



VIRGINIA **CAREER WORKS**

NEW RIVER | MOUNT ROGERS REGION

PY 2020-2024 Strategic Plan

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Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

Background and History: The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board has been engaged in the business of workforce solutions since 2000. The board holds to its formation mission of facilitating and coordinating workforce initiatives that enable economic growth and increase the standard of living of our regional citizens. This focus has required services and partners to evolve over the years and yet, anchors our work in the heart of developing a robust workforce that supports a growing economy in the New River/Mount Rogers region as well as across southwest and the rest of Virginia.

Our work locally has been guided by a vision and mission that has been revisited over the years. Following the integration of our sector initiative work, expansion of the integration of workforce system efforts, and incorporation of the state's focus, our joint Workforce Development and Consortium boards approved the revised vision and mission statements to guide our organization over the next three years. The vision represents our biggest and best thinking about how the region will look when we fully achieve our strategic mission. The goals help us build the path to that vision.

Direction and Results: The NRMWDB is a trusted regional convener within the workforce system and is committed to this role. The strategic direction and goals included in this plan is the NRMWDB's response to what we understand our stakeholders desire most from the workforce system as well as current opportunities and challenges for providing workforce development in the region. This plan is also designed to support the Virginia Board of Workforce Development's Strategic plan. The following statements are listed as their blue print for the next three years:

- Align the Commonwealth's workforce system with economic development Action Items
- Ensure training programs are demand driven
- Provide Virginians with educational pathways that lead to economic independence and prosperity
- Create a best-in class delivery system for workforce services that is accessible and effective for jobseekers and employers alike

These action items are addressed in the NRMWDB's **Goals** and **Strategies**.

Section 1:

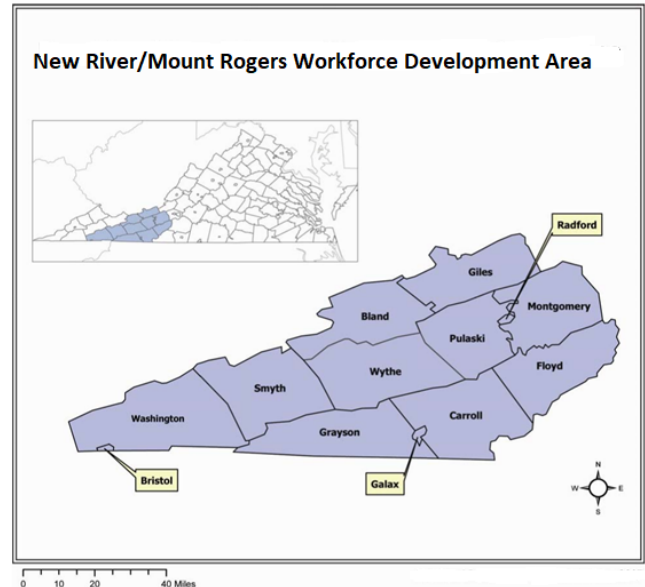
Workforce and Economic Analysis





Regional Economic Conditions

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area (Region II) is composed of ten counties (Bland, Carroll, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Montgomery, Pulaski, Smyth, Washington, Wythe) and three independent cities (Bristol, Galax, and Radford). Data from the American Community Survey (ACS) estimates that 371,531 people lived in this area in 2019. Total population in Region II fell by 301 people (-0.8%) since the 2010 Decennial Census, where 371,832 people were counted. Median age increased from 40.4 in 2010 to 42.9 in 2019, which was likely the product of population changes in individual age cohorts. Only the 15-19, 25-29, and 30-34 age cohorts saw population growth ranging from 2% to 8% from 2010-2019. The remainder of cohorts aged under 60 experienced decline ranging from -3% to -15% during the same period. Alternatively, cohorts aged 60 and older experienced population growth at rates ranging from 9%-24%.



Region II contained 147,403 households in 2019, according to the ACS. Married-couple households, nonfamily households, and single parent households accounted for 48.2%, 13.9%, and 37.9% of the Region's households for the same year. Region II had an average family size of 3.0 for both married-couple households and single parent households in 2019. Approximately 31.2% of married-couple households and 48.2% of single parent households included children under the age of 18 for the same year. Average household income (AHI) in Region II was \$60,395 in 2019. This was lower than AHI for both the State (\$105,091) and Nation (\$92,324) for the same year.

A **living wage** is the lowest wage necessary to meet the minimum standard of living in a community or region. Household dynamics, such as the presence of dependents, and other cost of living factors influence living wages. For instance, it is likely that a single mother requires a higher living wage than a single person with no children. Virginia Tech's Office of Economic Development (VT OED) interpolated regional household data and cost of living data provided by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to generate a weighted average living wage of \$13.85/hour (approximately \$28,807 annually) for a conventional full-time position (2,080 hours a year) in Region II for 2019. It is important to note that this average is reflective of all households in Region II; individual households may require a higher or lower wage. For example, a married-couple household where both spouses are working and no child is present required a wage of \$9.10 to meet a

minimal standard of living in 2019. Alternatively, the Region's average single parent household (one householder, two children) required a wage of \$29.48 for the same year.

Poverty status is determined for all people except institutionalized people, people living in military quarters, people in college dormitories, and unrelated individuals under 15 years old. Approximately 19% (65,084) of residents for whom poverty status is determined in Region II lived below the poverty line in 2019, according to the ACS. This was higher than the poverty rate for the State (10.6%) and Nation (13.7%) for the same year. Female-headed households with no spouse present saw the highest incidence of poverty in Region II; 28.9% of these households were under the poverty line in 2019. Furthermore, female-headed households accounted for 41.3% of all households under the poverty line in Region II for the same year. Residents who were unemployed (37% lived under the poverty line), attained less than a high school education (27%), or received some type of cash benefit (24.6%) were also more likely to live in poverty for the same year. Alternatively, married couple households were the least likely to live in poverty, with only 6% of these households living under the poverty line in 2019.

Data provided by the United Way of Southwest Virginia suggest that nearly a third of working households in Region II live above the poverty line; however, they do not earn enough to satisfy the minimum cost of household essentials, including food, housing, childcare, etc. The United Way classifies these households as **asset limited, income constrained, employed** (ALICE). The ALICE threshold represents the widening gap between the federal poverty level and minimum cost of household essentials, also known as the "survival budget." For instance, a single, childless worker in Region II may earn above the federal poverty level (\$12,400) but still earn below the estimated survival budget for this Region (\$23,184).

The United Way estimates that 31.7% of households in Region II fell within the ALICE threshold in 2018. Approximately 17.4% of households in Region II lived below the poverty line and 50.9% of households lived above both the poverty line and ALICE threshold during the same year. Proportionally more households in Region II lived below the poverty line and/or ALICE threshold compared to the State. The United Way estimates that 29.5% of Virginia's households lived

NEW RIVER VALLEY

Counties of: Floyd, Giles (only),
Montgomery, Pulaski
City of: Radford



MOUNT ROGERS

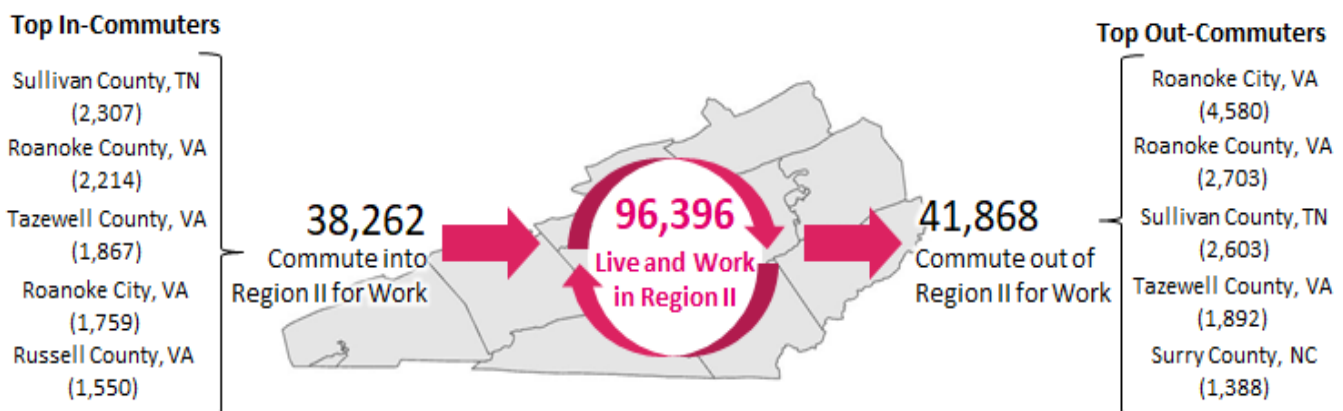
Counties of: Bland, Carroll, Grayson,
Smyth, Washington, Wythe
Cities of: Bristol, Galax



under the ALICE threshold, 10.3% lived below the poverty line, and 60.2% lived above the ALICE threshold for the same year.

Similar to poverty, certain groups were more like to live above or below the ALICE threshold. For instance, only 20.6% of female-headed households with children in Region II lived above both the poverty line and ALICE threshold in 2018. Alternatively, 79% of married couple households including children under 18 lived above both the poverty line and ALICE threshold during the same year. Younger households were more likely to live below the poverty line while older households were more like to earn below the ALICE threshold. Householders aged under 25 in Region II had the highest incidence of poverty in 2018 (62.5%) but were marginally less likely to live under the ALICE threshold for the same year (26%) compared to older age cohorts. Alternatively, householders aged over 65 in Region II were less likely to live in poverty (11%) and more likely to live below the ALICE threshold (43.7%).

Commuting patterns are also important to consider when getting an overall picture of a region's workforce. Employment is a measure of the total number of jobs contained within a region. A resident worker is employed and living in a region but may work outside of that region. According to EMSI, Region II housed 155,322 jobs and 154,313 resident workers in 2020, which suggests that at least some industries within Region II rely on out-of-Region workers to satisfy their labor needs. Montgomery County and Washington County housed the most jobs and workers in Region II in 2020. Census data suggest that 71% of regional jobs were held by resident workers in 2018, with the remaining 29% of jobs being held by nonresident workers. A combined 6.5% of jobs in Region II were held by nonresident workers from Sullivan County, TN, Roanoke County, VA, and Russell County, VA in 2018. Alternatively, Census data suggest that 29.2% of resident workers in Region II worked outside of the region during the same year. A combined 8.2% of workers living in Region II were employed in Roanoke County, VA, Sullivan County, TN, and Roanoke City, VA in 2018.





Knowledge and Skills Requirements

Target Industries & Occupations identified by the New River/Mount Rogers workforce development board include three existing target sectors: healthcare and social assistance, manufacturing, and construction. Two emerging target areas were also identified: professional, scientific, and technical services, and transportation and warehousing. VT OED reviewed the comprehensive economic development strategies of the two planning districts in Region II and ensured that these identified target sectors were congruent with the goals of these documents.



Manufacturing

The regional manufacturing sector accounted for the largest portion (17.2%) of total employment in Region II; 25,985 workers were employed in businesses belonging to this sector in 2020. This sector was expected to add 1,003 jobs from 2015-2020, according to an estimation based on the growth of the national economy and the performance of the national manufacturing sector during this period. Instead, 883 jobs were eliminated from the manufacturing sector from 2015-2020 (3% decline), underperforming expected job change by 1,886 jobs. However, EMSI projects a 6% employment growth (1,479 jobs) for this sector over the next five-year period (2020-2025). The manufacturing sector had a location quotient of 2.13 in 2020, which suggests that employment in this sector was more concentrated in Region II compared to all regions of the Nation. The regional manufacturing sector supplied 26.4% of the Region's GRP in 2019 (\$3.16 billion). Five distinct clusters dominated employment in the regional manufacturing sector: transportation equipment manufacturing; electrical equipment, appliance, and components manufacturing; chemical manufacturing; forest and wood products; and food and beverage processing.

The regional transportation equipment manufacturing cluster accounted for 30% of employment (7,749 jobs) in the Region's manufacturing sector. This cluster was expected to add 783 jobs from 2015-2020, according to an estimation based on national economic and national cluster performance. Instead, this cluster added 232 jobs during this period (3% growth), which indicates that this cluster was **not competitive**. EMSI projects 7% employment growth (561 jobs) for the region's transportation equipment manufacturing cluster over the next five-year period (2020-2025). This cluster was highly specialized in heavy duty truck manufacturing (104.82 LQ), truck trailer manufacturing (50.27), motor vehicle steering and suspension components manufacturing (15.03), and motor vehicle gasoline engine and engine parts manufacturing (8.58) in 2020. Five additional industries had LQ values between 1.0-3.5 during the same year. The transportation equipment manufacturing cluster supplied 35% (\$1.1 billion) of the regional manufacturing cluster's GRP in 2019.

The region's **chemical manufacturing** cluster was composed of 6,135 workers in 2020, which accounted for 23.6% of regional manufacturing sector employment. The region's chemical manufacturing cluster was expected to add only seven jobs from 2015-2020,

based on national economic growth and national cluster performance. However, the regional chemical cluster added 333 jobs during this period, which suggests that this cluster **was competitive**. EMSI projects 6% employment growth (333 jobs) for this cluster over the next five-year period (2020-2025). This cluster was highly specialized in explosives manufacturing (130.08 LQ), photographic film, paper, plate, and chemical manufacturing (83.09), custom compounding of purchased resins (29.81), and artificial and synthetic fibers and filaments manufacturing (25.59) in 2020. An additional fifteen industries had LQ values between 1.2-15.5 for the same year. The chemical manufacturing cluster supplied 30.7% (\$970.4 million) of the regional manufacturing sector's GRP in 2019.

The regional **electrical equipment, appliance, and components** manufacturing cluster accounted for 10.2% of employment (2,648 jobs) in the Region's manufacturing sector in 2020. This cluster was expected to create 11 jobs from 2015-2020, based on national economic growth and national cluster performance. Instead, 235 jobs were eliminated (8% decline) during this period; this cluster was **not competitive**. EMSI projects a 7% employment decline (182 jobs) for this cluster over the next five-year period (2020-2025). The regional cluster was highly specialized in motor and generator manufacturing (39.46 LQ), other lighting equipment manufacturing (37.62), power, distribution, and specialty transformer manufacturing (15.35), and commercial, industrial, and institutional electric lighting fixture manufacturing (14.92) in 2020. Three additional industries belonging to this cluster had LQ values between 2.0-4.0. The regional electrical equipment, appliance, and components manufacturing cluster generated \$300.4 million in 2019, which accounted for 9.5% of the regional manufacturing cluster's GRP.

The manufacturing portion of the region's **forest and wood products** cluster was composed of 2,563 workers in 2020 (9.9% of sector employment). This cluster was expected to eliminate 57 jobs from 2015-2020, according to an estimation based on national economic and industry trends. A total of 579 jobs were eliminated in the Region's forest and wood product manufacturing cluster, which suggests that the regional cluster is **contracting at a faster pace** than the national cluster. EMSI projects 7% employment growth (192 jobs) for this cluster over the next five-year period (2020-2025). This cluster was highly specialized in cut stock, resawing lumber, and planing (22.15 LQ), other paperboard container manufacturing (11.15), prefabricated wood building manufacturing (9.55), upholstered household furniture manufacturing (8.01), other millwork (7.76), and reconstituted wood product manufacturing (7.32) in 2020. Eight additional industries had LQ values between 1.1-3.4 for the same year. The forest and wood product manufacturing cluster supplied 5.2% (\$165.3 million) of the regional manufacturing sector's GRP in 2019.

Finally, 2,075 workers were employed in businesses belonging to the region's **food and beverage processing** cluster in 2020, which accounted for 8% of regional manufacturing cluster employment. This cluster was expected to add 222 jobs from 2010-2025, based on national economic and industry performance. The regional food and beverage processing cluster grew by 403 jobs (24% growth) during this period, indicating **competitiveness**. EMSI projects 14% employment growth (294 jobs) for this cluster over the next five-year period (2020-2025). The regional food and beverage cluster was highly

specialized in other snack food manufacturing (11.72 LQ), soft drink manufacturing (10.29), other animal food manufacturing (8.20), and bottled water manufacturing (3.29) in 2020. An additional five industries had LQ values ranging between 1.0-2.0 during the same year. This cluster generated \$261.7 million in 2019, which accounted for 8.9% of the regional manufacturing sector's GRP for the same year.

Miscellaneous **assemblers and fabricators** (15.3% of sector employment), **first-line supervisors** of production and operating workers (3.8%), and electrical, electronic, and electromechanical **assemblers** (3.5%) were the largest occupations by employment within the Region's manufacturing sector in 2020. These three occupations were also the sector's **most in-demand occupations** for the same year. Miscellaneous assemblers and fabricators saw 654 annual openings and 2,163 hires; electrical, electronic, and electromechanical assemblers saw 149 openings and 330 hires; and first-line supervisors of production and operating workers saw 144 openings and 402 hires.

Attachment B lists a more detailed overview of in-demand manufacturing occupations.



Healthcare and Social Assistance

The healthcare and social assistance sector was the third largest sector in Region II by employment in 2020. This sector accounted for 11.4% of the Region's employment (16,500 jobs) during that year. The Region's healthcare and social assistance sector was expected to add 1,573 jobs from 2015-2020, according to an estimation based on national economic performance and the performance of the national sector. Instead, 588 jobs were added (4% growth) across the regional healthcare and social assistance sector during this period. This degree of underperformance suggests that the regional sector was **not competitive** during the past five years. EMSI projects 7% employment growth (1,194 jobs) for this sector over the next five-year period (2020-2025). The healthcare and social assistance sector had a location quotient of 0.83 in 2020, suggesting that employment in this sector was less concentrated in Region II compared to the Nation. The regional sector also generated 8% (\$953.1 million) of the Region's GRP during 2019.

Home health and **personal care aides** (12.9% of sector employment), **registered nurses** (12.1%), and **nursing assistants** (9.4%) were the largest occupations by employment within the region's healthcare and social assistance sector in 2020. Occupations with high annual openings, a measure of new and replacement jobs within an occupation, and that paid a livable wage (\$11.50) were considered in-demand. The nursing assistant occupation led the sector in demand for 2020 with 265 annual openings and 1,338 hires. Registered nurses (181 annual openings), licensed practical and vocational nurses (104), social and human service assistants (76), and medical assistants (61) were the following most in-demand occupations for the same year.

Attachment B provides an overview of in-demand healthcare and social assistance occupations.



Construction/Skilled Trades

The regional construction sector accounted for 3.9% (6,032 workers) of total employment in Region II for 2020. This industry experienced a net change of -17 jobs from 2015-2020; 604 jobs were eliminated and 587 jobs were created. The regional construction sector was expected to add 867 jobs from 2015-2020, according to an estimation based on national economic and sector-specific performance. The regional construction sector underperformed this expectation by 884 jobs, indicating that it was **not competitive** during this period. EMSI projects less than 1% employment change (32 jobs) for this sector over the next five years. The construction sector had an LQ of 0.68 in 2020, suggesting that employment in this sector was less concentrated in Region II compared to the Nation. This sector generated \$444.66 million in 2019, which accounted for 3.7% of the Region's GRP.

Construction laborers (17.3% of sector employment), **carpenters** (11.5%), **first-line supervisors** of construction trades and extraction workers (8.3%) and operating engineers and other construction equipment operators (4.8%) were the largest occupations by employment within the region's construction sector. These three occupations also led this sector in demand in 2020.

Attachment B provides an overview of in-demand construction and skilled-trades occupations.



Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

The Region's professional, scientific, and technical services sector accounted for 3.3% (5,121 jobs) of regional employment in 2020. This sector was expected to see the addition of 569 jobs from 2015-2020, according to an estimation based on national economic performance and national sector performance. Instead, 152 jobs were eliminated across the Region's professional, scientific, and technical services sector during this period. Employment decline amid a period of national growth suggests that this sector was **not competitive** over the past five years. EMSI projects 4% employment growth (208 jobs) for this sector over the next five-year period (2020-2025). The professional, scientific, and technical services sector had a location quotient of 0.5 in 2020, suggesting that employment in this sector was half as concentrated in Region II compared to the Nation. This sector generated \$542.6 million in 2019, which accounted for 4.5% of the Region's GRP.

Lawyers (6% of sector employment), **management analysts** (4.1%), and **software developers** and software quality assurance analysts and testers (4.1%) were the largest occupations by employment within the regional professional, scientific, and technical services industry. Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks (229 annual openings), accountants and auditors (110), management analysts (102), software developers and software quality assurance analysts and testers (72), and computer use support specialists (65) were the top in-demand occupations within the region's professional, scientific, and technical services sector in 2020.

Attachment B provides an overview of in-demand Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services occupations.



Transportation, Logistics, and Warehousing

The transportation and warehousing sector was composed of 3,795 jobs in 2020, which accounted for 2.4% of total employment in Region II. Approximately 822 jobs were expected to be created across this sector from 2015-2020, according to an estimation based on national and sector-specific growth. This sector added 180 jobs during this period, which suggests low competitiveness. EMSI projects 6% employment growth (209 jobs) over the next five-year period (2020-2025). The regional transportation and warehousing sector had an LQ of 0.64 in 2020, which suggests that employment in the regional sector is less concentrated compared to the nation. This sector supplied 3.3% (\$395.5 million) of the Region's GRP in 2019.

Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers (23.3% of sector employment), **laborers and freight, stock, and material movers** (7.5%), **light truck drivers** (6.6%), and **stockers and order fillers** (6.6%) were the largest occupations by employment within the region's transportation and warehousing sector. The laborers and freight, stock and material movers and heavy and tractor-trailer truck driver occupations also led the sector in demand with 408 and 406 openings in 2020, respectively.

Attachment B provides an overview of in-demand Transportation and Warehousing occupations.

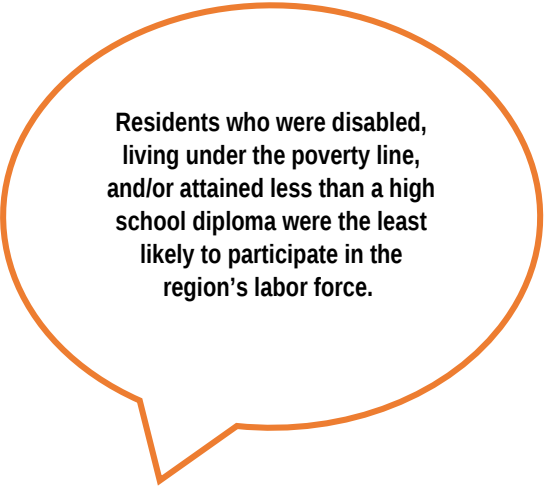


Local Workforce Analysis

Understanding the current labor force is crucial to building and achieving our economic goals in the region. Virginia Tech's Office of Economic Development (VT OED) not only provides overview data about employment, but also they break down this information by sectors and dig deeper into the issues of underemployment in our workforce. This work is an important contribution toward sectoral Action Items by helping to provide a deeper understanding of individual and categorical business partner workforce needs. Quarterly Reports can be viewed on our website or by clicking the link: http://bit.ly/wda2_qtr_rpts

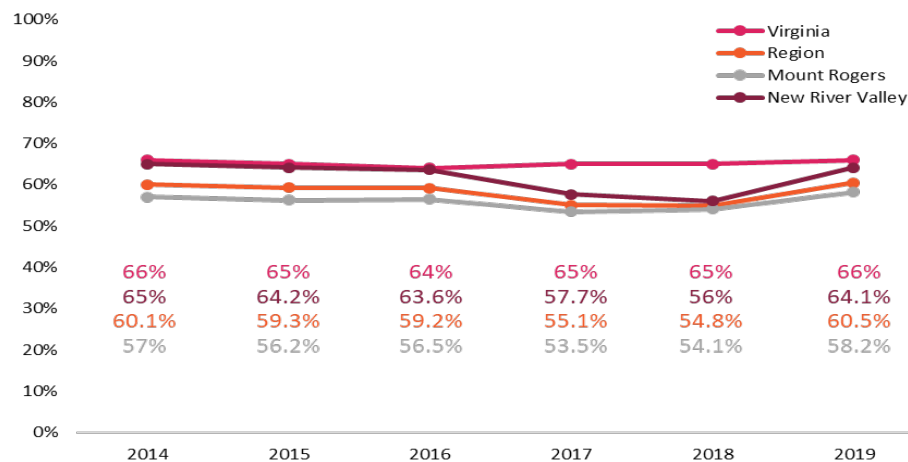
The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area (NRMRWDA) had a **civilian noninstitutionalized population** of 313,895 in 2019, according to ACS data. This number is reflective of the total number of individuals that could participate in the workforce. Region II saw a **labor force participation rate** (LFP) of 60.5% in 2019, according to the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC). This compares to an LFP of 59.3% in 2015. LFP in Region II was **lower** than that of the State (63.4%) and Nation (63.1%) in 2019. Additionally, 26% of individuals aged between 20-64 in Region II **did not work** in 2019. Region II had a proportionally greater number of non-workers in 2019 compared to the State (20.2%) and Nation (22.4%) for the same year. The **average median age** of workforce participants in Region II was 40.7 years of age in 2019, according to the ACS. This compares to 39.6 years of age for the State and Nation during the same year. Workers aged between 45-54 accounted for the largest portion of the Region's workforce (20.3%). Approximately 7.5% of workforce participants were **nearing retirement age** (60-64) in 2019 and 5.9% of workforce participants were aged over 65 for the same year.

Several factors were correlated with higher and lower LFP in Region II, including age, gender, poverty status, and disability status. LFP was highest among residents aged between 25-44; 76.9% of residents in this age cohort participated in the region's labor force in 2019. Labor force participation was lower for residents aged 24 and under (56.5%) and for residents aged 45 and older (44.8%) for the same year. LFP was marginally higher for men aged between 20-64 (71.9%) compared to women in the same age group (68.2%) in 2019. However, women with children under 18 were the most likely to participate (75.2%) in the 20-64 age group. Residents who were disabled (37.4% LFP), living under the poverty line (42.4%), and/or attained less than a high school diploma (49.8%) were the least likely to participate in the Region's labor force in 2018.



Residents who were disabled, living under the poverty line, and/or attained less than a high school diploma were the least likely to participate in the region's labor force.

Labor Force Participation Rates:



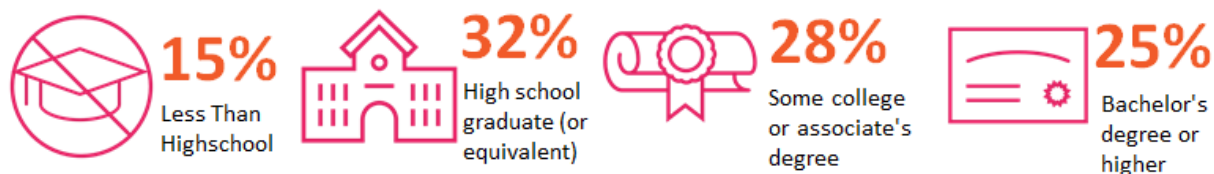
Sources: EMSI Developer, 2020.3 Dataset; US Census, 2018 5-Year Estimates; Virginia Employment Commission; BLS Annual State Employment Status

Workers with **more credentials** tend to be better compensated compared to their less credentialed counterparts. Occupations with **no formal education requirements** paid the **lowest** in Region II while occupations requiring **bachelor's degrees** and above paid the **highest**, with some exceptions. Occupations requiring a high school diploma had the most variation in compensation. Additionally, large occupations requiring some college or postsecondary achievement paid similar wages to occupations requiring only a high school diploma.

