed to increase awareness of the role that attitudes play in the employment of people with disabilities. Developed in California in 1982, Windmills consists of modular exercises that can be arranged for one to eight one-hour training sessions.

- The Pathways RA Liaison and DARS Business Development Managers in partnership VA Works Registered Apprenticeship Consultants with National Apprenticeship Week hosted a training tour at Wilson Workforce Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) for Building Trades & Manufacturing training programs. (2 “pre-apprenticeships resulted from these tours”).

Strategy 6.1: Provide peer mentoring/support specialist services to improve engagement and outcomes for individuals with mental health conditions and substance use disorders including collaborating with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to create a service definition for peer mentoring/support specialist, determine acceptable credential for peer mentor/support specialists, and create a system to onboard peer mentors/support specialists.

Through the work of the EPIC grant DRS collaborated with the Arc of Virginia to establish peer mentoring as a service for EPIC participants. Mirroring the requirements through (DBHDS) DARS was able to onboard two providers for Peer Mentoring in VA.

Strategy 6.2: Improve provider capacity for SE and Pre-ETS by providing training internally and externally to strengthen skills.

During the first half of 2025 DARS partnered with the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Management (VRTAC-QM) to develop and implement training related to supported employment for VRCs. The purpose of the training was to strengthen skills in managing cases that utilized supported employment, giving VRCs a better understanding of supported employment services, what to expect from providers who are delivering services and the confidence to be able to oversee the service.

DARS transition team continues to offer training to both internal staff and external providers related to Pre-ETS.

Strategy 6.3: Develop SE and Pre-ETS training based on gaps and needs identified in the comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA), Employment Services Organization Performance Report, stakeholder feedback, and program evaluations.

DARS is continuing to review the CSNA and ESO Performance Report to identify gaps in services.

Strategy 6.4: Expand services to areas across the Commonwealth that have limited choice of provider options by: (a) identifying areas of the state where SE services are not readily accessible and (b) establish initiatives to assist existing ESOs to expand into underserved areas.

Through district provider forums and statewide meetings with providers DARS reviews gaps related to SE service provision and discusses ways to enhance provider capacity to address those gaps. In the last performance year three additional SE providers were onboarded.

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Strategy 6.5: Increase access to Pre-Employment Transition Services through the expansion of Community Rehabilitation Providers including existing partners Centers for Independent Living (CILs).

During this performance year all 14 of 17 Centers for Independent Living were able to provide Pre-ETS services. This was an increase from four the year before. Additionally, 12 other providers of Pre-ETS services were onboarded. As a partner, we continue to work together to develop a system of performance for all 14 workforce development areas.

Strategy 6.6: Identify and implement effective means to ensure seamless service delivery and supports among the partners, to include American Job Center and Centers for Independent Living.

VR field offices in several locations across the Commonwealth are co-located within the American Job Centers ensuring co-enrollment and braided funding to reach consumer goals when appropriate.

DRS operates under cooperative Memorandum of Understanding with all 14 of Virginia's Workforce Boards (American Job Centers) across the Commonwealth.

Goals are necessary for the improvement of any program. To ensure that goals are being met there must be a way to assess if DARS is on track to meet those goals. DARS will continue to employ a variety of tracking and measuring mechanisms to determine if the agency is on track. Many of the strategies listed above have direct measurable elements that will be used to determine if goals are on track or if the agency needs to reevaluate its current position. For example, several strategies, such as credential attainment, are gathered through WIOA measures. Other information is collected and provided to the field on a monthly basis through a scorecard of various measures. In addition, the Virginia Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) was completed in 2025 and provides additional information on the current landscape and where the agency needs to go in the future. DARS also conducts assessments of provider enrollment, business development, client outcomes, and seeks regular input both formally and informally from various stakeholders. Trainings are tracked and regularly reviewed to ensure they are meeting the needs of those attending.

B. PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR, REFLECTING ACTUAL AND NEGOTIATED LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE. EXPLAIN ANY DISCREPANCIES IN THE ACTUAL AND NEGOTIATED LEVELS; AND

Employment Rate, Median Earnings, Measurable Skills Gain, and Credential Attainment

DARS monitors their progress towards the WIOA accountability indicators monthly. Each month a scorecard is distributed to the DARS vocational services director, and district leadership so that outcomes at the state, district, office, and counselor level can be assessed. The monthly report is conditionally formatted so that progress towards the measures can be easily determined and is color coded to provide information quickly.

DARS adds the measures achieved by the Department for the Blind and

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Visually Impaired (DBVI) for the final submission to RSA for the following measures: employment rate at 2nd quarter post exit, employment rate 4th quarter post exit, median earnings at 2nd quarter post exit, credential attainment and measurable skills gains.

The negotiated performance measures below were agreed upon in 2024.

Indicator	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	59%	59.5%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	57%	57.5%
Median Earnings (second Quarter After Exit)	\$4,173	\$4,200
Credential Attainment Rate	63%	66%
Measurable Skill Gains	89%	91.5%

Performance results for PY 2024 are below:

Indicator	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2024 Results (DARS and DBVI)
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	54.2%	54.5%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	53.9%	53.9%

Indicator	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2024 Results (DARS and DBVI)
Median Earnings (second Quarter After Exit)	\$4,274.48	\$4,366
Credential Attainment Rate	32%	56.8%
Measurable Skill Gains	72.4%	77.8%

DARS will continue our partnership with DBVI to extend the trajectory of these improved outcomes. It is assumed that the decrease in performance with MSG could be related to data input. This can be addressed through additional education of staff and a continued emphasis on the importance of data tracking.

Effectiveness in Serving Employers

DARS has partnered with our Core Partners and the Virginia's Workforce Development Board to establish a baseline for each of the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA. The Commonwealth of Virginia selected Retention with the Same Employer and Employer Penetration Rate as the pilot measures to assess the Effectiveness in Serving Employers. The data collection efforts on employer services, which included activities supported by WIOA-funded programs and other non-WIOA funded workforce programs, shows that in PY 2024 there was a 69.3% retention rate for DARS.

DARS monitors our progress towards attainment of these goals with monthly reports on the number and types of businesses served at the district, state, and office level. These reports are reviewed by our VR director and leadership team.

C. THE USE OF FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES (SECTIONS 101(A)(18) AND 101(A)(23) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT) (E.G., SRC, SILC).

The DARS workforce programs unit has continued to promote and deliver Windmills training to employers and has added additional trainers to allow for on demand in person trainings upon request. The DARS Business Services team and select placement counselors, vocational evaluators and assistive technology staff presented 49 Windmills trainings to over 2030 individuals with state and federal agencies, businesses, and community partners over PY 2024.

The Pathways grant has completed the first four years of funding and will move to statewide rollout this year. After four years, over 1,400 participants have been served, meeting the goal of numbers served for the grant. In addition, there have been 471 successful closures with an average hourly wage of \$20.76 and weekly hours averaged 32 per week. There have been a total of 1,987 referrals filed, but not all of those received Pathways services. Total requests for Alternative Hiring (AHP) letters from DARS, DBVI, and non VR individuals is 4,053. This includes 1,051 non VR participants who received letters. Not every request resulted in a letter as some were not eligible for the AHP. From these requests, 569 were referred to DARS and 335 chose to open cases with DARS to

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receive services. This has resulted in 175 AHP executive hires and an additional 49 hires through VCCS, who adopted the AHP process more recently. These numbers may be low, as the Commonwealth has moved to Page Up where tracking is more reliable. These numbers include DARS and non DARS participants.

Funds continue to support Virginia's Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and DARS' State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). Innovation and expansion funds for the SILC are used to assist in the maintenance of Council operations as well as to partially fund two Part B subrecipient grant awards. The SRC uses funding to also support Council operations, including the ability to meet in various geographic locations around the state. The SRC also holds an annual retreat that coincides with the regularly scheduled November meeting. Funds may also be used to support SRC member attendance at educational and networking opportunities such as the National Council of State Rehabilitation Councils.

- SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS, AND ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

A. ACCEPTANCE OF TITLE VI FUNDS:

(A) VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.

B. IF THE VR AGENCY HAS ELECTED TO RECEIVE TITLE VI FUNDS, SECTION 606(B)(3) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT REQUIRES VR AGENCIES TO INCLUDE SPECIFIC GOALS AND PRIORITIES WITH RESPECT TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. DESCRIBE THE USE OF TITLE VI FUNDS AND HOW THEY WILL BE USED IN MEETING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM.

Each year, DARS supplements its Title VI funding for supported employment with Title I funding. This strategy allows DARS to provide Supported Employment services to all clients who require that service to become successfully employed. During FFY 2024, 3,605 individuals received services through DARS Supported Employment programs via Title I case service funds (\$12,127,672.13). This includes Job Coach Training Services (JCTS).

The Employment Services and Special Programs team provides training and technical assistance to all DRS field offices. Technical Assistance for Customized Employment and Supported Employment is offered to individual counselors and in a group to field offices.

DARS will continue to reserve and expend a minimum of 50 percent of its Title VI funds on youth with the most significant disabilities. DARS' policies will allow for the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed four years and DARS will continue to utilize other funds (non-Title VI) for supported employment services for youth. These funds are utilized once the Title VI funds are exhausted. However, in the past five years, DARS has expended 100% of these funds on youth with the most significant disabilities. DARS expects to continue to expend 100 percent of Title VI funds on youth with the most significant disabilities.

DARS will continue to improve the quality of supported employment services to

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individuals with the most significant disabilities through training and technical assistance. DARS will continue its efforts to deliver quality supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities by: (a) providing ongoing training and technical assistance to VR staff and Employment Services Organizations on long-term follow along options; (b) conducting,

on a regular basis, reviews of cases in long term follow along to ensure that appropriate quality services are provided along with effective and efficient use of funds; and (c) developing guidance for, and training, counselors to use the annual Employment Services Organization Outcomes Report as an effective tool to assist clients in making Employment Services Organization choices.

The Commonwealth requires that each of Virginia's Employment Services Organizations approved to provide employment services be nationally accredited through CARF International (CARF). CARF accreditation provides a host of benefits to the Commonwealth as a state-funding source, as well as to DARS consumers, and taxpayers. In addition to assuring accountability and consistent quality levels, national accreditation allows DARS to focus on program expansion, improvement, and accountability. DARS currently purchases services through 62 Employment Services Organizations throughout the state. During FFY 2024, these organizations provided Supported Employment services to 4,389 individuals, including youth with the most significant disabilities. During FFY 2023, 3,605 individuals received services through DARS Supported Employment Program. The Department projects that it will serve this number of individuals in FFY 2025. The Employment Services Organizations provide both time-limited and extended services, which commence at the time of job placement. Supported employment services include extended services, follow-along services, individual, and group model supported employment services.

C. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MAY BE PROVIDED WITH TITLE 1 OR TITLE VI FUNDS FOLLOWING PLACEMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES IN EMPLOYMENT. IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(22) AND SECTION 606(B)(3) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, DESCRIBE THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES; AND THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 defines Supported Employment as competitive work in integrated settings for individuals with severe disabilities for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred, or for individuals for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or is intermittent because of a severe disability, and who, because of the nature and severity of their disability, need ongoing support services to perform such work. Supported employment services are based on a determination of the needs of an eligible individual as specified in the individualized plan for employment (IPE). Supported employment services are provided by DARS for a period of not more than 24 months, unless there are special circumstances and the eligible individual, and the vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselor jointly agree that an extension of time is necessary for the individual to achieve the employment outcome identified in their IPE. In FFY 2023, 336 youth and in FFY 2024, 415 youth with most significant disabilities received services through supported employment programs funded by Title VI utilizing 100% of the Title VI funds allocated to the Department.

Transition to extended services from DARS supported time-limited services is accomplished after the consumer reaches stability in employment. During the 90 days before anticipated case closure, the counselor shall ensure stability based on

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the following:

1) funding for extended services has been secured; 2) job coaching and related interventions have decreased to a level necessary to maintain the client in employment and intervention has reached a plateau or leveled out; 3) client is emotionally or behaviorally stable; 4) client performs expected job duties; 5) supervisor reports satisfaction with client job performance; 6) client is satisfied with the job and work environment; 7) necessary modifications and

accommodations have been made at the worksite; 8) client has reliable transportation to and from work; and 9) client is compensated at or above minimum wage but not less than the customary wage paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by employees without disabilities. Stability for those placed in competitive integrated group supported employment also includes the client completing a 60-day period of placement and training in which intervention is directed at training to maintain production rather than behavioral issues. After that time, the funding is transferred from the basic federal VR grant to the state-sponsored long-term follow along funding. Coordination with the service provider, the client's counselor, and the long-term support arises to ensure that there is both a timely and accountable transition to extended services.

D. SECTIONS 101(A)(22) AND 606(B)(4) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT REQUIRE THE VR AGENCY TO DESCRIBE EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY AND ARRANGE, INCLUDING ENTERING INTO COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS, WITH OTHER STATE AGENCIES AND OTHER APPROPRIATE ENTITIES IN ORDER TO PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. THE DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE EXTENDED SERVICES, AS APPLICABLE, TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 C.F.R. § 363.4(A) AND
34 C.F.R. § 361.5(C)(19)(V).

DARS maintains relationships with private non-profit, private for profit and Centers for Independent Living VR services providers.

DARS continues its collaborative relationship with the more than 59 ESOs across Virginia that provide supported employment and customized employment services to DARS' consumers. The Commonwealth requires ESOs to obtain specific CARF (the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) International accreditation standards to ensure quality in employment services for our consumers.

DARS receives and utilizes stakeholder input from the Employment Services Organization Steering Committee (ESOSC) that provides the DARS' Commissioner counsel on funding and policy issues related to the allocation of Long-Term Employment Support Services (LTESS) state funds, as well as other services that impact providers and fosters close working relations between agency staff and Employment Services Organizations. Additionally, DARS collaborates with ESOs through regional provider forums and statewide leadership forums.

The Commonwealth of Virginia provides state funds to ESOs to increase the availability of extended services and reduce barriers to offering integrated,

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community-based employment options for persons with the most significant disabilities after the DARS time-limited services are completed. A total of \$8,952,766 in state general funds were made available by the Virginia General Assembly for extended services provided by Employment Services Organizations through DARS under the Long-Term Employment Support Services and Extended Employment Services programs.

DRS conducts district wide meetings designed to directly enhance the quality of supported employment services to consumers with the most significant disabilities. These sessions address increasing supported employment options and consumer choice for meeting physical, behavioral, medical, and overall rehabilitation needs; and accessing and expanding placement resources.

DARS along with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), is working with Griffin and Hammis, LLC to provide training and technical assistance to ESOs related to Customized Employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. Training includes the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) certification in Basic Employment Services with an Emphasis in Customized Employment as well as implementing a fidelity scale for CE services.

DARS implements an annual Employment Services Organization Outcomes Report to provide information to VR counselors and their consumers on the performance of each Employment Services Organization to inform decisions regarding service provider selection.

DARS has also established cooperative agreements with the Virginia Department of Education (DOE), the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS), and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) around services for DARS VR clients. The agreements are periodically reviewed, updated, and renewed as needed.

DBHDS and DARS specifically coordinate around the provision of VR and Medicaid waiver services to ensure that VR clients are receiving the support they need to attain and maintain employment. Policies and agreements are in place to ensure that clients receive services and referrals in the most appropriate manner including when categories are closed under Order of Selection and when clients need long term supports.

The Virginia Department of Education has actively funded the PERT (post-secondary education rehabilitation training) program at the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center. The program focuses on youth with disabilities and fosters career exploration through pre-ETS and career academies. DARS and DOE also collaborate on multiple other projects coordinating opportunities for shared clients.

DARS local offices work closely with local entities such as community services boards (CSBs), WIOA Youth Programs, local departments of social services, the ARC, Adult Education, community colleges, and the CILs. Each of these programs has their own set of funding, services, and eligibility criteria and so staff help to identify these resources and refer youth clients based upon their needs.

American Job Centers (AJCs) are also an important partner in the provision of services to youth with disabilities. AJCs have funds specifically set aside to serve

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youth. DARS has developed a partnership where local AJCs will actively recruit VR clients to participate in training and activities specifically designed for this age group.

- ANNUAL ESTIMATES

Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require all VR agencies to annually conduct a full assessment of their resources and ability to serve all eligible individuals before the start of the Federal fiscal year. In accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:

1. ESTIMATES FOR NEXT FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR—

A. VR PROGRAM; AND

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Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
MSD*	19,439	19,439	\$ 26,517,144.81	0
SD**	3,589	3,589	\$ 1,456,313.05	0
NSD***	142	142	\$ 76,107.27	0
Total	23,170	23,170	\$ 28,049,565.12	0

*MSD = Most Significant Disability

**SD = Significant Disability

*** NSD = All Other Eligible Individuals

B. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM.

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Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under Supported Employment Program	Costs of Services using Title I and Title VI Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
MSD*	5,463	5,463	\$ 12,209,670.97	N/A

• ORDER OF SELECTION

1. PURSUANT TO SECTION 101(A)(5) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, THIS DESCRIPTION MUST BE AMENDED WHEN THE VR AGENCY DETERMINES, BASED ON THE ANNUAL ESTIMATES DESCRIBED IN DESCRIPTION (F), THAT VR SERVICES CANNOT BE PROVIDED TO ALL ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE WHO APPLY FOR AND ARE DETERMINED ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES.

VR agencies may maintain an order of selection policy and priority of eligible individuals without implementing or continuing to implement an order of selection.

The VR agency is not implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.

2. FOR VR AGENCIES THAT HAVE DEFINED PRIORITY CATEGORIES DESCRIBE—

A. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER

An Order of Selection is required under Section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, if a vocational rehabilitation agency determines that it is unable to provide services to all eligible individuals who apply for services. As of September 30, 2023, all categories remain open and DARS does not have clients on the Wait List for services under an Order of Selection.

Notwithstanding, DARS maintains an order of selection policy and priority categories, cognizant of the fact that if trends hold, DARS anticipates that funding for its vocational rehabilitation services will not be sufficient to provide services to all eligible individuals in the future. Based upon the growing number of participants and expenditures along with analysis of historical trends, DARS anticipates potentially closing categories in FFY 2026.

B. THE ORDER (PRIORITY CATEGORIES) TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES ENSURING THAT INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; AND

The established priority categories are as follows:

Priority Category I: An individual with a most significant disability
Priority Category II: An individual with a significant disability

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Priority III: All other individuals determined eligible for the

VR program Definitions and Terminology:

An individual with a significant disability means an individual with a disability:

Who has a severe physical or mental impairment which seriously limits one or more functional capacities (mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome;

Whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time; and

Who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, intellectual disability, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), paraplegia, quadriplegia and other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disabilities, end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.

An individual with a most significant disability is an individual with a significant disability that seriously limits three or more functional capacities.

Extended Period of Time: Needing services for a duration of six months

or more. Multiple Services: Two or more services needed to achieve a successful rehabilitation.

C. THE VR AGENCY'S GOALS FOR SERVING INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, INCLUDING HOW THE AGENCY WILL ASSIST ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS ASSIGNED TO CLOSED PRIORITY CATEGORIES WITH INFORMATION AND REFERRAL, THE METHOD IN WHICH THE VR AGENCY WILL MANAGE WAITING LISTS, AND THE PROJECTED TIMELINES FOR OPENING PRIORITY CATEGORIES. NOTE: PRIORITY CATEGORIES ARE CONSIDERED OPEN WHEN ALL

INDIVIDUALS IN THE PRIORITY CATEGORY MAY BE SERVED.

The following provides information on the service and outcome goals for individuals in the three Priority Categories: (1) Most Significantly Disabled; (2) Significantly Disabled; and (3) all other Eligible Individuals. Please note that the provided numbers for all categories are estimates and are difficult to predict accurately with the opening and closing of priority categories.

Priority Category 1: In PY 2026, 16,834 individuals will be served; 2,470 will exit with employment after receiving services; 3,533 individuals will exit without employment after receiving services for a total of 6,003 closed after receiving services, 10,831 will remain open. In PY 2027, 17,137 individuals will be served; 2,570 will exit with employment after receiving services; 3,607 individuals will exit without employment after receiving services for a total of 6,177 closed after receiving services, 10,960 cases will remain open. Cost of services: PY 2026 - \$26,206,817.74; PY 2027 - \$26,393,568.37.

Priority Category 2: In PY 2026, 3,477 individuals will be served; 519 will exit with employment after receiving services; 795 individuals will exit without employment after receiving services for a total of 1,314 closed after receiving services, 2,163 will remain open. In PY 2027, 3,540 individuals will be served; 540 will exit with employment after receiving services; 812 individuals will exit without employment after receiving services for a total of 1,352 closed after receiving services, 2,188 cases will remain open. Cost of services: PY 2026 - \$2,162,560.42; PY 2027 - \$2,177,970.90.

Priority Category 3: In PY 2026, 143 individuals will be served; 31 will exit with employment after receiving services; 39 individuals will exit without employment after receiving services for a total of 70 closed after receiving services, 73 will remain open. In PY 2027, 145 individuals will be served; 32 will exit with employment after receiving services; 40 individuals will exit without employment after receiving services for a total of 72 closed after receiving services, 73 cases will remain open. Cost of services: PY 2026 - \$85,364.23; PY 2027 - \$85,972.53.

Depending upon agency resources, the categories are closed for services in order beginning with Priority Category III, then II and, finally Priority Category I. This policy does not affect consumers who began to receive services under an Individualized Plan for Employment prior to the implementation date of order of selection.

After a consumer is found eligible for VR services, an Order of Selection determination is completed. Additional evaluations or assessments to make the eligibility determination may be provided. The VR counselor, in collaboration with the consumer, determines the consumer's

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Priority Category by evaluating the consumer's serious functional limitations, anticipated services needed and the duration of those services.

When funding requires that clients be placed on a waitlist, all clients must be officially notified of their individual Order of Selection determination. All clients must be officially notified of their individual Order of Selection determination. Clients in closed categories are provided with referral services to the one-stop centers or other appropriate sources and are placed on the Wait List. After 12-months, consumers are contacted to determine if they wish to remain on the Wait List or have their case closed. If they do not notify their counselor that they wish to have their case closed, they remain on the Wait List. Consumers in closed categories may request a review of their priority category assignment by submitting evidence that their disability has become more severe. DARS does not anticipate anyone who applies and is determined eligible to be placed on the Order of Selection Wait List for both FFY 2026 and FFY 2027.

Currently, all categories remain open and DARS does not have any clients on the Wait List. Depending upon agency resources, the categories are closed for services in order beginning with Priority Category III, then II and, finally Priority Category I. This policy does not affect consumers who began to receive services under an Individualized Plan for Employment prior to the implementation date of order of selection.

Projected timelines for opening categories:

Priority Category 1: FFY 2026 0 days; FFY 2027 0 days. Priority Category 2: FFY 2026 0 days; FFY 2027 0 days. Priority Category 3: FFY 2026 0 days; FFY 2027 0 days.

3. HAS THE VR AGENCY ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS OUTSIDE
OF THE ORDER OF SELECTION WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR
EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN
EMPLOYMENT?

Yes.

- WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS.

The State plan shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, however, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (Commissioner) may waive compliance with this requirement in accordance with Section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations in 34 C.F.R. § 361.26. If the VR agency is requesting a waiver of statewideness or has a previously approved waiver of statewideness, describe the types of services and the local entities providing such services under the waiver of statewideness and how the agency has complied with the requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 361.26. If the VR agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewideness, please indicate "not applicable."

Not applicable since DARS does not request a waiver.

- COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT.

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation

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Act, the VR agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act) of the VR agency's comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the State VR agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:

1. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT PERSONNEL AND PROJECTED PERSONNEL NEEDS INCLUDING—

- A. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL CURRENTLY NEEDED BY THE VR AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY; AND
- B. THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF PERSONNEL THAT ARE EMPLOYED BY THE VR AGENCY IN THE PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES, INCLUDING RATIOS OF QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS TO CLIENTS;
- C. PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY, WHO WILL BE NEEDED BY THE VR AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES IN 5 YEARS
BASED ON PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL EXPECTED TO RETIRE OR LEAVE THE FIELD, AND OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS.

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Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

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Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed	No. of Personnel Currently Needed	Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 Years
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor - VRC	172 (including WWRC)	10	185
Placement Counselor	24	1	30
Vocational Evaluator	9	1	14
Program Support	29	0	29
Other Service Staff	71	7 (Total 78)	78
Managers	35	1	36

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23,000

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D. R O OF QUALIFIED VR COUNSELORS TO CLIENTS:

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E. PROJECTED NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED IN 5 YEARS:

2. DATA AND INFORMATION ON PERSONNEL PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION, AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

A. A LIST OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE THAT ARE PREPARING VR PROFESSIONALS, BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS, BROKEN DOWN BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; AND THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED DURING THE PRIOR YEAR FROM EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS WITH CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, OR WITH THE CREDENTIALS FOR CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, BROKEN DOWN BY THE PERSONNEL CATEGORY FOR WHICH THEY HAVE RECEIVED, OR HAVE THE CREDENTIALS TO RECEIVE, CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE.

Select 'Edit' to edit the narrative.

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

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Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates
Virginia Commonwealth University	Rehab Counseling		46
	Clinical Mental Health	19	

Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates
	Dual RC + MH	58 30	
George Washington University	Rehab Counseling	33	6
West Virginia University	Rehab Counseling	69	19
Norfolk State University	Rehab Counseling	No information	No information
Winston Salem State University	Rehab Counseling	No information	No information

B. THE VR AGENCY'S PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL, WHICH ADDRESSES THE CURRENT AND PROJECTED NEEDS FOR QUALIFIED PERSONNEL; AND THE COORDINATION AND FACILITATION OF EFFORTS BETWEEN THE VR AGENCY AND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS TO RECRUIT, PREPARE, AND RETAIN PERSONNEL WHO ARE QUALIFIED, INCLUDING PERSONNEL FROM MINORITY BACKGROUNDS AND PERSONNEL WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

The Division for Rehabilitative Services (DRS) is committed to a highly qualified and diverse talent pool that is reflective of the diversity of our communities and customers. To achieve this goal, DRS in partnership with DARS Human Resources has continued our recruitment plan that includes outreach to all surrounding University Rehabilitation programs and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), comprehensive internship programs as well as mentorship programs with particular emphasis on attracting and retaining candidates from minority backgrounds and those with disabilities. These efforts include targeted marketing to student groups representative of diverse backgrounds, direct work with University ADA and disability advocate personnel as well as continued leveraging of our Disability Innovation Grant – PATHWAYS. The opportunity ensures priority application screening for personnel from minority backgrounds and individuals with disabilities in the hiring process. This opportunity continues to open doors for apprenticeship hiring for staff in our agency. Pathways affords collaboration and staff embedded in the State Department of Human Resource Management and the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry.

The comprehensive Personnel Plan and agency recruitment and selection policies assure that all newly recruited staff meet minimum state requirements. Information from the Comprehensive Personnel Plan is also used to refine job classifications, job descriptions, and performance standards. DARS Management conducts annual reviews of performance standards to ascertain whether the standards continue to meet requirements and needs and offer recommendations, as appropriate.

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DARS cooperates with Virginia colleges, universities, and higher education institutions in other states to place student interns in VR counselor, vocational evaluator, physical/occupational therapy, audiology, nursing and other appropriate professional positions. Paid internships are

provided to graduate students, when possible, along with unpaid practicum and internship placements. Since 2022, fourteen internships were initiated which resulted in two students securing full time VR counselor employment with the agency. The Department is committed to continuing formal and informal internship programs as a workforce planning tool in an effort to attract and retain qualified professionals.

C. DESCRIPTION OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND
ACTIVITIES THAT ENSURE ALL PERSONNEL EMPLOYED BY THE VR
AGENCY RECEIVE APPROPRIATE AND
ADEQUATE TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR
PROFESSIONALS AND
PARAPROFESSIONALS:

I. PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO ASSESSMENT, VOCATIONAL
COUNSELING, JOB PLACEMENT, AND REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY,
INCLUDING TRAINING IMPLEMENTED IN
COORDINATION WITH ENTITIES CARRYING OUT STATE PROGRAMS UNDER
SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF
1998; AND

II. PROCEDURES FOR THE ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT
KNOWLEDGE FROM RESEARCH AND OTHER SOURCES TO VR AGENCY
PROFESSIONALS AND
PARAPROFESSIONALS AND FOR PROVIDING TRAINING REGARDING THE
AMENDMENTS TO THE REHABILITATION ACT MADE BY THE WORKFORCE
INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT.

Staff development is critical to providing quality services. From new counselors to seasoned staff, ensuring professional growth and up to date knowledge is necessary for the success of DARS' VR clients. To ensure new counselors have the knowledge and tools they need to succeed, New Counselor Skills Training (NCST) was redesigned in 2023. This training is required of all Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) staff and is offered to any other field staff who would benefit from attending.

A well-designed and quality training program is an essential part of the onboarding process with new employees, while aiding in staff retention. With creating a new and streamlined curriculum, new employees receive a more focused and strategic training that increases competency, confidence, and retention. Having an established training guide, managers and supervisors save time and ensure new staff are onboarded consistently and comprehensively across the Commonwealth. The training model is comprised of Foundational Learning (to be completed within the first 3 months of hire) followed by four strategically developed Units covering various topics of the VR Process from Application to Closure. Each Unit encompasses four sections; consisting of pre-work designed for completion prior to the in-person training, a 2 day in-person training, homework to promote application/practice and ending with a virtual check-in with the trainers to follow up on any concerns/issues that may have risen. This re- designed training structure moves from four intensive days to six months of intensive training conducted in a variety of adult learning methods.

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Providing this unified robust training curriculum, new hires should receive a comprehensive streamlined training to enhance their learning within the state VR program.

DARS provides a comprehensive in-service training program for VR staff with the use of VR funds earmarked for training purposes. The training programs planned in a given year are identified from training needs assessments, information from the VR consumer satisfaction survey, and discussions with agency management and the State Rehabilitation Council. DARS utilizes the training funds for training activities to include, but not limited to, professional and leadership development, assistive technology, caseload management, job development and

placement, and Pre-employment and transition services for youth with disabilities. Internal and external staff training opportunities are communicated to staff on a weekly basis. These trainings include nationally based opportunities as well as Virginia VR specific topics that focus on process improvement and quality assurance. Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) credits are offered as appropriate. VR staff also acquire knowledge of research activities with their involvement with the National Rehabilitation Association and are provided information and guidance around Virginia Rehabilitation Association membership.

VR Rehabilitation Technology Services (RTS) and AT Act Program/Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) staff work collaboratively to address the assistive technology equipment and service needs of VR participants and staff which includes ensuring that VR staff are educated on AT needs and options. VATS staff are collocated in VR offices and have a highly collaborative relationship with the VR Program to improve access to and acquisition of AT devices and services for VR staff and clients. VATS' statewide AT Lending Library is also collocated with the VR program's Northern Virginia AT Lab. In addition to the main AT library, VATS maintains partnerships with several disability service organizations, to include DARS AT Labs, to provide statewide access to equipment for constituent training, demonstration and/or loan. VATS makes equipment available at DARS AT Labs for State Level and State Leadership activities that VR would not normally provide or to implement a pilot program.

VATS participates in weekly DARS AT Specialist and bi-weekly Sensory Processing virtual meetings to discuss new and emerging technologies, constituent needs, and services. VATS collaborates with the VR Rehabilitation Technology Services (RTS) team to provide hands-on AT demonstrations and trainings regionally for new and seasoned VR staff to improve access to VATS services and to keep staff engaged with AT and rehabilitation engineering services. VATS collaborates with VR RTS staff to address AT access and training needs of cohorts of VR clients in Time Management trainings, College Preparation seminars, and a Sensory Processing Group. In addition, VATS and VR RTS staff collaborate to develop an AT training at Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center for VR staff.

3. DESCRIPTION OF VR AGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF PERSONNEL STANDARDS CONSISTENT WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B) TO

ENSURE THAT VR AGENCY PROFESSIONAL AND PARAPROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL ARE ADEQUATELY TRAINED AND PREPARED, INCLUDING—

A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR - RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE

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EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

To comply with the qualified personnel requirement of the Rehabilitation Act DARS requires VR counselors to possess “a master’s or doctoral degree in a field of study such as vocational rehabilitation counseling, law, social work, psychology, disability studies, business administration, human resources, special education, management, public administration, or another field that reasonably provides competence in the employment sector, in a disability field, or in both business-related and rehabilitation-related field...” (34 C.F.R. § 361.18 (c)(1)(ii)(B)).

A DARS’ vocational rehabilitation counselor will be considered qualified personnel for the purposes of determining eligibility for the VR program. (34 CFR §361.42).

DARS operates a tiered structure for VR counselors’ qualifications. This leveled approach seeks to address challenges in hiring and retaining qualified and effective VR counselors. VR Counselors 1 are required to hold a Master’s Degree in a field that reasonably provides competence in the employment sector, in a disability or human services field, or in both business-related and rehabilitation-related field (including degrees listed in 34 C.F.R. § 361.18 (c)(1)(ii)(B)). VR Counselors 2 hold a Master’s Degree, as previously noted, and possess the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) credential. To recognize and reward the highly valued CRC credential, DARS will utilize an incentive plan, if feasible, to encourage staff to obtain and maintain their CRC credential.

To ensure that Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors have the appropriate 21st Century knowledge related to the evolving labor force and needs of people with disabilities, DARS provides access to national training provided by CSAVR and University based programs through our “Training Tuesday” all staff updates. Staff are encouraged to register for and attend relevant training to increase their knowledge base and functional abilities. Labor market training is also included in our New Counselor Skills (NCST) curriculum. All Virginia VR offices are connected to American Job Centers (Virginia Works) across the Commonwealth and in many locations, are co-located. In addition, VR leadership has an active seat on our Workforce Development Boards (WDB) to ensure that local labor market and employer information is shared. This arrangement provides staff with access to labor market trends and career-cluster based employment with targeted industries. In partnership with our Business Development Managers, who work closely with employers to understand the accommodation needs of people with disabilities, we are able to successfully meet the unique employment needs of VR clients. Our Business Development Managers and Job Placement Counselors work closely with VRC staff to ensure up to date understanding of the labor market and to provide access to employers on behalf of our VR consumers.

4. METHOD(S) THE VR AGENCY USES TO ENSURE THAT PERSONNEL ARE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE IN APPROPRIATE MODES OF COMMUNICATION WITH OR IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE OF APPLICANTS OR ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY.

DARS continues to address the communication needs of consumers by having counselors who specialize in caseloads serving individuals who are deaf and

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hard of hearing and has other employees who can communicate in sign language. There are nine “dedicated” Regional Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RCDs) across the Commonwealth, which include several Rehabilitation Counselors who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. In addition, there is a statewide Transition Specialist for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, who also serves as the statewide consultant on Pre-ETS/Transition issues. WWRC also has sign language interpreters for clients and employees in need of these services. Sign language and foreign language interpreters and translators are also contracted as needed for employees and clients in need of these services. Counselors use other resources, including assistive technology, to communicate with consumers with individualized needs. All VR forms used by the public have been translated into Spanish and are posted on the Internet for public use. In addition, these forms may be translated into other languages based upon client need.

There are also videophones located in each Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RCDs’) office, State Coordinator for the Deaf, Statewide Transition Specialist for the Deaf, and in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Unit at Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation

Center (WWRC). This allows staff and consumers to access Video Relay Services and for consumers to call in “point to point” to discuss their services with counselors.

The agency is always reviewing evolving communication technology and continues to work with state and national community partners (Workforce Development Centers, Community Services Boards, the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, Local Deaf Service Centers and CSAVR Deaf Professionals Network) to pilot software to enhance telecommunications and accommodation needs of staff via text and video services.

The agency continues to develop and implement plans to enhance outreach and services to individuals with disabilities from different ethnic backgrounds, including those with limited English proficiency. DARS has a number of regional and statewide resources available to address the unique service needs of this population, particularly as it relates to interpreting and translation services. In addition, DARS has several Spanish-speaking counselors.

5. AS APPROPRIATE, DESCRIBE THE PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES TO COORDINATE THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT WITH PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT.

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is the state agency responsible for implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004. The DARS and VDOE cooperative agreement outlines collaborative practices on respective policies, eligibility criteria, information requirements, agency programs and services and the coordination of transition services.

DARS continues to be a stakeholder in the review of data that VDOE collects to report to the Office on Special Education Programs (OSEP) to support and accomplish respective post school and employment outcomes required by the federal government and to provide meaningful data collection by each agency.

Additional DARS and VDOE collaborative activities include co-chairing a statewide Community of Practice on Transition. Representatives from DARS, VDOE, local education agencies (LEAs), and the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) conduct meetings and trainings across the Commonwealth to discuss transition and vocational services available to students with disabilities. This collaboration and flow of communication allows for improved partnerships, creative responses to identified needs, and recommendations for future efforts.

The State Coordinator for the Deaf serves as a member of the Virginia Network of Consultants: Professional Working with Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VNOC). This group was created by the Virginia Department of Education, in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Health, and the Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University. While the members provide consultation to Virginia's school divisions to promote/enhance education services, DARS role is to foster collaboration and exchange information related to transition services for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. The Statewide Transition Specialist on Deafness and a Regional Counselor for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing also served as a member of the planning team for Opening Doors - Unlocking Potential, which is Virginia's

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premier professional development in deaf and hard of hearing education. The Department's Deaf Services Program is an exhibitor and provides workshops at this annual event, as well as webinars sponsored through the Technical Assistance Center for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. With the Technical Assistance Center and the Virginia School for the Deaf, the Statewide Transition Specialist on Deafness is part of the statewide team coordinating outreach activities with Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing serving students who are deaf and hard of hearing. This statewide team has also partnered with the state parent

organization and developed virtual online activities for students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

The Transition and Education Services Manager utilizes an interactive webinar series to streamline processes and improve communication to/from field staff involved with serving students with disabilities. The webinar series offers a time saving alternative to the standard face-to-face training approach while simultaneously saving agency resources. Webinar topics are developed based on staff input, leadership recommendations, and developing issues. Similar technology is also used for meetings with local office and school division staff. The DARS Transition and Education Services Manager and other staff facilitate meetings by using the Zoom Meeting platform. This enables teams to meet online and collaboratively discuss partnerships and programming.

For several years, the Commonwealth of Virginia participated in the National Deaf Center (NDC) "Engage for Change/State." This collaboration focuses on critical issues in deaf education that address positive student outcomes, graduation, and transition to post-secondary education and training. Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, annual in-person summits were held, and participants included state leaders from deaf education and vocational rehabilitation agencies. The Department's State Coordinator of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (SCD) and the Department of Education Specialist of Deaf and Hard of Hearing represented the Commonwealth at the annual summit and convened local stakeholder meetings to review gaps in programs and services. The Department team also includes the Statewide Transition

Specialist on Deafness. NDC is a national program funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs and the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Their focus is to build capacity in states and support the exchange of information and strategies for improving educational programs, services, and outcomes for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. Since the creation of this postsecondary grant in 1996, the Department has been an active participant in roundtable discussions on a regional and national level. The Department

also serves as a member of the Summer Program Workgroup modeling Virginia's summer youth program, as well as a member of the Virtual Career Exploration and Work Based Learning work groups reviewing national programs.

In the past, the Department has convened a one-day statewide summer youth event "Opening Doors to Life Beyond High School" for deaf and hard of hearing students, which was jointly held at the annual Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Professional Development Institute (Opening Doors – Unlocking Potential). After the COVID 19 pandemic in 2020 the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program successfully held a three-day summer program for students who are deaf and hard of hearing in 2021 at WWRC. This was held for the first time on the WWRC campus, with the residential support of the Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation Transition (PERT) Program Services. All DARS staff used American Sign Language and interpreters were provided for students who were not fluent signers; therefore, making the entire program a total immersion experience for all students. Sessions incorporated all five Pre-ETS core services with a focus of "Deaf at Work." The Department's Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf are part of the team in developing this program and the goal was to bring in Deaf Mentors (former

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consumers) to share stories about their journeys as they “mapped their future.” This program has continued with new and returning students. In 2022, there were five deaf students and in 2023 there were 11 deaf and hard of hearing students. The returning students were given leadership roles in several sessions. The 2023 session included an outdoor scavenger hunt with items related to employment such as a brick bricklayer), matchbox cars (auto mechanics, auto detailing), coffee supplies (barista). Additionally, the Program Director from the Technical Assistance Center for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing became a part of the planning

team and instructor in 2022. Based on students' evaluations, plans for 2024 will expand the program to four days.

- COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS.

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act—

1. DESCRIBE PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES FOR COORDINATION BETWEEN THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATION OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PUBLIC EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, THAT ARE DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF THE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM THE RECEIPT OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN SCHOOL TO THE RECEIPT OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are available to students with disabilities. A student with a disability is an individual between the ages of 14 through 21. However, a student with a disability who has not earned a standard diploma, may be age 22 if the student is enrolled in a recognized education program and has not yet had their 22nd birthday before September 30. That student would then qualify to receive Pre-ETS through the last day of that school year. The age range for Pre-ETS is based on the *Code of Virginia* and also aligns with the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) policies established for Pre-ETS.

Vocational rehabilitation transition services are those coordinated activities for both students and youth (an individual with a disability between the ages of 14 to 24) designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities. Pre- ETS are only available to students with disabilities, whereas vocational rehabilitation transition services may be provided to both students and youth with disabilities (based upon eligibility requirements). All policies and practices are in alignment with those established by DBVI for the delivery of transition services.

During FFY 2025, DARS had 3,036 Potentially Eligible cases (i.e., students with disabilities . PE applications increased by 7% over SFY 2024 and we had a higher percentage of SWDs moving from Potentially Eligible to VR cases – from 26% in October 2024 to 36.3% in July 2025. DARS provided 25,694 Pre-ETS services for SFY 2025.

Each local education agency (LEA) across the Commonwealth has at least one DARS counselor assigned to it. The counselor informs students, parents/guardians, and school staff about the continuum of services the agency offers and facilitates the opening of a Potentially Eligible case or an application for VR services. These counselors are actively engaged in the secondary schools throughout the Commonwealth to support students in receiving Pre-ETS prior to applying to the VR program, accepting referrals for VR services, developing Individualized Plans for Employment with those determined eligible for services, and providing information to school personnel, parents/guardians, and students on the value of services available through DARS. Other means to improve and expand services for students with disabilities include:

- Cooperating and coordinating with the Department of Education and

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LEAs to facilitate an effective continuum of transition services for students with disabilities, including Pre-ETS, so students are better prepared to engage in competitive, integrated employment, post-secondary education, and community living.

- Producing transition-related products (e.g., newsletters, brochures, PowerPoint presentations, and posters) with examples of best practices, services available, and problem solving.
- Collaborating with Employment Service Organizations and Virginia's Centers for Independent Living to increase Pre-ETS activities offerings that would assist in improving the LEA, DARS and student connections and outcomes.
- Collaborating with Employment Service Organization staff to increase awareness of local vendor programs that could provide services to schools and transition age youth.
- Previously DARS had 20 Project SEARCH sites in Virginia. Currently there are 17 active Project SEARCH sites in Virginia.
- Expanding the number of Start on Success Programs in Virginia, as appropriate. There are currently 8 programs and Virginia is expected to have ten programs in PY 2025. DARS counselors work closely with each project and DARS provides wage reimbursement for the first three years of each project.

DARS' policies require that for students with disabilities who i) are receiving special education services from a public school, and ii) also are determined eligible for VR services (and able to be served if DARS is under an Order of Selection), that the Individualized Plan for Employment (IEP) shall be completed and signed within 90 days of the eligibility determination and before the student leaves the school setting.

When an IEP meeting invitation is received from the school division, DARS' staff responds to the invitation and participates in the meeting by attending in person, virtually, by phone, or provides information that can be shared with students, staff, and parents/guardians (e.g., DARS' contact and program information). DARS' staff coordinate in the development of the IEP with the teacher, student, and parent prior to the IEP Meeting for open cases. General information about Pre-ETS and VR Services can be provided during the IEP meeting for potential new cases as well as by establishing open lines of communication with school staff and provides information on how DARS' counselors can work with school staff to provide activities related to individual transition goals and activities for post-secondary education/training, employment, and independent living. DARS' staff coordinate the need for Pre-ETS by:

- Communicating with school staff and providing information about Pre-ETS services and how they relate to transition goals and activities in students' IEPs;
- Participating in school division events;
- Participating as members of school division committees such as Transition Councils;

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- Presenting information about Pre-ETS services to staff; and
- Developing good working relationships with school division administrators.

DARS' staff, in conjunction with the IEP case manager, reviews the Transition Section of the IEP with the student, parent/guardian, and teacher during face-to-face meetings at the school (which in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic may be conducted virtually). Reviewing the goals on the IEP assists the Pre-ETS Counselor with identifying what services the school is providing to help the individual meet their transition goals. This information is utilized to help the team plan what services DARS could provide to assist the student achieve their transition goals. It is a best

practice to make sure that the DARS' team members' input is shared with the IEP teams prior to school-based IEP meetings so that they can be used in developing ongoing IEP transition goals.

DARS' staff also identifies, and coordinates needed Pre-ETS for students with disabilities. DARS' counselors serving potentially eligible (PE) students collaborate with the student, the student's school, their parent/guardian and, as applicable, other relevant team members to identify the topics and objectives team members have or will address with the student. The DARS' counselor then supports the student with receiving services to address the remaining topics. This promotes a truly collaborative approach to Pre-ETS and ensures DARS does not duplicate services. In addition, DARS' staff coordinates the need for Pre-ETS by communicating with school staff, providing information about Pre-ETS services and how they relate to transition goals and activities in the IEP, participating in school division events, being active members of school division committees such as Transition Councils, presenting about Pre-ETS to school division staff, and developing good working relationships with school division administrators.

DARS' Transition and Education Services Manager has also partnered with school division staff to plan summer program offerings. The offerings are based on students' needs and available resources in the local communities. Throughout the Commonwealth, the Department has had numerous summer programs provided by DARS' counselors and Employment Service Organizations. Summer opportunities have included work-based learning experiences, both paid and unpaid, that may last for up to eight weeks. Other programs offered include the remaining four Pre-ETS standards. Employment Service Organizations have developed programs lasting anywhere from one week to eight weeks of classroom-based instruction for groups of students as well as workplace experiences in areas where DARS may not have the capacity to provide those services.

DARS continues to be a stakeholder in the review of data that VDOE collects to report to the Office on Special Education Programs (OSEP) to support and accomplish respective post-school and employment outcomes required by the federal government and to provide meaningful data collection by each agency.

Additional DARS and VDOE collaborative activities include co-chairing statewide interagency collaborative groups. Representatives from DARS, VDOE, and the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired plan statewide trainings to discuss transition and vocational services and initiatives available to students with disabilities and federal and state regulations related to transition services. This activity provides a forum for transition practitioners and other interested stakeholders from school divisions, adult agencies, and community partners to engage in professional development activities, networking opportunities, and collaborative efforts that enhance the implementation of quality transition services for secondary school students with disabilities. The Community of Practice works to stay abreast of current transition information, to identify gaps in resources, and avoid duplication of transition services.

Additionally, for many years the State Coordinator for the Deaf has served as a member of the Virginia Network of Consultants: Professional Working with Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VNOC). This group was created by the Virginia Department of Education, in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Health, and the Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia

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Commonwealth University. While the members provide consultation to Virginia's school divisions to promote/enhance education services, DARS' role is to foster collaboration and exchange information related to transition services for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. The Statewide Transition Specialist also serves as a member of the planning team for Opening Doors - Unlocking Potential, which is Virginia's premier professional development in deaf and hard of hearing education. The Department's Deaf Services Program is

an exhibitor and provides workshops at this annual event, as well as webinars sponsored through the Technical Assistance Center for Children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. With the Technical Assistance Center and the Virginia School for the Deaf, the Department's Statewide Transition Specialist on Deafness is part of the statewide team coordinating outreach activities with Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing across the Commonwealth to connect them with the regional rehabilitation counselors serving students who are deaf and hard of hearing. This statewide team has also partnered with the state parent organization and developed virtual online activities for students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

The Department's Transition and Education Services Manager and expert field staff provide training to staff through in-person activities and virtual meetings. Training is provided to new counselors as part of the New Counselors Skills Training. This training provides information on how to provide Pre-ETS/Transition services to support a career pathways approach and how to evaluate and process VR training cases to ensure that employment goals meet the employment needs of our communities. Virtual meetings are used to streamline processes and improve communication with field staff involved with serving transition-age youth. The monthly meetings offer a time saving alternative to the standard face-to-face training approach while simultaneously saving agency resources. Webinar topics are developed based on staff input, leadership recommendations, and developing issues.

For several years, the Commonwealth of Virginia participated in the National Deaf Center (NDC) "Engage for Change|State." This collaboration focuses on critical issues in deaf education that address positive student outcomes, graduation and transition to post-secondary education and training. The Department's State Coordinator of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (SCD) and the Department of Education Specialist of Deaf and Hard of Hearing represented the state at the annual summit and convened local stakeholder meetings to review gaps in programs and services. The Department team also includes the Statewide Transition Specialist on Deafness.

NDC is a national program funded by the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs and the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Their focus is to build capacity in states and support the exchange of information and strategies for improving educational programs, services and outcomes for students who are deaf and hard of hearing. Since the creation of this postsecondary grant in 1996, the Department has been an active participant in roundtable discussions of state teams hosted by the grant on a regional and national level. The Department also serves as a member of the Summer Program Workgroup modeling Virginia's summer youth program, as well as a member of the Virtual Career Exploration and Work Based Learning workgroups reviewing national programs. In the past, the Department has convened, a one-day statewide summer youth event "Opening Doors to Life Beyond High School" for deaf and hard of hearing students, which was jointly held at the annual Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Professional Development Institute. The Department planned to relocate the summer deaf youth program in 2020 to the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC). However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the sessions were held virtually.

2. DESCRIBE THE CURRENT STATUS AND SCOPE OF THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY

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AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE VR AGENCY AND THE STATE EDUCATIONAL
AGENCY. CONSISTENT WITH THE
REQUIREMENTS OF THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT PURSUANT TO
34 C.F.R. § 361.22(B), PROVIDE, AT A MINIMUM, THE FOLLOWING
INFORMATION ABOUT THE AGREEMENT:

A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, WHICH MAY BE
PROVIDED USING ALTERNATIVE MEANS FOR MEETING PARTICIPATION
(SUCH AS VIDEO CONFERENCES AND
CONFERENCE CALLS), TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR
THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-
SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES
AND OTHER VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES;

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE
AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY PERSONNEL FOR STUDENTS WITH
DISABILITIES THAT FACILITATES
THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR
INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS (IEPS) UNDER SECTION
614(D) OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT;

C. THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL
RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR
DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND
QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES AND PRE-
EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES;

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH
DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT
TRANSITION SERVICES.
OUTREACH TO THESE STUDENTS SHOULD OCCUR AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE
DURING THE TRANSITION PLANNING PROCESS AND MUST INCLUDE, AT A
MINIMUM, A DESCRIPTION OF THE PURPOSE OF THE VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION PROGRAM, ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS, APPLICATION
PROCEDURES, AND SCOPE OF SERVICES THAT MAY BE PROVIDED TO
ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS;

E. COORDINATION NECESSARY TO SATISFY DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS
SET FORTH IN 34 C.F.R. PART 397 REGARDING STUDENTS AND YOUTH
WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE
SEEKING SUBMINIMUM WAGE EMPLOYMENT; AND

F. ASSURANCE THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 C.F.R. § 397.31, NEITHER THE
SEA NOR THE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WILL ENTER INTO A CONTRACT
OR OTHER ARRANGEMENT WITH AN ENTITY, AS DEFINED IN 34 C.F.R. §
397.5(D), FOR THE PURPOSE OF OPERATING A
PROGRAM UNDER WHICH YOUTH WITH A DISABILITY IS ENGAGED IN WORK
COMPENSATED AT A SUBMINIMUM WAGE.

DARS and VDOE have a formal agreement to provide cooperation and
coordination among the two agencies to facilitate effective transition services for
students with disabilities to engage in competitive, integrated employment, post-
secondary education, and community living. VDOE is designated as the lead
agency to ensure that students with disabilities are properly referred to DARS and
DARS will serve as the lead agency to determine eligibility for VR services and to

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develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Both agencies agree to:

(1) Promote the development and expansion of collaborative structures for planning and evaluating transition services; share relevant data; share contact information on school divisions' special education directors and 504 coordinators; and explore new opportunities for collaboration regarding the provision of Pre-ETS, secondary transition, and vocational rehabilitation services and resources. Each agency will assign or designate primary program responsibility for transition to one individual within the agency.

(2) Promote a comprehensive personnel development approach through the provision of collaboratively planned and jointly sponsored professional development activities. VDOE has the responsibility for ensuring the requirements for the provision of special education services by LEAs to students with disabilities in accordance with federal and state laws, regulations, agency policies and guidelines.

(3) VDOE shall commit financial resources to: (a) teaching positions for Vocational Training, the Workplace Readiness Skills Program at Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC),

(b) career and workforce development at WWRC, and (c) the Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation and Transition Program (PERT) program at WWRC.

(4) DARS commits financial resources to: (a) transition services, including Pre-ETS for students with disabilities. Activities include career counseling and exploration, vocational evaluation, case management, situational assessments, field transition consultant services, and technical assistance, as appropriate; (b) the Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation and Transition Program (PERT) at the Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center; and (c) activities for the Community of Practice. DARS is responsible for the coordination, provision, and/or payment of rehabilitative/transition goods and services for individuals with disabilities in accordance with applicable federal and state laws, regulations, agency policies and guidelines.

The Cooperative Agreement between DARS and the Department of Education was executed on February 25, 2017. Under the terms of the Cooperative Agreement, it is to be reviewed annually by both Agencies and remains in effect until altered by amendment or terminated by either Agency with no less than 30 days' notice in writing. This Agreement may also be amended by mutual consent of both Departments, provided that any changes are agreed to in writing at least 30 days prior to the effective date of the change. A focus of the agreement is to provide collaborative training opportunities between school personnel and DARS Counselors to increase collaborative transition services which lead to improved outcomes for students with disabilities. Another focus of the agreement is the importance of sharing data between agencies. The cooperative agreement is currently under review to be updated with particular attention to addressing collaborative training opportunities.

VDOE and DARS will collaborate to disseminate information across their respective agencies and local offices pertinent to secondary transition and vocational rehabilitation services and resources. The agreement also confirms that DARS and LEAs will not enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity as defined in 34 CFR 397.5 (d) for the purpose of operating a program under which a student with a disability is engaged in subminimum wage employment.

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Both agencies will provide collaborative training opportunities for recertification points for counselors and teachers.

Each agency is responsible for collaborating in the coordination and/or provision of transition goods and services for individuals with disabilities, as well as the provision of technical assistance and dissemination of information to individuals with disabilities, parents, employers, service providers, and other community members. Grant opportunities with federal, state, and local agencies and other private and public partners will be jointly pursued.

Additionally, DARS works collaboratively with local education agencies to develop cooperative agreements. The cooperative agreement outline:

- Coordination and Collaboration –this discusses who is the lead agency for specific activities such as informing students of services available through DARS and determine eligibility for DRS services.
- Consultation and Technical Assistance – This section describes the consultation and technical assistance DARS provides to local school divisions to assist in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities (e.g., attending IEP meetings, person centered planning meetings, transition planning meetings, career fairs, transition fairs, etc.).
- Pre-ETS & VR Transition Services–These sections describe each of the services DARS provides in the continuum of transition services.
- Interagency Planning between VR and the School Division ensures students/families are informed about DARS and school responsibilities in referring/obtaining documentation for DARS services.
- Interagency Planning between VR, WWRC, and the School Division focused on PERT planning and recruitment activities. Discusses the roles of LEA coordinators, DARS VRCs and WWRC admissions team.
- Cross-Training Opportunities – Outlines how staff members of each agency will provide regular training to the other regarding services provided. i.e., in-service trainings at staff meetings, financial responsibilities - outlines the financial responsibilities of each agency in regard to service provision.
- Dispute Resolution - Outlines the process to resolve disputes related to financial responsibility of each agency.
- Youth and Subminimum Wage Employment – Affirms that neither agency will enter into an arrangement with an entity holding a special wage certificate under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability receives or is compensated at subminimum wage. Furthermore, outlines the documentation requirements of each agency to *comply with the requirements set forth in 34 CFR § 397.10*.

• COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the VR agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated

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employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre- employment transition services for students with disabilities.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

The DARS' Workforce Development Unit coordinates and participates in activities to meet business needs. Activities include, but are not limited to, the assessment of job candidate's skills and abilities to meet job requirements. Businesses are offered disability etiquette training on hiring persons with disabilities and educational training on Assistive Technology, on-the-job training, tax credits, work-site accommodations, and various other services needed to meet business needs. The Workforce Development Unit is seen as a single point of contact for businesses recruiting for job openings and hosts monthly/quarterly Commonwealth Business Network meetings where businesses are able to describe their job openings and job requirements to multiple organizations in one setting to recruit qualified job candidates. The DARS' Workforce Unit is actively working with the National Employment Team (The NET) through the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation using a Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) where businesses may place job openings and select qualified candidates. The Unit also provides education to employers who are federal contractors (503) on hiring individuals with disabilities and assisting with recruitment efforts to meet business needs. The Unit is listed as the point of contact on all compliance letters sent to 503 employers in the Commonwealth from the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs.

DARS works collaboratively with the Secretary of Health and Human Resources and multiple state agencies and partner organizations to enable persons with disabilities to participate fully and equally in the social and economic life of the Commonwealth and to engage in remunerative employment. The DARS' Workforce Unit will assist with identifying work experiences, paid internships, job shadowing, and mentoring opportunities. The Unit also will work with the Department of Human Resource Management in identifying the skill set needed for many hard to-fill positions within Virginia state employment and assist with recruiting qualified persons with disabilities to fill the positions. The Unit currently will continue to strengthen relationships with Economic Development Partnerships in Virginia, the Virginia Manufacturers Association, the Virginia Rural Summit, local government agencies, Virginia colleges and universities and Workforce Development Boards Business Services Teams to assist and promote hiring persons with disabilities in the Commonwealth's Workforce.

The DARS Business Services team and select placement counselors, facilitated 49 Windmills trainings to over 2030 individuals this performance year, to state and federal agencies, businesses, and community partners. Attendees of this training have been over 42 state agencies including but not limited to Department of Human Resource Management, Department of General Services, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Social Services, Virginia Department of Transportation, Department of Emergency Services, Department of Behavioral Health, Department of Taxation, Virginia Courts, VA Medical Center, Department of Corrections, Department of Health, Department of Education, Virginia Community College Systems, Department of General Services, Virginia Employment Commission (Virginia Works), VPOR, DEQ, Virginia Department of Accounts, Department of the Treasury, Virginia

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Lottery, Eastern and Western State Hospital and Virginia State Corporation Commission. Businesses that have attended are but not limited to Huntington Ingalls/Newport News Shipbuilding, Colonna's Shipbuilding, Sentara Health Systems, Food City, Carilion Health, Carter Machinery, Virginia Marine Institute, Virginia Credit Union, Federal Reserve Bank, JMU, VCU Health, Foster Fuels, PCSI, Richmond SHRM, Fredericksburg SHRM and Goodwill. Community partners include but not limited to Adult Education, Sportability, Versability, Brain Injury Services, Career Support Services, RSVP. Volunteers of America, The Choice Group and Build Smart Institute. Windmills is designed to increase awareness of the role that attitudes play in the employment of people with disabilities. Developed in California in 1982, Windmills consists of modular exercises that can be arranged for one to eight one-hour training sessions. Over 72 DARS staff are now certified trainers, whose function is to facilitate exercises and guide group discussions. Year to date, the Business Development Managers and DARS team have facilitated over 235 trainings for 8872 individuals.

Windmills Modules presented:

Perspectives: Examining stereotypes associated with common disabilities.

Profiles: Examine how stereotyping of persons with disabilities may impact employment decisions.

Fact or Fiction: Teaches individuals to anticipate situations that might occur in the workplace with individuals with disabilities.

Whose Fault: Improves individual's awareness of the different players and roles in a successful business practice and to identify more effective ways to communicate and resolve conflict.

Assistive Technology and Reasonable Accommodations: Acquaints individuals with a creative process in identifying possible reasonable accommodations needed.

Taking Emotions out of Emotional Disabilities: Provides suggestions to businesses to consider reasonable accommodations for persons with emotional disabilities in an emotionally neutral environment.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): Explores the assumptions and beliefs about how TBI affect job performance and identify ways to accommodate employees with TBI.

All of the Windmills' modules are approved for both Human Resources Certification Institute and Society for Human Resource Management credits and also expands DARS' ability to market the training to employers.

The DARS Business Services team is frequently contacted for help and assistance from other certified Windmills trainers. Virginia law states that it is the policy of the Commonwealth to promote and increase the employment of individuals with disabilities directly employed at all levels and occupations by state agencies, institutions, boards, and authorities of the Commonwealth (Virginia Code § 2.2-203.2:3). In 2021, Virginia enacted legislation to increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities by streamlining application processes for positions in Virginia state government (Virginia Code § 2.2-1213). This Alternative Application Process increases employment opportunities for individuals with

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disabilities on a permanent or temporary basis. Currently, Virginia's Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) and DARS finalized this process, and it went into effect April 5, 2022, allowing qualified individuals with disabilities access to high-quality positions within Virginia's 252 state agencies. The Alternative Application Process has created additional partnerships with state agencies and driven additional referrals to local DARS offices. As of July 1, 2023, current state employees with disabilities are also allowed to utilize this process. DARS fielded 1083 requests for certificate of disability during the most recent Federal fiscal year and issued 646 while referring 255 individuals to DARS offices around the state for additional vocational rehabilitation services.

DARS, in partnership with other state agencies, received a \$9.2 million grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The project, named "Pathways," serves Virginians with disabilities to acquire skills-based training and registered apprenticeships in high-wage, high-demand fields, including STEM and state government. In this five-year project, DARS will collaborate with multiple workforce agencies in Virginia, including the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI), Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM), and the Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI). This project also capitalizes on recent state legislation that facilitates the Alternative State Job Application Process for eligible individuals

with disabilities, which is designed to increase access to services in an equitable manner. It also includes the creation of DARS staff positions, one embedded at DOLI and the other at DHRM to develop cross-agency policy and practices to increase recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting individuals with disabilities in these in-demand jobs.

Included in this project will be opportunities to facilitate the development of effective services for unserved and underserved populations. Examples of outreach activities include targeting traditionally unserved and underserved groups, sharing best practices for training, credentials and education, and activities leading to apprenticeship opportunities. This project will also serve to cement best practices from the previous Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities (CPID) grant and make them available statewide.

TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

During FFY 2023, 37.4% of DARS cases were 22 years of age or younger. During FFY 2024, 39.3% of DARS cases were 22 years of age or younger. All DARS counselors are trained to work with this population to prepare them for employment as many have exited or are preparing to exit the school environment. However, after reviewing outcomes and staffing patterns most offices have reinstituted the use of dedicated transition counselors to work with youth to address their specialized needs and services. The DARS Development Managers and Placement Counselors work collaboratively with VR Counselors and consumers to design Employment Plans with services designed to lead to successful employment for this population, many of whom are first entering the job market.

- **INTERAGENCY** COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), describe

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interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system to develop opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:

1. STATE PROGRAMS (DESIGNATE LEAD AGENCY(IES) AND IMPLEMENTING ENTITY(IES)) CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE 21st Century Assistive Technology Act;

The Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) is a statewide program authorized and funded by the 21st Century Assistive Technology Act, which amended the Assistive Technology Acts of 1998 and 2004. The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) is the lead agency and administers Virginia's AT Act program. Under section 4 of the 21st Century Assistive Technology Act, VATS provides State Level and State Leadership activities which include the following assistive technology (AT) services: device demonstration, short-term equipment loans, durable medical equipment reuse, training, information and assistance, technical assistance, and public awareness.

VATS staff are colocated in VR offices and have a highly collaborative relationship with the VR Program to improve access to and acquisition of AT devices and services for VR staff and clients. VATS' statewide AT Lending Library is also colocated with the VR program's Northern Virginia AT Lab. In addition to the main AT library, VATS maintains partnerships with several disability service organizations, to include DARS AT Labs, to provide statewide access to equipment for constituent training, demonstration and/or loan. VATS equipment is available at disability service organization AT access points to extend its capacity to provide statewide services. VATS makes equipment available at DARS AT Labs for State Level and State Leadership activities that VR would not normally provide or to implement a pilot program.

VATS participates in weekly DARS AT Specialist and bi-weekly Sensory Processing virtual meetings to discuss new and emerging technologies, constituent needs, and services. VATS collaborates with the VR Rehabilitation Technology Services (RTS) team to provide hands-on AT demonstrations and trainings regionally for new and seasoned VR staff to improve access to VATS services and to keep staff engaged with AT and rehabilitation engineering services. VATS collaborates with VR RTS staff to address AT access and training needs of cohorts of VR clients in Time Management trainings, College Preparation seminars, and a Sensory Processing Group. VATS collaborates with VR to develop an AT Training at Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center for VR staff.

