

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 **Virginia Workforce Connection (VAWC)** system, and all Operators are trained to use it. The NRMWDB's Operations Coordinator provides management and oversight of the VAWC system.

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.

knowledge *to* work

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 partnered with Lord Fairfax Community College to develop an on-line portal that houses a variety of training options for the region, many of which are “open sourced” materials. Knowledge to Work (www.knowledgetowork.com) 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.

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.

Program Operators cover all thirteen jurisdictions in the NRMR WDA. Staff are strategically placed to provide services directly, especially in remote areas. Training providers such as the local community colleges each have a service area, so clients desiring to participate in training must have access to transportation—as there is no public transportation in the region. Supportive services to assist with transportation barriers can be provided to clients to aid in their access to postsecondary education.



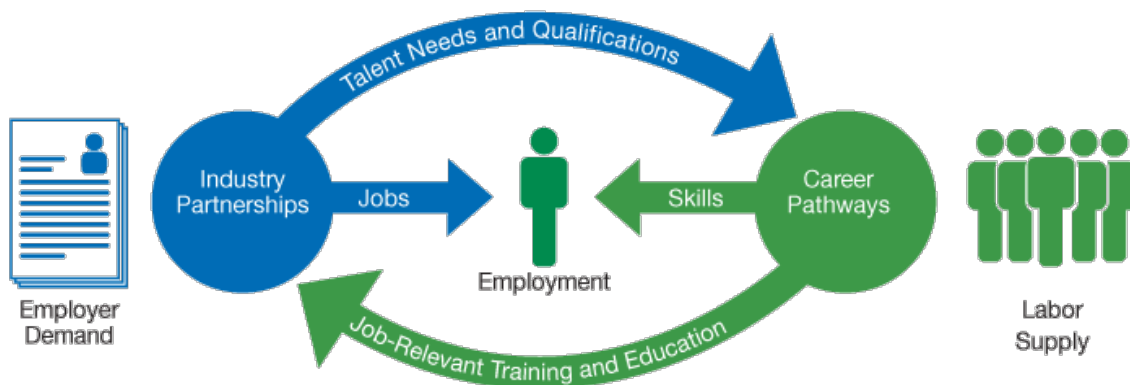
Career Pathways

The NRMR WDA's future is dependent upon an educated, skilled workforce. Improving the skills, knowledge, and credentials of our workers is critical to our economic stability, growth, and competitiveness. WIOA provides an opportunity to improve job and career options for our workers and jobseekers through an integrated, job-driven, workforce system that links diverse talent to businesses. It supports the development of strong, vibrant regional economies where businesses thrive and people want to live and work.

The workforce system includes three critical hallmarks of excellence:

1. The needs of business and workers drive workforce solutions;
2. American Job Centers provide excellent customer service to jobseekers and employers and focus on continuous improvement; and
3. The workforce system supports strong regional economies and plays an active role in community and workforce development.

In addition, WIOA requires states and localities to collaborate with adult education, postsecondary education, and other partners to establish **career pathways systems** that make it easier for all Americans to attain the skills and credentials needed for jobs in their regional economy. A Career Pathway is a workforce development strategy used to support workers' **transitions from education into and through the workforce**. Career pathways programs offer a clear sequence, or pathway, of education coursework and/or training credentials aligned with employer-validated work readiness standards and competencies.



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



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 “Other” programs listed such as our discretionary projects or TANF. Through the development of Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs), 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, and various other funding sources for training and supportive services.

Integrated Resource Teams help to develop key partnerships where co-enrollments are a natural outcome.



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/

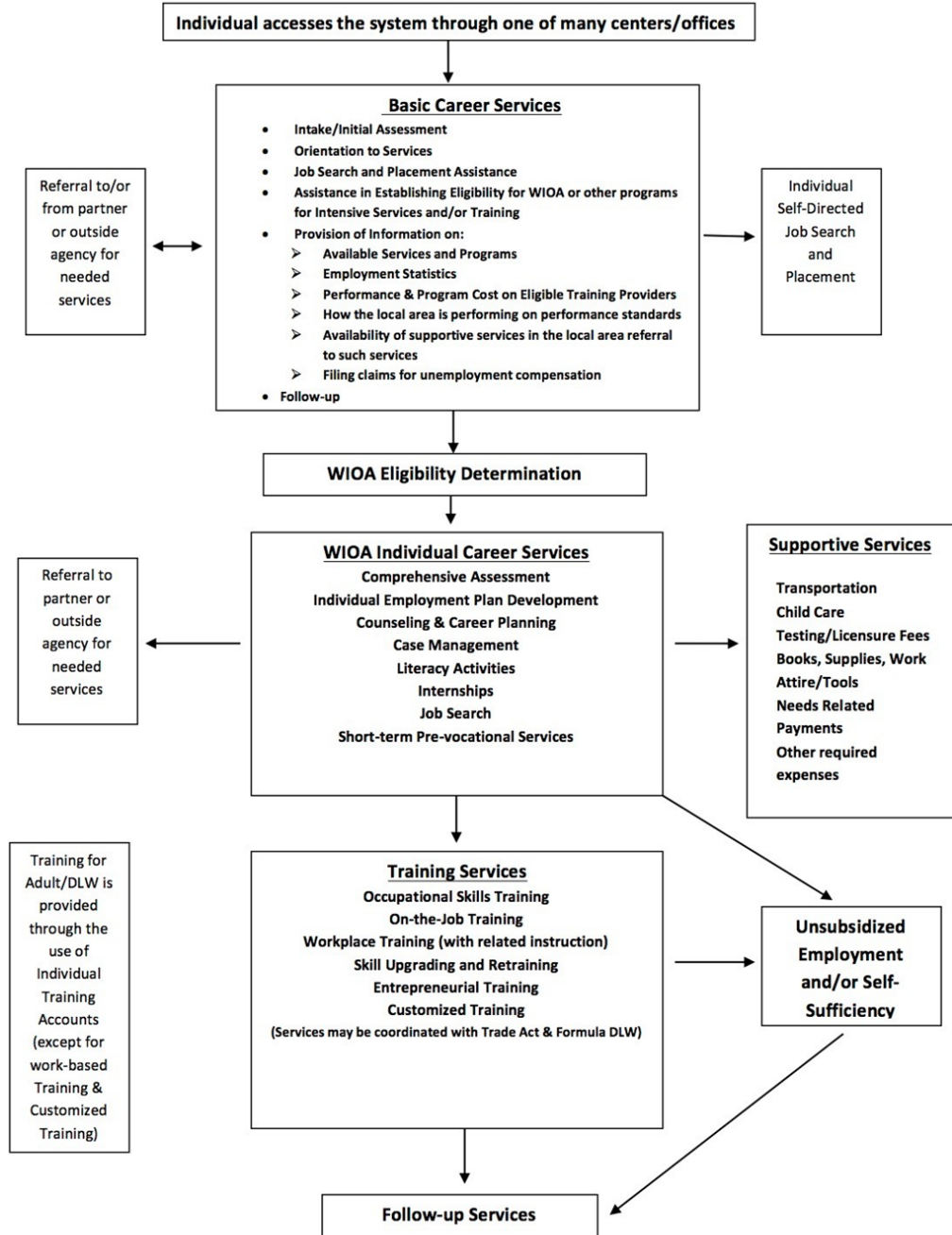
❖ **Pulaski VA Career Works Center (Affiliate)**