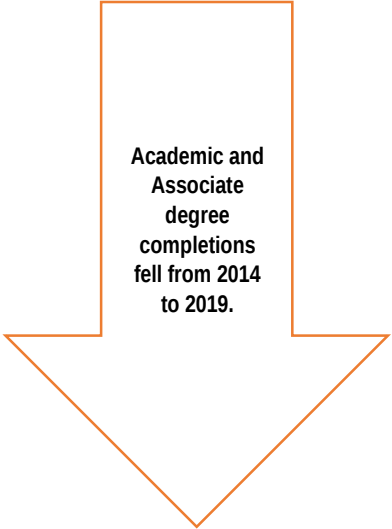
Educational Attainment:

Educational attainment was varied for people aged over 25 in the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area (Region II). For instance, 15% of individuals aged over 25 did not have a high school diploma, 32% attained a high school diploma or equivalency, 28% had some college experience or an associate's degree, and the remaining 25% attained a bachelor's degree or higher in 2020. A greater proportion of workers in Region II did not have a high school diploma compared to the State and Nation. Alternatively, a larger portion of working-age residents had an associate's degree compared to the State and Nation. Workers in Region II, however, were less likely to have a bachelor's degree compared to the same geographies.

Education Attainment, 2020



Overall completions for 1-year **academic programs**, **1-2-year academic programs**, and **associate's degrees** fell by -32% (179 completions), -29% (206), -4% (41) in Region II from 2014-2019, respectively. Nevertheless, allied health diagnostic, intervention, and treatment (83 completions), diesel mechanics technology/technicians (30), welding technology/welder (23), and general computer and information sciences programs (21) were the most popular 1-year academic programs in 2019. General liberal arts and sciences (337 completions), allied health diagnostic, intervention, and treatment (37), licensed practical/vocational nurse (36) programs were the most popular 1-2-year academic programs for the same year. Finally, Liberal studies (513 completions), registered nursing (162), agricultural production operations (54) and industrial electronic technology/technician (43) programs were the most popular associate's degree programs.



Academic and Associate degree completions fell from 2014 to 2019.

In-Demand Skills & Qualifications:

Jobs are often posted across a multitude of webpages, job boards, etc. This oftentimes creates multiple postings for the same job. For instance, there were 341,697 job postings for 85,559 available jobs in Region II in 2019. More than half of the jobs advertised in Region II in 2019 were located in Montgomery County (28.7% of postings), Washington County (11.8%), and Wythe County (10.2%).

Approximately 66% of 2019 job postings in Region II did not list an educational requirement, although many of these occupations may require an education credential that was omitted from the posting. Nevertheless, 14% of 2019 job postings required a high school degree or GED, 5% required an associate's degree, and the remaining 25% required a bachelor's degree or higher. Similarly, 69% of 2019 postings did not list an experience requirement. Approximately 13% of postings required 0-1 years of experience, 12% required 2-3 years, and 6% required 4 or more years of experience.

In-demand qualifications varied for each industry and occupation; information regarding in-demand qualifications for target industries is found below. **Commercial Drivers License** (CDL) was the most in-demand qualification in Region II for 2019; 13.9% of job postings listed a CDL as a requirement. **Healthcare qualifications** were also in high demand, according to job postings data. Approximately 4.3% of postings in Region II required a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing (BSN), Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), Nurse Practitioner, and Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) credential. Qualifications related to **business administration**, operations, and management; **food service**; and **logistics** were also in-demand in 2019.

Similar to qualifications, **hard skills** tended to align with specific industries and occupations. Nevertheless, the top-five in-demand hard skills in Region II were **merchandising** (6% of 2019 postings), **restaurant operation** (6%), **nursing** (5%), **flatbed truck operation** (4%), and **basic life support** (3%).

In-demand **soft skills** were more universal. For instance, **communications, customer service, and management** skills were listed in 20%, 18%, and 15% of all job postings in Region II for 2019, respectively.



Top-posted **soft skills** include communications, customer service, management, and leadership



Healthcare and Social Assistance

There were 37,186 postings for 7,761 job openings within the Region's healthcare and social assistance sector in 2019. Montgomery County, Washington County, and Wythe County were the most popular locations for these postings. Approximately 3,803 healthcare job postings listed an educational requirement in 2019; 26% called for a high school diploma or equivalent, 29% called for an associate's degree, and the remaining 45% called for a bachelor's degree or higher.

Bachelor's of Science in Nursing (BSN) was the most in-demand qualification for this sector in 2019; 8.5% of all health care postings required this certification. Additionally, 7.4% of postings called for Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) certifications, and 5.9% called for Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certifications. Top hard skills for healthcare postings in 2019 were nursing, CPR, rehabilitation, and basic life support. Communications, customer service, management, and leadership were the top-posted soft skills for the same year.



Manufacturing

There were 18,071 postings for 3,301 job openings within the Region's manufacturing sector for 2019. It is important to note that job postings for manufacturing occupations tend to underrepresent the actual number of job openings in this sector. Montgomery County, the City of Radford, and Wythe County were the most popular locations for these postings. Approximately 2,098 job postings listed an educational requirement in 2019; 34% called for a high school diploma or equivalent, 12% called for an associate's degree, and the remaining 56% called for a bachelor's degree or higher.

CDL was the most in-demand qualification for manufacturing postings in 2019; 7.3% of postings called for this certification. Bachelor's of Science in Business, project management professional certification, and certified safety professional were the next most in-demand qualifications for the same year. Top hard skills listed in these postings were auditing, corrective and preventive action (CAPA), lean manufacturing, and

continuous improvement processes. Additionally, communication, management, operations, and leadership with the top-posted soft skills.



Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

There were 27,519 postings for 6,071 job openings within the Region's professional, scientific, and technical services sector for 2019. Montgomery County, the City of Radford, and Washington County were the most popular locations for these postings. Approximately 2,745 postings listed an educational requirement in 2019; 35% called for a high school diploma or equivalent, 7% called for an associate's degree, and the remaining 58% called for a bachelor's degree or higher.

The top-posted qualifications for these positions were CompTIA Security +, product certification (2.4% of 2019 postings), product certification (1.8%), Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (1.3%), and IAT Level II Certification (1.2%). Top-posted hard skills in 2019 were scripting, selling techniques, auditing, accounting, and underwriting. Communication, customer service, management, sales, and operations were the top-posted soft skills for the same year.



Construction/Skilled Trades

There were 6,201 postings for 2,021 job openings with the region's construction sector for 2019. It is important to note that job postings for construction occupations tend to underrepresent the actual number of job openings in this sector. The vast majority (77%) of job postings for construction occupations did not list an education requirement in 2019. Occupation data suggest that many construction occupations do not require a formal education credential, especially labor-intensive construction occupations. Approximately 13% of 2019 postings called for a high school diploma, 3% called for an associate's degree, and 7% called for a bachelor's degree or higher.

Many construction postings in Region II also did not list required qualifications. A small number of postings listed CDL, certified forklift operator, and flagger certification as a requirement in 2019. Sales was the most commonly listed hard skill for construction postings, followed by painting, plumbing, carpentry, and HVAC. Similar to other target industries, top soft skills for construction postings were communications, valid driver's license, research, and customer service.



Transportation, Logistics, and Warehousing

There were 58,382 job postings for 16,679 job openings within the region's transportation, logistics, and warehousing sector in 2019. Montgomery County, Pulaski County, and Wythe County were the most popular locations for postings. It is important to note, however, that the bulk of postings were generated by national transportation firms and are not location-dependent. Almost all 2019 postings for logistics positions (97%) did not list an education requirement.

Approximately 63.4% of 2019 postings required a CDL in 2019. Other in-demand qualifications were related to driver endorsements for specialized freight, such as hazardous materials and double and triple-trailer configurations. The most frequently listed hard skills were flatbed truck operation, over-the-road driving, dry van truck operation, and truckload shipping. Desired soft-skills included a good driving record, customer service, operations, and management skills.



Workforce Development Activities

The region is home to three state universities, three community colleges, and several proprietary higher educational institutions. The Workforce system accesses these excellent educational partners and augments training through various credentialing, individual training, and includes the **Manufacturing Center of Excellence**. Within the region, all workforce programs have a specific footprint and customers are made aware of the programs and performance of the programs through various forms of data.

K12 Public School System Pipeline:



24

High Schools in Region II



11:1

Average students to teacher ratio for grades 8 to 12



13,600

Students enrolled in the 2019 to 2020 school year for grades 9 to 12



93.6%

Graduation rate in 2018, excluding GED completions



3.3%

Dropout rate in 2018



62.9%

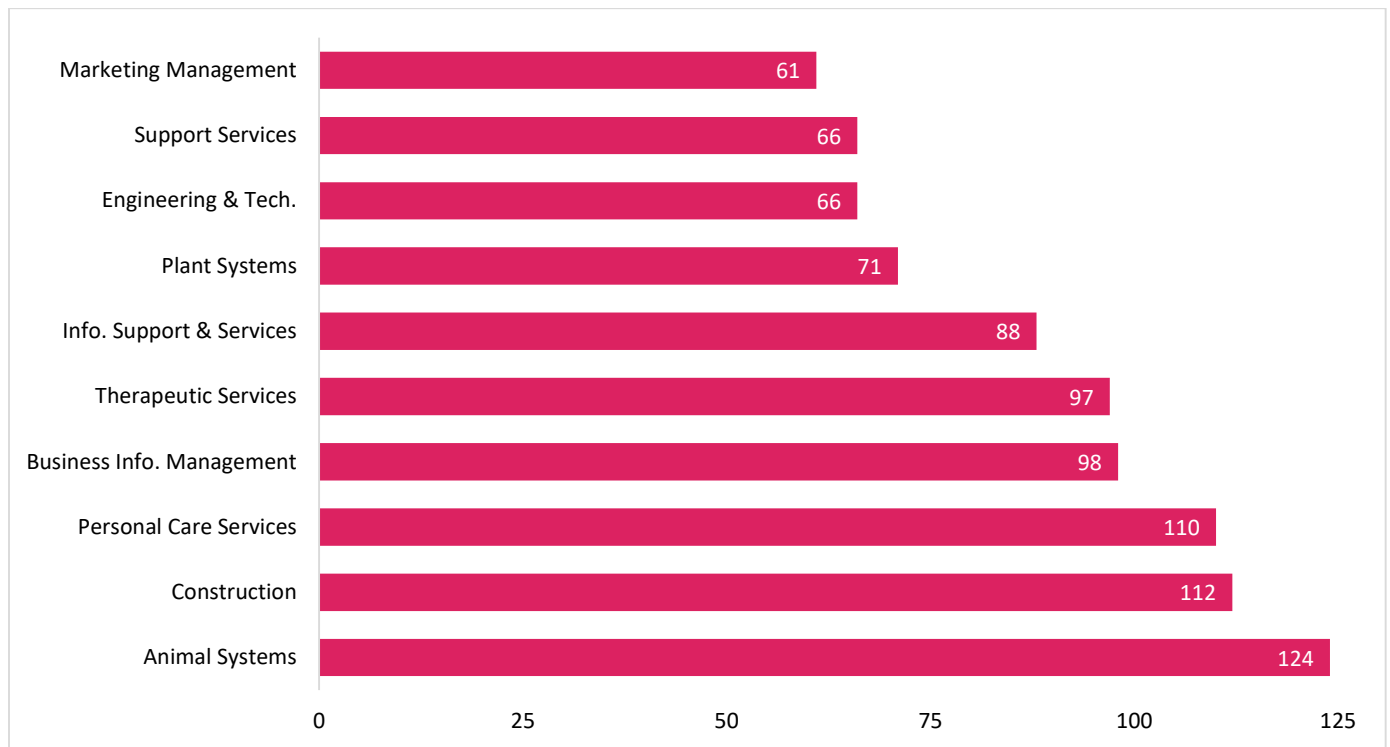
Average percent participation in school nutrition meal eligibility for 2018 to 2019 school year

School Division CTE Completers 2018-19 School Year:

Division	H.S. Enrollment	CTE Completers	% CTE Completers	Dual Enrollment	% Dual Enrollment
Bland County	245	60	24.5%	54	22.0%
Bristol City	670	84	12.5%	145	21.6%
Carroll County	1,101	183	16.6%	431	39.1%
Floyd County	636	75	11.8%	187	29.4%
Galax City	351	66	18.8%	66	18.8%
Giles County	776	154	19.8%	245	31.6%
Grayson County	448	93	20.8%	175	39.1%
Montgomery County	2,931	302	10.3%	882	30.1%
Pulaski County	1,229	214	17.4%	279	22.7%
Radford City	509	26	5.1%	107	21.0%
Smyth County	1,328	218	16.4%	336	25.3%
Washington County	2,233	323	14.5%	471	21.1%
Wythe County	1,251	251	20.1%	243	19.4%

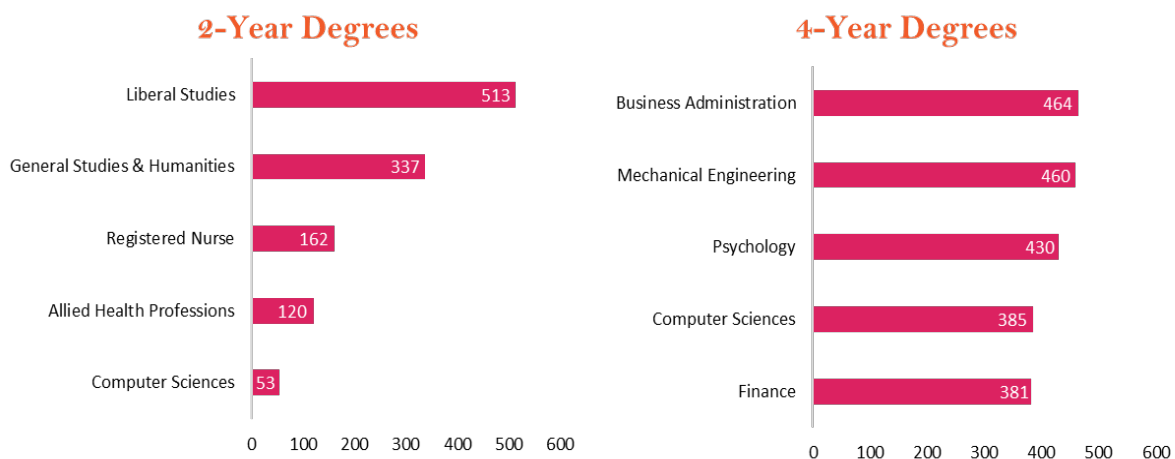
Each school division in Region II offered CTE and dual enrollment programs for the 2018 academic year. Despite high CTE participation, more students participated in dual enrollment programs. Washington County had the highest number of CTE completers in 2018 while Montgomery County had the highest number of dual enrollment students.

Top 10 CTE Programs by Completion 2018:



Higher Education Pipeline:

Top 5 Program Completions by Degree Type



The NRMRWDB Discretionary Programs and Projects:

The NRMRWDB's current discretionary grant programs and opportunities are listed below. Each of these projects targets individuals in the region who have barriers to employment. Programs use an Integrated Education and Training (IET) model to help individuals with barriers increase their employability skills and obtain employment. Programs provide holistic and flexible programming that emphasizes personal responsibility and provides job skills training, work experience, job readiness training, supportive services, and other work-related expenses for careers that matter. This model helps achieve the directive under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to "help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in a global economy."

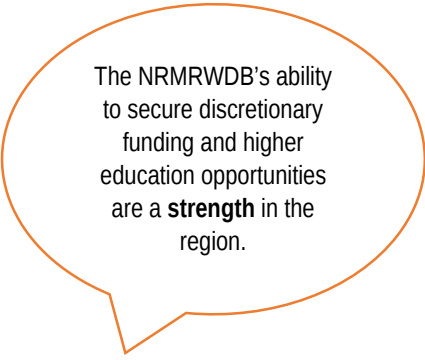
For detailed description, see "Other Programs and Services" in the One-Stop Delivery System Section.

- Pathways to the American Dream (DOL America's Promise)
- Economic Equity (VCCS)
- Pathways to Self-Sufficiency (VCCS RSVP)
- Pathways to a Strong and Healthy Region (ARC POWER)
- Work-Ready Community (Tobacco Commission)

Strengths and Weaknesses:

One of the strengths noted in the SWOT Analysis was the NRMRWDB's ability to seek additional (discretionary) funding to support and meet the unique needs of the businesses and the labor force in the region. This intent is to target resources to enable economic growth through workforce development activities.

Another of the strengths of the region is the availability of higher education opportunities with three community colleges, two state universities and a private four-year college in the regional footprint. Although this is a strength, many graduates (of the universities and the colleges) leave the region for higher paying wages. There are several initiatives in the region to market both the career opportunities and the quality of life to these graduates. The NRMRWDB will be supporting these initiatives through the Career Lattice development, business and job seeker engagement activities, and marketing of "in-demand" occupations.



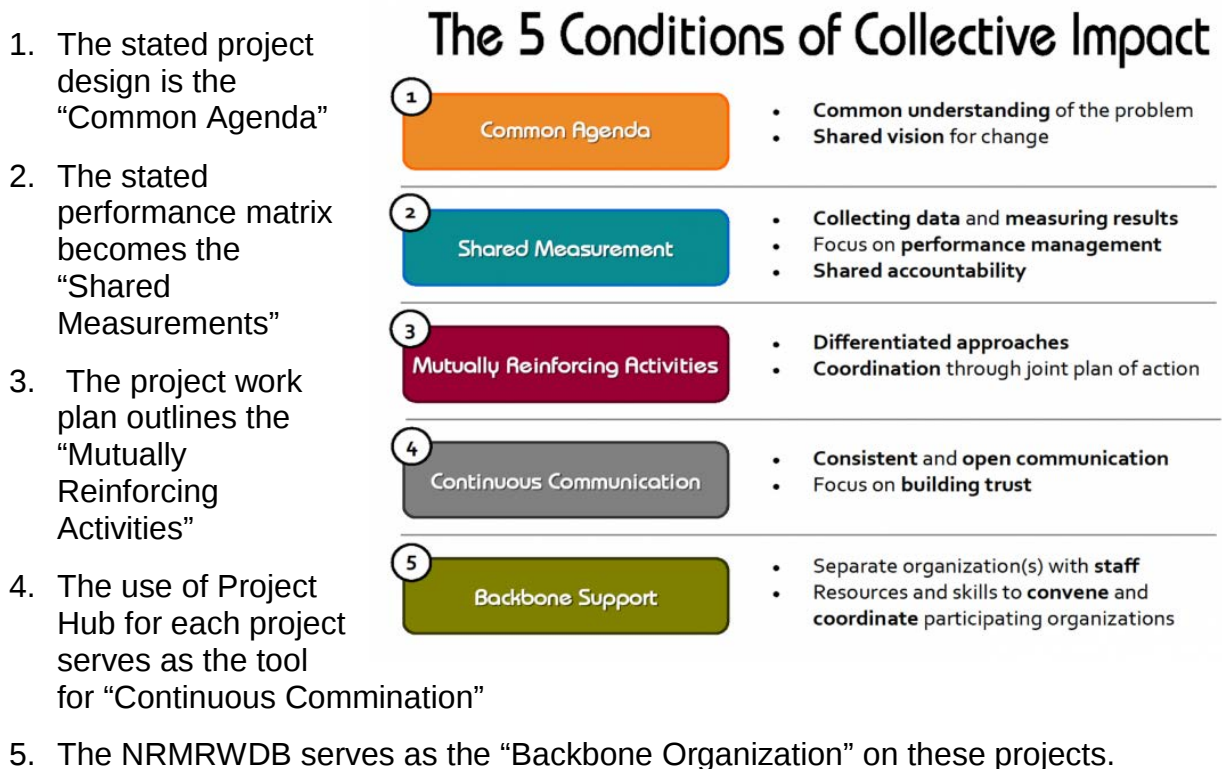
The NRMRWDB's ability to secure discretionary funding and higher education opportunities are a **strength** in the region.

Workforce Development Capacity:

The SWOT survey responses highlighted the strong and innovative leadership role that the NRMRWDB plays in the region. Staff are collaborative, passionate, and tenacious in pursuing funding and finding solutions to individual, regional, and systemic challenges.

Collective Impact has been the focus of the NRMRWDB for the last five plus years as we have worked to establish a model for the region's workforce development system. The additional funding and creative program design, through discretionary grants, has created the opportunities that allow the five conditions for collective impact (shown below) to begin to manifest in the region.

Each new program/project is designed to build on current regional strengths and partnerships through the use of Integrated Resource Teams to serve individuals and Business Solutions Teams to serve businesses. Both teams are designed to bring additional partners into the collaboration. Tools such as B2B Engage© (client management tool) and ProjectHub® (a project management tool) are used for communication and data collection for the partners in each project to have access to information as needed. These programs also add funding and other resources that allow the workforce system to meet specific industry needs and/or the needs of special populations through the collective impact approach as well as the braiding and leveraging of regional resources. The lessons learned about the collective impact model is beginning to flow into standard practice in the workforce system.



Regional Indicators that Affect the Workforce:



3.4%

Immigrants
(of total population)



7.5%

Veterans



10.3%

Female-headed families
(% of total households)



18.4%

Below poverty rate



19.5%

Disabled



23.3%

Seniors (65+)



17%

Excessive drinking



30%

Adult obesity



18%

Adult smoking



44,930

Total number of
food insecure



18,065

Total number with
limited access to
healthy food



141

*Total number of
drug overdose
deaths



3.8

Average number of
physically unhealthy
days



3.9

Average number of
mentally unhealthy
days



25%

Physically inactive



The Region's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, And Threats



SWOT Analysis:

The SWOT Analysis for the 2021-2023 NRMW Strategic Plan occurred in November and December of 2020. Input for the analysis was broadly acquired through a **survey** to all workforce system stakeholders, which received 74 responses. Approximately 82% of respondents said their knowledge of the workforce system was somewhat or very high. Only three respondents said they had no real knowledge of the workforce system. In order of most to least number of responses, most responses came from the following:

- Someone currently participating in a workforce program through one of the following agencies: DARS, DBVI, Goodwill Industries, People Inc., VEC, VIEW, Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education, New River Community College Office of Transitional Programs, or Pathways to the American Dream (23 responses)
- Someone who works for local, regional, or state government (16 responses)
- A member of the NRMW Workforce Development Board (13 responses)
- Someone who works for one of the One-Stop System Partners: Adult Education, VEC, DARS, DBVI, DSS, WIOA Program Operator, Board staff, etc. (7 responses)

Additional and more in-depth input was received through **six facilitated meetings** that lasted between one and two hours. Meeting participants were asked to reflect on the state of the region's workforce system, the SWOT analysis from the previous plan, responses from the current SWOT survey, and possible Action Items the workforce system should develop in the upcoming plan. These sessions were divided among key workforce system stakeholders that included:

1. Direct service providers to adult workers
2. Education partners
3. Chambers of commerce and economic development partners
4. IT businesses
5. Manufacturing businesses
6. Healthcare businesses

The following is a summary of all SWOT findings, listed in order of most to least responses. Answers shaded in gray are those where at least one-third of respondents agreed with the given response. As a reminder, a SWOT analysis reviews the Strength and Weaknesses of the workforce system and those within the system, as well as the Opportunities and Threats in the outside environment that workforce system partners can take advantage of or account for in their work.

Strengths of the Workforce System:

For the top responding groups, the majority of respondents unanimously agreed that the **greatest strengths** of the workforce system are the experienced individual working in the system and the active pursuit of funding and programming to address workforce issues in the region. Among workforce development board members and government officials, good fiscal management, strong links with local government and alignment with state programs were considered great strengths. Among those who said they had participated in workforce programming, the drive toward **regional impacts** and **strong referral processes** among partner agencies in the system were top strengths.

In addition to reinforcing many of the survey responses, meeting participants also highlighted the **strong and innovative leadership role** that the workforce development board plays in the region. Staff are collaborative, passionate and tenacious in pursuing funding and finding solutions to individual and systemic challenges. Many of the recent programming, for instance *Pathways to the American Dream*, have focused on industry needs. Employers who have used these programs and other system resources responded positively and have expressed gratitude. Resulting from these strengths, many participants noted the increase in participation in workforce activities in the past three to five years.

Answer Choice	Respondents	%
Experienced Board staff	51	69%
Actively developing programs and seeking funding to meet the region's workforce issues	46	62%
Experienced Program Operator staff	43	58%
Ability to align with State Programs	37	50%
The Workforce and Consortium Boards are driven towards regional impact	37	50%
Good fiscal management	36	49%
Strong links with local governments	34	46%

Board and staff participate in many regional special projects (job fairs, symposiums, special grant projects, etc.)	32	43%
Strong referral process among partner agencies within the system	27	36%
Strong Business Service Coordination	23	31%
Internal service delivery procedures are consistent and provide good compliance framework	22	30%
High level of board member involvement	21	28%
Strong training provider selection and oversight by WDB	21	28%
Increased partner presence in One-stop Centers.	16	22%
Greater business involvement in board activity	15	20%
Representative service delivery by jurisdiction	2	3%

Words in **bold were also highlighted during facilitated meetings*

Weaknesses of the Workforce System:

For the top responding groups, the majority of respondents unanimously agreed that the **greatest weakness** of the workforce system is the **stigma of vocational education programs** creating a shortage of skilled workers. After that, there was less agreement on other weaknesses. Among workforce development board members, the greatest weaknesses were **education programming** not meeting the needs of businesses, **territorialism** among workforce organizations leading to poor system coordination, and **not being proactive** in job training for future industries/occupations. One survey respondent explained that system staff do well with pursuing proactive opportunities but the system overall remains reactive. Government officials cited poor marketing of the system, **limited measurable impact**, and the system **not being customer-friendly** as top weaknesses. Among those who said they had participated in workforce programming, **poor marketing** and limited measurable impact were also cited, but an equal amount of respondents said they hadn't experienced any weaknesses.

In facilitated meetings, there was some debate concerning **underutilize workforce programs** and whether education institutions were not meeting business needs. For both issues, some questioned whether the business community was as forthcoming about their workforce needs, leading to underutilization and poor program alignment. Others pointed out the education program alignment had improved considerably, and the biggest issue was marketing resources to improved underutilization of resources.