In FFY 2024, VATS provided services to 7,352 older adults and Virginians with disabilities through the AT Act program. Services included State Level and State Leadership activities to include AT device demonstrations, short-term equipment loans, durable medical equipment reuse, trainings, and information and assistance. Service recipients included an array of Virginians to include individuals with disabilities, family members, healthcare and allied health professionals, employers, educators, and representatives of community living services were provided statewide. VATS contracts with VR to provide primary and back-up gently used durable medical equipment for VR program participants with limited resources. In FFY 2024, VATS served eighty-three (83) DRS clients

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in DME Reuse Program. Since 2010, VATS' reuse program has provided 1,210 DARS clients with primary or back-up equipment needed to maintain or obtain employment.

2. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

AgrAbility Virginia assists individuals and their families who farm, and have illnesses, injuries or disabilities that are impeding their ability to work safely, effectively, and productively. DARS has a strong collaborative relationship with this program and receives referrals from this project.

The DARS Rehabilitation Technology Services team meets virtually on a regular basis with the Virginia AgrAbility project to discuss potential referrals, program/agency updates and provide technical assistance. This cooperative relationship is working well.

3. NON-EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH;

DARS works with Social Services, Adult Education, Community Services Boards, Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, Treatment Facilities like the AVALON Center in Williamsburg, and Residential Facilities such as the Bon Air Juvenile Correctional Center. DARS also works with various other private or public community agencies to share information about services and accept referrals. Additionally, DARS collaborates with Brain Injury Clubhouses, Centers for Independent Living, and other non-profit organizations serving individuals with disabilities with referrals and services to out of-school youth leading to their employment and independence.

Local DARS Offices provide community mapping strategies to identify partners for comparable benefits, resources, and collaboration to assist out of school youth with service provision. An example of this took place in Martinsville, several years ago. DARS helped facilitate a program called Bridges Out of Poverty which essentially brought a community of agencies together to provide comprehensive services and support for out of school youth and other individuals partnering with the United Way of Henry County.

4. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS;

The Commonwealth of Virginia, as provided in Virginia Code § 2.2-1117, has a state use contracting program for services, articles and commodities performed or produced by persons, or in schools or workshops, under the supervision of the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired. In addition, Virginia Code § 2.2-1118 for the purchase of items or services from Employment Service Organizations without competitive procurement with certain requirements.

5. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTERING THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT (42 U.S.C. 1396 ET SEQ.);

In Virginia, the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) is the agency responsible for the State Medicaid Plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act. DARS collaborates with DMAS to address the planning and coordination of services to individuals with most significant disabilities that leads to successful

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employment. In addition, DARS' staff serve on the Virginia Employment First Advisory Group where DARS and DMAS work collaboratively to implement Virginia's Strategic Plan for Employment First. Employment is the first and preferred option for Virginians with disabilities receiving assistance from publicly financed systems. Along with other state agencies, DARS and DMAS have partnered to improve employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Joint efforts include addressing the capacity of the Commonwealth's provider community that provide Individual Supported Employment services to persons with disabilities by providing technical assistance and training to both stakeholders and providers.

6. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES;

In Virginia, the agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities and mental health services is the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS). DARS has a Cooperative Agreement with DBHDS to develop opportunities for competitive-integrated employment for VR consumers. The Cooperative Agreement has been developed with respect to the delivery of VR services for individuals with the most significant disabilities who have been determined eligible for home and community-based services under a Medicaid waiver. The Cooperative Agreement addresses:

- consultation and technical assistance between the agencies to assist in the planning and coordination of services to individuals with most significant disabilities leading to successful employment;
- roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency;
- data sharing;
- procedures for outreach to and identification of potential VR consumers to receive services; and
- technical assistance to Employment Services Organizations regarding expectations of service delivery.

7. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES; AND

DBHDS is also the state agency responsible for providing mental health services. Accordingly, DBHDS, has provided DARS with fiscal and personnel resources to support the co-location of VR counselors in the Community Services Boards (CSBs) since 1988. The resources contributed by DBHDS allow DARS to have dedicated specialty counselors to provide VR services to individuals that experience substance use disorders that also receive treatment services through the CSB service system. DARS also provides services to individuals with serious mental illness, most of whom are also served by CSBs. In addition, DARS' staff serve on the Virginia Employment First Advisory Group and work closely with DBHDS on various work groups and initiatives that focus on recovery and the integration of work into the mental health service system. In addition, DARS collaborates with DBHDS to develop Individual Placement Supports Model of Supported Employment.

8. OTHER FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS

OUTSIDE THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
SYSTEM.

In addition to partnerships established and enhanced through development and implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) system in Virginia, DARS continues to emphasize the importance and necessity of cooperating with other community partners (federal, state, and local agencies and programs) to assist in providing comprehensive and effective services for VR customers. One of the most successful cooperative relationships has been with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to provide services to individuals with substance use disorders and with serious mental illness. The relationship with DBHDS continues to grow, and the data shows the success to our customers brought about by this relationship.

The DBHDS Office of Substance Use Disorders has provided DARS with fiscal and personnel resources to support the co-location of VR counselors in the Community Services Boards (CSBs) since 1988. The resources contributed by DBHDS allow DARS to have dedicated specialty counselors to provide VR services to individuals who experience substance use disorders and receive treatment services through the CSB service system. The program expanded in the middle of SFY 2000 from three counselors to nineteen counselors serving 18 of the forty CSBs. DARS also provides services to individuals with serious mental illness, most of whom are also served by CSBs. In addition, DARS' staff serve on Virginia's Employment First Advisory Group and work closely with DBHDS on various work groups and initiatives that focus on recovery and the integration of work into the mental health service system. Consultants from both the Office of Substance Use Disorders and the Office of Behavioral Health collaborate with DARS in conducting annual meetings to provide program updates, provide in-service training opportunities, and regularly share information to promote a common understanding of the strategies and practices to serve individuals with substance use disorders and/or serious mental illness. DARS has two employees who specialize in intellectual and developmental disabilities to provide technical assistance, guidance, and direction to VR counselors in serving this population.

9. OTHER PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.

Private non-profit, for-profit providers and Centers for Independent Living can apply to become DARS' VR employment service providers and providers of Pre-Employment Transition Services. Applicants' qualifications are evaluated based on services to be offered and criteria in the standard vendor agreement. DARS and each qualified provider establishes a written provider agreement. This agreement provides assurances to DARS that each organization complies with federal and state requirements for a community rehabilitation program. This agreement also clearly defines roles, expectations, and evaluation criteria.

Other mechanisms DARS utilizes to cooperate with private non-profit VR service providers include:

- Receiving stakeholder input from the Employment Services Organizations' Steering Committee (ESOSC) that provides the DARS' Commissioner counsel on funding and policy issues related to community rehabilitation programs and the allocation of Long- Term Employment Support Services and Extended Employment Services state funds, as well as other services that impact providers;

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- Fostering close working relations between agency staff and Employment Services Organizations; and
- Utilizing the Employment Services Organization Outcome Report to assist Employment Services Organizations, VR counselors, and VR consumers in ensuring appropriate service provision. DARS has been convening regular webinars with Employment Service Organizations to provide information and answer questions about service provision.

Through the implementation of the Ticket to Work Program, DARS is actively working with multiple non-profit organizations, community rehabilitation programs and other groups to increase available services to DARS clients. The technical assistance provided by DARS to these organizations has increased their ability to access federal Ticket to Work funding to increase capacity and service delivery. Recently we have begun working with a Virginia faith-based employment network.

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner, that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

THE VR AGENCY MUST SELECT THE “EDIT” BUTTON TO REVIEW AND AGREE TO THE VR STATE PLAN ASSURANCES.

The State Plan must include
1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a Unified State plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

3. Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

The State Plan must include
3.a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.b. either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).
3.e. as applicable, the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.f. as applicable, the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.h. the requirements for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities as set forth in section 101(a)(18)(A).
3.m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:
4.a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(E) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services or, if

The State Plan must include
implementing an order of selection, in accordance with criteria established by the State for the order of selection as set out in section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.f. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act
4.g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by sections 101(a)(14) and 511 of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs.
4.j. With respect to students with disabilities, the State,
4.j.i. has developed and will implement,
4.j.i.A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and
4.j.i.B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and
4.j.ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15), 101(a)(25) and 113).
4.j.iii. shall reserve not less than 15 percent of the allocated funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services; such funds shall not be used to pay for the administrative costs of providing pre-employment transition services.
5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement to the State plan:
5.a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.
5.b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals

The State Plan must include
receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.
6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program (Title VI):
6.a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(H) and (I) of the Rehabilitation Act.
6.b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.
7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:
7.a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.
7.b. The designated State agency assures that the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(7)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Do you attest that these assurances
will be met? Yes

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL) CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE,) IS AUTHORIZED TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR
COMBINED STATE PLAN UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (REHABILITATION ACT), AS AMENDED BY TITLE IV OF WIOA[1], AND ITS STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT;

[1] Public Law 113-128.

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ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE
UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE

Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services

2. IN THE EVENT THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY IS NOT PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH VOCATIONAL AND OTHER REHABILITATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY MUST INCLUDE A DESIGNATED STATE UNIT FOR THE VR PROGRAM (SECTION 101(A)(2)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT). AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES, THE (DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WHEN THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY HAS A DESIGNATED STATE UNIT)[2] AGREES TO OPERATE AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[3], THE REHABILITATION ACT, 34 CFR 361.13(B) AND (C), AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[4], POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE TO STATES UNDER SECTION 111(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

[2] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[3] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[4] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361.

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY

Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services

3. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY, OR THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WHEN THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY HAS A DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AGREES TO OPERATE AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[5], THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[6], POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

[5] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the

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Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[6] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

4. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT OR, IF NOT APPLICABLE, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO PERFORM THE FUNCTIONS OF THE STATE

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REGARDING THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED
STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 CFR
361.13(B) AND (C);

5. THE STATE LEGALLY MAY CARRY OUT EACH PROVISION OF THE VR
SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN
AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

6. ALL PROVISIONS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR
COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT ARE
CONSISTENT WITH STATE LAW.

7. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS
THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO RECEIVE, HOLD, AND DISBURSE
FEDERAL FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF
THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS
SUPPLEMENT;

ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Kathryn A. Hayfield

8. THE (ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS
THE AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR
COMBINED STATE PLAN AND
THE SUPPLEMENT FOR SUPPORTED
EMPLOYMENT SERVICES; ENTER THE TITLE OF
AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Kathryn A. Hayfield

9. THE AGENCY THAT SUBMITS THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED
OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT HAS ADOPTED OR
OTHERWISE FORMALLY APPROVED
THE PLAN AND ITS

SUPPLEMENT.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Public Law 113-128.

[2] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[3] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[4] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361.

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[5] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[6] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

CERTIFICATION SIGNATURE

TO REVIEW AND COMPLETE THE CERTIFICATION SECTION OF THE VR PORTION OF THE STATE
PLAN,

please select the “Edit” button.

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open this link to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field, and start over if needed.

Signatory information	Enter Signatory information in this column
Name of Signatory	
Title of Signatory	Commissioner
Date Signed	

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Each State VR program must submit expected levels of performance in its Unified or Combined State Plan and in the two-year modification of that plan. Expected levels of performance for the first two years of a state plan must be submitted in the initial submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and in the initial submission of the two-year modification of that Plan, for years three and four, as described in 34 CFR § 361.170(a). Expected levels of performance must be stated to the nearest tenth of a percent (XX.X %) or to the nearest whole dollar for median earnings. State VR programs are reminded that the expected levels of performance must be published for public comment prior to plan submission in accordance with state law, regulation, and policy.

After the Unified or Combined State Plan submission, each State VR program must reach agreement with RSA on the negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the Unified or Combined State Plan (or for the third and fourth years of the Unified or Combined State Plan during the required two-year modification process) in accordance with WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv).

RSA will use its statistical adjustment model to derive pre-program year estimated levels of performance for each indicator. Each State VR program and RSA will consider the negotiation factors outlined in WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(v) during the negotiation process. Once negotiated levels of performance are agreed upon, each State VR program must incorporate the negotiated levels of performance into the Unified or Combined State Plan and the two-year modification of that plan prior to the plan's approval (section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv) of WIOA).

EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

In the final rule implementing WIOA, the Departments indicated that they would initially implement this indicator in the form of a pilot to test the feasibility and rigor of three proposed approaches. During Program Year (PY) 2022, the Departments initiated the rulemaking process to establish a standard definition of Effectiveness in Serving Employers. States will continue to report two of three proposed approaches until the Departments issue the final rule and implement the indicator.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level

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Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	59%		59.5%	

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	57%		57.5%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$4,173		\$4,200	
Credential Attainment Rate	63.0%		66.0%	
Measurable Skill Gains	89.0%		91.5%	
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹

¹

The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

GEPA 427 FORM INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION PACKAGE -
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

OMB Control Number 1894-0005 Expiration 02/28/2026

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA SECTION 427 FORM INSTRUCTIONS FOR STATE APPLICANTS

State applicants must respond to the following four questions:

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.
2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?
3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

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4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

- Applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.
- Applicants use the associated text box to respond to each question. However, applicants might have already included some or all this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) in their State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.
- Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity to apply.
- Applicants that have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.
- Applicants that believe no barriers exist must still provide an explanation and/or description to each question to validate that perception, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

Please refer to GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

1. DESCRIBE HOW YOUR ENTITY'S EXISTING MISSION, POLICIES, OR COMMITMENTS ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO, AND EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION IN, THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY.

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

STATE APPLICANTS MUST RESPOND TO FOUR QUESTIONS. THE FIRST OF FOUR QUESTIONS IS:

Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

Virginia General Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) operates under the mission of the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) which states; "DARS' mission: to improve the employment, quality of life, security, and independence of older Virginians, Virginians with disabilities, and their families." To this end, the Vocational Rehabilitation program ensures quality and equitable access to people with disabilities seeking career/vocational advancement by providing active outreach to marginalized communities, ensuring the availability of our offices/staff in every city and county in Virginia as well as co-locating many of our offices, and providing services in all of the American Job Centers.

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Through our partnerships with local educational school districts, pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) are available in every school district ensuring that equitable access occurs through K-12 educational

programming. These services are also available to charter and alternative schools and by direct parent referral of a student aged 14-22. DARS VR actively partners with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to ensure services are available through our Community Service Boards (CSBs) serving every locality in the state.

Through state grant funding, specialized vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRCs) serve substance abuse and mental health consumers. These services are available statewide.

Virginia General Vocational Rehabilitation is committed to equitable consumer participation based on the unique and individual needs of consumers. This commitment is outlined and further described in our state VR policies, that ensure equitable access to the vocational rehabilitation program across populations represented in Virginia. Our administration routinely reviews statewide demographic and consumer access data and creates district benchmarks to increase accessibility and outreach to representative populations. To further ensure access to services for all consumers, policies have been updated to ensure interpretation and translation services can be accessed by all consumers. Additionally, DARS Policy staff remains abreast of the disability access requirements in federal and state law and regulation.

2. BASED ON YOUR PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY, WHAT BARRIERS
MAY IMPEDE EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF
STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, OR OTHER
BENEFICIARIES?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a)
applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

STATE APPLICANTS MUST RESPOND TO FOUR QUESTIONS. THE SECOND OF FOUR QUESTIONS IS:

Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

Virginia General VR is committed to the provision of equitable access to all eligible consumers, and we continue to strategize operational enhancements to address barriers as they are identified. Identified barriers include:

- Geographic proximity to services for consumers

- Qualified vendor capacity to provide Supported and Customized Employment and Pre- Employment Transition Services.
- Individual school/district interest/capacity in partnering with VR for services to students with disabilities.

3. BASED ON THE BARRIERS IDENTIFIED, WHAT STEPS WILL YOU TAKE TO ADDRESS SUCH BARRIERS TO EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR
ACTIVITY?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

STATE APPLICANTS MUST RESPOND TO FOUR QUESTIONS. THE THIRD OF FOUR QUESTIONS IS:

Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

Geographic proximity to services: Virginia General VR maintains fully staffed, full-service offices (30 statewide). Many are rural in designation and/or are co-located within one-stop centers to ensure the widest coverage and availability of services statewide. Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling staff are assigned to individual schools to provide required Pre-ETS activities and outreach to surrounding communities. General VR Counselors are assigned by county and/or specific territory in urban areas. The use of community-based internet sites ensures that VR staff can work in the closest proximity to assigned caseloads. In addition, the use of video conferencing as well as payment of consumer transportation costs can mitigate consumer equity and access to services.

The Driving Program at Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC), Virginia's comprehensive rehabilitation center, is working on several initiatives that will enhance virtual service delivery along with the added positive result of increasing WWRC's ability to serve more clients across the state. Virtual services expanded during COVID, and providers have found that the virtual delivery of certain aspects of driver education can augment and facilitate instructional methods that are normally associated with an in-person classroom. WWRC is working to integrate and utilize CANVAS within the driving program to assist with organizing instructional materials and the potential to reach clients remotely. For the classroom component of driver's education, WWRC has provided one-on-one virtual instruction to a total of 95 clients since 2021 (by comparison, in-person training serves an average of 72 clients per year). The use of CANVAS will continue to allow for a more organized and efficient delivery method for both the client and the instructor, in-person and virtually.

WWRC is working on developing a virtual re-exam course to be approved by DMV. "Re-exam" refers to coursework that must be completed to allow a client to take the learner's permit test after 3 consecutive fails. Being able to offer a

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virtual re-exam class delivered via CANVAS will reach a larger number of clients in the state, many of whom may not be easy to come to WWRC for in-person services.

The Communication Services Department at WWRC also developed virtual service delivery methods during the pandemic. Since 2020, 143 clients have received one-on-one virtual service for various needs such as evaluation/treatment, assistive technology (alternative and augmentative communication), and fluency. Therapists in this department are currently providing in-person instruction in the pragmatics of communication in all the vocational training programs and work readiness programs (WRP) at WWRC. The potential to offer this service virtually to other clients in the Commonwealth is being explored based upon need and staffing resources.

Virtual PERT is a service line that was originally developed when students were not able to come to WWRC during COVID closures. The virtual option continues to be beneficial for students who may live in more remote areas or who do not elect to participate in campus-based programming. This program is best utilized by students early in the transition process. The program uses common virtual technologies to deliver services to students originally in their homes and now mostly at their home school. Content for the virtual program consists of PowerPoint presentations, videos and interactions with PERT On-Site Rehabilitation Counselors and PERT Residential staff. To date, 574 students have been served.

WWRC is providing virtual case management services to DARS clients participating in the 11- week IT Essentials Bootcamp. The program prepares clients to sit for the A+ Certification test by participating in the CompTIA curriculum. In addition to the CompTIA coursework, clients also participate in curriculum to enhance their workplace readiness behaviors, study skills, and trade-related academic skills. At the conclusion of the bootcamp, case management responsibilities transfer to the DARS vocational rehabilitation counselor for transitional planning and job seeking services.

Qualified vendor capacity to provide Supported and Customized Employment and Pre- Employment Transition Services: DARS continues to partner with Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs), including Employment Service Organizations (ESO) statewide to build and sustain quality Pre-ETS programming/Work Based learning for student and youth populations. This capacity building has expanded to CRPs that provide services across state lines which has resulted in new providers with strong reputations for service excellence moving into broader communities in our southern most points of the state. We will continue to support growth and expansion.

DARS VR maintains a regularly scheduled staffing presence in all comprehensive one-stop centers across the Commonwealth and serves as a single point of contact for consumers with identified disabilities.

DARS VR has full office operations in several one-stop centers, statewide, and works collaboratively with center partners to share employer information across systems. VR Counselors utilize this information in guidance and counseling with consumers through the VR process.

DARS VR has an elected seat on each Workforce Development Board across the Commonwealth and maintains an active voice on behalf of VR services and people with disabilities.

Partnerships with employers continued by providing Windmills Training. This past year 49

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trainings were offered on Windmills' disability awareness training, impacting 2,030 human resource professionals and/or employers. Additionally, DARS applied to be a Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) trainer so that when offering these trainings to HR professionals, they are able to receive continuing education credits to maintain their professional credentials.

DRS offices work collaboratively with WWRC in the referral and admissions process to technical education provided in this supported setting. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors are part of discharge planning and work with WWRC to find and support employment post-graduation.

DRS offices build and sustain working relationships with Employment Service Organization (ESO) providers for job coaching and placement related services.

The Commonwealth of Virginia provides state funds to ESOs to increase the availability of extended services and reduce barriers to offering integrated, community-based employment options for persons with the most significant disabilities after the DARS time-limited services are completed. A total of \$8,952,766 in extended services will be available to Employment Services Organizations through DARS under the Long-Term Employment Support Services and Extended Employment Services programs as appropriated by the Virginia General Assembly.

DRS conducts district wide meetings designed to directly enhance the quality of supported employment services to consumers with the most significant disabilities. These sessions address increasing supported-employment options and consumer choice for meeting physical, behavioral, medical, and overall rehabilitation needs; and accessing and expanding placement resources.

DARS along with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), working with Griffin and Hammis, LLC provides training and technical assistance to Employment Service Organizations related to Customized Employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. Training includes Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) certification in Basic Employment Services with an Emphasis in Customized Employment as well as implementing a fidelity scale for Customized Employment services.

DRS continues to have a collaborative relationship with the Employment Service Organizations (ESO) through the ESO provider network and the Employment Services Organizations' Steering Committee (ESOSC). Through the ESOSC DARS receives stakeholder input from Employment Services Organizations that provides the DARS' Commissioner counsel on funding and policy issues related to community rehabilitation programs and the allocation of Long-Term Employment Support Services and Extended Employment Services state funds, as well as other services that impact providers, such as Supported and Customized Employment and Pre- Employment Transition Services. This fosters close working relationships between agency staff and Employment Services Organizations.

DRS continues to utilize the Employment Services Organization Outcome Report to assist Employment Services Organizations, VR counselors, and VR consumers in ensuring appropriate service provision. The outcomes report is reviewed annually with ESOs to provide information and answer questions about service provision.

Individual school/district interest/capacity in partnering with VR for services to students with disabilities: Following the pandemic, access to some schools/districts had been restricted as relationships between Virginia VR and educational districts needed to be strengthened and rebuilt. 2024-25 outreach activities continued and included the first annual Capacity Building Institute in

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Virginia. DARS and seventeen school districts across Virginia came together to enhance relationships and develop plans to improve student transition activities.. VR districts hold events focused on services to students with disabilities that are well attended by educators and partners. These efforts brought increased VR visibility and educator engagement in the collaborative process. These efforts will continue and expand with the Virginia Department of Education Transition staff who have jointly held meetings with Special Education Directors (SPED), special education teachers and Virginia VR statewide. In 2025 DARS partnered with the Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living to improve access to Pre-ETS services for underserved students, including just involved youth. All districts were required to implement and sustain community-based outreach to non- traditional referral sources. In the most recent program year, each district provided a variety of outreach events that were well attended by local community members. DARS offices, in partnership with DARS HR, are working to engage representative demographics in staff recruitment efforts. Partnerships with the Pathways grant includes targeted outreach and recruiting for bilingual staff.

Community PERT mobile units are being implemented to reestablish relationships between PERT and local school areas that are currently underutilizing DARS services. PERT staff traveled to King William County to provide an independent living exploration service to students at the local high school. This community effort provided two days of interest inventories, career awareness exposure, and independent living assessment. Independent living activities included developing a budget for real life situations, cooking, kitchen safety, medication management, hygiene, self-esteem, and problem-solving assessments. Community PERT mobiles will result in additional services through PERT for students in these localities. In 2024, mobile visits are scheduled for Lancaster County, Northumberland County, Richmond County, and Westmoreland County.

In its final year, 2026, the Pathways to Careers grant has expanded to all field offices statewide. DARS has partnered with the Department of Labor's Division of Registered Apprenticeship and Cyber Civilian to develop a peer recovery specialist registered apprenticeship and are beginning to assist clients enter this career. The Pathways grant has developed a Spanish language job club and has targeted the grant's advisory workgroup to Hispanic participants to address this underserved population and increase the agency's effectiveness in serving this community. The grant has focused on creating a Hispanic Advisory board to better inform the grant team and reach unserved and underserved populations. Under the grant, data is shared with offices regarding who is being served and who is not being served. This approach is increasing counselor awareness of unserved and underserved populations.

While conducting outreach to local educational agencies, the DARS transition team has developed and participated in numerous events. These include CREATE Transition events in the Southwest and Hampton districts, presentations with other DARS staff including Connect for Success, Virginia Council of Administrators of Special Education (VCASE), Mission Transition Start on Success, and the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3). The presentations were attended by parent resource center personnel, special education directors, special education teachers, and military education leaders from across the Commonwealth.

A Model Interagency Pre-ETS Program collaborative with Virginia Commonwealth

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University (VCU) has been initiated in Gloucester High School, and will be in Hampton and Phoebus High Schools, as well as Albemarle and Monticello High Schools. This multi-year project will be expanded to all six districts and will focus on the strategic training and enhancement of Pre-ETS through a professional development and support model. VCU will provide multistage training designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of DARS staff and Pre-ETS vendors, and improve communication and collaboration between DARS, schools, families, and Pre-ETS service providers. The components of the model will include: 1) annual regionally based training for DARS counselors and other staff; 2) the facilitation of a work-based learning course; 3) a framework to assess a student's level of needs and flow of service provisions; and 4) regional- specific technical assistance. These components will build upon each other, leading to multi- pronged development that will directly impact student outcomes.

The Transition Self-Assessment Tool (TSAT) has been e-mailed to every Special Education Director in Virginia's public high schools. The future quantitative results will be shared with the Council as well as the qualitative information obtained from identified focus groups.

DARS has entered into several agreements to enhance services to underserved areas of the state and populations:

- Bloom Consulting has started to provide services in the Middle Peninsula, Northern Neck and other Fredericksburg Schools which have all been identified as underserved. In addition to Bloom Consulting, a Drone Academy Day has been marketed to appropriate DARS staff in these underserved areas.
- An updated contract with the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) to provide continued peer mentoring services to at-risk students is almost finalized. The continued contract was recommended based on positive feedback from DARS Offices in Northern Virginia, Harrisonburg and on the Peninsula.
- A contract with the Center for Family Involvement has been submitted to procurement for next steps. This collaborative partnership will provide services to culturally and linguistically diverse transition aged youth and their families with culturally sensitive information and strategies for navigating Pre-ETS. A goal of the program is to develop at least five products for culturally and linguistically diverse youth with disabilities and their families that considers preferred idioms, customs, literacy, and formats as well as generational preferences.

DARS has contracted with the National Technical Assistance Center-The Collaborative (NTACT- C) for technical assistance to ensure that internal processes are in place to obtain needed data to make informed decisions regarding Pre-ETS and the continuum of transition services.

DARS has actively participated in the federally funded CAPE Youth project to increase collaboration and effectiveness in serving pre-ETS and transition cases. The Center for Advancing Policy on Employment for Youth (CAPE-Youth) is a collaboration between the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy, The Council of State Governments, and the K. Lisa Yang and Hock E. Tan Institute on Employment and Disability at Cornell University. The Center was created in 2019 by the U.S. Department of Labor. It seeks to improve

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employment outcomes for youth and young adults with disabilities by helping states build capacity in their youth service delivery and workforce systems. As a result of this partnership, two CAPE-Youth fellows recorded a webinar for DARS counselors and clients on how to ask for accommodations in college. This recording is now available on our website. Additionally, DARS participated in a social network analysis through this project which has resulted in a planning meeting with other WIOA partners designed to increase collaboration and outcomes for transition, justice involved and out of school youth with disabilities. DARS has actively developed paid summer work experiences for transition students and paid work experiences for DARS clients with recently earned credentials but no work experience to add real experience to a resume.

4. WHAT IS YOUR TIMELINE, INCLUDING TARGETED MILESTONES, FOR ADDRESSING THESE IDENTIFIED BARRIERS?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

STATE APPLICANTS MUST RESPOND TO FOUR QUESTIONS. THE FINAL OF FOUR QUESTIONS IS:

What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

Virginia VR began efforts to mitigate identified barriers in 2022 following the pandemic and as operations expanded. Community outreach and efforts targeted on increasing agency visibility are a key priority of all statewide field offices. These efforts will continue and will be sustained ongoing as an effort to increase public perception and general knowledge of the contribution the VR process makes to strengthening the lives and employment outcomes for people with disabilities of all ages.

Targeted community outreach to increase visibility and equity of service access begun in 2023 have led to an increase in VR applications statewide. These efforts will continue and will be expanded based on demographic and service data as it informs our current efforts.

The continuing expansion of Pre-ETS services for students with disabilities is the focus of our efforts in 2026-27. Increasing visibility, access to quality programming, expanding relationships with special education transition and school personnel as well as increasing vendor capacity as well as full utilization and expenditure of Pre-ETS set aside dollars are outlined in our corrective action plan.

GEPA 427 FORM INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION PACKAGE - SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

OMB Control Number 1894-0005 Expiration 02/28/2026

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA SECTION 427 FORM INSTRUCTIONS FOR STATE APPLICANTS

State applicants must respond to the following four questions:

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.
2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?
3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?
4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

- Applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.
- Applicants use the associated text box to respond to each question. However, applicants might have already included some or all this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) in their State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.
- Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity to apply.
- Applicants that have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.
- Applicants that believe no barriers exist must still provide an explanation and/or description to each question to validate that perception, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

Please refer to GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

1. DESCRIBE HOW YOUR ENTITY'S EXISTING MISSION, POLICIES, OR COMMITMENTS ENSURE
EQUITABLE ACCESS TO, AND EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION IN, THE
PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY.

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a)
applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

STATE APPLICANTS MUST RESPOND TO FOUR QUESTIONS. THE FIRST OF FOUR QUESTIONS IS:

Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

Virginia General Vocational Rehabilitation operates under the mission of the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) which states; *"DARS' mission: to improve the employment, quality of life, security, and independence of older Virginians, Virginians with disabilities, and their families."* To this end, the Vocational Rehabilitation program, including the Supported Employment program ensures quality and equitable access to people with disabilities seeking career/vocational advancement by providing active outreach to marginalized communities, ensuring the availability of our offices/staff in every county in Virginia as well as co-locating many of our offices, and providing

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services in all of the American Job Centers. Through our partnerships with local educational school districts, pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) are available in every school district ensuring that equitable access occurs through K-12 educational programming. These services are also available to charter and alternative schools and by direct parent referral of a student aged 14-22. DARS VR actively partners with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to ensure services are available through our Community Service Boards (CSBs) located across the state. Through state grant funding, specialized Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs) serve substance abuse and mental health consumers. These services are available statewide.

Virginia General Vocational Rehabilitation, including the Supported Employment program, is committed to equitable consumer participation based on the unique and individual needs of consumers. This commitment is outlined and further described in our state VR policies, that ensure equitable access to the vocational rehabilitation program and supported employment program across all populations represented in Virginia. DARS routinely reviews statewide demographic and consumer access data and creates district benchmarks to increase accessibility and outreach to representative populations. To further ensure access to services for all consumers, policies have been updated to ensure interpretation and translation services can be accessed by all consumers. Guidance for policies related to services for individuals who experience substance use disorders and serious mental illness were updated to ensure that abstinence and stability requirements are applied consistently to allow an individual to start services regardless of length of abstinence. Additionally, DARS Policy staff remains abreast of the disability access requirements in federal and state law and regulation.

2. BASED ON YOUR PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY, WHAT BARRIERS
MAY IMPEDE EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF
STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, OR OTHER
BENEFICIARIES?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a)
applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

STATE APPLICANTS MUST RESPOND TO FOUR QUESTIONS. THE SECOND OF FOUR QUESTIONS IS:

Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

Virginia General VR is committed to the provision of equitable access to all eligible consumers, and we continue to strategize operational enhancements to address barriers as they are identified. Identified barriers include:

- Geographic proximity to services for consumers
- Qualified vendor capacity to provide Supported and Customized Employment and Pre- Employment Transition Services.

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- Individual school/district interest/capacity in partnering with VR for services to students with disabilities.

3. BASED ON THE BARRIERS IDENTIFIED, WHAT STEPS WILL YOU TAKE TO ADDRESS SUCH BARRIERS TO EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR

ACTIVITY?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

STATE APPLICANTS MUST RESPOND TO FOUR QUESTIONS. THE THIRD OF FOUR QUESTIONS IS:

Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

Geographic proximity to services: Virginia VR maintains fully staffed; full-service offices (30 statewide) many are rural in designation to ensure the widest coverage and availability of services statewide. Two VR offices are collocated within American Job Centers. Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling staff are assigned individual schools to provide required Pre-ETS activities and outreach to surrounding communities. General VR Counselors are assigned by county and/or specific territory in urban areas. The use of community-based internet sites ensures that VR staff can work in the closest proximity to assigned caseloads. In addition, the use of video conferencing as well as payment of consumer transportation costs can mitigate consumer equity and access to services.

DARS will expand services to areas across the Commonwealth that have limited choice of provider options by: (a) identifying areas of the state where SE services are not readily accessible and (b) establish initiatives to assist existing ESOs to expand into underserved areas.

Qualified vendor capacity to provide Supported and Customized Employment and Pre- Employment Transition Services: DARS continues to partner with Community Rehabilitation Providers (CPRs), including Employment Service Organizations (ESO) statewide to build and sustain quality Pre-ETS programming/Work Based learning for student and youth populations. This capacity building has expanded to CRPs that provide services across state lines which has resulted in new providers with strong reputations for service excellence moving into boarder communities in our southern most points of the state. We will continue to support growth and expansion.

DARS receives and utilizes stakeholder input from the Employment Services Organization Steering Committee (ESOSC) that provides the DARS' Commissioner counsel on funding and policy issues related to the allocation of Long-Term Employment Support Services (LTESS) state funds and fostering close working relations between agency staff and Employment Services Organizations.

The Virginia legislature provides state funds to Employment Services Organizations to increase the availability of extended services and reduce barriers to offering integrated, community- based employment options for persons with most significant disabilities after the DARS time- limited services are completed. A total of \$8,952,766 in extended services is available to Employment Services

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Organizations through DARS under the Long-Term Employment Support Services and Extended Employment Services programs.

Regional meetings designed to directly enhance the quality of supported employment services to consumers with the most significant disabilities are conducted across regions. These sessions address increasing supported-employment options and consumer choice for meeting physical,

behavioral, medical, and overall rehabilitation needs; and accessing and expanding placement resources.

DARS along with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), working with Griffin and Hammis, LLC continues to provide training and technical assistance to Employment Service Organizations related to Customized Employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. Training includes Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) certification in Basic Employment Services with an Emphasis in Customized Employment. Recently mentoring and technical assistance has been added to help develop the proficiency of provider staff to provide Customized Employment.

Implementing the Employment Services Organization Outcomes Report will provide information to VR counselors and their consumers on the performance of each Employment Services Organization to inform decisions regarding service provision.

DARS will obtain stakeholder insights and assistance through the Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) Network. The network represents a cross-section of stakeholders and DARS' staff meets regularly with the Network members to: (a) provide ideas and recommendations regarding program changes and procedures; (b) identify and address special regional needs, unique needs of rural, suburban, and urban communities, and needs of different populations of individuals with disabilities; and (c) provide information to the Department and help develop priorities and initiatives.

Individual school/district interest/capacity in partnering with VR for services to students with disabilities: Following the pandemic, access to some schools/districts had been restricted as relationships between Virginia VR and educational districts needed to be strengthened and rebuilt. 2024-2025 outreach activities continued and included the first annual Capacity Building Institute in Virginia. DARS and seventeen school districts across Virginia came together to enhance relationships and develop plans to improve student transition activities. VR districts hold events focused on services to students with disabilities that are well attended by educators and partners. These efforts brought increased VR visibility and educator engagement in the collaborative process. These efforts will continue and expand with the Virginia Department of Education Transition staff who have jointly held meetings with Special Education Directors (SPED), special education teachers and Virginia VR statewide.

In 2025, DARS partnered with the Virginia Association of Centers for Independent Living to improve access to Pre-ETS services for underserved students, including justice involved youth.

4. WHAT IS YOUR TIMELINE, INCLUDING TARGETED MILESTONES, FOR ADDRESSING THESE IDENTIFIED BARRIERS?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing

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the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

STATE APPLICANTS MUST RESPOND TO FOUR QUESTIONS.

The final of four questions is:

What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

Virginia VR began efforts to mitigate identified barriers in 2022 following the pandemic and as operations expanded. Community outreach and efforts targeted on increasing agency visibility are a key priority of all statewide field offices. These efforts will continue and will be sustained ongoing as an effort to increase public perception and general knowledge of the contribution the VR process makes to strengthening the lives and employment outcomes for people with disabilities of all ages.

Targeted community outreach to increase visibility and equity of service access began in 2023 which led to an increase in VR applications statewide. These efforts will continue and will be expanded based on demographic and service data as it informs our current efforts.

The expansion of Pre-ETS services for students with disabilities continues to be a focus of our efforts in 2025-26. Increasing visibility, access to quality programming, expanding relationships with special education transition and school personnel as well as increasing vendor capacity.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

APPENDIX ALL WIOA CORE PROGRAMS

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM (COMBINED OR GENERAL) - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Each State VR program must submit expected levels of performance in its Unified or Combined State Plan and in the two-year modification of that plan. Expected levels of performance for the first two years of a state plan must be submitted in the initial submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and in the initial submission of the two-year modification of that Plan, for years three and four, as described in 34 CFR § 361.170(a). Expected levels of performance must be stated to the nearest tenth of a percent (XX.X %) or to the nearest whole dollar for median earnings. State VR programs are reminded that the expected levels of performance must be published for public comment prior to plan submission in accordance with state law, regulation, and policy.

After the Unified or Combined State Plan submission, each State VR program must reach agreement with RSA on the negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the Unified or Combined State Plan (or for the third and fourth years of the

Unified or Combined State Plan during the required two-year modification process) in accordance with WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv).

RSA will use its statistical adjustment model to derive pre-program year estimated levels of performance for each indicator. Each State VR program and RSA will consider the negotiation factors outlined in WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(v) during the negotiation process. Once negotiated levels of performance are agreed upon, each State VR program must incorporate the negotiated levels of performance into the Unified or Combined State Plan and the two-year modification of that plan prior to the plan's approval (section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv) of WIOA).

EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

In the final rule implementing WIOA, the Departments indicated that they would initially implement this indicator in the form of a pilot to test the feasibility and rigor of three proposed approaches. During Program Year (PY) 2022, the Departments initiated the rulemaking process to establish a standard definition of Effectiveness in Serving Employers. States will continue to report two of three proposed approaches until the Departments issue the final rule and implement the indicator.

Performance Indicators	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level	PY 2027 Expected Level	PY 2027 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	59%	TBD	59.5%	TBD
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	57%	TBD	57.5%	TBD
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$4,173	TBD	\$4,200	TBD
Credential Attainment Rate	63.0%	TBD	66.0%	TBD
Measurable Skill Gains	89.0%	TBD	91.5%	TBD
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹

¹

The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BLIND)

a. State Rehabilitation Council.

1. All VR agencies, except for those that have an independent consumer-controlled commission, must have a State Rehabilitation Council (Council or SRC) that meets the criteria in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable, has:

(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council

2. In accordance with Assurance (a)(1)(B), if selected, please provide information on the current composition of the Council by representative type, including the term number of the representative, as applicable, and any vacancies, as well as the beginning dates of each representative's term.

Council Representative	Current Term Number/Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) Gary Talley: Representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(i)	1 st Term	10/2024
Parent Training and Information Center Heidi Lawyer: Representative of a Parent Training and Information Center 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(ii)	2 nd Term	10/2024
Client Assistance Program Beth Klein: Representative of Client Assistance Program 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(iii)	2 nd Term	10/2024
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency) LaSonya Jackson: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor-Ex-Officio, Non-Voting Member 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(iv)	1 st Term	10/2023
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider Vacant: Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(v)	Vacant	
Business, Industry, and Labor	1 st Term	10/2025

Council Representative	Current Term Number/Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Kendall Morris: Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(vi)		
Business, Industry, and Labor	1st Term	10/2023
John Leopold: Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(vi)		
Business, Industry, and Labor	1st Term	10/2022
Amaan Karim: Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(vi)		
Business, Industry, and Labor		
Vacant: Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(vi)		
Disability Advocacy Groups	1st Term	10/2023
Susan Bowmaster: Representative of Disability Advocacy Group 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(3)(ii)(A)		
Disability Advocacy Groups	1st Term	10/2023
Gerald Merideth: Representative of Disability Advocacy Group 34 CFR§361.17 (b)(3)(ii)(A)		
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services	1st Term	10/2022
Mark Roane: Former or Current Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(B)(viii)		
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)	2nd Term	10/2023
Christine Appert: Former or Current		

Council Representative	Current Term Number/Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(B)(viii)		
State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Rebecca Ceja: Representative of Department of Education 34 CFR §361.17 b)(1)(B)(x)	1st Term	10/2023
State Workforce Development Board Jeffery Sluss: Representative of the Virginia Workforce Board 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(B)(xi)	1st Term	10/2023
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio) Commissioner Rick Mitchell: The Director of the designated Statue Unit DBVI as an ex-officio, non-voting member 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(B)(xii)		
Vacant: Representative of an Individual who is blind, has multiple disabilities, and has difficulty representing him or herself or is unable due to disabilities to represent him or herself Vacant: Representative of an Individual who is blind, has multiple disabilities, and has difficulty representing him or herself or is unable due to disabilities to represent him or herself 34 CFR §361.17 (b)(3)(ii)(B)		

Council Representative	Current Term Number/Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of VR Services Chanthen Nene: Former or current recipient of VR services 34CFR §361.17 (b)(1)(B)(vii)	2 nd Term	10/2022

3. If the SRC is not meeting the composition requirements in Section 105(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and/or is not meeting quarterly as required in Section 105(f) of the Rehabilitation Act, provide the steps that the VR agency is taking to ensure it meets those requirements.

DBVI will work closely with the Commonwealth Governor's office to locate a replacement for the vacated positions of Community Rehabilitation Service Provider, Business, Industry and Labor, and Representative of an Individual who is blind, has multiple disabilities, and has difficulty representing him or herself or is unable due to disabilities to represent his or herself. DBVI's Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services will alert the Governor's office once the vacant role of - Director of Board Appointments; Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth is appointed. DBVI will continue the agency's recruitment efforts to fill these vacancies, and upon identification of appropriate representatives, will assist them in completing the Commonwealth's application for Board Appointments.

4. In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(21)(A)(ii)(III) of the Rehabilitation Act, include a summary of the Council's input (including how it was obtained) into the State Plan and any State Plan revisions, including recommendations from the Council's annual reports, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction and other Council reports.

The DBVI SRC recommendations

SRC Recommendation 1: The SRC recommends that DBVI report to the SRC quarterly on the progress toward accomplishing the 2024-2027 State Plan goals.

SRC Recommendation 2: Taking into consideration the feedback received from individuals served by DBVI through surveys, success stories and other anecdotal evidence, the SRC recognizes that self-advocacy is vital to the goal setting and subsequent achievements both personally and professionally of the individuals served. The SRC recommends that DBVI continues to recognize the importance of Self-Advocacy across all age groups and should continue to incorporate these values into its rehabilitation programs and other support services.

SRC Recommendation 3: The SRC recommends the following in regard to the consumer satisfaction survey process:

1. Consumer Satisfaction continues to be collected both annually and on a rolling basis throughout the continuum of service provision.
2. DBVI continues to report on the overall consumer satisfaction rate quarterly at each meeting for review and analysis of continuous improvement efforts.

SRC Recommendation 4: The SRC recommends that DBVI continues to provide the SRC with a dedicated administrative staff person to capture the minutes and discussions therein especially any key action items to be

addressed during each SRC meeting and for that staff person to coordinate and collaborate with SRC leadership to offer newly appointed SRC members an orientation to the SRC and its stated purpose at least once a year.

SRC Recommendation 5: The SRC recommends the following regarding the opportunity for members of the public to make comment.

1. DBVI shall continue to provide the opportunity for public meetings, whether virtual or in-person, statewide during the current State Plan cycle and for DBVI to share the public comments and feedback gathered along with the agency's responses from those meetings with the SRC at each scheduled SRC meeting.
2. DBVI shall continue to provide timely notification of all public meetings (including regional meetings, state meetings of consumer organizations, and the quarterly SRC meeting) on the DBVI website, the designated channel for Virginia on Newline, and through DBVI's official social media accounts. DBVI should make every effort to allow all ages and stakeholders the opportunity for comment, with special emphasis related to focusing on students and youth with disabilities and their parents, and those students attending the Vocational Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired.
3. DBVI has incorporated the use of Community Chats in which agency leadership and program directors are made available to answer questions and address concerns in real time to ensure that service provision continues to meet the highest standards.

SRC Recommendation 6: With the enhanced emphasis on the dual service approach of supporting both the individual with a disability and the local business community, DBVI should place special emphasis on training Vocational Rehabilitation Staff regarding marketing, job development, job placement, enlisting the assistance of job coaches as appropriate for each individual, and leveraging the expertise of DBVI's Employment Services Organizations partnerships. DBVI shall continue to encourage effective, and outcome driven collaboration with the DBVI Business Relations Unit to further increase the likelihood of job placement, paid and unpaid work experiences, and specific job search related skills to prepare the individuals that DBVI serves with the best knowledge, skills and confidence in their abilities throughout the individual's tenure with DBVI. The SRC further recommends that DBVI report on these collaborative efforts at each SRC meeting (minimum of 4 times per year).

5. Provide the VR agency's response to the Council's input and recommendations, including an explanation for the rejection of any input and recommendations.

SRC Recommendation 1: The SRC recommends that DBVI report to the SRC quarterly on the progress toward accomplishing the 2024-2027 State Plan goals.

Agency response: DBVI supports this recommendation and will report to the SRC quarterly regarding the progress towards accomplishing the State Plan goals for 2024- 2027.

SRC Recommendation 2: Taking into consideration the feedback received from individuals served by DBVI through surveys, success stories and other anecdotal evidence, the SRC recognizes that self-advocacy is vital to the goal setting and subsequent achievements both personally and professionally of the individuals served. The SRC recommends that DBVI continues to recognize the importance of Self-Advocacy across all age groups and should continue to incorporate these values into its rehabilitation programs and other support services.

Agency response: DBVI is in agreement that self-advocacy skills are a crucial component to the individual's achievement of both personal and professional goals. DBVI provides training on appropriate self-advocacy skills through its Pre-Employment Transition Services and the Adult Vocational Rehabilitation program. Additional

emphasis is placed on appropriate self-advocacy through DBVI's residential training program (for both students and adults with disabilities) at the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired.

SRC Recommendation 3: The SRC recommends the following regarding the consumer satisfaction survey process:

1. Consumer Satisfaction continues to be collected both annually and on a rolling basis throughout the continuum of service provision.
2. DBVI continues to report on the overall consumer satisfaction rate quarterly at each meeting for review and analysis of continuous improvement efforts.

Agency Response: DBVI made great strides during the previous state plan cycle (2020-2023) regarding the collection of consumer satisfaction data and feedback to include the hiring of an individual to work part time with the sole focus of reaching out to both current and former participants in DBVI vocational rehabilitation programming to capture their experiences through qualitative and quantitative data collection. DBVI has updated the consumer satisfaction survey to include more targeted questions to allow for analysis and the proper addressing of any feedback that requires an agency response. DBVI agrees to continue providing quarterly updates on the Consumer Satisfaction survey data collected and will provide a full consumer satisfaction report annually for review and input. Over the past year, DBVI has worked with a national consulting firm to develop pulse surveys that individuals served may opt into. These pulse surveys are sent at specific and pertinent times in the life of the individual's case to ensure that any areas of service improvement may be corrected in real time to ensure that service provision continues to meet the highest standards.

DBVI will continue to develop new strategies to engage individuals that have received services throughout the consumer satisfaction process.

SRC Recommendation 4: The SRC recommends that DBVI continues to provide the SRC with a dedicated administrative staff person to capture the minutes and discussions therein especially any key action items to be addressed during each SRC meeting and for that staff person to coordinate and collaborate with SRC leadership to offer newly appointed SRC members an orientation to the SRC and its stated purpose at least once a year.

Agency Response: DBVI recognizes the importance of the SRC member's full attention to meeting discussions and opportunities for questions. DBVI agrees to continue providing a dedicated administrative staff person to capture the minutes and discussions therein with a special emphasis of denoting any key action items to be addressed during each SRC meeting. DBVI agrees that the same administrative staff person will coordinate and collaborate with SRC leadership to offer newly appointed SRC members an orientation to the SRC and its stated purpose at least annually.

SRC Recommendation 5: The SRC recommends the following regarding the opportunity for members of the public to make comment.

1. DBVI shall continue to provide the opportunity for public meetings, whether virtual or in-person, statewide during the current State Plan cycle and for DBVI to share the public comments and feedback gathered along with the agency's responses from those meetings with the SRC at each scheduled SRC meeting.
2. DBVI shall continue to provide timely notification of all public meetings (including regional meetings, state meetings of consumer organizations, and the quarterly SRC meeting) on the DBVI website, the designated channel for Virginia on Newline, and through DBVI's official social media accounts.

DBVI should make every effort to allow individuals of all ages and stakeholders the opportunity for comment, with special emphasis related to focusing on students and youth with disabilities and their parents and with those students attending the Vocational Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired.

Agency Response: DBVI is committed to continuing to conduct a minimum of four public meetings (either virtual or in person), at least three of which will be conducted in conjunction with consumer group organization meetings. DBVI will continue to provide summaries of public comment and agency responses annually on the DBVI website and on Newsline and will share this information with the SRC by emailing an electronic copy to appointed members annually.

DBVI will continue its practice of notification of agency public meetings, including those held in conjunction with state consumer group meetings, but will not assume responsibility for providing notification of state consumer group meetings generally. DBVI will include all consumer group public meetings on the Calendar of Events on the DBVI website if such information is provided by consumer groups. DBVI has incorporated the use of Community Chats in which agency leadership and program directors are made available to answer questions and address concerns in real time to ensure that service provision continues to meet the highest standards.

SRC Recommendation 6: With the enhanced emphasis on the dual customer service approach of supporting both the individual with a disability and the local business community, DBVI should place special emphasis on training Vocational Rehabilitation Staff regarding marketing, job development, job placement, enlisting the assistance of job coaches and Employment Service Organizations as appropriate for each individual, and leveraging the expertise of DBVI's Employment Services Organizations partnerships. DBVI shall continue to encourage effective and outcome driven collaboration with the DBVI Business Relations Unit to further increase the likelihood of job placement, paid and unpaid work experiences, and specific job search related skills to prepare the individuals that DBVI serves with the best knowledge, skills, and confidence in their abilities throughout the individual's tenure with DBVI. The SRC further recommends that DBVI report on these collaborative efforts at each SRC meeting (minimum of 4 times per year).

Agency Response: DBVI will continue its commitment to making Business relations and engagement a priority by engaging with other WIOA partners and continuing business relations efforts both locally and statewide. DBVI will provide continuous training to VR staff in appropriate workforce activities including, but not limited to, job development and placement strategies and education of the workforce partners regarding the viability of the talented pipeline of career seekers that it serves. DBVI will report to the SRC quarterly concerning its ongoing efforts to maintain a collaborative relationship between Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and the Business Relations Unit in an effort to provide critical wrap around services related to job development and placement by providing a report quarterly regarding business and corporate initiatives and WIOA title partners engagement with DBVI's talented and qualified career seekers.

b. Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA).

1. The VR services needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, including:

A. Individuals with the most significant disabilities and their need for Supported Employment;

According to the most recent DBVI Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment in July 2025, the % of individuals having the most significant disabilities (MSD) was relatively stable, increasing by .2% from PY 2021 to PY 2023, with 96.5% being classified as MSD in PY 2023.

There continues to be limited use of Supported Employment services with a primary concern that many of the Employment Services Organizations (ESOs) who provide Supported Employment services have high turnover rates

and limited experience in working with individuals who are blind, vision impaired or deafblind. Extended funding for Supported Employment services was available as needed through Long-Term Employment Support Services. ESO job development, training, and retention remains a top priority to develop for individuals with the most significant disabilities and needing Supported Employment services especially in the more remote rural areas of the state. In 2023, DBVI began holding quarterly meetings with ESOs across the state to provide detailed information regarding blindness as a disability and best practices for working with individuals with vision impairments of all levels and etiologies. DBVI anticipates continuing this practice throughout 2026 with the goal of training new ESO staff as turnover occurs as well as ensuring that a minimum level of education regarding blindness is retained to aid in the job development and employment phases of Supported Employment services.

B. Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

Data for ethnicity rates for the general population of the state was obtained from 2022 American Community Survey one-year estimates.. The ethnic demographic averages for each region were calculated by adding population totals for each ethnic group and dividing by the total population.

The State's averages for ethnic diversity in the categories of Hispanic/Latino, American Indian and Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander were below the National averages. White individuals comprise the largest ethnic group in the State and exceeds all other ethnic categories by more than 20 % in each Regional Office.

Black or African Americans comprise the second largest ethnic group in the State (18.4%), with an average that is 6.5% higher than the National average. American Indian and Alaska Natives comprise less than one percent (.3%) of Virginia's population and the averages are identical for the State in each Regional Office.

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders residing in Virginia comprise less than one percent (.1%) of the State's population. Similarly, the rates are lower than the averages for American Indians and Alaska Natives in Virginia (0.1%).

The total population Nationwide, is 333,287,562 with the State's total population at 8,683,619 during the same period.

The Nationwide average of Hispanic or Latino (of any race) was 19.1% while it was 10.4 % in Virginia. The National average for White alone was 57.7 % while the average for the State was 58.7 %.

The National average for Black or African American alone was 11.9 % with an average of 18.4% in Virginia. While the National average for American Indian and Alaska Native alone was 0.5 %, the average for the State of Virginia was 0.1%.

Nationwide, Asian alone ethnicity was reported at 5.8% with Virginia exceeding that percentage with 6.5%. Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone in Virginia was 0.1% compared to the National average of 0.2%.

Lastly, those who identified as having two or more races was 4.3% Nationally with the State's average being higher at 4.7%.

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Cornell University publishes disability statistics for National and State employment by disability type and ethnicity showed that Asians comprised the fourth largest ethnic group in Virginia (6.5% of the population) and had the highest rate of employment for those reporting a visual disability. The ethnic category of Hispanic/Latino had the

second highest employment rate for those reporting a visual disability. American Indian and Alaskan Native, non-Hispanic and had the lowest employment rate among those reporting a visual disability (28.2%).

For DBVI specifically, the data showed that White individuals constituted the largest category of individuals served by the Agency (54.5%). Black or African American individuals were the second largest group served representing nearly 40% of all DBVI consumers. The rate of Asian individuals served constituted 6.7% of participants served in PY 2022, while the share of Hispanic individuals increased from 5.7% in PY 2020 to 6% in PY 2022.

The data indicated that White individuals are slightly underrepresented among DBVI participants compared to their overall percentage in Virginia. In addition, Hispanic individuals were served at a lower rate than their percentage in Virginia. African Americans were overrepresented as a share of DBVI participants, compared to their overall percentage in Virginia. It should be noted that there are many factors to consider when comparing the population of DBVI consumers to Virginia's population overall including consideration of the socioeconomic status of each group. One would expect that individuals who are in greater need due to lack of financial and other community resources would constitute a higher percentage of individuals receiving assistance from the Agency.

The top three barriers to achieving employment goals were:

1. Employer's perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
2. Language barriers
3. Not having job skills; and, education and training

The top three barriers identified by Agency partners mirrored top three barriers selected for the general population as well.

As a result of these findings, DBVI will continue a targeted effort to reach unserved and underserved populations. These efforts include hiring more bilingual staff, attending various community cultural events to conduct outreach and inform individuals of the services that DBVI has to offer, and providing many agency documents in other languages. To date, DBVI has begun offering Spanish language town halls for students and families interested in Pre-ETS programming. It is anticipated that DBVI will continue to grow its outreach to unserved and underserved populations throughout the current State Plan cycle.

C. Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the workforce development system; and

At the time of the last Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment(2025), it was noted that there had been considerable progress in the relationship between DBVI and the core partners at the State level. The Commissioner continues to represent DBVI on the Statewide Workforce Development Board (SWDB) while the Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services' primary function is to bring the core partners together and act as staff to the SWDB. This has resulted in the development of stronger partnerships between DBVI and the other core partners. Joint planning and frequent communication continue to be common among partners. It was highlighted that DBVI plays a critical role on the SWDB in that the Agency continues to advocate for the accessibility of the Virginia Works Centers (one-stops) and all partner programs and facilities.

As staff to the SWDB, the DBVI Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services has been invited as a core member of several Virginia Works Centers recertification process and continues to provide crucial information to the recertification team regarding both physical and electronic accessibility of each location.

DBVI's sister agency, the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), remains a vital workforce partner for DBVI. The strong relationship between DARS and DBVI is essential for offering

comprehensive wraparound services to individuals with co-occurring disabilities. While the level of service and productivity of this partnership has varied in the past, depending on staff members and Regional Offices, DBVI has actively worked to improve this by training Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors on managing dual cases shared with DARS. In September of 2025, DARS and DBVI hosted a joint training session for all DARS Regional Counselors for the Deaf and DBVI Vocational Counselors to enhance outcomes for dually shared Deafblind cases. Additionally, DBVI has updated its business practices to support collaboration, aiming to help individuals secure and maintain competitive integrated employment.

As a core partner, DBVI continues to provide in-service training for Virginia Works staff on the provision of DBVI services, the importance of Center services, and the integration of funding to offer comprehensive support. DBVI plans to strengthen its partnership with Virginia Works Centers to leverage all available partner services, helping individuals with visual impairments achieve or maintain viable, competitive, integrated employment.

The core workforce partners in Virginia have continued the development of a common referral portal which should aid in tracking co-enrollment. However, the project is currently on hold while developers work to ensure the system becomes fully accessible. Portal modification and updates continue to be implemented in order to ensure that all core partners have the same access to the portal information.

The needs of individuals served through DBVI's Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment service categories are being effectively met by combining Federal funding, and by recognizing individuals with visual disabilities as a minority group that benefits from the support of all workforce partners. The services offered typically include job interview preparation, resume development, student and youth work experiences, comprehensive training programs and technology workshops aimed at increasing computer skills and the use of assistive technology (AT).

D. Youth with disabilities, including students with disabilities and their need for pre-employment transition services. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under IDEA.

In DBVI's most recent CSNA, 2025, it was noted that the number of transition-age youth applying for services ranged from 66-108 in PYs 2021-2023, which represented an increase from pandemic-era levels. As noted in the CSNA, the number of students receiving Pre-ETS services fluctuated during each quarter, however there was a slight decrease in the number of students receiving Pre-ETS. Despite this, the number of Pre-ETS services delivered significantly increased during the same period, indicating that students received a larger number of Pre-ETS services overall. . The average time frame for eligibility determinations for transition-age youth at DBVI decreased during the prior four-year period, ending at 38 days. This was found to be well below the established time frame of 60 days maximum in the Rehabilitation Act. All youth found eligible were determined to have at least a significant disability, with more than 96% having a most significant disability in PY 2023.

Since the 2022 CSNA, DBVI has continued to work on providing rapid engagement services to bring the average number of days in status to an even lower number. DBVI is committed to its Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor training efforts in support of this initiative.

Post-pandemic, the number of students with disabilities remained relatively stable. However, the number of potentially eligible students increased significantly during the same period. This suggests that DBVI needs to focus on educating families of potentially eligible students on the benefits of the Vocational Rehabilitation program. DBVI has incorporated parent information sessions during student programming to address questions about the VR

program. The agency has been offering a variety of programming that help students access the five required services, ensuring equal opportunity for participation in all Pre-ETS core services.

As a result of increased data collection, including labor market indicators and stated employer staffing needs throughout Virginia, DBVI has tailored the provision of Pre- Employment Transition Services programs to focus on educating students with disabilities on the prevailing career paths related to current Virginia employer needs.

The Assessment indicated that barriers to achieving employment goals for both students and youth with disabilities were not different. Two of the three top barriers selected for DBVI consumers in this population were also listed in the top three barriers selected for the general population. These barriers were:

1. Not having job skills;
2. Not enough jobs available;
3. Employer's perceptions about employing persons with disabilities

The following assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition services included the following as of PY23:

1. Transportation barriers from school and work. The lack of reliable transportation, specifically in the rural areas of Virginia, affects every area of the lives of youth and can have a significant impact which limits work options for this population.
2. Low Vision technology and other AT are key services for youth and students who are blind, vision impaired or deafblind. These services are critical in preparing students and youth for their chosen career and their ability to complete the essential functions of their chosen careers.
3. All five required pre-employment transition services activities have been consistently cited as being necessary for students with disabilities. One of the five required services, work-based learning experiences, was most frequently cited, however skills related to self-advocacy and soft-skills (now referred to as power skills) training were mentioned almost as frequently.
4. DBVI has a close working relationship with the Department of Education through many facets of the programs offered. Specifically related to students with disabilities, DBVI works hand in hand with the Teachers for the Vision Impaired (TVI) Statewide to ensure services are coordinated and comprehensive. In more rural areas of the State where a school district may not have a TVI, it is found that coordination of services for students with disabilities is adversely impacted.
5. An expressed need from DBVI's students with disabilities is further training surrounding the concepts of resiliency in the face of adversity and self-advocacy. DBVI had added Pre-ETS programs focusing on the concepts of resiliency and financial literacy. The new offerings were considered helpful, needed and a positive experience for respondents.
6. The transition from secondary to post-secondary continues to be a major challenge for students who have received services under an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504. Understanding one's disability and the necessary accommodations to access educational materials can be daunting at first. To support students transitioning from high school to college, DBVI's AT services help bridge the technology gap. However, there have been reports that these services were sometimes delivered late, causing delays at the start of students' learning processes and in achieving their goals.

The expressed barriers above were found to be similar in the years following the last CSNA. Virginia continues to struggle with broadband internet access in the more rural regions of the state, which impedes a student's ability to engage in remote pre-employment transition programs. To negate this lack of access, DBVI's Rehabilitation Technology staff work with students to provide hotspot capability (along with a loaner laptop if necessary) to facilitate greater access Pre-ETS programming.

DBVI's Education Services and Vocational Rehabilitation divisions engage in cooperative agreements with local LEAs to coordinate transition efforts supporting the same end goal. Starting at age 14, students are identified by the Vocational Rehabilitation Division for targeted outreach. This outreach includes offering the five required Pre-Employment Transition Services and inviting students to participate in various pre-ETS programs provided by DBVI and its vendors.

2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.

Respondents who participated in the survey identified the top six service needs that rehabilitation service providers were unable to meet in the State:

1. Job Training Services
2. AT
3. Other transportation assistance
4. Independent Living Skills training
5. Adjustment to blindness training
6. Affordable housing services

The respondents were then provided with a list of five reasons and were asked to identify the primary reasons why vocational rehabilitation service providers were unable to meet individual's service needs. Respondents were able to select more than one item if desired. The majority of respondents stated that there were not enough service providers available in areas, which implies that this item is the primary reason why services through community rehabilitation programs (CRP) were not met. The subsequent reasons cited included:

1. Low quality of provider services
2. Individual barriers prevented successful interactions with providers
3. The lack of referrals to needed services

Survey participants were also asked to identify the most important change that network or rehabilitation service providers in Virginia could make to support individuals who are blind, vision impaired or deafblind in achieving their employment goals. These changes included:

1. Communication with the consumer and lists of options
2. More staff and more training for staff with more in-person participation in meetings and training

3. More training on AT and accommodations
4. Provide training closer to southwest Virginia
5. Additional recurring themes from those surveyed included:
 - a. The provision of training services provided to individuals by DBVI staff members
 - b. The use of CRPs and other individual service providers for some services
 - c. In-house service provision was the most common method of service delivery
 - d. The use of external service providers for employment services including supported employment; although infrequent
 - e. Due to the inherent in-house service provision, it was found that DBVI was not as adversely affected by the loss of external service providers due to layoffs and high turnover as some other VR programs nationally
 - f. An expressed need to develop the ability of ESOs to work with individuals who are blind, vision impaired or deafblind. Staff respondents indicated that they would be more likely to work with ESOs for employment services if they had more knowledge and experience working with their consumers
 - g. The need to re-establish vocational evaluation services for DBVI consumers due to the lack of professional vocational evaluation services that are tailored to meet the needs of individuals with blindness or vision impairments
 - h. The need for peer mentors, especially for youth with blindness and vision impairments. Although mentors are not usually considered as a purchased service, peer mentor training programs and networks can be contractually provided or arranged for on a fee-for-services basis

In response to the feedback received from the CSNA in this area, DBVI has implemented strategies and programs aimed at lessening the gap in the use of ESO provided services. As stated earlier in the report, DBVI has established quarterly in-person training for ESO staff surrounding blindness as a disability and the anticipated interaction of the ESO and DBVI staff while collaborating to support an individual with blindness or vision impairment in their search to gain or retain competitive integrated employment. An additional focus of these trainings is to introduce ESO staff to the myriad AT devices that can be used on the job as well as an introduction to skills of blindness philosophy and training. DBVI has provided targeted training in southwest Virginia during the past year and will continue to engage with participants in that region and offer training.

Also, DBVI has contracted with Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (VCU RRTC) for the provision of peer mentoring services. As part of the contract, VCU RRTC has developed a replicable curriculum and resource tool kit that can be used as a framework for other ESOs to utilize when setting up peer mentoring services. DBVI is currently in the second year of the contract and great success has been reported by student participants who would otherwise not have access to mentors and peers with blindness.

c. Goals, Priorities, and Strategies

1. Describe how the SRC and the VR agency jointly developed and agreed to the goals and priorities and any revisions; and

During the final SRC meeting of the year, the SRC was presented sample goal language for consideration and discussion. DBVI Director of Vocational Rehabilitation outlined the suggested language and what led to the choosing of each specific goal for consideration. As a part of this review process, the SRC provided input and feedback on the suggested language, and the SRC members were unanimously in favor of adopting the amended suggested goal language for inclusion in the Combined State Plan 2024-2027 cycle.

