

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.