Answer Choice	Respondents	%
Stigma of vocational education programs is creating a shortage of skilled workers	28	37.8%
The system is not customer friendly (difficult to navigate)	21	28.4%
Measurable local impact	20	27.0%
Poor marketing of services provided by the WDB	20	27.0%

Territorial issues between workforce system organizations causes a lack of coordination of services	20	27.0%
Education is not meeting the needs of regional businesses (training and/or credentials offered)	13	17.6%
Not being proactive in job training for future industries or occupations	12	16.2%
Lack of jurisdictional coordination in workforce development/training initiatives - very competitive between PDC's	12	16.2%
Lack of coordination of services to businesses	9	12.2%
Lack of partner presence/participation in some of our One-Stop Centers	9	12.2%
Not proactive in recruiting programs or providers	8	10.8%
Inconsistency with services to businesses	6	8.1%
Inconsistency with co-enrollments of participants and braiding/leveraging of funds for job seekers	5	6.8%
Inexperienced/undertrained front-line staff	4	5.4%
One-Stop Centers are inconsistent in basic service delivery (varying degrees of customer driven service)	3	4.1%

*Words in **bold** were also highlighted during facilitated meetings

Opportunities for the Workforce System:

For the top responding groups, the majority of respondents unanimously agreed that the greatest opportunity of the workforce system is **low cost of living**. Among workforce development board members and government officials, a large pool of graduates from higher education institutions were considered great opportunities. Among workforce development board members and those who said they had participated in workforce programming, **availability of federal, state and private grants** were top opportunities.

In facilitated meetings, other opportunities considered were adapting a West Virginia **simulated workspace program** to help students of regional CTE programs gain workplace soft skills, helping youth in the region gain employment, growing telework opportunities, and supporting business development efforts at New River Community College.

Answer Choice	Respondents	%
Low cost of living	45	60.8%
Access to interstate system	44	59.5%
Availability of Federal, state and private grants	41	55.4%
Pool of available workers, with upgradable skills and a good work ethic	35	47.3%
Attractions for tourism	34	45.9%
An abundance of natural resources & good environmental quality	33	44.6%

Large pool of graduates (from VT, RU and three community colleges)	33	44.6%
Minimal union activity	30	40.5%
Multi-jurisdictional cooperation (Regionalism)	29	39.2%
Ability to quickly add training programs at the community colleges to meet employer needs	28	37.8%
Low crime rates	27	36.5%
Research and Business Development from VT & RU	22	29.7%
Entrepreneurial activities and support	21	28.4%
Increased involvement of business sector	20	27.0%
Broadband is available in many areas – completion of the “last mile” is possible	19	25.7%
Availability of support resources, capital and business sites for start-up and small businesses	18	24.3%
Availability of quality educational (P-20) and training resources	18	24.3%
Access to quality healthcare	18	24.3%
Expansion of infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, etc)	15	20.3%
Access to int’l airports (CLT), inland ports (Pulaski & Elliston), and Foreign Trade Zone (NRV Airport)	14	18.9%

Words in **bold were also highlighted during facilitated meetings*

Threats to the Workforce System:

There was limited agreement on top threats to the system. Among workforce development board members, the greatest threats were **declining/aging population**, **lack of opportunities** for recent college graduates, and **low wages** (not livable wages). Government officials agreed that a declining/aging population was the top threat, but respondents also cited **limited fiscal capacity** of state and local governments and the **decline of corporate involvement** in community activities/initiatives. Among those who said they had participated in workforce programming, **low wages** (not livable wages) was the most cited responses, while some also said lack of opportunities for recent college graduations.

All agreed that the **COVID-19** pandemic has been a threat to the region as much as the nation, particularly with respect to the uneven impact on lower skilled workers. Emphasized in almost all facilitated meetings were also the growing need for **more accessible wrap-around resources** including childcare, transportation and behavioral health facilities. Indeed, substance use disorder was described as an ever present and growing challenge to achieving a worker-ready region. Limited affordable housing in Blacksburg, Christiansburg and Floyd were also key concerns. Finally, education providers cited the difficulty of attracting a pool of talented teachers due to the stigma about the Southwest Virginia region (i.e. Appalachia).

Answer Choice	Respondents	%
Declining/Aging population	47	63.5%
Low wages (service vs. production) – minimum wage is not a “living” wage	46	62.2%
Lack of opportunities for recent college graduates	45	60.8%
Area left out of State-wide decisions	37	50.0%
Lack of needed infrastructure for “knowledge based” workers (i.e.: broadband is not everywhere, lack of social & cultural amenities) creating a void in these high tech/high wage jobs	37	50.0%
Potential Recession	36	48.6%
Limited fiscal capacity of state and local governments (State government is failing to meet its obligations creating more financial stress on local governments)	34	45.9%
Competition rather than cooperation between localities for economic development	31	41.9%
Decline of corporate involvement in community activities/initiatives	25	33.8%
A disorganized workforce development system (at state-level)	24	32.4%
Exporting of jobs & businesses (and projection of more job losses)	24	32.4%
Low importance of advanced education by some citizens	21	28.4%
Continued disregard for the environment and natural resources	18	24.3%
Electronic crime (internet fraud)	14	18.9%

Words in **bold were also highlighted during facilitated meetings*



Availability of Comprehensive Youth Services

Youth workforce investment activities in the New River/Mount Rogers Region, including activities for youth with disabilities, range from career guidance to comprehensive training leading to meaningful employment in an in-demand occupation in the region. Successful models using these types of activities include Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs used by our board.

Strategy for Ensuring the Availability of Services:

Currently, two program operators, **Goodwill Industries of the Valleys** and **People Incorporated of Virginia**, provide youth services in all localities in the region. Goodwill serves the localities of Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski, and Radford. People, Inc. serves the localities of Bland, Bristol, Carroll, Galax, Grayson, Smyth, Washington and Wythe. Annual monitoring evaluates a percentage of files for each Case Manager. Through monitoring, the Operations Coordinator evaluates the availability of services and determines whether all program elements are being provided. Written findings are provided to the operators, and each finding must be addressed. Staff participate in available trainings offered directly through the NRMWDB, in WorkforceGPS, and others to support their professional development needs. Other strategies to ensure that youth services are available include use of the Virginia Workforce Connection System and partnerships with various agencies and organizations through Integrated Resource Teams.

Seventy-five percent of the funding must be spent on out of school youth per state guidelines. WIOA operators have developed detailed eligibility criteria to meet the needs of our regional youth population and to support the pipeline to employment for all young people with targeted programming for the most at risk in our region. Through strict fiscal monitoring, funds are appropriately used in our youth programs.

Identification and Selection of WIOA Youth Operators:

All WIOA Title 1 Program Operators, including Youth Program Operators, are selected through a competitive procurement process. A Request for Proposal (RFP) is posted publically on our website and notices are sent out through: 1) email to prospective bidders, 2) a public notice in the region's two largest newspapers, and 3) social media. A bidder's conference is held for all prospective bidders to answer questions about the RFP. Once received, each proposal is documented on when and how it was received and by the bidder's name. A team of NRMWDB and CLEOs is created to review and score each proposal. The scored proposals are presented to the NRMWDB's Youth Committee to review and make a recommendation to the NRMWDB and the Consortium Board. A formal vote is taken at each board meeting on awarding contracts and funding amounts.

For the PY20, Goodwill Industries of the Valleys was awarded the contract to serve youth in the New River Valley (Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski and Radford) and People Inc. of Virginia for the Mount Rogers area (Bland, Bristol, Carroll, Galax, Grayson, Smyth, Washington and Wythe).

Ensuring Youth Access to Required Program Elements:

Through collaborations, direct support, and monitoring, we ensure that youth clients are offered the Fourteen Elements available to them as described in the following table:

Element	How the Element is being provided
1. Tutoring, study skills training and evidence based dropout prevention Action Items that lead to completion of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent or for a postsecondary credential.	For in-school youth, we can deliver tutoring, but do not currently have that need. Adult Education provides this service for out-of-school youth.
2. Alternative secondary school offerings.	Provided through the local school systems.
3. Summer employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning.	The WIOA Youth Program Operators provide summer work experience that is linked to the participant career goals/training. Although this was a challenge during COVID.
4. Paid and unpaid work experience, including summer employment opportunities, internships, pre apprenticeship programs, job shadowing and on the job training opportunities.	The WIOA Youth Program Operators provide work experience, summer employment opportunities, and internships that are consistent with the youth's career goals and training. Unfortunately, transportation is a major barrier to most of our youth participants. Public transportation does not exist in most of our service delivery area. Lack of transportation dramatically effects the work experience opportunities that are available to participants, particularly the more rural counties.

5. Occupational skill training which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in demand industry sectors and occupations.	Regional training providers for this service. Unfortunately, the short-term programs best suited for our youth participants are limited. COVID created another barrier as “on-line” training is frequently not an option due to: technology skills, technology accessibility and individual learning styles. In partnership with non-WIOA funded programs the opportunity to have access to WorkKeys Assessments and WorkKeys 2.0 Curriculum adds additional skills support.
6. Leadership development opportunities, which may include such activities as positive social behavioral and soft skills, decision making, team work and other activities.	The WIOA Youth Program Operators provide this which typically take the form of community service activities, college tours, etc. With the shift to the out-of-school youth population, it is more difficult to manage attendance at these activities. In partnership with other programs the availability of Conover assessments, WorkKeys assessments and follow-up curriculum helps with the soft skill development.
7. Supportive Services.	The WIOA Youth Program Operators provide many of these services to youth in training or work based learning. Through the use of Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) other organizations help with many supports that an eligible youth might need.
8. Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months, which may occur both during and after program participation.	This element is rarely used due to the geography of the region, lack of transportation for youth as the appropriate mentor may not be located geographically near the youth. Prior to COVID, “virtual” resources were limited. There may be an opportunity here to improve the use of this element, by incorporating more virtual mentorships where appropriate.
9. Follow-up Services for a minimum 12- month period.	The WIOA Youth Program Operators are providing this service and have created robust follow-up Action Items that keep participants engaged throughout the 12-month period. They use a variety of contact methods and provide continuous career information to the participants throughout the follow-up period.

10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling, mental health counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of individual youth.	The WIOA Youth Program Operators refer participants to the local CSBs for these services. The region, like many around us, is battling undisclosed substance abuse issues and have identified the need for additional education and services in this area. The local WDB is a recipient of an ARC POWER grant to develop a “recovery ready” region and additional resources should become available during the grant period.
11. Financial Literacy education.	This is provided as part of work readiness through a variety of methods including Financial Empowerment and programs offered through Local Credit Unions.
12. Entrepreneurial skills training.	Although this is touched on during work readiness, a more intentional approach is needed.
13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors and occupations.	The WIOA Youth Program Operators review LMI with participants as part of the development of their plan.
14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.	The WIOA Youth Program Operators are utilizing more assessment through WorkKeys and Northstar Digital literacy. In the southern part of the region there is a partnership between that WIOA Program Operator and Job Corp and through various other programs funding to develop Integrated Education and Training Programs (like PIVA) are being developed and promoted to youth as appropriate.

How Program Design Addresses Youth Service Strategies:

WIOA services are prioritized to serve out-of-school youth through a minimum expenditure requirement of 75 percent and focusing on work experiences through a minimum expenditure requirement of 20 percent. The NRMWDB Youth Program focuses on providing youth with educational and career success through work-based learning and attainment of credentials. Through a framework of leveraged resources, our programs support entry into and along career pathways. To do so, we have strong partnerships with the educational institutions in our region as well as various community based organizations and other youth-serving organizations to integrate service delivery.

Partnership Engagement:

Our Workforce System has formed the necessary partnerships to advance the youth services vision. Key partners and stakeholders have reviewed relevant youth data and identified the overarching service needs of in-school and out-of-school youth. Through the development of Integrated Resource Teams, we are striving to develop with key partners and stakeholders an on-going, collaborative approach for recruiting, referring, and providing holistic youth services. Partners that could be included in the Active Resource Coordination/Case Management of the IRT flow (depending on the needs of the particular youth) are: Adult Education, Alternative Education/Schools, Apprenticeship/Pre-Apprenticeship, business partners, Community/Faith Organizations, Career & Technical Education (secondary/post-secondary), Community Organizations, Job Corps, Juvenile/Adult Justice Organizations, Local School Districts, TANF, Vocational Rehabilitation, various other funding sources for Training and Supportive Services.

Governance and Leadership:

Our board has formed the necessary structure to ensure WIOA youth provisions are implemented and continuously improved. Individuals with experience relating to programs for youth are involved in the design and implementation of our WIOA youth services programs. We have policies outlining the criteria for youth eligible providers and a Youth Council that meets to review and evaluate the Youth Program Operators and their respective activities/programs to support the region's youth. Duties and functions of the Youth Council are defined, and include functioning as a convener to coordinate local resources; providing information; and assisting with planning, operations, identification of service providers, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth, which includes identifying the lead staff supporting the Youth Council.

Organizational Capacity and Alignment:

Our Workforce System has the personnel, policies, and shared vision in place to support the targeted youth population and service offerings outlined in WIOA. We have spending rate policies and have an integrated vision for serving youth that supports a service delivery system that leverages other federal, state, and local resources to support in-school and out-of-school youth. We have identified professional development needs for front-line staff serving youth and youth service providers.

Service Delivery and Integration:

We facilitate the development, availability and delivery of workforce, education and training programs that are responsive to the needs of targeted youth populations. Our RFPs reflect the out-of-school and work experience requirements and assist in identifying providers with the capacity to successfully provide services. Specific strategies are in place to identify and recruit out-of-school youth. Partnerships and resources have been identified to carry out these strategies, including dropout recovery efforts, connecting with Adult Basic Education, serving TANF recipients, and coordinating with Health and Human

Services partners. The appropriate partnerships exist among our workforce system and the state education agency/local school districts to access free or reduced price lunch information to identify eligible populations.

Program Elements:

Our workforce system facilitates inclusion of the 14 Program Elements to ensure each is adequately providing youth with needed support.

Identification, Recruitment, and Retention of Youth:

In order to identify, recruit and retain OSY, Program Operator staff will contact and provide presentations to agencies that serve drop-outs, unemployed and low income persons such as: the Virginia Career Works centers, Local Departments of Social Services, Department of Juvenile Justice, Drug Courts, Adult Education Programs, Health Departments, Local Food and Clothing Banks, Churches, Public Housing, etc. Relationships with these organizations is strengthened through the use of Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) and regional Professional Development opportunities that are offered to all workforce partners in the region.

Efforts to Ensure Expenditure Rate of Youth Funds:

Board staff review all Program Operator expenditure reports as well as related Fiscal Agent program financial records on a monthly basis to ensure that all program expenditures are in line with planned projected program expenditure levels. Additionally the Board's Operations Coordinator conducts an in depth review of all Program Operator financial expenditure activities during the annual compliance monitoring review visit. Extensive efforts are made by Board staff to ensure that all program expenditure rates are in line with program requirements.

Youth Service Policy:

Our policy regarding serving youth who do not meet income requirements is addressed in our [Youth Services](#) policy which is posted on our website.

Youth Services Coordination Efforts:

See Partnership and Engagement as well as descriptive information about Integrated Resource Teams to follow in this section.

Child Labor and Safety Regulations Compliance:

Compliance with applicable child labor and safety regulations are addressed in our "General Terms and Conditions" which are included as a part of all approved Program Operator contracts for WIOA service delivery. Item 27(e) of this document addresses compliance with child labor and safety regulations. The [General Terms and Conditions](#) document is posted on our website under the policies section.

Pay-for-performance Policy:

Our region does not use Pay-for-Performance.



Availability of Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities

In collaboration with our program operators, the NRMRWDB is working to develop a client-centered approach, where system partners and programs coordinate in a way that each customer or job seeker has a pathway to improving his or her education, knowledge, skills and, ultimately, his or her employment prospects, with a focus on in-demand careers. The Area's education, job skills development, and career training system must ensure that the workforce development system focuses on the individual customer's aspirations and needs and provides access to pathways for improving employment prospects. In many cases throughout the existing system, activities and services provided are program-focused, with the specific program being placed at the center of service delivery. In such a model, greater focus is given to meeting program requirements and less attention is paid to truly serving the individual. This has left the customers navigating a complex web of program requirements, often having to visit multiple program locations, multiple times, and providing the same information at each stop in order to receive the services needed. This paradigm must shift dramatically towards ensuring that system partners and program requirements are aligned with the customer at the center of service delivery. In this client-centered approach, system partners and programs coordinate in a way that each individual has a pathway to improving his or her education, knowledge, and skills and entering into a fulfilling and rewarding career, with partner and program resources designed to complement the individual's pathway.

Adult and Dislocated Worker employment and training activities in the New River/Mount Rogers Region include a range of services to assist clients in obtaining meaningful employment with family sustaining wages. Career services include basic, individualized, and follow-up, detailed as follows:

Basic:

Outreach, intake and orientation to the information, services, programs, tools and resources available through the Area 2 workforce system.
Initial assessments of skill level(s), aptitudes, abilities and supportive service needs.
In and out of area job search and placement assistance (including provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations and non-traditional employment).
Access to employment opportunity and labor market information.
Performance information and programs costs for eligible providers of training, education and workforce services.

Information on performance of the local Workforce system.
Information on the availability of supportive services and referral to such, as appropriate.
Information and meaningful assistance on UI claim filing
Determination of potential eligibility for workforce Partner services, programs, referrals.
Information and assistance in applying for financial aid for training and education program not provided under WIOA.

Individualized:

Comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs.
Development of individual employability plan to identify employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the customer to achieve the employment goals.
Referral to training services.
Group counseling.
Literacy activities related to work readiness.
Individual counseling and career planning
Case management for customers seeking training services; individual in and out of area job search, referral and placement assistance.
Work experience, transitional jobs, registered apprenticeships and internships.
Workforce preparation services (e.g., development of learning skills, punctuality, communication skills, interviewing skills, personal maintenance, literacy skills, financial literacy skills, and professional conduct) to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training.
Post-employment follow-up services and support (Is not an individualized career service but listed here for completeness).

Follow-up:

For both WIOA and discretionary grants, Follow-up is provided on all clients. A follow-up staff person contacts Adult/DLW clients **each quarter** and youth **every four weeks**. For discretionary project, follow-up is conducted once each month. The purpose of follow-up

is to determine if the client needs assistance. If the client is no longer working or enrolled in school, then the Follow-up staff do the following:

- Note the change in status on the follow-up internal tracking system and in the Virginia Workforce Connection (VAWC) for WIOA and B2B Engage® for discretionary grant participants.
- Email the case manager about the client's change in status. Case manager reaches out to offer job search assistance.

Follow-up is also used to confirm whether or not the client is employed or enrolled in an educational or training program. Follow-up staff retrieve **Employment Verification** and **Education Credentialing Verification** also during Follow-up. If the client indicates that s/he would like additional assistance because of salary, reduced hours, job satisfaction, conflict in the workplace, or other issues, then the request is documented in the internal tracking system for the monthly report. The client's case manager is contacted to provide the assistance.

Self-Sufficiency:

Definitions for self-sufficiency are continued into the Board's ["Self-Sufficiency"](#) policy and those considered as hard to serve are defined in the Board's ["Priority of Services"](#) policy. Both policies are posted on the Board's website and are accessible for viewing.

To fully incorporate these elements within the functional and aspirational programming in the region, goals 1 and 5 and their subsequent Action Items located in the earlier Goals and Action Items section further define and integrate opportunities for access and delivery of targeted career services.

In 2018, 51% of Southwestern Virginia households lived in poverty or were ALICE, compared to 39% of all Virginia households. These households contribute to Southwest Virginia's economy by earning, spending, and paying taxes, yet they still struggle to make ends meet. The NRMWDBs [Self-Sufficiency and Employed Worker](#) Policy reflects the need to serve this population.

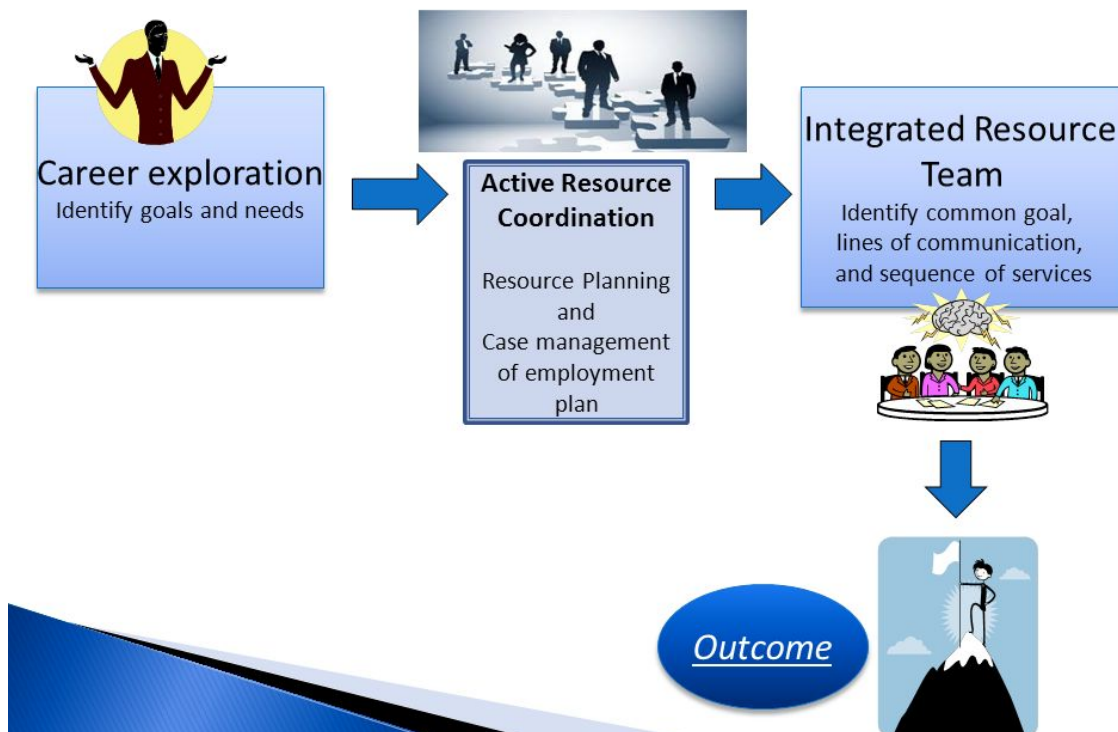
Hard-to-Serve Populations:

The NRMWDB definition of "Hard-to-serve" populations with multiple barriers to training/employment are those that have more than one of the following issues: those who are receiving public assistance, are TANF eligible or are classified as low income; or those that are basic skills deficient or lack a high-school diploma/GED; or those who are offenders; or those with a disability; or those with a substance use disorder; or those that are homeless; or those that lack transportation; or those who are unable to secure safe/affordable childcare.

Integrated Resource Teams:

The IRT approach, one of the key strategic service delivery components of the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI), a project of the U.S. Department of Labor in which the NRMWDB participated, is an informal agreement at the “customer level” that involves diversified service systems coordinating services and leveraging funding in order to meet the needs of an individual jobseeker. This strategic approach is customer-centered and supports the integrated nature of WIOA, resulting in enhanced coordination of services and supports to a jobseeker. While not all participants in NRMWDB programs have a disability, the IRT approach has been identified as a best-practice to assist participants as they prepare for and transition into employment. Tools such as the **Collaborative Funding Agreement (CFA)**, created in the America’s Promise grant, help the members of the IRT clearly understand the participant’s needs and who is responsible (financially and otherwise) for supporting each specific need. The CFA is a living document, shifting as the needs of the participant change throughout his/her experience in the program. A copy of the CFA is included in the appendices. ProjectHub® is used to support collaboration and coordination efforts among team members.

IRT Flow of Services



Section 2:

Strategic Vision and Goals



The NRMRWDB's strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency includes goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce to meet the needs of regional businesses and goals pertaining to performance accountability measures.

The NRMRWDB goals for the coming years are our response to the important issues identified in our SWOT analysis, completed as part of the strategic planning process. The goals provide a roadmap for fulfilling the strategic direction and are foundational to our work. We understand the **responsibility** for preparing our region's workforce and fully accept the **accountability** through performance measures that ensure the success as well as help us understand where to make adjustments when needed.

The 2020 New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board (NRMRWDB) Local Strategic Plan is a **three-year roadmap** to expand on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). As such, our plan represents efforts to align job training to integrated service delivery across programs, improve efficiency in service delivery, and ensure that our workforce system in the region is job-driven, matching businesses with skilled workers. The overall intent of our plan is to promote a shared understanding of the workforce needs within the New River/Mount Rogers region and foster development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as sector-based strategies, system building, and career pathways, to address the needs of businesses and workers. To accomplish our goals, we understand the need to strengthen service delivery by building strong partnerships that have healthy communicative relationships.

As defined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), our target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth. The **Workforce Development System** in Virginia encompasses various state agencies that provide oversight of an additional layer of agencies and organizations that deliver programs on the local level. Within this organizational system, we, the local workforce development conveners, analyzed our region's current economic environment and identified the overall vision for our Regional Workforce Development System. Then, we developed data-driven **Goals and Action Items** to address business needs by preparing an educated and skilled workforce and for aligning local workforce development programs in our region.

Our Workforce Development System is intended to help individuals in the New River/Mount Rogers region **reach their full potential**, regardless of disability, ethnicity, or barriers to employment. We are charged with helping our residents obtain and succeed in family-sustaining wage jobs while meeting business needs for a skilled workforce.

This Strategic Plan is a living document to serve as a roadmap toward the region's intended outcomes and anticipated impact as well as a management tool that has two primary purposes:

- **To present a wide-ranging compilation of the plan and its component parts.** It encapsulates the strategic planning process as well as the views and decisions of stakeholders.
- **To serve as a guidance tool for workforce development stakeholders.** Each section contains information about its component part as well as additional information about how the workforce system can use the information in the plan.

The boards and staff will review our plan's progress semi-annually and will update the plan as needed.





Vision, Mission, and Goals

Vision:

The New River Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board envisions a region where every business has access to a qualified, job-ready workforce and every citizen in the region has the skills needed to secure sustainable, meaningful employment, competitive wages, and career advancement through an integrated workforce support infrastructure.

Mission:

The NRMWRWDB supports the region's economy through a collaborative approach to meeting needs of businesses and job seekers that is flexible and adaptable to the changing economic ecosystem. And we hold ourselves accountable to all our stakeholders in the region.

Goals:

- (1) Jobseekers will have access to employment in a career pathway with family-sustaining wages.
- (2) Business engagement efforts deliver value to business customers and strengthen the region's economy.
- (3) The region's workforce meets the current and anticipated needs of businesses to sustain and grow.
- (4) Outreach efforts promote workforce services, stimulate career awareness, and promote Career Pathway opportunities of regional businesses.
- (5) Workforce system services are integrated and offer innovative solutions to the jobseeker and business customer.
- (6) Workforce system public investments add value to regional stakeholders and demonstrate a return on investment.

Strategies and Action Items:

To pursue the strategic direction described in this plan, the NRMWRWDB will strive to achieve the following:

Goal 1: Jobseekers will have access to employment in a career pathway with family-sustaining wages.

Strategy 1.1: Complete Career Pathways and Lattice Models for targeted industries.

Action Items:

- A. Further develop Career Pathway/Lattice for Manufacturing, IT, Healthcare, and Skilled Trades with current industry skill standards and demands.
- B. Engage with businesses to gather occupational information and validate occupations/pathways/lattices in their industry.
- C. Share the visual Career Pathway Tool with workforce system partners, education, and businesses.
- D. Coordinate with local community colleges credit for prior learning opportunities that support In-demand occupations along the career pathways identified in the tools.