2. Identify measurable goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs and the basis for selecting the goals and priorities (e.g., CSNA, performance accountability measures, SRC recommendations, monitoring, other information). As required in Section 101(a)(15)(D), (18), and (23), describe under each goal or priority, the strategies or methods used to achieve the goal or priority, including as applicable, description of strategies or methods that—

A. Support innovation and expansion activities;

B. Overcome barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services;

C. Improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, post-secondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services); and

D. Improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes.

DBVI and the SRC agreed to the following 6 goals for the 2024-2027 cycle of the combined state plan. The goals were developed following the review of the latest CSNA, understanding areas of improvement that DBVI needs to focus on, and past input from the SRC regarding what they would like to see and continue to receive updates on moving forward. Please see the following agreed upon goals:

1.

- a. Engage and collaborate with WIOA core partners to coordinate business service efforts to include the blind and visually impaired labor market.

During the latest CSNA, it was shown that while DBVI has made great strides in increasing the partnership with other Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) title partners, it was indicated that DBVI should continue these efforts into the future. DBVI has a dedicated Business Relations Unit who have worked tirelessly to bridge the gap between the career seekers DBVI works with and businesses. To that end, the Business Relations Unit has also begun to provide Windmills disability awareness training to title partners across the Commonwealth. In this next cycle, DBVI will continue working with the WIOA core partners to not only coordinate business service efforts, but also to inform employers of the talented pipeline of career seekers who are ready to join or rejoin the workforce. This goal will be measured in the following ways:

- An increase of the number of career seekers co-enrolled with WIOA core partners. To quantify this goal, DBVI expects the percentage of co-enrolled cases to increase by 20%.
- The ability/availability for collaboration to braid funding to provide wrap-around services for the individuals DBVI works with, shown by an increase of co-enrollment reporting supported by DBVI's case management system. To quantify this goal, DBVI has developed a case management report that allows DBVI to track the number and type of WIOA programs that are being accessed throughout the life of an individual's case. To quantify this goal, DBVI expects the percentage of co-enrolled cases to increase by 20%.

2. Provide comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services, including rehabilitation technology services, to students with disabilities, youth in transition, and adults resulting in the attainment of industry recognized credentials to obtain competitive integrated employment.

DBVI has a robust and industry recognized AT Department that assists individuals with the appropriate equipment to meet their unique needs related to their chosen vocational goal. While DBVI strives to provide the highest quality of services, there have been instances, as noted in the latest CSNA, where individuals did not feel they received the services and necessary AT to move forward confidently in working to achieve their desired level of employment. DBVI is dedicated to reducing the response time to address any such delays and continues to work hand in hand with case managers to ensure individual's needs are not only met, but that the individual can appropriately and functionally utilize the AT for its intended purpose. This goal will be measured in the following ways:

- The utilization of reporting mechanisms through the DBVI case management system. To quantify this measure, DBVI has developed a case management report that will show the length of time from referral to recommendation of equipment. DBVI expects the time from referral to recommendation to be less than 30 days.
- Feedback from individuals regarding their experiences.

3. Conduct outreach efforts to Local Education Agencies and other Community Partners to assist in increasing the number of students with disabilities participating in and benefiting from DBVI offered Pre-Employment Transition programs.

DBVI continues to provide robust and meaningful programming related to the Pre-ETS 5 required activities as set forth in WIOA. One area of improvement is DBVI's outreach to local education agencies and other community partners to inform them about the services available to students with disabilities. In response to this area, DBVI has recently hired an additional staff member to assist in focusing on outreach to the stated audiences. Historically, DBVI has relied on the TVI to let the students and their parents know about the programming and services available to them while still in High School. This goal will be measured in the following ways:

- An increase in the number of new contacts related to Pre-ETS services. DBVI expects outreach efforts to increase the number of new students to DBVI by 30%.
- An Increase in participation numbers related to Pre-ETS programming. DBVI expects participation numbers to increase by 20% as a result of targeted outreach.
- The increased use of resources to provide support and programming to the DBVI Pre-ETS population statewide.

4. Continue to expand the utilization of Supported Employment and Customized Employment services for adults and youth to increase competitive integrated employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

As noted in the most recent CSNA, DBVI has historically underutilized the provision of Supported Employment for both youth and adults with disabilities. Many factors contribute to this, including case manager lack of understanding of supported employment services and how to leverage ESO assistance in supporting an individual who is blind, vision impaired, or deafblind on the job. As stated earlier in this report, there has been found to be a lack of trained and qualified ESO staff statewide to address the specific needs of individuals who have blindness.

This is especially prevalent in the more rural parts of the state where other barriers such as lack of transportation, lack of internet access, and lack of resources significantly impact individual's who are blind in their search for competitive integrated employment. DBVI is committed to providing increased training for both case managers and ESO staff on the provision of supported employment services and how to fully support an individual with vision impairment on the job. This goal will be measured in the following ways:

- Increased use of supported employment services and funding to provide the necessary support for the individual to maintain appropriate competitive integrated employment related to their chosen vocational goal. This will be indicated by an increase of 15% above the current number of individuals served under this plan type.
- Measured through reporting mechanisms available in the DBVI case management system. DBVI has developed a case management report that easily shows the number of individuals in this plan type and will compare current case numbers to new supported employment plans signed.

5. Achieving agency annual performance goals for the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance in section 116(b)(2)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.

DBVI strives to remain a good workforce core partner by providing services that lead to achievement of goals related to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance. Dedicated DBVI staff members are continuously looking at reported measures and work to ensure that the objectives set forth are met. This goal will be measured in the following ways:

- Data reporting through the DBVI case management system. DBVI has developed a case management report that allows tracking of data related to the common performance measures.
- Power BI (data visualization software) reports to internally measure the number of services provided to individuals during a given quarter or performance year
- Reports provided to the Rehabilitation Services Administration on both a quarterly and yearly basis
- Internal controls surrounding the collection and reporting of data related to program performance.

This measure will be attained by DBVI meeting or exceeding negotiated levels of performance for each program year.

6. Increase collaboration with the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services to provide comprehensive wrap around services to address the needs of individuals who have dual diagnoses.

Virginia is fortunate to have two separate VR (Title IV) partners to provide comprehensive wrap around services for individuals with disabilities. The latest CSNA mentioned that DBVI should leverage its working relationship with the general agency to enlist expertise in disabilities other than blindness, and to collaborate as one unit on data measures that are reported as a state and not by each individual agency. Now more than ever, DBVI is recognizing the prevalence of co-occurring disabilities and should collaborate with the general agency to ensure that all of the individuals needs are met, not just needs related to blindness. DBVI has begun to implement business practices regarding the importance and availability of individuals to have a VR case open with both agencies. This goal will be measured in the following ways:

- An increase in the number of reported joint cases with the general agency. DBVI expects the number of co-enrolled cases to increase by 30%.

- Documentation of the increased collaboration of DBVI and the general agency's executive leadership teams to address statewide reporting concerns and remediation of any concerns that would prevent the state from meeting our combined efforts and reporting requirements.

d. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals

1. Progress in achieving the goals and priorities identified for the VR and Supported Employment Programs;

The following goals were recommended by the DBVI SRC for the 2020-2023 combined state plan cycle:

SRC Recommendation 1- The SRC recommends DBVI report to the SRC quarterly on the progress toward accomplishing the 2020-2023 state plan goals.

Progress or completion: This goal was completed as a result of DBVI providing both written and verbal reports quarterly as to the progress made towards achieving the designated state plan goals for the current plan cycle.

SRC Recommendation 2- Per the feedback from individuals served by DBVI (surveys, success stories, and other anecdotal evidence), the SRC recognizes that self-advocacy skills are critical to the goal setting and thereby achievements of personal and vocational goals for transition- age youth, students and individuals of all ages. Therefore, the SRC recommends that DBVI continues to promote the importance of self-advocacy and continue to incorporate these values into its rehabilitation programs and other services.

Progress or completion: Progress was made on this goal as evidenced by DBVI ensuring incorporation of self-advocacy training as a part of all Pre-ETS programming as well as documenting vocational guidance and counseling provided by the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and other organizations to include increased awareness of consumer organizations and their roles. Training programs at VRCBVI also include a self-advocacy component in all training modalities.

SRC Recommendation 3- The SRC recommends the following related to consumer satisfaction data.

1. Consumer Satisfaction survey data is collected annually or on a rolling basis.
2. DBVI continues the quarterly reporting cycle whereby consumer satisfaction data and analysis are provided at each scheduled meeting.
3. Develop strategies to increase consumer participation in consumer satisfaction surveys.

Progress or completion: This goal was achieved by DBVI developing and filling a part-time consumer satisfaction employee to follow up with individuals whose cases were closed each week in an attempt both by phone and email to contact individuals to get real time survey information regarding the services they received while working with DBVI. DBVI continued to report quarterly on the consumer satisfaction survey data and responses at each scheduled meeting. DBVI elected to gather the consumer satisfaction survey data on a weekly and rolling basis with a minimum of two emails with survey links sent to the individual followed by a minimum of 3 phone calls in an attempt to allow an individual to provide feedback regarding their services. DBVI collected data from individuals whose cases were closed following successful competitive integrated employment as well as individuals who exited the Vocational Rehabilitation Program prior to competitive integrated employment. DBVI will continue with the consumer satisfaction survey process as developed and will monitor the process to allow for any updates or changes to be made as the needs of individuals and reporting requirements change.

SRC Recommendation 4-The SRC recommends that DBVI provide the SRC with a dedicated staff person to capture notes and key action items during SRC meetings and to collaborate with SRC leadership in offering newly appointed SRC members an orientation at least once a year.

Progress or completion: This goal was achieved by the designation of a DBVI administrative team member to capture the quarterly meeting minutes and any key action items that require follow-up. This administrative team member also assists Council members in making arrangements to travel to the meeting location, assists in recording the agenda for upcoming meetings, and works in collaboration with the Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services to schedule and provide meaningful orientation opportunities at least yearly to new members of the SRC. The SRC new member orientation includes an introduction to VR terms and acronyms, a brief history of DBVI and its purpose, and review of the mandate for the SRC and the inherent responsibilities assumed following Governmental appointment. DBVI will continue to provide this requested information and has adopted the recommendation as a best practice.

SRC Recommendation 5- The SRC recommends the following as it pertains to providing opportunities for public comment.

1. DBVI continues to conduct regional public meetings with regional or state meetings of consumer organizations during the State Plan cycle and share the public comments and agency responses from those meetings with the SRC at each scheduled SRC meeting.
2. DBVI continues to provide notification of all public meetings to include regional meetings, state meetings of consumer organizations, and the quarterly SRC meetings to the DBVI website and the designated channel for Virginia on Newsline. In addition, the SRC recommends that DBVI provide notification of the quarterly SR meetings to students enrolled in VRCBVI.

Progress or completion: The goal was achieved by DBVI's continued willingness to continue to provide a full report of public comments and the agency's responses on the official DBVI website as well as emailing an electronic copy to SRC members annually and continued posts on Newsline. DBVI remained committed to conducting a minimum of four public meetings (by in-person gatherings and virtual gatherings of stakeholders). At least three of those opportunities are conducted in conjunction with consumer group organizations meetings. All public meetings are advertised on the official DBVI website as well as the official social media pages and Virginia Town Hall so that all interested parties and stakeholders are sufficiently notified of upcoming opportunities to comment. DBVI continues to be open to receiving public comment at any time throughout the year in writing, and stakeholders are advised of this additional opportunity. DBVI is committed to continuing to offer as a best practice.

SRC Recommendation 6- In the interest of providing the best possible customer support to consumers receiving workforce placement services from Virginia DBVI field services, the SRC recommends DBVI place emphasis on training DBVI counselors on Job Development (Entrepreneurship or building relationships with local employees); Job Placement; as well as an overview of Job Coaching and effectively working with Employment Service Organizations. Recommend counselors continue working closely with the DBVI Business Relations Unit to ensure they have the most up-to-date information to assist clients with job placement. The SRC further recommends DBVI report on these efforts at each scheduled SRC meeting (a minimum of four times each year).

Progress/Completion: Throughout the most recent state plan cycle, DBVI has remained committed to providing training to staff, enhancing the counselor relationship with the Business Relations Unit, and providing comprehensive job placement efforts by working with community partners. Each year, DBVI Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors attend a scheduled Vocational Rehabilitation Training each month. The topics for the trainings are chosen based on Counselor feedback, reporting trends, and any change in process or policy. DBVI is happy to have seen a large increase in the number of paid work experiences for both students and youth with disabilities but also for adult career seekers as well. This increase could not have occurred without the cooperation and collaboration of the field Counselor and the Business Relations unit. As a rule of thumb, the Business Relations Unit reports out (in- person or virtually) to both DBVI staff and SRC meetings. An update regarding business

relations efforts, partnerships and job placement is provided quarterly to the SRC as recommended. DBVI is looking forward to continuing this practice during the next state plan cycle.

SRC Recommendation 7- DBVI develop and distribute various marketing materials for individuals in the community, including business and potentially eligible recipients of services. The SRC recommends that DBVI share these materials with the SRC and ensure that all materials are available in alternate format, to include large print, Braille, and electronic media. The SRC recommends that DBVI conduct targeted outreach to underserved populations.

Progress/Completion: As a commitment to ensuring that all systems and stakeholders are aware of the DBVI services that are available, DBVI has hired a Director of Communications. As part of the first tasks accomplished was consistent branding across all DBVI programs to ensure continuity and understanding of information being received from DBVI. In addition, marketing materials have been developed and are provided in various languages (including the top 5 languages spoken in Virginia). At the time of intake, DBVI case managers confirm with the individuals being served as to what their preferred format is to receive information. This preference is documented in DBVI's case management system and allows for alternative formats such as large print, Braille, Electronic, or written communication. DBVI has participated in several community outreach events geared towards providing information to populations historically underserved by DBVI and has hired staff who are bi-lingual to help bridge the communication divide. DBVI has hired an additional Pre-ETS specialist dedicated to conducting outreach to Local Education Agencies, TVIs, Parents, and Students with Disabilities to ensure that maximum effort is provided to ensure that DBVI services and opportunities of support are known throughout the State. DBVI shared and will continue to share any new marketing material and website modernization information as they are developed.

2. Performance on the performance accountability indicators under Section 116 of WIOA for the most recently completed program year, reflecting actual and negotiated levels of performance. Explain any discrepancies in the actual and negotiated levels; and

DBVI monitors progress towards the WIOA accountability indicators monthly. Each month, a dashboard is distributed to the DBVI Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner for Services, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services, Assistant Director of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and DBVI's Senior Policy Analyst for review. The report is formatted so that progress towards the measures can be easily determined and is color coded, or otherwise marked for accessibility, to provide information quickly.

DBVI and DARS report measures achieved by both agencies (DARS & DBVI) for the final submission to RSA for the following measures: employment rate at 2nd quarter post exit, employment rate 4th quarter post exit, median earnings at 2nd quarter post exit, employment rate 4th quarter post exit, median earnings at 2nd quarter post exit, credential attainment and measurable skills gains.

The negotiated performance measures below were agreed upon in 2022.

Indicator	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	52.0%	53.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	50.0%	52.0%

Indicator	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Median Earnings (second Quarter After Exit)	\$3,600	\$3,800
Credential Attainment Rate	43.5%	45%
Measurable Skill Gains	89.0%	89.1%

Performance results for PY 2022 are below:

Indicator	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2022 Results (DARS and DBVI)
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	52.0%	58.1%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	50.0%	55.7%
Median Earnings (second Quarter After Exit)	\$3600	\$4,123
Credential Attainment Rate	43.5%	61.3%
Measurable Skill Gains	89.0%	87.7%

Program year (PY) 2022 results exceeded all negotiated levels with the exception of measurable skill gains (MSG). DBVI has shown consistent improvement in all performance indicator areas since PY20, including measurable skill gains. When reported as a state, measurable skill gains fell from 92.3% in PY 2021 to 87.7% in PY 2022. It should be noted that Virginia DBVI ranks amongst the top states for MSGs. Also, it is important to recognize that the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) did not assess MSG in PY 2022.

3. The use of funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities (Sections 101(a)(18) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act) (e.g., SRC, SILC).

The Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired has added two additional Pre-ETS specialist to assist with outreach efforts through Local Education Agencies in a targeted effort to increase community awareness of the specialized services offered through DBVI and encourage participation in Pre-ETS activities at an earlier age.

DBVI has also established a VR Specialist role tasked with working vacant caseloads in an effort to ensure the continuation of timely and quality employment services should a vacancy occur. This will allow a greater continuity of services to ensure individual's continued progression toward competitive integrated employment.

e. Supported Employment Services, Distribution of Title VI Funds, and Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services.

1. Acceptance of title VI funds:

(A) VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.

2. If the VR agency has elected to receive title VI funds, Section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act requires VR agencies to include specific goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of Title VI funds received under

Section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services. Describe the use of Title VI funds and how they will be used in meeting the goals and priorities of the Supported Employment program.

The Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) uses funds received through Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, to purchase Supported Employment services (SE) for eligible individuals, including youth, who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind. DBVI purchases SE using a fee-for-services structure from a statewide network of approximately seventy approved SE vendors.

In PY 2023, 25 individuals with most significant disabilities received services through Supported Employment programs funded by Title VI. DBVI will use Title VI funds to purchase and provide SE support services for approximately 15-20 individuals each year of the state plan cycle, including youth, with most significant disabilities. Other activities will include:

1. collaborating with Employment Services Organizations (ESO's) to identify areas within the state where Supported Employment services are not available or limited and to provide consultation, training, and support for those ESO's who expand services into those areas;
2. providing consultation and training to all ESO's to enhance their ability to serve individuals who are blind, deafblind, or who have a vision impairment;
3. continuing to identify alternative funding opportunities for extended employment services.

3. Supported employment services may be provided with Title 1 or Title VI funds following placement of individuals with the most significant disabilities in employment. In accordance with Section 101(a)(22) and Section 606(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities; and the timing of transition to extended services.

DBVI will continue to reserve and expend 50% of its Title VI funds for youth up to age 25 with the most significant disabilities. DBVI's policies will allow for the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed four years and DBVI will continue to utilize other funds (non—Title VI) for SE services for youth once Title VI funds are exhausted. DBVI collaborates with eight Community Rehabilitation Providers known as Employment Services Organizations (ESO) in Virginia to arrange for and to provide Extended Services.

Once the youth has reached stability on the employment site (as agreed to between the VR counselor and the Employment Services Organization (ESO) job coach), the extended services phase begins.

Extended Services activities can include any of the following on-going support services:

1. Any particularized assessment needed to supplement the comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs;
2. The provision of skilled job trainers who accompany the individual for intensive job skill training at the work site;
3. Skills training for new job duties;
4. Social skills training;
5. Regular observation or supervision of the individual;

6. Follow-up services such as regular contact with the employers, the individuals, the parents, family members, guardians, advocates or authorized representatives of the individuals, and other suitable professional and informed advisors, in order to reinforce and stabilize the job placement;
7. Facilitation of natural supports at the worksite;
8. Any other service identified in the scope of rehabilitation services described in 34 CFR part 361; and
9. Any service similar to the foregoing services.

4. Sections 101(a)(22) and 606(b)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act require the VR agency to describe efforts to identify and arrange, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services. The description must include extended services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including the provision of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 363.4(a) and 34 C.F.R. § 361.5(c)(19)(v).

DBVI will seek to expand and enhance relationships with community partners, including both public and private programs and agencies, with the goal of leveraging additional resources to increase extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities in Virginia. Specifically:

1. DBVI is currently working with a larger number of individuals with multiple disabilities, in particular individuals who are blind, deafblind, or have a vision impairment and also have a mental health or developmental disability. DBVI continues to collaborate more formally with the local public mental health agencies with the goal of leveraging those entities as an additional resource. DBVI successfully held a two-day training for VR Counselors in the fall of 2025 focusing on working with clients who have a mental health disability. Following the training, VR Counselors received a Mental Health First Aid certificate.
2. DBVI has had sporadic relationships with the Veterans Administration (VA) programs across the state. DBVI will identify those VA programs that may be serving a population consistent with those individuals DBVI is currently serving as another possible resource.
3. DBVI has an established policy for jointly serving individuals who may also have (or could have) an open case with the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) in Virginia and has recently updated business practices to encourage collaboration between the two agencies. Jointly serving individuals with multiple disabilities who require supported employment services, including shared funding of those services, will not only enhance the services to the individual but will limit costs for both agencies.
4. DBVI has been expanding the roster of potential vendors for services, including supported employment services, for individuals who are blind, deafblind, or vision impaired. The majority of these vendors are non-profit agencies, but an enhanced collaboration with them may provide access to other resources for the population DBVI serves.
5. DBVI, through the approved supported employment vendors (Employment Services Organizations – ESO's), has been able to access some Long-Term Extended Support Services (LTESS) for the population served in supported employment. DBVI has as a goal to continue increasing its utilization of these ESO's for supported employment services, and that increased utilization will mean increased LTESS funds targeted for those served by DBVI.

f. Annual Estimates

1. Estimates for next Federal fiscal year—

A. VR Program; and

** Estimates for next Federal fiscal year

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
Priority Category 1 Most Significantly Disabled	950	950	2,960,000.00	0
Priority Category 2 Significantly Disabled	40	40	75,000.00	0
Priority Category 3 All Others Eligible	14	14	0.00	0

B. Supported Employment Program.

Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under Supported Employment Program	Costs of Services using Title I and Title VI Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
Priority Category 1 Most Significantly Disabled	100	100		0

g. Order of Selection

1. Pursuant to Section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act, this description must be amended when the VR agency determines, based on the annual estimates described in description (f), that VR services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for and are determined eligible for services.

The VR agency is not implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.

2. For VR agencies that have defined priority categories describe—

A. The justification for the order

An Order of Selection (OOS) will be implemented when services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities who have applied for services. Individuals with the most significant disabilities will be given priority for services. At this time, DBVI does not expect to enter into an Order of Selection during the 2024-2027 state plan cycle.

B. The order (priority categories) to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services ensuring that individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and

Category I: Individuals with a most significant disability (MSD)

The individual meets the definition of an individual with a significant disability and;

1. The severe vision impairment and/or any secondary disabilities, seriously limits two or more life activities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, interpersonal skills, self-direction, work tolerance or work skills) in terms of achieving an employment outcome and;
2. The individual's vocational rehabilitation must also be expected to require multiple core VR services over an extended period of time (6 months or longer).

Category II: Individuals with a Significant Disability (SD):

1. The severe vision impairment and/or any secondary disabilities, "seriously limits" one life activity (such as mobility, communication, self-care, interpersonal skills, self-direction, work tolerance or work skills) in terms of achieving an employment outcome.
2. The individual's vocational rehabilitation must also require multiple core VR services over an extended period of time (minimum of six months)."
3. It is important to note that an eligible SSDI or SSI recipient is automatically considered to be, at least, an individual with a significant disability.

Category III: All Other Eligible Individuals

C. The VR agency's goals for serving individuals in each priority category, including how the agency will assist eligible individuals assigned to closed priority categories with information and referral, the method in which the VR agency will manage waiting lists, and the projected timelines for opening priority categories. NOTE: Priority categories are considered open when all individuals in the priority category may be served.

Priority Category Assignment If DBVI is operating under an Order of Selection:

The VR Counselor shall assign individuals determined eligible for VR services to the appropriate priority category and must then document the rationale for the assignment in the case record. The VR Counselor shall communicate to the individual, through appropriate modes of communication (per 34 CFR 361.57(e)), the category assignment as well as DBVI's appeal process. Only those assigned to an open category will be served.

1. The VR Counselor must assign individuals who receive either Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), or both, to priority Category I or II since they are presumed to have a significant disability that results in serious functional limitations in one or more areas (per 34 CFR

361.42(a)(3)). Individuals receiving SSDI survivor or family benefits are not presumed to have a significant disability because they are receiving SSA benefits under the work record and disability of another person.

2. Individuals whose cases are in Eligible status or higher are exempt from the Order of Selection and should continue to be served. Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE) may be developed for those individuals who were previously placed in Eligible status before the date that the category became closed. Those individuals in Service status should continue to be served under their IPE.
3. The Order of Selection process will be implemented if DBVI cannot provide services, due to limited resources, to all individuals who are eligible for VR services.
4. The Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services will provide written notification to all regional offices regarding the category and date to implement or discontinue the Order of Selection.
5. The Order of Selection does not apply to individuals who have already been determined eligible prior to the priority category they are in closing, or to individuals in Service status.
6. Applications for VR services will be accepted without restrictions. All applicants will receive the necessary assessment services to determine eligibility and will receive assistance in locating services available from other sources, including services available through Virginia's workforce development services system.
7. In the event that VR services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals in a given category, a waiting list (also referred to as Delayed Status) based upon the date of application for VR services will be used within a category.
8. If an individual who is eligible for VR services does not meet the criteria for the category(ies) being served (i.e., is placed in a priority category that's not open to be served) under the Order of Selection and does not request case closure from Application, they must be accepted for services and held in a waiting status. An individual placed into this status has been determined eligible for VR services (Certificate of Eligibility completed) but cannot receive services because he or she does not meet the State agency's Order of Selection priorities.
9. The individual should be notified via the Order of Selection letter in AWARE (DBVI's case management system)
10. Individuals will be held in the waiting status until;
 - a. the priority category they are in is fully opened (all individuals in a specific priority category or categories become open to be served as of a date specified),
 - b. the priority category they are in is partially opened (all individuals in a specific priority category within a defined date range by application date become open to be served as of a date specified),
 - c. the individual requests their VR case be closed.

Individuals who are on the waiting list due to an order of selection and are closed prior to receiving services should be closed as "Other."

An individual determined to be eligible for VR services may appeal their priority category assignment in accordance with the agency's standard appeal procedures. If DBVI should open a priority category, or partially open a priority category, the VR Counselor should communicate with those individuals on their caseload who are on the waiting list and would be impacted by this change. The individual should be notified through appropriate

modes of communication to include as appropriate by mail, electronic mail and/or telephone to best ensure the individual has been fully informed of the opening of their category.

3. Has the VR agency elected to serve eligible individuals outside of the order of selection who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment?

Yes

h. Waiver of Statewideness.

"not applicable"

i. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development.

1. Analysis of current personnel and projected personnel needs including—

A. The number of personnel currently needed by the VR agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

B. The number and type of personnel that are employed by the VR agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, including ratios of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to clients;

C. Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the VR agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed	No. of Personnel Currently Needed	Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 Years
Senior Regional Manager	2	2	2
Regional Manager	6	6	6
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor	16	18	19
Rehabilitation Teacher	20	20	20
Education Services Coordinator	6	6	8
Orientation and Mobility Instructor	8	10	10
Rehabilitation and Technology Specialist	4	4	4

Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed	No. of Personnel Currently Needed	Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 Years
Administrators, Program Directors, Data and Program Analysts	20	20	20
Regional office Administrative Staff	16	16	16
Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services	1	1	1
Director of Business and Corporate Initiatives	1	1	1
Business Relations Specialist	4	4	5
VRCBVI: Instructors, Orientation and Mobility Specialists, Access Technology Specialists, Health Educator, Administrative Support Staff, Drivers, Dorm Staff	39	40	40
VRCBVI Administrators	3	3	3

D. Ratio of qualified VR counselors to clients:

1:74 currently; in PY2025 expected ratio is 1:60 in PY 2024 the ratio was 1:60, in PY 2025 the expected ratio is 1:64.

E. Projected number of individuals to be served in 5 years:

1400

2. Data and information on personnel preparation and development, recruitment and retention, and staff development, including the following:

A. A list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program; the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates
Virginia Commonwealth University	Master of Science in Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling	100	30

B. The VR agency's plan for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel, which addresses the current and projected needs for qualified personnel; and the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the VR agency and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

Virginia is fortunate to have one accredited school offering a degree program in vocational rehabilitation. The degree program at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in Richmond is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The VCU Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling prepares students for the CRC certification upon graduation.

DBVI has adopted, as a minimum standard, the educational standards established by the Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) and supports counselors in becoming CRCs. For the past 21 years, nearly all of DBVI's VR Counselors and Regional Managers have met the CRCC education standards.

If there are no applicants meeting the educational standards adopted by DBVI for VR Counseling positions, DBVI will consider a second tier of applicants that have completed a significant amount of their coursework towards a master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or closely related field and will complete their program within one year of their hire date. This type of position is developed as a Counselor Trainee position with expectations of movement to Rehabilitation Counselor within 6 months of graduation.

DBVI maintains a Personnel Policies Handbook containing procedures for recruiting, advertising, screening applications, interviewing, hiring decisions, and applicant notification. DBVI specifically emphasizes advertising geared to attract qualified minorities, females, and individuals with disabilities.

DBVI supports recruiting and hiring qualified blind individuals to provide rehabilitation services. DBVI provides job announcements directly to consumer groups, *Newsline*, the National Federation of the Blind, and the American Council of the Blind central offices.

To attract historically underserved individuals to rehabilitation careers, DBVI collaborates with historically black colleges and universities for recruitment. Additionally, DBVI provides or sponsors VR staff training to improve cultural awareness and sensitivity.

DBVI sponsors eligible blind, vision impaired, or deafblind individuals attending any of the Commonwealth of Virginia's four historically black colleges and universities: Hampton University in Hampton, Norfolk State University in Norfolk, Virginia State University in Petersburg, and Virginia Union University in Richmond. DBVI maintains contact with these schools through service provision to eligible individuals receiving VR services, VR

Counselors, the Human Resources office, and other agency staff. DBVI will continue to expand its outreach activities with these colleges and universities.

C. Description of staff development policies, procedures, and activities that ensure all personnel employed by the VR agency receive appropriate and adequate training and continuing education for professionals and paraprofessionals:

- i. Particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and
- ii. Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to VR agency professionals and paraprofessionals and for providing training regarding the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act made by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

The personnel standard that is used to comply with the qualified personnel requirement of the Rehabilitation Act is that prospective VR counselors are required to possess a master's or doctoral degree in a field of study such as vocational rehabilitation counseling, law, social work, psychology, disability studies, business administration, human resources, special education, management, public administration, or another field that reasonably provides competence in the employment sector, in a disability field, or in both business and rehabilitation related fields.

DBVI VR Counselors are required to hold a master's degree as previously noted. If new hires do not possess the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) credential, they are expected to obtain the credential within 12 months of hire and to maintain the credential while employed. DBVI supports VR counselors in this effort by reimbursing their re-certification expenses every five years upon successful renewal.

In 2024-2027, DBVI will continue several key workforce training activities focusing on improving services and developing and maintaining collaborative partnerships with individuals receiving services. DBVI planning for training in this area includes:

- analyses of the changing workforce
- analyses of demographic information and agency staffing
- assessment of future needs
- determination of gaps between current and future staffing needs
- enhancing Workforce Development activities including continuing to establish relationships with businesses
- utilizing Career Pathways opportunities in Virginia
- Focusing on the Virginia High Demand Occupations list to ensure vocational training related to the top industries found within the Commonwealth to closely adhere to Virginia Works mandate of being "future ready".

In the Commonwealth of Virginia, the AT State Grant program is led and implemented by the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services. This program is carried out under the name "Virginia Assistive Technology System" (VATS). The mission of VATS is to ensure that Virginians of all ages and abilities can acquire the appropriate, affordable assistive and information technologies and services they need to participate in society as

active citizens. VATS has three programs, the equipment reuse program;, the equipment exchange program; and the demo and loan program.

The Virginia Equipment Reuse Program (VRN) allows for individuals to donate or procure gently used AT (including medical mobility devices) for individuals who are uninsured, underinsured or lack resources to purchase appropriate rehabilitation equipment on their own. VRN partners include: the Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment and Endowment (F.R.E.E.); Children’s Assistive Technology Service (CATS); the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS); the Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) and Wilson Workforce & Rehabilitation Center (WWRC); and a “Virtual Network” comprised of various individuals and organizations dedicated to helping persons have access to appropriate and quality rehab equipment. Virtual Network members are not funded by the VRN, but are valuable partners in helping to serve Virginians with disabilities statewide.

Virginians may use the VRN Exchange to offer gently used equipment for sale or donation. Requests to the VRN’s Equipment Exchange are collected by VATS and then sent out to a larger network across the state using an email distribution list. The VRN Equipment Exchange functions like a classified advertisement in your local newspaper. Requests may include all types of AT: communication devices, ramps, modified vehicles, stair climbers, porch lifts, respiratory equipment, low vision equipment, and any other type of AT that helps Virginians with disabilities overcome barriers or improve their health and safety.

The VATS AT Demonstration and Loan Program has an extensive library in Fairfax, Virginia. This library is open to any Virginian with a disability, their family members, and any service provider who works with individuals with disabilities. This library is a free resource. Anyone can make an appointment to visit the library to have a hands-on demonstration of a specific device or software. If an individual is unable to travel to the library, an AT specialist can make arrangements to meet you at a more central location.

Most equipment in the library can be loaned. Items can be loaned out for 1-4 weeks based on need and availability. It is sometimes recommended that an individual have a short demonstration or training of an AT device and this can be scheduled at the same time as the loan.

DBVI provides AT routinely, and vocational rehabilitation counselors will continue to be trained to understand the services offered by VATS, the eligibility criteria, and equipment that is available through each VATS program.

Each month of the calendar year, DBVI vocational rehabilitation counselors are required to attend training sessions surrounding topics such as professional and leadership development, the provision of AT, effective caseload management and prioritization, job development and business relations services, professional ethics, case management system processes, motivational interviewing and Pre-Employment Transition Services for students and youth with disabilities.

3. Description of VR agency policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that VR agency professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including—

A. Standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and

B. The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

As a provision of employment as a vocational rehabilitation counselor with DBVI, employees are expected to already possess or be eligible to sit for certification through the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC). In order to achieve and maintain this certification, DBVI has a tuition reimbursement program for courses directly related to the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor's job description. DBVI also pays for recertification of CRC status following the completion and satisfaction of all required CRCC continuing education credits and consistent good standing with the Commission.

DBVI continues to support vocational rehabilitation counselors' lifelong learning regarding new evidence-based practices, evolution of AT, understanding of the current labor force needs and trends for businesses in the Commonwealth. This support ensures that DBVI vocational rehabilitation counselor's knowledge remains in line with current trends in connection to assisting people who are blind, vision impaired or Deafblind in achieving their desired level of independence and employment.

4. Method(s) the VR agency uses to ensure that personnel are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

DBVI ensures that staff and individuals who apply for or are eligible for VR services who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind and/or have other disabilities or have limited English speaking abilities are provided with accommodations to address appropriate modes of communication. Examples include, but are not limited to, interpreters, forms provided in various languages, the use of electronic media, braille, and translators to facilitate communication; DBVI purchases interpreter and translator services at the local level as needed. Upon request, all written materials may be translated into the individual's preferred language.

At this time, DBVI's website is continuing to be updated and modernized for ease of understanding, the current iteration of DBVI services and divisions, etc. As a part of this website modernization effort, DBVI will follow its policy surrounding language access for individuals with print disabilities or whose native language is not English. The DBVI website update and modernization regarding language access has been completed. The DBVI website now includes the availability choose one of 12 languages for ease of access for non-native English language speakers.

5. As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

VR Counselors routinely partner with students, their families, and teachers to ensure eligible students aged 14 to a student's 22nd birthday receive vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services.

In response to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), DBVI's Education Coordinators provide support and technical assistance at the local level to children and students, their parents, school division administrators, and itinerant teachers for the visually impaired. The goal is to further students' involvement in academic and extracurricular school activities.

DBVI has six Education Coordinator positions located in Regional Offices. Education Coordinators have graduate-level training and when appropriate, participate with VR staff in joint training initiatives per DBVI's Personnel Development Plan.

j. Coordination with Education Officials.

1. Describe plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities, that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including pre-employment transition services.

DBVI maintains collaborative relationships with state and local education officials. Interagency partnering includes developing and implementing cooperative agreements with the Virginia Department of Education (DOE) and each local school division that identify plans, policies, and procedures.

These annual agreements facilitate the transition of blind, vision impaired, or deafblind students from school to the receipt of VR services for eligible students, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students and the financial obligations of each agency. DBVI provides access to the five required pre-employment transitions services to students who are known to DBVI and are considered potentially eligible based upon their visual disability.

Additionally, the agreements establish collaboration and coordination efforts to help blind, vision impaired, or deafblind students fully participate in school. DBVI has implemented pre-employment transition services and includes these services in all planning, policies, procedures, and agreements in the cooperative agreement cycle.

The cooperative agreement between DBVI and DOE identifies each agency's respective and joint responsibilities. DOE is the lead agency, ensuring eligible students with disabilities receive free appropriate public education, while DBVI prepares and delivers Pre-Employment Transition Services programming as a complement to services provided in the public school system. DBVI works with students who are potentially eligible for vocational rehabilitation (VR) services and school systems to plan and provide services to students.

Transition services are delivered to youth with a disability. A Youth with a Disability means individual with a disability who:

- is not younger than 14 years of age; and
- is not older than 24 years of age.

Pre-Employment Transition Services are delivered to students who are at least 14 years of age but less than 22 years of age. The age range for pre-employment transition Services was agreed upon and aligns with the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitation Services age range for pre-employment transition services.

2. Describe the current status and scope of the formal interagency agreement between the VR agency and the State educational agency. Consistent with the requirements of the formal interagency agreement pursuant to 34 C.F.R. § 361.22(b), provide, at a minimum, the following information about the agreement:

A. Consultation and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls), to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and other vocational rehabilitation services;

B. Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency personnel for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs (IEPs) under Section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;

C. The roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services and pre-employment transition services;

D. Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services and pre-employment transition services. Outreach to these students should occur as early as possible during the transition planning process and must include, at a minimum, a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals;

E. Coordination necessary to satisfy documentation requirements set forth in 34 C.F.R. part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment; and

F. Assurance that, in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 397.31, neither the SEA nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.

This state-level cooperative agreement specifies that DBVI:

- assists DOE staff and other facilities with developing “child find” efforts to identify and locate students who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind;
- assists DOE staff to plan for the AT needs of eligible students;
- assists DOE staff in planning for Virginia’s statewide testing program;
- invites DOE staff to DBVI meetings that address major issues affecting students who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind;
- provides information and educational materials defining DBVI services and procedures;
- provides a lending service through DBVI’s Library and Resource Center (LRC) from which the School Division may borrow certain items that are appropriate for teaching students who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind; and
- provides professional development opportunities for Teachers of the Vision Impaired (TVI) on a regional basis, to include two training sessions for new teachers related to the DBVI Low Vision program and the process for ordering materials from the Library Resource Center.

In relation to 34 CFR part 197, the Commonwealth of Virginia through the Virginia minimum wage act, phases out subminimum wage in the state after incrementally increasing it over the next several years. Subminimum wage increased to \$11.50/hour on July 1, 2025. It is important to note that DBVI does not allow for case closures for employment below Virginia's minimum wage of \$12.77/hour. DBVI also does not allow for case closures for employment that is not considered competitive integrated employment under the WIOA definition.

Also of note, DBVI does not enter into contracts or other arrangements with any entity that operates programming for youth and/or students with disabilities in which their work is compensated at a subminimum wage. All Student

and Youth work experiences and employment are compensated at least at Virginia's minimum wage of \$12.77/hour.

k. Coordination with Employers

The Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) develops and maintains collaborative relationships with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for individuals, including students and youth, who are blind, vision impaired or Deafblind. DBVI established a Business Relations Unit (BRU) in 2015 to assume the lead role for the VR program in creating effective partnerships with business, with the primary goals of educating employers regarding the capabilities of individuals who are blind or vision impaired, assisting them with their efforts towards diversity and inclusion in their workforce, and establishing a pipeline of talent consistent with their workforce needs.

Several themes emerged from the CSNA report around the needs of business and effectiveness in serving employers.

- DBVI's business services activities have gained national recognition for their innovative approaches to serving businesses and creating employment opportunities for their consumers. There is a strong need to educate employers about the ability of individuals with blindness and vision impairments to dispel stereotypes and increase expectations and belief in the ability of DBVI service recipients to work and function independently
- There is a strong need for disability awareness training, education on available AT and accommodations to reduce employer concerns.

During this State Plan cycle, the DBVI Business Relations Unit (BRU) will continue to work with employers to identify their human resource needs to facilitate competitive integrated employment opportunities and career exploration opportunities for eligible individuals, including students and youth who are receiving vocational rehabilitation services. The agency will continue to develop innovative partnerships with business, such as the customized training program developed with Aetna/CVS that provides training to individuals at VRCBVI that results in employment upon completion.

The DBVI Business Relations Unit will continue to identify potential employers and federal contractors through a variety of methods, including participation in various business related groups and organizations (e.g., Chamber of Commerce), participation with business services teams established in the workforce development centers, developing working relationships with the Virginia Employment Commission, the Office of Federal Contractor Compliance (OFCCP), and targeted job development based on the identified vocational goals of the individuals DBVI's VR program is serving.

The DBVI BRU will continue to collaborate with employers to determine their job specific needs and how DBVI can best assist the employer in filling vacant positions, including an understanding of the skills, abilities, and credentials ideal candidates need to perform essential job functions, and become aware of what types of applicants are needed to meet the employers' hiring needs.

The Business Relations staff will collect and maintain necessary data on the employers who are contacted to assist with program planning and individual vocational plan development. Data will include basic contact information, the types of services the employer needs, and training and recruitment needs.

The Business Relations staff will utilize a number of targeted services to enhance DBVI's relationships with businesses. These include the continued use of paid and unpaid work experience, On-The-Job Training (OJT), and

Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC)(currently on hiatus pending reauthorization). DBVI regularly engages employers directly with the individuals served in the VR program through use of informational interviewing, job shadowing, and the work experiences noted above. DBVI's participation with the workforce development business services teams provides VR the opportunity to coordinate with other agency programs and services, such as rapid response teams, registered apprenticeships, employer job fairs, and targeted employer training. Support of employers through coordination with Employment Services Organizations (ESO's) has also been a component of services to business that DBVI will continue to emphasize.

DBVI has been and will continue to be responsive to employer training needs, including ADA, federal contractor requirements, disability awareness training, and AT. Specific to the area of AT, DBVI will coordinate with employers and individuals receiving VR services to identify areas where job seekers may require accommodations to obtain and maintain employment. AT services may include recommendations and technical assistance to businesses around adjustment or modification in the workplace to help existing and potential employees who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind, including youth, to maximize productivity on the job. DBVI's Rehabilitation Technology Specialists will be available to assess the employers' places of business and workplace and develop recommendations if needed.

Services to businesses throughout the state are provided virtually or in person to ensure we are responsive to the identified human resource needs. The Business Relations Unit continues to participate in Business Services Teams, and has continued to strengthen the partnership with the Virginia Employment Commission and the Office of Federal Contractor Compliance (OFCCP).

A hallmark of DBVI's Pre-Employment Transition Services is the provision of work-based learning experiences for all students prior to high school graduation. The DBVI Business relations staff work collaboratively with the student/youth and their vocational rehabilitation counselor to determine vocational interests and pairs those interests with meaningful and engaging paid work experiences related to the student's current vocational interests in relation to their strengths and aptitudes.

I. Interagency Cooperation with Other Agencies

1. State programs (designate lead agency(ies) and implementing entity(ies)) carried out under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

The Virginia Assistive Technology Systems (VATS) is housed at DARS and has a highly collaborative relationship with the VR Program. VATS regularly assists with training and technical assistance to enhance the knowledge of VR professionals in the use of AT with VR consumers. In FFY 2022, VATS provided services to 7,491 older adults and Virginians with disabilities through the AT Act program. In FY 2021, 6,153 individuals were served. Services included AT device demonstrations, short-term equipment loans, durable medical equipment reuse, trainings, and information and assistance. Service recipients included an array of Virginians to include individuals with disabilities, family members, healthcare and allied health professionals, employers, educators, and representatives of community living services were provided statewide.

2. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;

During this State plan cycle, DBVI will work with AgrAbility Virginia to assist individuals who seek employment in the farming industry. AgrAbility Virginia assists individuals and their families who farm, and have illnesses, injuries or disabilities that are impeding their ability to work safely, effectively, and productively. AgrAbility Virginia promotes safety, wellness, and accessibility on the farm through education, rehabilitation services and AT. AgrAbility services are funded through USDA NIFA and free to Virginians. DBVI will continue to provide wrap

around services for individuals who are blind, vision impaired or Deafblind who are interested in employment in the agriculture sector. DBVI and AgrAbility will work together to utilize all Federal funding streams to ensure that individuals have what they need to enter into successful agricultural employment.

3. Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth;

DBVI collaborates with statewide and local non-profit organizations serving individuals with disabilities with referrals and services to out-of-school youth leading to their employment and independence. Examples of organizations that DBVI has partnered with for this endeavor include the Virginia Space Flight Academy, The Center for Excellence in Education, The Child and Family Network Centers, Children's AT Service, etc.

The benefit to VR participants is that with the assistance of these organizations, other barriers to employment outside of the scope of VR (i.e. housing and specific at-risk youth services) are able to be effectively addressed. Having all needs addressed has an impact on the outcomes and access to employment for out-of-school youth.

4. State use contracting programs;

The Commonwealth of Virginia (Section 2.2-1117 of the Code of Virginia) has a state use contracting program for services performed, along with articles and commodities produced by persons, and in schools or workshops, under the supervision of DBVI. This section of the Virginia Code refers to the Virginia Industries for the Blind which is under the supervision of DBVI and includes but is not limited to items such as mattresses, uniforms, pens, pencils, spices, and other goods.

In addition, Virginia Code Section 2.2-1118, purchases from Employment Services Organizations of Virginia serving individuals with disabilities, allow for the purchase of items or services from Community Rehabilitation Providers (known as Employment Service Organizations in Virginia) without competitive procurement with certain requirements.

5. State agency responsible for administering the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.);

The Virginia Department of Medical Assistant Services (DMAS) is the agency responsible for the delivery of Medicaid programs in Virginia. The DBVI/DMAS partnership includes participating in interagency workgroups with DMAS personnel and other state agencies and community stakeholders. Partnerships and collaboration focus on Medicaid programs including Home and Community Based Waivers which incorporate consumer-directed (CD) services, employment services options, and how to assist individuals in accessing long term supports that are integrated and individualized and help them understand their responsibilities and benefits.

6. State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities;

The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) provides services and support to individuals who have developmental disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and mental health concerns, also known as behavioral health in Virginia. Service to these individuals are provided by regional and local Community Services Boards (CSBs). DBVI has established collaborative relationships with Virginia DBHDS and CSBs to include participating in interagency workgroups with the DBHDS Employment Specialist and the Intellectual Disability (ID/Developmental Disability (DD) CSB Case Managers with the goal of providing information related to allowable employment activities including Virginia's Employment First initiative, Medicaid Waiver programs, and the provision of supported and extended support services. Collaboration with DBHDS also provides information on services and resources that supported pre-employment transition programs and positive employment outcomes.

7. State agency responsible for providing mental health services; and

The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) provides services and support to individuals who have developmental disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and mental health concerns, also known as behavioral health in Virginia. Services to these individuals are provided by regional and local Community Services Boards (CSBs). DBVI has established collaborative relationships with Virginia DBHDS and CSBs to include participating in interagency workgroups with the DBHDS Employment specialist and the Intellectual disability (ID)/Developmental Disability (DD) CSB case managers with the goal of providing information related to allowable employment activities including Virginia's Employment First Initiative, Medicaid Waiver programs, and the provision of supported and extended support services. Collaboration with DBHDS also provides information on services and resources that support pre-employment transition programs and positive employment outcomes.

8. Other Federal, State, and local agencies and programs outside the workforce development system.

The Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) seeks to improve and enhance vocational rehabilitation services to individuals, including youth, who are blind, vision impaired or Deafblind through interagency cooperation with federal state, and local agencies and programs and other organizations, agencies, and programs that are outside of the purview of government. This collaboration, which includes the use of services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the state workforce development system, is facilitated by formal and informal agreements.

DBVI partners with agencies to increase competitive integrated employment outcomes by leveraging additional Federal funding streams, the use of facilities to accommodate larger groups as individuals receive training related to self-determination, goal setting, understanding workplace behaviors and interactions, etc. The agencies that DBVI partners with are also readily available to address individual's needs related to Behavioral Health, Medicaid/Medicare, remedial skills training and other factors that affect an individual's ability to engage in and maintain competitive integrated employment.

During this State Plan cycle, DBVI will develop or update formal and informal agreements with the following federal, state, or local agencies and programs.

The Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

The Office of Veterans Affairs

The Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services

The Virginia Department of Education

The Department of Social Services

9. Other private nonprofit organizations.

Through an interagency agreement between the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) and the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), DBVI may purchase services from one or more of the Community Rehabilitation Services Programs (CRPs) that have been approved by and have vendor agreements with DARS. The CRPs are private, non-profit organizations providing services, such as work evaluations, work adjustment, and workforce services and supports job development, job placement, job coaching, Supported Employment, and extended support services. The majority of individuals, including youth, who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind for whom DBVI may purchase services from CRPs, are individuals who have the most significant disabilities who require intensive one-on-one support services. DBVI only purchases services from

these VR service providers for the purpose of ensuring that individuals enter into or maintain competitive integrated employment.

Assurances

The State Plan must include
1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a Unified State plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.
3. Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:
3.a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.b. either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).
3.e. as applicable, the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.f. as applicable, the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.h. the requirements for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The State Plan must include
3.j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities as set forth in section 101(a)(18)(A).
3.m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:
4.a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(E) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services or, if implementing an order of selection, in accordance with criteria established by the State for the order of selection as set out in section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.f. comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by sections 101(a)(14) and 511 of the Rehabilitation Act.

The State Plan must include
4.i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs.
4.j. with respect to students with disabilities, the State:
4.j.i. has developed and will implement,
4.j.i.A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and
4.j.i.B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and
4.j.ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15), 101(a)(25) and 113).
4.j.iii. shall reserve not less than 15 percent of the allocated funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services; such funds shall not be used to pay for the administrative costs of providing pre-employment transition services.
5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement to the State plan:
5.a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.
5.b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.
6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program (Title VI):
6.a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(H) and (I) of the Rehabilitation Act.
6.b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when

The State Plan must include
providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.
7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:
7.a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.
7.b. The designated State agency assures that the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(7)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Do you attest that these assurances will be met?

Yes

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BLIND) CERTIFICATIONS

1. The (enter the name of designated state agency or designated state unit, as appropriate,) is authorized to submit the vr services portion of the unified or combined state plan under title i of the rehabilitation act of 1973 (rehabilitation act), as amended by title iv of wioa[1], and its state plan supplement under title vi of the rehabilitation act;

Enter the name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate

Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired

2. In the event the designated State agency is not primarily concerned with vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, the designated State agency must include a designated State unit for the VR program (Section 101(a)(2)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act). As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the (designated State agency or the designated State unit when the designated State agency has a designated State unit)[2] agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan[3], the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c), and all applicable regulations[4], policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available to States under section 111(a) of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;

Enter the name of designated State agency

Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired

3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency, or the designated State unit when the designated State agency has a designated State unit, agrees to operate and is responsible for the administration of the State Supported

Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan[5], the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations[6], policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;

4. The designated State unit or, if not applicable, the designated State agency has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement and is responsible for the administration of the VR program in accordance with 34 CFR 361.13(b) and (c);

5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.

6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.

7. The (enter the name of authorized representative below) has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;

Enter the name of authorized representative below

Dr. Rick Mitchell

8. The (enter the title of authorized representative below) has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;

Enter the title of authorized representative below

Commissioner

9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

[1] Public Law 113-128. [2] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph. [3] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act. [4] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361. [5] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act. [6] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

Certification Signature

Signatory information	Enter Signatory information in this column
Name of Signatory	Dr. Rick Mitchell

Signatory information	Enter Signatory information in this column
Title of Signatory	Commissioner
Date Signed	03/26/2024

Vocational Rehabilitation Program Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level	PY 2026 Expected Level	PY 2026 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	55.0%	59.0%	57.0%	59.5%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	54.0%	57.0%	56.0%	57.5%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$3,909.00	\$4,173.00	\$4,200.00	\$4,200.00
Credential Attainment Rate	63.0%	63.0%	66.0%	66.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	89.0%	89.0%	91.5%	91.5%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹

1

The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

GEPA 427 Form Instructions for Application Package - Vocational Rehabilitation

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

The Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) agency mission statement is to provide services and resources which empower individuals who are blind, vision impaired or deafblind to achieve their desired levels of employment, education, and personal independence.

DBVI's vision statement is that DBVI envisions a world in which individuals who are blind, vision impaired or deafblind can access all that society has to offer and can, in turn, contribute to the greater community. We believe this is achievable.

DBVI's Agency Values:

1. Recognize the Abilities of Individuals who are Blind and value the contributions of individuals who are blind, vision impaired or deafblind.
2. Equal Access to all life activities including information, education, training and employment.
3. Exemplary Work Habits by valuing integrity, honesty, teamwork and dedication.
4. Diversity and respect for the individual and personal choice
5. Employees are valued for their dedication and expertise.
6. Professional Boundaries resulting in healthy appropriate relationships with the individuals we serve.

DBVI ensures equitable access to agency services by accepting referrals from any source or individual, providing information in the individual's preferred reading medium, and providing information and materials in alternate formats and languages.

DBVI's Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services participates as staff to the Virginia Board for Workforce Development on the Customer Opportunity and Success Committee. The Director, along with other Board support staff, reviews Commonwealth of Virginia documentation and procedures for equal access related to the American Job Centers, now known as Virginia Works. The Director serves as the subject matter expert in accessibility and reasonable accommodations related to the certification and re-certification of Commonwealth workforce centers and partners with other state agencies to ensure equal access to public services for individuals who are blind, vision impaired or deafblind.

DBVI engages in the Employment First program. The Commonwealth of Virginia's Employment First program was passed in February 2012 by Virginia Senate Joint Resolution No. 127. Employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred option for Virginians with disabilities receiving assistance from publicly financed systems. A publicly financed system is a system that is funded by or receives funds from the government. Some examples may include The Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), The Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI), Community Services Board (CSB), and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS).

2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

There are several barriers that may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators or other beneficiaries, including the inability to afford transportation, AT, internet, childcare, housing or other support services that would contribute to an individual's ability to access DBVI VR services or participation in the rehabilitation program in general.

Other barriers may include age, gender bias, preconceived ideas about an individual's ability to benefit from VR services, prejudice or stereotyping, the need for foreign language or ASL interpreting services for access to the VR program and coordinating with staff, and a lack of written communication being offered in an individual's native language.

Virginia is a dynamic state with very distinct urban and rural parts of the Commonwealth. In the more rural parts of the Commonwealth (including southwest Virginia), there may be barriers including a lack of transportation options or travel support, limited internet access, limited community services related to the individual's disability, etc.

While there is no residency requirement, individuals served by DBVI may experience homelessness or housing insecurity related to low-income, lack of a stable or consistent living environment, lack of treatment access for behavioral health, lack of financial supports, and a lack of understanding of the available community resources.

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

DBVI will take necessary steps to mitigate barriers and equitable access by developing or revising policies to explicitly indicate equality, equal access and non-discrimination, continuing to provide transportation support to individual's as needed to obtain services related to competitive integrated employment, continuing to provide interpreters, ensuring access of all materials in various modalities and languages, conducting employer education/training to increase disability awareness, and the continuation of providing targeted work based learning experiences for students, youth and adult participants. DBVI will provide targeted training to contracted Employment Services Organizations (ESO) regarding the provision of services to individuals who are blind, vision impaired or Deafblind to ensure that ESO staff understand the unique employment needs of individuals with vision loss so that the staff can speak to employers with an understanding of explaining accommodations and barrier mitigation for the population that we serve.

Through DBVI's Pre-Employment Transition Service Specialists, outreach and education for LEAs regarding DBVI services and support to students with disabilities that complement the transition services being provided to students through an IEP/504. Specialists will also partner with DBVI's Education Services Coordinators to understand the unique needs of school districts in various parts of the Commonwealth so that DBVI information dissemination is meaningful and actionable.

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

DBVI will review and/or update policies and procedures to ensure the mitigation of barriers and define equality, equal access, and non-discrimination by the end of the 2024 calendar year.

DBVI will ensure access of all materials in various modalities and languages to facilitate outreach efforts and individual understanding and participation in vocational rehabilitation services throughout the current state plan cycle.

GEPA 427 Form Instructions for Application Package - Supported Employment

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

The Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) agency mission statement is to provide services and resources which empower individuals who are blind, vision impaired or deafblind to achieve their desired levels of employment, education, and personal independence.

DBVI's vision statement is that DBVI envisions a world in which individuals who are blind, vision impaired or deafblind can access all that society has to offer and can, in turn, contribute to the greater community. We believe this is achievable.

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2. Equal Access to all life activities including information, education, training and employment.

3. Exemplary Work Habits by valuing integrity, honesty, teamwork and dedication.
4. Diversity and respect for the individual and personal choice
5. Employees are valued for their dedication and expertise.
6. Professional Boundaries resulting in healthy appropriate relationships with the individuals we serve.

DBVI ensures equitable access to agency services by accepting referrals from any source or individual, providing information in the individual's preferred reading medium, and providing information and materials in alternate formats and languages.

DBVI's Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services participates as staff to the Virginia Board for Workforce Development on the Customer Opportunity and Success Committee. The Director, along with other Board support staff, reviews Commonwealth of Virginia documentation and procedures for equal access related to the American Job Centers, now known as Virginia Works. The Director serves as the subject matter expert in accessibility and reasonable accommodations related to the certification and re-certification of Commonwealth workforce centers and partners with other state agencies to ensure equal access to public services for individuals who are blind, vision impaired or deafblind.

DBVI engages in the Employment First program. The Commonwealth of Virginia's Employment First program was passed in February 2012 by a Virginia Senate Joint Resolution No. 127. Employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred option for Virginians with disabilities receiving assistance from publicly financed systems. A publicly financed system is a system that is funded by or receives funds from the government. Some examples may include The Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), The Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI), Community Services Board (CSB), and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS).

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While there is no residency requirement, individuals served by DBVI may experience homelessness or housing insecurity related to low-income, lack of a stable or consistent living environment, lack of treatment access for behavioral health, lack of financial supports, and a lack of understanding of the available community resources.

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DBVI will take necessary steps to mitigate barriers and equitable access by developing or revising policies to explicitly indicate equality, equal access and non-discrimination, continuing to provide transportation support to individual's as needed to obtain services related to competitive integrated employment, continuing to provide interpreters, ensuring access of all materials in various modalities and languages, conducting employer education/training to increase disability awareness, and the continuation of providing targeted work based learning experiences for students, youth and adult participants.

DBVI will provide targeted training to contracted Employment Services Organizations (ESO) regarding the provision of services to individuals who are blind, vision impaired or Deafblind to ensure that ESO staff understand the unique employment needs of individuals with vision loss so that the staff can speak to employers with an understanding of explaining accommodations and barrier mitigation for the population that we serve.

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4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

DBVI will review and/or update policies and procedures to ensure the mitigation of barriers and define equality, equal access, and non-discrimination by the end of the 2024 calendar year. As of February 10, 2026, this review and update of policies have been completed.

DBVI will ensure access of all materials in various modalities and languages to facilitate outreach efforts and individual understanding and participation in vocational rehabilitation services throughout the current state plan cycle.

VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED UNDER THE CARL D. PERKINS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION ACT OF 2006, AS AMENDED BY THE STRENGTHENING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION OF THE 21ST CENTURY ACT (PERKINS V).

II. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTIONS

II.A. Plan Development and Consultation

II.A.1. Describe how the State Plan was developed in consultation with the stakeholders and in accordance with the procedures in section 122(c)(2) of Perkins V. See Text Box 1 for the statutory requirements for State Plan consultation under section 122(c)(1) of Perkins V.

Perkins State Plan Development

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) developed its Perkins Four-Year State Plan using the Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act for the 21st Century (Perkins V) requirements as a foundation to ensure input from a wide variety of stakeholder sources. The Four-Year Career and Technical Education (CTE) State Plan was informed by representatives from secondary and postsecondary CTE programs, which included eligible secondary and postsecondary subrecipients, with representatives of two-year minority-serving institutions, historically black colleges and universities, and adult CTE providers. Teachers, faculty, school system leaders, school administrators, specialized instructional support personnel, career and academic guidance counselors, and paraprofessionals also informed plan development. Value was added to the State Plan by the participation of interested community representatives, including parents, students, and community organizations. Representatives from the Governor's office and from large and small business and industry also provided input to the stakeholder meeting. Intentional strategies were employed to include the voice of representatives of special populations, including individuals with disabilities and out-of-school youth, disadvantaged youth, homeless children and youth, and at-risk youth.

Throughout this Plan, the term students with disabilities refers to students with a disability who are eligible for special education and related services, including a student who is evaluated and determined to have autism, developmental delay, emotional disability, intellectual disability, orthopedic impairment, or other categories which meet the federal and state regulations. The term disadvantaged refers to individuals (other than students with disabilities) who have economic or academic disadvantages, and who require special services and assistance to succeed in CTE programs and includes individuals who are members of economically disadvantaged families, migrants, students who have limited English proficiency, and individuals who are identified as potential dropouts from secondary schools.

Virginia does not have tribally controlled colleges or universities, Indian Tribes, or Tribal organizations, nor does it have charter schools included in the local school system for Perkins funding purposes. The comprehensive list of stakeholders by name and organization can be found in Appendix A.

Virginia is fortunate to also have the WIOA Combined State Plan team that is led by the Governor and Governor's office, including the Secretary of Labor and the Virginia Board of Workforce Development (VBWD). The Secretaries of Commerce and Trade, Education, and Health and Human Resources; as well as representatives from branches under each, including Virginia Works, Virginia Employment Commission (VEC); Virginia Community College System (VCCS); Office of Career and Technical Education; Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS); Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI), and Department of Social Services (VDSS) are team members. State department levels participating in the WIOA Combined State Plan development under WIOA are Title I areas of Rapid Response, Adult Education, Dislocated Workers, and Youth; Title II area of Adult Education and Literacy; Title III area of Wagner-Peyser; and, Title IV areas of Vocational Rehabilitation. The remaining Combined Plan team members are from the offices of Trade and Adjustment Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, Jobs for Veterans State Grants, secondary, postsecondary, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Virginia's Initiative for Employment not Welfare (VIEW).

The participation of, and input from, the wide breadth of stakeholders informing the development of the State Plans has led to a thorough connection among secondary and postsecondary education, small and large business and industries, workforce development industry sectors, and Governor-led state agencies.

II.A.2. Consistent with section 122(e)(1) of Perkins V, each eligible agency must develop the portion of the State Plan relating to the amount and uses of any funds proposed to be reserved for adult career and technical education, postsecondary career and technical education, and secondary career and technical education after consultation with the State agencies identified in section 122(e)(1)(A)-(C) of the Act. If a State agency, other than the eligible

agency, finds a portion of the final State Plan objectionable, the eligible agency must provide a copy of such objections and a description of its response in the final plan submitted to the Secretary. (Section 122(e)(2) of Perkins V)

Funding split between secondary education and postsecondary education

This topic spanned across all four public hearings and emphasized the overwhelming support to continue the current secondary to postsecondary funding split of 85 percent/15 percent. Many also spoke to the need to increase the secondary to postsecondary funding split in favor of secondary to 90 percent/10 percent. The Superintendent of Lee County Public Schools spoke on behalf of the Regional Superintendent's Group that represents 19 school divisions in Southwest Virginia. The Division Superintendent's Group supports the 85 percent/15 percent split of funding because of their commitment to children. He pointed out that community colleges have a variety of other opportunities provided through industry partnerships to help with equipment needs that school divisions do not have. In closing, he advocated highly that the State Board of Education (BOE) continue to fund Perkins at the current level or increase funding for secondary education.

Several school division personnel cautioned the VDOE that reducing the secondary funding in the formula would significantly and negatively affect their divisions' ability to implement CTE with fidelity and equity, and that the VDOE must consider how secondary must divide the funding to support 358 high schools and 374 middle schools, compared to 23 community colleges. Any reduction in federal funding for secondary could result in fewer CTSO opportunities, a reduction in staff professional development, fewer equipment upgrades, and fewer credentialing opportunities.

It was also requested that the split be increased in favor of secondary to support the increased demands with special education, work-based learning (WBL), and industry credentials. Many also indicated that additional funding for secondary education is needed to fulfill the VDOE's mission to prepare students to be career, college, and life ready, a mission aligned with the VDOE's Profile of a Virginia Graduate.

Continued support for CTSOs at the secondary level

Students and advisors that participate in CTSOs presented and shared comments at each of the four public hearings throughout the Commonwealth, stressing the importance of continued funding to support CTSO opportunities. It was shared that through CTSOs, students are provided with opportunities to serve, lead, expand their skills and knowledge, and experience career planning far beyond the scope of the classroom. Continued funding to support teachers providing these experiences is vital in helping students learn to lead in a technical world. Several personal stories of student success were shared.

A teacher/CTSO sponsor who worked with over 50 Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) regional, state, and national officers shared her perspective: CTSO opportunities have helped students learn the importance of workplace readiness skills (WRS).