Strategy 1.2: Develop three new Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs offerings in partnership with business/industry.

Action Items:

- A. Engage with businesses to determine pain-points and to coordinate training programs that address their challenges.
- B. Determine from businesses the education, skill, and credential levels needed for employment and integrate into the Integrated Education and Training programs.
- C. Raise partner and stakeholder awareness through presentations and collaboration efforts.
- D. Deliver equitable and universal services to jobseekers, including low-skilled adults, persons with disabilities, veterans, individuals with substance use disorder, justice involved, individuals 200% of poverty with dependent children, non-native English speakers, and unemployed and underemployed workers.
- E. Partner with the Regional Adult Education programs, Career and Technical Education programs, community colleges, and vocational programs to provide concurrent and contextual workforce preparation activities and workforce training.
- F. Include community college FastForward programs, integrating the Virginia Ready initiative, in the IET program offerings.
- G. Incorporate opportunities and initiatives offered in the region and expand services for IET participants through the use of Integrated Resource Teams.

- H. Connect businesses with successful program completers through a variety of business and jobseeker events.
- I. Coordinate and sponsor professional development opportunities to enhance the knowledge and skills of partners and stakeholders.

Strategy 1.3: Increase by five percent use of Work-Based Learning opportunities supported by regional businesses (PY23 over PY19).

Action Items:

- A. Promote to business the practice of job shadowing for instructors and students in CTE, community colleges, WIOA and discretionary grant projects, and others.
- B. Promote to businesses and jobseeker customers through presentations and engagement activities Work-Based Learning, including Registered Apprenticeship, On-the-Job Training, Customized Training, Incumbent Worker Training, Transitional Jobs, Work Experiences, and others.
- C. Work with a Department of Labor Apprenticeship Intermediary to develop an apprenticeship program.
- D. Share best-practices models and regional Success Stories with stakeholders and businesses through various outreach tools, including newsletters, e-marketing campaigns, podcasts, and infographics.
- E. Promote the Southwest Virginia United Way Ignite Program and other initiatives that offer opportunities for work-based learning for high-school students.

Strategy 1.4: Provide a minimum of ten jobseeker and business engagement events annually.

Action Items:

- A. Offer Reverse Job Fairs to highlight job seekers with in-demand skills and to promote in-demand occupations for businesses.
- B. Sponsor social events for jobseekers and businesses to interact in an “informal” way (for “professional level” job seekers and companies seeking those job seekers).
- C. Provide both in-person and virtual job/career fairs as needed.

- D. Coordinate customized job/career fairs for specific companies and/or industries based on their specific needs.
- E. Develop and implement a youth mentoring program to connect youth to regional business leaders.

Responsible Parties:

- WDB staff
- BSTs
- WIOA Title I Program Operators
- Adult Education
- Community Colleges
- DSS
- DARS/DBVI
- VEC
- CTE Programs
- Chambers of Commerce & Other Business Organizations
- Other Community Organizations

Goal 2: Business engagement efforts deliver value to business customers and strengthen the region's economy.

Strategy 2.1: Increase by twenty percent business engagement efforts.

Action Items:

- A. Propose a plan and services to mediate risk for companies that are identified at risk of lay-off through Business Solutions Teams and other sector initiatives.
- B. Connect companies that are in a position of growth as identified through Business Solutions Teams and other sector initiatives to appropriate organizations, funding, and initiatives.
- C. Provide Incumbent Worker Training and other Work-Based Learning opportunities to support business growth and transitions.
- D. Coordinate customized company specific talent recruitment and retention efforts.
- E. Continue to promote and use the KnowledgetoWork.com portal as a virtual career fair platform highlighting the competencies that are needed for in-demand occupations.

- F. Host quarterly business workshops and/or webinars that provide businesses with relevant information about talent recruitment, retention, supervision, and others, as needed. .

Strategy 2.2: Increase by ten percent coordination of Workforce System partners in serving Businesses.

Action Items:

- A. Use the Customer Relationship Management tool, B2B Engage®, as a method of coordinating business engagement efforts and information sharing.
- B. Devise an early warning system to gather business information in order to meet the business needs in all phases of the business.
- C. Collaborate with local economic development partners taking lead on business retention and growth initiatives.
- D. Coordinate and sponsor semi-annual professional development opportunities to enhance the knowledge and skills of Business Solutions Team members.

Strategy 2.3: Increase by twenty percent regional awareness of needs and opportunities in targeted industries.

Action Items:

- A. Provide outreach to targeted jobseekers to communicate information about in-demand careers in targeted industries and career pathways for businesses in the region, with special focus on underserved populations.
- B. Communicate information about in-demand careers in targeted industries and career pathways for businesses in the region to high school students and graduates of postsecondary institutions to retain local talent, including those with disabilities.
- C. Highlight businesses, industry sectors, job opportunities, and growth and transition supports through podcasts and other outreach efforts.
- D. Host a Workforce Exchange event quarterly for businesses to increase workforce system partner's knowledge of the hiring practices and needs of specific businesses in the region.

Responsible Parties:

- WDB Staff
- BST's
- WIOA Title 1 Staff
- CTE Programs
- Adult Education
- Chambers and other Industry/business organizations
- SVAM
- Center of Manufacturing Excellence
- RBTC & SWVA Technology Council
- Local/Regional/State Economic Development
- Community Colleges
- DARS/DBVI
- DSS
- VEC

Goal 3: The region's workforce meets the current and anticipated needs of businesses to sustain and grow.

Strategy 3.1: Support and promote training offerings that result in credentials valued by businesses.

Action Items:

- A. Through the Career Lattice Tool, identify the skills and credentials needed by businesses and share with partners and businesses.
- B. Coordinate competency-based training programs that support the skills development and credential attainment desired by businesses.
- C. Enhance the KnowledgetoWork.com portal by adding competencies needed by regional businesses.
- D. Promote Credit for Prior Learning Assessment System to encourage jobseeker and worker transitions to community college skill development programs.
- E. Use the Work Talk Podcast as a tool to communicate regional business needs and training opportunities.

Strategy 3.2: Support localities in meeting the criteria necessary to become a Work Ready Community

Action Items:

- A. Promote the use of Job Profiling as a method of identifying knowledge and skill needs for In-demand occupations (and those occupations necessary for specific companies).
- B. Promote the use of WorkKeys® to identify the skills of jobseekers and students.
- C. Provide opportunities for businesses and jobseekers/students to learn about the value of the WorkKeys® assessments and the National Career Readiness Certificate.
- D. Increase the number of Workkeys® testing sites and proctors throughout the region.

Strategy 3.3: Increase by five percent integration of K-12 Career and Technical Education Programs with other workforce development initiatives.

Action Items:

- A. Support and promote regional CTE programs and initiatives that engage students and businesses to increase student knowledge of regional career opportunities.
- B. Participate with CTE and community college Advisory Boards to share information.
- C. Promote and support “signing day” events.

Responsible Parties:

- WDB Staff
- BST's
- WIOA Title 1 Staff
- CTE Programs
- Adult Education
- Chambers and other Industry/business organizations
- SVAM
- Center of Manufacturing Excellence
- RBTC & SWVA Technology Council
- Local/Regional/State Economic Development
- Community Colleges
- DARS/DBVI

- DSS
- VEC

Goal 4: Outreach efforts promote workforce services, stimulate career awareness, and promote Career Pathway opportunities of regional businesses.

Strategy 4.1: Increase by 10 percent use of social media and other tools to tell the regional workforce story.

Action Items:

- Update the region's Marketing Plan to include a regional communication strategy.
- Highlight activities, successes, and Return on Investment in newsletters, the annual report, digital stories, infographics, pod casts, the website, and other digital media tools.
- Use reliable data and mission-aligned communication Action Items tailored to target audiences to be transparent, communicate performance, and enhance capacity.
- Use e-marketing through B2B Engage® to share information to businesses, partners, and participants.
- Develop a clearinghouse of regional workforce services to businesses (a matrix of who does what) with informational documents available for download for use to serve and inform businesses about regional workforce services.

4.2 Increase by 10 percent partner engagement activities (PY23 over PY19)

Action Items:

- Provide in-person and virtual resource (partner) fairs for jobseekers and businesses to attend to learn more about the workforce system and programs.
- Create and share visuals depicting each partner's eligibility and suitability criteria, funding restrictions, and other relevant information to enhance the knowledge of partners.
- Support partner community engagement activities.

- D. Sponsor Professional Development for frontline staff and all workforce partners.
- E. Promote the use of IRTs as a referral and leveraging of funds tool to serve job seekers with barriers to employment and training.

Responsible Parties:

- One-Stop Partner WIOA Staff
- Transportation Directors
- RideShare
- BSTs
- My SWVA
- Entrepreneurship Programs
- Community Organizations
- Title I Program Operators
- WDB staff

Goal 5: Workforce system services are integrated and offer innovative solutions to the jobseeker and business customer.

5.1 Increase by twenty-five percent the use of Integrated Resource Teams to create customer-centered partnerships and improve employment outcomes for jobseekers.

Action Items:

- A. Coordinate services and leverage funding with partners to give jobseekers comprehensive, wrap-around services that are tailored to their unique needs and employment goals.
- B. Seek out and collaborate with partners to provide more intensive services to jobseekers.
- C. Use ProjectHub® as a tool to communicate and collaborate with partners to address the jobseeker's challenges to employment.
- D. Develop shared forms and eliminate the duplication of data collection from jobseekers.

- E. Develop ways to encourage and empower the jobseeker to be in lead of his/her IRT.

5.2 Increase by ten percent partnerships with services for worker commuting, maintaining sobriety, childcare assistance, housing, and other barriers that present challenges to successful obtainment and retention of employment.

Action Items:

- A. Using the collective impact model to become more knowledgeable of, collaborate with and support partner efforts to address worker barriers to employment.
- B. Coordinate partner engagement activities, both virtual and in person, for information sharing and coordination of efforts.
- C. Through the Recovery Ready Region initiative, increase partnerships with organization that support individuals with substance use disorder and build safety nets between them and the workforce system to create an environment that supports successful access to employment.
- D. Work with organizations and localities to support the expansion of childcare opportunities in the region.
- E. Work with organizations to increase transportation opportunities (public and/or others) for those needed the services for training and/or employment.
- F. Increase use of Ticket to Work and other programs that support individuals with disabilities.

5.3 Increase by ten percent opportunities for entrepreneurship exploration.

Action Items:

- A. Coordinate entrepreneurship presentations and workshops to job seekers (including youth and populations with special barriers/needs) and high school students.
- B. Refer interested participants to entrepreneurship initiatives through the Small Business Development Centers and other small business/entrepreneurship training programs.

5.4 Increase by ten percent the use of a continuum of care approach for evidence-based services.

Action Items:

- A. Coordinate and sponsor professional development opportunities for staff and partners.
- B. Use Integrated Resource Teams as a standard of practice.
- C. Through the collective impact model, maximize resources by directing jobseekers to qualified partners to deliver service(s).
- D. Seek out additional faith-based and non-profit partners in local communities and provide the information to partners in shareable formats.
- E. Use the STRONG Accountable Care Community and ARC POWER initiatives to build partnerships with new organizations to increase services and safety nets for those with barriers to employment and training.

5.5 Increase by ten percent the successful outcomes in jobseeker programs.

Action Items:

- A. Coordinate and sponsor professional development to staff to advance their coaching skills to support jobseeker goals.
- B. Use assessments to effectively determine, address, and monitor the jobseeker's life, academic, employability, and technical skills advances toward employment goals.
- C. Collaborate and communicate with partners through Integrated Resources Teams using shared tools to provide an array of comprehensive services to jobseekers.
- D. Initiate the development of a Recovery-Ready region to support individuals with substance use disorder.
- E. Develop and implement a Youth Mentoring Program.

Responsible Parties:

- WDB Staff
- Transportation Directors

- RideShare
- Entrepreneurship Programs
- Community Organizations
- Title I Program Operators
- DARS/DBVI
- DSS
- VEC
- Virginia Rural Health Association
- One-Care VA
- Ballad Health
- Eagles Nest

Goal 6: Workforce system public investments add value to regional stakeholders and demonstrate a return on investment.

6.1 Increase by twenty percent the number of outreach activities demonstrating workforce development impacts in the region.

Action Items:

- Measure the financial and social impact of workforce development programs and activities through annual Return on Investment report and project specific impact reports.
- Use qualitative and quantitative data in reports made available to the public and shared through e-marketing efforts.

6.2 Increase by twenty percent sharing of performance measures and outcomes among partners.

Action Items:

- Share and align missions with partner organizations.
- Share programmatic performance measures.
- Create a team approach among partners and encourage transparency.

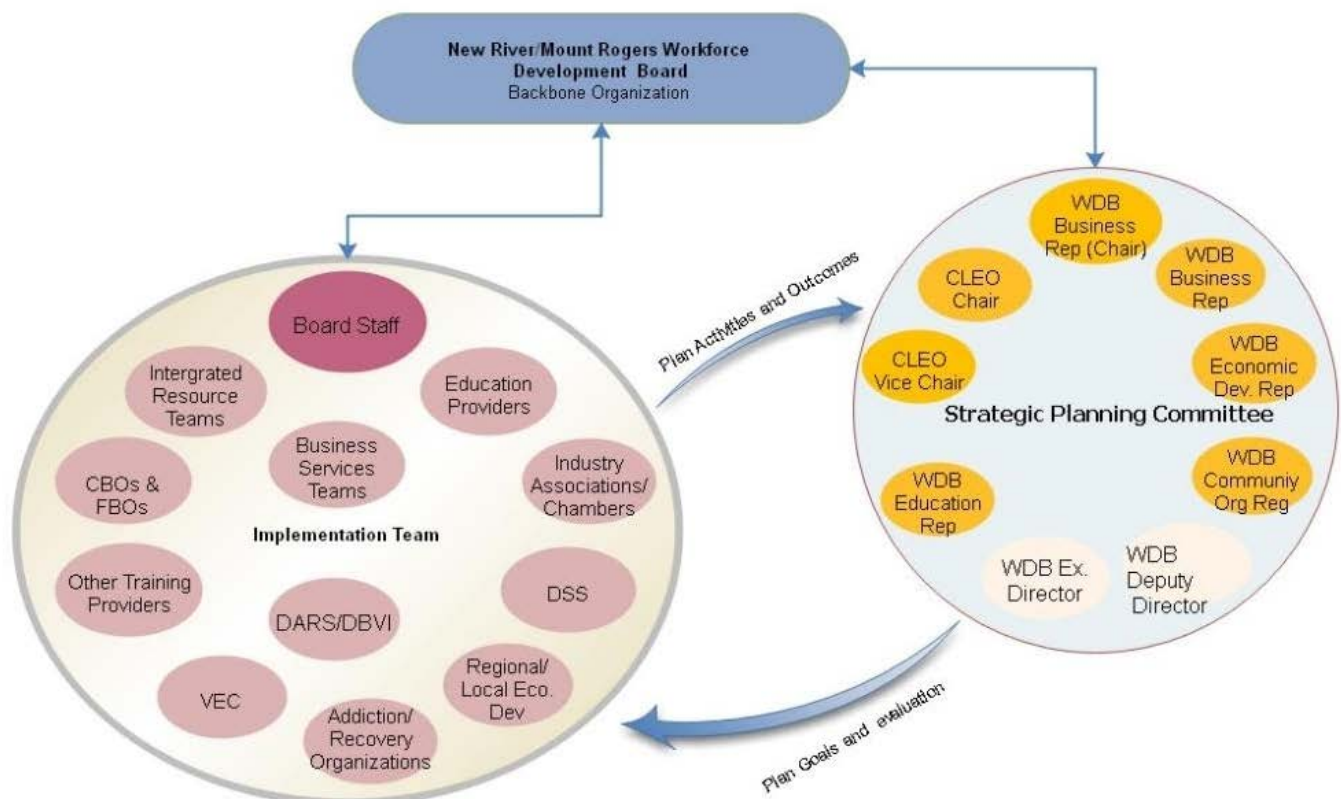
- D. Develop a communication tool for partners to share stated performance measures and outcomes.

Responsible Parties:

- WDB Staff
- WIOA Title 1 Staff
- VEC
- DARS/DBVI
- Community Colleges
- CTE Programs
- DSS

Plan Implementation:

The NRMWRWDB will implement and oversee this plan (and other regional projects) as the backbone organization, through a design structure that includes the Strategic Planning Committee, the Implementation Team, and project-based Working Groups. This concept pulls together partners to actively take part in various components of the project and allows for input from all partners.

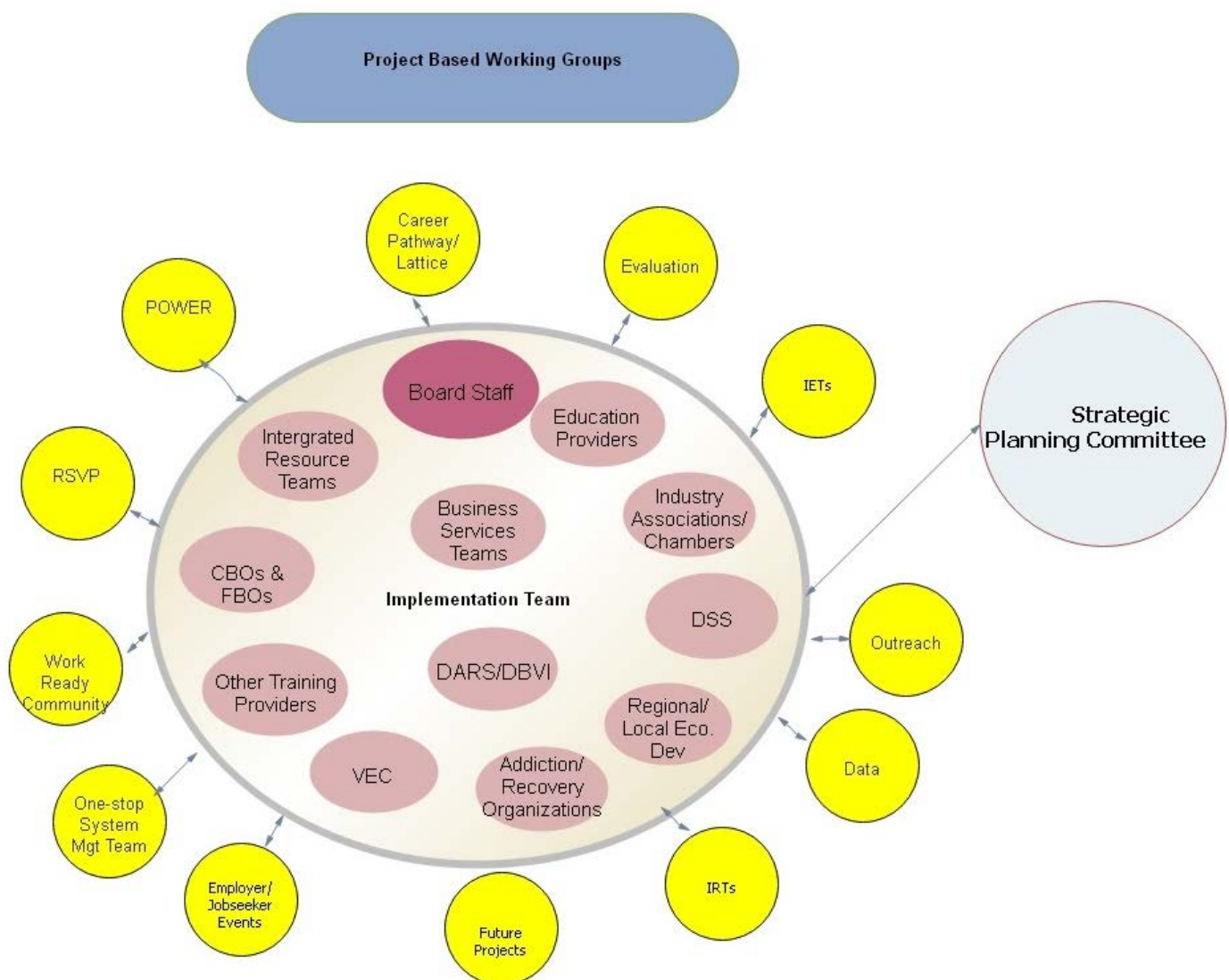


The Strategic Planning Team provides the overall guidance of the plan and focuses on the mission and goals of the plan. They will meet at least quarterly (in person and/or virtually) to discuss the progress of the plan. Bi-Annually the NRMRWDB and CLEOs will be updated.

The Implementation Team is made up of the regional partners that tasked with ensuring the plan moves forward. This includes management/supervisors and frontline staff. Board staff will be responsible in providing the SPC updates and reports on the plan components.

The **Working Groups** are project based and will be made up of the partners that are in that project and/or are working on a very specific part of the plan.

These groups will provide feedback and report to board staff that is assigned to each group.





Collaboration and Coordination Strategy

To align resources and achieve our strategic vision and goals, the NRMWDB uses the following strategies:

Service Alignment:

Alignment and collaboration with “collective impact” in mind has been the focus of the NR/MR WDA for many years. Since 2016, the region has worked to identify the resources in the region, and documented it in two ways: A Regional Resource Map and a Workforce Services Matrix (see Attachment C).

This work is designed to ensure the availability of needed services and limit the duplication of services. This area, however, is one that we are working to strengthen. Through a resource mapping, an ongoing task, we have identified available organizations and programs within the region

In addition, each new project (with funds) brought to the area, has components for collective impact. We achieve collective impact by building working relationships with traditional and “non-traditional” partners.

Referrals:

As the Integrated Resource Team process becomes standard practice to serve all jobseekers, the referral and alignment of programs serving jobseekers will happen more consistently. Other referrals happen as front-line gather information from the individuals with whom they are working. They gain knowledge about services this individual may need, and they reach out specifically to appropriate organizations. The use of the Region’s Asset Map and Workforce Matrix are also tools used for referrals.

Information Sharing:

Through regional “partner” meetings, IRTs, and regularly scheduled Business Solution Team meetings, various partners come together and share information and issues about their respective organizations and programs. These partners include a mix of those mentioned in section 3.1.

For specific projects, the use of **ProjectHub®** (an on-line project management tool) is a parking place for various documents and a space for sharing other information that aid frontline staff. **ProjectHub®** encourages collaboration, simple task management, content collaboration, and reporting.

The NRM CB uses a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, **B2B Engage®**, to track business services and outcomes and intel gathered on a business

(e.g. needs assessments about talent, retention and training). This database was implemented in the region using various State and Federal funds. Having such a powerful tool has allowed partners to work together to avoid a duplication of effort. There are a number of workforce partners in the CRM besides NRMWRDB staff: Chairs of each of the regional BSTs, Economic Development and Title 1 Program Operators.

Training and Cross-Training:

The NRMWRDB believes in, supports, and offers regional Professional Development opportunities to their staff and all workforce partners in the region. These events not only increase the skills of the individual trainees, but they also build capacity for the region to serve our businesses and job seekers and build a sense of community between partners. Cross training on programs and how to access programs happens during regularly scheduled Partner and BSU meetings. Regional Professional Development opportunities are offered to partners (WIOA Titled and others) once a month.

A larger number of frontline staff are able to access these trainings as most of these are now offered on-line. Below is the most recent Professional Development Schedule.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES 2020-2021

October 28 2020 9:00-12:00	Adverse Childhood Experiences	New River Valley Community Services Board (Kathy Kenley, Leslie Beasley)
November 19 2020 9:00-12:00	Using Labor Market Information to better serve your customers	Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development (Zach Jackson, Sarah Lyon-Hill)
December 9 2020 10:00-12:00	Seven Meaningful Tools for Navigating through Stressful Times	Extra Ordinary Living (Janet Crawford)
January 27 2021	Basics of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Non-Mental Health Practitioners	National Association of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapists (Dr. Aldo Pucci)
February 2021 9am-5pm	Mental Health First Aid	

March 2021	Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth	Extra Ordinary Living (Janet Crawford)
April 2021	Career Ladder Training (what are they and how to use them)	Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development (Zach Jackson, Sarah Lyon-Hill)
May 2021	From Conflict to Creative Tension	Extra Ordinary Living (Janet Crawford)
June 2021	Addressing Bias: Understanding Substance Use Disorder	Ballad Health (Jason Pritchard)
July 2021	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy with SUD participants	Liz Annis
August 2021	TBD	
September 2021	TBD	

Section 3: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies





The Region's Workforce Development System

The Workforce System in the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development region is comprised of the **six core programs** along with various **other programs** that provide services that prepare an educated and skilled workforce.

The Core Programs include:

WIOA Title I	Adult/Dislocated Worker	<i>Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor</i>
WIOA Title I	Youth	<i>Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor</i>
WIOA Title II	Adult Education and Family Literacy	<i>Administered by the U.S. Department of Education</i>
WIOA Title III	Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser)	<i>Administered by the U.S. Department of Labor</i>
WIOA Title IV	Vocational Rehabilitation	<i>Administered by the U.S. Department of Education</i>

Regional Programs and Services include:

Program	Partner Organization	Authorization/Category
Adult Education	Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education New River Community College	US Department of Labor WIOA Title II Program
Apprenticeship	Virginia Department of Labor and Industry	US Department of Labor
	Career Support Systems, Inc.	WIOA Title IV funding through DARS & DBVI
Community College	New River Community College	Postsecondary Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs under Carl D. Perkins CTE Act of 2006

	Virginia Highlands Community College Wytheville Community College	
Community Services Block Grant	Mountain Community Action People, Inc.	Special Block Grants
Good Care Program	Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, Inc	US Health and Human Services Health Professions Opportunity Grant
Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers	Virginia Employment Commission	National Farmworker Jobs Program
Rehabilitative Services	Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired	US Department of Labor WIOA Title IV Program
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	District Three Governmental Co- op Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, Inc. Goodwill Industries TNVA	US Department of Labor WIOA Title V Program
Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG)	Virginia Employment Commission	JVSG, authorized under chapter 41 of Title 39, U.S.C.
Pathways to the American Dream Project	New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area Consortium Board	US Department of Labor America Promise H1b Visa Grant
POWER – Pathways to a Strong and Healthy Region	NRMRWDB	Appalachian Region Commission

RSVP (Road to Success in Virginia Program)	Consortium of our three Community Colleges and two Regional Adult Education programs Coordinated by the NRMRWDB	TANF, authorized under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act through the Virginia Community College System
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Department for Social Services Localities: Galax, Giles, Grayson, Montgomery, Pulaski, Radford, Washington, Wythe	TANF, authorized under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act
Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)	Virginia Employment Commission	TAA, authorized under chapter 2 of Title ## of the Trade Act of 1974
Unemployment Insurance (UI)	Virginia Employment Commission	UI programs under Virginia unemployment compensation laws
Virginia CARES	New River Community Action People, Inc.	
Virginia Ready	Coalition of Virginia businesses and community colleges	
Wagner-Peyser Employment Services (ES)	Virginia Employment Commission	ES program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III of WIOA, also providing the state's labor exchange
WIOA Adult Program	Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, Inc. People Inc.	US Department of Labor WIOA Title I Program
WIOA DLW Program	People Inc.	US Department of Labor WIOA Title I Program

WIOA Youth Program	Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, Inc. People Inc.	US Department of Labor WIOA Title I Program
Native American program	N/A – no regional providers	US Department of Labor WIOA
Second Chance Act	N/A – no regional providers	Second Chance Act
HUD Training Programs	N/A – no regional providers	
Youthbuild	N/A – no regional providers	US Department of Labor WIOA

Supporting Alignment:

The board works closely with the entities carrying out the aforementioned core programs and other workforce development programs to support alignment to provide services that prepare a highly skilled workforce. With the idea of a collective impact in mind, the board uses the following guiding principles to support alignment of programs and services.

Customer Focused Service: Our primary customers are businesses and job seekers. Meeting their needs will continue to be the focus of every transaction. Together, the partners will consider everyone who enters a center seeking services a customer and deserving of a quality response and/or service.

Functional Integration of Service Delivery: Together, the partners will plan, coordinate, and provide services in an effort to maximize the utilization of resources, and will continuously enhance the integrated workforce development delivery system. This will result in a seamless system where there is no wrong door and everyone who contacts the Campus in any manner is considered a "shared" customer.

Each partner will maintain appropriate managerial control over their funded program services delivered on the Campus and responsibility for staff performance. As the work environment transforms to one with multiple partners serving common customers within the framework of functionally integrated teams, it is anticipated that functional supervision of staff will occur to facilitate enhanced customer flow and improve outcomes.

Commitment to Partnership: The strength of the local workforce system is founded upon the collaborative synergies achieved by the participating partners and it is implicit that all partners will coordinate their service delivery efforts with each other to the extent that they are aligned with their own organization's policies, directives, and obligations. Fostering the partnership is vital to the dynamic evolution of an integrated workforce development system and operational decisions will be designed with customer needs in mind.

Workforce System Management Team (MT) comprised of representatives of all the various workforce system partners, along with People Inc., (as the One-Stop Operator), and NR/MR WDA Consortium Board staff meet monthly to facilitate:

- A coordinated and integrated service delivery system to businesses and job seekers (including Employment and Training Services).
- A coordinated and integrated marketing/outreach plan for businesses and job seekers
- An open communication process to enhance customer services, accountability, and the integration of services into an appropriate local process.

Professional Development: Together, the partners will work closely to ensure that the centers are high-performance work places with staff that has a visible passion for quality of service.

Consensus Management: Together, the partners will work closely to ensure that all the needs of our customers and the system partners are met. The partners will make decisions by consensus at all levels of the organization and promote trust, ownership, and teamwork.

Referral Process: Together, the partners will conduct referral for services with the express goal of optimal utilization of all partner and community resources to achieve mutually shared outcomes of participants who receive services by multiple partners. Common intake procedures and data sharing among system partners will be an integral element of service delivery and support this referral process. The use of IRTs supports and encourages program referrals.

Co-Enrollment of Participants: A variety of federal, state, local, and grant-funded programs serve customers in this workforce development area. In the interest of leveraging resources wherever possible to meet the needs of our business community and to help jobseeker customers reach their career goals, co-enrollment strategies have been adopted (and encouraged) between programs that share eligible participants. The use of Integrated Resource Teams RTs supports and encourages co-enrollments of IRTs. Within the IRTs a Collaborative Funding Agreement is used to document which programs is providing what service (and at what cost) to each participant. See Attachment C for a copy of the Collaborative Funding Agreement.

Coordination and Interactions with Chief Local Elected Officials: Collaboration and information sharing has been a standard of practice between the NRMRWDA Consortium Board (CLEOs) and the NRMRWDB since 2010. The Chair of each board attends and reports at the other's board meeting. In addition, members of each board sit on the WDBs Strategic Planning Committee and the One-Stop Operation's Committee, ensuring that there is equal input from each board on these two important committees. Annually (in the

month of December) the two boards come together for a joint meeting. In addition, the Executive Committees of each board meet together at least once annually, ensuring that collaboration and joint decision making happens in the region.



Strategies and Services

The strategies and services used to serve and meet the needs of our business customer as well as to coordinate our programs with economic development and link together the One-Stop System and Unemployment Insurance include specific, concerted efforts to be business driven. With these programs, initiatives such as incumbent worker training, training for un/underemployed workers, work-based learning, customized training, career pathway, sector strategies, and business services and engagement are offered throughout the region. For more details on specific strategies and services, see Section 4: Program Design and Evaluation.

Facilitating Business Engagement

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area Consortium Board has designated the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board as the regional convener for business engagement. As such, we have a dedicated Business Services Coordinator, funded by a variety of funding streams. She provides business engagement services and facilitates Business Solutions Teams. Services are provided to all businesses, particularly those in in-demand sectors. In order to best meet the needs of our region's businesses and our partners, we have developed four regional Business Solution Teams (BSTs) that are specialized in their sub-region and have scheduled meetings every other month.

NRMRWDB and its partners that make up the Region's BSTs believe that services to the region's businesses should serve the widest possible range of businesses, be individualized and efficient with a single point of contact wherever possible (or a "no wrong door" approach). It is also our intent to share information about what services we are currently providing to businesses with partner agencies to avoid unnecessary duplication, including initial assessment and discovery, service plans, service coordination, outcome and follow-up information. In order to mount this collaborative effort, we will be cross training each partner in one another's services so that we are able to provide more seamless referrals for needed services as well as being able to speak to the many services available, regardless of what agency may 'own' these services.

When making a business contact, the Business Services Rep will use a NR/MR WDA Out-reach Folder that will include a complete host of Business Services Partner information, including contacts, programs and scope of services. This marketing tool will be used by all members of the BSTs when making any business contacts and will be reviewed and updated by unit members as changes are warranted.

Targeted businesses will be identified by each of the four BSTs as well as next steps and desired outcomes. A *Listen & Deliver Strategy* is required: When a business need, that is offered through a partner agency, is identified (through a marketing call and/or a business reaching out to an agency), it will be required that an immediate referral (and/or

"soft" hand-off) be made to the respective agency that offers the needed service(s), so as not to delay timely delivery of service(s) to the business in need. Follow-up is required by the original Business Rep.

- Response to an initial business inquiry: 2-3 days
- Response time for information on a specific request: 4-6 days

Toward this objective, the BSTs stand united on the below best practices:

- Every agency and organization can benefit from collaboration: Collaborative local systems are more effective than those that conduct their work alone, or with a limited range of partners. Further, the region's One-Stop Center(s) is, in most cases, the natural hub for collaborative workforce development activities in any given community.
- * Highly coordinated services are essential for all customers: Given the wide range of services available to businesses and career seekers, workforce agencies and partner organizations will build a network of seamlessly coordinated services across the WDA that are accessible at multiple points ("no wrong door").
- * Greater alignment between workforce development and economic development will benefit both systems: To provide a full array of effective and coordinated business development services, the Business Solution Units will align themselves with economic development organizations throughout the region.

Meeting Business Needs

Through various tactics, we strive to support the local workforce development system with the intent of meeting the needs of businesses in the region. We seek to learn as much about our businesses so we can actively support them. Several activities we coordinate include:

1. On-site tours attended by BST members
2. Workforce Exchange events where businesses talk directly to workforce development professional about their talent needs and hiring practices
3. Developing and sharing Career Pathway Lattices
4. Various business roundtables/workshops on topics valued by businesses
5. Hosting recruitment and hiring events at the request of businesses
6. Upskilling current workforce through incumbent worker training opportunities
7. Job Profiling to document skills & knowledge necessary for specific occupations
8. Documenting and tracking business needs and services offered in the **B2B Engage©** customer management system

Coordinating Workforce Development Programs and Economic Development

The NRMRWDB is engaged with local, regional, and state level economic development entities on a regular basis through formal and informal avenues that highlight the long-term, integrated relationships of the workforce and economic development system in the region. Our Executive Director is a member of the CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy) committees of both the New River Valley Regional Commission and the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission and is regularly invited by local and state economic development to participate in prospect meetings throughout the region and specific company meetings. With the addition of a Business Services Coordinator, the coordination and promotion of workforce initiatives and activities to the economic development community have increased. To better coordinate workforce and economic development programs, local and regional economic development professionals have access to our B2B Engage© customer management system.

For the last several years, a unique and important element of this engagement is with the **Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development** that supports not only the board but also our regional and local economic development and governmental partners through a contractual data sourcing agreement. We provide specifically requested LMI and industry data to local and regional economic developers as well as to colleges, businesses, and other stakeholders. This service is at no cost to our partners.

The process for such data pulls varies depending on the client and the industry that the client represents. However, generally speaking, the process is as follows: A stakeholder, or business prospect, contacts the New River Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board seeking labor market, occupational, or industry data. Or, in some cases the NRMRWDB itself requires particular data. The director or staff at the NRMRWDB then contacts the Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development (VTOED). VTOED then compiles data relevant to the request. Often, the request is in the form of a question (e.g. What are top industries in a particular county?) and sometimes requires OED to determine the most appropriate approach for informing that inquiry such as including top related industries, top occupations in the region related to those industries, educational and training programs, and labor force availability within the potential labor shed of the prospect. For these initial data pulls, VTOED predominantly uses EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc.), a proprietary data source that provides unsuppressed and combined data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, job postings in real-time. When needed, VTOED supplements and verifies EMSI's data through phone calls to cited companies and stakeholders. Data gathered from EMSI and through direct stakeholder engagement is also cross-checked with other secondary data sources and providers, which vary depending on the request and on the prospect type.

While the data supplied is the key outcome to this contract, the ease of access and collaborative nature of building and exploring the impacts of such requests and how these data impact the overall economic viability of our regional communities is critical to the

successful development of both responsive and visionary elements of the workforce program. Addressing needs of large and small business growth opportunities across the region is critical to overall economic health and our regional relationships with economic development allies has helped to shape current developing business opportunities in the area.

Linkages between One-Stop Delivery System and Unemployment Insurance

The linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance program has been challenged for the last few years as the UI program no longer has staff in the regional Virginia Career Works centers. With the onset of the COVID Pandemic, these activities were being performed by local Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) staff and the LWDBs contracted with the VEC to perform the Wagner-Peyser duties. This shift in duties has strengthened the understanding of the need to connect UI to the daily activities of the workforce system. How this will play out as the region moves back to more “normal” activities is not yet known.



Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education

Coordination of Career Pathways from secondary and postsecondary education with workforce investment activities is essential to developing effective workforce Action Items, enhancing services, and avoiding duplication of services. Currently, a Career and Technical Education (CTE) Director serves on the Workforce Development Board. At each meeting, he highlights activities and initiatives that the CTE programs are engaged in throughout the region. He is also charged with communicating workforce development activities with the twelve other CTE programs in the region. As with the community college partnership, the NRMWRDB has not evaluated the effectiveness of this communication flow, particularly in regards to analyzing the development of effective, systematic workforce Action Items, the enhancement of services, and the circumvention of a duplication of services. Therefore, we will also take a more active role in directly communicating with the thirteen CTE schools through our content marketing using social media tools. Staff will also directly network with the thirteen CTE programs to advance the partnership and communication so each of the programs, along with their community college counterparts, also feels a vested interest in the planning and delivery of workforce and training services.

Further, CTE programs are formally and informally connected with our BST efforts. Often, CTE staff participate in meetings and present information about their programs to all partners (service and business), seeking guidance in meeting industry needs as well as determining how services can be integrated and customers co-enrolled in programs to address their varying needs.

To further maintain connectivity, the NRMWRDB Executive Director is a member of several CTE Advisory Boards and is secretary to the Community in Schools NRV Board. In an effort to better align with all educational elements and to enhance the workforce pipeline, several Action Items of this plan directly address this effort.

The NRMWRDB has partnered with regional universities for a number of years. With Radford University's School of Social Work, the NRMWRDB has been a partner for the last four years by hosting a Master's level intern. This collaboration has benefited the NRMWRDB organization by providing us with another staff person to help staff and implement special projects that address the needs of job seeker customers, and has benefited the student by providing work-based learning opportunities. With Virginia Tech, the NRMWRDB has a long-standing partnership with its Office of Economic Development (OED) and previously with VT *Knowledgeworks*. In an effort to further expand our Career Pathway efforts, however, we will also actively engage with our university partners through our content marketing efforts in an effort to better align systems and enhance services.

Training Provider and Program Selection: It is the intent of the NRMWRDB to utilize available training funds in the most effective manner, focusing on high demand occupations that will enable clients to achieve a level of self-sufficiency and allow them career growth opportunities.

The Training Provider Committee of the NRMWRDB meets annually to review data (EMSI Analytics, provided by VT OED) on regional occupations. This data shows the annual employment, employment growth (from five years prior), average annual openings, average median wage and age of workers for every occupation in the region. This information is sorted and evaluated on annual employment, average annual openings, and average median wage. Then, the occupations are clustered by industry. From this process, the region's demand occupations are listed. WIOA Title I Program Operators and our discretionary grant programs use this list when determining if grant funds can (and should) be used for training.

For PY 2021, the NRMWRDB is primarily interested in occupational skills training programs (training duration of two years or less) related to occupations in the Healthcare, Information Technology, Transportation and Distribution, Advanced Manufacturing, Trades/Construction, and Public Safety Industry Sectors that pay a median hourly wage rate of \$12.00 or greater. Other programs may be proposed and considered for full or temporary approval.

The NRMWRDB follows the State's Training Provider Policy and Programs and Providers are evaluated annually. The approval process and application forms are located on the NRMWRDB Website at <https://vcwnewrivermtrogers.com/resources/training-provider-information-and-applications/>



Collaboration with local Community Colleges

The relationship between the NRMWDB and the three regional community colleges (New River, Virginia Highlands and Wytheville) is strong, and there are many ways in which collaboration happens every day. The three colleges are an important training provider for the region and are an integral partner in almost all of the NRMWDB's discretionary grant projects as well as making up 85% of the WIOA Eligible Training programs in the region.

In July of 2021, the NRMWDB worked to create a regional consortium of all three colleges to apply for a *Road to Success in Virginia (RSVP)* grant from the VCCS Systems Office. This consortium was awarded \$405,000 to implement the Integrated Education and Training (IET) program, *Pathways to Self-Sufficiency*, to serve 120 TANF recipients and families with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level.

The region's comprehensive One-Stop is located on the campus of Wytheville Community College, and the colleges have representatives that participate on the Workforce System Management Team and the four BSTs ensuring a steady flow of communication between the NRMWDB and the colleges.



Coordination of Activities with Supportive Services

Integrating supportive services into the overall programs and workforce services is key to our businesses and jobseekers. We fully understand the need to create wrap-around services to ensure a strong economy for both growing industries as well as the workforce in our region. We will continue to seek partners and programs that support critical services to aid both job creation and retention in our region. In addition to the core services in workforce development in our region, individuals are assessed for their specific needs. Partners providing that need are brought into an Integrated Resource Team for that jobseeker. The team uses a *Collaborative Funding Agreement* that documents who is doing what for each individual, ensuring that needs are met, with limited duplication of services.

Items needed to be success in training and/or obtaining employment includes: Books, Uniforms, Tools, Certification Exams, etc. will be purchased for the participant.

TANF & SNAP referrals are made to (and from) the thirteen Department of Social Services to access programs that participants need.

Homeownership and Housing Counseling: Offered through a variety of agencies where Low- and moderate-income families can gain financial stability, accumulated assets, and equity, and make a long-term investment in their future by becoming homeowners with assistance from

Section 8 Rental Assistance: Connecting to this program provides financial assistance for rent and utilities to qualified families.

Homeless Prevention Program (HPP): Families at risk of losing their homes receive emergency assistance with rent payments.

Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP): Short-term financial assistance for various household expenses including rent in order to prevent homelessness.

Weatherization: Provides repairs and improvements to low-income residences to increase the home's energy efficiency and reduce total residential energy expenditures.

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF): Temporary financial assistance and supportive services, such as personal financial planning and housing counseling, are provided to veterans and their families to help promote housing stability.

Comprehensive Health Investment Project (CHIP): CHIP provides parent education and health-focused home visits to Medicaid-eligible families, with young children, and pregnant women.

Domestic Violence Shelter and Outreach Program: Provides temporary emergency shelter, supportive services, and advocacy to help victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault. A 24- hour crisis hotline offers immediate counseling and support.

Virginia Community Action Re-Entry Solution-(Virginia CARES): Virginia CARES helps ex-offenders and their families make the transition from prison to life in the community. Services include pre- release life skills, post-release referrals to community service providers, and help in securing employment.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Various County Free Dental Clinic: Volunteer professionals provide dental care for eligible Washington County residents screened and referred by Social Services and the Health Department.

Project Discovery: A drop-out prevention and college access preparatory program for high school students that arranges college campus visits, provides academic support counseling, goal-oriented workshops, SAT fee waivers and test preparation, and information on financial aid and college admissions.

Early Head Start (for children up to three years old): Early Head Start program provides center-based and home-based education, health, and social services for pregnant women and families with children up to three years of age.

Head Start (for children from three to five years old): Head Start centers around the region and homebased services promote early childhood education, health, nutrition, social services, parent education, family development, and parental involvement for income-eligible families and children ages three to five. Dedicated teachers provide developmental, sensory, and behavioral screenings during enrollment. We also encourage parents to participate in program governance, volunteer, and attend parenting training, adult literacy, and career skills classes.

Public Transportation and Ride Share Services: Across the region partners work with local transportation services to meet needs of area businesses and job seekers. Due to the rural nature of the region, this element of support is not simple and each transportation need is unique to the community, business and job seeker. We continue to seek broader, sustainable transportation solutions for our region to ensure the most job-ready employees and support businesses.



Coordination with Services under the Wagner-Peyser Act

The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service focuses on providing a variety of services including:

- Job search assistance,
- Help getting a job referral, and
- Placement assistance for job seekers.

Additionally, **re-employment services** are available for unemployment insurance claimants, as well as **recruitment services** to employers with job openings. Services are delivered in one of three modes including (1) self-service, (2) facilitated self-help services, and (3) staff-assisted service delivery approaches.

The services offered to employers, in addition to referral of job seekers to available job openings, include (1) assistance in development of job order requirements, matching job seeker experience with job requirements and skills, (2) assisting employers with special recruitment needs, (3) arranging job fairs, and (4) assisting employers analyze hard-to-fill job orders.

Staff that provide Wagner-Peyser services are part of the BSTs in their area to provide their needed services to help a business recruit needed talent. They are also part of the IRTs for individuals that may be having difficulty in finding a job.



Coordination with Adult Education and Literacy

Coordination with Adult Education and Literacy (WIOA Title II), including the review of local applications for funding, is crucial to the successful development and continuous improvement of our regional workforce system. Adult Education's role of assisting adults who are basic skill deficient, who do not have a secondary credential, and/or who are English language learners in becoming literate and obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary for successful postsecondary and/or employment transition, economically self-sufficient, and responsible citizens is fundamental to the workforce system as a whole. An Adult Education program director sits on the NRMWDB and highlights adult education program activities and initiatives throughout the region. Just like her community college and CTE counterparts, she is responsible for communicating workforce development activities with the other regional Adult Education program in the New River/Mount Rogers workforce region. Because the NRMWDB has not evaluated the effectiveness of this communication flow, we will also engage our two regional Adult Education partners through our content marketing using social media tools. As such, we anticipate that Adult Education will be actively involved in the planning and delivery of workforce and training services, and will, as well, have a vested interest in our workforce system.

Adult Education representatives attend and participate in BST meetings and events. We will continue to support our Adult Education partners' active engagement with other workforce partners to help them to continue to gain a greater understanding of the workforce system and help the other partners in coming to understand how Adult Education fits in the workforce system.

We support and assist both Regional Adult Education programs in becoming fully integrated in the workforce system, in sync with the broad purpose of driving workforce solutions that address the needs of businesses and workers. We review and provide feedback on funding applications and encourage them to partner on all grant proposals. In prior years, we supported the integrated education and training program, PluggedInVA (PIVA), of both Regional Adult Education programs. While neither has offered a PIVA program in the past few years, we engaged with both to partner on our RSVP program and encouraged them to apply for PIVA funds to support RSVP. They are playing a critical role in the implementation of RSVP, providing programming to support basic skill development toward a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), professional soft skills toward a Conover Credential, and computer skills toward NorthStar Digital Literacy skills. As we move forward, however, we strive to play an even more active role with Adult Education partners by providing guidance on all of their programming.



Business Engagement and Services

Our three-year Strategic Plan incorporates the following:

Policies and Protocols

The NRMRWDB's Business Services Plan (See Attachment E) provides guidance to the workforce system partners. We believe that services to the region's businesses should serve the widest possible range of businesses, be individualized and efficient with a single point of contact wherever possible (or a "no wrong door" approach). It is also our intent to share information about what services we are currently providing to businesses with partner agencies to avoid unnecessary duplication, including initial assessment and discovery, service plans, service coordination, outcome and follow-up information. To mount this collaborative effort, we will cross train each partner in one another's services so that we are able to provide more seamless referrals for needed services as well as are able to speak to the many services available, regardless of the agency that is responsible for these services. We provide regional leadership regarding Business Services including but not limited to identification of priority industry sectors, convening and assembling appropriate business development activities, and aligning of resources to more effectively address sector and business needs.

Business Development is defined as the process of establishing a relationship between the services and a business, in addition to providing assistance in addressing the overall workforce needs of the business. *Business Development* is business-focused: **the customer is the business**. Increasing business use, particularly centered on the priority industry sectors (and the skills that comprise those sectors) of the NR/MR WDA workforce services increases employment opportunities for the participants.

Business contacts are defined as the meaningful exchange of information between a NR/MR WDA Business Representative and a business. These contacts should include information on the services and programs offered by all the NR/MR WDA partners, and to serve as a broker for additional services available within the community and workforce investment area.

The following types of contacts are not considered a meaningful exchange of information:

- Job Order maintenance.
- Brief and informal contacts at meetings, job fairs and community events.
- Dissemination of pertinent industry and labor market information by use of mass e-mail or mailings.

In addition to creating new relationships, Business Representatives are also expected to maintain and grow existing relationships with businesses. For this reason, follow-up contact is considered crucial, provided the definition of business contact is maintained.

While all business interactions are important to the success of the NR/MR WDA, all business contacts will have to meet the same standards:

1. To the extent possible, the contact should be face-to-face, preferably at the business location. However, as long as the definition of business contact is maintained, these contacts can be made via e-mail, phone, or in person.
2. The Business Representative will collect business information and share said information with other members of the BST.

Targeted businesses will be identified by the Business Solutions Teams as well as next steps and desired outcomes. A ***Listen & Deliver Strategy*** is required: When a business need, that is offered through a partner agency, is identified (through a marketing call and/or a business reaching out to an agency), it will be required that an immediate referral (and/or "soft" hand-off) be made to the respective agency that offers the needed service(s), so as not to delay timely delivery of service(s) to the business in need. Follow-up is required by the original Business Rep.

- Response to an initial business inquiry: 2-3 days
- Response time for information on a specific request: 4-6 days

Business Involvement in the Formation of Workforce Development Activities

Business partners are essential to the development of all Integrated Education and Training Programs and for determining what additional funding (through discretionary grants) are needed to aid in preparing the region's workforce for necessary in-demand occupations.

Addressing Business Needs

Activities the NRMWDB undertakes to address the specific workforce needs of businesses includes, but is not limited to:

- Providing Customized hiring and recruitment activities/events
- Providing Work-based learning opportunities such as Incumbent worker training, OJTs and Apprenticeships supports
- Providing Job Profiling and WorkKeys Assessments
- Developing IETs



Section 134 (c)(3)(E) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires that with respects to funds allocated to a local area for Adult employment and training activities, priority for receipt of career and training services shall be given to recipients of public assistance, other low income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board has also added offenders to this priority of services group. Federal priority guidelines apply to adult funds only; therefore, funds allocated for youth and dislocated workers are not subject to this requirement.

Definition of Limited Funds:

The Workforce Development Board has determined that the term “limited funds” will be applicable when 50% of the available program year Adult Program formula funds have been expended. Until such time as the 50% threshold is attained, the 175% Non-Metro LLSIL may be used in lieu of the low-income standard. Pursuant to this determination, the following Adult priority levels shall be applicable:

Adults: First priority for career and training services will be given to those participants who are receiving public assistance or are classified as low income or are basic skills deficient or are offenders **AND** who lack a high school diploma or GED.

Second priority for career and training services will be given to those participants who are receiving public assistance or are classified as low income or are basic skills deficient or are offenders **AND** who possess a high school diploma or GED.

Third priority for career and training services will be given to those participants who are determined to meet the Self-Sufficiency and Employed Worker policy guidelines **AND** who lack a high school diploma or GED.

Fourth priority for career and training services will be given to those participants who are determined to meet the Self-Sufficiency and Employed Worker policy guidelines **AND** who possess a high school diploma or GED.

Compliance with the Jobs for Veterans Act: The NRMWDB will provide veterans and eligible spouses priority of service at each level, as specified in the Jobs for Veterans Act and its implementing regulations at 20 CFR part 1010.

A Veteran is defined as “**a person who served in the active military, naval or air service who was discharged or released there from under conditions other than dishonorable.**” Active services include full-time duty in the National Guard or a Reserve component, other than full-time duty for training purposes.

The term “eligible spouse” means: the spouse of any person who died of a service-connected disability; the spouse of any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of the application for the priority, is listed on one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than ninety days:

i. missing in action; ii. captured in line of duty by hostile force; or iii. forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power; 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.

The United States Department of Labor (USDOL) provides additional clarification by indicating that the re-marriage of the spouse would not terminate their eligibility. However, if a spouse becomes divorced from a veteran, eligibility for priority of service is terminated.

It is further understood that this policy does not exclude from eligibility spouse who were not citizens at the time that the veteran was discharged or retired, nor does it stipulate that a spouse had to be married to a veteran at the time of his or her discharge or retirement.

Section 4:

Program Design and Evaluation





Expanding Access for Eligible Individuals

The NRMWDB recognizes the need for the **use of technology** in our outreach and case-management efforts. However, we recognize its limitations in the region as not all areas have broadband and/or cell service, nor are all citizens/jobseekers comfortable using technology. We use **Roving Computer Labs** in remote areas of the region to assist with digital literacy (and as remote One-Stops). The Commonwealth provides the VAWC system, and all Operators are trained to use it. The **Common Intake System** is used in Radford and Wytheville. However, there is not a common intake for the whole workforce system, so partners participate regularly in engagement and communication to best support business and customer engagement across the system.

To further expand our efforts, we are striving to implement the **Virginia Career Works Referral Portal**. While earlier efforts proved challenging, we recognize the importance of the tool plays in connecting clients to all the resources they need in one streamlined process.

The NRMWDB recognizes that jobseekers need a variety of training options to accommodate schedules, interests, and their own personal goals. Through the *Pathways to the American Dream* project, the NRMWDB developed an on-line portal that houses a variety of training options for the region, many of which are “open sourced” materials.

Additional strategies to expand access includes our development of online fillable forms used for eligibility determination. These forms will be accessible on our website along with the websites of our program operators. This process should be completed and rolled out by the end of PY 2021.

KnowledgetoWork (<https://www.knowledgetowork.com/home.php>) is an on-line portal for individuals to learn about regional jobs, the skills and knowledge necessary for those jobs and how to access the needed training (which includes free public resources found on-line). Individuals can also learn about regional businesses, job openings and connect with the “system” partners through mobile and computer devices. This portal is also used to host regional virtual job fairs.