The national vice-president of Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) shared how participation in FCCLA has had a tremendous impact on her life, providing her with leadership skills and WRS which have helped her transition into life after high school. She shared several examples of the positive impact of family and consumer science classes, and that the skills she has learned align with the State focus on the Profile of a Graduate. She encouraged an increase in support of CTSO opportunities for future generations.

Overall importance of CTE at the secondary level

Speakers from across all four public hearings gave examples of the significance of CTE at the secondary level and the importance of continued support through federal funding.

A representative from Hampton City shared that “the Academies of Hampton are transforming the high school experience.” Funding to support career exploration with programs like My Future, My Journey provide students the experience to explore all careers at the Hampton Convention Center. In Perkins V, federal funding is permissible down to grade five for expanded career exploration; this requires additional resources and supports, increasing the federal dollars needed at the secondary level. CTE is an integral experience along with CTSO opportunities, industry credentialing, professional development, resources like the CTE Resource Center (CTERC), and essential equipment for hands-on activities that are critical for student success, ensuring all students are life ready as they enter the workforce pipeline throughout the Commonwealth.

A representative from Northern Virginia shared that CTE provides opportunities like the Thinkabit Lab in Falls Church City where over 5,000 grade five through 12 students study the foundations of microelectronics, computer science and programming, and robotics. CTE courses provide the hands-on technical skills that are needed for the future workforce. Continued support of CTE at the secondary level is mission critical to meeting the workforce needs of the Commonwealth.

A parent from Prince William County shared a personal story of his son’s success as a CTE student in automotive technology. Throughout his career pathway and involvement in SkillsUSA, his son was able to compete in seven different states with students from all over the country. Based on a WBL opportunity and this classroom success, he received over \$100,000 in scholarship funding to attend a technical school; he earned a full ride to the Universal Technical Institute and then participated in the Mercedes-Benz Drive Program. Today, at 20 years old, his son is a Mercedes-Benz mechanic at Huber Mercedes-Benz in Fredericksburg, Virginia; he is self-sufficient and living on his own with a bright future thanks to the Hylton High School CTE automotive program. Any reduction in federal funding would lead to having antiquated training resources or outdated equipment, creating a more difficult transition to a technical school or the industry, thus impacting scholarship opportunities for current and future Hylton High School students.

Importance of WBL at the secondary level

Several presenters' comments were related to WBL, as Virginia highlights the importance of WBL in its Profile of a Virginia Graduate. One presenter shared, “WBL experiences provide our students with authentic learning opportunities on a spectrum from career exploration all the way through career preparation. Perkins funding supports the opportunity for WBL to be embedded in CTE courses.”

At the public hearing in Williamsburg, a CTE staff person indicated that implementing WBL has highlighted the need for a centralized management system. Increased funding is needed to support this important component to ensure students are career ready.

Several speakers requested the funding split to be increased to 90 percent for secondary schools, in support of expanding WBL opportunities throughout the Commonwealth.

Support for private school students

Two presenters from Wytheville, Virginia shared comments representing the Minnick Private Day School.

One presenter stated that Perkins V requires states to continually make meaningful progress toward improving the performance of special populations. Private schools in Virginia serve over 4,000 students and the goal of many private day schools is to return the students to their home school. It only makes sense to assess the needs of these

students and staff when determining how funds can be equitably applied, and to move the needle toward positive outcomes for this special population.

Another presenter shared that evidence-based practices for the future success of special needs students points to CTE initiatives, including vocational training, WBL, career planning, and paid and unpaid work experience. The goal is to get these students back to public school, and she believes that if they had some of these opportunities, or even one opportunity, to experience some of these programs, that would be a way to get them interested and back into public schools.

Continued support for professional development at the secondary level

One presenter shared the need for continued funding for CTE teachers to attend professional development, as it is critical in providing a level of confidence and competence as a professional educator.

Another presenter shared a concern about ensuring funding was available for all staff to remain current in their field. Some teachers are required by their industry to remain certified to maintain their teaching license. For example, students in automotive technology programs seek to earn their state inspector license and ASE certifications. Teachers in this program area are required to attend professional development training by industry to stay current to prepare students for rigorous exams; continued funding is mission critical at the secondary level.

Continued support for the CTERC

Several presenters shared the value and significance of the work at the CTERC for the past 37 years.

About 70 percent of the funding for the CTERC comes from Perkins.

CTERC staff support curriculum revision, development of new courses, establishment of the 17th career cluster, WBL Guide, and Safety Guide.

The website receives two million hits per year.

CTERC provides aligned curriculum with industry standards and ensures competencies are identified, and articulates CTE courses, industry certifications, and course sequences.

Presenters expressed that funding to support the CTERC is critical and losing it would be devastating; funding must remain to ensure Virginia's CTE curriculum keeps pace with industry and workforce needs.

Several presenters commented in favor of an increase to support the CTERC, noting any decrease in funding would severely affect the ability of the CTERC to provide free access to, and support of, the curriculum resources for all teachers.

Perkins V performance indicators

One presenter in Wytheville shared comments of concern related to the fact that science is now an additional performance measure in Perkins V. He indicated that Virginia is considering the biology SOL as a performance measure, which essentially means that CTE students' biology scores will help determine CTE program quality. He shared that he does not think CTE should be held accountable for what will come down to biology SOL scores. He urged Virginia to reconsider this measure. In addition, while he supports dual enrollment, he is not in support of making dual enrollment credits a measure of program quality.

II.A.3. Describe opportunities for the public to comment in person and in writing on the State Plan. (Section 122(d)(14) of Perkins V)

The public had the opportunity to comment on the draft Plan from February 28 – March 10, 2024. Written comments were accepted through www.viriniaworks.gov.

II.B. Program Administration and Implementation

II.B.1. State's Vision for Education and Workforce Development

II.B.1.a. Provide a summary of State-supported workforce development activities (including education and training) in the State, including the degree to which the State's career and technical education programs and programs of study are aligned with and address the education and skill needs of the employers in the State identified by the State workforce development board. (Section 122(d)(1) of Perkins V)

Secondary

Virginia has an established statewide system of career pathways that brings together elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education; workforce boards; and business and industry. These partnerships connect education, workforce development, and economic development, and the workforce development activities connect to employer needs and focus on high-skills, high-wages, or in-demand careers that relate to the economy. This statewide system allows Virginia to ensure continued improvement to its modern, relevant, and rigorous programs, and supports students to be workforce ready upon high school graduation or with additional postsecondary education.

The Virginia Workforce Development Plan aligns the education and training pipeline to the needs of the labor market, and the pipeline of activities range from middle and high school, postsecondary, and adult education CTE programs. These priorities are reflected in recent Virginia workforce initiatives that include the identification and acceleration of a workforce that is ready to fill middle-skill jobs, and the inclusion of workforce credentials that are valued by employers and vital to the individual's career progression.

Additionally, 8VAC20-132-50 and 8VAC20-132-51, requires students to earn a CTE credential approved by the BOE. The CTE credentials could include the successful completion of an industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or the Virginia WRS for the Commonwealth Assessment. If the CTE credential in a particular program area is not readily available, appropriate, or does not adequately measure student competency, with satisfactory completion of competency-based instruction in the program area, the student will meet the standard diploma requirements.

Virginia programs of study for career pathways provide a consistent foundation of knowledge and skills across the state with additional regional requirements added to programs, if needed. These programs of study enhance secondary and postsecondary collaboration that may lead to articulation agreements. Virginia's Economic Development Strategic Plan reinforces the Perkins' programs of study and technical skills assessment and ensures collaborative efforts to produce results and value in the workforce system in order to meet business needs, while being responsive to long-range talent and skills forecasts as well as emerging needs. Labor market data is acquired from resources such as CTE Trailblazers at www.ctetrailblazers.org, the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) at

www.vec.virginia.gov, and the Census Quarterly Workforce Indicator Explorer at <https://qwiexplorer.ces.census.gov/>.

Virginia will continue to work across agencies to establish professional development academies to help ensure a common understanding of career pathways and sector partnerships. This effort builds upon a decade of work in the Commonwealth to align education and training programs in ways that make it easier for individuals to access and complete career preparation. By pairing together sector strategies and career pathways awareness, Virginia plans to improve the relevance and effectiveness of education and training programs, leading to more positive outcomes for individuals and businesses. Through a blend of instructor-led and self-paced online courses, academies will strengthen the leadership capacity of workforce system partners and practitioners to incorporate sector partnership, career pathway strategies, and thinking as integral components in every Virginia region.

Postsecondary

According to VCCS policy, occupational/technical education programs are designed to meet the increasing demand for technicians, semi-professional workers, and skilled crafts-persons for employment in industry, business, professions, and government. These programs, which normally require two years or less of training beyond high school, may include preparation for agricultural, business, engineering, health and medical, industrial, service, and other technical and occupational fields. The curriculum is planned primarily to meet the needs of workers in the region being served by the community college, but the VCCS may designate certain community colleges as centers to serve larger areas of the state in offering expensive and highly specialized occupational and technical education programs.

The VCCS governs 23 colleges located on 40 campuses across the Commonwealth, with its principal objective to “provide and maintain a system of comprehensive community colleges through which appropriate educational opportunities and programs to accomplish the purposes set forth [in the Code of Virginia] shall be made available throughout the Commonwealth.” Additionally, each college in the VCCS has a local board. The purpose of each local college board is to keep the community college responsive to the needs of its service area. Each local board also monitors college programs, policies, and actions to ensure that they are within statewide policies.

These local boards also play important roles in the curriculum approval process that follows the following pathway:

College proposal is approved by an institutional curriculum advisory committee

The proposal is reviewed and approved by the Chief Academic Officer (CAO)

The proposal is reviewed and approved by local board

The proposal is reviewed and approved by the VCCS. The Academic and Student Affairs Council (ASAC) also serves as an advisory body on system-wide matters related to instructional programs and student services. The ASAC also provides a forum for the exchange of information and professional development activities.

All community colleges maintain a workforce development division headed by a vice president, dean, or director who is charged with analyzing and addressing business and industry’s need for a skilled workforce within the college’s local service area. These workforce leaders work collaboratively with CAO within the institution to plan, develop, and maintain occupational/technical education programs at the colleges. Curriculum advisory committees, referenced above, consist of representatives from business, industry, and labor; and aid in keeping courses and programs relevant to the workplace and providing students and faculty with relevant career entry requirements. Experiential learning through apprenticeships, internships, cooperative education, service, and

project-based learning provides students with opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in a real-world context. Site visits and mentoring ensure additional relevancy.

The Workforce Development Advisory Council (WDAC), comprised of college workforce leaders and decision makers, also meets regularly to discuss current needs, trends, and opportunities. The WDAC serves as an advisory body to the Chancellor on system-wide matters related to non-credit instruction/services and workforce, economic, and community development. The Council meets at least three times a year.

II.B.1.b. Describe the State's strategic vision and set of goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including special populations) and for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers, including in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations as identified by the State, and how the State's career and technical education programs will help to meet these goals. (Section 122(d)(2) of Perkins V)

Secondary

The VDOE continues to strengthen its workforce development activities in Perkins V with a wide range of partners and with a continuum of career awareness, exploration, and training opportunities.

As required by 8VAC20-132-140, each elementary, middle, and secondary school must provide for the identification of academic and career interests that support planning for career preparation for all students, including students within special populations. Beginning in the elementary school years, students explore the different occupations associated with career clusters and select areas of interest in the process of developing an academic and career plan portfolio (ACPP). In middle school, students complete a locally selected career interest inventory and select a career pathway in developing a personal Academic and Career Plan (ACP). To support development of the ACP, students participate in CTE career investigations course, or school division alternative, that includes personalized planning for academic courses, WBL opportunities, industry certifications, possible independent projects, and postsecondary education plans within students' identified career pathways. In high school, students select career-related learning experiences, including courses and WBL opportunities as identified in their ACP. Students' career interests are evaluated throughout high school, and, if necessary, the ACP is re-aligned. Additionally, wherever possible and appropriate, students are encouraged and afforded opportunities to take college courses simultaneously to meet high school graduation requirements and earn college degree credit (dual enrollment). Students are provided with various options and programs during this process, including the use of state-supported and/or commercial resources for career exploration and career readiness activities. Additionally, students receiving special education services are provided with the required transition-planning process that is uniquely tailored to the students' preferences, interests, and abilities, for students to be career ready whether their transition is directly to employment or to postsecondary education or training.

The VDOE Office of Career and Technical Education continues its successful process of developing relevant and rigorous curriculum frameworks, with teacher and business and industry input, which prepare students with academic, employability, and technical knowledge and skills to meet local, state, and global workforce needs. Further, the 21st Century WRS for the Commonwealth are the first 22 competencies of every state CTE course and provide students with vital employability skills.

Virginia offers CTE curriculum in the following 17 Career Clusters:

Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources

Architecture and Construction

Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications

Business Management and Administration

Education and Training

Energy

Finance

Government and Public Administration

Health Science

Hospitality and Tourism

Human Services

Information Technology

Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security

Manufacturing

Marketing

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

Transportation, Distribution and Logistics

Virginia's programs of study (plans of study) for career pathways within the 17 career clusters provide a consistent foundation of knowledge and skills, with additional regional requirements added to programs if needed. These programs of study enhance secondary and postsecondary collaboration and ensure that the CTE programs in Virginia are producing results and value in the workforce system to meet business needs for long-range talent projections and skills forecasts, as well as emerging needs.

Postsecondary

Virginia's 23 community colleges serve an estimated 400,000 people annually across the state. The opportunities provided include cutting-edge and highly demanded training and education. Over the next ten years, Virginia will need to fill 1.5 million jobs, the majority of these jobs will require postsecondary credentials – associate degrees, certifications, and licensures.

To accommodate the demand, in 2015, the VCCS developed a six-year strategic plan which focuses on one goal through 2021: Virginia's Community Colleges will lead the Commonwealth in the education of its people by tripling the number of credentials awarded for economic vitality and individual prosperity.

A committee of representatives from across the VCCS engaged in a comprehensive and inclusive process to create the six-year strategic plan for the system's 23 colleges. The committee included VCCS presidents, vice presidents, deans, faculty, staff appointed representatives, and students from across Virginia's Community Colleges. The process began with a series of town hall meetings held around Virginia to gather perspectives from the people the community colleges serve. Next, the committee examined higher education reform proposals from federal and state governments, higher education think-tank reports, national and state data about higher education trends, as

well as strategic plans for other organizations. The committee also heard from national experts on higher education trends and reviewed survey data from the VCCS employees and students. The analysis led the committee to a clear conclusion: Virginia needs its colleges to produce a dramatically higher number of meaningful postsecondary credentials to support economic vitality. More Virginians must complete degrees, diplomas, certificates, career studies certificates, and industry recognized certifications. Their prosperity, and that of the entire state, depends on their success.

To make this one strategic goal achievable and meaningful, Virginia's Community Colleges and the VCCS office focused efforts in five specific areas:

Elevating Virginia's skilled workforce

Providing educational access for all Virginians

Reinventing the way community colleges help students succeed

Connecting Virginia's diverse educational opportunities

Preserving affordable college access

To further advance the strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including special populations) and for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations, the VCCS seeks to further align Perkins V CTE programs with the Virginia public workforce system, including WIOA.

The mission of Virginia's public workforce system is to prepare individuals for the careers of today and tomorrow and connect businesses to a highly skilled workforce. To achieve this mission, Virginia incorporates the Career Pathways Model in the implementation of statewide workforce development programs. This model values employer engagement, customer focus, and data driven decision making in all workforce programs, and helps Virginia to maintain a workforce system that exemplifies innovation and responsiveness in an ever-changing economic landscape.

The VCCS vision of Perkins V leverages and complements WIOA and the public workforce system by supporting a statewide system of career pathway development that brings together not only state and local leaders in Perkins, but also Adult Education and high school dropout recovery programs, Department of Labor grant projects, and state funded initiatives such as the Virginia Community Colleges Institutes of Excellence that are targeted to the development and dissemination of new programs in emerging technologies.

In order to build a career pathways system that brings together a variety of workforce targeted programs, the VCCS personnel responsible for career pathways-related programming, such as Perkins, high school and adult career coaches, Middle College, PluggedIn Virginia, Department of Labor grant programs, the Career Readiness Certificate, Institutes of Excellence, and credit and non-credit workforce program, have been consolidated under a VCCS cross-functional Academic and Workforce Programs team. This team reports to the Senior Vice Chancellor of Academic and Workforce Programs and collaboratively leads and manages the VCCS career pathway initiatives.

A Career Pathways Work Group (CPWG), which includes representatives from all the agencies in Virginia responsible for workforce development programs, including the state CTE directors, as well as members from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and the Governor's office, was established in 2013. The CPWG ensures integrated career pathways programming that is responsive to regional business demands. Members meet in small and large groups to address specific projects, grant opportunities, and share programming and outcomes.

The CPWG has established a statewide definition of a career pathways system, funded regional career pathways grants, and provided ongoing advice and recommendations to the Virginia Board for Workforce Development.

The VCCS postsecondary Perkins funding helped to create the development of a career-coaching program. Currently, Perkins partially supports 135 coaches, who are community college employees, serving 185 high schools statewide. Perkins funds have also supported career coach training in the following areas:

Increased nontraditional gender career awareness, participation, and completion among high school students (via professional development seminars and training)

Improved technological capabilities for case management and student tracking (Virginia Wizard Case Management System)

Supported professional development for the Coordinator for Postsecondary Pathways/Program Director - High School Career Coach Program to attend the National Career Pathways Conference in Orlando to earn the Career Pathways Leadership Certification and glean CTE topical and pedagogical best practices

The career coaching program's success and growth has garnered significant funding from public and private entities and has spurred an expansion of coaching across colleges and divisions for adults, veterans, at-risk students, and foster youth.

The VCCS continues to provide fiscal support from Perkins for high school career coaches and, in 2014, launched the Rural Virginia Horseshoe Initiative, designed to improve educational attainment rates in rural Virginia. The initiative continues to prioritize the strategy to increase the number and impact of career coaches in high schools served by the 14 rural Virginia Community Colleges. Approximately 40 percent of career coaches now occupy full-time positions, and full-time coaches primarily serve rural secondary students.

In addition to the career coaches, the VCCS will employ Perkins funding to support high quality CTE instruction, ongoing and targeted professional development for CTE instructors, and collaborative initiatives with both the VDOE and other agencies that lead to stronger CTE outcomes in the Commonwealth.

II.B.1.c. Describe the State's strategy for any joint planning, alignment, coordination, and leveraging of funds between the State's career and technical education programs and programs of study with the State's workforce development system, to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in section 122(d)(2) of Perkins V, including the core programs defined in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102) and the elements related to system alignment under section 102(b)(2)(B) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 3112(b)(2)(B)); and for programs carried out under this title with other Federal programs, which may include programs funded under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and the Higher Education Act of 1965. (Section 122(d)(3) of Perkins V)

Secondary

Virginia is submitting its Perkins V Four-Year State Plan as part of the WIOA State Plan. Virginia's WIOA Plan and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated State Plan informs Virginia's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce. These plans, along with this Perkins V Four-Year State Plan, align to establish a foundation that prepares an educated and skilled workforce in Virginia.

The ESSA Consolidated State Plan identifies Virginia's rigorous accountability Board-approved benchmarks in reading and mathematics as the long-term goals for all students and student groups. For over 20 years, Virginia has implemented a state accountability system that includes rigorous state content standards and assessments for all students that are updated on a regular basis. These benchmarks differentiate and identify schools for support and improvement, and also place federal accountability focus on student groups that have historically failed to meet growth targets. This gap-closing model is rigorous and attainable and emphasizes the importance of improved achievement for low-performing student groups.

Postsecondary

Virginia's CTE programs of study and workforce development system serve many of the same under and unemployed Virginians. Consequently, the Commonwealth seeks to coordinate efforts to most effectively leverage and utilize resources, and to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in this document. Representatives from all eight agencies in the Commonwealth with responsibility for workforce development, including the VDOE and the VCCS, have been meeting regularly over the past several months to ensure that the activities to be carried out under Perkins and WIOA are aligned and, where appropriate, integrated.

The VCCS is the State agency responsible for the administration of both postsecondary Perkins and the WIOA, Title I. Consequently, staff responsible for WIOA planning and implementation regularly meet and plan programming with the VCCS staff responsible for college programs, including Perkins. Having oversight of both postsecondary Perkins and WIOA provides the VCCS with the unique opportunity to ensure that the two programs align; many conversations and shared planning are conducted within the central office, colleges, and local workforce areas focused on program alignment. One example of shared planning and programming is the planning and implementation of the G3 ("Get Skilled, Get a Job, and Give Back") workforce development program, the signature workforce development program under Governor Ralph Northam's administration. In preparation for G3, the VCCS, under the Governor's direction, allocated just over \$5 million in WIOA state set-aside funds to support colleges in their redesign of targeted, high-demand CTE programs. This redesign resulted in the overhaul of nearly 500 college CTE programs that lead to applied associate degrees in fields such as healthcare, manufacturing, and information technology (IT). The new programming is broken into smaller, stackable, credential programs that are fully aligned and sequential. Students may enter level one, earn a credential of value, and then become employed – returning later to engage in levels two and three, which are seamlessly aligned in an articulated pathway toward an associate degree. This new approach to stackable CTE programming is scheduled to be implemented in FY 2021 after a significant budget proposal from the Governor to support G3 as Virginia's "Promise Program" for the colleges.

Middle College and Great Expectations are two additional programs serving current and aspiring CTE students. Middle College allows individuals without a high school degree to increase their income and employability by simultaneously pursuing a GED, community college education, and a workforce certification in a college environment. The Great Expectations program supports current or former foster youth who are seeking postsecondary education, but who often lack the resources and support to be successful. Frequently, Great Expectations youth access the Middle College program, and both programs recruit individuals who are eligible under WIOA adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs. Both programs also offer targeted remedial courses,

access to workforce readiness courses, wraparound support services, scholarships, incentives, enrollment in community college courses applicable to a degree or industry-based certificate, and comprehensive support services.

The representation of both secondary and postsecondary Perkins on the state's CPWG also ensures regular communication and coordination among Perkins and WIOA program leaders. Finally, the VBWD's work plan has specific activities related to the alignment of secondary and postsecondary Perkins with activities carried out under Title I of WIOA.

The VCCS also employs the following strategies for joint planning, alignment, coordination, and leveraging of funds between the State's CTE programs/programs of study with the State's workforce development system to improve and enhance career pathway access and opportunities for students, and to leverage funds between Perkins V and WIOA programs:

VDOE: The VCCS and the VDOE have an extensive history of cooperative and collaborative work with the state's WIOA partners to provide a coordinated and comprehensive programmatic and funding approach for educational and workforce services.

Virginia's WIOA one-stop centers, known in Virginia as Career Works: one-stop centers are part of Virginia Career Works network, and postsecondary Perkins is a mandated partner in the centers. As a required one-stop partner under WIOA, the VCCS continues coordinated efforts with the VEC on the delivery of services to Virginia's employers and job seekers offered at Virginia Career Works. One-stop centers were developed to bring together employment and training program services that work with all people and make it easier for job seekers and employers to use these services.

The Virginia Career Works network maintains a list of Virginia Career Works Centers with access to workforce and employment and training services through various programs and partner organizations. All Career Works Centers provide services required by federal legislation plus programs and services from nonprofit and other community partners that coordinate to meet the needs of the local community.

Virginia's WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs: Under WIOA Title I - Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, and the Youth Program, the Virginia Career Work Centers provide educational youth services that include: tutoring, study skills training, evidence-based dropout prevention and/recovery services, alternative secondary school services, financial literacy, and education offered concurrently with workforce preparation activities and training for specific occupations or occupational clusters. These activities include summer employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning, paid and unpaid work experiences that incorporate academic and occupational education, occupational skills training, and entrepreneurial skills training. Resources delivered include, but are not limited to job openings, labor market data, resume training, education services, online learning, veterans' services, and youth services.

As a partner program that provides access through Virginia's Career Works system, postsecondary Perkins will continue to partner and coordinate service delivery efforts with WIOA Titles I, II, III, and IV.

II.B.1.d. Describe how the eligible agency will use State leadership funds made available under section 112(a)(2) of Perkins V for each of the purposes under section 124(a) of the Act. See Text Box 2 for the required uses of State leadership funds under section 124(a) of Perkins V. (Section 122(d)(7) of Perkins V)

Secondary

Virginia will use its State Leadership funds to:

Develop, revise, or procure CTE curricula that are aligned to industry and academic standards, including funding for the CTERC

Evaluate and improve regional technical centers

Provide professional learning experiences for CTE teachers, faculty, and administrators

Review CTE Comprehensive Local Needs Assessments (CLNA) and Perkins applications

Review Perkins local allocation and local use

Monitor CTE programs of study

Recruit and prepare CTE teachers, faculty, and specialized instructional support personnel or paraprofessionals

Market and highlight CTE programs of study, including CTE stigma/perception and marketing

Support state-supported resources for career exploration and career readiness activities

Provide support to eliminate inequities in student access to high-quality CTE programs of study and hire effective teachers, faculty, specialized instructional support personnel, and paraprofessionals

Prepare students for nontraditional fields in current and emerging professions

Develop strategies to improve success in CTE programs of study for members of special populations

Provide funding to CTE programs that serve individuals in State institutions

Deliver technical assistance for eligible recipients

Support the integration of employability skills into CTE programs of study

Support CTSOs

Support career exploration curriculum through Fifth Grade

Postsecondary

The VCCS uses State Leadership funds to support development and implementation of strategies to improve CTE throughout the community college system. These activities include:

Preparation for nontraditional fields in current and emerging professions, programs for special populations, and other activities that expose students, including special populations, to high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations that result in postsecondary certificates and nationally-recognized certifications (e.g. the VCCS High

School Career Coach Coordinator provides professional development and assistance to High School career coaches)

Support for recruiting, preparing, training, and retaining CTE instructors, faculty, specialized instructional support personnel, professional development, or leadership development programs (e.g., the VCCS's annual Hire Ed Conference is a gathering of community college leaders, workforce development professionals, partner agencies, board members, and elected officials exploring the ways in which colleges will respond to the needs of businesses and individuals in the Commonwealth, positioning Virginia as a national model for workforce training)

Provision of technical assistance to Perkins eligible recipients and reporting on the effectiveness of funding (e.g., on-site monitoring activities, data collection, and provision of related technical assistance)

II.B.2. Implementing Career and Technical Education Programs and Programs of Study

II.B.2.a. Describe the career and technical education programs or programs of study that will be supported, developed, or improved at the State level, including descriptions of the programs of study to be developed at the State level and made available for adoption by eligible recipients. (Section 122(d)(4)(A) of Perkins V)

Secondary

Virginia's CTE program provides a statewide system of career pathways that brings together secondary, postsecondary, workforce development, and business/industry. These partnerships focus on high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand occupations that strengthen the economy. Utilizing a statewide career clusters model, the state ensures delivery of modern, rigorous, and flexible programs that offer global competitiveness. In both secondary and postsecondary, obtainment of workforce credentials such as industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or for the Commonwealth WRS Assessment is a priority.

Sample programs of study have been developed for each of the 17 career clusters based on models provided by Advance CTE. The programs of study provide a consistent foundation of core knowledge and skills for statewide implementation. Additional competencies may be added to address regional and local workforce demands.

School divisions are required to develop at least one new program of study each year or revise an existing program of study based on the courses offered within their schools, employment needs of the area, and postsecondary career options. We provide sample programs of study and templates for the following career clusters and pathways:

Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources

Agribusiness Systems

Animal Systems

Environmental Service Systems

Food Products & Processing Systems

Natural Resources Systems

Plant Systems

Power, Structural & Technical Systems

Architecture & Construction

Construction

Design / Pre-Construction

Maintenance Operations

Arts, A/V Technology & Communications

Audio / Video Technology and Film

Journalism & Broadcasting

Performing Arts

Printing Technology

Telecommunications

Visual Arts

Business Management & Administration

Administrative Support

Business Information Management

General Management

Human Resources Management

Operations Management

Education & Training

Administration & Administrative Support

Professional Support Services

Teaching and Training

Energy

Fuels Production

Power Generation

Energy Transmission, Distribution, and Storage

Energy Sustainability and Efficiency

Finance

Accounting

Banking Services

Business Finance

Insurance

Securities & Investments

Government & Public Administration

Foreign Service

Governance

National Security

Planning

Public Management & Administration

Regulation

Revenue & Taxation

Health Science

Biotechnology Research & Development

Diagnostic Services

Health Informatics

Support Services

Therapeutic Services

Hospitality & Tourism

Lodging

Recreation, Amusements & Attractions

Restaurants and Food / Beverage Services

Travel & Tourism

Human Services

Consumer Services

Counseling & Mental Health Services

Early Childhood Development & Services

Family & Community Services

Personal Care Services

Information Technology

Information Support & Services

Network Systems

Programming & Software Development

Web & Digital Communications

Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security

Correction Services

Emergency & Fire Management Services

Law Enforcement Services

Legal Services

Security & Protective Services

Manufacturing

Health, Safety & Environmental Assurance

Logistics Inventory Control

Maintenance, Installation & Repair

Manufacturing Production Process Development

Production

Quality Assurance

Marketing

Marketing Communications

Marketing Management

Marketing Research

Merchandising

Professional Sales

Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

Engineering & Technology

Science & Math

Transportation, Distribution & Logistics

Facility & Mobile Equipment Maintenance

Health, Safety & Environmental Management

Logistics Planning and Management Services

Sales & Service

Transportation Operations

Transportation Systems / Infrastructure Planning, Management & Regulation

Warehousing & Distribution Center Operations

Virginia's CTE programs and courses are described on the CTERC [website](#). The links below point to the state-approved courses organized by career clusters.

[Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources](#)

[Architecture and Construction](#)

[Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications](#)

[Business Management and Administration](#)

[Education and Training](#)

[Energy](#)

[Finance](#)

[Government and Public Administration](#)

[Health Science](#)

[Hospitality and Tourism](#)

[Human Services](#)

[Information Technology](#)

[Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security](#)

[Manufacturing](#)

[Marketing](#)

[Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics](#)

[Transportation, Distribution and Logistics](#)

The Virginia BOE requires that students complete a minimum of two sequential courses to be a program finisher. Once the student graduates, the designation is changed to program completer.

For the postsecondary section of the program of study, Virginia's template provides the recommended certificate programs and associate degree programs using a VCCS state code for the degree program (degree requirements are available on the website of each community college). School divisions and postsecondary institutions work together to identify specific courses to ensure secondary to postsecondary program alignment.

The 2019 Virginia General Assembly passed House Bill 2008 and Senate Bill 1348, which requires the VDOE, in consultation with representatives from pertinent industries such as renewable energy, natural gas, nuclear energy, coal, and oil, to establish an energy career cluster. The two bills also require the VDOE to base the knowledge and skill sets contained in such energy career cluster on the energy industry competency and credential models developed by the Center for Energy Workforce Development in partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor. The bills further require the VDOE to report to the Chairmen of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health no later than December 1, 2019, on its progress toward establishing such energy career cluster

Postsecondary

The VCCS is comprised of 23 community colleges located on 40 campuses throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Each community college provides programs and majors through the associate-degree level, encompassing occupational-technical education, college transfer education, general education, developmental education, continuing education, and workforce development. The VCCS provides access to quality higher educational opportunities and workforce training throughout the Commonwealth for over 225,000 credit students and nearly 175,000 non-credit students. The VCCS's mission is to provide the opportunity to learn and develop the right skills so lives and communities are strengthened.

Each community college serves a defined service region and is charged with meeting the needs of the students and industry partners in these regions while working collaboratively with secondary education, colleges and universities, and community organizations. All occupational and technical education programs are designed to meet the increasing demand for technicians, semi-professional workers, and skilled crafts persons. These programs may include preparation for agriculture, business, engineering, healthcare, manufacturing, information technology, building and construction trades, and public safety. Curricula primarily meet the need for workers in the region being served by the community college, but the VCCS may designate certain community colleges as centers to serve larger areas of the state in offering highly specialized occupational and technical education programs.

Each community college maintains a CTE Advisory Committee comprised of college students, college faculty, labor organizations, workforce investment council members, business and industry leaders, local school division representatives, community representatives, special populations representation, out of school, homeless, and/or at-risk youth individuals to provide input and guidance pertaining to the scope and sequence of programs and courses to meet regional workforce demands.

The following provides postsecondary program titles, by category, offered by the VCCS. Detailed information regarding program availability, associated courses, and the college(s) offering each credential is readily available on the VCCS website.

Associate of Arts

Humanities/Humanistic Studies

[LIBERAL ARTS](#)

Visual and Performing Arts, General

[FINE ARTS](#)

[MUSIC](#)

Associate of Arts and Sciences

Liberal Arts and Sciences/Liberal Studies

[ARTS & SCIENCES](#)

[BUSINESS ADMIN](#)

[EDUCATION](#)

[ENGINEERING](#)

[GENERAL STUDIES](#)

[LIBERAL ARTS](#)

[SCIENCE](#)

Associate of Applied Arts Non-transfer, applied degree. Visual and Performing Arts, General

[MUSIC](#)

Visual and Performing Arts, Other

[FINE ARTS](#)

[STUDIO & VISUAL COMMUNICATION](#)

[STUDIO ARTS](#)

Associate of Applied Science

Non-transfer, applied technology degree Accounting and Related Services, Other

[ACCOUNTING](#)

Airframe Mechanics and Aircraft Maintenance Technology/Technician

[AVIATION MAINTENANCE TECHNOLOGY](#)

Allied Health Diagnostic, Intervention, and Treatment Professions, Other

[HEALTH SCIENCES](#)

Applied Horticulture/Horticultural Operations, General

[HORTICULTURE](#)

Architectural Technology/Technician

[ARCHITECTURE](#)

Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician

[AUTOMOTIVE](#)

Biology Technician/Biotechnology Laboratory Technician

[BIOTECHNOLOGY](#)

Business Operations Support and Secretarial Services, Other

[ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TECH](#)

[COMPUTER SOFTWARE SPECIALIST](#)

Business/Managerial Operations, Other

[ACQUISITION AND PROCUREMENT](#)

[MANAGEMENT](#)

[MARKETING](#)

CAD/CADD Drafting and/or Design Technology/Technician

[COMPUTER AIDED DRAFTING & DESIGN](#)

Child Care Provider/Assistant

[EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT](#)

Civil Engineering Technology/Technician

[CIVIL ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY](#)

Clinical/Medical Laboratory Technician

[MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNOLOGY](#)

Computer and Information Sciences, General

[INFORMATION SYSTEMS TECHNOLOGY](#)

IST: NETWORKING

Computer and Information Systems Security

[CYBERSECURITY](#)

Construction Trades, General

[CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT TECH](#)

Cooking and Related Culinary Arts, General

[CULINARY ARTS](#)

Corrections

[CORRECTIONS SCIENCE](#)

Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement Administration

[ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE](#)

[POLICE SCIENCE](#)

Dental Hygiene/Hygienist

[DENTAL HYGIENE](#)

Design and Visual Communications, General

[COMMUNICATION DESIGN](#)

[COMPUTER ARTS](#)

[GRAPHIC DESIGN](#)

Diagnostic Medical Sonography/Sonographer and Ultrasound Technician

[DIAGNOSTIC MEDICAL SONOGRAPHY](#)

Diesel Mechanics Technology/Technician

[DIESEL TECHNOLOGY](#)

Electrical, Electronic and Communications Engineering Technology/Technician

[COMPUTER ELECTRONICS TECHNOLOGY](#)

[COMPUTER NETWORKING TECHNOLOGY](#)

[ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY](#)

Electrician

[ELECTRICAL TECHNOLOGY](#)

[ELECTROMECHANICAL CONTROL](#)

Emergency Medical Technology/Technician (EMT Paramedic)

[EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES](#)

Engineering Technology, General

[ARCHITECT CIVIL ENGINEER](#)

[GENERAL ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY](#)

Environmental Control Technologies/Technicians, Other

[ENERGY TECHNOLOGY](#)

Fire Science/Firefighting

[FIRE SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY](#)

Forensic Science and Technology

[FORENSIC SCIENCE](#)

Funeral Service and Mortuary Science, General

[FUNERAL SERVICE](#)

Health Information/Medical Records Technology/Technician

[HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY](#)

Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation and Refrigeration Maintenance Technology/Technician (HAC, HACR, HVAC, HVACR)

[AIR CONDITIONING AND REFRIGERATION](#)

Hospitality Administration/Management, General

[HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT](#)

Industrial Electronics Technology/Technician

[ELECTRONICS TECHNOLOGY](#)

[INSTRUMENTATION](#)

Industrial Production Technologies/Technicians, Other

[COMPUTER INTEGRATED MANUFACTURING](#)

[INDUSTRIAL](#)

[INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY](#)

Industrial Technology/Technician

[TECHNICAL STUDIES](#)

Interior Design

[INTERIOR DESIGN](#)

Legal Assistant/Paralegal

[PARALEGAL STUDIES](#)

Manufacturing Technology/Technician

[MECHATRONICS](#)

Mechanical Engineering Related Technologies/Technicians, Other

[MECHANICAL DESIGN](#)

[MECHANICAL ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY](#)

Mechanics and Repairers, General

[MARITIME TECHNOLOGIES](#)

Medical Radiologic Technology/Science - Radiation Therapist

[RADIATION ONCOLOGY](#)

Mental and Social Health Services and Allied Professions, Other

[HUMAN SERVICES](#)

Mining Technology/Technician

[ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT](#)

Natural Resources/Conservation, General

[ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE](#)

[FOREST SCIENCE](#)

[FORESTRY](#)

Nursing

[NURSING](#)

Occupational Therapist Assistant

[OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT](#)

Opticianry/Ophthalmic Dispensing Optician

[OPTICIANRY](#)

Photography

[PHOTOGRAPHY](#)

Physical Therapist Assistant

[PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT](#)

Precision Metal Working, Other

[MACHINE TECHNOLOGY](#)

Radiologic Technology/Science - Radiographer

[RADIOGRAPHY](#)

Respiratory Care Therapy/Therapist

[RESPIRATORY THERAPY](#)

Sign Language Interpretation and Translation

[AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE – ENGLISH INTERPRETATION](#)

Teacher Assistant/Aide

[EDUCATION ASSISTING](#)

Veterinary/Animal Health Technology/Technician and Veterinary Assistant

[VETERINARY TECHNOLOGY](#)

Associate of Fine Arts

Art/Art Studies, General

[VISUAL ARTS](#)

Drama and Dramatics/Theatre Arts, General

[THEATER](#)

Film/Cinema Studies

[CINEMA](#)

Music, General

[MUSIC](#)

Associate of Science

Biological and Physical Sciences

[SCIENCE](#)

Business Administration and Management, General

[BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION](#)

Computer Science

[COMPUTER SCIENCE](#)

Criminal Justice/Safety Studies

[CRIMINOLOGY & CRIMINAL JUSTICE](#)

Education, General

[EDUCATION](#)

Engineering, General

[ENGINEERING](#)

General Studies

[GENERAL STUDIES](#)

Health Services/Allied Health/Health Sciences, General

[HEALTH SCIENCES](#)

Information Technology

[INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY](#)

Social Sciences, General

[SOCIAL SCIENCES](#)

Certificate

A curriculum that consists of a minimum of 30 semester hours with a minimum of 15 percent of course work in general education which must include one three credit hour English class.

Accounting and Related Services, Other

[ACCOUNTING](#)

[BOOKKEEPING](#)

Aircraft Powerplant Technology/Technician

[POWER PLANT MAINTENANCE](#)

Airframe Mechanics and Aircraft Maintenance Technology/Technician

[AIRFRAME MAINTENANCE](#)

Allied Health Diagnostic, Intervention, and Treatment Professions, Other

[ADVANCED HEALTH CARE](#)

[HEALTH SCIENCES](#)

Applied Horticulture/Horticultural Operations, General

[SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND HORTICULTURE](#)

Architectural Drafting and Architectural CAD/CADD

[ARCHITECTURAL DRAFTING](#)

Audiovisual Communications Technologies/Technicians, Other

[MUSIC RECORDING TECHNOLOGY](#)

Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician

[AUTOMOTIVE DIAGNOSIS AND TECHNOLOGY](#)

[AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY](#)

Business Operations Support and Secretarial Services, Other

[ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TECHNOLOGY](#)

[CLERICAL STUDIES](#)

[MICROCOMPUTER OFFICE AUTOMATION](#)

[OFFICE INFORMATION PROCESS](#)

[OFFICE SYSTEMS TECHNOLOGY](#)

[WORD PROCESSING](#)

Business/Managerial Operations, Other

[ACQUISITION AND PROCUREMENT](#)

[GENERAL BUSINESS](#)

[MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT](#)

[SMALL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT](#)

[SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT](#)

CAD/CADD Drafting and/or Design Technology/Technician

[COMPUTER AIDED DRAFTING & DESIGN](#)

Child Care Provider/Assistant

[CHILD CARE](#)

[EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT](#)

Computer and Information Sciences, General

[INFORMATION SYSTEMS TECHNOLOGY](#)

[NETWORKING APLUS](#)

Computer and Information Systems Security

[CYBERSECURITY](#)

Construction Trades, General

[BUILDING CONSTRUCTION](#)

Cooking and Related Culinary Arts, General

[CULINARY ARTS](#)

Corrections

[CORRECTIONS](#)

Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement Administration

[ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE](#)

[LAW ENFORCEMENT](#)

[POLICE SCIENCE](#)

Dental Assisting/Assistant

[DENTAL ASSISTING](#)

Design and Visual Communications, General

[GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS](#)

[MULTIMEDIA DESIGN](#)

Diesel Mechanics Technology/Technician

[DIESEL MECHANICS](#)

Electrical, Electronic and Communications Engineering Technology/Technician

[ELEC/ELECTRONICS](#)

[ELECTRONICS](#)

Electrician

[ELECTRICITY](#)

Environmental Control Technologies/Technicians, Other

[ENERGY TECHNOLOGY](#)

Fire Science/Firefighting

[FIREFIGHTING](#)

Forensic Science and Technology

[CYBERCRIME INVESTIGATION](#)

Health and Medical Administrative Services, Other

[HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT](#)

[MEDICAL OFFICE CLERK](#)

Health Information/Medical Records Technology/Technician

[HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY](#)

Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation and Refrigeration Maintenance Technology/Technician (HAC, HACR, HVAC, HVACR)

[AIR CONDITIONING AND REFRIGERATION](#)

Hospitality Administration/Management, General

HOSPITALITY MANAGMENT

Industrial Production Technologies/Technicians, Other

[INDUSTRIAL MAINTENANCE](#)

[MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY](#)

[WIND TURBINE SERVICE TECHNOLOGY](#)

Legal Assistant/Paralegal

[LEGAL ASSISTANT](#)

Liberal Arts and Sciences, General Studies and Humanities, Other

[GENERAL EDUCATION](#)

Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Training

[PRACTICAL NURSING](#)

Massage Therapy/Therapeutic Massage

[MASSOTHERAPY](#)

Medical/Clinical Assistant

[MEDICAL ASSISTING](#)

Mental and Social Health Services and Allied Professions, Other

[HUMAN SERVICES](#)

Precision Metal Working, Other

[COMPUTER NUMERIC CONTROLS MACHINING](#)

[MACHINE SHOP](#)

[MACHINE TOOL OPERATIONS](#)

[PRECISION MACHINING TECHNOLOGY](#)

Security and Protective Services, Other

[FORENSIC SCIENCE](#)

Substance Abuse/Addiction Counseling

[SUBSTANCE ABUSE REHABILITATION](#)

Surgical Technology/Technologist

[SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY](#)

Technical and Business Writing

[PROFESSIONAL WRITING FOR BUSINESS](#)

Visual and Performing Arts, Other

[ARTS AND CRAFTS](#)

[FINE ARTS](#)

Web Page, Digital/Multimedia and Information Resources Design

[WEB DESIGN MANAGER](#)

Welding Technology/Welder

[PIPE WELDING](#)

[WELDING](#)

A two-year curriculum with an emphasis in a career/technical area with a minimum of 15 percent of course work in general education, which must include one three credit hour English class.

Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician

[AUTOMOTIVE ANALYSIS & REPAIR](#)

Construction Trades, General

[CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY](#)

Electrical/Electronics Maintenance and Repair Technology, Other

[ELECTRONICS SERVICE](#)

Graphic Communications, General

[PRINTING](#)

Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation and Refrigeration Maintenance Technology/Technician (HAC, HACR, HVAC, HVACR)

[AIR CONDITIONING AND REFRIGERATION](#)

Industrial Electronics Technology/Technician

[ELECTRICAL ELECTRONICS](#)

Precision Metal Working, Other

[MACHINE OPERATIONS](#)

[MACHINE SHOP](#)

[MACHINE TOOL](#)

[MACHINE TOOL AND QUALITY](#)

Welding Technology/Welder

[WELDING](#)

In addition to the programs provided in the summary table, each college delivers [career studies certificates](#) to meet targeted, regional workforce needs. A career studies certificate program is defined as a program of study of not less than 9 or more than 29 semester credit hours and which is not required to include general education courses. Information regarding [Career Studies Certificates provided by colleges](#) may be accessed through the VCCS courses and programs portal.

The VCCS Complete 2021 strategic plan, adopted in 2015, established the goal of leading the Commonwealth in the education of its citizens by tripling the number of credentials awarded by 2021. During the 2016 session, the General Assembly passed [HB 66](#), which established the New Economy Workforce Grant Program. This grant program, the first of its kind, provides a pay-for-performance model for funding noncredit workforce training that leads to a credential in an in-demand field. Branded as [FastForward](#) in 2017, total program enrollments have resulted in more than 18,000 industry recognized, high-demand industry certifications and licensures.

In 2018, in accordance with the VCCS strategic plan, additional strategies were developed to support meeting the goal set forth in the plan – implementing guided career pathways – and prioritizing partnerships with K-12 that result in accelerated pathways to the workforce. For example, community colleges work with regional K-12 partners to create and expand dual enrollment opportunities supported by high school career coaches, which provide students with transparent and efficient pathways for those interested in attaining industry certifications, career studies certificates, certificates, and degrees. These models provide seamless connections between K-12, the VCCS, and businesses by providing access to clearly articulated and affordable pathways. All of these aforementioned efforts contribute to the VCCS’s emphasis placed on the [Guided Pathways](#) model.

Guided Pathways represents the thoughtful consideration of internal and external factors that influence Virginia’s college communities and the creation of a systemic approach to addressing those factors in the interest of student success. Guided Pathways are designed to guide students from connection through completion. In a Guided Pathways approach, incoming students are given support to clarify goals for college and careers, choose a program of study, and develop an academic plan with predictable schedules. Embedded advising, progress tracking, and feedback are integrated into pathways leading to successful transfer or entry into the labor market.

Despite these efforts and advances, Virginia still faces significant demand for a skilled workforce, and in many industry sectors, such as IT and computer science, demand exceeds supply. An analysis of Virginia labor market data shows that Virginia needs a strong mixture of short credentials and associate degrees to meet job demands. The VCCS is undertaking a curriculum redesign initiative to build accelerated pathways into the workforce by creating stackable pathways that begin with short-term certificates and industry certifications. With stackable pathways, students can enroll in short-term skills-based programs, find good entry-level jobs, and continue or return later to complete credits toward additional credentials. In fall 2018, the [Governor provided \\$5.1 million from the WIOA](#) state set-aside funds to jump start the accelerated pathways redesign. Each community college was awarded funding to restructure programs leading to high demand jobs in the following industry sectors: IT/computer science, healthcare, manufacturing and trades, public safety, and early childhood education.

II.B.2.b. Describe the process and criteria to be used for approving locally developed programs of study or career pathways, including how such programs address State workforce development and education needs and the criteria to assess the extent to which the local application under section 132 will-

II.B.2.b.i. promote continuous improvement in academic achievement and technical skill attainment

Secondary

The goals for education in Virginia are to ensure that every student attends a school that maximizes his or her potential and prepares the student for life beyond high school. A successful graduate will achieve and apply academic and technical knowledge; demonstrate productive workplace skills, qualities, and behaviors; build connections and value interactions with others as a responsible and responsive citizen; and align knowledge, skill, and personal interests with career opportunities.

Under the new accreditation system implemented in 2018, every school must develop a multiyear plan to support continuous improvement. The new accreditation system emphasizes closing achievement gaps between student groups and provides a more comprehensive view of quality. The accreditation reforms align to the Profile of a Virginia Graduate, focus on equity outcomes, include student growth, and measure student engagement.

School Quality Profiles were developed by the BOE in response to the 2015 Virginia General Assembly, which directed the Board to redesign online reports for schools and school divisions to more effectively communicate to parents and the public about the status and achievements of Virginia's public schools.

Among such items as assessments, college and career readiness, and teacher quality, the School Quality Profile also tracks the number of CTE completers by state, division, and school; and the number of industry certifications, state licensures, and occupational competency assessments passed by CTE students. All students are held to the same rigorous content requirements and high performance on the Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments for graduation.

Local school divisions must submit at least one program of study each year. The components of the program of study include:

Incorporating secondary education and postsecondary courses aligned to industry standards.

Coherent and rigorous content aligned with challenging academic standards and relevant career and technical content in a coordinated, nonduplicative progression of courses that align secondary education with postsecondary education to adequately prepare students to succeed in postsecondary education.

The opportunity for secondary education students to participate in dual or concurrent enrollment programs or other ways to acquire postsecondary education credits.

Attaining to an industry-recognized credential or certificate at the postsecondary level, or an associate or baccalaureate degree.

The programs of study will be used to strengthen career assessment activities at the middle school level, provide opportunities for students to prepare for industry certifications/credentials and a high school diploma, provide students and parents information on careers, and encourage students to seek a higher level of academic achievement.

Virginia will continue to reinforce high academic achievement for secondary students and provide postsecondary connections through program initiatives such as High Schools That Work, State Scholars Initiative (Commonwealth Scholars Initiative), dual enrollment courses, and validated course credits through which high school students may earn college credits in escrow through satisfactory performance on a certification or licensure examination or an end-of-program or course assessment commonly administered at both secondary and postsecondary levels.

Postsecondary

Local program applications by eligible college recipients must be submitted in a VCCS approved comprehensive format. Each application is reviewed by the VCCS Office to determine whether the local program of study:

meets the criteria for postsecondary career pathways established by the VCCS and the VDOE;

identifies and addresses high-skilled, high-wage, in-demand occupations;

includes evidence of continuous program assessment and improvement;

is based on appropriate use of anticipated funds;

provides specific plans and use of funds to address any performance measures that the college has failed to meet in a previous year or years;

shows evidence of business and industry involvement, including labor and workforce partners, in the development assessment of programming;

shows evidence of involvement of the college-led, college service region Career Pathways Leadership Team;

requires eligible recipients to agree to comply with all statements of assurances and conditions as defined by Perkins V legislation;

provides students with strong experience in, and understanding of, all aspects of an industry; and,

ensures that students who participate in CTE programs are taught to the same challenging academic proficiencies as taught to all other students.

II.B.2.b. Describe the process and criteria to be used for approving locally developed programs of study or career pathways, including how such programs address State workforce development and education needs and the criteria to assess the extent to which the local application under section 132 will-

II.B.2.b.ii. expand access to career and technical education for special populations; and

Secondary

Virginia is committed to the expansion of access to CTE programs for special populations.

Each local school division must include strategies for increasing the participation of all special population groups in CTE in its local Perkins application. These may include staff development activities related to serving special populations, literature and resources designed to attract special populations to programs, and sharing information about program offerings in creative ways that target all special population groups. To comply with regulations from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), Office of Civil Rights (OCR), all school divisions must publish statements of nondiscrimination with the name and contact information for the designated person responsible for addressing complaints.

Across the Commonwealth, students who are members of special populations go through the same registration process as all other students and have equal access to all CTE programs and activities. Once enrolled in a CTE course, there are many supports for students who are members of special populations, if necessary, up to and including accommodations and/or modifications for students with disabilities, to access the CTE curriculum, course competencies, and activities. Additionally, Virginia will continue to encourage students who are members of special populations starting in elementary through middle school and high school to enroll in CTE programs, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), that ultimately lead to future high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand industry sectors or occupations.

Postsecondary

All of the 23 local community colleges are required to submit annual accountability reports that include services for special populations. Strategies incorporated by the colleges include adaptive technologies, specialized personal tutoring, facilities accessibility, and transportation options. The annual USDE OCR Methods of Administration (MOA) reviews provide the colleges with information and data to help meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and all pertinent federal and state statutes prohibiting discrimination. The MOA and Perkins reviews examine all college publications and information available to the public (print and media) to ensure that underrepresented and nontraditional populations are properly included in text and illustrations, and that statements of nondiscrimination and contact information for the designated college officials are published as defined by federal and state law to potential and current students and to the public at large. The on-site reviews also ensure that services and facilities are in compliance with federally mandated standards including the Americans with Disabilities Act. All colleges maintain offices and staff designated to assist members of special populations. The VCCS provides career coaching and direction in all 23 service regions of the state to prospective students currently enrolled at the secondary level or adults interested in resuming their education. Comprehensive outreach services, including high school career coaches, adult career coaches, and advanced technology coaches, provide direct services in career and college planning, postsecondary enrollment, financial aid, etc.

II.B.2.b. Describe the process and criteria to be used for approving locally developed programs of study or career pathways, including how such programs address State workforce development and education needs and the criteria to assess the extent to which the local application under section 132 will-

II.B.2.b.iii. support the inclusion of employability skills in programs of study and career pathways. (Section 122(d)(4)(B) of Perkins V)

Secondary

Virginia's WRS for the Commonwealth are a set of personal qualities and abilities, interpersonal skills, and professional competencies identified by Virginia employers and educators as essential for employee success in the workplace. Developed and updated over the past 30 years to adapt to changing workplace trends and needs, these skills are incorporated into the curriculum of every state CTE course. They not only provide students of diverse backgrounds with the opportunity to develop the personal resources they need to obtain and keep good jobs, but they also help employers by providing them with entry-level workers who are well-prepared to deal with a variety of workplace challenges. Additionally, because many students hone these skills through hands-on work experience, the decreasing labor force participation and increasing school enrollment of Virginia's teens in recent decades means that school-based workplace readiness skills programs will become an even more vital resource for CTE students in the future.

The VDOE's Office of Career and Technical Education, in partnership with several organizations, has been sponsoring research on workplace readiness skills in Virginia for more than 30 years. In each decade since the 1980s, hundreds of employers throughout the Commonwealth have been interviewed or surveyed about what they believe are the most essential workplace skills for entry-level workers to possess.

Initial research conducted in the mid-1980s revealed that employers believed workplace readiness skills were at least as important as traditional academic and technical skills in promoting workplace success. Another round of research conducted from 1993 to 1997 led to the creation of Virginia's first set of 13 WRS, which were incorporated into the curriculum of every Virginia CTE course in 1998. Based on research performed from 2008 to 2011, the original list of 13 skills was updated and expanded to 21 skills, and additional curriculum and assessment resources were developed.

In 2017, the Office of Career and Technical Education continued Virginia's long history of data-driven evaluation of its WRS framework by requesting that the Demographics Research Group at the University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service conduct research to identify and update the skills that are of most value to the state's many employers. The Office of Career and Technical Education convened a panel of CTE administrators and educators, business and industry representatives, and curriculum development and assessment experts to review the Weldon Cooper Center recommendations and to continue the process of refining the skills. As a result of their collaborative efforts, a new set of 22 WRS for the Commonwealth was developed. These 22 WRS are embedded and taught in context in each state-approved CTE course. The refinements made to Virginia's WRS for the Commonwealth ensure that all courses have up-to-date and aligned employability skills that focus on the needs of Virginia's employers.

Postsecondary

Inclusion of employability skills is evidenced through the incorporation of input from advisory committees (comprised of relevant occupational experts and employers) that inform programs of study or career pathways

regarding needed employability skills both within the colleges' immediate service region and statewide for successful program completion.

Three major initiatives help the VCCS ensure programs are aligned with critical industry demands and with industry-recognized certifications:

- 1) Complete 2021: six-year strategic plan to triple number of credentials earned by the year 2021
- 2) FastForward: short-term workforce credential program to train Virginians for top, in-demand jobs across the Commonwealth. Most programs take between 6 and 12 weeks and are built so students can get their education while they work
- 3) G3: Governor's workforce development program, "Get Skilled, Get a Job, and Give Back."

Each initiative has helped, and will continue to help, the VCCS substantially increase the number of awarded industry credentials preparing students for entry and advancement in high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand careers.

II.B.2.c. Describe how the eligible agency will-

II.B.2.c.i. make information on approved programs of study and career pathways (including career exploration, WBL opportunities, early college high schools, and dual or concurrent enrollment program opportunities) and guidance and advisement resources, available to students (and parents, as appropriate), representatives of secondary and postsecondary education, and special populations, and to the extent practicable, provide that information and those resources in a language students, parents, and educators can understand.

Secondary

Perkins V builds on current CTE success by maintaining a strong commitment to programs of study that were first introduced in the 2006 Perkins Act. As programs of study are developed and approved by the VDOE and the VCCS, they are posted on the VDOE website and disseminated electronically to stakeholders with responsibility for CTE.

Specifically, the information for CTE Programs of Study is disseminated through the following methods as they are developed and approved at the state level:

CTE administrative meetings at both the secondary and postsecondary levels;

CTE administrators listserv and program/career cluster specialist listservs;

the VDOE, CTE webpage for Career Clusters; and

the CTERC website for approved curriculum frameworks.

State regulations, 8VAC20-132-140-C(1)(2), require each middle and secondary school to provide for the early identification and enrollment of students in a program with a range of educational and academic experiences related to college and career readiness inside and outside the classroom, including an emphasis on experiences that will motivate disadvantaged and minority students to prepare for a career, whether directly entering the career field or seeking postsecondary education.

Beginning with the 2018-2019 academic year:

Each elementary, middle, and secondary school shall provide for the identification of personal interests and abilities to support planning for postsecondary opportunities and career preparation for all students. Such support shall include the provision of information regarding exploration of career cluster areas in elementary grades; and course information and planning for college preparation programs, opportunities for educational and academic experiences in and outside the classroom including internships and WBL, and the multiple pathways to college and career readiness in middle and high school grades.

Beginning in the elementary school years, students are to explore different occupations associated with career clusters and select an area or areas of interest. Students shall begin the development of an ACPP in elementary grades to include information about interests, values such as dependability and responsibility, and skills supporting decisions about their future interests and goals. The ACPP is a repository for planning notes, class projects, interest inventory results, awards and recognitions, and other information related to academic and career

plans and preparation. The ACPP is student led and updated and revised as the student continues to plan for their future throughout school years. The information contained in the ACPP shall serve as the foundation for creating the ACP in grade seven.

In middle school, students are to complete a locally selected career interest inventory and select a career pathway. To support development of the ACP, students shall complete a career investigations course selected from the CTE state-approved list, or a school division-provided alternative means of delivering the career investigations course content, provided that the alternative is equivalent in content and academic rigor. The course, or its alternative, shall address, at a minimum, planning for academic courses, WBL opportunities, completion of industry certifications, possible independent projects, and postsecondary education. The course, or its alternative, shall include demonstration of personal, professional, and technical WRS.

Local school divisions then use school counselors, career counselors, and career coaches to provide information and advisement on career pathways to Virginia's high school students. Career coaches are community college employees who are based in local high schools to assist students in preparing for higher education and careers, and to increase student access to college programs and services, postsecondary faculty, and business and industry. Career coaches are based in high schools, alternative centers, Governor's schools, and combined schools in Virginia. Under Perkins V, the VCCS and VDOE will continue to expand the career coaches initiative statewide.

Postsecondary

As programs of study are developed and approved by the VDOE and the VCCS, they will be posted on the VDOE website and disseminated electronically to stakeholders such as Workforce Investment Boards with shared responsibility for CTE. Dissemination strategies include the following:

CTE administrative meetings at both the secondary and postsecondary levels;

The VDOE CTE webpage for Career Clusters;

The Virginia Rural Horseshoe Initiative;

Adult, advanced technology, and high school career coaches;

Virginia Education Wizard (a secondary and postsecondary online college and career planning tool); and

The Virginia CTERC website approved curriculum frameworks.

The VCCS has initiated a number of strategies intended to provide members of underrepresented gender populations with introductions to career and technical career fields that they may not have considered otherwise. Colleges are offering summer camps to introduce nontraditional prospective and enrolled, undecided students to CTE opportunities such as computer coding and manufacturing for females, and healthcare careers for males, among others. Additionally, several colleges have created nontraditional student support groups. The VCCS high

school, adult, and advanced technology coaches advise nontraditional students to consider career and technical opportunities and make referrals to the college CTE departments.

II.B.2.c. Describe how the eligible agency will-

II.B.2.c.ii. facilitate collaboration among eligible recipients in the development and coordination of career and technical education programs and programs of study and career pathways that include multiple entry and exit points.

Secondary

The CTE State Advisory Committee was established by the Virginia BOE in 2003 at the request of former Governor Warner. This committee is a standing committee of the Board to provide input on issues important to CTE programs and periodically makes reports to the BOE. This committee is comprised of business and industry (including labor) leaders, professional organization leaders, and representatives from secondary and postsecondary education who are appointed by the BOE.

Virginia's curriculum framework documents for CTE programs/courses are developed with a statewide emphasis on competency-based education. The curriculum development process is based on industry standards, both those that are nationally recognized and those that are identified through research that is based on business and industry input. Among the procedures involved in the curriculum development process are the following:

formation of a state technical committee for every new or updated curriculum project,
 application of the modified Developing A Curriculum (DACUM) occupational analysis,
 validation of technical competencies by the state technical committees and by business/industry advisory groups, and
 correlation of Virginia's SOL to technical competencies.

Ongoing research based on new and emerging high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations and changing technology is used in the development and updating of curriculum.

Postsecondary

At the local level, each of the VCCS colleges maintains advisory committees for their CTE programs with representatives from business, labor, community organizations such as workforce investment boards and chambers of commerce, secondary educators, faculty, students, administrators, and special populations. Career pathways and career coaching are crucial approaches used at all colleges and serve as guiding practices for advisory committees that oversee CTE programs, courses, and related activities such as recruitment and retention. At the state level, the VCCS leaders are engaged with multiple partner agencies to promote and support CTE opportunities for special populations such as SNAP-ET, TANF, and ex-offenders. In 2018-2019, the VCCS trained more coaches using the established Virginia Career Coach training model, with more coaches having the opportunity to earn their Facilitating Career Development credential that leads to a globally recognized Global Career Development Facilitator certification. As part of Perkins V, all colleges will conduct Comprehensive Local Needs Assessments that include input from several education, business, and community groups to assess current

and future CTE needs. During a May 2019 webinar, colleges were given guidance on how to complete the assessment and possible collaborations.

II.B.2.c. Describe how the eligible agency will-

II.B.2.c.iii. use State, regional, or local labor market data to determine alignment of eligible recipients' programs of study to the needs of the State, regional, or local economy, including in-demand industry sectors and occupations identified by the State board, and to align career and technical education with such needs, as appropriate.

Secondary

Virginia values and uses labor market data to drive the development of statewide curriculum and approval of local CTE programs. To ensure that programs and courses offered in localities are consistent with employment demand and opportunities in the particular community/region, the local program/course approval process requires that local school divisions submit data on labor market and/or employment needs and student interest. CTE program integration of curriculum offerings is also encouraged when competencies for high-skill, high-wage, in-demand, and emerging careers require skill development from two or more concentrations (e.g., advanced manufacturing and cybersecurity). Labor market data is secured from such resources as CTE Trailblazers at <http://www.ctetrailblazers.org/>, the VEC at <http://www.vec.virginia.gov/>, and the Census Quarterly Workforce Indicator Explorer at <http://qwiexplorer.ces.census.gov>. School divisions must submit a [CTE New Program/Course Application](#) for review and approval of all new courses.

Postsecondary

According to the VCCS policy, occupational/technical education programs are designed to meet the increasing demand for technicians, semiprofessional workers, and skilled crafts-persons for employment in industry, business, the professions, and government. These programs, which normally require two years or less of training beyond high school, may include preparation for agricultural, business, engineering, health and medical, industrial, service, and other technical and occupational fields. The curricula are planned primarily to meet the needs for workers in the region being served by the community college, but the VCCS may designate certain community colleges as centers to serve larger areas of the state in offering expensive and highly specialized occupational and technical education programs.

All community colleges also maintain a workforce development division headed by a vice president, dean, or director who is charged with analyzing and addressing business and industry's needs for a skilled workforce within the college's local service area. These workforce leaders work collaboratively with CAO within the institution to plan, develop, and maintain occupational/technical education programs at the colleges. Curriculum advisory committees consisting of representatives from business, industry, and labor aid colleges in keeping courses and programs relevant to the workplace, signaling regional demand for skilled workers, and providing students and faculty with guidance regarding career entry requirements.

The VCCS also uses data provided by the VEC, the U.S. Department of Labor, the USDE, Advance CTE, and local workforce boards, as well as its own collected data to help determine CTE course and program priorities, and to identify colleges in need of technical assistance.

II.B.2.c. Describe how the eligible agency will-

II.B.2.c.iv. ensure equal access to approved career and technical education programs of study and activities assisted under this Act for special populations.

Secondary

Virginia is committed to equal access to CTE programs for students who are members of special populations across the state and recognizes the need to actively recruit these students to enroll in all CTE programs. The VDOE and local school divisions strive to continuously improve strategies to reach and recruit students who are members of special populations starting in elementary school and continuing through high school for all CTE programs. Once enrolled in a CTE course, there are supports for students who are members of special populations, if necessary, up to and including accommodations and/or modifications for students with disabilities, to access the CTE curriculum, course competencies, and activities.

In order to overcome barriers, including those based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability, and age, the VDOE requires each local applicant for Perkins' funds to sign an assurance statement that the local applicant will ensure equal opportunities for all eligible students, faculty, and other program beneficiaries in any project or activity in which such funds are used. Further, the VDOE requires each local applicant to complete Schedule 4 of the Local Plan and Budget (submitted in the Perkins Local Application to the VDOE) that will address how they will ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the project or activity to be conducted by addressing the special needs of students, faculty, and other program beneficiaries, in order to overcome barriers to equitable participation. Finally, the VDOE will sign an assurance that all applications for Perkins funds will be reviewed to ensure that the above requirements are met.

The VDOE also conducts MOA CTE civil rights reviews and CTE federal program monitoring reviews which help ensure students who are members of special populations are provided equal access to CTE programs. The CTE civil rights and the CTE federal program monitoring reviews include an extensive examination of the school division's data, policies, and procedures; interviews with central office administrators, school administrators, school staff, and students; and, walk-throughs of CTE classrooms and laboratories to assess building accessibility for people with disabilities.

Postsecondary

The VCCS has taken the following steps to increase access and success of special population students:

review and revise, as needed, current Perkins monitoring review questions;

implement a specific special populations quarterly improvement plan for community colleges that have findings related to special population services as needed;

solicit feedback from local community college administrators to identify best practices in reaching and increasing special population participation in CTE programs;

solicit feedback in the form of a questionnaire from those who work in the student accommodations offices at all 23 colleges; and

provide additional system leadership and resources to advance best practices across the Commonwealth.

II.B.2.c. Describe how the eligible agency will-

II.B.2.c.v. coordinate with the State board to support the local development of career pathways and articulate processes by which career pathways will be developed by local workforce development boards, as appropriate.

Secondary

In Virginia, through Perkins V, the VDOE will continue the work in the development of career pathways that was started in Perkins IV connecting high schools and postsecondary institutions through the identification of career pathways: programs of study. School divisions are required to document programs of study that progress from middle school through postsecondary, and the programs must be signed by participating agencies.

Funds are also used for collaborative academic and CTE workshops and professional development, curriculum development, and the development of CTSO scholastic and leadership activities. Program improvement is supported for new courses that address identified high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand jobs in Virginia.

The VDOE is also developing, in collaboration with multiple agencies including workforce development, online courses related to sector partnerships and career pathways to enhance and support the workforce needs throughout the Commonwealth.

The VDOE staff continually reviews the CTE program activities, including courses for secondary instructors, leadership training, integrated academic/CTE instructional activities, recognition of best practices and programs of excellence, joint student leadership training for CTSO officers, and transitional programs and instructional strategies for special populations.

Postsecondary

According to the VCCS policy, colleges generally originate in curriculum. There must be ample justification for the creation of new curriculum based upon the needs and opportunities of a region served by the college. In determining the curriculum to be offered, the VCCS evaluates the varying needs of the communities served throughout the Commonwealth and the substantiated requests of interested local governing bodies, employers, and individuals. The VCCS policy Section 5, Educational Programs, defines all requirements for new programs, to include local college, local college board, and VCCS approval.

All CTE programs are subject to accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and, therefore, must include both technical and academic education. The VCCS Policy Manual provides stringent policies and guidelines to ensure a balance of core academic as well as career and technical knowledge and skills in CTE programs of study. Colleges must also continuously assess instruction and courses according to the requirements stipulated by the VCCS.

II.B.2.c. Describe how the eligible agency will-

II.B.2.c.vi. support effective and meaningful collaboration between secondary schools, postsecondary institutions, and employers to provide students with experience in, and understanding of, all aspects of an industry, which may include work-based learning such as internships, mentorships, simulated work environments, and other hands-on or inquiry-based learning activities.

Secondary

In Virginia, all state curriculum for CTE courses include a required unit on all aspects of industry to provide students with a strong experience in and an understanding of these occupational specific competencies. This unit is linked to instructional resources that focus on the work associated with career clusters and career pathways.

During 2013-2014, a strategic review of WBL was conducted to reassess and revitalize the WBL opportunities offered to Virginia's CTE students. The results redefined WBL methods and provided flexibility to school divisions with eight options in three categories, ranging from career exploration to pre-professional to career preparation.

During the 2019 General Assembly, [House Bill 2018](#) and [Senate Bill 1434](#) required the BOE to review and revise, in consultation with certain stakeholders and no later than December 1, 2019, its CTE Work-Based Learning Guide to expand the opportunities available for students to earn credit for graduation through high-quality WBL experiences such as job shadowing, mentorships, internships, and externships.

During 2018-2019, a technical review of WBL was conducted to expand the WBL opportunities offered to students. The results increased the number of opportunities for school divisions, adding three new WBL methods for a total of eleven options in three categories: job shadowing, mentorship, school-based enterprise, externship, entrepreneurship, internship, service learning, clinical experience, cooperative education, youth registered apprenticeship, and registered apprenticeship. The newly revised Work-Based Learning Guide will be effective July 1, 2020. A convening of business leaders and educators with defined focus on the WBL methods of instruction, best practices, and current trends is conducted annually. The goal is for each CTE student to participate in at least one WBL experience during secondary education.

Postsecondary

Effective and meaningful collaboration among secondary schools, postsecondary institutions, and employers is essential to the development of an appropriately skilled workforce. This focus can be appreciated through review of required student learning expressed in the VDOE Profile of a Virginia Graduate, which was updated in May 2019. The profile describes four overlapping areas for student learning and achievement considered essential to success beyond high school. These are:

Content Knowledge: Knowledge of subject areas based on statewide standards and their application.

Workplace Skills: Demonstration of personal skills and behaviors required for productivity, effective relationships, and problem-solving within one's workplace.

Community and Civic Responsibility: Understanding of the opportunities within civic organizations for service, and decision-making and responsibility for respectful interaction with others.

Career Exploration: Individual participation in career exploration, planning, and preparation, based on understanding of personal interests, skills, and abilities, and the needs of the economy.

Virginia's community colleges are committed to working with secondary educators to help advance these goals and to supporting seamless transitions to postsecondary CTE programs.

The VCCS provides a variety of programs to foster collaboration with and support for employers, incumbent workers, and the emerging workforce. Noncredit programs are delivered via open enrollment programs and as customized corporate training. Open enrollment programs are available to the general public and assist individuals in transitioning to employment after training. Customized corporate training programs are developed at the request of employer partners to upskill current or potential employees, providing opportunities for employee advancement and meeting the emerging needs of regional employers. Additionally, Virginia's credit and noncredit career and academic pathways are designed to provide meaningful and rigorous opportunities that incorporate workplace and citizenship skills through internships, externships, credentialing, and blended learning.

The VCCS also established a director of career education programs and workforce partnerships and organized staff around these priorities, to support effective and meaningful collaboration between secondary schools, community colleges, and employers to help ensure students are provided with experience in, and understanding of, all aspects of industry. Successful WBL and apprenticeship models already exist throughout the VCCS, and expanding these opportunities is a system priority. Current program examples include the delivery of related technical instruction for apprentices and employer sponsors in the shipbuilding, ship repair, mechatronics, asphalt, and information technology industries. These programs will serve as a foundation as the VCCS seeks to expand WBL opportunities in an effort to offer these experiences to a larger percentage of students and employer partners. Significant opportunities exist for collaboration between secondary and postsecondary in this effort as this is a shared priority.

Through its programs of study, the VCCS contributes to Virginia's distinguished record as one of the best states for education, employment, and growth in the disciplines of STEM. Virginia's strong education pipeline and business friendly climate help support an economy that employs hundreds of thousands of Virginians in STEM fields. Additionally, Virginia is expected to add nearly 150,000 new STEM jobs in the next five years, with opportunities expected to grow for years to come.

The STEM education pipeline has not evolved as quickly as economic demand, and educational inequities often limit access to advanced courses in STEM disciplines, credentials, and WBL for many of the most vulnerable and underrepresented students. In order to close those achievement opportunity gaps, meet the growing economic demands for STEM-prepared employees, and maintain its recognition as one of the best states for STEM education and employment, Virginia's Governor established a STEM commission and charged the commission with creating a unified vision and adopting a set of dynamic shared goals to strategically prepare students for STEM jobs of the future. Key representatives from the VCCS and the VDOE serve on this committee to help ensure alignment.

The state STEM plan requires collaboration from a wide range of state and local stakeholders, with early childhood, K-12, postsecondary, out-of-school programs, informal education, workforce development, environmental education, and business and industry partners from every region of the state. Through collaboration with stakeholders, the VCCS contributes to shared goals on several initiatives including renewed emphasis on CTE career pathways through the expansion CTE dual enrollment offerings, and opportunities to align state-level WBL efforts benefiting students and business and industry partners.

II.B.2.c. Describe how the eligible agency will-

II.B.2.c.vii. improve outcomes and reduce performance gaps for CTE concentrators, including those who are members of special populations. (Section 122(d)(4)(C) of Perkins V)

Secondary

Enhancing student learning and achievement is the goal of the Virginia BOE's efforts to improve public education. The BOE has revised its accreditation standards to provide a more comprehensive view of school quality while encouraging continuous improvement for all schools and placing increased emphasis on closing achievements gaps. The Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia (8 VAC 20-132) places emphasis on raising achievement standards for all students. The revised accreditation standards measure performance on multiple school-quality indicators, not just on overall student achievement on state tests. At the high school level, this includes indicators for college, career, and civic readiness.

School divisions are required to meet or exceed the Virginia Agreed-upon Performance Levels for the Perkins Core Indicators of Performance. The actual performance of the school division is recorded in each school division's Annual Performance Report (APR). In addition, performance data for all special populations is included in the analysis of data. If an indicator is not met, the school division must provide an explanation and the actions taken to improve the performance indicator. Once the school division has met the state standards, they must maintain or show improvement each year. School divisions, in their Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, must disaggregate and analyze data to identify achievement gaps and ensure that students who are members of special populations have equitable access and success in all CTE programs.

Postsecondary

The VCCS will continue to use CTE performance indicator data to drive student learning outcome improvement. If performance does not meet state-approved minimum levels, the VCCS will work with the local colleges on improvement plans. These improvement plans may address specific targeted supports including tutoring, academic remediation, and specialized support for members of special populations. The VCCS will also offer technical assistance aimed at improving student performance and outcomes and will also promote student academic achievement by supporting local community college efforts to develop, expand, and improve comprehensive student support systems.

The VCCS data suggests that there are opportunity and achievement gaps that persist, for example, between students of color and white students, and students with and without disabilities. The VCCS will continue to seek and develop effective strategies to address these disparities. In order to continue its promotion and support for nontraditional CTE participation, the VCCS will also assess the feasibility of developing a plan to evaluate and, if appropriate, implement a Program Improvement Process for Equity (PIPE). The PIPE, developed by the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity Education Foundation (NAPEEF), is a data-driven, decision-making institutional change process that focuses on increasing participation, completion, and transition of underrepresented groups in nontraditional CTE programs.

II.B.2.d. Describe how the eligible agency, if it chooses to do so, will include the opportunity for secondary school students to participate in dual or concurrent enrollment programs, early college high school, or competency-based education. (Section 122(d)(4)(D) of Perkins V)

Secondary

Virginia provides secondary school students with the opportunity to participate in dual or concurrent enrollment programs, early college high school, and competency-based education.

Community college and school division partnerships identify a common set of foundation courses that could simultaneously serve as 11th and 12th grade dual enrollment courses, youth apprenticeships, registered apprenticeships, and more.

Virginia's Early College Scholars program allows eligible high school students to earn at least 15 hours of transferable college credit while completing the requirements for an Advanced Studies Diploma. The result is a more productive senior year and a substantial reduction in college tuition. Students earning a college degree in seven semesters instead of eight can save an average of \$5,000 in expenses.

To qualify for the Early College Scholars program, a student must:

- have a "B" average or better;

- be pursuing an Advanced Studies Diploma; and

- take and complete college-level course work (i.e., Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Cambridge, or dual enrollment) that will earn at least 15 transferable college credits.

Early College Scholars are supported by Virtual Virginia, which provides statewide access to college-level courses. The Commonwealth College Course Collaborative defines the subjects high school students can complete and receive college degree credit from participating public and private colleges and universities.

Competency-based education has been an active component in Virginia's CTE programs since the mid-1970s. The curriculum development process is based on industry standards, both those that are nationally recognized and those that are identified through research that is based on business and industry input. Among the procedures involved in the curriculum development process are the following:

- formation of a state technical committee for every new or updated curriculum revision project;

- application of the modified DACUM occupational analysis;

- validation of technical competencies by the state technical committees and by business/industry advisory committees; and

- correlation of Virginia's SOL to technical competencies.

Ongoing research based on new and emerging high-skill, high-wage, in-demand occupations and changing technology is used in the development and revision of curriculum.

Postsecondary

Secondary students may earn VCCS college credits through dual enrollment, thereby increasing the portability of college credits earned through early college programs to all 23 community colleges. Dual enrollment has become the primary vehicle in Virginia of awarding early college credits in CTE program areas.

Dual enrollment affords qualified high school students in the Commonwealth the opportunity to enroll in college-level coursework while concurrently satisfying high school graduation requirements. Dual enrollment programs have many potential benefits for students, depending on their talents, intentions, and particular postsecondary path they intend to pursue. These benefits include improving the student's ability to complete postsecondary programs efficiently, enriching educational opportunities, and preparing for future employment. To support the achievement of these goals, dual enrollment courses should:

provide access to postsecondary education and pathways to the workforce for qualified high school students from all backgrounds;

expose students to rigorous coursework that familiarizes them with the academic and behavioral expectations of colleges and universities;

contribute to the enhanced student success and quality outcomes in postsecondary education; and

afford the opportunity to reduce time to complete and cost of postsecondary education.

It is the mutual responsibility of higher education institutions, secondary schools, and secondary school divisions to ensure that dual enrollment offerings enable fulfillment of the above purposes according to students' interests, abilities, and aspirations.

II.B.2. Implementing Career and Technical Education Programs and Programs of Study

II.B.2.e. Describe how the eligible agency will involve parents, academic and career and technical education teachers, administrators, faculty, career guidance and academic counselors, local business (including small businesses), labor organizations, and representatives of Indian Tribes and Tribal organizations, as appropriate, in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of its career and technical education programs. (Section 122(d)(12) of Perkins V)

Secondary

Virginia stakeholders include parents, academic and CTE teachers, administrators, faculty, career guidance and academic counselors, local businesses (including small businesses), and labor organizations in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of its CTE programs. All of the above-named stakeholders are members of the State Plan Review Committee.

The VDOE uses the following activities/organizations to provide continued input into the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of CTE programs.

As a direct result of the Virginia Congress of Parents and Teachers (PTA) representative serving on previous State Plan Review Committees, the VDOE will continue to engage the PTA in the development of the Perkins V Four-Year State Plan.

The CTE State Advisory Committee is a standing committee of the BOE which provides input on issues important to CTE programs. This committee is comprised of business and industry (including labor) leaders, professional organization leaders, and representatives from secondary and postsecondary education who are appointed by the BOE.

Local CTE Advisory Committees are required through state regulation (8VAC20-120-50). These committees serve the same purpose at the local level in advising and providing input on issues important to the local CTE programs and approving their Local Plan and Budget that is submitted for Perkins funds. These committees are comprised of the same stakeholders as the CTE State Advisory Committee but secured from the local/regional area served by the school divisions and represent the programs offered in that division/center.

The Office of Career and Technical Education's regional directors planning group is composed of local CTE administrators from each of the eight superintendent's regions. This group keeps the VDOE CTE staff aware of CTE-related best practices, professional development needs, and questions arising that are best addressed at the state level.

The Virginia Career Education Foundation was established in 2002 by Governor Mark Warner, and its fundamental missions are to raise funds and to lend support for initiatives that promote quality technical programs and raise the level of awareness for technical careers in the Commonwealth. The Foundation, a public-private partnership, supports and facilitates public-private partnerships, for it is through the combined efforts of industry, government, and educational institutions that these challenges can best be overcome. The Foundation focuses its efforts primarily on initiatives that are geared toward middle and high school students, those students for whom the future is just around the corner. Under Perkins V, the foundation will be restructured to continue to meet the needs of statewide CTE initiatives. The website is <http://vcefworks.org/>.

The CTE state director serves as an ex-officio member of the Virginia Association of Career and Technical Education Administrators (VACTEA) and the Virginia Association for Career and Technical Education (VACTE).

These organizations provide opportunities for professional development, awareness of trends, and needed changes to CTE programs in Virginia.

Staff at the Demographics and Workforce and Center for Survey Research of the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia maintains Trailblazers (formerly Career Prospects in Virginia), an online resource to help teachers, administrators, and school divisions meet Perkins requirements. In addition, this site provides useful employment projections, labor market data, and research; it is regularly updated and manages the CTE Completer Follow-Up system.

In addition to coordinating program maintenance and improvement activities with the state's Perkins grant subrecipients, the VDOE staff maintains open communication with each of the CTE professional associations, including VACTE, VACTEA, Virginia Association of Agriculture Educators (VAAE), Virginia Association for Career and Technical Education-Special Needs Division (VACTE)-(SND), Virginia Association of Marketing Educators (VAME), Virginia Association of Teachers of Family and Consumer Sciences (VATFACS), Virginia Association of Trade and Industrial Educators (VATIE), Virginia Business Education Association (VBEA), Virginia Health and Medical Sciences Education Association (VAHAMSEA), and Virginia Technology and Engineering Education Association (VTEEA). These organizations are dedicated to expanding relevant and rigorous CTE programs and enhancing leadership among its members.

Postsecondary

At the local level, each of the VCCS colleges maintains advisory committees for their CTE programs with representatives from business, labor, community organizations such as workforce investment boards, chambers of commerce, secondary educators, faculty, students, administrators, and special populations. The VCCS leadership engages with multiple partner agencies to promote and support CTE opportunities for special populations such as SNAP-ET, TANF, and ex-offenders. As part of Perkins V, all colleges will continue to conduct a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment that includes input from education, business, and community groups to assess current and future CTE needs.

II.B.2. Implementing Career and Technical Education Programs and Programs of Study

II.B.2.f. Include a copy of the local application template that the eligible agency will require eligible recipients to submit pursuant to section 134(b) of Perkins V. See Text Box 4 for the statutory requirements for local applications under section 134(b) of Perkins V.

Secondary

Posted: [Perkins V Secondary Local Plan 2026-2027](#)

Postsecondary

Posted: [Perkins V Postsecondary Local Plan 2026-2027](#)

II.B.2. Implementing Career and Technical Education Programs and Programs of Study

II.B.2.g Include a copy of the comprehensive local needs assessment template and/or guidelines that the eligible agency will require of eligible recipients to meet the requirements of section 134(c) of Perkins V. See Text Box 5 for the requirements for the comprehensive local needs assessment under section 134(c) of Perkins V.

Secondary

[2026-2027 Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment Response Form](#)

Postsecondary

[2026-2027 Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment Response Form](#)

II.B.2. Implementing Career and Technical Education Programs and Programs of Study

II.B.2.h. Provide the eligible agency's definition of "size, scope, and quality" that will be used to make funds available to eligible recipients pursuant to section 135(b) of Perkins V.

Secondary

The secondary definitions of "size, scope, and quality" in Virginia are:

Size:

A minimum of 11 courses in career and technical education is offered in each secondary school. (Standards of Accreditation 8 VAC 20-132-100.B)

Scope:

At least three different career and technical education programs, not courses, that prepare students as a career and technical education completer are provided. (Standards of Accreditation 8 VAC 20-132-100.A.1.)

Instruction in career and technical exploration is provided in each middle school. (Standards of Accreditation 8 VAC 20-132-90.B)

Quality:

Career and technical education programs incorporated into the K through 12 curriculum that include:

knowledge of careers and all types of employment opportunities including, but not limited to, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship and small business ownership, the military, and the teaching profession; and emphasize the advantages of completing school with marketable skills;

career exploration opportunities in the middle school grades; and

competency-based career and technical education programs that integrate academic outcomes, career guidance, and job-seeking skills for all secondary students. Programs must be based upon labor market needs and student interest. Career guidance shall include counseling about available employment opportunities and placement services for students exiting school. Each school board shall develop and implement a plan to ensure compliance with the provisions of this subdivision. Such plan shall be developed with the input of area business and industry representatives and local community colleges and shall be submitted to the Superintendent of Public Instruction in accordance with the timelines established by federal law. (Standards of Quality § 22.1-253.13:1. Standard 1.D.3.)

Establish the requirements for a standard and an advanced studies high school diploma, which shall each include at least one credit in fine or performing arts or career and technical education and one credit in United States and Virginia history. The requirements for a standard high school diploma shall, however, include at least two sequential electives chosen from a concentration of courses selected from a variety of options that may be planned to ensure the completion of a focused sequence of elective courses. Such focused sequence of elective courses shall provide a foundation for further education or training or preparation for employment. The advanced studies diploma shall be the recommended diploma for students pursuing baccalaureate study. Both the standard and the advanced studies diploma shall prepare students for postsecondary education and the career readiness required by the Commonwealth's economy... (Standards of Quality § 22.1-253.13:4.D.2.). Note: Requirements for graduation (effective for the students entering ninth grade prior to the 2018-2019 school year) (8VAC 20-132-50).

Requirements for graduation (effective for students who enter the ninth grade in the 2018-2019 school year) (8VAC 20-132-51).

Provide for the award of verified units of credit for passing scores on industry certifications, state licensure examinations, and national occupational competency assessments approved by the BOE. School boards shall report annually to the BOE the number of Board-approved industry certifications obtained, state licensure examinations passed, national occupational competency assessments passed, for the Commonwealth Workplace Readiness Assessment passed, and the number of CTE completers who graduated. These numbers shall be reported as separate categories on the School Performance Report Card. In addition, the Board may:

for the purpose of awarding verified units of credit, approve the use of additional or substitute tests for the correlated SOL assessment, such as academic achievement tests, industry certifications or state licensure examinations; and

permit students completing career and technical education programs designed to enable such students to pass such industry certification examinations or state licensure examinations to be awarded, upon obtaining satisfactory scores on such industry certification or licensure examinations, the appropriate verified units of credit for one or more CTE classes into which relevant SOL for various classes taught at the same level have been integrated. Such industry certification and state licensure examinations may cover relevant SOL for various required classes and may, at the discretion of the Board, address some SOL for several required classes. (Standards of Quality § 22.1-253.13:4.D.12.)

Postsecondary

The postsecondary definitions of “size, scope, and quality” in Virginia are:

Size:

A minimum of 74 courses in CTE is offered in each local community college.

Scope:

At least seven different CTE programs, not courses, that prepare students as a CTE completer are provided.

Quality:

CTE programs incorporated into the postsecondary education curriculum that include:

knowledge of careers and employment opportunities including, but not limited to, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship and small business ownership, the military, and the teaching profession, and emphasize the advantages of completing college with marketable skills;

career exploration opportunities; and

competency-based career and technical education programs that integrate academic outcomes, career guidance and job-seeking skills.

Programs must be based upon labor market needs and student interest. Career guidance includes counseling about available employment opportunities and placement services for students exiting school. Programs of study are developed with the input of area business and industry representatives, labor representatives, and local Workforce Investment Board(s).

II.B.3. Meeting the Needs of Special Populations

II.B.3.a. Describe its program strategies for special populations, including a description of how individuals who are members of special populations-

II.B.3.a.i. will be provided with equal access to activities assisted under this Act.

Secondary

Equal access to and equity in CTE programs for students who are members of special populations, as with all students, begins in the elementary school years, when each student develops an ACP that assists in identifying their future interests and goals. In middle school, students complete a career interest inventory and select a career pathway to support the development of their ACP. In high school, students select a career-related learning experience to include in their ACP to assist in their selection of CTE courses, as well as other courses, required in that program of study. Accordingly, individuals who are members of special populations go through that same registration process and have equal access to all CTE programs and activities. Once enrolled in a CTE course, there are many supports for students who are members of special populations, if needed, up to and including accommodations and/or modifications for students with disabilities, curriculum and competency adjustments based on the Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) or Section 504 plans, and instructional activities.

Virginia is committed to equity and to providing members of special populations equal access to CTE programs. In compliance with federal regulations, the VDOE administers MOA compliance reviews to identify and eliminate any discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, and disability. The identification of school divisions for an on-site CTE compliance review of civil rights requirements is determined by a targeting plan that is approved by the USDE OCR and is applied to school divisions in the current year of a six-year cyclical monitoring schedule. The targeting plan consists of indicators that reflect CTE student enrollments, division and school demographics, existence of a language minority community, and the division's last participation in a VDOE CTE civil rights on-site review. The CTE civil rights monitoring process includes an examination of the school division's data, policies, and procedures; interviews with central office administrators, school administrators, school staff, and students; and, walk-throughs to assess building accessibility.

The school divisions must include notices of nondiscrimination in school division and/or school student handbooks, course registration materials, major publications, and other materials that are disseminated to students and parents that states that it does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability, and if applicable, must notify English language learners stakeholders of the nondiscrimination provisions in their language, as well.

Postsecondary

Annual on-site MOA and Perkins monitoring helps to ensure that all students are provided with equal access to activities assisted under this Act. These visits include an evaluation of disability services offices and other special population related programs to ensure the success of special populations and underrepresented gender students. Questions are posed to determine the level of support, assistive technology service needs, and physical access to services. Corrective action plans are developed with guidance from a monitoring team for any findings or gaps in

services. The VCCS and its local colleges must include nondiscrimination statements on all advertising and promotional materials intended for public consumption.

II.B.3.a. Describe its program strategies for special populations, including a description of how individuals who are members of special populations-

II.B.3.a.ii. will not be discriminated against on the basis of status as a member of a special population;

Secondary

Each local recipient shall include in the Local Plan strategies to overcome barriers that result in lowering rates of access to, and lowering success in, the programs for special populations. These may include staff development activities related to serving special populations, literature and resources designed to attract special populations to the program, and the sharing of information about program offerings in creative ways that target all special population groups. To comply with regulations from the USDE OCR, all school divisions and colleges must publish statements of nondiscrimination and name and contact information for the designated person responsible for addressing complaints.

Local school divisions provide assurances in their local applications that discrimination against students who are members of special populations will not occur. School divisions must provide equal opportunities in its CTE programs without discrimination based on gender, race, color, national origin, religion, age, political affiliation, veteran status, persons with disabilities, and equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Recruitment and enrollment methods must be developed and implemented by the school division to provide information and access to all students, including students who are members of special populations. Additionally, school divisions, in their Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, must disaggregate and analyze data to identify achievement gaps and ensure that students who are members of special populations have equitable access and success in all CTE programs.

Postsecondary

Each eligible recipient of Perkins funding must assess access and opportunity gaps in their respective Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment. Specifically, applicants 1) describe progress toward implementation of equal access to high quality CTE courses and programs of study for all study, and 2) describe strategies to overcome barriers that result in lower rates of access to, or performance gaps in, the courses and programs for special populations. Such activities help to ensure that students are not discriminated against on the basis of status as a member of a special population. All eligible recipients are required to comply with all award conditions, including compliances with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Individuals with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act.

II.B.3.a. Describe its program strategies for special populations, including a description of how individuals who are members of special populations-

II.B.3.a.iii. will be provided with programs designed to enable individuals who are members of special populations to meet or exceed State determined levels of performance described in section 113, and prepare special populations for further learning and for high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations;

Secondary

Students who are members of special populations go through the same registration process as all students, with equal access to all CTE programs and activities. Once enrolled in a CTE course, there are many supports for students who are members of special populations, if necessary, up to and including accommodations and/or modifications for students with disabilities, to access the CTE curriculum, course competencies, and activities.

Virginia also has developed Education for Employment (EFE) CTE courses for students with special needs. EFE courses are specifically designed for students with disabilities, or students identified as disadvantaged, at risk, or diverse learners to prepare them for inclusion in regular CTE programs as soon as feasible. The EFE programs are provided at various instructional levels within the middle and high schools and include WBL opportunities.

The following programs and courses are designed specifically to provide career preparation for students with special needs:

Education for Employment (EFE) course titles and codes are as follows:

Middle School Courses

Exploratory Development (9083/36 weeks/for students with disabilities)

Exploratory Development (9031/9 weeks/for students with disabilities)

Exploratory Development (9030/6 weeks/for students with disabilities)

Exploratory Development (9032/12 weeks/for students with disabilities)

Exploratory Development (9082/18 weeks/for students with disabilities)

Exploratory Preparation (9076/36 weeks/for students identified as disadvantaged)

Exploratory Preparation (9075/18 weeks/for students identified as disadvantaged)

Exploratory Preparation (9021/9 weeks/for students identified as disadvantaged)

Exploratory Preparation (9020/6 weeks/for students identified as disadvantaged)

Exploratory Preparation (9022/12 weeks/for students identified as disadvantaged)

High School Courses

Level I--Development (9085/36 weeks/for students with disabilities)

Level I--Development (9084/18 weeks/for students with disabilities)

Level I--Preparation (9077/18 weeks/for students with disabilities)

Level I--Preparation (9078/36 weeks/for students identified as disadvantaged)

Level II--Development (9086/18 weeks/for students with disabilities)

Level II--Development (9087/36 weeks/for students with disabilities)

Level II--Preparation (9079/18 weeks/for students identified as disadvantaged)

Level II--Preparation (9080/36 weeks/for students identified as disadvantaged)

In addition to the EFE courses, programs and courses designed specifically for students with special needs are available within the following program areas: agricultural education, business and information technology, career connections, and technology and engineering education. In addition, family and consumer science, health and medical sciences, marketing, and trade and industrial education also provide for students with disabilities through their IEPs. Further, when a student with disability reaches age 14, their IEP must include services that are needed to transition to student-identified postsecondary goals. The transitional plan goals must relate to training, education, employment, and transition services, including courses of study to reach preferred occupational goal(s).

Postsecondary

Each VCCS college maintains advisory committees for their CTE programs with representatives from business, labor, community organizations such as workforce investment boards and chambers of commerce, faculty, students, administrators, and special populations. Career pathways and career coaching are crucial services used at all colleges and serve as guiding practices for advisory committees that oversee CTE programs, courses, and related activities such as recruitment and retention of special populations. At the state level, the VCCS leaders are engaged with multiple partner agencies to promote and support CTE opportunities for special populations such as SNAP-ET, TANF, and ex-offenders. Strategies used to ensure that members of special populations are provided with programs designed to enable them to meet or exceed state-determined levels of performance are incorporated by the colleges and include adaptive technologies, specialized personal tutoring, facilities accessibility, and addressing transportation concerns.

II.B.3.a. Describe its program strategies for special populations, including a description of how individuals who are members of special populations-

II.B.3.a.iv. will be provided with appropriate accommodations.

Secondary

Students receiving special education services or Section 504 provisions will be provided with the accommodations and/or modifications in all CTE program areas according to each student's IEP or Section 504 plan. The CTE instructors have access to students' IEP and 504 plans and other accommodation information that will assist them as they teach students who are members of special populations.

Postsecondary

All community colleges are required to have a designated disability services representative for students to receive assistance with the implementation and maintenance of necessary accommodations, such as provisions for students with physical or emotional disabilities. Physical barriers to accessibility are addressed as part of MOA on-site reviews. All services and accommodations for special population students must be identified on the college website, in the student handbook, and in the college catalog.

II.B.3.a. Describe its program strategies for special populations, including a description of how individuals who are members of special populations-

II.B.3.a.v. will be provided instruction and work-based learning opportunities in integrated settings that support competitive, integrated employment. (Section 122(d)(9) of Perkins V)

Secondary

Students who are members of special populations have equal access to each of the WBL experiences, dependent on each student's interests, CTE program, and IEP or section 504 plan. The WBL supervisors, along with other school division staff responsible for the oversight and coordination of work-based learning, must monitor and verify the rigor and expectations of all placements. Students within special populations participating in WBL opportunities must also meet the technical, performance, academic, and competency standards as prescribed by their program, with accommodations if included in their IEP or Section 504 plan.

Postsecondary

The VCCS will continue working with and supporting local education agency WBL coordinators throughout Virginia. The VCCS will also seek to support, or to expand support for, innovative and accessible WBL opportunities which may include career exploration experiences, service learning, internships, cooperative education, and apprenticeships. The WBL experiences and activities include actual paid or unpaid work experience.

II. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTIONS

II.B. Program Administration and Implementation

II.B.4. Preparing Teachers and Faculty

II.B.4.a. Describe how the eligible agency will support the recruitment and preparation of teachers, including special education teachers, faculty, school principals, administrators, specialized instructional support personnel, and paraprofessionals to provide career and technical education instruction, leadership, and support, including professional development that provides the knowledge and skills needed to work with and improve instruction for special populations. (Section 122(d)(6) of Perkins V)

Secondary

The VDOE, along with the business and Industry community, places the recruitment, preparation, and retention of teachers and other school professionals as one of its top priorities. Virginia uses a number of required and optional strategies and methods to achieve this objective.

In the [Virginia Perkins V Local Application](#), each school division must indicate, for each Perkins Award Year, the number of teachers who will participate in professional development activities, including state conferences, institutes, or workshops (including virtual training programs); national conferences, institutes, or workshops; local conferences, institutes, or workshops; and/or internship in industry. Further, in alignment with Section 134(b)(8), each school division must describe in its Perkins Application how the school division will coordinate with the state agency and institutions of higher education to support the recruitment, preparation, retention, and training, including professional development of teachers, faculty, administrators, and specialized instructional support personnel and paraprofessionals who meet applicable state certification and licensure requirements (including requirements met through alternative routes to certification), including individuals from groups underrepresented in the teaching profession. Lastly, each school division is required to describe how they will spend a portion of its allocated Perkins funds for professional development activities. Each school division must identify the career and technical activity funded, align the budgeted expense to its Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, identify the Section 134 Local Use of Funds and career and technical program area(s) funded, provide a narrative description and the budgeted fund amount.

The Office of Career and Technical Education provides training for new and experienced CTE administrators to provide sustained professional development on the responsibilities of the CTE administrator, identify resources, and to provide timely support throughout the school year. The sessions are recorded and archived on the VDOE website.

The Office of Career and Technical Education annually conducts a New Teacher Institute, for college credit, that is designed to help new CTE teachers design and implement effective, engaging classroom instruction. The New Teacher Institute instruction is provided on state-approved competencies and curriculum frameworks to develop lesson plans, assessments, and instructional sequences. Additionally, emphasis is placed on differentiated instruction and authentic performance-based assessments to provide tools for the new teacher for working with

students in special populations. Additionally, in 2020-2021, the New Teacher Institute program will be expanded, with the expectation to double the number of participants.

The VDOE, in collaboration with the VCCS, sponsors Creating Excellence Awards that recognize excellence in following secondary and postsecondary categories at the local, regional, and state levels: CTE exemplary programs, advisory committees, and business and industry partnerships. This has proved to be an excellent retention strategy as well as a local, regional, and statewide promotional event to inform about CTE programs offered in Virginia.

Postsecondary

The VCCS will continue to support and promote the recruitment and preparation of instructors, faculty, administrators, and specialized instructional support personnel, and will support or provide CTE instruction, leadership, and professional development that provides the knowledge and skills needed to work with and improve instruction for special populations.

Perkins will continue to provide funding and resources for professional development and other activities to support the retention of qualified teaching and administrative personnel. Additionally, the VCCS will continue to partner with the VDOE to support, with Perkins leadership funds, an annual ACTE conference which serves as a statewide professional development conference for secondary and postsecondary CTE instructors, counselors, and administrators.

Within the VCCS' Academic and Workforce Programs Department are the Student Success Center and the Office of Professional Development. The goal is to support the development of faculty, staff, and administrators to achieve the mission of Virginia's Community Colleges. With more than 6,500 full-time and nearly 14,000 part-time employees across 23 colleges, the Office of Professional Development plays a vital role in supporting and preparing teachers and faculty.

II.C. Fiscal Responsibility

II.C.1. Describe the criteria and process for how the eligible agency will approve eligible recipients for funds under this Act, including how-

II.C.1.a. each eligible recipient will promote academic achievement.

Secondary

Local recipients' funds at both the secondary and postsecondary levels must be approved through a Local Perkins Application. All local applications must promote continuous improvement in academic achievement and include an analysis of local data and the alignment of the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment to the expenses in its planned budget. Also, as part of Virginia's Perkins Performance Standards, local school divisions must meet the Virginia Agreed Upon Performance Levels of the two sub-indicators for Academic Attainment or, if not, explain why it has not met the levels and describe the actions to be taken to improve performance.

Local applications and any improvement plans (if required) must be received by the due date determined by the VDOE (generally April 30). All local applications are reviewed through the Online Management of Education Grant Awards (OMEGA) and, if necessary, detailed responses with comments and information are provided to the local school division CTE administrators. All applications must be submitted in a substantially approvable format, including all application schedules, Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, at least one program of study, a CTE Federal Program Monitoring Self-Assessment (if in the six-year cohort cycle) and a completed certification and assurance signature page.

Postsecondary

Local community college recipients are required to submit annual applications for review and approval by the VCCS and the VDOE. Applications not adequately addressing all Perkins assurances and conditions are returned to the college for editing and/or rewrites. Colleges must directly demonstrate actions expected to improve performance for underachieved Perkins performance measures. Before a college recipient receives full State approval, the application goes through six levels of review. Each application will be reviewed by the VCCS to determine whether the local programs of study:

meet the criteria for postsecondary career pathways established by the VCCS and the VDOE;

identify and address high-skilled, high-wage, in-demand occupations;

include evidence of continuous program assessment and improvement;

are based on appropriate use of anticipated funds;

provide specific plans and use of funds to address any performance measures that the community college has failed to meet in a previous year or years;

show evidence of business and industry involvement, including labor and workforce partners, in the development assessment of programming;

show evidence of involvement of the college-led, college service region Career Pathways Leadership Team;

require eligible recipients to agree to comply with all statements of assurances and conditions as defined by Perkins V legislation;

provide students with strong experience in, and understanding of, all aspects of an industry; and

ensure that students who participate in CTE programs are taught to the same challenging academic proficiencies as taught to all other students.

II.C.1. Describe the criteria and process for how the eligible agency will approve eligible recipients for funds under this Act, including how-

II.C.1.b. each eligible recipient will promote skill attainment, including skill attainment that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential.

Secondary

Local recipients' funds at both the secondary and postsecondary levels must be approved through a Local Perkins Application. All local applications must promote continuous improvement in skill attainment achievement and include an analysis of local data and the alignment of the comprehensive local needs assessment to the expenses in its planned budget. Also, as part of Virginia Perkins Performance Standards, local school divisions must meet the Virginia Agreed Upon Performance Levels of the five sub-indicators for Technical Skills Attainment or, if not, explain why it has not met the levels and describe the actions taken to improve performance.

VAC20-132-51, requires students to complete an Advanced Placement, honors, International Baccalaureate, or dual enrollment course; (ii) complete a high-quality work-based learning experience, as established by board guidance on work-based learning; or (iii) earn a career and technical education credential approved by the BOE. The credential could include, but is not limited to, the successful completion of an industry certification, a state licensure examination, a national occupational competency assessment, or the WRS for the Commonwealth Assessment. On an annual basis, the Virginia BOE reviews and approves industry, professional, or trade association certification examinations, state licensure examinations, and occupational competency assessments that will meet graduation requirements.

Further, the Virginia General Assembly also funds CTE student industry certification examinations, licensure tests, and occupational competency assessments; and, also provides funding to support industry credentialing testing materials for students and professional development for instructors in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics-health sciences (STEM-H) CTE programs. Each school division is provided an allocation based on its CTE student enrollment and is required to submit reimbursements to the VDOE for review and approval.

Postsecondary

As a major part of the VCCS' Complete 2021 initiative, the VCCS seeks to enable Virginians to fill 1.5 million new jobs by 2021. The majority of these jobs will require postsecondary credentials – an associate degree, a certificate, a certification, and a licensure that are aligned with the VCCS' primary capabilities.

To accommodate the expanded demand for skilled workers, Virginia's Community Colleges embarked on a six-year strategic plan with the primary goal to triple the number of credentials that students earn by the year 2021 which demonstrates the effort to promote skill attainment and especially skill attainment that leads to a recognized postsecondary credentials.

Similarly, the FastForward program is an innovative example of how higher education and workforce systems can combine to better serve workers, employers, and regional economies. This program targets some of Virginia's most eager prospective students and focuses its efforts on closing the skills gap and filling the demand for positions by businesses across the Commonwealth. Additionally, FastForward helps students earn a credential and start a career. Efforts also focus on advisors and other influencers who can become advocates of FastForward within their immediate communities and regions.

II.C.1. Describe the criteria and process for how the eligible agency will approve eligible recipients for funds under this Act, including how-

II.C.1.c. each eligible recipient will ensure the local comprehensive needs assessment under section 134 takes into consideration local economic and education needs, including, where appropriate, in-demand industry sectors and occupations. (Section 122(d)(5) of Perkins V)

Secondary and Postsecondary

Local recipients' funds at both the secondary and postsecondary levels must be approved through a local Perkins application. All local applications, effective with the 2019-2020 submission, were required to include a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, which included a description of how CTE programs offered by the local school division and community college(s) are designed to meet local economic and education needs.

Virginia conducts ongoing research based on new and emerging high-skill, high-wage, in-demand local and regional industry sectors and occupations, and changing technology, which is used in the development and updates of curriculum.

Virginia also ensures that its CTE programs and courses are consistent with employment demand and opportunities in the particular community/region. The local program/course approval is based on labor market data secured from such resources as the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](http://www.bls.gov), CTE Trailblazers at <http://www.ctetrailblazers.org/>, the VEC at <http://www.vec.virginia.gov/>, or the Census Quarterly Workforce Indicator Explorer at <http://qwiexplorer.ces.census.gov>.

The local school divisions and community colleges are required to submit data on labor market, employment needs, and student interest. The CTE program integration of curriculum offerings is also encouraged when competencies for high-skill, in-demand, and emerging careers require skill development from two or more concentrations (e.g., advanced manufacturing and cybersecurity).

Virginia requires that the competencies for CTE programs be regularly reviewed and revised so that the skills that form the foundation of the curriculum (1) include the academic disciplines of the SOL, (2) are consistent with industry or professional standards, and (3) represent application of knowledge in preparation for eventual employment and lifelong learning. These requirements emphasize the importance of developing academic and technical competencies for the current and emerging workforce requirements.

II.C.2. Describe how funds received by the eligible agency through the allotment made under section 111 of the Act will be distributed-

II.C.2.a. among career and technical education at the secondary level, or career and technical education at the postsecondary and adult level, or both, including how such distribution will most effectively provide students with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace.

Secondary

Each eligible recipient must submit a local application for approval to the VDOE before receiving funds from the Perkins V. Any recipient of funds under this state plan must submit an application covering the same period as the transition plan that identifies the specific requirements set forth for eligible recipients in Title I, Part C, Sections 134 and 135. The local application for eligible recipients must be submitted in the format provided. Each application will be reviewed by the Office of Career and Technical Education staff to determine whether the local plan:

promotes continuous improvement in academic achievement;

promotes continuous improvement of technical skill attainment;

identifies and addresses current or emerging employment opportunities, both locally and statewide;

is based on appropriate and relevant data in view of anticipated funds;

shows evidence of involvement of groups required to participate in the development of the plan; and

addresses requirements identified in Section 134(b) of Perkins V, and each eligible recipient or institution agrees to comply with statements of assurance and conditions required for funding.

When the review of its plan is complete, the local education agency or institution will be notified of its disposition by the CTE Director, Office of Career and Technical Education Virginia required all local school divisions and community colleges to use Section 134(c)(2) to determine the status of their program and activities under the Perkins state plan. The Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, which is to be completed beginning with the Perkins local application for 2019-2020 and at least every two years thereafter, is the basis for determining areas of need for improvement and helps provide data to make decisions regarding funding in the budget schedule of the local application. During the transition year, Virginia will examine the elements of the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment through school division feedback, public hearings, comment period, and the stakeholder groups when developing of the subsequent state plan (FY 2020-2023).

Postsecondary

A distribution of the Perkins state allocation on the postsecondary level enables continued collaboration with secondary partners, community organizations, and business and industry. The distribution supports efforts that effectively provide students with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace. These efforts include providing access to career coaches and advisors, creating programs of study that outline a detailed map of how one successfully moves from coursework to careers, increasing stackable credentials, supporting bold program innovations, supporting WBL opportunities, and increasing opportunities for professional development for the VCCS faculty and staff.

II.C.2. Describe how funds received by the eligible agency through the allotment made under section 111 of the Act will be distributed-

II.C.2.b. among any consortia that may be formed among secondary schools and eligible institutions, and how funds will be distributed among the members of the consortia, including the rationale for such distribution and how it will most effectively provide students with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace. (Section 122(d)(8) of Perkins V)

Secondary and Postsecondary

Virginia does not use consortia within the state.

II.C.3. Provide the specific dollar allocations made available by the eligible agency for career and technical education programs and programs of study under section 131(a)-(e) of the Act and describe how these allocations are distributed to local educational agencies, area career and technical education schools and educational service agencies within the State. (Section 131(g) of Perkins V)

Secondary

The state allocations under Perkins V for July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, were communicated to Virginia secondary school divisions in [#2025-23 Virginia Education Update June 20, 2025](#)).

Thirty percent shall be allocated to such local educational agencies in proportion to the number of individuals in preK-12 as reported to National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), who reside in the school division served by such local education agency for the preceding fiscal year compared to the total number of such individuals who reside in the school divisions served by all local educational agencies in the state for such preceding fiscal year.

Seventy percent shall be allocated to such local education agencies in proportion to the Census Bureau's estimate of the relative number of children in poverty aged 5 through 17, inclusive, who reside in the school divisions served by such local educational agency compared to the total number of such individuals who reside in the school divisions served by all local education agencies in the state for the most recent Bureau of the Census' estimate.

Funds are distributed through reimbursement requests submitted via the OMEGA system for secondary, postsecondary, and institutional subrecipients. Documentation of any reimbursement claims must be retained in the school division and be available for audit in accordance with state and federal regulations governing the retention of financial records.

Below is the table (2025-23 Virginia Education Update) that documents the allocation for funds for the 2025-2026 school year (July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026)

LEA NO.	SCHOOL DIVISION	Entitlement Available July 1, 2025	Entitlement Available October 1, 2025	SY 2025 - 2026 Total Entitlements
001	ACCOMACK	\$52,044.71	\$85,500.85	\$137,545.56
002	ALBEMARLE	\$77,489.64	\$127,302.66	\$204,792.30
003	ALLEGHANY HIGHLANDS	\$25,309.02	\$41,578.53	\$66,887.55
004	AMELIA	\$13,691.29	\$22,492.53	\$36,183.82
005	AMHERST	\$34,170.34	\$56,136.22	\$90,306.56
006	APPOMATTOX	\$19,670.08	\$32,314.69	\$51,984.77
007	ARLINGTON	\$138,672.48	\$227,815.96	\$366,488.44
008	AUGUSTA	\$57,933.20	\$95,174.66	\$153,107.86
009	BATH	\$3,387.40	\$5,564.93	\$8,952.33

LEA NO.	SCHOOL DIVISION	Entitlement Available July 1, 2025	Entitlement Available October 1, 2025	SY 2025 - 2026 Total Entitlements
010	BEDFORD	\$69,732.65	\$114,559.21	\$184,291.86
011	BLAND	\$4,720.89	\$7,755.64	\$12,476.53
012	BOTETOURT	\$21,430.79	\$35,207.24	\$56,638.03
013	BRUNSWICK	\$20,770.12	\$34,121.86	\$54,891.98
014	BUCHANAN	\$25,378.85	\$41,693.25	\$67,072.10
015	BUCKINGHAM	\$21,318.17	\$35,022.24	\$56,340.41
016	CAMPBELL	\$62,141.86	\$102,088.79	\$164,230.65
017	CAROLINE	\$33,167.82	\$54,489.25	\$87,657.07
018	CARROLL	\$37,276.84	\$61,239.69	\$98,516.53
019	CHARLES CITY CO.	\$5,669.66	\$9,314.31	\$14,983.97
020	CHARLOTTE	\$24,412.08	\$40,105.02	\$64,517.10
021	CHESTERFIELD	\$317,270.28	\$521,222.61	\$838,492.89
022	CLARKE	\$10,001.28	\$16,430.46	\$26,431.74
023	CRAIG	\$5,195.87	\$8,535.96	\$13,731.83
024	CULPEPER	\$59,196.43	\$97,249.94	\$156,446.37
025	CUMBERLAND	\$13,744.06	\$22,579.21	\$36,323.27
026	DICKENSON	\$19,240.81	\$31,609.48	\$50,850.29
027	DINWIDDIE	\$33,492.01	\$55,021.84	\$88,513.85
028	ESSEX	\$12,635.32	\$20,757.74	\$33,393.06
029	FAIRFAX	\$846,096.74	\$1,389,997.05	\$2,236,093.79
030	FAUQUIER	\$52,329.57	\$85,968.84	\$138,298.41
031	FLOYD	\$15,519.55	\$25,496.05	\$41,015.60
032	FLUVANNA	\$20,316.42	\$33,376.53	\$53,692.95
033	FRANKLIN CO.	\$56,193.51	\$92,316.64	\$148,510.15
034	FREDERICK	\$75,710.00	\$124,379.02	\$200,089.02
035	GILES	\$16,415.21	\$26,967.48	\$43,382.69
036	GLOUCESTER	\$33,113.52	\$54,400.05	\$87,513.57

LEA NO.	SCHOOL DIVISION	Entitlement Available July 1, 2025	Entitlement Available October 1, 2025	SY 2025 - 2026 Total Entitlements
037	GOOCHLAND	\$15,684.61	\$25,767.21	\$41,451.82
038	GRAYSON	\$17,905.62	\$29,415.98	\$47,321.60
039	GREENE	\$20,668.38	\$33,954.72	\$54,623.10
040	GREENSVILLE	\$28,496.56	\$46,815.14	\$75,311.70
041	HALIFAX	\$62,534.18	\$102,733.31	\$165,267.49
042	HANOVER	\$69,770.70	\$114,621.72	\$184,392.42
043	HENRICO	\$317,935.32	\$522,315.17	\$840,250.49
044	HENRY	\$77,886.61	\$127,954.83	\$205,841.44
045	HIGHLAND	\$2,323.61	\$3,817.32	\$6,140.93
046	ISLE OF WIGHT	\$33,285.37	\$54,682.37	\$87,967.74
048	KING GEORGE	\$22,544.29	\$37,036.55	\$59,580.84
049	KING & QUEEN	\$7,083.92	\$11,637.70	\$18,721.62
050	KING WILLIAM	\$12,223.76	\$20,081.62	\$32,305.38
051	LANCASTER	\$11,576.23	\$19,017.83	\$30,594.06
052	LEE	\$33,013.87	\$54,236.33	\$87,250.20
053	LOUDOUN	\$278,916.13	\$458,213.09	\$737,129.22
054	LOUISA	\$36,696.65	\$60,286.54	\$96,983.19
055	LUNENBURG	\$17,418.96	\$28,616.46	\$46,035.42
056	MADISON	\$13,092.68	\$21,509.10	\$34,601.78
057	MATHEWS	\$6,990.35	\$11,484.00	\$18,474.35
058	MECKLENBURG	\$37,859.63	\$62,197.10	\$100,056.73
059	MIDDLESEX	\$10,991.44	\$18,057.13	\$29,048.57
060	MONTGOMERY	\$66,085.35	\$108,567.31	\$174,652.66
062	NELSON	\$15,222.87	\$25,008.67	\$40,231.54
063	NEW KENT	\$16,296.88	\$26,773.08	\$43,069.96
065	NORTHAMPTON	\$17,743.16	\$29,149.09	\$46,892.25
066	NORTHUMBERLAND	\$12,190.06	\$20,026.26	\$32,216.32

LEA NO.	SCHOOL DIVISION	Entitlement Available July 1, 2025	Entitlement Available October 1, 2025	SY 2025 - 2026 Total Entitlements
067	NOTTOWAY	\$22,227.82	\$36,516.64	\$58,744.46
068	ORANGE	\$37,236.13	\$61,172.80	\$98,408.93
069	PAGE	\$26,275.64	\$43,166.54	\$69,442.18
070	PATRICK	\$19,716.65	\$32,391.20	\$52,107.85
071	PITTSYLVANIA	\$60,116.56	\$98,761.56	\$158,878.12
072	POWHATAN	\$18,754.16	\$30,809.99	\$49,564.15
073	PRINCE EDWARD	\$31,535.36	\$51,807.38	\$83,342.74
074	PRINCE GEORGE	\$36,456.28	\$59,891.63	\$96,347.91
075	PRINCE WILLIAM	\$454,173.25	\$746,131.54	\$1,200,304.79
077	PULASKI	\$41,203.71	\$67,690.87	\$108,894.58
078	RAPPAHANNOCK	\$6,070.49	\$9,972.81	\$16,043.30
079	RICHMOND CO.	\$11,523.35	\$18,930.96	\$30,454.31
080	ROANOKE CO.	\$66,362.16	\$109,022.06	\$175,384.22
081	ROCKBRIDGE	\$22,946.69	\$37,697.61	\$60,644.30
082	ROCKINGHAM	\$79,683.71	\$130,907.16	\$210,590.87
083	RUSSELL	\$33,963.13	\$55,795.81	\$89,758.94
084	SCOTT	\$28,207.19	\$46,339.76	\$74,546.95
085	SHENANDOAH	\$43,329.12	\$71,182.58	\$114,511.70
086	SMYTH	\$33,103.61	\$54,383.76	\$87,487.37
087	SOUTHAMPTON	\$19,828.95	\$32,575.68	\$52,404.63
088	SPOTSYLVANIA	\$138,552.37	\$227,618.64	\$366,171.01
089	STAFFORD	\$136,905.94	\$224,913.82	\$361,819.76
090	SURRY	\$7,460.63	\$12,256.59	\$19,717.22
091	SUSSEX	\$14,275.90	\$23,452.94	\$37,728.84
092	TAZEWELL	\$62,771.48	\$103,123.16	\$165,894.64
093	WARREN	\$35,764.03	\$58,754.39	\$94,518.42
094	WASHINGTON	\$51,089.20	\$83,931.10	\$135,020.30

LEA NO.	SCHOOL DIVISION	Entitlement Available July 1, 2025	Entitlement Available October 1, 2025	SY 2025 - 2026 Total Entitlements
095	WESTMORELAND	\$18,406.92	\$30,239.53	\$48,646.45
096	WISE	\$44,296.82	\$72,772.36	\$117,069.18
097	WYTHE	\$32,956.01	\$54,141.28	\$87,097.29
098	YORK	\$50,506.04	\$82,973.08	\$133,479.12
101	ALEXANDRIA CITY	\$126,698.29	\$208,144.33	\$334,842.62
102	BRISTOL CITY	\$30,099.62	\$49,448.70	\$79,548.32
103	BUENA VISTA CITY	\$8,159.63	\$13,404.91	\$21,564.54
104	CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY	\$41,454.25	\$68,102.48	\$109,556.73
106	COLONIAL HEIGHTS CITY	\$24,384.05	\$40,058.97	\$64,443.02
108	DANVILLE CITY	\$78,948.90	\$129,699.99	\$208,648.89
109	FALLS CHURCH CITY	\$8,235.14	\$13,528.98	\$21,764.12
110	FREDERICKSBURG CITY	\$37,083.75	\$60,922.48	\$98,006.23
111	GALAX CITY	\$14,908.56	\$24,492.29	\$39,400.85
112	HAMPTON CITY	\$174,160.36	\$286,116.66	\$460,277.02
113	HARRISONBURG CITY	\$47,568.42	\$78,147.06	\$125,715.48
114	HOPEWELL CITY	\$52,490.08	\$86,232.53	\$138,722.61
115	LYNCHBURG CITY	\$103,457.54	\$169,963.64	\$273,421.18
116	MARTINSVILLE CITY	\$31,977.01	\$52,532.93	\$84,509.94
117	NEWPORT NEWS CITY	\$305,187.16	\$501,372.04	\$806,559.20
118	NORFOLK CITY	\$358,323.04	\$588,665.51	\$946,988.55
119	NORTON CITY	\$6,935.29	\$11,393.53	\$18,328.82
120	PETERSBURG CITY	\$73,295.40	\$120,412.21	\$193,707.61
121	PORTSMOUTH CITY	\$164,330.47	\$269,967.80	\$434,298.27
122	RADFORD CITY	\$12,205.42	\$20,051.49	\$32,256.91
123	RICHMOND CITY	\$282,292.84	\$463,760.46	\$746,053.30
124	ROANOKE CITY	\$175,957.07	\$289,068.38	\$465,025.45
126	STAUNTON CITY	\$26,340.44	\$43,272.98	\$69,613.42

LEA NO.	SCHOOL DIVISION	Entitlement Available July 1, 2025	Entitlement Available October 1, 2025	SY 2025 - 2026 Total Entitlements
127	SUFFOLK CITY	\$122,919.70	\$201,936.73	\$324,856.43
128	VIRGINIA BEACH CITY	\$406,782.11	\$668,275.75	\$1,075,057.86
130	WAYNESBORO CITY	\$31,462.99	\$51,688.50	\$83,151.49
131	WILLIAMSBURG CITY	\$68,651.42	\$112,782.92	\$181,434.34
132	WINCHESTER CITY	\$40,549.49	\$66,616.11	\$107,165.60
135	FRANKLIN CITY	\$20,901.27	\$34,337.32	\$55,238.59
136	CHESAPEAKE CITY	\$267,629.45	\$439,670.92	\$707,300.37
139	SALEM CITY	\$23,691.00	\$38,920.39	\$62,611.39
142	POQUOSON CITY	\$8,987.71	\$14,765.33	\$23,753.04
143	MANASSAS CITY	\$62,693.62	\$102,995.24	\$165,688.86
144	MANASSAS PARK CITY	\$17,794.81	\$29,233.93	\$47,028.74
202	COLONIAL BEACH	\$4,338.01	\$7,126.62	\$11,464.63
207	WEST POINT	\$2,785.24	\$4,575.69	\$7,360.93
Blank Cell	TOTALS	\$8,546,674.51	\$14,040,773.09	\$22,587,447.60

Postsecondary

Below are the specific dollar allocations made available by the VCCS for CTE programs under Perkins V for postsecondary education programs at the 23 Virginia community colleges for July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026.

The amount of each postsecondary institution's allocation is determined using a single formula that incorporates the number of CTE students receiving federal Pell Grants. The minimum allocation to each college is \$60,000.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE	SY 2025-2026 Total Entitlements	
Blue Ridge Community College	\$89,843.31	
Central Virginia Community College	\$244,837.56	
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College	\$115,195.90	
Danville Community College	\$106,695.18	
Eastern Shore Community College	\$60,000.00	
Germanna Community College	\$205,243.92	
J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College	\$286,833.31	
John Tyler Community College	\$73,975.60	
Lord Fairfax Community College	\$134,680.58	
Mountain Empire Community College	\$60,000.00	
New River Community College	\$109,393.77	
Northern Virginia Community College	\$855,017.59	
Patrick Henry Community College	\$88,423.36	
Paul D. Camp Community College	\$60,000.00	
Piedmont Community College	\$81,851.23	
Rappahannock Community College	\$70,638.89	
Southside Community College	\$145,646.12	
Southwest Community College	\$149,138.58	
Thomas Nelson Community College	\$494,820.51	
Tidewater Community College	\$129,670.13	
Virginia Highlands Community College	\$127,119.32	
Virginia Western Community College	\$227,777.00	

Wytheville Community College	\$69,218.33	

II.C.4. Provide the specific dollar allocations made available by the eligible agency for career and technical education programs and programs of study under section 132(a) of the Act and describe how these allocations are distributed to eligible institutions and consortia of eligible institutions within the State.

Secondary

The VDOE provides leadership and technical assistance to the state's correctional institutes, including the Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). The funding formula for these institutions is based on enrollment trends. Of the Perkins V allocation, \$157,696 is allocated to the DOC and \$62,304 is allocated to the DJJ.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Funding provided for the DOC will be used to enhance and improve existing programs, develop and implement new programs, provide for staff development, and create industry credentialing opportunities consistent with Perkins V.

Efforts to expand the number of students that earn a certification through the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), the Residential Construction Academy, A+, Net+, OSHA 10, and many others will continue under Perkins V. Further, emphasis will be placed on utilization of computer-based training to provide real-world experiences. Also, the DOC has several articulation agreements for concurrent enrollment with community colleges that further assist students with their career development.

The DOC maintains an active advisory council of key stakeholders. The council provides guidance pertaining to program designs, instructional resources, and equipment.

DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Funding provided for the DJJ will be used to enhance and improve existing programs, develop and implement new programs, provide for staff development, and create industry credentialing opportunities consistent with Perkins V.

Efforts to expand the number of students that earn a certification will continue under Perkins V. Further, emphasis will be placed on the use of computer-based training to provide real-world experiences. The agency provides services to its postsecondary students through a partnership with Community College Workforce Alliance.

Also, the DJJ has several articulation agreements for concurrent enrollment with community colleges that further assist students with their career development.

The DJJ maintains an active advisory council of key stakeholders. The council provides guidance pertaining to program designs, instructional resources, employability, and equipment. Additionally, many of the council members come into the classrooms as mentors and guest lecturers.

The juvenile programs follow the same curriculum that is mandated for public schools. This assists students with re-enrolling in public schools when they are released. All of their credits will transfer toward high school graduation.

Additionally, Virginia does not use consortia within the state.

Postsecondary

Please refer to II.C.3 (above) for a complete listing of dollar allocations. All specific dollar allocations are in compliance with section 132(a) of the Perkins V Act.

II.C.5. Describe how the eligible agency will adjust the data used to make the allocations to reflect any changes in school district boundaries that may have occurred since the population and/or enrollment data was collected, and include local education agencies without geographical boundaries, such as charter schools and secondary schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Education. (Section 131(a)(3) of Perkins V)

Secondary and Postsecondary

There were no changes in the subrecipients' boundaries pursuant to Perkins IV or Perkins V.

II.C.6. If the eligible agency will submit an application for a waiver to the secondary allocation formula described in section 131(a)-

II.C.6.a. include a proposal for such an alternative formula.

Secondary and Postsecondary

Virginia will not submit any waiver request.

II.C.6. If the eligible agency will submit an application for a waiver to the secondary allocation formula described in section 131(a)-

II.C.6.b. describe how the waiver demonstrates that a proposed alternative formula more effectively targets funds on the basis of poverty (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)) to local educational agencies with the State. (Section 131(b) of Perkins V)

Also indicate if this is a waiver request for which you received approval under the prior Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV).

Secondary and Postsecondary

Virginia will not submit any waiver request.

II.C.7. If the eligible agency will submit an application for a waiver to the postsecondary allocation formula described in section 132(a)-

II.C.7.a. include a proposal for such an alternative formula; and

Secondary and Postsecondary

Virginia will not submit any waiver request.

II.C.7. If the eligible agency will submit an application for a waiver to the postsecondary allocation formula described in section 132(a)-

II.C.7.b. describe how the formula does not result in a distribution of funds to the eligible institutions or consortia with the State that have the highest numbers of economically disadvantaged individuals and that an alternative formula will result in such a distribution. (Section 132(b) of Perkins V)

Also indicate if this is a waiver request for which you received approval under the prior Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV).

Secondary and Postsecondary

Virginia will not submit any waiver request.

Perkins V Reserve Funds

II.C.8. If the eligible agency will award reserve funds to eligible recipients under section 112 (c) of Perkins V, describe the process and criteria for awarding those funds.

Reserve fund grants are awarded on a competitive basis to school divisions and community colleges meeting at least one of two eligibility requirements, which are:

rural area; and/or

areas with disparities or gaps in performance.

Reserve fund grants are used to support the implementation or enhancement of CTE programs of study, prepare students for careers, and/or provide professional learning experiences to CTE educators, administrators, counselors, or faculty.

II.C.9. Provide the State's fiscal effort per student, or aggregate expenditures for the State, that will establish the baseline for the Secretary's annual determination on whether the State has maintained its fiscal effort, and indicate whether the baseline is a continuing level or new level. If the baseline is new, please provide the fiscal effort per student, or aggregate expenditures for the State, for the preceding fiscal year. (Section 211(b)(1)(D) of Perkins V)

Eligible Agency

Virginia's current maintenance of effort is based on aggregate expenditures. In the State Combined Annual Report (CAR), which was submitted in December 2019, the maintenance of effort listed for the state under nonfederal share of expenditures (Column H) was \$1,415,524.70. The baseline is a continuing level.

II.D Accountability for Results.

II.D.1. Identify and include at least one (1) of the following indicators of career and technical education program quality—

II.D.1.a.the percentage of CTE concentrators (see Text Box 6 for the statutory definition of a CTE concentrator under section 3(12) of Perkins V) graduating from high school having attained a recognized postsecondary credential;

Include any other measure(s) of student success in career and technical education that are statewide, valid, and reliable, and comparable across the State. (Section 113(b)(2)(A)(iv)(II) of Perkins V) Please note that inclusion of “other” program quality measure(s) is optional for States.

Provide the eligible agency’s measurement definition with a numerator and denominator for each of the quality indicator(s) the eligible agency selects to use.

Virginia is selecting 1.a, 1.b, and an additional measure for program quality: Technical Skill Attainment. This measure was a Virginia Core Indicator under Perkins IV and is a valuable measurement that is collected locally and statewide, valid, reliable, and comparable across the state.