A Career Pathway is a workforce development strategy used to support workers' transitions from education into and through the workforce. The NRMWRDB has taken the approach to career pathways by building systems to understand which occupations are needed for targeted industries as well as learning what skills, knowledge, and certifications are needed for those occupations. We then identify what education opportunities are available in the region to meet those needs (and which are not).

To best understand and communicate knowledge, skills and abilities required to effectively perform specific in-demand jobs of high-growth businesses in targeted industries the NRMWRDB has taken the following approach:

- Through various data collections sources (e.g. discussions, job postings, job descriptions, and job profiling*) Industry Specific Career Lattices are being developed (see the Advanced Manufacturing Sample in Attachment D).
- The American College Testing (ACT) **Job Profiling system**, where a regional certified job profiler will consult with subject-matter experts at companies to analyze the skills, skill levels, and skill frequency workers need to be successful at certain jobs. Businesses will gain a sharable, detailed analysis of skills and abilities an employee needs to be productive and efficient on the job. Using ACT's standardized structure, detailed internal reports will enable efficient job matching to applicant work history, applicant training completions, and employee skill mastery while external redacted reports will inform workforce system partners in developing navigational career progression maps specific to the region. This tool will also inform Workforce System partners and Job Seekers of the critical skillsets required to be successful in specific jobs. Using the same ACT Job Profiling system, curriculum may be profiled to measure the degree of alignment between specific jobs and the outcomes of a training program—a process that will aid in establishing reasonable expectations as well as providing assurance to employers that graduates of a program have the skills they need to be successful in the company. Knowledge and skill gaps can be analyzed and understood so that custom training may be secured.

Both of these tools (Career Lattice graphics and the ACT Job Profiling) will aid in the development of skilled-worker pipelines from K12 through senior-level talent by reducing subjective interpretation of businesses' required and preferred skills, identifying gaps, and guiding training selection and/or modification. While modifications to the talent pipeline will develop over time, businesses will immediately have a standardized tool to calibrate their recruitment efforts to significantly reduce turnover and encourage retention.

The Career Lattice graphics depicting the career pathway information (competencies, education/training, and credentials) will be shared for all to openly access in our website www.vcwnewrivermtrogers.com and possibly our online portal KnowledgetoWork.com once completed.



Co-Enrollments

Co-enrollment means enrollment in more than one program at a time, such as simultaneous enrollment in the WIOA Title 1 Adult and one of the “Other” programs listed such as our discretionary projects or TANF. Through the development of Integrated Resource Teams, the NRMWDB is striving to develop key partnerships in an on-going, collaborative approach for recruiting, referring, and providing holistic services, through co-enrollments that are a natural outcome of this method of service delivery.

Partners that could be included in the **active resource coordination/case management** of the IRT (depending on the needs of the particular customer) are: Adult Education, Apprenticeship/Pre-Apprenticeship, business partners, Community/Faith Organizations, Career & Technical Education (secondary/post-secondary), Job Corps, Justice Organizations, SUD recovery organizations, TANF, Vocational Rehabilitation, various other funding sources for training and supportive services.



One-Stop Delivery System

The One-Stop Delivery System in the New River/Mount Rogers Region is robust and includes multiple partners and services to our business and jobseeker customers. Traditional partners in the NRMRWDA workforce system include:

WIOA Title 1: Contracted Program Operators are: Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, Inc. (Adult and Youth in the NRV PD); People Inc. (Adult & Youth in MR PD), DLW and One-Stop Operator (in all of NRMRWDA)

WIOA Title II: Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education (MR PD) and NRCC Office of Transitional Programs (NRV PD)

WIOA Title III: Virginia Employment Commission offices in Abingdon/Bristol, Galax, Radford and Wytheville (part of WOSC)

WIOA Title IV: Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services offices located in Abingdon, Christiansburg and Wytheville (part of WOSC) and Department of the Blind and Visually Impaired in Bristol

Community Colleges: New River (Dublin & Christiansburg), Virginia Highlands (Abingdon) and Wytheville (Wytheville and Galax)

Apprenticeships: Virginia Department of Labor and Industry

K-12 Career and Technical Education: all 13 school divisions

TANF: all 13 Departments of Social Services

Job Corps: Blue Ridge Job Corps

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (Abingdon office)

Virginia Cares: New River Community Action and People Inc.

Other Workforce Programs: GoodCare (Goodwill Industries of the Valleys), *Pathways to the American Dream* (NRMRWDB), *Pathways to a Strong and Healthy Region* (NRMRWDB), and RSVP (Regional Consortium).

Non-traditional partners include (but not limited to):

Chambers of Commerce and Industry Organizations: City of Bristol, Floyd County, Montgomery County, Pulaski County, Smyth County, Twin County, Washington County, and Wytheville/Wythe/Bland, Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing,

Roanoke/Blacksburg Technology Council, Southwest Virginia Technology Council, Economic Development: VEDP (Virginia Economic Development Partnership),

Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development, Mount Rogers Planning District Commission, NRV Economic Development Alliance, NRV Regional Commission, Virginia's Industrial Advancement Alliance, City of Bristol, Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority, Floyd County, Montgomery County, Pulaski County, Smyth County, Washington County, and the Wythe/Wytheville Joint IDA

Others: Virginia Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity, Small Business Development Centers (Galax & Abingdon), Genedge Alliance, Manufacturing Technology Center, CAEL (Council for Adult Education and Learning), VALRC (Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center), VCCS (Virginia Community College Systems Office), United Way Southwest Virginia, Radford University School of Social Work, the Center for Manufacturing Excellence

The Workforce Partners have a Facebook and LinkedIn page where we share information about what is happening in the region.

Facebook targets job seekers (and the general public).

<https://www.facebook.com/nrmrworkforcenetwork/>

LinkedIn focuses on business and partner outreach.

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/virginia-career-works-newriver-mountrogers>

YouTube houses pre-recorded workshops

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGyInC3EkA3IYZLXWO80iNA>

Virginia Career Works Centers:

The LWDA has seven (7) VA Career Works centers, also known as America's Job Centers that are designed to provide a full range of assistance to job seekers, workers and businesses under one roof. Established under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) and continued by the WIOA, the centers offer a comprehensive array of services designed to match talent with opportunities.

❖ Wytheville VA Career Works Center (Comprehensive)

Christina Lowe, Manager	Phone: 276-228-4051
1000 East Main Street, Carroll Hall, Wytheville, VA 24382	Email Address: Christina.lowe@vec.virginia.gov
Operating Hours: 8:30 am – 4:30 pm, except for Wednesday 9:30-4:30	Website https://vcwnewrivermtrogers.com/

❖ Abingdon VA Career Works Center (Affiliate)

Beth Carico, Director of WFD Programs	Phone: 276-619-2212
1173 West Main Street, Abingdon, VA 24210	Email Address: ecarico@peopleinc.net
Operating Hours: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm	Website https://vcwnewrivermtrogers.com/

❖ Bristol VA Career Works Center (Affiliate)

Vinny Ringrose, Manager	Phone: 276-642-7350
200 Bob Morrison Boulevard, Suite 200, Bristol, VA 24333	Email Address: vinny.ringrose@vec.virginia.gov
Operating Hours: 8:30 am – 4:30 pm except for Wednesday 9:30-4:30	Website https://vcwnewrivermtrogers.com/

❖ Galax VA Career Works Center (Affiliate)

Rebecca Haynes, Manager	Phone: 276-236-5105
1117 East Stuart Drive, Suite 167, Galax, VA 24333	Email Address: rebecca.haynes@vec.virginia.gov
Operating Hours: 8:30 am – 4:30 pm except for Wednesday 9:30-4:30	Website https://vcwnewrivermtrogers.com/

❖ **Narrows VA Career Works Center (Affiliate)**

Trent Moore, Director of Workforce Services	Phone 540-726-8201
211 Main Street, Narrows, VA 24124	Email Address tmoore@goodwillvalleys.com
Operating Hours 8:00am - 4:30pm Tu/Wed/Thur	Website https://vcwnewrivermtrogers.com/

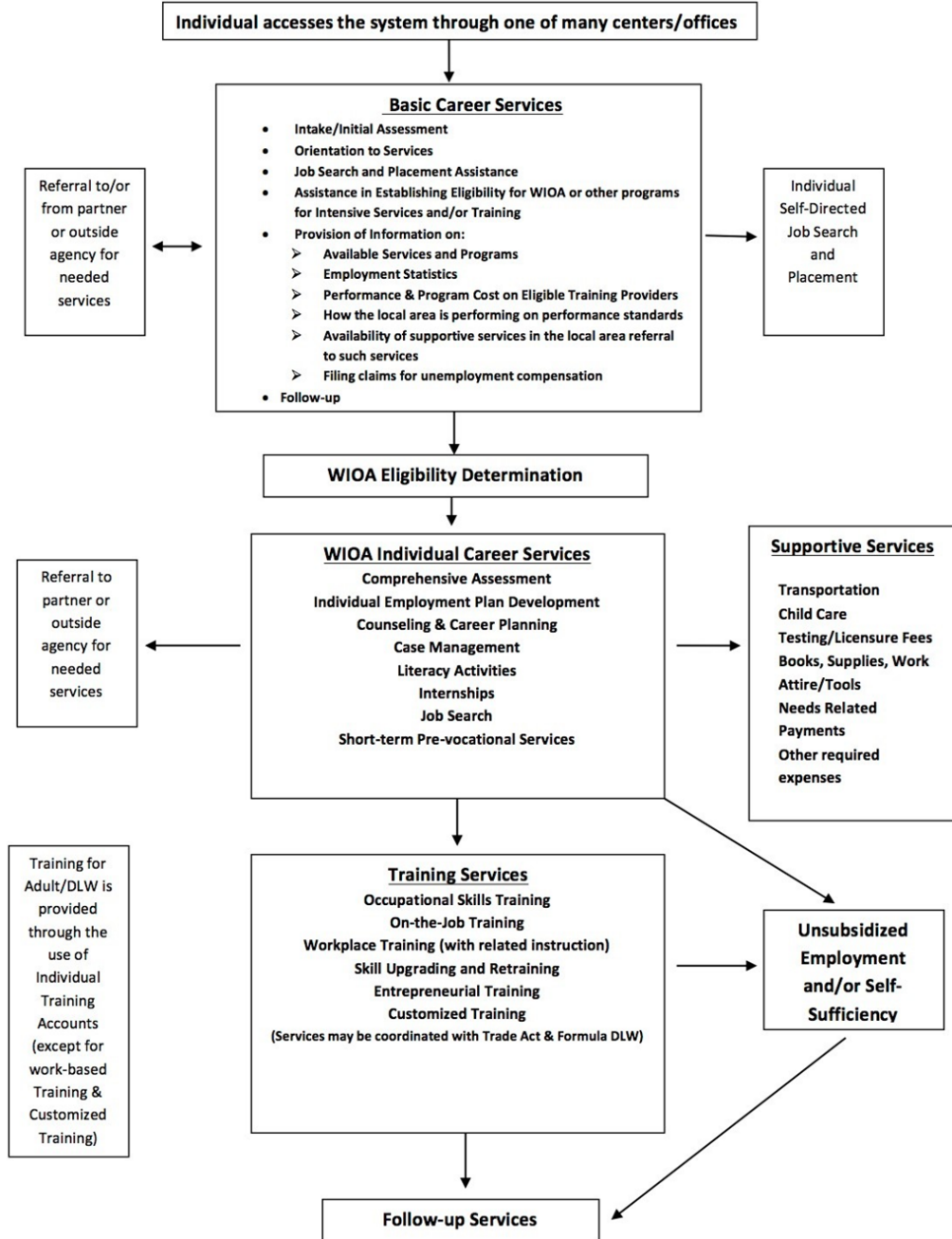
❖ **Pulaski VA Career Works Center (Affiliate)**

Trent Moore, Director of Workforce Services	Phone 540.980.1323
246 N. Washington Avenue, Suite D Pulaski, VA 24301	Email Address tmoore@goodwillvalleys.com
Operating Hours 8:00am – 4:30pm Mon - Fri	Website https://vcwnewrivermtrogers.com/

❖ **Radford VA Career Works Center (Affiliate)**

Karen Akers, Manager	Phone: 540-831-5980
6226 University Park Drive, Suite 1300, Radford, VA 24141	Email Address: karen.akers@vec.virginia.gov
Operating Hours: 8:30 am – 4:30 pm except for Wednesday 9:30-4:30	Website https://vcwnewrivermtrogers.com/

NRRMOWA One-Stop Delivery System



Continuous Improvement Efforts:

Efforts to ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, and workers are accomplished via:

- Ensuring each LWDA Virginia Career Works Center meets State and Federal requirements for Certification
- Satisfaction Surveys (paper and on-line) are collected from businesses and job seekers. Results from these surveys are reported to the boards monthly by the One-Stop Operator.
- Providing professional development opportunities to frontline staff to ensure they have the skills and knowledge necessary

Access to Services:

The region has seven Virginia Career Works Centers spaced throughout the 4,300 square miles of the region. The NRMWDB also promotes the use of the Commonwealth's Referral Portal at <https://app.virginia.myjourney.com/> . An on-line Scheduler is available and promoted for individuals to schedule services (in-person and virtual) at [Schedule Appointment with New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board \(as.me\)](#). The schedule allows staff to facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and through the use of mobile computer labs (Roving Computer Labs – RCL), the NRMWDB support remote areas of the region with access to technology, training and job search and programming. There are currently six 5-laptop labs with available mobile printing and hotspot service available for “check-out” by partners and community groups. Additionally, there are three 3-laptop labs with the same Microsoft office set up and accessory access as the larger labs for use with smaller groups. The NRMWDB also has two tablet labs (7 iPads and 7 Acer tablets) to support business and job seeker training in the use of the technology and to provide opportunities to test drive these resources as companies in the region determine how to best enhance their technology in-house. The RCLs are currently heavily utilized for job fairs, job search/resume writing workshops, mass lay-off enrollment activities, WorkKeys Assessment test (at business request) and other targeted community and individual training and internet support programming. The NRMWDB continues to build community partnerships through outreach with these resources and will target beyond our usual suspects in business, industry and workforce circles to include more community support organizations and business affinity groups to make these resources accessible in times and locations where our customers are already engaged in their business and community.

Addressing the Needs of Individuals with Disabilities:

All Virginia Career Work Centers are ADA compliant and provide services and equipment for job seekers with physical and intellectual disabilities. Beyond the physical workforce center accessibility, the local One-Stop Center staff have training in disability etiquette and are knowledgeable about resources available to customers with disabilities that may not

be available in the One-Stop as well as a streamlined referral process. This training supports staff ability to provide services to many customers with disabilities without referring them to organizations and partners whose focus is disability supports. Co-enrollment and IRT services are available to all customers and accessible through any portal or partner that customers may enter.

The NRMWRWDB also ensures services to individuals with disabilities through collaborating with DARS and DBVI through the following:

- **Order of Selection:** In the event that the Vocational Rehabilitation program does not have sufficient funds to serve all eligible individuals, federal law requires that DARS implement an order of selection. Order of selection prioritizes individuals into categories according to the significance of their disabilities and ensures that those with the most significant disabilities are selected first to receive services. Those individuals assigned to a closed category remain on a waiting list for services until there are sufficient resources to open closed categories and they are referred to the One-Stop System for workforce services.
- **Social Security (SSA) - Ticket to Work Program:** LWDB areas 2, expanded One Stop Center employment opportunities for SSA beneficiaries with disabilities by becoming Employment Networks to provide Ticket to Work Program services.
- **Work Incentive Specialist Advocate (WISA):** The NRMWRWDB has a Certified WISA on staff to act as an advocate for job seekers with disabilities with the Social Security Administration as well. The WISA certification allows our staff to be more effective with Ticket to Work clients that we engage through the employment network because we can identify and support continued safety nets to encourage people to engage in the workforce while still receiving necessary services and benefits needed to address their disabilities.
- **Partnership PLUS:** Partnership Plus ensures that beneficiaries experience a smooth transition or “handoff” as they move to and from VR to EN services: From VR case closure to EN on-going support services. A handoff is a smooth transition as beneficiaries move from State VR agencies (after case closure) to EN for ongoing support services.

One-Stop Partner Contributions:

Roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners at the Wytheville Comprehensive Center include:

Wytheville One-Stop Campus Resource Sharing Matrix

Mandated Program	Program provided by:	Cost of operating the Wytheville One-Stop Campus by:
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act 2014 – Title I Programs and Community Block Grants	People Incorporated of Virginia 1173 W. Main Street, Abingdon, VA 24210	- Adult/DLW Workforce Development Specialist will assist in the resource room 3-4 - Hours per week* and will provide 1 workshop per month. - Youth Case manager will work the resource area 3 hours per week*; and will teach one work readiness workshop each month; Estimated contribution \$7,500+ annually. *occasionally will work more when traffic requires extra assistance. - Plus, see Wytheville RSA
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act 2014 – Title II Programs	Mt. Rogers Regional Adult Education Program 1 Partnership Circle, Abingdon, VA 24210	- Staff to will provide services in the Resource Room on Fridays, 10:00- 1:00. 3 hrs. x\$22 per hr. x 45 weeks, totaling \$2970 annually.
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act 2014 – Title III Programs, Jobs for Veterans State Grants and National Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers	Virginia Employment Commission 800 E. Main Street, Suite 200, Wytheville, VA 24382	- Interview space for employers: - Office paid for by VEC for employers: \$32.43 x 144 sq ft = \$4669.92 - Non Wagner-Peyser staff assist in outreach to employers (LVER \$440.00 per wk x52 = \$22,880 per yr) - Use of the video equipment for partners and employers - equaling \$1140.00 per yr (\$19 per hr x60 hrs of use) - Estimated contribution \$28,690 annually - Plus, see Wytheville RSA
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act 2014 – Title IV Programs	VA Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services 800 E. Main Street, Suite 160, Wytheville, VA 24382	- Scheduled use of the Wytheville DARS office conference room (approx. 30 times) - and VTC equipment to be made available (with staff assistance). Estimated contribution \$1,000 annually - License for Zoom On-Line Meeting. Estimated contribution \$175 annually
Older Americans Act of 1965 (Title V): Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	District Three Governmental Cooperative 4453 Lee Hwy, Marion VA 24354	SCSEP staff will be housed at the Campus (Wytheville) 4 hours per month for recruiting purposes and 2 hours per month in the resource room assisting job seekers @ \$16.29 plus fringe. Estimated contribution of \$1172.88 annually.
Post-Secondary Vocational Training Programs (Perkins Act)	Wytheville Community College 1100 E. Main Street, Wytheville, VA 24382	Will upgrade the 10 computers in the resource room on a rotating basis. Estimated contribution of \$12,000 for two years.
TANF/ Virginia Initiative for Employment Not Welfare Program (VIEW)	Wytheville Department of Social Services 290 South 6th Street, Suite 200, Wytheville, VA 24382 Bland Department of Social Services 612 Main St. Bland County Court House, Suite 208 Bland, VA 24315	- Providing staff to conduct a 2 hour workshop quarterly on coping with the loss of a job and developing coping strategies. - Estimated contribution of \$750 per office annually
Job Corp	Blue Ridge Job Corp 245 W Main St, Marion, VA 24354	In-kind services to support job seekers in the center.
	New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Area Consortium Board 6580 Valley Center Dr, Suite 119 Radford, VA 24141	- Providing staff to work the resource room 3-4 hours per week* @29 per hr (with benefits). - Providing staff to deliver Debt Management Workshops during RESEA events quarterly @29 per hr (with benefits) - Staff to assist during Rapid Response events (as needed) - Estimated contribution is \$6,000 annually *occasionally will work more when traffic requires extra assistance. - Plus, see Wytheville RSA

Intake and Case Management:

Outreach, Intake and Orientation of the informational services available through the one-stop system. These efforts increase the availability and utilization of services by targeted population because it ensures that these groups are aware of available services and that they are encouraged to participate.

Initial Assessment is a brief analysis of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive services needs of customers. This will primarily be done through the career development process of “questioning” or interviewing information. The purpose is to gather information that results in more effective assistance and eventually self-sufficiency. This will be done through a brief session with staff. Another method of initial assessment will include the customers accessing internet based assessment tools that can be self-administered by the customer.

Self-Help Job Search and Placement Assistance will be in coordination with Wagner-Peyser job match services. Additional services include providing limited assistance in developing resumes or completing an application. Local newspapers are available to

help with the customers' job search. Customers are provided job search packets that contain interview tips, information on how to complete an application and create a resume, labor market information, and job-keeping skills. Computers are available for the customer to perform web based job searches.

Employment Statistics and Labor Market Information including information on economic conditions, business outlook, labor supply and demand for occupation, wage information, job vacancies, and skills needed for in-demand jobs will be available to customers in coordination with the Virginia Employment Commission. Resources will include Career Connect web-based information, Virginia Employment Economic and Employment Projections, posters listing demand occupations, copies of Industrial Occupational Employment Projections, copies of wage data information, Virginia Business and experiential data gathered through newspapers, local economic development agencies, and internally developed data.

Training Provider Performance and Program Cost Information will be maintained and made available to customers through a posted list of providers. Catalogs, applications, financial aid information, and cost of attendance information will be maintained for each institution at each center. Performance information will be made available upon submission by the institutions and compiled by the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board.

Partner Agency Information/Services will be available to customers. Partners use the Region's Resource Map to share information about specific services available.

Case Management occurs once an individual is made eligible for a specific program. The use of IRTs ensures co-enrollment where possible and shared case management activities.

Information on Availability of Supportive Services will be provided to customers. The use of IRTs ensures co-enrollment where possible and increasing the availability of Supportive Service funds. More detailed information on IRTs can be found on page ?.

Partner Services:

Services provided by each partner mandated by federal and state law, and other optional partners includes:

CORE PROGRAMS:

- **WIOA Title I**

Adult and Dislocated Worker Program: The NR/MRWDB in collaboration with our program operators are working to develop a client-centered approach, where system partners and programs coordinate in a way that each customer or job seeker has a pathway to improving his or her education, knowledge, skills and, ultimately, his or her employment prospects, with a focus on in-demand careers. The Area's education, job skills development, and career training system must ensure that the workforce development system focuses on the individual customer's aspirations and needs and provides access to pathways for improving employment prospects. In many cases throughout the existing system, activities and services provided are program-focused, with the specific program being placed at the center of service delivery. In such a model, greater focus is given to meeting program requirements and less attention is paid to truly serving the individual. This has left the customers navigating a complex web of program requirements, often having to visit multiple program locations, multiple times, and providing the same information at each stop in order to receive the services needed. This paradigm must shift dramatically towards ensuring that system partners and program requirements are aligned with the customer at the center of service delivery. In this client-centered approach, system partners and programs coordinate in a way that each individual has a pathway to improving his or her education, knowledge, and skills and entering into a fulfilling and rewarding career, with partner and program resources designed to complement the individual's pathway.

Career services include both – basic self-service/informational and staff facilitated services will be provided by Program Operator staff. Individuals who are primarily seeking information are not treated as participants and their self-service or informational search does not require registration. Self-service or basic informational Career Services are designed to “place” adults in employment through short-term interventions. Access to the Adult and DLW programs are available in all Virginia Career Works Centers in the region.

Youth Program: While the current youth programming remains core and important, there are strategic efforts for youth that will be integrated into overall programmatic work within the WIOA system to improve outreach, engagement, and overall supports for all job seekers, with special attention to this younger population. Young people are more likely to engage when the following elements are present:

Financial incentives and opportunities for paid training and work. Incentives and stipends are a key form of positive reinforcement to sustain motivation, especially when

tied to benchmarks such as earning academic credentials or acquiring specific competencies. They also can be an important source of support to meet the economic challenges these young people face. Low-wage work that is not connected to a career pathway or that young people perceive to have no value may not be as effective as work experience that gives them a sense of future advancement or the satisfaction of providing a needed service to the community.

Opportunities to feel connected to caring adults and to a community. Many out-of-school youth experience instability in their family and neighborhood and lack adult support and supervision. The presence of caring, committed adults who provide moral and emotional support appears to be an important feature of successful youth programs, as are creation of a family-like atmosphere and a sense of belonging. A few factors that may assist in building such an environment and relationships include:

Ongoing, consistent leadership development activities not only teach youth responsibility and soft skills needed for employment, but foster a sense of self-confidence and belonging among youth (which is especially a need among the millennials) which builds a strong foundation for employment success.

Staff retention is key, as turnover among staff members whom participants have come to trust and rely on can be disruptive to engagement during the program, as well as during the follow-up period. A manageable caseload and competitive salaries are obviously necessary to minimize staff burnout; regular communication and feedback from supervisory staff members and professional development opportunities are also important.

Staff members at youth programs often emphasize the importance of shared experiences and similarities — including race or ethnicity, family backgrounds, and life choices and consequences — in building lasting connections with young people. Some programs encourage hiring staff whose socioeconomic and community backgrounds reflect those of the young people they serve, and programs may formally or informally involve graduates in provision of services.

Transportation is one of the most often mentioned issues when it comes to providing services for young people. Most at-risk young people in urban areas rely on public transportation, so the programs need to be in accessible locations, and many provide subsidies; for young people in rural areas, transportation is a much bigger hurdle. For those who are parents, child care is also a common barrier. Given that out-of-school youth are a diverse population with a range of experiences and skills, it may be important to take an individualized approach to addressing their personal barriers; however, no one program can directly meet all of a young person's needs. Partnerships with other agencies and programs are key to meeting these needs, as long as those services are available in the community and young people can access them easily.

Financial literacy training and activities educate and form youth about being financially savvy. Youth learn how to manage income and expenses, understand how to use credit wisely, and learn how to develop their assets. Staff participated in facilitator's training through Money Management International to learn to facilitate and administer the

workshops. Other youth centered financial literacy programs include Banzai, which is a tool developed by United Southeast Federal Credit Union, electronic educational resources provided through Wells Fargo. Reality stores are also implemented (which utilizes community partners) to provide youth with a live simulation of what it is like to work, live, survive and thrive in the real world.

Youth have the opportunity to experience **entrepreneurship** through a variety of activities include entrepreneurship workshops in addition to business boot camps. Youth learn about business basics, forms of business ownership, qualities of successful entrepreneurs, and have an opportunity to develop a business idea of their own and pitch it to a panel of judges.

Youth learn about the **labor market and post-secondary/advanced training opportunities** through career academy (funding permitting). Career academy is a week-long event that takes place on a college campus (or on the campus of an institution of higher education). Youth explore and experience various high demand occupations through a hands-on approach. Credentialing and certification opportunities are also made available so youth not only leave with knowledge of the labor market, but a certification or credential that enhances their employability

In order to identify, recruit and retain OSY, Program Operator staff will contact and provide presentations to agencies that serve drop-outs, unemployed and low income persons such as:

- o Comprehensive One Stop Center
- o Virginia Workforce Center (VEC)
- o Local Departments of Social Services
- o Department of Juvenile Justice
- o Adult Education Programs
- o Health Departments
- o Local Food and Clothing Banks

Program Operator staff will explain WIOA OSY services to their clients seeking referrals to our WIOA youth program. Staff will explain the benefits and eligibility requirements of the WIOA youth program and leave brochures and posters/flyers.

Program Operator staff will also recruit OSY at places they may frequent such as recreation programs, churches, libraries, stores and public housing facilities. Brochures and flyers will be left at the selections to inform potential OSY customers of WIOA youth services. Also, an important recruitment toll will be word of mouth as both current and former participants will spread the word about the benefits if the WIOA youth program. OSY clients will be retained through intensive case management by Program Operator staff to identify and resolve any issues or barriers to OSY clients successfully completing program.

Our policy regarding serving youth who do not meet income requirements is addressed in our [Youth Services](#) policy which is posted on our website.

Access to Youth Services is available at all Virginia Career Works Centers in the region.

Other Youth Activities and Services

- o The NR/MR WDB supports two Career Expos for regional 7th Graders
 - o The United Way Southwest Virginia annual Career Expo in Abingdon
 - o The Go Virginia Region 2 Talent Collaborative Career Expo in Salem
- o The NR/MR WDB is a member of various Career and Technical Education Advisory Committees throughout the region and assist with advising on curriculum and activities.

Job Corps: Job Corp is a free residential education and job training program for eligible young adults ages 16–24. Blue Ridge Job Corps is located in Marion, VA and is a residential program for females studying in healthcare occupations of: CNA, CMA, LPN, Medical Administrative Assistant and Patient Care Technician. Males can attend, but with our on-campus residency. Information about Job Corp is provided in all Virginia Career Works Centers in the region.

• WIOA Title II:

Adult Education and Literacy: Education and literacy are keys to a better quality of life. According to the 2013-2017 American Community Survey, over xxx adults do not have a high school diploma or high school credential, and many more lack literacy in key areas such as math or business skills.

To serve these populations, the NRMR WDA has two regional programs: Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education provides services in the localities of Bland, Bristol, Carroll, Galax, Grayson, Smyth, Washington and Wythe. NRCC Office of Transitional Programs provides services to the localities of: Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski and Radford. These services can be accessed through all of the Virginia Career Works Centers in the region.

• WIOA Title III:

Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser): The **Wagner-Peyser** Act of 1933 established a nationwide system of public employment offices, known as the Employment Service. The Employment Service seeks to improve the functioning of the nation's labor markets by bringing together individuals seeking employment with employers seeking workers. These programs are primarily provided by the Virginia Employment Commission. These services are provided in all of the Virginia Career Works Centers in the region. In VCW Centers where there are no VEC staff, this service is provided by WIOA Title 1 Staff.

Services are also provided self-serve via the Virginia Workforce Connection at <https://www.vawc.virginia.gov/>

- **WIOA Title IV:**

Vocational Rehabilitation: A process that enables persons with functional, psychological, developmental, cognitive, and emotional disabilities, impairments or health disabilities to overcome barriers to accessing, maintaining, or returning to employment or other useful occupation. Services are provided by the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Virginia Department for Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) and their contracted agencies. These services can be accessed by all VCW Centers in the region (including co-location at the Wytheville Comprehensive Center).

OTHER PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Area Consortium Board and the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board have long acknowledged the limitations of WIA/WIOA funding in meeting regional workforce development needs. Board and Program Operator staff continually seek out other sources of funding to broaden the range of programs and activities beyond WIOA.

Since 2009, the NRMRWDB has participated in multi-workforce area projects. We have long recognized the interdependency of the region.

New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board

- ***Pathways to the American Dream:*** A \$6,000,000 Department of Labor America's Promise grant awarded in 2017 due to wrap up in December 2021, in collaboration with the SWVA, Western Virginia, and West Piedmont workforce boards to create a pipeline of skilled workers in manufacturing, IT, and healthcare. In addition to training, *Pathways* developed an online portal for jobseekers to control their journey along their career pathway as well as assisted community colleges in developing a Prior Learning Assessment system. The Pathways project exceeded all performance outcomes and was selected by the DOL for a Best Practices review and a Program Evaluation. Highlights of these reviews identified a strong sustainability plan, effective uses of technology for program and data management, and strong business and partner collaborations. During 2021 year, we will finalize our work, evaluating the impact of our project on the region. More information about the Pathways to the American Dream project can be found here: http://bit.ly/APG_Pathways

- ***Economic Equity:*** A \$200,000 Virginia Community College initiative that supports training in in-demand occupations in Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, and Skilled Trades. The target population served are those that are listed in the report “Who is Unemployed in Virginia.” Partners include: the WIOA Title 1 Program Operators (Goodwill Industries of the Valleys and People, Inc.) the 13 DSS offices, three community colleges (NRCC, VHCC and WCC), DARS, VEC and others. This is a \$200,000, two-year project covering the NRMW WDA.
- ***Pathways to Self-Sufficiency:*** A \$405,000 yearly regional project awarded by the Virginia Community College System in collaboration with New River, Wytheville, and Virginia Highlands community colleges through the Road to Success in Virginia Program (RSVP) initiative. As a consortium, we are striving to serve 75 low-income TANF (or TANF eligible) individuals to assist them in entering a career pathway toward self-sufficiency wages.
- ***Pathways to a Strong and Healthy Region:*** A \$1,500,000 three-year regional program in collaboration with numerous partners in the workforce and economic development sectors as well as the healthcare and human service sectors. Awarded by the Appalachian Regional Commission through their POWER 2020 initiative, Pathways’ overarching goal is to create a Recovery-Ready Region. Training, supportive, and vocational services will be provided to 350 individuals with substance use disorder to help them obtain skills and credentials for employment. Many of these individuals will be trained as Peer Recovery Specialists, a much needed occupation in the region. 30 individuals in the healthcare and human service sector will be supported through training and credentialing opportunities to help them advance their skills in serving individuals with SUD.
- ***SWVA Work Ready Community:*** The NRMWDB and the Southwest Virginia Workforce Development Board in partnership with the Center for Manufacturing Excellence are supporting the 21 localities of SWVA in meeting the criteria for ACT’s Work Ready Communities. The Certified Work Ready Community initiative will utilize the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) to certify work readiness skills, throughout the region, providing a tool to assist in economic development effort. Information about the Work Ready Community can be found here: <http://bit.ly/SWVA-Work-Ready> . Some of this work is being supported through a Tobacco Commission grant (for needed software and funds to support NCRC testing in the Tobacco Commission footprint).

Local Departments of Social Services

- **Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)** program is designed to help needy families achieve self-sufficiency. States receive block grants to design and operate programs that accomplish one of the purposes of the TANF program. State TANF’s flexible funds provide benefits and services to low-income families with children. This program is offered by all 13 NRMW WDA Localities. Information about and referrals to TANF are made from all Virginia Career Works Centers in the region.

- **Virginia's Initiative for Employment Not Welfare (VIEW)** is an **employment** services program for TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) recipients who are required to participate. **Non**-mandatory recipients may be able to volunteer to participate in the program. This program is offered by all 13 NRMR WDA Localities. Information about and referrals to VIEW are made from all Virginia Career Works Centers in the region.

Senior Community Service Employment Program

- **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP):** A community service and work- based job training program for older Americans, this is a Department of Labor program authorized by the Older Americans Act. This program provides training for low-income, unemployed individuals who are 55 and older. This program is made available through out the region by: Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, Inc., Goodwill of TNVA and Government Three Coop. Information about and referrals to SCSEP are made from all Virginia Career Works Centers in the region.

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

There are common factors among incarcerated juveniles and young adults related to deficiencies in education and lack of adequate job skills. Both Youth Program Operators work closely with regional Juvenile Justice Departments and Drug Courts in recruiting and supporting out-of-school youth that are in their roles. WIOA's Youth Elements provides the needed structure for improving their education and/or occupational skills attainment.

Virginia Cares

Virginia CARES (Community Action Re-Entry System) is a heralded, statewide network of Community Action Agencies (CAAs) originally formed in 1981 to address the successful reentry and deinstitutionalization of returning citizens in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The agency presently provides pre-release services in 14 prisons and 9 city/county jails and 6 regional jails, as well as post-release programs in 26 cities/towns and 32 counties in Virginia. Since 1981 Virginia CARES has worked with more than 104,000 returning citizens. VA CARES is provided by New River Community Action and People Inc. Information about and referrals to VA CARES are made from all Virginia Career Works Centers in the region.

Apprenticeship

An **apprenticeship** is a system for training a new generation of practitioners of a [trade](#) or profession with on-the-job training and often some accompanying study (classroom work and reading). Virginia's Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) oversees the program for the Commonwealth. Information about and referrals to Apprenticeship opportunities are made from all Virginia Career Works Centers in the region.

Veterans Services

The VEC provides job referral and placement resources to assist veterans in finding jobs. Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) and Disabled Veterans Outreach

Program (DVOP) staff are available in the Bristol, Galax, Radford and Wytheville Career Works Centers to assist veterans with employment services.

Career and Technical Education

Career and technical education (CTE) programs in the region's public schools serve students in grades 6-12. These programs are designed to prepare young people for productive futures while meeting the commonwealth's need for well-trained and industry-certified **technical** workers. A NRMWDB staff member is a member of most Career and Technical Advisory Boards in the region to serve as a link between K-12 CTE and businesses and the rest of the workforce System.

New River, Wytheville, and Virginia Highlands Community Colleges:

- College Preparation through the Virginia Education Wizard
- College Anywhere VA
- Transfer Programs
- Diploma, Degree, Certificate Programs
- Workforce Programs
- Customized Training
- FastForward
- High School Dual Enrollment
- Credits2Careers (Veterans Portal)
- Rapid Response

Virginia Ready Initiative

VA Ready's goal is to reward out of work Virginians who commit themselves to training for in-demand jobs so they can get back to work quickly. We've partnered with businesses across Virginia and Virginia's Community Colleges and the FastForward Workforce Credential Program to equip them with the skills needed for in-demand jobs in high-growth sectors. Information about the VA Ready programs can be found through the community colleges and the NRMWDB's Workforce Navigators.

Goodwill Industries of the Valleys

- **GoodCare Career Pathways Program:** Funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, GoodCare is a Health Professions Opportunity Grant project aimed at advancing careers in the healthcare field. This program will serve approximately 20 individuals each year in 2017, 2018 and 2019. The program serves primarily low-income individuals with a focus on TANF recipients. Approximately \$350,000 - \$400,000 in funds for this program are allocated to the New River/Mount Rogers area.
- **Careers in Technology Program:** Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, Careers in Technology is a TechHire project aimed at helping disadvantaged youth receive training and credentials in the IT field for entry into the IT career pathway.

People, Incorporated of Virginia

- **Business Development and Loan Services:** People Incorporated offers financial assistance microenterprise loans, business training and technical services to help start or expand businesses, which in turn, creates jobs.
- **Business Training:** Business Basics Workshop – 3-hour workshop- an overview of the business planning process and the strategic considerations when starting or expanding a business.
- **Customer Service Training:** 2-hour class that covers 4 principles to inspire employees to achieve great things. Teaches employees the importance of taking care of the customer.
- **Consumer Loans:** Loans with an affordable interest rate of Prime + 5% are offered to individuals for up to 36 months to provide assistance with many household expenses, car purchases and bill consolidation.
- **Credit Counseling:** This workshop explains how to read a credit report, improve credit and protect your credit.
- **Financial Literacy Workshop—Journey to Financial Security:** Workshop segments include: · Credit Report - How to read your report, · Credit Score - Learn how the score is determined, · Debt - Learn the warning signs of too much debt, · Loans - Learn the essentials of the loan process, · Managing Income and Expenses
- **Individual Development Account:** IDAs facilitate a pattern of regular savings for modest income working families using matching funds. Clients build assets and long-term economic security.
- **New Markets Tax Credits:** The New Markets Tax Credits program attracts private investment to community development projects in low-income communities by offering tax credits to investors in return for qualified equity investments. People Incorporated, a qualified Community Development Entity, uses the investment funds to make loans to high impact businesses that create jobs and build opportunities and economic growth in low-income communities.

RESTORE

RESTORE Southwest Virginia will assist families impacted by the opioid crisis and is offered by New River Community Action and serves Women from the localities of Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski & Radford. Information and referrals to RESTORE are made from the Virginia Career Works Radford Center.

The STRONG Accountable Care Community

Accountable Care Communities of Southwest Virginia and North East Tennessee work to improve the overall health and well-being of their region. They're made up of community partners from local and regional businesses, community organizations, faith-based organizations, health care organizations, schools and more. They represent the urban

and rural diversity that makes Central Appalachia home. STRONG stands for: Striving Toward Resilience and Opportunity for the Next Generation. STRONG is one of the largest organizations of its kind—and the only one in the country to span two states. Their goal is to transform the health of a 21-county region of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia by uniting efforts under a common agenda, mutually reinforcing activities, shared measures, and two-way communication.

Key focus areas include:

- Childhood trauma and resilience
- Obesity
- Substance use
- Tobacco use

We are a member of the STRONG ACC, and our Executive Director serves as a member of the Leadership Council. She is also Co-chair of the Measurement and Evaluation Committee. Participation in STRONG enables the NRMWDB to further its mission and to add to the agencies and partners that can provide the necessary wrap-around services needed by program participants.

One-Stop Operator:

The One-Stop Operator for the region is selected through a competitive bid process. For PY 20, People Inc. was awarded this contract which can be renewed annually for two additional years.

Center Location

Our comprehensive Virginia Career Works Center is located on the Wytheville Community College Campus at:

Virginia Career Works - Wytheville
1000 Main Street (Carroll Hall)
Wytheville, VA 24382

Affiliate/Partner Sites

Our Virginia Workforce Network affiliated sites, partner sites, or specialized centers are:

Virginia Career Works - Abingdon
1173 West Main Street
Abingdon, VA 24210

Virginia Career Works - Bristol
200 Bob Morrison Blvd
Bristol VA 24201

Virginia Career Works - Galax

117 East Stuart Drive
Galax, VA 24333

Virginia Career Works - Narrows
211 Main Street, Suite 101
Narrows, VA 24124

Virginia Career Works - Pulaski
246 N. Washington Ave.
Suite D
Pulaski, VA. 24301

Virginia Career Works - Radford
Suite 1300
6226 University Park Drive
Radford, VA 24141



Individual Training Accounts and Customer Choice

Individual empowerment through informed customer choice is one of the principles that guided the authors of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). A key tool to actualize this principle is the use of individual training accounts, or vouchers, which give adults the power to choose eligible training programs and qualified training institutions as a means of accomplishing their training and employment goals.

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board ITA system supports a “work first” philosophy (for meaningful, family sustaining wage occupations), so that those who cannot find employment through career services will logically be those lack the necessary skills to gain such employment or those with substantial barriers to employment and to self-sufficiency. As such, ITA’s for job training shall be accompanied by a strong case management system that provides the counseling assistance and the supportive services necessary for the success of those individuals.

The full NRMRWDB’s ITA Policy is posted on their website and can be found here: https://vcwnewrivermtrogers.com/download/policies_and_procedures/Individual-Training-Account-System-Policy-1-1-2018.pdf



Training Leading to In-Demand Occupations

Without sound data of where we are, we cannot reach our desired destinations. Over many years, the NRMRWDB and CB have built a strong partnership with the Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development (VT OED) to help track and analyze macro and micro factors impacting our regional economy.

Through an annual contract the CB receives annual occupational data which the [In-Demand Occupation](#) list is derived as well as valuable reporting each quarter that depicts insights into the needs of existing and emerging industries, general employment data and pressure points, as well as targeted growth opportunities and gaps in the knowledge and skills of our workforce. All quarterly reports can be found at http://bit.ly/wda2_qtr_rpts.

Information about the selection of Training Providers and programs can be found here: [Training Provider Information and Applications - New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board \(vcwnewrivermtrogers.com\)](http://vcwnewrivermtrogers.com)



Rapid Response under WIOA is no longer just to serve businesses and individuals during downsizing and closures, but it is to create regional Action Items and partnerships to support businesses to limit/eliminate layoff impacts to the region. In many cases, the first contact that a business or job seeker has with the workforce system, is through a Rapid Response initiative. It is critical that a coordinated and unified system is in place.

The NRMRWDB, as the region's convener of the workforce system, will take the lead on all layoff aversion activities in partnership with the Regional Rapid Response Coordinator. Many of these activities have been previously mentioned under the Business Services section and/or under Goals 1, 2 & 3.

Layoff Aversion Activities include (but are not limited to):

- Using Sector Partnerships and BSU intel as early warning networks
- Utilizing the information gathered by VT OED to identify heavily concentrated industries and sectors and related training needs in the geographic area by conducting analyses of suppliers to assess risks and vulnerabilities from potential closings of a manufacturing customer
- Business Services Specialist to partner with regional/local Economic Development in proactive measures such as business visitation or layoff forecasting programs to identify indicators of potential economic transition and training needs in growing industry sectors or expanding businesses
- Connecting businesses and workers with short-term, on-the-job, and customized training and apprenticeships before or after layoff and prior to new employment
- Helping companies practice continuous improvement in processes and quality, constantly looking for opportunities for new products, customers, markets, and business models
- Partnering with other business focused organizations to assess risks to a company, propose Action Items to address those risks, implement services, and measure impacts of services delivered

As stated in the Business Services Plan (see Attachment E) the Regional Rapid Response Coordinator is the main contact for all layoff/closure activities. Businesses planning to downsize/close will be put in direct contact with the Regional Rapid Response Coordinator. The Rapid Response Coordinator will contact the business and develop a plan with them on what, when and how they desire services from the workforce system. The Rapid Response Coordinator will inform the BSTs and other partners of any wanted/required activities and services.

Reemployment Services offered include (but are not limited to) Workshops and/or staff assistances for:

- Job search techniques
- Career exploration
- Labor market information
- Interviewing skills
- Résumé preparation
- Debt/financial management
- Job fairs
- Rehabilitation services
- Connection to programs that have funding to support retraining
- Connection to programs that offer other transitional and/or supportive services

Section 5:

Compliance





Oversight, Monitoring, and Corrective Action

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) promotes service integration and coordination of services among and between required and additional partner programs. The VCCS Office of Title 1 acts on behalf of the Governor to administer and oversee the implementation of WIOA. At the local level, the NRMWDB is responsible for both fiscal and programmatic oversight of WIOA Title 1 programs.

The four primary objectives of monitoring are:

- **Compliance:** Compliance monitoring is conducted to ensure that program activities and expenditures are allowable and meet, or do not exceed, spending thresholds and to ensure that local board and service provider practices comply with federal, state and local - laws, regulations and policies.
- **Program Management:** Review of program management involves an in-depth examination of program activities. It is intended to ensure that the delivery of employment and training services is effective and meeting the needs of diverse groups of customers. For example, checking to identify whether a participant's skills and abilities were assessed checking whether assessment results are used to inform development of the individual's employment and training plan and used to help the individual make informed employment and training decisions, is one method of in-depth program management review.
- **Performance:** Performance reviews occur throughout the year and allow the reviewer to gauge whether minimum levels of performance are being met. Reviewers assess and identify issues that may affect attainment of negotiated levels of performance, such as employment outcomes and credential attainment rates.
- **Ongoing Evaluation** is a comparison of planned versus actual activity and results. The State reviews spending and service levels (planned number of participants in each program category expected to receive career and/or training services and/or exit the program) on a quarterly basis. Reviewing proposed progress and spending throughout the program year allows time to adjust and incorporate strategies that will ensure planned service goals are met. In addition to quarterly reporting, specific evaluation activities may be conducted that focus on a service expectation; such as, reviewing and comparing outcomes between participants receiving only basic and individualized services against those who received occupational training services.

In addition to satisfying federal mandates for oversight and assurance that statutes regulations, and policies are being followed, monitoring is critical to ensuring a continuous

improvement cycle in which advanced strategies and worthy practices are promoted and technical assistance and staff training needs are identified and addressed.

Monitoring identifies how well service provider staff understand:

1. How to use operating systems to document participant progress, track services and expenditures, report outcomes and validate eligibility and other service delivery requirements;
2. The makeup and design of the local one-stop system and how they are expected to interact with required and additional partners to streamline service delivery across multiple programs on behalf of shared participants;
3. The overarching goals of WIOA, which include increased access, for all individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, education and training and about the many resources and support services they may access to help them succeed in the labor market; and
4. Implementation requirements and local service delivery methods outlined in the State and local area plans, and more.

The NRMWDB receives regular performance information about WIOA operators through the state system (VOS).

All NRMWDB WIOA program operators are monitored annually by program element. All evaluation is patterned after the state format and follows the contracts established with each operator. The evaluator reviews a sampling of records including client records, financial documents, and program policies. Using standardized assessment, the evaluator provides a report back to the operator regarding deficiencies, positive elements, and overall key performance elements. The WDB works with the operators who have deficiencies and areas of improvement to bring all programs into compliance and elevate performance of the WIOA program in the most effective manner.



Sunshine Provisions

The NRMRWDB conducts business in accordance with the Sunshine Provisions of WIOA: The schedule of the NRMRWDB and CB meetings are posted on the NRMRWDB website. A few days before each meeting the full meeting packet is also posted and after the meeting, the meeting minutes are posted. All meetings are open to the public. In addition, during each WDB and CB meeting, there is a public comment period (no prior sign-up is required).

During COVID, the meetings have been virtual using Zoom. Notice has been given of these meetings in the following ways: Meeting information which includes the link, times and how to sign-up for public comment on the Boards' website and on Facebook. Regional partners (including chambers of commerce, education and other workforce partners are notified of meetings via email).

Meeting information can be found here:

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area Consortium Board: [Consortium Board - New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board \(vcwnewrivermtrogers.com\)](http://vcwnewrivermtrogers.com)

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board: [Workforce Development Board - New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board \(vcwnewrivermtrogers.com\)](http://vcwnewrivermtrogers.com)

All NRWRWDB job vacancies are posted on the Virginia Workforce Connect system. Resumes are evaluated using a "pre-set" evaluation criteria by an evaluation team (staff and/or board members). Potential candidates are invited to attend a panel job interview and the same questions are offered to each person and evaluated by the panel.



Expenditure Methods and Strategies

To ensure WIOA funds are being expended in a timely manner both the WDB and Elected Officials review Financial Reports at their regular meetings. Staff ensure that both Boards are updated on all financial matters allowing them the opportunity to implement any additional action necessary to correct any projected deficiencies in our financial process.

The New River Valley Regional Commission is the Fiscal Agent for Area 2. The New River Valley Regional Commission, Fiscal Agent, prepares and distributes checks bi-monthly on the 15th and last day of the month. All WIOA bills are paid at one of the above noted payment dates. Program Operators delivering services under WIOA are paid on a reimbursement basis. Payment to Program Operators is made after the funds have been requested from the State by way of the Cash Payment Schedule and received by the Fiscal Agent. Payment is made on a monthly basis.

In order to insure WIOA funds are being expended in a timely manner both the WDB and Elected Officials review Financial Reports at their regular meetings. Staff insures that both Boards are updated on all financial matters allowing them the opportunity to implement any additional action necessary to correct any projected deficiencies in our financial process.

Area 2 requires all Program Operators to leverage WIOA funds with other Federal, State and local funds to insure we achieve the maximum level of resource sharing and provide the highest level of services. Area 2 also continually applies for non-WIOA grants to insure additional funding options for our area increasing our ability to provide and deliver additional services to both local business and citizens that we serve.

NRMRWDB receives regular performance information about WIOA operators through the state system (VOS). All NRMRWDB WIOA program operators are monitored annually by program element. All evaluation is patterned after the state format and follows the contracts established with each operator. The evaluator reviews a sampling of records including client records, financial documents, program policies. Using standardized assessment, the evaluator provides a report back to the operator regarding deficiencies, positive elements, and overall key performance elements. The WDB works with the operators who have deficiencies and areas of improvement to bring all programs into compliance and elevate performance of the WIOA program in the most effective manner.



Competitive Procurement

All local contracts for activities under Title I of WIOA as well as the selection of our One Stop Operator are awarded utilizing a competitive procurement process. A Request for Proposals process, approved by the Workforce Development Board, is utilized in this endeavor. A non-mandatory bidder's conference is advertised in local newspapers for three (3) consecutive days. All potential bidders contained on our local bidders list are sent a written notice of the date and time of the bidder's conference. The Request for Proposals package is reviewed, explained and distributed during the bidder's conference. Those prospective bidders that do not attend the bidder's conference may request a RFP package, which will be provided after the bidder's conference.

The competitive procurement process initially starts with the development of a written Request for Proposals package approved by the Workforce Development Board and Elected Officials Consortium Board. A bidder's conference is scheduled for the issuance of the RFP. Thirty (30) days prior to the bidder's conference, all potential bidders, contained on the Board's bidders list, are sent a letter notifying them of the bidder's conference. Also, the non-mandatory bidder's conference is advertised in local newspapers for a minimum of three (3) consecutive days. Any prospective bidder that did not attend the bidder's conference can request a RFP package by phone, e-mail, fax, mail or in person. The entire RFP package is reviewed in detail during the bidder's conference and attendees are allowed to ask questions. Once the RFP package has been issued, all potential bidders are provided a minimum of thirty (30) days in which to complete the proposal and submit it for funding consideration. Once all proposals are received, they are reviewed by a panel of WDB/Elected Officials, who do not have a vested interest in the process. All proposals are evaluated using an evaluation criteria contained in the RFP package. Scores are tabulated, averaged, and proposals are ranked based on their average proposal evaluation score. Once the evaluation process had been completed, negotiations begin with the proposer with the highest ranking in order to negotiate an acceptable contract, to be approved by the Workforce Development Board and Elected Officials Consortium Board. This negotiation process is utilized for all bidders proposing to deliver services in the same jurisdictional area(s). If an acceptable contract cannot be negotiated with the highest ranking proposer, efforts will then be made to enter into negotiations with the second highest ranking proposer. All proposed contracts and funding levels resulting from procurement negotiations are subject to final approval by the Workforce Development Board and the Elected Officials Consortium Board.

Criteria utilized to award funds to contractors of WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth services are outline on Proposal Evaluation Criteria sheets contained in the Request for Proposal package. Copies of Proposal Evaluation Criteria sheets can be found in Attachment F.

Names of contracted organizations for PY'20 and duration of each contract is as follows:

People Incorporated of Virginia

- o Adult Contract: 7/1/20-6/30/21, DLW and One-Stop Operator Contract: 7/1/20 – 6/30/21, Youth Contract 7/1/20-6/30/21

Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, Inc.

- o Adult Contract: 7/1/20-6/30/21 and Youth Contract: 7/1/20-6/30/21



The New River Valley Regional Commission is the contracted Fiscal Agent for the NRMWDB and NRM CB for PY20. They are responsible for distribution of grant funds (all accounts payable and payroll functions). This contract is reviewed annually by the NMRCB. If all parties are agreeable, a new contract is drafted and approved by the NMRCB.