Provide the eligible agency’s measurement definition with a numerator and denominator for each of the quality indicator(s) the eligible agency selects to use.

Core Indicator of Performance 5S1: Program Quality – Attained Recognized Postsecondary Credential

The percentage of CTE concentrators graduating from high school having attained a recognized postsecondary credential.

Numerator: Number of CTE concentrators who met or exceeded proficiency on industry standards to attain a recognized postsecondary credential (approved for a specific CTE program) and who, in the reporting year, graduated from secondary education. _____

Denominator: Number of CTE concentrators who took an assessment aligned to industry standards leading to attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential and who, in the reporting year, graduated from secondary education.

II.D.1. Identify and include at least one (1) of the following indicators of career and technical education program quality—

II.D.1.b. the percentage of CTE concentrators graduating high school having attained postsecondary credits in relevant career and technical education programs and programs of study earned through a dual or concurrent enrollment program or another credit transfer agreement; and/or

Include any other measure(s) of student success in career and technical education that are statewide, valid, and reliable, and comparable across the State. (Section 113(b)(2)(A)(iv)(II) of Perkins V) Please note that inclusion of “other” program quality measure(s) is optional for States.

Provide the eligible agency’s measurement definition with a numerator and denominator for each of the quality indicator(s) the eligible agency selects to use.

Secondary

Virginia is not using the postsecondary credits quality indicator.

Postsecondary

Not Required - Not applicable to postsecondary.

II.D.1. Identify and include at least one (1) of the following indicators of career and technical education program quality—

II.D.1.c. the percentage of CTE concentrators graduating from high school having participated in work-based learning. (Section 113(b)(2)(A)(iv)(I) of Perkins V)

Include any other measure(s) of student success in career and technical education that are statewide, valid, and reliable, and comparable across the State. (Section 113(b)(2)(A)(iv)(II) of Perkins V) Please note that inclusion of “other” program quality measure(s) is optional for States.

Provide the eligible agency’s measurement definition with a numerator and denominator for each of the quality indicator(s) the eligible agency selects to use.

Virginia is selecting 1.a, 1.c, and an additional measure for program quality: Technical Skill Attainment. This measure was a Virginia Core Indicator under Perkins IV and is a valuable measurement that is collected locally and statewide, valid, reliable, and comparable across the State.

Provide the eligible agency’s measurement definition with a numerator and denominator for each of the quality indicator(s) the eligible agency selects to use.

Core Indicator of Performance 5S3: Program Quality – Participated in Work-based Learning

The percentage of CTE concentrators graduating from high school having participated in work-based learning.

Numerator: Number of CTE concentrators who participated in work-based learning and who, in the reporting year, graduated from secondary education.

Denominator: Number of CTE concentrators, in the reporting year, who graduated from secondary education.

Include any other measure(s) of student success in career and technical education that are statewide, valid, and reliable, and comparable across the State. (Section 113(b)(2)(A)(iv)(II) of Perkins V) Please note that inclusion of “other” program quality measure(s) is optional for States.

Secondary

Virginia is selecting 1.a, 1.c, and an additional measure an additional measure for program quality called Technical Skill Attainment. Technical Skill Attainment was a Virginia Core Indicator under Perkins IV. Technical Skills Attainment is a valuable measurement that is collected locally statewide, valid, reliable, and comparable across the State.

5S4—Technical Skills Attainment: Rate for School Divisions is calculated by the VDOE (Reported by CTE Serving Division)

Competency Rate from End-of-Year Student Record Collection (CTE Completers)

Numerator: Number of CTE completers who attained a satisfactory rating (one of the three highest marks) on the Student Competency Rating (SCR) scale on at least 80 percent of the required (essential) competencies in a CTE course

Denominator: Number of CTE completers

Participation Rate Percentage of CTE Completers Taking External Credentialing Tests

Numerator: Number of CTE completers who participated in an approved external examination

Denominator: Number of CTE completers

Passing Rate of CTE Completers Taking External Credentialing Tests

Numerator: Number of CTE completers who passed an approved external examination

Denominator: Number of CTE completers taking external credentialing tests

Completers Passing Credentialing Tests

Numerator: Number of CTE completers who passed an approved external examination

Denominator: Number of CTE completers

CTE Completers who Passed a Credentialing Test Plus Completers Who Earned an Advanced Studies Diploma and Did Not Pass a Credentialing Test

Numerator: Number of CTE completers passing a credentialing test plus the number of CTE completers earning an Advanced Studies Diploma without passing a credentialing test

Denominator: Number of CTE completers

Postsecondary

Not Required - Not applicable to postsecondary

II.D.2. Provide on the form in Section V.B, for each year covered by the State Plan beginning in FY 2020, State determined performance levels or each of the secondary and postsecondary core indicators, with the levels of performance being the same for all CTE concentrators in the State. (Section 113(b)(3)(A)(i)(I) of Perkins V)

Secondary and Postsecondary

Refer to pages 133 and 134 in Section V.B.: State Determined Performance Levels (SDPL) for each year covered by the state plan beginning in FY 2020, state determined performance levels for each of the secondary and postsecondary core indicators, with the levels of performance being the same for all CTE concentrators in the state.

II.D.3. Describe the procedure the eligible agency adopted for determining State determined levels of performance described in section 113 of Perkins V, which at a minimum shall include—

II.D.3.a.a description of the process for public comment under section 113(b)(3)(B) of Perkins V as part of the development of the State determined levels of performance (see Text Box 7 for the statutory requirements for consultation on State determined performance levels under section 113(b)(3)(B) of Perkins V);

As part of the procedures for determining State determined levels of performance, describe the process that will be used to establish a baseline for those levels.

Secondary

These measures and levels of performance were reviewed by stakeholders including directors of CTE for each local school division, the VCCS, and the state Perkins V core stakeholders' team and WIOA Combined State Plan workgroup participants. Recommendations for performance measures and level of performance on which consensus were reached and then submitted for public comment through a portal on the VDOE website. All participants were made aware that additional indicators of performance, with corresponding measures and levels of performance, would also be developed if needed.

In accordance with the provisions of the Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act for the 21st Century (Perkins V), the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), Office of Career and Technical Education shall provide stakeholders with the opportunity to provide written comments to the eligible agency, which shall be included in the State Plan, regarding the update of the State Determined Performance Levels (SDPLs) for school year 2026-2027.

Postsecondary

Additionally, the VCCS distributed a survey to Perkins stakeholders to solicit comments on the state-determined levels of performance and the degree to which the proposed levels of performance:

meet the requirements of the law;

support the improvement of performance of all CTE concentrators; and

support the needs of local education and the business community.

II.D.3.b. an explanation for the State determined levels of performance that meet each of the statutory requirements in Text Box 8; and

As part of the procedures for determining State determined levels of performance, describe the process that will be used to establish a baseline for those levels.

Secondary

These measures and levels of performance were reviewed by stakeholders including: directors of CTE for each local school division, the VCCS, and the state Perkins V core stakeholders' team and WIOA Combined State Plan workgroup participants. Recommendations for performance measures and level of performance on which consensus were reached were then submitted for public comment through a portal on the VDOE website. All participants were made aware that additional indicators of performance, with corresponding measures and levels of performance, would also be developed if needed.

Postsecondary

All postsecondary levels of performance:

Are expressed in a percentage or numerical form, so as to be objective, quantifiable, and measurable.

Reflect VCCS' commitment to continually make meaningful progress toward improving the performance of all CTE students.

Have been subject to the public comment process as described in this application.

If adjusted, will take into account how the levels of performance involved compare with the state levels of performance established by other states, considering factors including the characteristics of actual (as opposed to anticipated) CTE concentrators when the CTE concentrators entered the program, and the services or instruction to be provided.

If adjusted, will be higher than the average actual performance of the two most recently completed program years, except in the case of unanticipated circumstances that require revisions in accordance with other statutory provisions.

Take into account the extent to which the state determined levels of performance advance the eligible agency's goals, as set forth in the state plan.

II.D.3.c.a description of how the State determined levels of performance set by the eligible agency align with the levels, goals and objectives other Federal and State laws, (Section 122(d)(10) of Perkins V).

As part of the procedures for determining State determined levels of performance, describe the process that will be used to establish a baseline for those levels.

Secondary

Virginia has achieved a coherent state system of accountability by aligning Perkins V performance measures with priority measures embedded in the Profile of a Virginia Graduate, ESSA, Consolidated State Plan, and the Virginia WIOA Combined State Plan. These performance measures and performance levels span across state and federal laws and present an aligned message to stakeholders about which outcomes are valued in increasing the career and college readiness for all students.

The approach used to establish State determined levels of performance for each of the Perkins performance measures is consistent with the State accountability approach using a growth model. Each recipient is expected to demonstrate progress (growth) on each measure, relative to their previous performance. Secondary SDPLs have been determined using performance data for program years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 (past two years) was used to calculate “floors” for FY 2026-2027.

Postsecondary

The VCCS is committed to improving performance in each of the measures. Increases shown each year reflect anticipated meaningful progress toward improved CTE performance. Postsecondary SDPLs have been determined using performance data for program years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 (past two years) was used to calculate “floors” for FY 2026-2027.

II.D.4. Provide a written response to the comments regarding State determined performance levels received during the public comment period pursuant to section 113(b)(3)(B) of Perkins V. (Section 113(b)(3)(B)(iii) of Perkins V).

As part of the written response, include a description of any the changes made to the State determined performance levels as a result of stakeholder feedback.

Secondary and Postsecondary

There were written comments pertaining to the State Determined Performance Levels during the public comment period from the general public, state agencies, and members of the State Board of Education. No changes were made to the State determined performance levels as a result of stakeholder feedback. Please refer to Appendix A for comments and feedback.

II.D.5. Describe how the eligible agency will address disparities or gaps in performance as described in section 113(b)(3)(C)(ii)(II) of Perkins V in each of the plan years, and if no meaningful progress has been achieved prior to the third program year, a description of the additional actions the eligible agency will take to eliminate these disparities or gaps. (Section 122(d)(11) of Perkins V)

As part of the written response, and pursuant to the Report of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP), the eligible agency could indicate that it will analyze data on the core indicators of performance to identify gaps in performance, explain how they will use evidence-based research to develop a plan to provide support and technical assistance to eligible recipients to address and close such gaps, and how they will implement this plan. The eligible agency is not required to submit a new State Plan prior to the third program year in order to address this requirement.

Secondary and Postsecondary

The VDOE and VCCS will review the statewide CTE Annual Performance Report (APR) and analyze the data on the indicators to identify gaps among student groups in performance and equity, if any.

Further, each secondary school division and postsecondary college will receive an APR, which includes the performance measures for the Core Indicators of Performance. These reports include Perkins Performance Standards and Virginia Agreed Upon Performance Levels for previous year's data for use in the analysis of CTE performance and annual planning, and to identify gaps among student groups in performance and equity.

If a performance standard is not met, the school division and/or postsecondary institution must explain why and explain the actions taken to improve performance. Once a school/college has met the state performance standards, they must maintain or show continuous improvement each year.

Each recipient will be required to provide an analysis of CTE student performance and identify improvement efforts in their annual application. This information will be used to provide appropriate technical assistance, on-site visits, and/or local federal program monitoring visits.

V. STATE DETERMINED PERFORMANCE LEVELS

V.A. Instructions

V.A. 1. On the form in Item V.B, provide State determined performance levels (SDPLs), covering FY 2020-23, for each of the secondary and postsecondary core indicators of performance for all CTE concentrators in the State described in section 113(b) of Perkins V (see Table 6). In preparing your SDPLs, refer to your narrative descriptions in Section II.D of this guide

V.A.2. In completing the SDPL form, provide—

Column 2: Baseline level

Columns 3-6: State determined levels of performance for each year covered by the State Plan, beginning for FY 2020, expressed in percentage or numeric form and that meets the requirements of section 113(b)(3)(A)(III) of Perkins V. See Text Box 8 for the statutory requirements for setting State determined levels of performance under section 113(b)(3)(A)(iii) of Perkins V.

V.A.3. Revise, as applicable, the State determined levels of performance for any of the core indicators of performance—

V.A.3.i. Prior to the third program year covered by the State Plan for the subsequent program years covered by the State Plan pursuant to section 113(b)(3)(A)(ii); and/or

V.A.3.ii. Should unanticipated circumstances arise in a State or changes occur related to improvement in data or measurement approaches pursuant to section 113(b)(3)(A)(iii).

Please note that, pursuant to section 123(a)(5) of Perkins V, an eligible agency may not adjust performance levels for any core indicators that are subject to, and while executing, an improvement plan pursuant to section 123(a) of Perkins V.

Table 6: Section 113(b) Core Indicators of Performance

Indicator Descriptions	Indicator Codes	Indicator Names
Secondary Level		
The percentage of CTE concentrators who graduate high school, as measured by the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (defined in Section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965).	1S1	Four-Year Graduation Rate
(At the state's discretion) The percentage of CTE concentrators who graduate high school, as measured by extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate defined in such Section 8101.	1S2	Extended Graduation Rate
CTE concentrator proficiency in the challenging state academic standards adopted by the state under Section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as measured by the academic assessments in reading/language arts as described in Section 1111(b)(2) of such act.	2S1	Academic Proficiency in Reading/Language Arts
CTE concentrator proficiency in the challenging state academic standards adopted by the state under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as measured by the academic assessments in mathematics as described in Section 1111(b)(2) of such act.	2S2	Academic Proficiency in Mathematics
CTE concentrator proficiency in the challenging state academic standards adopted by the state under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as measured by the academic assessments in science as described in Section 1111(b)(2) of such act.	2S3	Academic Proficiency in Science

The percentage of CTE concentrators who, in the second quarter after graduating from secondary education, are in postsecondary education or advanced training, military service or a service program that receives assistance under Title I of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12511 et seq.), are volunteers as described in Section 5(a) of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2504(a)), or are employed.	3S1	Post-Program Placement

Table 6: Section 113(b) Core Indicators of Performance (continued)

Indicator Descriptions	Indicator Codes	Indicator Names
Secondary Level (continued)		
The percentage of CTE concentrators in CTE programs and programs of study that lead to nontraditional fields. ¹¹	4S1	Nontraditional Program Concentration
The eligible agency must include at least one program quality indicator- 5S1, 5S2, or 5S3- and may include any other quality measure(s) that are statewide, valid, reliable, and comparable across the State.		
The percentage of CTE concentrators graduating from high school having attained a recognized postsecondary credential.	5S1	Program Quality - Attained Recognized Postsecondary Credential
The percentage of CTE concentrators graduating from high school having attained postsecondary credits in the relevant CTE program or program of study earned through a dual or concurrent enrollment or another credit transfer agreement	5S2	Program Quality - Attained Postsecondary Credits
The percentage of CTE concentrators graduating from high school having participated in HQWBL.	5S3	Program Quality - Participated in Work-Based Learning
Other(s) (optional): The percentage of CTE concentrators achieving on any other measure of student success in CTE that is statewide, valid, and reliable, and comparable across the state. Please identify. Technical Skills Attainment	5S4, 5S5, 5S6, ...	Program Quality - Other

Table 6: Section 113(b) Core Indicators of Performance (continued)

Indicator Descriptions	Indicator Codes	Indicator Names
Postsecondary Level		
The percentage of CTE concentrators who, during the second quarter after program completion, remain enrolled in postsecondary education, are in advanced training, military service, or a service program that receives assistance under Title I of the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12511 et seq.), are volunteers as described in Section 5(a) of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2504(a)), or are placed or retained in employment. Numerator: CTE program completers retained by the VCCS, transferred to another postsecondary institution, are pursuing a workforce credential at the VCCS, or employed six months after program completion Denominator: CTE program completers (i.e., students who earned a VCCS award in a CTE program or completed a Fast Forward workforce training program)	1P1	Post-Program Placement

The percentage of CTE concentrators who receive a recognized postsecondary credential during participation in or within one year of program completion.¹² Numerator: CTE program concentrators that earned a VCCS CTE award or received a recognized third-party credential within twelve months after completion of a noncredit CTE program. Denominator: CTE program concentrators who were not enrolled in postsecondary education or pursuing a workforce credential during 12-month period after leaving the program.	2P1	Earned Recognized Postsecondary Credential
The percentage of CTE concentrators in CTE programs and programs of study that lead to nontraditional fields.¹³ Numerator: Nontraditional gender program concentrators in a nontraditional program of study. Denominator: All program concentrators in a nontraditional program of study.	3P1	Nontraditional Program Concentration

¹² This means that a student gets counted under this indicator whether the student obtains the credential during participation or within one year of completion. The USDE interprets "within one year of completion" to have the plain meaning of those words: that the student would be counted if the student obtains the credential in the one year following that student's completion of the program.

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V.B: State Determined Performance Levels (SDPL) Form

Proposed Secondary and Postsecondary State Determined Performance Levels (2026-2027)

Core Indicator Code	Secondary Core Indicator of Performance	State Determined Performance Level 2025-2026 (%)
1S1	Four Year Graduation Rate	99.37
2S1	Academic Proficiency in Reading Language Arts	95.65
2S2	Academic Proficiency in Mathematics	92.34
2S3	Academic Proficiency in Science	88.18
3S1	Post-Program Placement	95.91
4S1	Nontraditional Program Concentration	32.51
5S1	Program Quality—Attained Recognized Postsecondary Credential	88.08
5S3	Program Quality—Participated in Work-Based Learning	33.88
5S4	Program Quality—Technical Skills Attainment	96.63

Core Indicator Code	Postsecondary Core Indicator of Performance	State Determined Performance Level 2025-2026 (%)
1P1	Post-Program Placement	79.03
2P1	Earned Recognized Postsecondary Credential	49.37
3P1	Nontraditional Program Concentration	17.81

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)

A. CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO SERVE ALL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS IN THE STATE (NOT NECESSARILY IN A UNIFORM MANNER) THAT PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES WITH (OR EXPECTING) CHILDREN AND PROVIDES PARENTS WITH JOB PREPARATION, WORK, AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO ENABLE THEM TO LEAVE THE PROGRAM, SPECIFICALLY CASH ASSISTANCE, AND BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(I) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

The following documents serve as the foundation for operation of Virginia's TANF program:

- (1) Commonwealth of Virginia TANF State Plan;
- (2) Code of Virginia § 63.2-600 through 63.2-620, and 63.2-1908;
- (3) Virginia Administrative Code relating to the TANF program § 22VAC40-35-10 through 22VAC40-35-130 and § 22VAC40-295-10 through 22VAC40-295-170.

The goal of Virginia's TANF Program is to enable TANF recipients to become self-reliant. Meaningful employment is essential to achieving the goal of self-sufficiency, but not all families will be able to meet this goal in the period defined by applicable time limits. Many TANF families include one or more individuals that face at least one barrier which would impede successful participation in the Virginia Initiative for Education and Work (VIEW) program. During the initial interview for TANF, the applicant completes a "Do You Have a Disability?" form which may identify disabilities.

Additionally, when the individual is referred to the VIEW program, they will be offered screening for learning disabilities, limited English proficiency, and mental health issues if a disability determination has not been made and it seems likely that a barrier may be affecting the client's progress in the VIEW program. On a voluntary basis, alcohol and substance abuse screenings (not testing), are offered.

All VIEW participants must be offered the screenings within 90 days of signing the Agreement of Personal Responsibility and entering the VIEW program. If the screening indicates that the client may have a disability, the client will be referred to a qualified professional for an in-depth disability evaluation. If the in-depth evaluation indicates the existence of a disability, treatments and/or services to address the disability will be made part of the client's required program assignments.

The number of required hours of participation varies according to the goal and needs of the customer. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to: part-time or flexible hours for work activities, providing the individual with work activities in a specific work environment that enables the individual to participate in work activities, providing particular types of jobs or work activities that are consistent with the person's limitations, activities that are scheduled so they do not conflict with ongoing medical or mental health treatment, additional notice of program appointments, additional explanation of program rules, job coaches, additional time to complete program requirements, and additional intervention before an individual is sanctioned for non-compliance with VIEW program requirements.

Virginia's TANF program meets the requirements mandated by "The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-193)."

COMPONENTS OF VIRGINIA'S TANF PROGRAM

The following components are included in Virginia's TANF Program:

Diversionary Assistance - Diversionary assistance provides a one-time cash payment to meet a family's needs during a crisis such as transportation, child care, or housing. The amount of the payment is based on the actual needs of the family, but can be up to four months of assistance or \$1,500, whichever is greater. To qualify for diversionary assistance, an applicant must be otherwise eligible for TANF, with the exception of some non-

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financial criteria. The applicant relinquishes their right to TANF assistance for a period equal to the benefit total plus one-third (a 1/1.33 ratio). A family may receive diversionary assistance once in a twelve-month period. Diversionary Assistance is funded with TANF and state general funds.

TANF-Emergency Assistance – Up to \$1,500 may be received at once to needy families with children who are eligible for TANF for eviction prevention, a natural disaster, or a fire. Natural disasters may include, but are not limited to, a tornado, hurricane, flood, or pandemic. TANF-Emergency Assistance is funded with TANF and state general funds.

Learnfare - This provision was designed to keep children, including minor parents, in school. To be eligible for assistance, children in the assistance unit under age 18, including minor parents, must comply with state compulsory school attendance requirements. A child is considered as meeting this requirement until the local department of social services receives notification that the child is truant. A child who is 18 years old meets the school attendance requirement, regardless of actual attendance, as long as they are enrolled. Truancy is defined as noncompliance with state compulsory school attendance requirements, as determined by the local school division pursuant to the Code of Virginia § 22.1-254 et seq., and any additional rules deemed necessary by the local school board to carry out the intent of state compulsory school attendance laws.

When the local department of social services verifies through the school that a child is truant, the local social services department must do the following:

- (1) Send a written notice to the caretaker advising him that the truant recipient is in jeopardy of losing eligibility for benefits. The caretaker must contact the local department within five days of the notice to cooperate in developing a plan to achieve compliance with compulsory school attendance laws. The notice must also specify that failure to contact the local department may result in the truant recipient's ineligibility for assistance due to non-cooperation.
- (2) If the caretaker does not respond within five days, the worker must attempt to personally contact the caretaker.
- (3) If the local department is unable to make personal contact, the local department must mail a written advance notice of proposed action to the caretaker advising that benefits will be reduced if the caretaker fails to contact the local department to develop a plan to return the child to school.

If the local department of social services denies or terminates assistance for noncompliance, the caretaker must notify the local department in writing of the truant individual's compliance with school attendance requirements and file a new application for benefits. The local department must verify compliance by contacting the school before reinstating assistance for the child.

Minor Parent Residency Requirement - Under this provision, a minor mother must live with her parent or a person standing in loco parentis in order to receive TANF benefits. Assistance is denied if the residency requirement is not met. There are exceptions if the minor parent is married, the minor parent has no parent or person standing in loco parentis who is living, the minor parent has no parent or person standing in loco parentis whose whereabouts are known, there is no appropriate person willing to assume the responsibility of acting in loco parentis, or the physical or emotional health or safety of the minor parent or dependent child would be jeopardized if the minor parent and child lived in the same residence with the parent or person standing in loco parentis.

Paternity Establishment - Mothers must identify the fathers of their children to receive TANF benefits. If unable to do so, they must identify all men who could be the father. Unless there is good cause to not cooperate, failure to cooperate during the first six months of receipt of assistance will result in removal of the parent's needs or a reduction in the assistance payment of 25 percent, whichever is greater. Continued non-cooperation with paternity establishment after six months may result in case closure.

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When the reason for not providing the information is one of the following, no sanction is imposed:

- (1) The child or parent may be subjected to physical or emotional harm;
- (2) The child was conceived due to rape or incest;
- (3) The child is being placed for adoption.

In addition, when paternity has not been established and the caretaker cannot provide the name of the noncustodial parent(s) plus at least three pieces of identifying information, she must attest to the lack of information under penalty of perjury. In this situation, no penalty will be imposed for non-cooperation.

Immunization Requirement - Parents are required to provide their children with all necessary immunizations to receive full benefits. Failure to immunize children within the required period results in assistance being reduced by \$50 for the first child out of compliance, and \$25 for each additional child out of compliance.

OTHER PROGRAM RULES IN VIRGINIA'S TANF PROGRAM

Assistance Unit - An assistance unit normally consists of the parents and their children living with them who meet the non-financial requirements of eligibility, such as age, relationship, and citizenship. When the children live with an adult relative other than a parent, such as a grandparent, the assistance unit may consist of the children only or, if the adult relative also needs assistance, the children and the adult relative.

The following persons must be included in the assistance unit if living with the child for whom TANF has been requested: the natural or adoptive parents and any blood-related or adopted siblings. Parents or children who are receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or are statutorily ineligible for TANF under other provisions of law cannot be included in the assistance unit.

Children and parents who are excluded from the assistance unit for failure to follow program rules, such as not providing a social security number for a child or parent or refusing to cooperate with the Division of Child Support Enforcement, are included in the assistance unit for purposes of determining whether the family meets financial eligibility requirements; however, their needs are not included for purposes of determining the amount of the family's monthly benefits.

Benefit Levels - The State Board of Social Services has established standards of assistance, based on the size of the assistance unit, to be used in all TANF cash payment cases. Because of a wide variation in shelter costs within the state, two groups of standards have been established reflecting this variation.

Family Size	Gross Income Screening	Standard of Assistance	VIEW Screening
1	524	262	1133
2	767	385	1526
3	996	482	1920
4	1152	577	2313
5	1361	681	2706
6	1522	761	3100
7	1703	851	3493
8	1901	951	3886

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Family Size	Gross Income Screening	Standard of Assistance	VIEW Screening
9	2068	1035	4280
10	2253	1127	4674
Each addition	189	95	394
Maximum amount		723	
Family Size	Gross Income Screening	Standard of Assistance	VIEW Screening
1	730	366	1133
2	974	489	1526
3	1175	587	1920
4	1361	681	2313
5	1622	811	2706
6	1773	887	3100
7	1960	979	3493
8	2158	1079	3886
9	2326	1164	4280
10	2509	1254	4674
Each addition	189	95	
Maximum amount		861	

Drug Felons – Pursuant to §63.2-505.2 of the Code of Virginia, Virginia opts out of the application of §115(a)(1) of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 and shall not deny TANF assistance solely because of a drug felony conviction.

Additional Eligibility Requirements Applicable to Children - Basic eligibility requirements must be met for a child to qualify for TANF assistance, as follows:

Age - The child must be under age 18, or if age 18 must be attending school.

Living with a Relative -The child must be living in the home of a parent or other relative except for temporary absences of up to 60 consecutive days.

Residence in Virginia - The child must reside in Virginia.

Additional Eligibility Requirements Applicable to the Family - Additional requirements that must be met by the family (parent or other adult caretaker and children) are as follows:

Income - To qualify for TANF assistance, the assistance unit's countable income must pass screenings: 1) gross income is compared to the maximum income level and 2) net income is compared to the standard of assistance, based on the family's size. Once the family is determined to be financially needy, the monthly payment is

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calculated. Income is counted prospectively in determining financial eligibility and the monthly payment amount. A standard work deduction equal to that used in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Family Size Standard Deduction

1-3 \$198

4 \$208

5 \$244

6 or more \$279

After the standard deduction is applied, the amount is reduced by twenty percent. Deductions for child and/or incapacitated adult care are also applied in determining applicants' eligibility for benefits. For full-time employment, deduct an amount equal to the anticipated cost, not to exceed \$175 per month, for care of each child, age 2 and older and/or incapacitated adult in the assistance unit. In the case of child care for a child under 2 years old, deduct the anticipated cost not to exceed \$200 per month. 2) For part-time employment, deduct an amount equal to the anticipated cost, not to exceed \$120 per month, for care of each child and/or incapacitated adult in the assistance unit.

Once a family member agrees, in writing, to participate in the VIEW Program, the family's earnings are evaluated in comparison to the federal poverty levels, based on assistance unit size.

Countable unearned income reduces the grant amount dollar for dollar for both VIEW and non-VIEW families.

OTHER TANF ACTIVITIES

In addition to the TANF cash assistance program administered by local departments of social services, the Virginia Department of Social Services has established other programs to provide additional services. Services are provided both to families receiving TANF and to other low-income families who have transitioned off the TANF cash assistance program or are at risk of becoming TANF recipients. These programs must meet at least one of the four purposes of the TANF program.

The four purposes of the TANF program are:

Purpose 1 - To provide assistance to needy families with children so that the children can be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.

Purpose 2 - End dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.

Purpose 3 - Prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies, including establishing prevention and reduction goals.

Purpose 4 - Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

For purposes one and two, an income test is required. The state has set a maximum income level that ensures that benefits are provided for needy populations. The maximum income level for services provided under purposes one and two is 200 percent of the federal poverty limit.

The following is a description of program activities established by the Department of Social Services or other agencies or organizations to assist the Commonwealth in carrying out the purposes of the TANF program.

(1) Solely State Funded Program Serving Two-parent Families

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The State has established a solely state funded program to serve needy two-parent families. State funds are used for cash assistance payments, employment services, and program administrative costs. Expenditures in this program do not count toward the Commonwealth's Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirement.

This program is designed to meet the special needs of two-parent families in helping them to attain self-sufficiency. For two-parent VIEW families, the income limit is 150% of the federal poverty level.

(2) VIEW Transitional Payments

A separate state program has been established to provide assistance to eligible families that are participating in VIEW and who exit from TANF assistance with employment of at least 30 hours per week. Such families receive assistance for up to one year after the exit from TANF assistance as long as employment, at least 30 hours per week is maintained. The eligible family consists of a child living with a custodial parent or other adult caretaker relative who meets the employment requirement.

(3) Employment Advancement

Description of Program -This program is designed to provide service approaches and strategies that help current and former TANF clients, including sanctioned individuals and those with barriers to employment such as learning, mental, and physical disabilities, and sanctioned individuals to prepare, enter, succeed, and advance in the workplace. This program enhances the VIEW program and it is expected that local agencies will also utilize their current VIEW funds and maximize the uses of other funds to address the needs of TANF recipients with significant barriers to employment. The funds may also be used for services that increase wages and retention as well as improve job placement, so that a long-term impact is made on the earnings of families. Employment Advancement is funded with TANF.

This initiative provides non-assistance services and benefits meeting TANF purposes one and two.

Target Population - The funds will be used for current and former TANF recipients.

Eligible Families - Program participants are current or former TANF recipients or those who qualify as TANF-eligible family members. A TANF-eligible family consists of a child living with a custodial parent or other adult caretaker relative with income not to exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Geographic Area(s) Served - The program is administered statewide.

Confidentiality Requirement - Information collected on individuals and families receiving services funded by TANF is protected as specified in the Government Data Collection and Dissemination Practices Act (Code of Virginia § 2.2-3800 et seq.).

(4) Child Safety and Well-Being

Description of Activities - Funding is provided to support social workers in local departments of social services to engage in activities designed to preserve and support families with related children.

Some examples of preservation services are:

- Pre-placement prevention services designed to help children remain in the home.
- Service programs designed to provide follow-up care to families to whom a child is returned after a foster care placement.
- Services designed to improve parenting skills.
- Support services are defined as direct services promoting the safety and well-being of children and families designed to increase the strength and stability of families (including adoptive, foster, and

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extended families), to increase parents' confidence and competence in their parenting abilities, to afford children a safe, stable, and supportive family environment, to strengthen parental relationships and promote healthy marriages, and otherwise to enhance child development.

Child safety and well-being activities include training of adoptive and foster families, recruitment of foster and adoptive parents, and education and training to families to support the well-being of children to maintain current living arrangements with parents or relatives. The cost matrixes for Community Resources Adoptive Foster Family Training, Recruitment of Foster/Adoptive Parents, Child Welfare Education and Support Program are partially funded by TANF and are included in the State's cost allocation plan. These cost matrixes are included under the activities for Child Safety and Well-Being.

The program provides non-assistance benefits and services, which are intended to accomplish TANF purpose one.

Target Population - The target population is families with children at-risk being removed from the home for abuse and neglect.

Eligible Families - Any family 1) expecting a child or having minor children under age 6 in the home, 2) with an income level at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Geographic Area(s) Served - Commonwealth of Virginia.

Confidentiality Requirement - all records of families receiving these services and assistance are subject to the confidentiality requirements of local departments.

(5) Families Forward

Description of Program - The mission of Families Forward is "to partner with communities, to strengthen families with young children, to improve community health, and to increase family self-sufficiency."

Families Forward programs are local public/private partnerships, which provide comprehensive care coordination, family support and referral to medical and dental services for low-income at-risk children. Families Forward programs provide a case management process which helps identified families connect to needed services. Families Forward does not provide medical or dental services. Local programs are overseen by both a management team (executive or senior level management of partner agencies - public health and community-based organizations) and an advisory council (a broad group comprised of community representatives and local government, social services, health, mental health, education, private business, and parents).

Families Forward's efforts to match a family to comprehensive preventive and primary care providers, coupled with family support services, guides families to the effective use of health care and community services. Families Forward builds the health of communities by promoting child health and increased family self-sufficiency. Families Forward home visitors work to develop plans for parenting education, health and nutrition, home safety, education and job training.

The program provides non-assistance benefits and services (case management) with the added goals of improving parents' employability and income earning capacity, so they can move on to self-sufficiency. Families Forward focuses on making the connection between the family and the assistance provider. While Families Forward's efforts cross over into several TANF purposes, they are deemed primarily to focus on TANF purpose one.

Target Population - This program targets low-income families with at-risk children to promote strong families, improve child health and increase family self-sufficiency.

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Eligible Families - Any family 1) expecting a child or having minor children under age 6 in the home, 2) with an income level at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Geographic Area(s) Served - Families Forward operates in 7 sites, serving children in 27 localities across the state. Sites are located in Arlington, Charlottesville, Chesapeake, Radford, Richmond, Roanoke, and Abingdon.

Confidentiality Requirement - Families Forward maintains client confidentiality by incorporating a "Consent to Exchange Information" form into the process. This form allows the family to explicitly choose to limit certain information from any affiliate. It further defines the family approved reason for sharing the information. Absent a parent or guardian's signature on the form, no information is shared with any affiliate.

(6) Healthy Families

Description of Program - Healthy Families programs offer voluntary, intensive home visiting services for up to five years to new parents who are assessed as being at—risk for child abuse/neglect. The services include in-home parenting education and support services to parents who need individualized and comprehensive support. Families participating in Healthy Families are assigned a Family Support Worker who provides home visiting services based on developing a trusting relationship with families and building on family strengths. Family needs are assessed and a case plan is developed. This plan includes role modeling in problem solving, developing effective parenting techniques and home management skills, ensuring well baby care and linking the family with appropriate community resources.

A Healthy Families Assessment Worker completes a Family Needs Assessment during pregnancy or at birth. If a family is identified as being at high risk of child maltreatment, and in need of support services, that family is offered the opportunity to participate in the Healthy Families program. When families accept services, comprehensive home visiting is initiated and Family Support Workers monitor and follow up on prenatal, postnatal, and pediatric care. In addition, Healthy Families provides early intervention through parent education, child development screenings, and nutrition counseling. Only non-assistance services and benefits are provided.

Healthy Families addresses TANF purpose one.

The Healthy Families program supports families by increasing access to and coordinating community services that meet individual family needs. The program also builds on family strengths.

Target Population - New parents or expectant parents are screened for services. Those new or expectant parents who are assessed as being at—risk for child abuse/neglect are offered the voluntary home-visiting services. Due to limited resources, many localities only offer these services to first-time parents.

Eligible Families - Segregated federal TANF funds are used to serve families with children and expectant families who are not recipients of TANF cash assistance. MOE funds are used to serve participants in the program who qualify as TANF recipients or as TANF-eligible family members. A TANF eligible family consists of a child living with a custodial parent or other adult caretaker relative with income not to exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Geographic Area(s) Served - The program has 29 sites serving 79 cities and counties in Virginia. Localities to be served by Healthy Families are listed below:

Alexandria, Arlington, Harrisonburg, Staunton, Waynesboro, Augusta County, Bath County, Highland County, Rockingham County, Bedford, Bedford County, Lynchburg, Appomattox County, Amherst County, Charles City County, New Kent County, Charlottesville, Albemarle County, Chesterfield County, Colonial Heights, Culpeper, Danville, Pittsylvania County, Fairfax County, Fairfax City, Falls Church, Fauquier County, Hampton, Henrico County, Hopewell, Prince George County, Loudoun County, Newport News, Winchester, Clark County, Frederick County, Orange County, Petersburg, Amelia County, Buckingham County, Charlotte County, Cumberland County,

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Lunenburg County, Nottoway County, Prince Edward County, Campbell County, Fredericksburg, Caroline County, King George County, Spotsylvania County, Stafford County, Richmond City, Shenandoah County, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Isle of Wight County, Essex County, Gloucester County, King William County, King & Queen County, Lancaster County, Mathews County, Middlesex County, Northumberland County, Richmond County, Westmoreland County, Virginia Beach, Martinsville, Franklin County, Patrick County, Henry County, Page County, Farmville, Madison County, Rappahannock County, Lee County, Scott County, Wise County, Norton, Warren County

Confidentiality Requirement - Contracts between the Department of Social Services and local programs include a confidentiality clause as follows: Any information obtained by the Contractor concerning recipients of services under this agreement shall be treated as confidential in accordance with relevant provisions of State and federal law.

(7) Community Action Agencies

Description of Program - The Community Action Network consists of 26 local agencies that provide a wide array of services for low-income families and individuals. TANF funds are used to provide a variety of services to needy families including emergency services, case management services, supportive services including childcare and transportation to employed families, cars for work programs, individual development account programs, intensive life skills training for families who are at risk to lose children to foster care, and computer skills.

Services and benefits provided may only be in the form of non-assistance. Contracts with administering agencies prohibit the provision of TANF "assistance." The services and benefits provided meet TANF purposes one and two.

Target Population - The program is targeted to serve needy families with minor children.

Eligible Families - To be eligible, families must be TANF recipients or TANF-eligible family members. A TANF-eligible family consists of a child living with a custodial parent or other adult caretaker relative with income not to exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Confidentiality Requirement - The contract requires the agency to maintain the confidentiality of client information in accordance with relevant provisions of State and federal law.

(8) Domestic Violence Program

Description of Program - The services provided are crisis and core services to victims of domestic violence, including 24-hour crisis telephone service, shelter, crisis counseling, supportive counseling, information and referral, transportation, coordination of services, legal advocacy, and basic children's services for children of victims of domestic violence. Funds may be used only to provide services and benefits that meet the TANF definition of non-assistance.

The services relate primarily to TANF purposes three and four.

Target Population - The target population served is women who are victims of domestic violence who have dependent children with them, or who are pregnant.

Eligible Families - Program participants are limited to those who qualify as TANF recipients or as TANF-eligible family members. A TANF-eligible family consists of a child living with a custodial parent or other adult caretaker relative with income not to exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Geographic Area(s) Served - Domestic violence programs are statewide.

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Confidentiality Requirement - Domestic violence programs have stringent confidentiality requirements from their other funding sources, and use these for the TANF population as well.

(9) Child Abuse and Neglect Advocacy Projects

Description of Program - These projects provide for the crisis intervention, parent education, family treatment, or child and family support groups.

The program provides non-assistance benefits and services, which are intended to accomplish TANF purpose one.

Target Population - The target population is families with children at-risk being removed from the home for abuse and neglect.

Eligible Families – Eligible family consists of a child living with a custodial parent or other adult caretaker relative with income not to exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Geographic Area(s) Served – statewide

Confidentiality Requirement – all records of families receiving these services and assistance are subject to strict confidentiality requirements guarding against any unauthorized disclosure of information.

(10) Earned Income Credit Outreach

Description of Program - The Virginia Community Action Partnership provides outreach, education and tax preparation services via the Virginia Earned Income Tax Coalition and other community non-profit organizations to citizens who may be eligible for the federal Earned Income Tax Credit.

The program provides non-assistance benefits and services, which are intended to accomplish TANF purpose two.

Target Population - The target population is low-income working families with children.

Eligible Families - Families that meet the income requirements to qualify for the earned income credit.

Geographic Area(s) Served - The program is administered statewide.

(11) Community Employment and Training

Description of Program - Community employment and training programs are designed to move current and former TANF clients and those with incomes 200% or less of the poverty level into meaningful employment with the prospect of a career path and wage growth. The program provides resources to expand and enhance evidence-based innovative types of service delivery efforts to address more fully the needs of the target population prior to their entry into work and during employment.

The program provides non-assistance benefits and services, which are intended to accomplish TANF purpose two.

Target Population - The target population is families with children with incomes 200% or less of the federal poverty level.

Geographic Area(s) Served - The program is administered statewide.

(12) Homeless Services

Description of Program - Supportive services are provided that address the basic needs of families in crisis to prevent homelessness. This includes meals, shelter, counseling, and housing location assistance. The program provides non-assistance benefits and services, which are intended to accomplish TANF purpose one.

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Eligible Families – The target population is families with children with incomes 200% or less of the federal poverty level.

Geographic Area(s) Served – Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax, Prince William

(13) Federation of Virginia Food Banks

Description of Activities – Programs are offered on a stateside basis to assist needy families with children with meals and access to nutritional food. A wide variety of strategies are implemented, including summer feeding programs, weekend feeding programs, and food distribution. This program is intended to accomplish TANF purpose one.

Target population – The funds are used to serve families with children with income at or below 200% of the federal poverty limit.

Geographic Area Served – The program is administered statewide.

Confidentiality Requirement – Information collected on individuals and families receiving services funded by TANF is protected as specified in the Government Data Collection and Dissemination Practices Act (Code of Virginia § 2.2-3800 et seq.).

(14) Family Self-Sufficiency Projects

Description of Program -This program is designed to utilize Family Coaches to develop individual development plans with selected families as part of a Whole Family/Two-Generation Pilot Project. Selected agencies are Community Action agencies (Designated agencies that work year-round on anti-poverty programs and approaches) that develop program designs, theories of change, and logic models for whole family work. Agencies work with 5-15 families at a time to identify barriers to self-sufficiency for all members of the family, and work to deliver services, or work with partners in the community, to eliminate those barriers. These can include new or better employment, child care, education resources, health care (through partners if applicable), financial education, parenting classes, transportation, and any number of other services. The pilot project is designed to achieve self-sufficiency outcomes for TANF-eligible families through the intensive Family Coaching model, which goes beyond case management to include direct coaching/mentoring and an integrated use of all community partners.

This initiative provides non-assistance services and benefits meeting TANF purposes one and two.

Target Population - The funds will be serving families with children.

Eligible Families - Program participants are families that are TANF-eligible. A TANF-eligible family consists of a child living with a custodial parent or other adult caretaker relative with income not to exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Geographic Area(s) Served - The program is funding six agencies that serve in the following counties and independent cities in the Commonwealth:

Counties: Floyd County, Giles County, Montgomery County, Pulaski County, Amelia County, Buckingham County, Cumberland County, Lunenburg County, Nottoway County, Prince Edward County, Buchanan County, Clarke County, Dickenson County, Fauquier County, Frederick County, Page County, Prince William County, Russell County, Shenandoah County, Shenandoah County, Warren County, Washington County, Brunswick County, Greenville County, Surry County, Sussex County, Caroline County, Charles City County, Hanover County, King George County, King William County, King and Queen County, New Kent County, Spotsylvania County, Stafford County

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Cities: City of Radford, City of Hampton, City of Newport News, City of Bristol, City of Manassas, City of Manassas Park, City of Emporia, City of Fredericksburg

Confidentiality Requirement - Information collected on individuals and families receiving services funded by TANF is protected as specified in the Government Data Collection and Dissemination Practices Act (Code of Virginia § 2.2-3800 et seq.).

(15) Virginia Early Childhood Foundation

Description of Program – Funds are provided to the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation to provide technical assistance to improve childcare programs and to improve community programs that enhances the health, safety, well-being, and school readiness of Virginia's youth.

Target Population – Technical assistance is provided to improve childcare programs that serve children. Families served directly with TANF funding are families with children under 200% of poverty.

Geographic Area – These services are provided on a statewide basis.

Confidentiality Requirement - Information collected on individuals and families receiving services funded by TANF is protected as specified in the Government Data Collection and Dissemination Practices Act (Code of Virginia § 2.2-3800 et seq.).

(16) Individual Development Accounts

Description of Program – Funds are provided for the establishment of individual development accounts. Savers will save funds in accounts designated for the purposes of home purchase, transportation, education, starting a business, or for self-sufficiency. Savings deposited in the designated accounts must be from earned income. Once the saver reaches the savings goal, match funds are provided at an eight to one rate. All payments are made directly to vendors. This initiative provides non-assistance benefits meeting TANF purpose one.

Target Population – The funds are used to serve families with children with income at or below 200% of the federal poverty limit.

Geographic Area – These services are provided on a statewide basis.

Confidentiality Requirement - Information collected on individuals and families receiving services funded by TANF is protected as specified in the Government Data Collection and Dissemination Practices Act (Code of Virginia § 2.2-3800 et seq.).

(17) Virginia Transit Association

Description of Program – Funds are provided to provide transportation to TANF-eligible individuals. This initiative provides non-assistance services and benefits meeting TANF purposes one and two.

Target Population – The funds are used to serve families with children with income at or below 200% of the federal poverty limit.

Geographic Area – These services are provided in Harrisonburg, Fredericksburg, and Hampton.

(18) United Community

Description of Program – Funds are provided to offer wrap-around services for low-income families to TANF-eligible individuals. These services include assessment, case management, employment barrier reduction, child care, advocacy, employment supports, and basic need assistance including food assistance and rental assistance. This initiative provides non-assistance services and benefits meeting TANF purposes one and two.

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Target Population – The funds are used to serve families with children with income at or below 200% of the federal poverty limit.

Geographic Area – These services are provided in Alexandria, Virginia.

B. REQUIRE A PARENT OR CARETAKER RECEIVING ASSISTANCE TO ENGAGE IN WORK (DEFINED BY THE STATE) ONCE THE STATE DETERMINES THE PARENT OR CARETAKER IS READY TO ENGAGE IN WORK, OR ONCE HE OR SHE HAS RECEIVED 24 MONTHS OF ASSISTANCE, WHICHEVER IS EARLIER, CONSISTENT WITH THE CHILD CARE EXCEPTION AT 407(E)(2) (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(II) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

The VIEW Program is a workforce development program that assists individuals in attaining the goal of obtaining employment with wages that exceed the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) threshold. The ALICE threshold is a measure of wages needed to meet all basic needs. Additional information is available at www.unitedforalice.org. All TANF applicants are screened at application to determine whether they must be referred for participation in VIEW. Nonexempt individuals are referred to VIEW workers within a month of case approval and assessed for participation within 30 days of referral.

Agreement of Personal Responsibility - The agreement of personal responsibility must be signed by all VIEW participants. It states the expectations that must be met under VIEW. If a recipient refuses to sign this agreement, then the case is closed and the recipient must reapply for benefits.

Time Limit - TANF recipients who are in VIEW may receive 24 months of cash benefits, plus a year of transitional benefits (if employed). After that, they must wait two years before they can again qualify for TANF.

VIEW Participation - Individuals must participate in VIEW, Virginia's TANF employment and training program, unless otherwise exempt. The exemptions are:

- (1) Any individuals, including all minor caretakers, under 16 years of age;
- (2) Any individual at least 16, but no more than 19 years of age, who is enrolled full-time in elementary or secondary school, including vocational or technical school programs. The vocational or technical school must be equivalent to secondary school;
- (3) Any individual unable to participate because of a temporary medical condition that prevents entry into at least 20 hours per week of employment or training, as determined by a medical professional;
- (4) Any individual who is incapacitated, as determined by receipt of Social Security Disability benefits or Supplemental Security Income;
- (5) Any individual 60 years of age or older;
- (6) Any individual who is the sole caregiver of another member of the household who is incapacitated, and whose presence is essential for the care of the member on a substantially continuous basis, shall be exempt from participation in VIEW. Incapacity is determined by receipt of Social Security Disability benefits or Supplemental Security Income. The sole other condition under which an individual may be determined incapacitated is by a written medical statement from a physician; and
- (7) A parent or caretaker of a child under 12 months of age who personally provides care for the child. Per the Code of Virginia §63.2-609 and 45 CFR 261.22(c)1 and (2), this exemption is limited to a period of no more than 12 months in a lifetime.
- (8) Individuals enrolled in full-time enrollment in an accredited public institution of higher education or other postsecondary school licensed or certified by the Board of Education or the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and are taking courses as part of a curriculum that leads to a postsecondary credential, such as a degree or an industry-recognized credential, certification, or license. This exemption was added due to the

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passage of House Bill 484 (Bill Tracking - 2022 session > Legislation (virginia.gov)) While the impacted individuals are participating in education and training activities, they are not subject to the 24-month VIEW time limit.

Supportive Services - Supportive and social services are provided to remove barriers to the individual's participation and to stabilize employment. Supportive services are provided as needed and available to support participation in orientation, assessment, approved self-initiated education, training and employment activities, or to accept or maintain employment. The provision of supportive services is contingent upon the availability of funds based on local VIEW allocations, and spending limits for services will be at the agency's discretion. Supportive services include:

- (1) Child care;
- (2) Transportation, including certain vehicle repairs;
- (3) Program and/or work-related expenses, such as fees for birth certificates, license fees, registration fees, graduation fees, picture ID costs, uniforms or other clothing and shoes, safety equipment and tools, and car repairs; and
- (4) Emergency intervention, such as provision of food, payment of utilities, or other items necessary for the participant to gain or keep employment or to participate in other work activities;
- (5) Medical and dental services, such as fees for dentures, glasses, orthopedic shoes, and other items required prior to entry into jobs, work-sites, or other components for a client that has a disability, as determined by a medical professional, which affects program participation. Medical and dental services are paid for with state funds.

If supportive services are essential for participation, neither the participant nor the agency can provide them, and no alternatives are available, the participant will not be sanctioned for noncompliance. In these situations, the participant is placed in an inactive status (for up to 90 days) to prevent the clock from counting against the VIEW 24-month time limit. It is expected that agency staff and the participant will work together to resolve any issues related to participation by the end of the 90-day timeframe.

A participant cannot be sanctioned if acceptable childcare is not available. Federal TANF regulations at section § 261.56(b) require the State to define the following four terms as they relate to determining if needed child care is available. The terms and the Commonwealth's definitions are as follows:

- (1) "Appropriate childcare" means childcare arranged by the participant or, if the participant cannot arrange for the child's care, child care arranged by the local department of social services with a legally-operating provider.
- (2) "Reasonable distance" means that the travel time from the child's home to the childcare provider and the work site is generally no more than one hour, based on transportation available to the parent.
- (3) "Unsuitability of informal childcare" means that the childcare arrangement does not meet the requirements for relative care in the Virginia Department of Social Services Child Care Services policy.
- (4) "Affordable child care arrangements" means the cost of the childcare is less than or equal to the payment amounts specified in the Virginia Department of Social Services Child Care Services policy.

For purposes of the above definitions, the term "legally-operating provider" includes all providers regulated by the Virginia Department of Social Services' Division of Licensing, city-approved providers, county-approved providers, local agency-approved providers, federally approved providers, and providers who are legally exempt from regulation based upon the number and ages of children in care or because the provider is a relative caring only for relatives.

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Failure to Meet the Requirements of VIEW - Recipients who fail to participate in work activities or to comply with the terms and conditions of their personal responsibility agreements receive a sanction. If an individual is sanctioned, her family's entire TANF benefit amount is reduced by 100 percent for a fixed period, or until the individual complies with the terms of the sanction, whichever is longer. Participants who have been sanctioned are not entitled to supportive services unless these services are required to maintain the participant's employment.

For a first sanction, the TANF grant is suspended for one month or until compliance, whichever is longer; for a second sanction, the TANF grant is suspended for three months or until compliance, whichever is longer; and for any subsequent sanctions, the TANF grant is suspended for six months or until compliance, whichever is longer.

C. ENSURE THAT PARENTS AND CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE ENGAGE IN WORK IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 407 (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(III) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT). CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIRED STRATEGIC ELEMENTS DISCUSSED IN SECTION II (A)(2) HEREIN, PROVIDE A SPECIFIC ANALYSIS OF HOW THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ARE ADDRESSING EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES FOR PARENTS OR CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE

Clients are placed in an approved work activity immediately after being enrolled and assessed. Work activities include job search, job readiness, subsidized employment, unsubsidized employment, community work experience, public service, on-the-job training, job skills training, and vocational education.

An individual is considered participating in a work activity if:

- (1) Employed in unsubsidized employment, including on-the-job training;
- (2) Employed less than 30 hours per week and also fully participating in assigned work activities designed to help her obtain full-time employment;
- (3) Unemployed but participating in an assigned work activity. The work activity may be job search, job readiness, vocational education, job skills training, subsidized employment, on-the-job training, community work experience, or public service.

After an initial assessment, an Activity and Service Plan is developed with the participant that outlines the activities that the participant will engage in. All hours of participation must be verified. The case manager follows up with those that fail to participate appropriately to determine the cause of the failure to participate, and determines the appropriate action depending upon the circumstances. The follow-up action could include providing accommodations or may result in sanctioning the participant.

Monitoring occurs at several different levels. Local departments of social services are primarily responsible for ensuring that recipients appropriately participate. Work participation rate reports are made available to local agency staff and supervisors for monitoring purposes. There are five regional social services offices in the Commonwealth. Each regional office has a TANF Program Consultant that is responsible for monitoring local agency performance including conducting case readings and requiring corrective action plans, if needed. This monitoring includes monitoring of the placement of TANF recipients in work activities and the local department's work participation rate. State staff monitor local performance regarding the employment and training program, VIEW.

Earned Income Disregard - Earnings up to 100 percent of the federal poverty level for one-parent families and up to 150 percent of the federal poverty level for two-parent families are disregarded in the computation of the amount of assistance.

Hardship Exceptions to the Two-Year Limit - Virginia has several hardship exceptions that extend a client's TANF benefits beyond the two-year time limit. Benefits may be extended for a period of three months to one

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year. Virginia's hardship exceptions apply to participants who are actively seeking employment but unable to find a job, participants who lose employment due to no fault of their own, participants continuing education and training related directly to employability, and participants residing in areas of the state with unemployment rates above 10 percent. These hardships will only be granted in cases where the individual participant has satisfactorily participated during his VIEW assignments, has not been sanctioned more than once during the 24 months of participation, and has not quit a job without good cause.

Transitional Child Care and Transportation - Virginia will provide up to one year of transitional childcare and transportation assistance to some VIEW clients who are no longer eligible for TANF cash assistance benefits. Transitional childcare and transportation benefits are available to those former clients who are working or participating in education or training activities. Transitional childcare is paid from Child Care and Development Block Grant funds. The financial eligibility criteria for transitional childcare assistance are as follows:

Income eligibility thresholds for child care assistance account for variations in the local cost of living index by metropolitan statistical areas. Localities which are not considered part of a metropolitan statistical area are grouped in one of three metropolitan statistical areas, based on their geographical proximity.

Transitional transportation services are paid from TANF and State funds. Families who participated in VIEW are deemed eligible for transitional transportation based on their prior TANF eligibility.

D. TAKE SUCH REASONABLE STEPS AS THE STATE DEEMS NECESSARY TO RESTRICT THE USE AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION ABOUT INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES RECEIVING ASSISTANCE UNDER THE PROGRAM ATTRIBUTABLE TO FUNDS PROVIDED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(IV) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Virginia will take reasonable and necessary steps to restrict the use and disclosure of information about individuals and families receiving assistance under the program attributable to funds provided by the Federal government. Information about applicants or recipients will be used or disclosed only for purposes directly connected with the administration of public assistance and related services which cannot be offered without such information. The safeguards shall not prevent the State agency from furnishing a Federal, State, or local law enforcement officer with the current address of any recipient in a manner consistent with state and federal laws (Code of Virginia § 63.2-102).

E. ESTABLISH GOALS AND TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT AND REDUCE OUT-OF-WEDLOCK PREGNANCIES, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON TEENAGE PREGNANCIES (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Virginia currently has several other initiatives underway to reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock births and teen pregnancy, with the goal of reducing the out-of-wedlock birth rate to 34.3% by the end of 2026.

Boys and Girls Clubs

Through the Boys and Girls Clubs, programming is focused on the expansion of community-based prevention and mentoring programs to improve school readiness and to alleviate conditions that lead to teen pregnancy. It also works with parents to help identify family/child strengths and barriers and encourages parental support of positive academic behaviors and attitudes.

F. CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO REACH STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, AND RELEVANT COUNSELING SERVICES, THAT PROVIDES EDUCATION AND TRAINING ON THE PROBLEM OF STATUTORY RAPE SO THAT TEENAGE PREGNANCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS MAY BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE MEN (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VI) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

The department promotes on-going efforts to provide education and training about the problems related to statutory rape, accessible by law enforcement and education staff. Statutory rape laws in Virginia are enforced throughout the state and prevention is a large part of the strategy to reducing statutory rape is preventative

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work. The Virginia Department of Health conducts an educational program to increase awareness of statutory rape. The Department of Health also maintains a website that provides information statutory rape prevention, including relevant state laws, advice for adolescents, and educational resources.

(www.vdh.virginia.gov/statutory-rape-prevention) The Department of Criminal Justices Services offers training called “Males and Violence: Engaging Men and Boys as Survivors, Advocates and Change Agents” which brings together mental health clinicians, social workers, victim advocates, and law enforcement. This included training on engaging men and boys in prevention efforts. The Division of Child Support Enforcement continues to make presentations that target men about the consequences of out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

G. IMPLEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AS NECESSARY TO PREVENT ACCESS TO ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART THROUGH ANY ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTION IN AN AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE OR POINT-OF-SALE DEVICE LOCATED IN A PLACE DESCRIBED IN SECTION 408(A)(12), INCLUDING A PLAN TO ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF THE ASSISTANCE HAVE ADEQUATE ACCESS TO THEIR CASH ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VII) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Implementation of policy and procedures focused on changing the State Code to make misuse of TANF benefits unlawful, publicizing the law change, putting the onus on the recipient to properly use TANF benefits, and notifying vendors. In the 2013 session of the Virginia General Assembly, House Bill 1577 was passed and signed into law on April 3, 2013. The legislation became effective statewide on July 1, 2013 and imposes greater restrictions than set forth in the federal Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012.

“§ 63.2—621. Restrictions on use of TANF cash assistance. Recipients of TANF benefits pursuant to this chapter shall not access TANF cash benefits through an electronic benefit transaction (i) for the purchase of alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, lottery tickets, or sexually explicit visual materials as defined in § 18.2-374.1; (ii) in any transaction in any (a) government store established for the sale of alcoholic beverages, (b) establishment in which pari-mutuel wagering or charitable gaming is conducted, or (c) establishment in which tattooing or body-piercing, as defined in § 54.1-700, is performed for hire or consideration; or (iii) in any establishment that provides adult-oriented entertainment in which performers or other individuals connected with the business appear nude or partially nude.”

The change in the law was publicized by a press release, and the information about the law was published in newspapers throughout the state.

Local TANF eligibility staff are trained on the policy as part of new worker training. The restrictions are explained to all applicants for assistance. Virginia requires a protective payee to receive and properly disperse TANF funds if a person is reported as having attempted to mispend TANF benefits. Posters, which explained the restrictions in both English and Spanish, have been distributed for display in 120 local departments of social services. The Department of Social Services website has information about the restrictions.

In Virginia, the sale of liquor is restricted to state-owned and operated liquor stores operated by The Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC). The ABC was alerted to the federal and state laws so that cashiers at ABC stores are aware of the restrictions and any attempted misuse of the TANF debit card.

Though there are no identifiable organizations that represent adult-oriented entertainment venues, we contacted the Retail Merchants Association as well as the Chamber of Commerce to alert them to the restrictions.

Recipients of TANF cash assistance have adequate access to their cash assistance. All recipients have the choice of receiving benefits by direct deposit, debit card, or check. While most participants receive benefits by debit card, participants can choose to receive benefits via direct deposit into a bank account or by check. This decision is the preference of the participant. If a participant chooses to bypass the no-charge option of receiving

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payments via direct deposit and chooses to receive benefits via the GOCard, there is a significant network of automated teller machines (ATMs) that include non-restricted ATMs in every county and city in the Commonwealth. The GOCard is also used for the delivery of unemployment compensation benefits and child support enforcement payments. For clients that opt to receive benefits via debit card, benefits may be withdrawn with no fees.

H. ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART HAVE THE ABILITY TO USE OR WITHDRAW ASSISTANCE WITH MINIMAL FEES OR CHARGES, INCLUDING AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACCESS ASSISTANCE WITH NO FEE OR CHARGES, AND ARE PROVIDED INFORMATION ON APPLICABLE FEES AND SURCHARGES THAT APPLY TO ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING THE ASSISTANCE, AND THAT SUCH INFORMATION IS MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VIII) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Recipients of TANF may access assistance with no fees or charges, and are provided information on applicable fees and surcharges that apply to electronic fund transactions involving the assistance. Such information is made publicly available. If a participant chooses to bypass the no-charge option of receiving payments via direct deposit and chooses to receive benefits via the GOCard, there is a significant network of automated teller machines (ATMs) that include non-restricted ATMs in every county and city in the Commonwealth. The GoCard is also used for the delivery of unemployment compensation benefits and child support enforcement payments. For clients that opt to receive benefits via debit card, benefits may be withdrawn with no fees. Minimal fees do apply, however, in certain limited situations.

A recipient may use the debit card to make purchases at merchants as long as MasterCard is accepted. In addition, at the merchant's discretion, the recipient may receive cash back. There is no fee for this transaction.

A participant may receive cash from an ATM that accepts MasterCard. There are no fees for withdrawals from network (MoneyPass) ATMs. There are over 600 MoneyPass ATMs in Virginia. For out of network ATMs, there is no fee for two ATM withdrawals each month. After two withdrawals at non-network ATMs, there is a fee of \$1.00 per withdrawal. Participants may make two free withdrawals per month from a teller in a bank location that displays the MasterCard logo. A printed copy of the fee structure as well as an explanation of how to withdraw benefits at no charge is provided to all newly approved recipients of TANF. The information is also available at GoProgram.com.

I. INDICATE WHETHER IT INTENDS TO TREAT FAMILIES MOVING FROM ANOTHER STATE DIFFERENTLY FROM OTHER FAMILIES UNDER THE PROGRAM, AND IF SO HOW (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(I) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Virginia does not treat families who move into the Commonwealth differently from current Virginia residents regarding the receipt of TANF benefits.

J. INDICATE WHETHER IT INTENDS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO NON-CITIZENS, AND IF SO INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(II) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Virginia provides TANF benefits to all aliens who meet the federal TANF definition of a "qualified alien" with the exception of those categories of qualified aliens who entered on or after August 22, 1996, who are barred from receiving assistance for five years beginning on the date of the alien's entry into the United States with a status within the meaning of the term "qualified alien." The Commonwealth provides assistance to all alien groups permitted to receive benefits under federal TANF law and regulations.

K. SET FORTH OBJECTIVE CRITERIA FOR THE DELIVERY OF BENEFITS AND THE DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND FOR FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT, INCLUDING AN EXPLANATION OF HOW IT WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECIPIENTS WHO HAVE BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED TO BE HEARD IN A STATE ADMINISTRATIVE OR APPEAL PROCESS (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(III) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

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Virginia has established procedures for ensuring fair and equitable treatment of applicants and recipients of public assistance. There shall be no discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, marital, parental, or birth status, or disability by State or local agencies in the administration of any public assistance program.

Virginia continues to offer an administrative fair hearing procedure for any aggrieved TANF recipient. The Department of Social Services has established objective standards for providing benefits and services, determining eligibility, and ensuring fair and equitable treatment. Applicants and recipients who believe they have been adversely affected by a decision concerning public assistance or needed services may request to have the decision reconsidered in accordance with Code of Virginia § 63.2—517, 63.2—518 and 63.2—519. Recipients have the right to appeal any action or inaction affecting eligibility, benefit or service determination or condition of payment and are advised of this right with each adverse action notice.

L. INDICATE WHETHER THE STATE INTENDS TO ASSIST INDIVIDUALS TO TRAIN FOR, SEEK, AND MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)—

1. PROVIDING DIRECT CARE IN A LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY (AS SUCH TERMS ARE DEFINED UNDER SECTION 1397J OF THIS TITLE); OR

2. IN OTHER OCCUPATIONS RELATED TO ELDER CARE, HIGH-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS, OR OCCUPATIONS EXPECTED TO EXPERIENCE LABOR SHORTAGES AS, DETERMINED APPROPRIATE BY THE STATE FOR WHICH THE STATE IDENTIFIES AN UNMET NEED FOR SERVICE PERSONNEL, AND, IF SO, SHALL INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF SUCH ASSISTANCE.

The Department intends to assist individuals to train for, seek, and maintain employment providing direct care in a long—term facility or in other elder care occupations. At the beginning of participation in the VIEW program, the caseworker conducts an identification and evaluation of the participant's job readiness skills, occupational skills and interests, education, work history, and family/life circumstances; a determination of the participant's functional literacy; an initial identification of the client's employment/educational goal(s) and the types of program assignments that may be completed throughout the client's VIEW participation; an evaluation of supportive service needs; and an evaluation of other issues that may clearly affect program participation or employment.

Upon completion of the assessment, the case manager, along with the participant will develop an Activity and Service Plan which details: the participant's assignments, responsibilities of the participant and the agency, and the supportive services needed by the individual to comply with program requirements. If during the assessment the client expresses an interest, or prior experience in the elder care field, the case manager will work with the participant to develop the appropriate resources to allow the participant to pursue that goal. This includes such activities as vocational education and subsidized employment.

M. PROVIDE FOR ALL MOE-FUNDED SERVICES THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION: THE NAME OF THE PROGRAM BENEFIT OR SERVICE, AND THE FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA THAT FAMILIES MUST MEET IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THAT BENEFIT OR SERVICE. IN ADDITION, FOR TANF MOE-FUNDED SERVICES (CO-MINGLED OR SEGREGATED MOE) DESCRIBE THE PROGRAM BENEFIT PROVIDED TO ELIGIBLE FAMILIES (SSP SERVICES DO NOT HAVE TO INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION BUT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ENCOURAGES IT) (§263.2(B)(3) & §263.2(C) PREAMBLE PAGES 17826-7)

The following are programs for which the State claims MOE expenditures.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Cash Assistance - The TANF assistance unit consists of the parents and their children living with them who meet the non-financial requirements of eligibility, such as age, relationship, and citizenship. In constructing the assistance unit, the following persons must be included if living with the child for whom TANF has been requested: the natural or adoptive parents and any blood-related

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or adopted siblings. Parents or children who are receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or are statutorily ineligible for TANF under other provisions of law cannot be included in the assistance unit.

Children and parents who are excluded from the assistance unit for failure to follow program rules, such as not providing a social security number for a child or parent or refusing to cooperate with the Division of Child Support Enforcement are included in the assistance unit for purposes of determining whether the family meets financial eligibility requirements; however, their needs are not included for purposes of determining the amount of the family's monthly benefits.

Additional eligibility requirements applicable to children:

- The child must be under age 18, or if age 18 must be attending school;
- The child must be living in the home of a parent or other relative except for temporary absences of up to 60 consecutive days; and
- The child must reside in Virginia.

Additional eligibility requirements applicable to the family:

To qualify for assistance, the assistance unit's countable income must pass a gross income screening and a net income screening at the standard of assistance, based on the unit's size. Once the family is determined to be financially needy, the monthly payment is calculated. Income is counted prospectively in determining financial eligibility and the monthly payment amount.

Clients who do not meet an exemption are required to participate in a work activity. Once a family member agrees, in writing, to participate in the employment program, the unit's earnings are evaluated in comparison to 100% of the federal poverty level, based on assistance unit size.

Virginia Initiative for Education and Work (VIEW) - The VIEW Program is the employment and training component of the TANF Program. VIEW requires able-bodied parents with children over the age of 12 months to participate. Most unemployed participants are assigned initially to job search. If not employed at the end of job search, participants are placed in another work activity. VIEW participants receive earned income disregards to allow eligibility up to 100% of the federal poverty limit and are eligible to receive transitional support services including childcare and transportation. After the 24-month time limit is reached, the family is ineligible for TANF cash assistance for 24 months.

Childcare Program - TANF participants engaged in employment or training activities can receive subsidized child care. Childcare services are those activities that assist eligible families in the arrangement and purchase of childcare for children. It also includes activities that promote parental choice, consumer education to help parents make informed choices about childcare, activities to enhance health and safety standards, and activities that increase and enhance childcare and early childhood resources in the community.

The eligible family includes at least one child under the age of 13 or a child under the age of 18 if they are physically or mentally incapable of caring for themselves or if they are subject to court supervision, and there is a need for child care to support employment, approved education or training or for reasons related to child protective services, and the family meets income eligibility requirements for the locality in which they live (150%, 160%, 185%, or 250% of the federal poverty level).

Virginia Pre-school Initiative - The Virginia Pre-school Initiative provides supportive services to income-eligible families with four-year old children. Localities that participate must ensure that the program operates at least six hours per day and conforms to the school calendar year to ensure the program meets the needs of working parents. Families participating in the Virginia Pre-school Initiative may receive assistance with Early Childhood Education and Development, Social Services, Children's Health Assessments and Parent Education. To be

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considered an eligible family, the family has to have a dependent child and income under 200% of the federal poverty level.

Family Preservation Services - Preservation Services include pre-placement prevention services designed to help children remain in the home, services to provide follow-up care to families when a child is returned from foster care, and services designed to improve parenting skills. To be considered an eligible family, the family has to have a dependent child and income under 200% of the federal poverty level.

Domestic Violence Services -Domestic violence services include education, help in obtaining needed resources, access to emergency shelter and development of safety plans. The program makes available hotlines, crisis intervention, advocacy for victims and children, support groups, emergency transportation, and community education. All victims are eligible for local Domestic Violence Services, with eligibility for specific services based on income. Referrals are made to the local DSS agencies for determination of TANF eligibility.

VIEW Transitional Payment (VTP) -VIEW participants who are employed at least 30 hours per week and lose TANF eligibility are eligible to receive a monthly payment to assist with employment expenses and to encourage greater employment retention. VTP eligibility lasts for 12 months and participants may earn up to 200% of the federal poverty limit.

TANF CERTIFICATIONS

The State Plan must include	Include
1. Operate a child support enforcement program under the State Plan approved under part D. (section 402(a)(2) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
2. Operate a foster care and adoption assistance program under the State Plan approved under part E, and that the state will take such actions as are necessary to ensure that children receiving assistance under such part are eligible for medical assistance under the State Plan under title XIX. (section 402(a)(3) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
3. Specify which state agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and private sector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social Security Act)—	
3. (A) have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the state so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; and	Yes
3. (B) have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services;	Yes

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The State Plan must include	Include
4. Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the state and is not eligible for assistance under a tribal family assistance plan approved under section 412, with equitable access to assistance under the state program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government. (section 402(a)(5) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
5. Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse, including standards and procedures concerning nepotism, conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the state program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage. (section 402(a)(6) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
6. (optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).—	
6. (A) screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals;	Yes
6. (B) refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; and	Yes
6. (C) waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for so long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance under this part to escape domestic violence or unfairly penalize such individuals who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).	Yes
7 Establish and enforce standards and procedures to*—	
7. (A) ensure that applicants and potential applicants for assistance under the state program	Yes

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The State Plan must include	Include
funded under this part are notified of assistance made available by the state to victims of sexual harassment and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking;	
7. (B) ensure that case workers and other agency personnel responsible for administering the state program funded under this part are trained in—	
7. (B) 1. the nature and dynamics of sexual harassment and domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking;	Yes
7. (B) 2. state standards and procedures relating to the prevention of, and assistance for, individuals who are victims of sexual harassment or survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; and	Yes
7. (B) 3. methods of ascertaining and ensuring the confidentiality of personal information and documentation related to applicants for assistance and their children who have provided notice about their experiences of sexual harassment, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; and	Yes
7. (C) ensure that, if a state has elected to establish and enforce standards and procedures regarding the screening for, and identification of, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking pursuant to paragraph (7)—	
7. (C) 1. the state program funded under this part provides information about the options under this part to current and potential beneficiaries; and	Yes
7. (C) 2. case workers and other agency personnel responsible for administering the state programs funded under this part are provided with training regarding state standards and procedures pursuant to paragraph (7).	Yes

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EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS UNDER THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (Programs Authorized Under Section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))

a. General Requirements [27]

1. The nature of the E&T components the State agency plans to offer and the reasons for such components, including cost information. The methodology for State agency reimbursement for education components must be specifically addressed. If a State agency plans to offer supervised job search in accordance with paragraph (e)(2)(i) of this section, the State agency must also include in the E&T plan a summary of the State guidelines implementing supervised job search. This summary of the State guidelines, at a minimum, must describe: The criteria used by the State agency to approve locations for supervised job search, an explanation of why those criteria were chosen, and how the supervised job search component meets the requirements to directly supervise the activities of participants and track the timing and activities of participants;

Components by Category (Non-Education, Non-Work Components; Education Components; Work Components)

The SNAP E&T components that are being offered are based on the Annual Plans that were submitted by Virginia's 32 SNAP E&T agencies and 5 SNAP E&T 50-50 partners. SNAP E&T agencies are allocated funds, state and federal, at the beginning of the State's Fiscal Year. These funds are accessed and drawn down by agencies on a monthly basis through the Locality Automated System Expenditure Reimbursement system (LASER) for reimbursement for SNAP E&T expenses. Virginia's SNAP E&T 50-50 partners are required to submit monthly or quarterly invoices to the Virginia Department of Social Services for reimbursement of SNAP E&T expenses. SNAP E&T components that are offered in Virginia are listed below:

Supervised Job Search

Description: Supervised Job Search are activities that occur in state-approved locations or systems where job-search activities are directly supervised and the timing/activities are tracked. This component requires participants to make a predetermined number of inquiries to prospective employers over a specified period of time. Examples of state approved locations may include but are not limited to American Job Centers (one-stops), Public Libraries, Employment Service Organizations (ESO's), 50-50 Providers and use of software/electronic platforms which track & time job search activities. Supervised Job Search may be self-paced and can occur remotely or in person, but engagement with case management for review has to occur at least monthly. Supervised Job search activities must have a direct link to increase employment opportunities.

All Supervised Job search activities must have a direct link to increase employment opportunities. The criteria to assign clients to supervised Job Search is based on evaluating that a reasonable success will be achieved in obtaining successful employment. Employment Service Workers (ESW) assess the assignment of each person's suitability for different jobs based on Labor Market Information (LMI) and developing sector strategy approaches to increasing a deep understanding of the interrelationships between business competitiveness and the workforce needs of the targeted industry. The goal of supervised job search should be to prepare for specific in-demand-high wage occupations. Supervised Job Search should be focused on helping clients identify personal goals, overcome personal barriers and develop leadership skills leading to the effective identification of employment opportunities.

Estimated Annual Component Costs: \$822,744; Cost per participant: \$1,404

Job Search Training

Description: This component will enhance the job readiness of participants by providing job seeking techniques

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and methods to increase motivation and self-confidence. Job Search Training includes activities that may consist of employability skill assessments, employability training, job placement services, or other direct training or support activities, including educational programs to expand the job search abilities or employability of the registrant. The Employment and Training Annual Plan must describe whether the local department will utilize the Job Search Training component.

Group or individually coordinated job search training activities may consist of employability assessments, occupational exploration, training, and counseling in personal preparation for employability, and training and counseling in techniques for identifying and pursuing employment opportunities (including information on local emerging and demand occupations and job placement services).

Component Cost: \$1,043,172 Cost Per Participant: \$1.404

Job Retention Services

Description: SNAP E&T agencies choosing to offer the job retention component must provide at least 30 days and no more than 90 days of job retention services. Job Retention support must be directly related to a participant's continued efforts to maintain employment and offer the participant the ability to advance living wages careers. The criteria for receiving Job Retention Services are determined upon the needs of the participant once he/she enters employment as long as the employment was obtained while he/she was receiving other SNAP E&T services. Once employment has been verified, a Reassessment will be conducted and the participant will be assigned to Job Retention Services for a minimum of 30 days and a maximum of 90 days. Cost of component: \$814,320; Cost per participant: \$1,404

Education

Description: SNAP E&T participants are offered the opportunity to be referred to the Virginia Department of Education ABE/GED program if basic skill remediation is identified through the SNAP E&T assessment process. Formalized relationships in terms of MOU's exist between LDSS and Adult Basic Education Providers. VDSS is a mandatory partner alongside WIOA Title II providers which include Adult and Base Education (ABE) – Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). This is embodied under the Commonwealths of Virginia's Combined Workforce Plan. Wrap around services are coordinated with LDSS's to ensure seamless service delivery to SNAP E&T participants assigned to this component. Credentials obtained after the completion of the EPB include the following:

1. Adult Basic Education (ABE) – ABE programs are designed to help adults improve their skills in reading, writing, mathematics, language acquisition and other basic skills. Students working below the ninth-grade level receive help to transition to Adult Secondary Education.
2. GED – Currently, the only Virginia board-approved HSE examination is the GED test, which was developed to enable persons who have not graduated from high school to demonstrate the attainment of abilities normally associated with completion of a high school program of study. GED Testing Service is a joint venture of the American Council and Pearson.

SNAP E&T is not charged for Adult Education costs. Cost for participation is provided by other sources both state and federal. Career/Technical Education Programs or other Vocational Training.

Educational Component: Career/Technical Education Programs or Other Vocational Training

Description: This component provides training in a workforce-based, high-wage/high demand skill or trade that will improve employability of participants and allow the participant to move directly into employment or will provide skill enhancement to increase employment advancement opportunities. Assignments to

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Educational or Vocational Training programs are usually determined based on the results of the initial or ongoing assessments. If it is determined, during the Assessment, that the participant has the basic educational skill level required for enrolling in a technical training program, a referral will then be made to the institution of higher learning for further assessments. If it is determined that the participant would then be a good candidate for vocational training, the Plan of Participation will be updated to reflect assignment to Vocational Training. Technical education opportunities are available to all participants who have demonstrated desire and skill competency to complete an educational component. SNAP E&T partners such as the Virginia Community College System determine admission requirements for each program.

Component cost \$12,877,488; Cost per participant: \$1,404

Work Experience: Work Activity

Description: In this component, participants gain work experience and new job skills through unpaid work in a public, private non-profit or for-profit agency. The primary focus of Work Experience: Work Activity is to help the participant develop good work habits, additional job skills, positive work attitudes and an understanding of the employee-employer relationship. Participants may be offered a Work Experience opportunity if they are preparing to enter the workforce and it is determined that additional guidance is required to yield sufficient employment opportunities. Assignments to Work Experience are determined based on the results of ongoing Assessments. If it is determined, during the assessment processes, that the participant has a poor work history, or has been unsuccessful in their supervised job search attempts, then the participant would then be a good candidate for Work Experience. Following the Initial and ongoing Assessments and based upon the information gathered and analyzed, the Employment Service Worker and the participant will decide if Work Experience is the best component activity for the participant based on participants strengths and goals.

Component Cost: \$46,332; Cost per participant: \$1,404

2. A description of the case management services and models, how participants will be referred to case management, how the participant's case will be managed, who will provide case management services, and how the service providers will coordinate with E&T providers, the State agency, and other community resources, as appropriate. The State plan should also discuss how the State agency will ensure E&T participants are provided with targeted case management services through an efficient administrative process;

The Eligibility Worker (EW) conducts a screening and assessment to ensure an individual is appropriate for SNAP E&T. An Employment Service Worker (ESW) at the Local Department of Social services receives the referral and contacts the work registrant. Eligibility Workers are required to discuss and explain Employment and Training opportunities offered under the program if a work registrant does not meet an exemption criteria. Eligibility Workers currently perform the role of screening and referring clients to SNAP E&T through a set of screening questions in VaCMS. Eligibility Workers interphase closely Employment Service Workers (SNAP E&T) to ensure that clients referred appropriately referred to SNAP E&T queue for initial assessment and further enrollment in SNAP E&T. The SNAP E&T worker provides information about the services available and the benefits of the program. If a work registrant does not meet any exemption criteria, they are referred to the SNAP E&T program. During application, reapplication and recertification, each member of the household is evaluated for Work Registration. SNAP participants can volunteer to enroll in SNAP E&T. In this case the client is transferred from the EW to the ESW, assessed and enrolled in SNAP E&T at the Local Departments of Social who offer the program (36 agencies, statewide) SNAP recipients are assessed and then a Plan of Participation (POP) is developed.

Targeted Case Management is offered to all SNAP E&T participants including volunteers. Case management services continue throughout the Plan of Participation and include: Barrier Removal, Transportation Assistance, Supportive Services as necessary and/or referral to community resources as necessary. Case Management activities directly support an individual's participation in the SNAP E&T program. Case

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management services can include, but are not limited to, comprehensive intake assessments, individualized Plan of Participation, progress monitoring, or coordination with service providers consisting of case management and at least one component. SNAP E&T programs must consist of case management and at least one Employment and Training Component. Case Management must be provided to all SNAP E&T Participants. Case Management must directly support an individual's participation in an Employment and Training program. Case Management services must be targeted to the needs of the participant and allow for efficient delivery of services. Case Management Services may only include allowable Employment and Training Costs. Time spent by the participant must count toward time-engaged with Employment and Training, as long as the services are allowable costs. Workforce Services recommends a good faith effort on the part of the ESW to reschedule the appointment or determine reasons for non-compliance so that the ESW can explore interventions for barrier elimination. ESWs contact their clients if they do not show up for either the orientation or the initial assessment.

ESWs are trained in wrap-around case management principles to ensure participants are provided with a high level of support and assistance with potential barriers that may prevent self-sufficiency. These services are often provided in a case staffing format with multiple workforce and social service providers offering input and resources to address potential participant issues.

Clients with significant barriers to employment receive intensive and targeted case management services. At minimum, for all SNAP E&T participants, case management is required on a monthly basis. Case narrative on each participant is maintained in VaCMS participant records.

For SNAP E&T 50-50 Partners, participant eligibility in the program is determined through state staff at the Home Office. SNAP 50-50 coordinators will strive to ensure that SNAP eligibility verification will be done as close to enrollment ideally within the first 30 days. SNAP 50-50 Coordinators verify SNAP eligibility at the time of participant enrollment or at minimum on a monthly basis. Upon the enrollment of SNAP E&T individuals in VaCMS participants continue to receive case management services for as long as they are assigned to SNAP E&T component activities.

3. An operating budget for the Federal fiscal year with an estimate of the cost of operation for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan. Any State agency that requests 50 percent Federal reimbursement for State agency E&T administrative costs, other than for participant reimbursements, must include in its plan, or amendments to its plan, an itemized list of all activities and costs for which those Federal funds will be claimed, including the costs for case management and casework to facilitate the transition from economic dependency to self-sufficiency through work. Costs in excess of the Federal grant will be allowed only with the prior approval of FNS and must be adequately documented to assure that they are necessary, reasonable and properly allocated. A State must submit a plan amendment to request budget adjustments at least 30 days prior to planned implementation;

Expense Category	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
I. Direct Program and Admin Costs			
Salary/Wages (State agency only)	\$ 160,898.00	\$ 160,898.00	\$ 321,796.00
Fringe Benefits - provide approved fringe benefit rate percentage in line			

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Expense Category	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
8 below. Or provide total fringe benefits in line 9 if multiple rates are used by the State agency			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Fringe Benefits -	\$ 43,886.00	\$43,886.00	\$87,772.00
Non-capital equipment	\$3,859.00	\$3,859.00	\$7,718.00
Materials	\$8,500.00	\$8,500.00	\$17,000.00
Travel	\$3,742.00	\$3,742.00	\$7,484.00
Building Space	\$9,425.50	\$9,425.50	\$18,851.00
Equipment and other capital expenditures			\$ -
<i>Subtotal - State agency costs only</i>	\$230,310.50	\$230,310.50	\$460,621.00
Contractual Costs: <i>Is prepopulating from Contract-Partnerships Table, must not include Participant reimbursements.</i>	\$7,990,253.42	\$7,990,253.42	\$15,980,506.84
County Administered Program Admin Cost, if applicable: <i>Is prepopulating from Tab D - Optional County Admin Budget.</i>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
County Administered Direct Program Admin Cost , if applicable. <i>Enter County costs here if Tab D - Optional</i>	\$175,000	\$175,000	\$350,000

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Expense Category	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
<i>County Admin Budget table is not used.</i>			
Total Direct Program and Admin Costs	\$8,395,563.92	\$8,395,563.92	\$16,791,127.84
II. Indirect Costs - using indirect cost rate: <i>Indirect costs are only calculated on the subtotal of State agency costs shown on Row 15.</i>			
Indirect Costs - provide approved indirect cost rate percentage in line 23 below.			
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Indirect Costs - using Federally Approved Cost Allocation Plan.			
Federally Approved Cost Allocated Costs - State agency only.	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$120,000.00
County Administered Allocated Costs (only applicable to County Administered Programs)	\$1,234,787.00	\$1,234,787.00	\$4,160,056.00
Total Allocated Costs based on Cost Allocation Plan	\$1,294,787.00	\$2,985,269.00	\$4,280,056.00

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Expense Category	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
III. In-kind contribution			
State in-kind contribution	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Administrative Costs	\$9,690,350.92	\$11,380,832.92	\$21,071,183.84
IV. Participant Reimbursements			
Dependent Care (including costs from contracts/partners and county administered programs)			\$ -
Transportation & Other costs (including costs from contracts/partners and county administered programs)	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 500,000.00
State Agency Cost for Dependent Care	\$ -		\$ -
Total Participant Reimbursements	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 500,000.00
V. Total Costs	\$9,940,350.92	\$11,630,832.92	\$21,571,183.84

4. The categories and types of individuals the State agency intends to exempt from E&T participation, the estimated percentage of work registrants the State agency plans to exempt, and the frequency with which the State agency plans to reevaluate the validity of its exemptions;

Virginia is an all-voluntary E&T program; therefore, all work registrants (100%) are exempt. Additionally, there is not a frequency on re-evaluation of exemptions since Virginia is a voluntary SNAP E&T state.

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5. The characteristics of the population the State agency intends to place in E&T;

Currently, Virginia's focus is on the SNAP E&T enrollments of SNAP recipients who wish to volunteer and are considered work-ready, or those volunteers who would benefit from vocational training and/or education in the pursuit of their employment goals. Work ready individuals should possess the foundational skills necessary to be minimally qualified for a specific occupation as determined through a job analysis or occupational profile.

6. The estimated number of volunteers the State agency expects to place in E&T;

Anticipated number of work registrants	100,000
Virginia state exemptions from E&T and the number of work registrants expected to be exempted under category. *Virginia is a voluntary SNAP E&T state	201,188
Percent of all work registrants exempt from E&T	100%
ABAWDS	
Anticipated number of ABAWDs	4,500
Anticipated number of ABAWDs in waived areas of the state	0
Anticipated number of ABAWDs to be exempted under the State's ABAWD discretionary exemption allowance	250
Number of potential at-risk ABAWDs expected in the State	4,250
E&T Participants	
Anticipated number of mandatory E&T participants	0
Anticipated number of voluntary E&T participants	15,000
Anticipated number of ABAWDs expected to serve in E&T	3,500
Participant Reimbursements	
Number of individuals expected to receive participant reimbursements	7,700
Percentage of participants expected to receive reimbursements	51.33%

7. The geographic areas covered and not covered by the E&T Plan and why, and the type and location of services to be offered;

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SNAP E&T operates locally at 32 out of the 120 agencies throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Due to the program being voluntary in Virginia, each locality has the option of deciding of whether they would like to become a SNAP E&T agency based on funding, locality (rural vs. city) and available community resources.

SNAP E&T Full Service LDSS (32 agencies): Albemarle County, City of Alexandria, Arlington County, Bedford County, City of Bristol, Brunswick County, City of Charlottesville, City of Chesapeake, Chesterfield/Colonial Heights, City of Danville, Fairfax County, City of Galax, Grayson County, City of Hampton, Henry-Martinsville, King and Queen County, City of Manassas, Montgomery County, City of Newport News, City of Norfolk, City of Petersburg, Pittsylvania County, City of Portsmouth, Prince George County, City of Richmond, Roanoke County, Smyth County, Stafford County, Surry County, Tazewell County, City of Virginia Beach, and Wise County.

SNAP E&T components offered for FFY 2026 include the following;

- Supervised Job Search (SJS)
- Job Search Training (JST)
- Work Experience: (Work Activity - WA)
- Education: GED (Adult Basic Education (EPB
- Vocational Training/Career/Technical (EPC)
- Job Retention (JR).

NOTE: SNAP E&T COMPONENT OFFERINGS MAY DIFFER BETWEEN THE 32 SNAP E&T LOCALITIES, BUT EACH AGENCY MUST OFFER AT LEAST ONE QUALIFYING COMPONENT AS IDENTIFIED IN THE SNAP E&T STATE PLAN.

8. The method the State agency uses to count all work registrants as of the first day of the new fiscal year;

Information for work registrant data is provided by the VDSS Office of Research and Planning utilizing the source system- VaCMS. This is a count of distinct VACMS distinct individual id numbers of eligible work registrants on October 1. The individual id number is an exclusive number assigned to each individual customer. The numbers are not duplicated. The process involves confirming or identifying SNAP cases in application status that were identified during the reporting period. Secondly, next steps involved identifying eligibility begin and end dates. Thirdly, identifying new registrants based on individual program status and work registration requirement codes. These are unduplicated numbers as assigned through the SNAP eligibility process in our case management system. To produce this report, the data from the VaCMS system is loaded into ESP Data Mart. Aggregation rules are utilized with reference to specific section headings from a sample report. The aggregation rules reference business names from the VaCMS system. Once this is completed the number of work registrants receiving SNAP is reported on October 1st of the new fiscal year.

9. The method the State agency uses to report work registrant information on the quarterly Form FNS-583;

The Quarterly Form FNS-583 is due 45 days after the end of each quarter. To ensure that accurate information is being collected on each work registrant, The Office of Research and Planning produces a report which generates the numbers for each category:

- Number of work registrants receiving SNAP on October 1 of the new fiscal year.
- Number of new work registrants
- Number of ABAWD applicants and recipients participating in qualifying components

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- Number of all other applicants and recipients (including ABWADs invoices in non-qualifying activities) participating in components
- Number of ABAWD case months used under the State agency's 15 percent exemption allowance
- Number of individuals who participated in each component (Supervised Job Search, Job Search Training, Community Work Experience, Education, and Vocational/Occupational Training): **This is completed only for the 4th quarter and numbers are not reported for ABAWD due to the waiver.**

Each Individual is counted one time per component (unduplicated) where the component end date is on or after the start date of the FFY. The participant information for SNAP 50-50 participants is also consolidated within this information and is unduplicated as well. The Office of Research and Planning provides the data for SNAP 50-50 since this information is not available in VaCMS. The 50-50 data is collected from each of the vendors and kept within a shared spreadsheet.

10. The method the State agency uses to prevent work registrants from being counted twice within a Federal fiscal year. If the State agency universally work registers all SNAP applicants, this method must specify how the State agency excludes those exempt from work registration under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(b)(1). If the State agency work registers nonexempt participants whenever a new application is submitted, this method must also specify how the State agency excludes those participants who may have already been registered within the past 12 months as specified under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(a)(1)(i);

The number of work registrants is available through a report in VaCMS. A monthly report displays the number of work registrants in each local department of social services. Working with the Office of Research and Planning, reports are generated which break down the number of registrants per month to ensure that there is non-duplication. At the close of the Federal Fiscal Year, the generated reports count each person whose referral has been assigned 'Assessment Complete' or 'Activity Created' once per component group. Each individual is counted one time per component where the component end date is on or after the start date of the FFY (Oct 1) and the component begin date precedes the last day of the FFY (Sept. 30).

11. The organizational relationship between the units responsible for certification and the units operating the E&T components, including units of the Statewide workforce development system, if available. FNS is specifically concerned that the lines of communication be efficient and that noncompliance by the participant be reported to the certification unit within 10 working days after the noncompliance occurs;

The Virginia SNAP E&T program is directly supervised at the state level by the Workforce Services Unit and is responsible for establishing E&T policies, 50-50 contracts, administration and monitoring (agencies and providers). The local departments of social services are responsible for the administration of their program at the county/city level. The E&T program at the state and local level is separate from the SNAP certification unit. The SNAP E&T Manager and SNAP Manager meet and communicate to provide updates of each program that is to be shared with their prospective teams. Pertinent information is shared with the LDSS and 50-50 vendors through emails, quarterly meetings (virtually through WebEx), state-wide conferences and VDSS Broadcasts (internal communication system).

Workforce Services maintains the position that the Eligibility Workers perform an integral role in screening and referring participants to the SNAP E&T VaCMS ESP Queue. The screening, eligibility and the referral process to SNAP E&T begins with the Eligibility Worker or Benefit Program Specialists (BPS). The process begins by screening individuals and individuals to the Employment Service Program- SNAPET (ESP Module). Eligibility Workers (EW) determine the work registration status for each household member. The EW is required to record any member as registered if the member does not meet a work registration exemption. SNAP sub-recipients who choose to volunteer are also screened by the Eligibility Workers by answering a series of screening questions and referred to the SNAPET ESP Module in VaCMS.

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After an individual is referred to the SNAPET ESP Module, the Employment Service Worker (ESW) pulls the client out of the ESP Queue and contacts them via phone or electronically (via email) to schedule an initial assessment. The Office of Workforce Services (WFS) has maintained a consistent position of communicating and educating Benefit Program Specialists during conference forums to have brief conversations with SNAP applicants during interview about SNAP E&T at application, reapplication and during recertification of the benefits of participating in SNAP E&T. Individuals in the household who are evaluated by the EW who do not have a Work Registration Exemption or a Work Requirement Exemption are referred electronically via the Virginia Case Management System (VaCMS) to the Employment Service Program (ESP) module in VaCMS. If a participant is interested in the program, a warm hand-off is completed by the EW to the Employment Services Team at the LDSS to manually enroll volunteers in VaCMS to be assessed and enrolled in SNAP E&T component activities. After being enrolled in SNAP E&T, if a customer is found to be non-compliant, they are sent a notice of closure by the ESW and this is internally communicated to the BPS/EW within 10 days of the closure being sent to the customer.

In the case of Provider Determinations, Eligibility Workers, not Employment Services Workers will be responsible for ensuring that clients who are referred by E&T providers that are determined ill-suited, are notified within 10 days of receiving information from an E&T provider at the LDSS or any of the 50/50 providers. Eligibility Workers will take one of the four actions after an individual receives a provider determination:

1. Refer the individual to an appropriate employment and training component;
2. Refer the individual to an appropriate workforce partnership, if available;
3. Re-assess the individual for mental and physical fitness; or
4. Coordinate with other Federal, State, or local workforce or assistance programs to identify Employment and training opportunities.

12. The relationship between the State agency and other organizations it plans to coordinate with for the provision of services, including organizations in the Statewide workforce development system, if available. Copies of contracts must be available for inspection; The State agency must document how it consulted with the State workforce development board. If the State agency consulted with private employers or employer organizations in lieu of the State workforce development board, it must document this consultation and explain the determination that doing so was more effective or efficient. The State agency must include in its E&T State plan a description of any outcomes from the consultation with the State workforce development board or private employers or employer organizations. The State agency must also address in the E&T State plan the extent to which E&T activities will be carried out in coordination with the activities under title I of WIOA;

Working in partnership with statewide local Workforce Development Boards allows Virginia to create strategic pathways aligned with WIOA Title I service activities and a direct connection to the business community through business alliances served by the Workforce Development Boards. VDSS staff meet on a monthly basis, leading up to the state plan submission, with state workforce board members, local workforce board directors, and representatives from Virginia's workforce system agencies: Virginia Community College System, the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), Virginia Career Works Centers (CWC) Department of Education, and the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitation Services (DARS). Conversations center on the coordination of services at the local level and how other workforce services can be leveraged to supplement SNAP E&T services. In addition, the Virginia Career Works Referral Portal, va-career-works.myjourney.com is our state web interface connecting job seekers to state workforce resources and workforce partners. This portal allows VDSS to connect SNAP E&T participants to state agencies providing workforce services. SNAP E&T staff worked on coordination of the implementation of the referral portal in conjunction with the other partners.

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The SNAP E&T 50-50 program continues to utilize quality Third-Party Partnerships to deliver employment and training programs and services. A full listing of 50-50 partners and services provided is detailed below.

Partner/Vendor	Description of Services
Moving Forward Agency	Work-readiness assessment, ACT Workeys, Remedial Education, Job Skills Training, Tuition Assistance, Job Retention Services.
Virginia Community College System	Training: FastForward (credentials and certifications for regional in demand industries) industries), FANTIC (funding for FastForward training), Great Expectations (serving former foster youth), Single Stops (provides benefit eligibility determination to every student).

Based on a collaborative approach to delivering streamlined workforce development solutions, Virginia’s workforce system focuses on regional labor demands and engages the training capacity of school divisions, community colleges, local Workforce Development Boards (WDB), the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), Virginia Career Works Centers (CWC) through WIOA Title I, Title II Department of Education Adult Education (Adult ED) and Literacy Program, Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitation Services (DARS) and (VDSS) through county and city- based (LDSS), as well as local Workforce Development Boards (WDB) and community- based organizations to get Virginia’s citizens prepared for high-skilled, high-wage jobs. A broad spectrum of supportive services is provided, including childcare and transportation.

WIOA-Title I and The Virginia Department of Social Services, through the comprehensive Career Works Centers (one-stops) are operating under Memorandums of Understanding and resource sharing agreements. VDSS continues to work collaboratively to build referral pipelines and co-location agreements as well as working to leverage resources to meet the needs of the job-seeking populations served. VDSS will continue to expand these collaborative relationships as a strategic commitment to be an integral part of Virginia’s workforce system.

Launched May 2020, the Virginia Career Works Referral Portal, <https://va-career-works.myjourney.com/> is our state web interface connecting job seekers to state workforce resources and workforce partners. This portal allows VDSS to connect SNAP E&T participants to state agencies providing workforce services. This streamlined effort will allow Virginia to engage in qualitative data sharing about the use of our state workforce programs as we move to develop further cost-allocation methodologies and referral strategies to support our mutual clients better.

Data regarding living wage, high-demand occupations in Virginia is available through the VEC website: <http://www.vec.virginia.gov/>. In-demand, occupations with healthcare, clerical and support, healthcare STEM positions, nursing, manufacturing, production, and finance. Industry credentials can be obtained through the VCCS System’s Fast Forward program. SNAP E&T participants are referred for participation in Fast Forward. A wide variety of credentials are available linked to in-demand positions, including X-ray and EKG technology, pharmacy, nursing, emergency medical care, billing and coding, logistics and transportation, welding, manufacturing, skilled trades, information and technology and business, and customer service.

13. The availability, if appropriate, of E&T programs for Indians living on reservations after the State agency has consulted in good faith with appropriate tribal organizations;

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The federal government has only recently recognized tribes in Virginia. They have not established SNAP programs and do not operate any SNAP E&T programs. Residents on tribal lands apply and receive assistance through the local department of social services.

14. If a conciliation process is planned, the procedures that will be used when an individual fails to comply with an E&T program requirement. Include the length of the conciliation period; and

Not applicable. SNAP E&T participation is voluntary. Sanctions will not be applied for non-participation in SNAP E&T.

15. The payment rates for child care established in accordance with the Child Care and Development Block Grant provisions of 45 CFR 98.43, and based on local market rate surveys.

SNAP recipients participating in the E&T program are eligible to receive childcare assistance through the Virginia Child Care Subsidy Program. The copayment is determined by the household income. If the household income is \$0, then the copayment is \$0 as well.

The Commonwealth of Virginia conducts market surveys every three years and the results are received and tabulated. The data is used to determine the cost of care by locality throughout the Commonwealth and is a Federal Requirement of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). This is the major source of funding for the Virginia Child Care.

Age of Child	Base Payment Rate	Full-time Weekly Base Payment Rate
Infant (6 months) center care	\$94/day	\$470/week
Toddler (18 months) center care	\$81/day	\$405/week
Preschooler (4 years) center care	\$70/day	\$350/week
School-age child (6 years) center care	\$61/day	\$305/week
Infant (6 months) family child care	\$81/day	\$405/week
Toddler (18 months) family child care	\$81/day	\$405/week
Preschooler (4 years) family child care	\$70/day	\$405/week
School-age child (6 years) family child care	\$81/day	\$405/week

16. The combined (Federal/State) State agency reimbursement rate for transportation costs and other expenses reasonably necessary and directly related to participation incurred by E&T participants. If the State agency proposes to provide different reimbursement amounts to account for varying levels of expenses, for instance for greater or lesser costs of transportation in different areas of the State, it must include them here.

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	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
50 Percent Transportation & Other Costs	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00	\$500,000.00

Reimbursement rates for transportation and other costs association with SNAP E&T participation are set by each of local SNAP E&T agencies. Each of the 36 participating SNAP E&T agencies submit an annual SNAP E&T plan which outlines the reimbursement rates for all participant reimbursements.

The following are the only reimbursement caps set by VDSS:

Allowable Participant Reimbursement	Participant Reimbursement Cap
Housing Assistance (including rent and/or utilities)	Housing assistance is for emergencies only and on a case-by-case basis. Not to exceed \$1,500.00 per occurrence and no more than two times in a 12-month period.
Driver's License Restoration	Exceptions apply to certain conviction-related suspensions and revocations. A list of these suspensions and revocations can be found at www.dmv.virginia.gov/webdoc/pdf/dmv39f.pdf . Assistance is limited to \$300.00 per occurrence and no more than once in a 12-month period.
Technology: broadband/internet/wifi/laptops & tablets	\$1,200 maximum per person

17. Information about expenses the State agency proposes to reimburse. FNS must be afforded the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed reimbursements before they are implemented.

Participant Reimbursement	Caps, if applicable	Provider	Method of Disbursement
Childcare	N/A	Virginia Department of Social Services - Child Care Subsidy Program.	Reimbursement for the actual amount.
Transportation	Set by Local Department of Social Services	Division of Benefits Programs - SNAP E&T Program	Reimbursement for the actual amount. Virginia pays providers directly for participants' services or provides the participant with a voucher such as a gas card. The local SNAP E&T agencies pay the

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Participant Reimbursement	Caps, if applicable	Provider	Method of Disbursement
			amount, enter the amount in the State LASER system (accounting system) and are reimbursed against their allocations for supportive and purchase services. LASER is monitored at the state level and the local agencies are visited yearly to review expenditures and enrollments.
Other allowable participant reimbursements: 1. Clothing suitable for job interviews 2. Licensing and bonding fees for work experience or job placement 3. Uniforms & work shoes 4. Purchase of an initial set of tools or equipment if required for a SNAP E& component or job retention component 5. Fingerprinting, if necessary for employment 6. Background check when necessary for employment 7. Medical services such as TB testing if required for employment		Division of Benefits Programs - SNAP E&T Program	Reimbursement for the actual amount. Virginia pays providers directly for participants' services. The local SNAP E&T agencies pay the amount, enter the amount in the State LASER system (accounting system) and are reimbursed against their allocations for supportive and purchase services. LASER is monitored at the state level and the local agencies are visited yearly to review expenditures and enrollments.

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Participant Reimbursement	Caps, if applicable	Provider	Method of Disbursement
8. Personal safety items required to complete training and educational components 9. Books 10. Course registration fees 11. Drugs tests if required for employment 12. Eye exams and vision correction, such as the purchase of eyeglasses 13. Dental work 14. Minor auto repairs 15. Tests fees and training material directly related to a SNAP E&T component 16. Union dues necessary for employment 17. Housing Assistance (rent/utilities) 18. Broadband Internet and Laptops 19. Driver's License Reinstatement	17. Emergencies only: \$1,500 per occurrence and no more than two times in a 12-month period 19. \$300 per occurrence and no more than once in a 12-month period		

18. For each component that is expected to include 100 or more participants, reporting measures that the State will collect and include in the annual report in paragraph (c)(17) of this section. Such measures may include:

A. The percentage and number of program participants who received E&T services and are in unsubsidized employment subsequent to the receipt of those services;

Component	Outcome Measure	Methodology including the timeframes being reported
Supervised Job Search	Number of people who obtain unsubsidized employment after completion of the component.	Numerator includes those participants who obtained employment after completing the component during the period of 10/01 to 09/30 of the federal fiscal year. Denominator will include the number of participants that participated in supervised job search during the period of 10/01 to 09/30 of the federal fiscal year.
Job Search Training	Number of people who obtain unsubsidized employment after completion of the component.	Numerator includes those participants who obtained employment after completing component during the period of 10/01 to 09/30 of the federal fiscal year. Denominator will include the number of participants that participated in Job Search Training during the period of 10/01 to 09/30 of the federal fiscal year.
Career/Technical and Other Vocational Training	Number of people who obtain unsubsidized employment after completion of the component.	Numerator includes those participants who obtained unsubsidized employment after completing component during the period of 10/01 to 09/30 of the federal fiscal year. Denominator will include the number of participants that participated in career/technical or other vocation training during the period of 10/01 to 09/30 of the federal fiscal year.

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B. The percentage and number of participants who obtain a recognized credential, a registered apprenticeship, or a regular secondary school diploma (or its recognized equivalent), while participating in, or within 1 year after receiving E&T services;

Component	Outcome Measure	Methodology including the timeframes being reported
Career/Technical or Other Vocational Training	Number of people who obtain a credential after completion of the component.	Numerator includes those participants who obtained a credential after completing component during the period of 10/01 to 09/30 of the federal fiscal year. Denominator will include the number of participants that participated career/technical or other vocation training during the period of 10/01 to 09/30 of the federal fiscal year.

C. The percentage and number of participants who are in an education or training program that is intended to lead to a recognized credential, a registered apprenticeship an on-the-job training program, a regular secondary school diploma (or its recognized equivalent), or unsubsidized employment;

Component	Outcome Measure	Methodology including the timeframes being reported
Career/Technical or Other Vocational Training	Number of people who obtain a credential after completion of the component.	Numerator includes those participants who obtained a credential after completing component during the period of 10/01 to 09/30 of the federal fiscal year. Denominator will include the number of participants that participated career/technical or other vocation training during the period of 10/01 to 09/30 of the federal fiscal year.
Career/Technical and Other Vocational Training	Number of people who obtain unsubsidized employment after completion of the component.	Numerator includes those participants who obtained unsubsidized employment after completing component during the period of 10/01 to 09/30 of the federal fiscal year.

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Component	Outcome Measure	Methodology including the timeframes being reported
		Denominator will include the number of participants that participated in career/technical or other vocation training during the period of 10/01 to 09/30 of the federal fiscal year.

D. Measures developed to assess the skills acquisition of E&T program participants that reflect the goals of the specific components including the percentage and number of participants who are meeting program requirements or are gaining skills likely to lead to employment; and

This measure does not apply to Virginia's components and outcome measures.

E. Other indicators approved by FNS in the E&T State plan.

Component	Outcome Measure	Methodology including the timeframes being reported
Job Retention	Percentage of participants that retained employment for at least 30 days.	Numerator will include the number of participants who maintained unsubsidized employment for at least 30 days during the period of 10/01 to 09/30 of the federal fiscal year. Denominator will include the number of participants that participated in Job Retention during the period of 10/01 to 09/30 of the federal fiscal year.

b. Able-bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD) [28]

1. Its pledge to offer a qualifying activity to all at-risk ABAWD applicants and recipients;

Virginia is not a pledge state.

2. Estimated costs of fulfilling its pledge;

Virginia is not a pledge state.

3. A description of management controls in place to meet pledge requirements;

Virginia is not a pledge state.

4. A discussion of its capacity and ability to serve at-risk ABAWDs;

All ABAWDS receiving SNAP from the 36 participating agencies will be offered the opportunity to participate in the SNAP E&T program. This is a vulnerable population given the time limit and the many challenges they face

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including lack of a high school diploma and low education levels, little work history, lack of job skills, and lack of reliable transportation. Each ABAWD volunteer will undergo an assessment done by SNAPE&T case manager. Activities will be assigned based on the findings of the assessment and include: job readiness, basic skill remediation, career track education/training, work experience, internship and/or other as identified.

The Commonwealth of Virginia will offer SNAPE&T services and supports to all ABAWD on a voluntary basis utilizing existing workforce infrastructure that leverages partnerships with the community college system through Fast Forward as well our partnerships with our WIOA/Title I partners through the comprehensive one-stops. Other partnerships will be identified through our SNAP 50-50 partner program.

5. Information about the size and special needs of its ABAWD population; and

All ABAWDs receiving SNAP from the 32 participating agencies will be offered the opportunity to participate in the SNAP E&T program. This is a vulnerable population given the time limit and the many challenges they face including lack of a high school diploma and low education levels, little work history, lack of job skills, and lack of reliable transportation. Each ABAWD volunteer will undergo an assessment done by SNAPE&T case manager. Activities will be assigned based on the findings of the assessment and include: job readiness, basic skill remediation, career track education/training, work experience, internship and/or other as identified.

The Commonwealth of Virginia will offer SNAPE&T services and supports to all ABAWD on a voluntary basis utilizing existing workforce infrastructure that leverages partnerships with the community college system through Fast Forward as well our partnerships with our WIOA/Title I partners through the comprehensive one-stops. Other partnerships will be identified through our SNAP 50-50 partner program.

6. Information about the education, training, and workfare components it will offer to meet the ABAWD work requirement

The following components will be offered for ABAWD work requirement: Job Search Training, Career/Technical and other Vocational Training, Basic Education, Work Experience: Work Activity and Job Retention.

JOBS FOR VETERANS' STATE GRANTS

(OMB Control Number: 1293-0017)

Components of the Jobs for Veterans State Grants State Plan

Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) recipients must provide a four-year state plan as a condition for the receipt of annual funding in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c). This plan must include responses to each of the components below.

DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES TO VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS UNDER THE JVSG PROGRAM

(I.E., VIRTUALLY AND IN-PERSON).

Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists, Lead Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LLVERs), and Consolidated DVOP/LVER (CODLs) are essential parts of and fully integrated into the workforce development network. They are included among the Virginia Workforce Connection (VAWC) system and the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) partner staff, which consists of all staff employed by programs or activities operated by WIOA partners listed in 29 U.S.C. § 2841(b) that provide online and/or in-person workforce development or related support services as part of the workforce development system. Other Virginia Job Center partner staff members include staff of WIOA, Wagner-Peyser (WP) and other one-stop network partner programs. In addition to in-person services, DVOPs also provide case management and career

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services virtually utilizing Microsoft Teams and/or other software. DVOPs and CODLs also assess clients' needs and connect them with opportunities to enhance their skill sets and increase employability.

The Virginia Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program offers employment services to all eligible veterans, eligible persons and additional populations authorized by the U.S. Secretary of Labor in the state with the goal of assisting those parties in overcoming barriers to employment and matching veteran job seekers with the best career opportunities available. In addition, JVSG staff coordinate with businesses, industries, and other community-based organizations to develop employment opportunities for veterans. Staffing levels and assigned locations of DVOPs, LLVERs and CODLs are dependent upon continued funding and periodic review of the needs of the veteran population.

JVSG staff are assigned to one of two geographic regions (East, and West). Each region is managed by a JVSG-funded Regional Veteran Manager who collaborates with the Chief of Veteran Services. Our DVOP, LLVER, and CODL staff, located in more than 30 one-stop centers, in rural and metropolitan areas, offer one-on-one individualized career services and employment assistance to both veterans and employers. The JVSG staff are fully integrated into the one-stops in these regions and work hand in hand with WIOA staff to ensure Priority of Service (POS) to veteran clients. One-stop partner staff conduct the necessary screening to ensure only eligible veterans, eligible persons, and designated additional populations are seen by the DVOPs/CODLs.

In addition to the one-stops, DVOP/CODL staff are assigned to more than 15 US Military Installations separating over 21,000 service members each year, Veteran Affairs (VA) Hospitals, homeless shelters and non-profit organizations to increase outreach efforts. JVSG staff use the state job-matching system, Virginia Career Works (VAWC), to document services provided to eligible veterans, eligible persons, additional populations and employers. Veterans register for employment in the VAWC, and if screened for case management services by a DVOP/CODL, when clients are job ready, DVOPs/CODLs and LLVERs/CODLs coordinate job matching with employers. Planned In-person and Virtual Job Fairs are conducted by LLVERs/CODLs throughout the year with strong support from the State employer base, one-stop partners, community partners, national recognized groups such as the National Chamber of Commerce Foundation, American Legion, and many others.

When not actively providing individualized career services or reviewing open case files, DVOPs/CODLs conduct outreach at off-site locations including, but not limited to, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs offices, Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Military Treatment facilities (MTF), Warrior Transition Units/Battalions (WTU/WTB), Local Prisons and Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) grantee locations. The purpose of these outreach efforts is three-fold. The first purpose is to maximize the number of participants that the service providers refer to Virginia's workforce delivery system, who are both eligible for and could benefit from DVOP/CODL services. The second purpose is to enhance outcomes for participants that the DVOP/CODL refer to other providers. The third purpose is to strengthen community awareness of the array of services available through the workforce development system.

While DVOPs/CODLs see eligible veterans, eligible persons and additional populations, LLVERs/CODLs advocate for ALL veterans seen at the one-stop. Those veterans, persons and populations not eligible to be case managed by a DVOP/CODL are still provided with employment services by Wagner-Peyser and other one-stop staff and are given Priority of Service as applicable. When job-ready, these veteran clients provided services by a DVOP/CODL or another one-stop partner are referred to LLVERs/CODLs for job development with employers and who also promote to employers, employer associations, and business groups the advantages of hiring veterans.

Lead LVERs (LLVERs) provide direct supervisory and administrative oversight for the DVOP staff in their assigned areas of operation. LLVERs perform their traditional role within their assigned geographic area 70% of the time. The remaining time is spent performing supervisory functions for DVOP staff, thus ensuring that

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each staff member is performing according to expectations and increasing the integration and accountability of JVSG staff as a partner within the current workforce model. Two DVOPs are assigned as DVOP/Veteran Employment Specialists (VES) and are located in the Prince William and Hampton offices. In this DVOP/VES role they perform their traditional DVOP role within their assigned geographic area 50% of the time. The remaining 50% is spent performing duties as a Wagner-Peyser Veteran Employment Specialist conducting outreach and employment services to Veterans, Military Spouses, and Dependent family members on local military installations that do not meet eligibility requirements to see a DVOP.

Furthermore, in addition to DVOPs and CODLs, each one-stop will have trained employment services staff and business services teams. DVOP specialists coordinate closely with these one-stop center staff members when providing individualized career services to eligible veterans, eligible persons, and additional populations. LLVERs provide advice and guidance as needed to one-stop center staff who provide services to veterans and are also mandatory members of the local Business Services Team.

The LLVER/CODL coordinates with Area Managers, Business Services Coordinators, and members of the Workforce Delivery Teams to advocate to business, industry, and other community-based organizations on behalf of veterans and to develop job opportunities specifically for veterans. LLVER/CODL staff train WP funded and other one-stop staff on how to screen veterans to determine JVSG program eligibility and to refer eligible veterans, eligible persons and additional populations for DVOP/CODL services, educate those staff about current employment initiatives and programs for veterans, and train staff to ensure compliance with Priority of Service requirements.

LIST THE POPULATIONS TO BE SERVED BY DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM

(DVOP) AND CONSOLIDATED POSITION STAFF, INCLUDING THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR REFERRAL FOR DVOP SERVICES.

Please refer to the following Veterans Program Letter (VPL05-24) Jobs for Veterans

State Grants Staff Roles and Responsibilities and Coordination with Workforce

Innovation and Opportunity Act Services to Veterans

<https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/VETS/files/VPL-05-24-JVSG-Staff-Roles->

and-Responsibilities-WIOA-Services-to-Veterans.pdf to identify the eligible veterans, eligible persons, and additional populations to be served by this grant:

DVOPs prioritize services to special disabled and other disabled veterans, as defined by U.S.C.

38, 4211, and to other eligible veterans in accordance with priorities determined by the U.S.

Secretary of Labor. Statute requires that DVOP specialists place maximum emphasis on assisting veterans who are economically or educationally disadvantaged. To ensure that DVOP specialists are able to fulfill their statutory responsibilities to provide individualized career services to these categories of veterans, DOL has developed the following guidance to identify the veterans prioritized and emphasized by the DVOP statute.

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DVOPs will limit their activities to providing services to eligible populations who:

Are interested in receiving one or more individualized career services, and

Meet at least one of the following two criteria:

Are defined as an eligible veteran or eligible person and are experiencing at least one of the qualifying employment barriers below; or

Are members of additional populations eligible for DVOP specialist services as authorized by the current annual appropriations act, as outlined below.

Eligible Veteran According to 38 U.S.C. § 4211(4), an eligible veteran is a person who meets one of the

following criteria:

1. Served on active duty for a period of more than 180 days and was discharged with other than a dishonorable discharge; or
2. Was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability; or
3. Was a member of a reserve component under an order to active duty— pursuant to 10 U.S.C. §§ 12301(a), (d), or (g); 12302; or 12304—who served on active duty during a period of war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge is authorized and was discharged or released from such duty with other than a dishonorable discharge; or
4. Was discharged or released from active duty by reason of a sole survivorship discharge.

Eligible Person According to 38 U.S.C. § 4101(5), an “eligible person” is: 1

1. The spouse of any person who died of a service-connected disability;
2. The spouse of any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for assistance under this chapter, is listed, pursuant to section 556 of title 37 and regulations issued thereunder, by the Secretary concerned in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than ninety days:
 - a. missing in action,

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- b. captured in line of duty by a hostile force, or
 - c. forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power, or
- 3. The spouse of any person who has a total disability permanent in nature resulting from a service-connected disability, or the spouse of a veteran who died while a disability so evaluated was in existence.

Qualifying Employment Barriers. To receive DVOP services, an eligible veteran or eligible person must affirm that they are experiencing at least one of the following employment barriers:

- a. Has a disability, which may include any of the following:
 - i. Special disabled veterans, defined in 38 U.S.C. 38, 4211(1) as a veteran who is entitled to compensation (or who but for the receipt of military retired pay would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for a disability rated at 30 percent or more, or rated at 10 or 20 percent in the case of a veteran who has been determined to have a serious employment handicap; or person who was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability.
 - ii. Disabled veteran, defined in 38 U.S.C. § 4211(3) as a veteran who is entitled to compensation (or who but for the receipt of military retired pay would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; or a person who was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability.
 - iii. Other disability. Eligible veterans and eligible persons who self-identify as having a disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12102.
- b. Is a Vietnam-era veteran, as defined by 38 U.S.C. § 4211(2) as an eligible veteran any part of whose active military, naval, or air service was during the Vietnam era, as defined by 38 U.S.C. § 101(29).
- c. Is a recently separated veteran, defined in 38 U.S.C. § 4211(6) as a veteran who was discharged or released from active duty within the last three years.
- d. Has been referred to employment services by a representative of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- e. Is experiencing homelessness, as defined in Sections 103(a) and (b) of the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. § 11302(a) and (b)).
- f. Is justice-involved, as defined in WIOA Section 3(38), 29 U.S.C. § 3102(38) (definition of “offender”).
- g. Is between the ages of 18–24 years of age at the time of enrollment.
- h. Is educationally disadvantaged, meaning that the individual lacks a high school diploma or equivalent certificate.
- i. Is economically disadvantaged, which means any of the following:
 - i. Meets the definition of a low-income individual in WIOA Section 3(36), 29 U.S.C. § 3102(36).
 - ii. Unemployed.
 - iii. Heads of single-parent households containing at least one dependent child.

Note: An eligible person must personally meet eligibility criteria. In other words, they must both: meet the definition found in 38 U.S.C. § 4101(5) and be experiencing at least one of the criteria listed above (e.g., homeless, justice-

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involved, etc.). An eligible person who is not a veteran may not claim eligibility for DVOP services based on their spouse's status as, for example, a Vietnam-era veteran.

2. Additional Populations. Annual appropriations acts may authorize JVSG staff to serve certain non-veteran populations. Continued service to these individuals is contingent upon future appropriations act authorization. States are responsible for consulting with the DVET and reviewing the appropriations act each year to ensure DVOP specialists are serving only eligible populations. Congress has authorized DVOP specialists to serve, and LVERs to work with employers on behalf of, the following additional populations:

- a. Transitioning Service Members (TSM) who, at the time of enrollment have participated in any part of the Transition Assistance Program, including self-paced online modules, and Individualized Initial Counseling.
- b. Wounded, ill, or injured members of the Armed Forces who are receiving treatment in military treatment facilities or warrior transition units.
- c. Spouses or other family caregivers of those wounded, ill, or injured service members described in subparagraph b.

DESCRIBE THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES ASSIGNED TO DISABLED VETERANS'

OUTREACH PROGRAM (DVOP) SPECIALISTS, LOCAL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVE (LVER) STAFF, AND CONSOLIDATED DVOP/LVER POSITIONS BY THE STATE. THESE MUST BE CONSISTENT WITH 38 U.S.C. 4103A AND 4104.

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4103A(d) and 4104(c), JVSG staff are prohibited from performing duties that detract from their ability to meet the employment needs of eligible veterans and other eligible populations with qualifying employment barriers. One-Stop Center staff will continue to provide priority of service to other veteran populations as described in VPL 07-09 and TEGL 10-09. The specific duties of DVOP specialists and LLVER staff throughout the state are consistent with the roles and responsibilities outlined in 38 U.S.C. § 4103A, 4104, and current guidance provided by DOL Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS).

DVOP

DVOP specialists provide basic and individualized career services to eligible participants. These services help participants overcome employment barriers and achieve their employment goals. DVOP specialists can serve participants directly as well as by referring them to appropriate resources. These resources may include other workforce development programs and training opportunities and any other in-person or virtual federal, state, and local programs for which the participant may be eligible. Case management continues to be an appropriate service delivery strategy or framework within which individualized career services may be delivered and tracked. To ensure effective tracking and accountability, DVOP specialists maintain detailed case files for each participant, documenting provided services and referrals. Individualized career services should be delivered following the case management framework in most cases. However, case management itself is a process, not a service, and is therefore not to be reported as a service, intensive or otherwise.

DVOP provided services, within the case management framework, include:

- Verifying profile and background information in Virginia Workforce Connection (VAWC)
- Completing an objective assessment (also known as a comprehensive assessment)
- Developing an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and managing the goals and objectives
- Providing Consistent Contact
- Referrals to outside agencies for services, training and/or employment

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- Follow ups and closure

When conducting an objective assessment for veterans, DVOPs must ask questions that will identify barriers to employment, as well as to assess the veteran's current overall situation to consider other extenuating factors that could prohibit a successful outcome. The findings from the objective assessment summary in VAWC under the case management plan will drive the creation of the IEP and will help the veteran and DVOP mutually identify goals and any potential barriers to gaining meaningful employment.

The DVOP will assist the participant in prioritizing their needs and making the necessary referrals to meet those needs. The DVOP will maintain consistent contact with the participant to ensure IEP progress, positive outcomes and job sustainability.

Objective Assessment: The objective assessment is a working document where additional barriers can be identified later, but at a minimum staff will document an expanded summary of the participant's circumstances, needs, and employment goals as well as the employment barrier that qualified them to work with the DVOP and finally and other employment barriers or limitations to employment. *Confidential and sensitive details will be left out of the VAWC case note and other sections of the Objective Assessment and IEP (e.g., medical information protected under HIPAA. Instead, the employment limitation will be annotated, not the specific medical condition).

Individual Employment Plan (IEP)

GOALS: IEP Goals must be descriptive, meaningful, and should fall into one of the following groups: employment, education or training. The goal details section of the IEP should include an explanation of goal description if summarized. The employment plan must address all barriers identified in the Objective Assessment.

Goal dates should be realistic and should be changed accordingly if the goal date has passed. If the objective is completed during the initial visit, it can be annotated here instead of creating an Objective in the system. All steps must be listed, but only those steps that will be completed within the next 30 days need to be built into the system. Over the course of case management, all steps should eventually be built into system unless the veteran achieves a successful outcome prior to completion. IEPs should be closed when all the Goals, Objectives, and 30/60 day follow-ups have been completed.

OBJECTIVES: IEP Objectives must be descriptive, meaningful, and should either be a step in the process to reach the desired goal or help to either overcome or circumvent an identified barrier.

CONSISTENT CONTACT during Case Management and Follow Up After Job Placement:

Required timelines for making consistent contact during the Case Management Framework varies slightly between traditional JVSG participants and VA Veteran Readiness & Employment (VR&E) clients. During VR&E Case Management, clients will be contacted minimally every 14 days. For Case Management of clients that are not VR&E, it is a best practice to contact clients minimally every 14 days but not to exceed more than 30 days. After job placement, the follow up requirement with all clients is 30 and 60 days from the job start date.

DVOPs are required to review open IEPs as the objective review dates or goal completion dates pass. After reviewing objective and/or goal notes, the DVOP will follow up with the Veteran to determine if the objective and/or goal has been completed or obtained. Follow-up attempts will include a phone call, text, and either an email or VAWC message as necessary. If the objective/goal has been completed, the completion date will be updated in VAWC with a comment in the notes section.

Lead LVER (LLVER)

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American Job Center (One-Stop): LLVERs are required to provide training and instruction on the JVSG to partner staff members working in a one-stop. Training may be completed with a group or on an individual basis. Overall expectations are that partners will be able to appropriately screen and refer clients and businesses.

Employer Outreach: LLVER staff work with other service providers, at a one-stop center, to promote the advantages of hiring Veterans to employers and employer groups. LLVERs market job seeking veterans as individuals who have highly marketable skills and experience.

LLVER staff serve as advocates for veterans with business, industry, and other community-based organizations by participating in a variety of outreach activities such as:

- Planning and participation in job and career fairs;
- Conducting employer outreach, including facility tours or interviews with current employees to familiarize themselves with job responsibilities or qualifications;
- Assisting with job development for veterans, eligible persons, and other DVOP eligible populations enrolled in workforce development programs;
- Facilitating job search workshops/groups, on behalf of/in conjunction with employers, provided that DVOP and/or other one-stop staff are available to deliver any needed direct services;
- Working with established unions, apprenticeship programs, and businesses or business organizations to promote and secure employment and training for veterans;
- Informing federal contractors of the process to recruit qualified veterans; promoting credentialing and licensing opportunities for veterans; coordinating and participating with other business outreach efforts, including the efforts of WIOA business service representatives;
- Educating and training one-stop staff to ensure easier access to the appropriate employment and training services for job-seeking veterans;
- Conducting community outreach and presentations on behalf of employers seeking to hire veterans;
- Promoting initiatives and programs such as the DoD SkillBridge program; and
- Promoting the HIRE Vets Medallion Program and assisting local area employers in applying for the award when appropriate.

When employer outreach is primarily accomplished by a BST or like entity, the LLVER must be included as an active member of that team. LLVER staff may also conduct other employer outreach activities that support job development and the referral of Veterans to appropriate job openings. When assigned responsibility for more than one local office or service delivery point, LLVER staff should conduct outreach and job development activities throughout their area of responsibility and partner with other LLVERs in bordering territories.

BSTs: When employer outreach is primarily accomplished by a Business Services Team or like entity, the LLVER should be included as an active member of that team. While serving on a team, LLVER staff must ensure that their primary focus remains on advocating for Veterans. LLVER staff do not need to be a Subject Matter Expert (SME) on other partner programs but should have a thorough understanding and contact information for each partner.

Job/Career Fairs: LLVERs are encouraged whenever possible to partner with other agencies to plan and participate in the creation of job and career fairs. LLVERs may not act as a financial agent, solicit, and accept goods or services for the benefit of an event.

Individualized Job Development: The primary focus of the LLVER role and the majority of the effort of LLVER staff should be on individualized job development for Veterans, particularly those determined to be job ready after receiving case management services from a DVOP specialist or Veterans working with other one-stop staff such as Career Navigators/partner staff and partner agencies. Job development by LLVER staff should include efforts to increase job opportunities for Veterans through direct employer contact. Individualized job development should center on each Veteran's needs, skills, abilities, goals, and physical abilities and limitations. LLVER staff should conduct outreach to employers, seminars for employers and in conjunction with employers, conduct job search workshops and establish job search groups. They also facilitate employment, training, and placement services. LLVERS can work with DVOPS and other partner staff to match specific veterans with specific employers. These actions of the LLVER will improve the potential for positive job development referrals. Additionally, Wagner-Peyser Staff or DVOPs for case managed veterans should provide services such as the following to improve the potential for positive job development referrals: Job search assistance workshops, individualized vocational guidance and labor market information; and targeted referral to training and supportive services.

Consolidated DVOP/LVER (CODL)

Consolidated JVSG staff positions perform the duties of both a DVOP specialist and a LVER. Any reference to either DVOP specialist or LVER duties in any statute, regulation, or policy applies equally to these consolidated positions unless otherwise specified or clearly not applicable.

DEMONSTRATE THE MANNER IN WHICH DVOP, LVER AND CONSOLIDATED DVOP/LVER STAFF ARE INTEGRATED INTO THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEMS OR AMERICAN JOB CENTER (AJC). THIS DEMONSTRATION SHOULD SHOW ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

BETWEEN JVSG AND OTHER AJC STAFF, SUCH AS THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN STAFF MEETINGS AND CROSS-TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.

The Commonwealth of Virginia is committed to ensuring program integration and coordination of employment and training services through the Virginia One-stop system. This one-stop

system is the primary source of information and service for Virginia's job seeking veterans. Virginia team members, which include DVOP/CODL, work together to obtain employment, training and related services for veterans through the WIOA partner programs, including US Department of Veteran Affairs Veteran Readiness & Employment (VR&E) program. DVOP/CODL specialists are stationed in all Comprehensive one-stops and most Affiliate locations.

Collaboration is also enforced via program updates and other workforce system policies shared among partners at regularly scheduled staff meetings and training. During those meetings, all staff members share information about new employers and job orders received, one-stop center scheduled activities, and positive recruitment activities taking place in the region.

Although DVOPs/CODLs are responsible for case management and facilitating individualized career services for eligible participants with employment barriers, they are not alone in this effort. Providing services to veterans with employment barriers takes a team effort and as such, all services available at any one-stop are available to veterans on a priority of service basis. Non-JVSG funded staff provide employment services as appropriate to veterans and other eligible persons when no DVOP Specialist is available. DVOPs/CODLs share information with partner staff regarding available community resources they can access to better serve veterans who may not be eligible for DVOP/CODL services.

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The LLVER serves as a member of the Business Services Team (BST) in their respective LWDB. The

team's primary focus is to conduct job development and outreach to employers. LLVERs and BSTs collaborate on reaching out to employers to present information on all programs to avoid duplicate visits. LVER Staff responsibilities include operating targeted hiring events and veteran's job fairs. LVER Staff provides program continuity by acting as the technical program advisor and trainer for one-stop center staff.