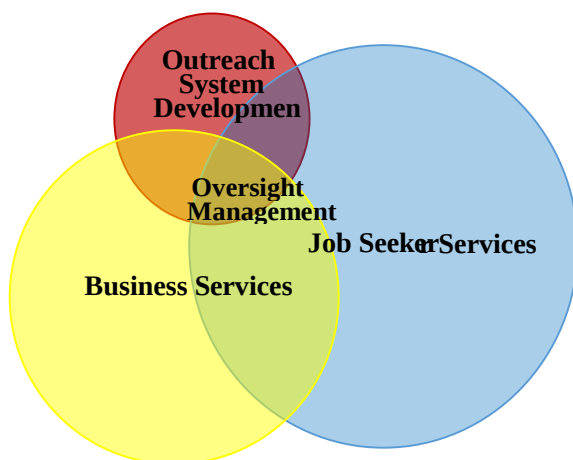


The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Area Consortium Board and the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board have long acknowledged the limitations of WIA/WIOA funding to meeting regional workforce development needs. Board and Program Operator staff continually seek out other sources of funding to broaden the range of programs and activities beyond WIOA. Since 2009, the NRMRWDB has participated in multi-workforce area projects. We have long recognized the interdependency of the region.

All funding the NRMRWDB sources is to leverage activities that support the mission and vision of the Boards. Funds fall in the four programmatic elements: Job Seeker Services, Business Services, Outreach and System Development and Administrative (Oversight/Management). The Overlap between programmatic and administrative elements in the workforce system are represented in the graphic below. The overlap between elements is not only efficient, it is valuable to access and integration of our workforce efforts. Often, programs that are directed at job seekers are influenced by the needs of our business partners and vice versa. Additionally, all our outreach and system development directly supports job seeker and business services.

While the elements are not equally funded (shown here by size of the circle), the shared edges allow our workforce partners to provide a more comprehensive and integrated system and to adjust as needs and strategic focus shifts resources and collaborative energies over time.

NRMRWDB Funding Alignment and Integration



Also, there is a strong emphasis on “partnership/alignment” in serving both the region’s business and job seeker customers. The NRMRWDB also recognizes the impact of collaborating with its One-Stop Partners to further the mission of each partner and, to positively change, how the “system” functions. The following is a tool the region uses (and frequently updates to show what services are offered by what organization). This tool enables workforce partners to limit duplication of services and increase the ability to leverage and braid funding.

Insert updated matrix here



PY 20-21 Performance Measures

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	ADULT	DISLOCATED WORKER	YOUTH
<i>Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit</i>	85.60%	85.00%	74.70%
<i>Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit</i>	\$5,500	\$8,500	\$3,553
<i>Measurable Skill Gains</i>	71.50%	57.00%	57.00%
<i>Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit</i>	85.00%	90.00%	62.80%
<i>Credential Attainment Rate</i>	74.00%	70.00%	70.00%



Indicators of Performance

Fiscal Agent:

Services for the NRMRCB Fiscal Agent are reviewed by the elected officials and contracted annually. The Fiscal Agent Agreement, which outlines the scope of work and the Exhibit A, which details the scope of work are agreed upon by both parties. See Attachment G for the PY20 Fiscal Agent Agreement. The Fiscal Agent send a notice to the NRMRCB Finance Committee of all expenditures for their review and approval. They then prepare and distribute checks which are paid out bi-monthly on the 15th and last day of the month. All WIOA bills are paid at one of the above noted payment dates. Program Operators delivering services under WIOA are paid on a reimbursement basis. Payment to Program Operators is made after the funds have been requested from the State by way of the Cash Payment Schedule and received by the Fiscal Agent. Payment is made on a monthly basis.

Program Operators:

The NRMRCB's WIOA Title I Program Operators are organizations that reach beyond WIOA and workforce development. While our partners and the programs they operate are targeted to the obvious partners and needs in the workforce system, it is critical that our programming and relationships ties reach beyond the usual suspects to include community and supportive services partners to undergird our core programs for businesses and job seekers. They are able to leverage WIOA funding by offering participants a vast array of other programs that their individual organizations have available.

People, Incorporated of Virginia provides a multitude of workshops and loans to the business customer, job seekers, and low income WIOA participants. They are contracted for One-Stop Operator and Dislocated Worker Programs for all of the NRMRCB for PY20 and that contract has a one-year extension option (that can be done twice). They are also the Adult and Youth Program Operator for the Mount Rogers Planning District (Bland, Bristol, Carroll, Galax, Grayson, Smyth, Washington & Wythe) and that contract has a one-year extension option (that can be extended twice).

Goodwill Industries of the Valleys is a large nonprofit agency dedicated to helping disadvantaged populations achieve their full potential. As such, Goodwill offers a variety of programs and services funded by federal, state, local, and private revenue streams. Additionally, Goodwill self-funds initiatives. They are the Adult and Youth Program Operator for the New River Valley Planning District (Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski & Radford) and that contract has a one-year extension option (that can be extended twice).

One-Stop Delivery System:

The NRMRWDA covers over 4,300 square miles. In an effort to best meet the needs of jobseekers and businesses, the LWDA has a variety of “physical” entry points into the system as well as the NRMRWDB website, which offers a virtual entry point into the system. Each entry point offers access to basic career services as well as a “no wrong door” approach to business services. At the regional comprehensive One-Stop and affiliates, where multiple partners are present, roles are clearly defined (who does what).

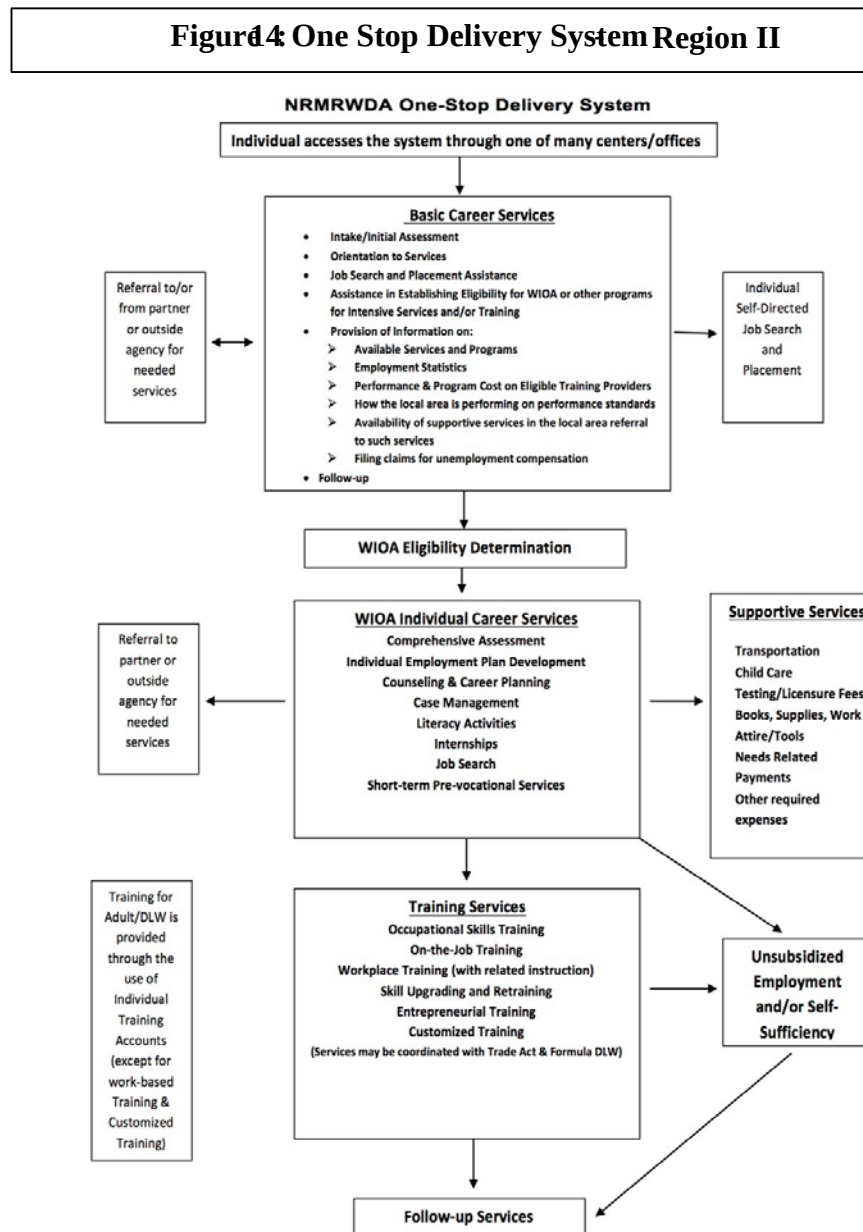
Through our partners the NRMRWDA One-Stop System provides the following services to our business customers: Applicant Screening & Referrals, Job Postings, Labor Market Information/ Economic Trends, Computerized Skills-Based Matching, Work-based Training supports/funding, Customized Training (incumbent worker), Interview and meeting rooms/space, UI Consultation, UI Tax Consultation, Job Fair Opportunities, Computers and/or Computer Lab space, Peer to Peer Networking opportunities, HR supports, Small Business supports and Business Requested Workshops.

Through our partners the NRMRWDA One-Stop System provides the following services to our job seeker customers: Job Listings, Resume and Cover Letter Writing assistance, Job Notifications and Referrals, Copier and Fax Services, Job Search Assistance, information/access to Job Fairs, High Speed Internet Access and Wi-Fi, Federal Bonding Letters, Specialized Supports for job seekers with Barriers (job seekers with disabilities, job seekers with a felony, etc.), Referrals to organizations that offer Supportive Services (e.g. child care, transportation, food assistance, housing assistance, etc.), Veteran Services, Occupational Skills Training opportunities/funding, Work-based Training opportunities, Various self-improvement Workshops, Entrepreneurship Training and/or Workshops and GED prep and basic skills upgrade. The region has had “system alignment” discussions between the four WIOA Titles, 13 Department of Social Services and three Community Colleges. The intent of this process to increase opportunities for leveraging of funds and to limit duplication of services. In addition, the NRMRWDB is staff devoted to creating an environment for increased co-enrollments and braiding of funding to ensure aligned job seeker and business supports and offerings. To aid in this process the NRMRWDB has the following staff positions:

Two Workforce System Navigators will work with job seekers, and other programs that support job seekers, to ensure smooth referrals and co-enrollments through the Integrated Resource Teams (see figure 8) and help develop a system for continual communication between partners about programs and policies that affect job seeker services. The Navigators will work throughout the region meeting with partners and job seekers.

A Business Service Coordinator will be the point person to assist the four Business Solution Teams to develop actions and activities to engage and support the region's businesses and will communicate relevant business staffing needs/requirements (of businesses) to the Workforce System Navigators, partner career counselors and other frontline job seeker support staff.

The following chart (Figure 14) shows the flow of efficient and effective service delivery system for the job seekers of the NRMRWDA One-Stop System





Replicated Cooperation, Collaboration, and Coordination Efforts

The One-Stop System MOU is executed between the New River/Mount Rogers Development Board New River/Mount Rogers (LWDB), the VA Career Works system Partners (Partners), and the Chief Elected Official (CEO), New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area Consortium Board. The MOU is developed to confirm the understanding of the Parties regarding the operation and management of the VA Career Works Centers and system in the New River/Mount Rogers Region (LWDA). The LWDB provides local oversight of workforce programming for the LWDA.

The Executed MOU can be found in Attachment H.



A **high-performing board** includes individuals who can provide broad strategic perspective while also bringing their specific experience and expertise to bear on regional workforce issues. It is also important to bring in guest speakers to offer insight and perspective on a variety of topics and issues that impact the regional workforce and workforce system.

The NRMWDB is designed to have a board range of expertise from members and to have guest speakers at each meeting providing additional information/perspective that impact the work that is before the board.

Role and Focus:

As the region's convener of the workforce system the board clearly understands that they play an important role in facilitating and coordinating workforce initiatives that enable economic growth and increase the standard of living in our region. At each board meeting, workforce partners bring updates to the board about the focus, concerns and happenings in their specific programs (this includes economic development). Updates on special workforce programs that are being led by board staff are also reviewed and discussed at every meeting. This process keeps board members informed and alerted to any issues that may need to be addressed. Business reps are chairs of every committee, ensuring that the board is truly "business led."

Each new board member has the opportunity to attend an Orientation to the workforce system and the board prior to their first meeting. They are given the opportunity to let the Board Chair know their preference for committee assignments (every board member sits on at least one committee).

Effective Chairperson:

The chairman sets the board's tone and direction as well as its performance and as Board Chair, chairs the Strategic Planning Committee to ensure consistency of board vision. S/he creates the appropriate environment for full engagement by all members of the board, drawing out opinions and shaping discussions of sensitive issues. To ensure the effectiveness of our chairperson, we will have two vice-Chairs that have the opportunity to lead meetings and committees, gaining the necessary experience to become Board Chair if they so desire.

Balanced Team:

A board is only as good as its members, who bring the outside perspective and judgment on which the board's oversight function is predicated. To have active members who can

provide broad strategic perspective while also bringing their specific experience and expertise to bear. The NRMRCB has the responsibility of appointing NRMWDB members. They ensure that all members appointed are “decision makers” in their organizations. Business representatives are nominated by the locality they will be representing and are from a business that is in an industry that is economically important to that locality. This process allows for a broad representation on the board.

Culture of Trust and Respect:

A board is not a collection of individuals and talents but a team. For it to function as such, candid communication and mutual respect are critical. Having open discussions and mutual respect ensures that probing questioning, constructive criticism and challenging debate can take place. To create a culture of trust and respect, every member is given an opportunity to serve on at least one committee and all members are encouraged to provide input during and after the meetings.



Strategic Plan Input

The NRMRWDB Strategic Plan was developed with the involvement and guidance from a variety of stakeholders, including board members, community members, staff, and regional partners. The NRMRWDB has a standing Strategic Planning Committee made up of board members from both the WDB and the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Area Consortium Board (CLEOs). The Strategic Planning Committee is charged with developing and overseeing the boards' various plans.

To prepare for this Strategic Plan, the Strategic Planning Committee met to reflect on the NRMRWDB's vision and mission, which underpins the approach to our work, and to review the current strategic plan as well as other regional initiatives. These meetings helped to establish the strategic direction and define the important work to be done in order to fully realize our charge in the region's workforce development system as well as how our work impacts the workforce system in the Commonwealth.

Regional partners, economic development, the business community and elected officials were engaged via an on-line survey, roundtable discussions and an email invite to provide comments on the posted Draft Strategic Plan. The general public and participants were engaged via an on-line survey and public notice to read and comment on the draft Strategic Plan. Public Notice was given via notice in the region's two large newspapers (see Attachment I) and in an email blast to all regional partners.



Professional Development

Professional Development is critically important and matters to the overall success of the Workforce System. Besides providing career training for staff and partners to develop new skills and stay up-to-date on current trends, it also provides opportunities for career advancement. In an effort to advance the skills of our staff and partners, provide value to the workforce system, and deepen our relationships with partners, the NRMWDB sponsors an ongoing series of professional development, provided each month, free to all. Sessions, ranging from topics such as Adverse Childhood Experiences to Labor Market Information, have been well attended with upwards of 40 participants. We firmly believe this effort is a win-win for everyone.

Regional partner training not only improves understanding of policy and programs, it builds the relationships between partners and allows sharing of best practices and creative program solving opportunities that is not always possible in the day to day implementation of programmatic elements.

In addition to specialized training offered for programmatic implementation and improvement, the Title I Program operators provide on-boarding and regular training and evaluation of staff and programs throughout the year. Included in this regular training and evaluation are the following:

At hire, staff received a minimum of four days of initial classroom training in the areas of WIOA eligibility, assessment procedures, development and implementation of individual employment plans, occupational skills and supportive procedures, VaWC data entry requirements, labor market information, file maintenance general case management practices, and Virginia Workforce Letters and local policies. Staff spend a considerable amount of time shadowing a senior staff member in a variety of areas such as intake/eligibility, client interaction, VaWC data entry, job development and general services provision. Also, staff is certified to administer the Test for Adult Basic Education through Virginia Commonwealth University, Adult Learning Resource Center and many are certified to administer the ACT WorkKeys assessments. All staff receive a training manual at the onset of employment.

All WIOA Title 1 staff are encouraged to complete their Certified Workforce Development Professional training and certification as soon as possible.

Other programs offered:

How to Conduct a GoTo Meeting, VaWC COVID-19 Topics, Updates, and Review with Brian Long. VaWC COVID-19-Topics Review with Beverly Suthers, Whole Family Approach Presentation-GoTo Meeting, Implementing Section 188-Equal Opportunity Provisions. Online Career Scope Review

WIOA Title I Regional Training, EmpowOR Referral Training, WIOA Title 1 Statewide Training, Part II WIOA Statewide Training VWL 20-06, Family Centered Coaching, OSS/IEP (Electronic), Brand 101, WIOA Activity Codes in VOS, Empower Referrals – making, receiving, following up, Careerscope training, EEO Part I, II, & III, Case Mgmt/Dr. Beverly Ford (multiple sessions), Family Centered Coaching (multiple sessions), VWL 20-07: VaWC System of Record and Electronic Case Files, Financial Empowerment Facilitator Training, Employment of Youth who are Blind Vision Impaired, or Deafblind, WIOA Form Review, Youth COVID-19

Additional staff professional development is provided through Workforce GPS, the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (webinars), and through other local training providers such as Fred Pryor Seminars, Dale Carnegie, and other training programs.

Finally, an annual performance evaluation. As part of this evaluation, professional development goals are discussed and progress toward those goals is monitored.

Section 6:

Informational Attachments



Attachment A

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FREQUENTLY USED ACRONYMS

ABE - Adult Basic Education

ABAWD – Able-bodied Adult without Dependents

ACT WRC – ACT Work Ready Community

ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act

AJC – American Job Center

ASE – Adult Secondary Education

BLS - Bureau of Labor Statistics

BST – Business Solution Team

CBO - Community Based Organization

CBT - Computer-Based Training

CWDP – Certified Workforce Development Professional

CLEO – Chief Local Elected Official

CEU - Continuing Education Unit

CFR - Code of Federal Regulations

CIS – Communities in Schools

CPS – Child Protective Services

CRT - Classroom Training

CTE – Career and Technical Education

DARS –Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services

DBVI – Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired

DLW – Dislocated Worker

DOLI - Department Of Labor and Industry

DOLETA – US Department of Labor Employment & Training Administration

DOT - Dictionary of Occupational Titles

DVOP – Disabled Veteran Outreach Program

ED – Executive Director

EEO - Equal Employment Opportunity

EITC - Earned Income Tax Credit

EO – Equal Opportunity ES - Employment Service

ESL - English as a Second Language (Oral Assessment)

ETA - Employment and Training Administration

ETPL – Eligible Training Provider List

ETP – Eligible Training Provider

FA – Fiscal Agent

FBO - Faith-Based Organization

FEMA - Federal Emergency Management Agency

FLSA - Fair Labor Standard Act

FMGA – Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts

FMLA – Family Medical Leave Act

FY - Fiscal Year

GAO - General Accounting Office

GCTC – Giles County Technology Center

GED - General Educational Development

IEP - Individual Employment Plan

IRT – Integrated Resource Team

IT - Information Technology

ITA – Individual Training Account IW – Incumbent Worker

IWTP – Incumbent Worker Training Program

LED – Local Employment Dynamics

LEP - Limited English Proficiency

LLSIL - Lower Living Standard Income Level

LMI - Labor Market Information

LWDA - Local Workforce Development Area

LWDB – Local Workforce Development Board

MOU - Memorandum Of Understanding MRPD – Mount Rogers Planning District

MRPDC – Mount Rogers Planning District Commission

MRRAEP – Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education Program

MSFW - Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers

NAICS - National American Industry Classification System

NAWB - National Association of Workforce Boards

NAWDP - National Association of Workforce Development Professionals

NCRC – National Career Readiness Certificate

NGA - National Governors Association

NRCC – New River Community College

NRMRCB – New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area Consortium Board

NRMRWDB – New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Board

NRMRWDA – New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area

NRVRC – New River Valley Regional Commission

OAG – Office of Attorney General

O*NET - Occupational Information Network

OES - Occupational Employment Statistics

OJT - On-the-Job Training

OSHA - Occupational Safety and Health Administration

PSA – Public Service Announcement

PY - Program Year

QWI – Quarterly Workforce Indicator

RESEA – Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment

RFB - Request for Bid

RFP - Request for Proposal

RFQ - Request for Qualifications

RR – Rapid Response

RU – Radford University

SGA - Solicitations for Grant Applications - Federal

SIC - Standard Industrial Classification

SNAP – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

SOC - Standard Occupational Classification

SVAM – Southwest Virginian Alliance Manufacturing

SVAMCOE - Southwest Virginian Alliance Manufacturing Center of Excellence

TA - Technical Assistance

TAA - Trade Adjustment Assistance

TABE - Test of Adult Basic Education

TAG - Technical Assistance Guide

TANF - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TEGL - Training and Employment Guidance Letter
TEIN - Training and Employment Information Notice

UI - Unemployment Insurance Compensation
USDOL - United States Department of Labor
UVa Wise – University of Virginia at Wise

VA – Veterans Administration
VCW – Virginia Career Works
VEC – Virginia Employment Commission
VCW – Virginia Career Works
VEDP – Virginia Economic Development Partnership
VCCS – Virginian Community College System
VETS - Veterans' Employment and Training Services –
VHCC – Virginia Highlands Community College
VOS – Virtual One Stop
VT – Virginia Tech (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University)
VT OED – Virginia Tech's Office of Economic Development

WARN - Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act
WDB - Workforce Development Board
WCC – Wytheville Community College
WIA - Workforce Investment Act
WIOA – Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act
WOTC - Work Opportunity Tax Credit
WRC – Work Ready Communities

Attachment B

In-Demand Occupation List

Attachment C

Collaborative Funding Agreement

Attachment D

Draft Advanced Manufacturing Career Lattice

Attachment E

Business Services Plan

Attachment F

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Attachment G

SCOPE OF SERVICES AND RESPONSIBILITIES NEW RIVER/MOUNT ROGERS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA CONSORTIUM FISCAL AGENT SERVICES

Acceptance and Maintenance of WIOA Funds

1. The Fiscal Agent shall be responsible for up fronting cost of Consortium operating expenses for the term of the Agreement and shall be reimbursed for eligible expenses.
2. The Fiscal Agent will receive and manage all funds in compliance with applicable State and Federal Laws, Consortium policy and fund-specific regulations; and ensure internal controls to maintain fiscal integrity.
3. Unless this Fiscal Agent is given other instructions in writing, the Fiscal Agent is not required to maintain separate depositories for the various grant funds.

Disbursement of Funds

1. The Fiscal Agent shall disburse WIOA Funds (“Funds”) in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, WIOA Final Regulations, Published June 30, 2016, and Federal/State policies and requirements.
2. Disbursements shall be made by the Fiscal Agent from available funds at the direction of the Consortium Executive Director within a reasonable time following receipt of complete and accurate requests for reimbursement accompanied by original invoices or payroll records and in compliance with WIOA regulations. Prior to paying on any accounts payable, the Fiscal Agent shall submit to the Consortium Finance Committee an Accounts Payable Register for review and approval on such accounts. The Fiscal Agent shall make the Accounts Payable Register available to the Consortium Finance Committee via email with three (3) business days to review prior to funds being dispersed.
3. The Fiscal Agent shall reimburse lower tier sub-recipients according to the applicable cost principles found in OMB Circular A-21, Cost Principles for Educational Institutions; A-87, Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments; and A-122, and Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations. The OMB circulars are incorporated herein by reference and are further specified in program regulations at 29 CFR 95.27 and 29 CFR 97.22. For commercial organizations acting either as a direct grant holder or as a sub recipient to a direct grantee, the cost principles detailed in the FAR, 48 CFR Part 31, apply.

Accounting of Funds

1. The Fiscal Agent will maintain an accounting of all revenue, expenditures, program income and applicable credits associated with the WIOA funds by funding stream, for the duration of the term of its services.
2. The Fiscal Agent will ensure that all financial procedures are in compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures (GAAP), Office of Management and Budget (OMB) policies, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), and any other federal or state regulatory requirements and limit risk of questioned or disallowed costs.
3. The Fiscal Agent will implement any such type of invoicing system, or procedures deemed necessary by the Consortium and the Fiscal Agent in order to comply with its duties and responsibilities as Fiscal Agent.
4. The Fiscal Agent will maintain an accounting of expenditures by expense type and service provider/vendor.
5. Using up-to-date fund accounting software the Fiscal Agent will establish and maintain appropriate ledgers to manage obligations and expenditures of funds.
6. The Fiscal Agent in conjunction with the Consortium Executive Director will establish procedures and processes to ensure that all amounts receivable or due to the local workforce area are collected and recorded on a timely basis.
7. The Fiscal Agent will maintain a record of all financial transactions for the WIOA and other funds allocated and expended in the local workforce area.
8. As needed, the Fiscal Agent will assist with cost allocation planning, reporting, invoicing and documentation procedures and other fiscal management procedures.

Financial and Grant Reporting

1. To support the oversight role of the Consortium the Fiscal Agent will prepare and disseminate financial reports on a monthly basis in formats prescribed by the entities to identify revenues, expenditures, accounts payable, accounts receivable and balances and obligations, by funding streams and lower tier sub-recipients.
2. The Fiscal Agent will develop standard financial reports, accessible to the Consortium, its Finance Committee, and its Executive Director.
3. The Fiscal Agent will report total obligations by funding stream on a quarterly basis.
4. On a monthly basis, the Fiscal Agent will provide financial reports to the Consortium Executive Director.
5. The Fiscal Agent will coordinate with the Consortium Executive Director to ensure that the parties are informed as to the appropriate expenditure of WIOA funds in conformance with Federal and State Regulations and WIOA provisions, and other rules and regulations

such as OMB and FAR and that expenditures of these funds are properly and accurately accounted for.

6. In a timely manner, the Fiscal Agent will work with the Consortium Executive Director to prepare required federal and state financial reports associated with management of grant funds.
7. The Fiscal Agent will be required to prepare financial reports and grant closeouts at the direction of the funding sources.

Auditing of Funds

1. The Fiscal Agent shall arrange for an annual audit of all Consortium funds and provide the Consortium Board with a complete copy of such audit.

Payroll Services

1. The Fiscal Agent shall process payroll for Consortium staff on the same basis as payroll is processed by the Fiscal Agent for its employees, including the payment of all federal and state taxes including federal and state unemployment taxes, social security and Medicare. Such payroll disbursements shall be made consistent with state and federal law requirements.
2. The Fiscal Agent shall enroll Consortium employees in the Virginia Retirement System, Local Choice Health Plan and Workers' Compensation plan under its name and make payments on a monthly basis to such plans to assure uninterrupted coverage under both benefit plans. If the employees are enrolled in VRS, Local Choice and Workers' Compensation under the Fiscal Agent's EIN and employer account, the Fiscal Agent will get written acknowledgment from each plan that the Consortium employees may be pooled (e.g. included as covered employees) under such plans with the same coverage and benefits as provided to Fiscal Agent employees.
3. The Consortium Executive Director will confer with the Fiscal Agent prior to employment being offered to a new Consortium employee to insure a smooth coordination of employment and benefits.

Attachment H

NR/MR Workforce Development Area One-Stop System MOU

Attachment I

Public Service Announcement