Virginia has adopted a demand-driven approach to all workforce and employment programs to focus services and training toward high demand jobs. The State promotes employment and job training opportunities through the use of several specialized programs, one of which is a website focusing on high demand careers, located at: <https://virginiahasjobs.com/>

The local one-stop centers act as the central hub for all workforce activities and associated

training within the state. The State's strategy for the leveraging of other state and federal education and training programs to develop skills necessary to prepare veterans for in-demand jobs is therefore focused on, and operated in, close cooperation with our one stop center partners. The combined efforts of the effective integration of the JVSG into the one stop center service delivery model, outreach to and relationship building with relevant partners, and comprehensive up-to-date information on in-demand jobs and skills, produces a coordination of programs and services that reduces or eliminates duplication, closes gaps in service, and identifies the program or service best suited to the individual veteran being served. In this way, the State leverages a wide range of state and federal training programs to efficiently and effectively provide veterans with the specific skills necessary to secure and succeed in current in-demand jobs.

One-stop center staff will work with the Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) contact to assist in the screening and referral of VR&E clients to either other one-stop staff or a DVOP/CODL if the participant meets JVSG eligibility.

DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE AWARD PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUALS AND/OR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICES TO IMPROVE AND/OR ACHIEVE

EXCELLENCE IN THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO VETERANS, INCLUDING:

THE NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCESS FOR ALL PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE AWARDS TO INDIVIDUALS AND/OR OFFICES;

Selection criteria for award recipients must be based on performance or activities during the program year (July 1 through June 30) for which the award is given. No later than 25 August of each year, supervisors will submit JVSG incentive nominations to the Chief, Veteran Services. This submission will include a narrative report that identifies the number and type of activities extended to veterans and their outcome in no more than one page, not including additional documentation in the form of VAWC or other pertinent data that can be attached. The criteria for the award type will include, but is not limited to, the U.S. Department of Labor performance measures for LVERs and DVOPs and performance measures established by Virginia Works and partner agencies. Incentive awards will not be based solely on numerical performance outcomes, since such data will likely represent performance prior to the current program year and would be skewed to consistently reward employees who are assigned to the most populous areas of the state. Program improvement, positive feedback, and other indicators of outstanding performance will be given consideration in addition to numerical data.

Exceptional merit is based on a number of factors, with the overriding concept being the value of the process. In essence this determines both a quantitative and qualitative rating and merit based on the following partial list of sample criteria for achievements or efforts:

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- Development of a program for which the impact may not be directly measurable (e.g., a resume skill-building program)
- Promotion of entry into federal employment
- Promotion of HIRE Veterans Medallion Program
- Outstanding case management
- Exemplary job fair support
- Vocational rehabilitation marketing (Note: This is an example of how awards criteria may foster partnerships, since vocational rehabilitation specialists often work with or rely upon assistance from DVOP or LVER staff.)
- Direct marketing to employers
- Exceptional performance beyond job requirements or outside of established performance goals
- Ideas that are implemented to improve the system, improve performance, reduce time or cost, or to promote collaboration
- Performance measures (Note: must reflect the given performance period)
- Outreach/community relations efforts, e.g., Chambers of Commerce, employers
- Generation of positive publicity for a local office
- Increase awareness of relevant issues within the employer community
- Enhancement of on-the-job training, customized job training, or compensated work therapy
- Efforts to assist hard-to-place populations (e.g., veterans experiencing homelessness)
- Collaborative success in providing all services to veterans, which may include success in employer relations and “great customer service” to veteran clients
- Other pre-defined achievements or measures

The Chief of Veteran Services will comprise a selection board that includes the Director of Program and Grants Management, Director of Service Delivery and the two Veteran Regional Managers to select submissions and ensure execution of these awards no later than 30 September of each year.

Determination of the award shall be by a combination of objective and subjective data. Data compilation, analysis, and award determination shall be by a team proposed by the Chief of Veterans Services. The final award approval shall be by the Appointing Authority, Director of Virginia Works who is also the signatory authority for the JVSG grant relationship with USDOL.

THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER AND VALUE OF CASH AWARDS USING THE ONE PERCENT INCENTIVE AWARD ALLOCATION;

There will be four levels of awards designated: Platinum (\$2,500), Gold (\$1,500), Silver (\$750), Bronze (\$500). If there are any remaining incentive award funds of less than \$500, one special award will be made to use the full incentive award amount. Virginia intends to award approximately 9 Platinum, 12 Gold, 15 Silver and 17 Bronze incentive awards annually.

However, the number of actual awards will be dependent on actual recommendation submissions and the annual grant funding amount.

THE GENERAL NATURE AND APPROXIMATE VALUE OF NON-CASH PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE AWARDS TO BE CHARGED TO THE BASE ALLOCATION; AND

By state law, all awards must be cash. Virginia does not provide non-cash incentive awards. Therefore, nothing will be charged to the base allocation as an award.

ANY CHALLENGES THE STATE MAY ANTICIPATE TO CARRYING OUT A PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE AWARD PROGRAM AS MANDATED BY 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(C). THIS SHOULD

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INCLUDE ANY STATE LAWS OR POLICIES THAT PROHIBIT SUCH AWARDS, IF APPLICABLE. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S EFFORTS IN OVERCOMING THOSE CHALLENGES.

Virginia does not anticipate any challenges to carrying out a performance incentive award program. The State anticipates that individuals and teams will recognize the value and process of the awards program and will, as a result, develop a competitive attitude within the agency that supports esprit de corps within the team while sharpening the focus on service to other eligible persons. Incentive award funds distributed shall be obligated by September 30, each fiscal year and distributed not later than December 31, of the same year in accordance with the regulation. An Incentive Awards report will be submitted in accordance with the most recent Incentive Award VPL not later than November 14 of each FY. This report will detail all incentive awards made to individuals. This report will include as a minimum the following:

Award recipient by name and title

A description of the value of each award

LIST THE PERFORMANCE TARGETS FOR DIRECT SERVICES TO VETERANS PROVIDED BY
JVSG STAFF, AS MEASURED BY PARTICIPANTS':

employment rate in the second quarter after exit from the program;

employment rate in the fourth quarter after exit; and

median earnings in the second quarter after exit.

Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter After Exit: 55%

Employment Rate – 4th Quarter After Exit: 50%

Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit: \$8,000

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI)

PDF to be shared

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

(OMB Control No. 1205-0040)

ECONOMIC PROJECTIONS AND IMPACT

DISCUSS LONG-TERM PROJECTIONS FOR JOBS IN INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS IN THE STATE THAT MAY PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER WORKERS. (20 CFR 641.302(D)) (MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.)

The Census Bureau's 2024 American Community Survey estimates for Virginia show that 30% of Virginia's population is age 55 or older, compared to the ACS 2022 estimate of 26.63%. The second largest population group, age 35-54, will be entering the 55 and up category in the next twenty years. Programs that serve the aging population in Virginia are essential. Labor force programs also must be taking this age group into consideration, as people 55 and up will be making up a large segment of the labor force for at least the next twenty years.

U.S. Census Bureau - 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Virginia

		% of Population
Total Population	8,811,195	
Age 0-14	1,532,592	17.4%

		% of Population
Age 15-19	585,661	6.6%
Age 20-34	1,740,237	19.8%
Age 35-54	2,308,877	26.2%
Age 55+	2,643,828	30.0%

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has established poverty guidelines for 2026. Per the HHS poverty guidelines, a family of four with an annual income of less than \$33,000 is living in poverty. Although many older individuals live in homes with a smaller family size, this was used as the baseline for the following data analysis.

Per the U.S. Census Bureau's "Age of Householder by Household Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2024 inflation-Adjusted Dollars), 221,271 householders age 65 and under had an annual income of under \$30,000. Given the increase in the cost of living, older adults are at significant risk of living in poverty. Older adults may also have physical, mental or psychological challenges that make finding employment difficult.

In 2026, DARS pulled occupational data to identify long term projections for occupations in Virginia. Data was pulled from VEC's Labor Market Information site. This data can be found [here](#), with high level analysis below.

Long-Term Occupational Virginia 2016-2026 Projections: 25 Occupations with highest position increase.

Occupation Name	Position Increase	Average Annual Openings
Cashiers	1620	20520
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	17990	20170
Retail Salespersons	2030	17970
Waiters and Waitresses	6980	14510
Personal Care Aides	28370	10940
Office Clerks, General	1250	10370

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Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	7900	9650
Customer Service Representatives	4970	8770
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	5390	7990
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	4480	7510
Management Analysts	10690	6360
Nursing Assistants	7860	5460
Cooks, Restaurant	4890	5380
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	3500	5240
General and Operations Managers	6100	5130
Teachers and Instructors, All Other	5380	5010
Receptionists and Information Clerks	4620	4960
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	4320	4790
Security Guards	3100	4770
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	320	4730
Accountants and Auditors	6150	4720
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	2290	4700
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	2270	4680
Registered Nurses	9340	4430
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	2560	4310

DISCUSS HOW THE LONG-TERM JOB PROJECTIONS DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN RELATE TO THE TYPES OF UNSUBSIDIZED JOBS FOR WHICH

SCSEP PARTICIPANTS WILL BE TRAINED AND THE TYPES OF SKILL TRAINING TO BE PROVIDED. (20 CFR 641.302(D))

Older workers are diverse in their abilities and needs. Many factors must be considered when matching an older worker with a job, including physical ability; work history; education levels; transportation access; barriers to employment; and the interests and needs of the individual. . In reviewing the long-term occupational projections with older workers in mind, several categories stand out as potential good fits. These include:

- Office and Administrative Support
- Transportation

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- Health Care Practitioners, Support, and Technical Assistance
- Education, Training and Library Services
- Food Preparation
- Retail and Other Sales

Occupations that require high levels of education and training or heavy physical labor may not be suitable for older adults seeking part-time employment but are considered and discussed with participants if they show an interest in those occupations.

Grantees and sub-grantees work to identify both host agency placements and outside courses that will train SCSEP participants in high growth areas. Sub-grantees seek out non-profit and government agencies who provide in-demand services. This allows participants to train in areas where there is already a local need for trained employees. This is particularly useful in rural areas that have limited options for outside training and courses. Grantees and sub-grantees depend on host agencies to provide relevant training and job search assistance to participants.

Sub-grantees also consider barriers to employment when assigning participants to host agencies and recommending outside training. For instance, having a criminal record is a major barrier to gaining employment. Sub-grantee coordinators have noted that transportation jobs will often consider hiring those with a criminal background and may assist participants with

obtaining their Commercial Drivers' License (CDL).

On the Job Experience (OJE) is a useful tool, particularly in rural areas that may be harder hit by economic downturns, in comparison with urban areas. Some of Virginia's rural areas have been designated by the U. S. Department of Labor (DOL) as areas of persistent unemployment, and many others are close to that threshold. In some instances, SCSEP participants have an Individual Employment Plan with an employment goal that requires skills that cannot be obtained through regular community service assignments. Coordinators determine if those skills align with available jobs in the area (cashiering, customer service, retail) and then try to make a connection with a private employer.

Health care support, diagnostics, and administrative jobs are also projected to be a large part of Virginia's economy in the next ten years. SCSEP participants have trained as home health aides, and sub-grantees provide information about Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training when appropriate. Participants have also completed food service safety certifications, customer service certifications, and computer courses that will help them find employment outside of the program.

One major barrier for SCSEP participants is digital literacy. Many older individuals are not trained in basic computer skills, and those are a major component to nearly every job available today. In many cases it is essential to be able to apply for a job online, to have a working email address, and to understand basic computer skills and applications. The state SCSEP grant was offered a demonstration grant in 2020 from USDOL to address an unmet need for the SCSEP population. DARS developed a digital literacy program using the Northstar Digital Literacy program. Participants met in small groups with peers in courses that taught computer basics at their pace. This program was essential in improving computer skills and increasing confidence in participants. This program ended in December of 2023, but DARS has applied and received an Additional Training and Supportive Services waiver to continue these classes for SCSEP participants. DARS has also applied for and been awarded over \$5,000,000 in grant funding through the Department of Housing and Community Development's Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment program. DARS will use this funding to increase digital literacy in both older individuals and individuals with disabilities.

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DARS has also applied for and received an Additional Training and Supportive Services waiver, which allows sub-grantees to elect to redirect 10% of Participant Wage and Fringe funding to Other Participant Costs. This funding must be used for digital literacy and additional technology for participants.

Assessment

The assessment process is essential in developing a training plan and Individual Employment Plan that not only suits the participant's needs but aligns their needs and goals with an occupational area that is growing. Sub-grantees use several tools to complete assessments, including self-assessments, staff assessments, interviews, and sites that identify occupational needs in the coverage area, such as OENet.com and the Virginia Employment Commission's Labor Market Information and community profiles. Coordinators use the assessment process to identify the goals and needs of the participant and use long-term employment projections to find a host agency and/or outside training opportunities that will increase the participant's likelihood of finding unsubsidized employment.

Individual Employment Plan

Following an in-depth assessment, an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) is developed for each SCSEP participant. The IEP serves as a roadmap with established goals and measurable action steps. The IEP is an agreed-upon plan between the participant and grantee or sub-grantee, which outlines the occupational preferences and training needed by the participant. A set of established goals with timelines are determined for training; barriers to employment are addressed and supportive service needs are identified. This information helps determine an appropriate community service training position with a host agency where the participant gains work experience and develops or improves skills. Along with the work experience gained through the community service assignment at a host agency, the participant may also take advantage of specific skills training. These may include basic computer skills, customer service certification, specific licensing courses, and/or adult education courses. The assessment and IEP, coupled with knowledge of the local labor market, form the basis for determining training and types of skill training to be provided, and how the training increases the participant's chances of finding employment.

DISCUSS CURRENT AND PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE STATE (SUCH AS BY PROVIDING INFORMATION AVAILABLE UNDER §15 OF THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT (29

U.S.C. 491-2) BY OCCUPATION), AND THE TYPES OF SKILLS POSSESSED BY ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS. (20 CFR 641.325(C))

The following data was pulled from the Virginia Labor Market Information page cited above. At the time of state plan modification, this data remains the most recent.

Short-Term Occupational Projections Virginia 2022-2024 (ranked by projected difference)

	Occupation	Estimated Employment	Projected Employment	Projected Difference
1	Business and Financial Operations Occ	396, 529	406,395	9,866
2	Healthcare Support Occ	146,757	156,335	9,578
3	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	235,515	244,716	9,201

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	Occupation	Estimated Employment	Projected Employment	Projected Difference
4	Computer and Mathematical Occ	253,216	262,198	8,982
5	Food Prep and Serving Related Occ	321,244	328,154	6,910
6	Business Operations Specialists	289,961	296,751	6,790
7	Health Diagnostic or Treating Practitioners	153,580	160,110	6,530
8	Management Occupations	271,536	276,830	5,294
9	Construction and Extraction Occupations	194,340	198,560	4,220
10	Construction Trades Workers	142,432	145,709	3,277
11	Community and Social Service Occ	67,590	70,716	3,126
12	Financial Specialists	106,568	109,644	3,076
13	Counselors, Social Workers, and Other Community Occ	65,286	68,355	3,069
14	Registered Nurses	72,761	75,819	3,058
15	Food and Beverage Serving Workers	169,031	171,939	2,908
16	Installation, Maintenance and Repair Occ	166,897	169,542	2,645
17	Health Technologies and Technicians	79,110	81,657	2,547
18	Management Analysis	79,554	82,076	2,522
19	Cooks and Food Prep Workers	82,713	85,188	2,475
20	Transportation and Material Moving Occ	323,918	326,064	2,146
21	Cooks, Restaurant	36,512	38,610	2,098
23	Architecture and Engineering Occ	72,179	74,161	1,982

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24	Other Management Occ	99,083	100,996	1,913
25	Accountants and Auditors	54,542	56,346	1,804

SCSEP coordinators review local job market information and use websites that identify the skills and education needed for specific jobs when discussing job goals with participants. Some of the high growth occupations may not be appropriate for older workers. For example, construction services or restaurant cooking and serving jobs require individuals to be on their feet for extended periods, and to be able to lift and carry significant weight. When reviewing job options, SCSEP coordinators must consider the participant's abilities and determine if job goals are reasonable.

SCSEP coordinators partner with a wide variety of host sites that can train participants in high growth areas. As the need for medical professionals like nurses and certified nursing assistants grows, participants can be placed in medical settings such as free clinics. SCSEP coordinators can assist them with becoming CNA certified or gaining skills as an in-home care assistant.

Health care technician positions, such as ultrasound techs or patient services coordinators, are often appropriate for older individuals.

Administrative jobs are in high demand, which highlights the need for participants who are not digitally literate to become comfortable with computers and basic applications. As it is difficult to even search or apply for positions without those skills, participants who engage with this type of training are more likely to have a positive employment outcome, no matter their occupation.

Most SCSEP participants are interested in part-time work, which can make finding positions challenging. To mitigate this, Virginia often works with host sites that are a source of unsubsidized employment. Likewise, the SCSEP team often works with non-profit agencies, which are often more likely to work with participants who do not want full-time employment. SCSEP host sites represent a variety of occupational opportunity listed on the table above. Host sites vary from food services, aging, health care, wildlife and land management, animal rescue, and housing assistance, to name a few. These host sites meet social needs that will be in demand for the foreseeable future, and SCSEP participants can train to provide these services.

SERVICE DELIVERY AND COORDINATION

A DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PROGRAMS. THIS MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE STATE STRATEGIES SECTION OF THE STRATEGIC

PLAN, BUT REGARDLESS OF PLACEMENT IN DOCUMENT, MUST INCLUDE:

PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SCSEP GRANTEES WITH WIOA TITLE I PROGRAMS, INCLUDING PLANS FOR USING THE WIOA ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND ITS PARTNERS TO SERVE INDIVIDUALS AGED 55 AND OLDER. (20 CFR 641.302(G), 641.325(E))

SCSEP is a required partner under WIOA, and partners with programs under the act to best serve participants. This is the first year that Virginia's SCSEP was included in the Combined State Plan in the past, SCSEP has issued a stand-alone state plan. This inclusion demonstrates the Commonwealth's desire to better align Title I programs with SCSEP. SCSEP also works closely with Virginia Works, allowing for SCSEP staff to work collaboratively with WIOA core programs.

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SCSEP sub-grantees have Memoranda of Understanding with their local American Job Centers (one-stop) and co-enroll participants when possible. Some sub-grantees have noted that the local one-stops cater more towards those looking for full-time work. Given that most SCSEP applicants and participants are interested in part-time work, their options at the one-stop may be limited.

Participants are educated on the availability of comprehensive workforce development-related activities provided at the one-stops, including updating resumes, practicing interview skills, and job search and placement services. The local one-stops refer potential SCSEP applicants to the local offices. If feasible, SCSEP staff or participants work or train out of the local one-stops, although this may be on a part-time basis. SCSEP coordinators with large coverage areas often devote certain days of the week or month to travelling to one-stops in their coverage area to meet with applicants and participants.

DARS, the state grantee, will continue to represent SCSEP in state level one-stop meetings and initiatives. The DARS SCSEP director works with the workforce development team at DARS to ensure that representatives are aware of the program, and that older workers are part of the overall workforce strategy. The DARS SCSEP director attends meetings and training courses and provides information to one-stop representatives and workforce initiatives to ensure that SCSEP has an active role.

There remain some challenges in partnering with local one-stop centers for SCSEP participants. As noted above, SCSEP participants are often looking for part-time work. Many WIOA programs focus on full-time employment, and SCSEP participants have had issues getting involved with other workforce programs. Further, many SCSEP participants struggle with transportation to one-stop offices. SCSEP grant staff are in contact with the state workforce office to identify ways to improve connection between participants and the one-stop centers.

PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SCSEP GRANTEES WITH THE ACTIVITIES BEING CARRIED OUT IN THE STATE UNDER THE OTHER TITLES OF THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT (OAA). (20 CFR 641.302(H))

The state sponsored grant has six sub-grantees; all are Area Agencies on Aging (AAA). Two service areas do not currently have sub-grantees and are being managed directly by DARS. These grantees and sub-grantees work closely with other OAA programs. The OAA authorizes nutrition aid, insurance counseling, weatherization assistance, legal services and elder abuse protection, and caregiver support, among others. SCSEP participants meet the criteria for many of these programs. During the initial and ongoing assessment process, SCSEP coordinators determine what other aging services a participant may need. Often other OAA programs provide essential supportive services and help the participant gain stability that, in turn, helps the participant find and retain unsubsidized employment. It is generally simple for AAA sub-grantees to coordinate with other programs under OAA, as they are often co-located with other OAA staff. However, in some cases, referrals are made to the local AAA, and SCSEP coordinators must be made aware of OAA programs. SCSEP coordinators who are not placed in a local AAA provide information and support to local AAAs and other senior service agencies. All AAAs in Virginia are made aware of the SCSEP, and referrals from other aging service programs are encouraged.

PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ENTITIES AND PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SERVICES TO OLDER AMERICANS, SUCH AS COMMUNITY AND FAITH- BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS, AND PROGRAMS FOR THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES. (20 CFR 641.302(I))

Strong community networks are essential to the success of SCSEP. Grantees and sub-grantees work to develop connections in local communities to recruit participants, as well as to find services and host agencies that other public and private entities may provide. Sub-grantees partner with local and state government offices that

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serve the older population; housing programs; churches; food banks; veterans' services programs; DARS and disability service programs; and health care organizations to identify needs in the community.

Grantees and sub-grantees participate in Commonwealth-wide and local meetings with senior service providers as appropriate. These include both public and private entities. SCSEP partners coordinate with these programs to serve our participants more

effectively and efficiently. The recent push for "person-centered" case coordination has shown that to address one challenge an older person may be having, providers need to coordinate and ensure all the person's needs are being met. That may include housing, health care, mental health or substance abuse counseling, transportation, and continuing education or training.

SCSEP providers focus on the most-in -need factors when partnering with public and private entities. SCSEP providers are tasked to provide priority services to those who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Veteran, or qualifying spouse of veteran
- 65 years old or older
- Has a disability
- Homeless, or at risk for homelessness
- Limited English proficiency
- Low literacy
- Lives in a rural area
- Lives in an area designated as having persistent unemployment
- Frail
- Low employment prospects

SCSEP plans recruitment efforts and partnerships around the above criteria. Public and private partnerships are made with the most-in-need factors in mind. Cross-referral methods are also established, so that providers can connect individuals with all the services they may need.

For instance, a sub-grantee may partner with a local homeless shelter to identify potential participants receiving services. Sub-grantees work with partners in vocational rehabilitation programs to offer services to people with disabilities who meet SCSEP's eligibility criteria. Partnerships are established with local veterans' groups and agencies that provide services to veterans to recruit that population. Grantees and sub-grantees will continue to coordinate with local, state, and federal transportation providers to assess need and to develop solutions for transportation issues. This is a challenge that every locality has, but solutions are minimal in rural areas.

Sub-grantees also partner with local medical providers to offer participants the annual physical exam benefit. Goodwill, Inc., was able to partner with Med Express to provide physicals at the same cost to the provider, regardless of location in the Commonwealth.

Grantees and sub-grantees are also working with re-entry groups who aid those leaving the prison system. Goodwill partners with Valleys Re-Entry program, and the state program partners with OAR. Sub-grantees have noted an increase in the number of employers who are willing to work with a participant who may have a criminal record, which is an encouraging development.

SCSEP grantees and sub-grantees often leverage 211 Virginia (the Commonwealth's 24-hour information and referral service) and other directories to identify entities and programs in the community that provide referrals and support services for seniors. These directories are especially helpful for transition services, when a

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participant's durational limit is approaching, and project staff are working with the individual to develop a transition assessment and IEP.

Grantees and sub-grantees have had success establishing partnerships with local community colleges. Community colleges have been an invaluable partner for adult education, particularly in developing computer training for seniors. Adult education centers also provide GED training and testing, which many participants need. Even entry-level jobs often require, at minimum, a high school diploma or GED. Community colleges also often have workforce offices, which can connect participants with continuing education.

The DARS SCSEP received a demonstration grant in 2020 and chose to focus on digital literacy courses designed specifically for older adults. Computer skills are essential in today's labor force. Older adults who do not have basic digital literacy skills are at a clear disadvantage when seeking employment. Sub-grantees have noted that beginner level computer classes at community colleges or other entities often assume a basic level of knowledge that many participants do not have. Sub-grantees that participated with this demonstration grant partnered with adult education partners, community colleges, and library partners to provide courses based on the Northstar Digital Literacy platform. Classes were kept small so that instructors could provide needed hands-on support. The program was successful, with participants reporting increased confidence and skills as the program progressed. Although this program ended on December 31, 2023, DARS has incorporated this model into their Additional Training and Supportive Services waiver and has shared the model with national SCSEP grantees and other state SCSEP grantees. As noted above, DARS has pursued and been awarded BEAD funding to continue digital literacy training, but that funding has not been released at this time.

State and national grantees also utilize each other as active partners. Goodwill has developed considerable online resources for job seekers, and each grantee and sub-grantee has developed a network of partners. By sharing information and cross-referral, grantees ensure that they

work together to best use resources, rather than compete for resources. This is particularly important in rural areas where there are state and national slot overlaps and limited resources and host agencies.

PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER LABOR MARKET AND JOB TRAINING INITIATIVES. (20 CFR 641.302(J))

Grantees review and provide sub-grantees with local labor market data available at the Virginia Employment Commission's Labor Market Information webpage. This information includes demographics, education level, employment level, and top employers in each Virginia

locality. This helps the program identify and adjust training to respond to growth in occupations and industries.

Grantees have continued to work with other job training initiatives, including workforce development teams, on behalf of SCSEP and SCSEP participants, and will continue to seek opportunities to jointly serve SCSEP participants. The state grantee requested to be part of the WIOA Combined State Plan, and this is the first year that SCSEP has been included in the broader state plan. This will increase the visibility of SCSEP in the workforce arena.

Grantees and sub-grantees will continue to partner with labor organizations such as the Virginia Employment Commission, the Workforce Investment Boards, and local Chambers of Commerce to increase program visibility and to identify areas of need, training opportunities, and job opportunities in each locality.

Sub-grantees frequently identify and utilize other job training programs. Participants have been able to undergo specific certification training offered through other job training programs and receive certifications in food preparation and service, customer service, health care,

administration, and commercial driver's licenses. These certifications are all tied to occupations that are in demand in Virginia and are projected to be in demand in the future.

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ACTIONS TO ENSURE THAT SCSEP IS AN ACTIVE PARTNER IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND THE STEPS THE STATE WILL TAKE TO ENCOURAGE AND IMPROVE COORDINATION WITH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. (20 CFR 641.335)

Grantees and sub-grantees have had varying levels of interaction and success in partnering with the one-stop system. All sub-grantees have Memoranda of Understanding with at least one local one-stop, and some sub-grantees have a part-time presence in a one-stop center. Sub-grantees have found that the infrastructure and cost share percentages for having a permanent office at a One-Stop is generally not affordable. SCSEP sub-grantees will continue to work with one-stops to ensure that participants are aware of and avail themselves to all programs that they qualify for and that would assist them in becoming economically self-sufficient and to obtain unsubsidized employment. Sub-grantees will continue to refer participants and ineligible SCSEP applicants to the one-stop for additional programs and services.

SCSEP participants are also frequently placed at a one-stop as a community service assignment. There they can receive job training as greeters, resource aids, job developers, custodians, clerical aides, and customer service representatives. As the participants learn about the one-stop's services and job search options, they have more support for their own training and job searches.

SCSEP participant openings will continue to be posted at the one-stop centers. Co-enrollment with WIOA programs, when possible, will be encouraged for participants seeking full-time employment. Grantees will continue to encourage one-stop centers to include all SCSEP grantees operating in the local area in regular partner meetings to improve coordination with the one-stop delivery system. Guidance will be requested by the one-stops on relevant skills required by local employers. This will impact participant assessments, goals, and IEPs. When possible, grantees and sub-grantees will attend Workforce Investment Board meetings in their service areas.

EFFORTS TO WORK WITH LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICES IN RURAL LOCATIONS.

Local SCSEP staff in rural areas work with economic development offices in their coverage areas. Staff ensure that local economic development offices understand the growing segment of the labor force that consists of older workers, and that in the next twenty years this is the only segment of the labor force that is growing. Local staff often sit on the boards of these organizations and attend board meetings to learn about new opportunities and to share information about the SCSEP.

THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ENGAGING EMPLOYERS TO DEVELOP AND PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PLACEMENT OF SCSEP PARTICIPANTS IN UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT. (20 CFR 641.302(E)) (MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE STATE STRATEGIES SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.)

While the state grantee and sub-grantees have established effective networks in the public sector, connecting to the private sector should be a priority. In the past the state grantee has been able to rely on non-profit and government agencies for host agency partnerships and for the hiring of participants, but engaging with private employers opens other opportunities for

participants. The state grantee and sub-grantees will be working to identify private employers in their area that can hire older workers. We will identify skills and training needed for jobs available in each area, and partner with companies who are willing to work with our population.

Another method all SCSEP staff in Virginia will be considering in the next four years is identifying additional, targeted specialized training opportunities beyond the basic community service assignments. Targeted skills are essential for the success of SCSEP participants. Initially academic training may be necessary, to advance very basic skills, and later targeted skill-specific training identified in the IEP will be implemented later in the

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participant’s enrollment. As the participant works with their host agency, coordinators should identify specific talents and abilities that will give participants an edge in the hiring process.

In the next four years, all grantees hope to increase the utilization of On-the-Job Experience, particularly in rural areas, where host agencies and employment opportunities are limited. It is essential to create partnerships with local businesses in these areas, and to help them understand the benefits of hiring older workers. DARS will provide local labor market information to sub-grantees so that they can narrow down lists of companies to contact, as coordinators may have a large geographical area to cover, and limited time to make those contacts. SCSEP participant staff will also be encouraged to make those contacts with local employers.

SCSEP grantees and sub-grantees will also engage with business development professionals in their regions. DARS has a business development team that is already providing support to the program, and NCOA and Goodwill have business development professionals on staff as

well. Partnering with people who are familiar with the employers and the skills needed in a geographic area is essential, particularly with limited resources and time.

DARS SCSEP staff have attended new counselor training and business development team meetings as well as statewide aging, adult education and rehabilitative services council meetings and conferences to present information on the SCSEP. Most of these opportunities include public and private employers, and staff networks with private employers at these events.

THE STATE’S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR SERVING MINORITY OLDER INDIVIDUALS UNDER SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (C))

The following data was pulled from the Senior Community Service Employment Program Preliminary Analysis of Service to Minority Individuals, PY 2021. The areas where minorities are significantly underserved are highlighted in bold. At the time of state plan modification, this remains the most recently gathered data on serving minority older individuals under SCSEP.

Minority Cat.	Pop. %	State	AARP Pop %	AARP	GW Pop %	Goodwill	NCOA Pop %	NCOA
Hispanic	2.3%	2.5%	3.8%	3.2%	2.00%	0.4%	10.8%	7.40%
Black	32.0%	58.4%	47.9%	88.8%	12.1%	38.0%	22.0%	47.9%
Asian	1.8%	0.6%	3.3%	0.3%	0.6%	0.3%	12.8%	11.40%
American Indian	0.2%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	1.10%	0.40%	0.40%
Pacific Is.	0.0%	0.6%	0.1%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

AARP and the state grantee should focus on recruitment of the Asian population in their service areas, and Goodwill and NCOA should focus on recruitment of the Hispanic population in their coverage areas. These two populations present some challenges; there are some cultural differences that may prevent older individuals in these two populations from seeking employment assistance. There also may be language barriers, which grantees should assist in overcoming by hiring translators and/or referring applicants to English as a Second Language courses. Grantees will reach out to cultural centers and representatives of these populations to discuss how they may better be reached and served.

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All grantees remain committed to providing the program in an equitable manner, and having diversity in the program that accurately reflects the diversity in the community served. Grantees and sub-grantees conduct outreach to minority populations in their communities.

All grantees serve participants who are English as a second language speakers. NCOA is fortunate to have bilingual staff members, and other grantees find translators and ESL classes in alternate locations. It has been noted that in the past few years, recruitment of immigrant community members, particularly Hispanic community members, has been difficult due to the policies regarding immigration and distrust of government agencies in those communities. People born outside of the United States are hesitant to approach government programs for support.

The following strategies will continue to be used to maximize recruitment of underserved populations in the program:

- Utilizing information and training on practices posted on the older worker web-based Community of Practice.
- Monitor the proportion of minority participants served and minority outcomes for SCSEP participants, keeping in mind local demographics.
- Build upon established links with service organizations that provide service to minority groups including continued contact with agencies and organizations in the community that serve Asian and Hispanic populations and making those organizations aware of SCSEP's recruitment goals and open slots.
- Reach out to community and faith-based organizations that serve minority populations to recruit eligible individuals.
- Seek eligible minorities through outreach efforts with one-stop partners such as veterans' representatives, vocational rehabilitation representatives, and social service agencies.
- Use multilingual brochures and flyers to reach non-English speaking minority groups and place them in employment centers, community centers, food banks, and one-stop centers.
- Request minority client referrals from one-stop centers, communicate recruitment needs at one-stop partner meetings, and request minority referrals from other partner programs such as Departments of Social Services, the Virginia Employment Commission, veterans' programs, and senior centers.
- Distribute brochures in grocery stores, medical offices, pharmacies, utility payment centers, churches, senior centers, and other places that serve minority individuals.
- Identify new minority recruitment sources in the community that have not previously been approached (churches, day care centers, community centers, and homeless shelters). This should include identifying agencies, businesses, churches, and other organizations that serve Hispanic and Asian seniors.
- Encourage minority participants to recruit family and friends.
- When language barriers are encountered, staff will refer participants to English as a Second Language classes and attempt to find a host agency site that can accommodate language barriers.

A LIST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES THAT ARE NEEDED AND THE PLACES WHERE THESE SERVICES ARE MOST NEEDED. SPECIFICALLY, THE PLAN MUST ADDRESS THE NEEDS AND LOCATION OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS MOST IN NEED OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE GROUPS WORKING TO MEET THEIR NEEDS. (20 CFR 641.330)

Virginia's greatest community service needs are driven by poverty. For more detailed information about the demographics of localities, please refer to the section detailing equitable distribution.

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All communities in Virginia are experiencing a housing crisis. Rent continues to rise, as does inflation. Sub-grantee coordinators have reported increased numbers of applicants who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Housing is particularly expensive in urban areas of Virginia, but rural areas are also experiencing a shortage of housing and increased housing costs. Seniors have limited incomes, and cost-of-living increases to Social Security payments are not keeping up with housing prices and inflation.

Grantees and sub-grantees agreed that the most common and universal community service needs of participants are housing assistance, transportation assistance, food assistance, utility support, and temporary financial assistance. Participants also often need guidance navigating the health care system, including Medicare and Medicaid. Other concerns of our participant population are isolation, lack of employment, fear of identity theft, and assistance caring for family members. For our population, that can include parents, children, and/or grandchildren. Sub-grantees in the southwest portion of the state particularly note the community's issue with opioid dependence and abuse. Participants often end up caring for grandchildren when the participant's child has substance abuse issues.

When researching Virginia's community service needs, similar trends emerge. The Community Foundation, a non-profit organization based in Richmond, collects data to identify focus areas for their grants. Their data has identified the following as areas of high need, community vibrancy, economic prosperity, educational success, and health and wellness. Areas of high need also include housing, after school and childcare, and workforce development. Regional health community service needs assessments all identify the need for mental health and substance abuse services, primary health care and preventative health care, and nutrition services.

Virginia is a diverse state, and the needs of different communities are identified by sub-grantees. For instance, urban areas like Richmond or Northern Virginia have more job opportunities and transportation options, but access to affordable housing, nutrition, and utility assistance are needed in those areas. Rural areas have more affordable housing options and lower cost of living but have fewer job opportunities and transportation options.

Participant assessment and community need determine participant placement. Sub-grantees have addressed the need for affordable childcare by placing participants in Head Start programs. Participants may be placed with nutrition programs, senior programs that assist with transportation, health care, or weatherization, and in workforce programs assisting the public in job searching and job skills. Sub-grantees have also placed participants in programs that provide community revitalization and support the arts, and in community service boards that provide mental health and substance abuse support for the community.

SCSEP has a wide reach in Virginia, and participants provide community service in a wide variety of organizations. SCSEP participants have been placed at local Area Agencies on Aging, the Red Cross, the United Way, the Legal Aid Society, senior nutrition and day centers, community colleges, and local organizations such as the Lions Club. Local schools and government agencies also serve as host agencies.

Sub-grantees are experiencing a higher level of applicants who do not meet the SCSEP income requirements, but who continue to need assistance. The DARS SCSEP director will be working with the Office of Workforce Development and Advancement to develop senior-friendly resources at one-stop centers.

THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY TO IMPROVE SCSEP SERVICES, INCLUDING PLANNED LONG-TERM CHANGES TO THE DESIGN OF THE PROGRAM WITHIN THE STATE, AND PLANNED CHANGES IN THE USE OF SCSEP GRANTEES AND PROGRAM OPERATORS TO BETTER ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF THE PROGRAM. THIS MAY INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT AS APPROPRIATE. (20 CFR 641.302(K))

The past few years have been challenging for SCSEP. The COVID pandemic and ensuing shift in the way businesses are run will affect SCSEP for the foreseeable future. Digital literacy took even more of a front seat, as so many organizations moved to remote work. Telework is still a frequently utilized tool in nonprofit and for-

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profit employment, and SCSEP participants need the skills to succeed in the increasing digital employment environment.

Funding for the program has been inconsistent over the past year. Although funding was approved for the program year beginning July 1, 2025, the release of funds was delayed until late September. As of late January 2026, no appropriations bill has been signed into law, leaving the program's future undetermined. Congressional discussions have included the possibility of discontinuing the program. This uncertainty has affected recruitment of participants and host agencies. Three sub-grantees within the state program have chosen not to continue. Programs report challenges engaging with SCSEP without clarity on future operations or funding. The service pause caused by the delayed release of funds disrupted program activities and external relationships. If funding is restored, additional time will be required to reestablish program engagement with individuals and organizations..

SCSEP is an administratively complex program. The amount of original paperwork and frequently updated items like assessments, IEPs, evaluations, and job search forms for each participant requires a good deal of hands-on time from administrative staff. In addition to that, administrative staff must manage the host agency relationships and paperwork, as well as OJE and connections with private employers. Good relationships with all these parties are essential to the success of the program. On top of that, administrative staff are tasked with marketing and recruiting the program and can cover geographically large areas. Most local offices depend on participant staff for basic administrative functions, but the SCSEP coordinator is responsible for monitoring, approving, and correcting all aspects of that administrative work, and for the payroll for participants.

The program continues to add administrative tasks and to rely on a data collection system that is not functioning as planned. Low budgets for staff pay and the time and energy it is taking to learn and enter data into GPMS is frustrating employees, and finding and retaining good SCSEP staff is a challenge.

These issues and lack of funding affect equitable distribution-a coordinator cannot possibly give the same amount of attention to participants and host agencies near their center of operation as they can to outlying areas, which may be over an hour's drive from their office. Frequently the administrative budgets for local offices are so small that they do not fund a full-time staff; SCSEP coordinators often have additional responsibilities at their agencies. We continue to ask local coordinators to increase their workload without increasing their administrative funding.

One long-term strategy that will improve SCSEP significantly would be to reduce the administrative burden at the local level. Simplifying the assessment process and providing training for case management could be useful. Increased administrative funding would also allow local providers to staff the program at the level that is appropriate and would prevent frequent turnover of local SCSEP staff. The budget limits on administrative funds limit how effective local, state, and national offices can be in serving our population. Increased administrative funding and decreased administrative burdens would increase the attention that can be paid to participants and would increase successful exits. This would give local staff more time to recruit participants, time to train and counsel participants, time to meet with more employers, and time to recruit host agencies with missions that provide training in high demand skills. It is essential that DOLETA understands the workload placed on local SCSEP coordinators.

Providing case management training and supporting the local SCSEP staff is part of the state's long-term strategy to help local SCSEP staff manage their workloads in an effective manner. This is training that many hired into the program do not have, and the frequent monitoring and updates required to participant and host agency paperwork and relationships can be overwhelming.

Grantees will continue to provide labor market information to sub-grantees to improve placements and employment goals. Grantees will continue to improve SCSEP services as follows:

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- Continue to advocate on behalf of participants to ensure that the needs of older workers are heard, and to ensure that employers understand the necessity of engaging older workers.
- Seek opportunities to increase collaboration among grantees to include sharing information and best practices and identifying and addressing common issues and challenges.
- Continue to participate in local and state WIOA planning processes.
- Continue to analyze the results of DOL's participant and host agency satisfaction surveys to determine how to improve services.
- Increase outreach to most-in-need populations, including leveraging relationships with Vocational Rehabilitation centers, Veterans Affairs and veterans' groups, disability groups, cultural groups in local communities, adult education programs, and other programs designed to provide services to the most-in-need populations.
- Train local SCSEP service deliverers to focus on achievement of performance goals.

THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN THE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE FOR SCSEP PARTICIPANTS' ENTRY INTO UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT, AND TO ACHIEVE, AT A MINIMUM, THE LEVELS SPECIFIED IN OAA SECTION 513(A)(2)(E)(II). (20CFR 641.302(F))

As has been mentioned several times in this section of the plan, digital literacy is one of the major barriers to employment that SCSEP participants face. Grantees and sub-grantees must provide options for training that will bring SCSEP participants up to speed on technology being used in the workforce. Connections to adult education services and local community colleges are essential in terms of training outside of community service assignments. DARS will continue to develop relationships with local community colleges, and to encourage SCSEP participants to look at educational opportunities. In Virginia, people who are 65 and older who meet income criteria can take community college classes for free.

The most important element in any participant's training is to first determine what skills are in demand by employers in that participant's local area. The second is to determine the skill sets possessed by each participant that relate to those in-demand jobs. The third is to determine the skill gaps for each participant, and to determine how the program can link that participant to training that will fill those gaps.

Participants will be trained for high demand occupations in health care, security, customer service, and transportation. This will benefit the participant by preparing them for better paying jobs as they exit the program. Investment in short-term training like CNA, CDL, or customer service certification will lead to higher employment and quicker turnover for participants. By ensuring that participants exit the program in a reasonable time frame to unsubsidized employment, each grant creates more space in the program for new enrollees. Training in high demand occupations will increase the number of participants who enter employment, achieve retention, and have higher average earnings than they would without the program and that specific training.

Grantees will utilize On the Job Experience (OJE), particularly in rural areas, to help participants develop an "edge" with employers in a rapidly disappearing job market in rural areas. The economic downturn has disproportionately affected rural areas, and affects population and

employment opportunities in those areas, as many people relocate to urban areas with better educational and employment opportunities.

Virginia grantees will also:

- Focus on increasing awareness of the program. Many employers, community service organizations and potentially eligible participants are not aware of the benefits offered by the SCSEP. By

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increasing awareness of the program and of the value of older workers among these groups, grantees should see an increase in the number and quality of placements. By increasing the number of placements into quality community service experiences and unsubsidized employment, Virginia will serve more of the eligible population.

- Provide on-going training to sub-grantees to improve their performance in meeting the common measure performance goals of employment, retention, and earnings. This will include training on topics such as performance measures, data management, case management, employer engagement, addressing barriers, and job search strategies.
- Provide additional training to participants through WIOA services. These resources include basic learning skills, upgrading computer skills, enrollment with WIOA for vocational education, resume writing, and assistance with job placement.
- Encourage local sub-grantees to participate in job fairs targeted to older workers.
- Ensure that efforts are made to establish rapport with employers who have reliable career pathways and who are willing to develop and maintain working relationships with SCSEP grantees and sub-grantees.

LOCATION AND POPULATION SERVED, INCLUDING EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION

A DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCALITIES AND POPULATIONS FOR WHICH PROJECTS OF THE TYPE AUTHORIZED BY TITLE V ARE MOST NEEDED. (20 CFR 641.325 (D))

SCSEP projects are authorized in most localities in the Commonwealth. Three national grantees (AARP, NCOA and Goodwill) manage programs alongside the DARS state SCSEP. The number of SCSEP slots that each locality received is based on a formula that considers the number of individuals aged 55 and up who are at or below 125% of the federal poverty level, based on U.S. Census data. These slots are assigned by DOLETA. Grantees and sub-grantees strive to serve eligible participants under Priority of Service requirements. Priority of service is given to participants who fit one or more of the following descriptors:

Veterans and Qualified Spouses Persons 65 or older

Individuals who:

- have a disability
- have limited English proficiency
- have low literacy skills
- reside in a rural area
- have low employment prospects
- fail to find employment through WIOA Title I services
- are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- formerly incarcerated

Authorized slot levels are based on U.S. Census levels alone. Authorized Slots can be seen in Appendix A. Modified slots are based on the highest available minimum wage, which in Virginia, is currently \$12/hour. Modified slot levels can be seen in Appendix B.

Most of Virginia's greatest community needs are driven by poverty. Virginia's poverty level in 2020, per the U.S. Census Income and Poverty data, was 10.6%.

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Per the U.S. Census Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates for January 2026, the following localities have poverty levels above 20%.

Locality	% Poverty
Radford city	27.2
Harrisonburg city	26.4
Greensville County	26.2
Lee County	26
Buchanan County	23.5
Petersburg city	23.3
Williamsburg city	23.3
Danville city	22.9
Lexington city	22.7
Sussex County	21.9
Galax city	21.6
Montgomery County	20.6
Emporia city	20.6
Brunswick County	20.2
Scott County	20.1

These areas span the entirety of Virginia, and from very rural to some of the largest urban areas in the state. All these areas have active SCSEP offices. Virginia’s SCSEP population is increasing in diversity, and populations that have special needs require additional attention, more intensive and comprehensive services, and in many cases, unique approaches, and partnerships. Grantees depend on the local sub-grantees’ knowledge of local areas and determining how to implement policy in a diverse state.

LIST THE CITIES AND COUNTIES WHERE THE PROJECT WILL BE CONDUCTED. INCLUDE THE NUMBER OF SCSEP AUTHORIZED POSITIONS AND INDICATE WHERE THE POSITIONS CHANGED FROM THE PRIOR YEAR.

The following table shows the authorized SCSEP slots in Virginia, and their assignment by county and SCSEP grantee. This is the FY 2025 Q3 Equitable Distribution of Authorized Slots table found in the Grant Performance Management System (GPMS). Authorized slots are based on the federal minimum wage, which is \$7.25/hour. The minimum wage in Virginia as of January 30, 2026, is \$12.77. The Department of Labor releases a list of modified slots for states whose minimum wage is higher than the federal minimum wage.

COUNTY_NAME	State Grantee	AARP Foundation Programs AP	Goodwill Industries International AP	National Council on the Aging
Accomack County	8	0	0	0
Albemarle County	0	0	6	0
Alexandria city	0	0	0	10
Alleghany County	0	0	4	0
Amelia County	2	0	0	0
Amherst County	0	0	5	0

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Appomattox County	0	0	3	0
Arlington County	0	0	0	17
Augusta County	0	0	7	0
Bath County	0	0	2	0
Bedford County	0	0	9	0
Bland County	0	0	1	0
Botetourt County	0	0	4	0
Bristol city	1	0	3	0
Brunswick County	3	0	0	0
Buchanan County	0	0	5	0
Buckingham County	0	0	3	0
Buena Vista city	0	0	1	0
Campbell County	0	0	6	0
Caroline County	4	0	0	0
Carroll County	2	0	5	0
Charles City County	0	2	0	0
Charlotte County	3	0	0	0
Charlottesville city	0	0	5	0
Chesapeake city	0	15	0	0
Chesterfield County	6	18	0	0
Clarke County	0	0	0	2
Colonial Heights city	0	0	0	1
Covington city	0	0	1	0
Craig County	0	0	2	0
Culpeper County	0	0	0	4
Cumberland County	2	0	0	0
Danville city	7	0	0	4
Dickenson County	0	0	4	0
Dinwiddie County	0	4	0	0
Essex County	2	0	0	0
Fairfax County	0	0	0	59

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Fairfax city	0	0	0	1
Fauquier County	0	0	0	4
Floyd County	0	0	4	0
Fluvanna County	0	0	2	0
Franklin County	3	0	7	0
Franklin city	0	2	0	0
Frederick County	0	0	0	6
Fredericksburg city	3	0	0	0
Galax city	0	0	2	0
Giles County	0	0	3	0
Gloucester County	3	0	0	0
Goochland County	2	0	0	0
Grayson County	4	0	0	0
Greene County	0	0	2	0
Greensville County	0	0	0	2
Halifax County	5	0	0	4
Hampton city	0	18	0	0
Hanover County	7	0	0	0
Harrisonburg city	0	0	4	0
Henrico County	7	23	0	0
Henry County	7	0	6	0
Hopewell city	0	0	0	4
Isle of Wight County	0	5	0	0
James City County	0	6	0	0
King George County	0	0	2	0
King William County	0	0	0	2
King and Queen County	0	0	0	2
Lancaster County	3	0	0	0
Lee County	4	0	2	0
Loudoun County	0	0	0	11

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Louisa County	0	0	0	5
Lunenburg County	3	0	0	0
Lynchburg city	0	0	8	0
Madison County	0	0	2	0
Manassas city	0	0	0	2
Martinsville city	3	0	0	0
Mathews County	0	0	0	0
Mecklenburg County	5	0	0	3
Middlesex County	2	0	0	0
Montgomery County	0	0	8	0
Nelson County	0	0	4	0
New Kent County	2	0	0	0
Newport News city	0	25	0	0
Norfolk city	0	34	0	0
Northampton County	3	0	0	0
Northumberland County	3	0	0	0
Norton city	1	0	0	0
Nottoway County	2	0	0	0
Orange County	0	0	0	3
Page County	0	0	0	4
Patrick County	2	0	2	0
Petersburg city	2	0	0	5
Pittsylvania County	6	0	0	7
Portsmouth city	0	14	0	0
Powhatan County	2	0	0	0
Prince Edward County	4	0	0	0
Prince George County	0	0	0	2
Prince William County	0	0	0	20
Pulaski County	0	0	5	0

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Radford city	0	0	1	0
Richmond County	1	0	0	0
Richmond city	14	25	0	0
Roanoke County	0	0	10	0
Roanoke city	0	0	19	0
Rockbridge County	0	0	4	0
Rockingham County	0	0	7	0
Russell County	0	0	7	0
Salem city	0	0	2	0
Scott County	2	0	4	0
Shenandoah County	0	0	0	6
Smyth County	4	0	3	0
Southampton County	0	2	0	0
Spotsylvania County	9	0	0	0
Stafford County	5	0	0	0
Staunton city	0	0	4	0
Suffolk city	0	9	0	0
Surry County	0	2	0	0
Sussex County	0	0	0	1
Tazewell County	0	0	8	0
Virginia Beach city	0	28	0	0
Warren County	0	0	0	4
Washington County	2	0	7	0
Waynesboro city	0	0	4	0
Westmoreland County	4	0	0	0
Winchester city	0	0	0	4
Wise County	3	0	4	0
Wythe County	2	0	4	0
York County	0	5	0	0
TOTAL	174	237	227	199

DESCRIBE CURRENT SLOT IMBALANCES AND PROPOSED STEPS TO CORRECT INEQUITIES TO

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ACHIEVE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION.

For this section, the modified slot level table from GPMS was used, as it is a closer representation of slot distribution and participants in Virginia. The following are the top ten over-enrolled counties and cities in Virginia, across all four SCSEP grantees (state, AARP, Goodwill, National Council on Aging).

COUNTY_NAME	Variance
Roanoke city	23
Lynchburg city	11
Richmond city	10
Winchester city	8
Bristol city	7
Halifax County	5
Sussex County	5
Fairfax County	4
Fredericksburg city	4
Mecklenburg County	4

The top ten under-enrolled areas are listed below.

COUNTY_NAME	Variance
Virginia Beach city	-14
Norfolk city	-12
Loudoun County	-6
Bedford County	-5
Portsmouth city	-5
Albemarle County	-4
Campbell County	-4
Carroll County	-4
Chesapeake city	-4
Chesterfield County	-4

Grantees use the equitable the GPMS system to identify over-localities, and to provide technical grantees to gradually shift positions areas. No participant is ever program to meet equitable urban areas are more likely to be SCSEP sub-grantees are likely to be borders, and because public more accessible. More rural areas enrolled, especially those far from a office.

distribution report in and under- enrolled support to local sub-to those underserved released from the distribution. Large over-enrolled, as located within their transportation is tend to be under- SCSEP sub- grantee

Host agencies are also limited in rural areas. To enroll a participant, the sub-grantee must have a host agency for placement that is appropriate for that participant. Some participants and applicants are not within a reasonable traveling distance to an optimal host site. Challenges with transportation in rural areas makes placement even more challenging.

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Program Year 2025 (July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026) has been particularly challenging for equitable distribution. The pause in services due to withheld funding resulted in some participants leaving the program and not returning. The uncertainty about future funding has led to applicants being hesitant to re-enroll or enroll in the program.

Another issue that affects equitable distribution is that several of Virginia’s localities have two SCSEP grantees with approved spots working in that area. Sixteen of the localities in Virginia have two SCSEP sub-grantees working in their communities. See Appendix C for overlapping grantee service areas.

APPENDIX C - LOCALITIES WITH TWO SCSEP SUB-GRANTEES

COUNTY NAME
Bristol city
Carroll County
Chesterfield County
Franklin County
Grayson County
Henry County
Martinsville city

COUNTY NAME
Patrick County
Richmond city
Richmond County
Scott County
Smyth County
Washington County
Wise County
Wythe County

In larger areas, like the city of Richmond, both the state and AARP have SCSEP slots makes sense, as it’s a heavily populated area. The SPAN Center (formerly Senior Connections), the DARS sub-grantee that represents Richmond, frequently works with AARP to design training and to refer participants to different programs. In less populated areas, however, having two grantees may create conflict. For instance, in Bristol, a city in far southwest Virginia, the state and Goodwill have slots. There are limited host agency opportunities in this area, and having two sponsors can cause confusion for applicants and participants, as hours and operation of the program may vary.

Ensuring SCSEP positions are equitably distributed is an ongoing effort. The state’s long-term strategy for achieving equitable distribution for SCSEP positions is to gradually transfer

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positions from over-served to under-served areas within the state. This is the only way to avoid disruption to current participants, and to maintain the program stability necessary to operate quality programs. Sub-grantees are educated on equitable distribution regularly and are encouraged to work towards that goal. However, grantees do not recommend holding a spot open in an under-enrolled area if an applicant can be found in an over-served area, particularly if that sub-grantee is under-enrolled overall.

THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING AN EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF SCSEP POSITIONS WITHIN THE STATE THAT:

A. MOVES POSITIONS FROM OVER-SERVED TO UNDERSERVED LOCATIONS WITHIN THE STATE IN COMPLIANCE WITH 20 CFR 641.365.

DOL requests an equitable distribution report be prepared annually showing the distribution of SCSEP enrollee positions among all political jurisdictions (independent cities and counties) in each state. DARS has the responsibility for the actual preparation and submission of the report to DOL, however, this is a collaborative effort involving all SCSEP grantees in Virginia. This report provides the basic information needed to assess the location of the eligible population and the current distribution of SCSEP enrollees served by the state program (DARS) and national contractor organizations within the state. Grantees use information to determine where slots need to be moved from over-served to under-served areas. Grantees within the state have a long history of accomplishing this task cooperatively without disruption to participants.

All state grantees will take the following steps to work towards equitable distribution:

- Collecting data and preparing reports to determine the present status of equitable distribution and communicating that data with the sub-grantees.
- Sub-grantees and grantees will focus SCSEP marketing in under-served areas. These efforts include:
 - Newspaper ads in local papers
 - Human interest stories in local papers
 - Radio spots describing the program and its intended audience
 - Mailings both to individuals and to public and private entities in under-served communities that interact with potential SCSEP clients
 - Utilizing social media and grantee and sub-grantee websites to reach potential applicants.
- Continuing outreach within the support community, including DARS local offices in under-served areas. SCSEP grantees will continue meeting with and developing partnerships with local social service agencies, non-profits, and other community groups that interact with potential participants. This will not be limited to those groups that work with the elderly, as word of mouth is an effective tool for SCSEP. For example, a parent with a child in Head Start may see a flyer for SCSEP and refer an older family member to the program. Often agencies that are contacted for recruiting purposes can become host agencies, as well.
- Educating sub-grantees about equitable distribution and designated slot levels in their localities.

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- As slots open in over-served areas, sub-grantees will be encouraged to enroll participants in under-served areas. This will prevent disruption in the program and gradually shift slots back to under-served areas.
- All DARS sub-grantees submit recruitment plans with their annual contract or contract renewal. These identify under-served areas and provide steps the sub-grantees will take to recruit in those areas.

B. EQUITABLY SERVES RURAL AND URBAN AREAS.

To reach and serve eligible individuals in rural and isolated areas with limited resources, grantees will continue outreach and collaborative efforts with host agencies, employers, transportation providers, and other community support providers within those regions.

During analysis of equitable distribution, it was noted that most urban areas are over-enrolled, as those living in urban areas generally have better access to transportation and are closer to a sub-grantee. Underserved areas are more likely to be rural, due to lack of transportation in those areas, and other geographical challenges that older workers in Virginia face. A rural participant may live up to or over an hour drive from any local SCSEP office, or to most host agencies in the area.

To increase services in rural areas, grantees will focus marketing efforts in those areas, including advertisements in local papers. Most sub-grantees have access to transportation services and will partner with those programs as much as possible to help participants get to host sites and training opportunities. Local SCSEP offices will also work with rural VEC and Workforce offices, as mentioned earlier in the plan, to identify potential participants.

Those sub-grantees that serve particularly large geographic areas may also need to identify a secondary location that can be used to meet participants who are geographically distant from the sub-grantee agency. As urban participants exit the program, sub-grantees will be encouraged to actively recruit in rural areas to increase equitable distribution between urban and rural localities.

Some grantees are also expanding OJE opportunities to rural areas. If host agencies are limited, a private employer may be a better option for a training opportunity for a rural participant.

C. SERVES INDIVIDUALS AFFORDED PRIORITY FOR SERVICE UNDER 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(A), 641.365, 641.520)

Virginia grantees have a long history of serving eligible individuals who are most in need. We will continue to recruit and enroll individuals who meet priority of service requirements. Priority service is offered to qualified veterans and their spouses, individuals aged 65 and older, and those who have disabilities, limited English proficiency, low literacy, who reside in a rural area, have low employment prospects, have failed to find employment after using services under Title I of WIOA, and/or are homeless or at risk of homelessness. We will continue to build upon relationships with organizations serving individuals who qualify for priority of service. DARS sub-grantees are required to submit a recruitment plan that breaks down specific recruitment efforts for each priority of service category. Each grantee and sub-grantee identify agencies that provide services to these populations and ensure that those agencies are aware of the services SCSEP provides.

The data showing service to most in need is not currently available through GPMS.

Grantees and sub-grantees work to identify other agencies, both public and private, that serve these populations. Once initial contact is made, a partnership can be created between SCSEP and other programs and agencies that ensure that eligible individuals who are interested in

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employment are directed to the program. Below is a chart with some examples of partner agencies for each Priority of Service/Most in Need factor.

Veteran	VFW organizations, veterans' hospitals, other veteran centered organizations
Age 65 or older	Local agencies on aging and senior centers
Disability	Local DARS offices and advocacy groups
Low literacy or LEP	Adult education centers, cultural centers for immigrant population, ESL courses
Reside in Rural Area	Local departments of social services, food banks, churches, schools
Failed to find employment under WIOA	Local VEC, WIB, and one-stop centers
Homeless or at risk of homelessness	Local shelters, housing departments, and advocacy groups

Veteran	VFW organizations, veterans' hospitals, other veteran centered organizations
Below the poverty level	Local shelters, SNAP offices, AAAs, senior centers
Re-entry	Local Parole boards, nonprofits that assist this population, local jails and prisons.

THE RATIO OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN EACH SERVICE AREA TO THE TOTAL ELIGIBLE POPULATION IN THE STATE. (20 CFR 641.325(A))

Per the United States Census Bureau's 2022 American Community Survey, the population of Virginia is 8,683,619. Of that population, 2,573,030 are 55 or older. Per America's Health Rankings, 8% of Virginians over 65 live below the poverty level.

THE RELATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO:

D. RESIDE IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS WITHIN THE STATE

Per the Rural Health Information Hub, 12.4% of Virginians live in a non-metro area. Based on 2020 American Community Survey census data, the poverty level in rural Virginia is higher than the overall level, at 14.9% (The state overall poverty rate is 10.3%). People in rural areas are less likely to have completed high school, and the unemployment rate in rural Virginia is also higher than urban areas.

E. HAVE THE GREATEST ECONOMIC NEED

The SCSEP grant serves individuals who are at or below 125% of the federal poverty level. Grantees and sub-grantees prioritize those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, have low unemployment prospects, and/or those receiving Social Security or Social Security Disability payments. All SCSEP participants have an economic need for assistance.

F. ARE MINORITIES

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Please see section b(3) regarding services to minorities. The table below details the overall minority population in Virginia, and the service level to minorities of the four SCSEP grantees.

Virginia Minority % (2022 Census)	% Served by State	% Served by AARP	% Served by Goodwill	% Served by NCOA
31.5%	62.1%	91.0%	40.9%	76.8%

G. ARE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT

It is difficult to determine the number of ESL participants being served, as the GPMS data collection system does not currently have a functioning report on that factor. While we do see participants entering the program with limited English proficiency, grantees and sub-grantees have noted that fear of immigration legal issues may deter non-native English speakers or those with limited English proficiency from seeking out that program. However, DARS has been able to enroll participants who have limited English proficiency and enroll them in ESL courses. One participant is now studying for her citizenship test.

H. HAVE THE GREATEST SOCIAL NEED. (20 CFR 641.325(B))

SCSEP serves a population that often falls through the cracks of workforce development. Given the poverty levels and most in need factors of our participants, SCSEP serves a population that has a great social need. Older adults tend to be discriminated against in hiring and may be limited in the things they can do and the hours they can work. Older individuals are also more likely to experience loneliness and isolation, which can affect physical and mental health. Unfortunately, due to GPMS issues, we cannot provide information about the number of most in need factors the average participant has documented.

I. FORMERLY INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS, AS DEFINED IN TEGL 17-20

This is a new most-in-need factor for SCSEP, but sub-grantees have always worked with participants who were formerly incarcerated. SCSEP coordinators work with individuals who have criminal records and find host agencies that are willing to take on the formerly incarcerated. Now that this category is a most-in-need factor, sub-grantees and grantees are engaging with programs that serve the recently incarcerated. Sub-grantees have identified contacts with local, state, and federal corrections facilities, as well as with parole boards and non-profits that assist with re-entry. Virginia's adult education resources partner with SCSEP to ensure this population gets the services they need to be successfully employed.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE STEPS TAKEN TO AVOID DISRUPTIONS TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE, WHEN POSITIONS ARE REDISTRIBUTED, AS PROVIDED IN 20 CFR 641.365; WHEN NEW CENSUS OR OTHER RELIABLE DATA BECOME AVAILABLE; OR WHEN THERE IS OVER-ENROLLMENT FOR ANY OTHER REASON. (20 CFR 641.325(I), 641.302(B))

When new Census data indicates that there has been a shift in location of the eligible population within the state, resulting in over-enrollment, or when there is over-enrollment for other reasons, Virginia's grantees will gradually shift positions to avoid disruptions to participants. Enrollment will cease in the over-enrolled area, but participants who are currently enrolled in that area stay in the program until they gain employment or exit for another reason. Participation is never terminated due to over-enrollment. The grantees are committed to ensuring that participants will not lose positions because of transfer of slots. Priority will be given to minimizing disruption to current participants, and shifts will occur as positions become available through normal attrition.

Virginia has had several reductions in modified slots due to the staggered increases in minimum

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wage. When an increase is approaching, sub-grantees meet with the grantee to determine what current enrollment is, and what the new modified slot level is anticipated to be. Sub-grantees may slow enrollment to ensure that they have enough funding to continue to serve the participants actively enrolled. No participants were or will be released from the program due to a minimum wage increase.

When grantees exchange slots, DOL must approve of the final slot distribution. If slots are moved between grantees, the involved grantees work together to ensure that participants who are enrolled in those slots remain enrolled in the program, and in their host agencies when possible. Grantees and sub-grantees meet with participants who will be affected and answer any questions that may come up in that process. Any paperwork that can be transferred to the new grantee (IEPs, assessments, supervisor and participant evaluations) move with the participant to the new grantee/sub-grantee.

When redistribution of SCSEP slots occurs because of a national grant competition, every effort is made to ensure that there is no disruption in service to participants, and that there is a seamless transition of participants to the new grantee. This has been successfully accomplished during past competitions, and grantees will continue to assist participants who are moved from one grantee/sub-grantee to another. Steps include the following.

- Timely meetings with participants and host agency supervisors.
- Transfer of all required files and records to the receiving grantee.
- Ensuring that participants are placed on the recipient grantee's payroll in a timely manner.
- Host agency placements continue for a minimum of 90 days, if the participant chooses to stay.
- Job-ready participants are encouraged to search for and move to unsubsidized employment, creating open positions for other individuals in the state.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR APPENDIX

Pending all negotiations with the Departments.