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/

NRRWDA 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 monthly to the boards by the One-Stop Operator.
- Providing professional development opportunities to frontline staff to ensure they have the skills and knowledge necessary.
- Annual monitoring of contracted WIOA Title 1 Program Providers
- Partner report out at each NRMRWDB meeting

Access to Services:

The region has seven Virginia Career Works Centers spaced throughout the 4,300 square miles of the region. The NRMRWDB also promotes the use of the Commonwealth's Referral Portal at 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 \(as.me\)](http://ScheduleAppointmentwithNewRiverMountRogersWorkforceDevelopmentBoard.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**).

The NRMRWDB supports remote areas of the region with **access to technology, training, 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 NRMRWDB 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 used for job fairs, job search/resume writing workshops, mass lay-off enrollment activities, WorkKeys® Assessment testing (at business request), and other targeted community and individual training and internet support opportunities needed in the region. The NRMRWDB 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.

Another strategy used by the NRMWDB is the use of designated email address: CareerHelp@vcwnmr.com. This email comes directly to the NRMWDB's Data & Program Coordinator (through discretionary funding), who contacts the individual directly to make appropriate referrals. The NRMWDB also uses a Prescreening form, which is an Adobe fillable document that can be read by screen readers. The Prescreening Form is sent to the Data & Program Coordinator through the designated email.

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

- **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 NRMWDB 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 of the One-Stop partners are fully described in F below and in Section 3 (who provides what mandated and un-mandated programs). Through promoting the “collective impact model,” the NRMWDB encourages workforce partners to become active partners and collaborators with other workforce partners in the region. In doing so, contributions from to partners to the one-stop system and/or center (that are not mandated) include (but may not be limited to) providing:

- Resources (staff and/or funds) for regional hiring events;
 - Staff to assist in resource rooms to serve job seekers;
 - Staff to facilitate workshops (that include individuals from many programs); and
 - Professional Development Workshops for front-line staff (of many programs).
- This collaborative approach is building capacity in the region to better service businesses and jobseekers.

Intake and Case Management:

A common intake system is not available in Virginia, which limits the opportunity to fully integrate case management. The NRMWDB is looking to become part of the UniteUs network, offered through the Commonwealth’s Health and Human Services Network. Until then, through discretionary funds, the board has provided a “band aid” approach.

Fillable Common Intake Forms between programs: Currently Adult Education and the Board’s discretionary grants are using the same, fillable intake form. Title I WIOA Adult/DLW programs will be brought into this process next. It is our intent to have all four titles and TANF using the same basic form (with each program having their own supplementary forms as needed. This intent is to limit the burden on the customer of completing multiple duplicative paperwork.

ProjectHub® and Synology®: The Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) are a way for shared case management, limiting duplication and leveraging of regional resources (which include case management staff, supportive services and other funds and resources). IRTs are using ProjectHub® to store some information, forms and to communicate. The NRMWDBs Synology drive (a secure cloud-based system) is used to store and share documents that need more protection. Each IRT has their own space on each, providing a space that only includes that team can access.

On-Line meetings (Zoom, Google Meets, etc.): Is used to provide an opportunity for the IRTs to meet “face-to-face” with each other and the job seeker to discuss opportunities and progress.

Partner Agency Information/Services: Partners use the Region’s Resource Map to share information about specific services available. At this time, the Resource Map is still an excel file housed in Google.

The **POWER** grant will provide the additional resources to make this available on-line.

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 instabilities 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:

- Comprehensive One Stop Center
- Virginia Workforce Center (VEC)
- Local Departments of Social Services
- Department of Juvenile Justice
- Adult Education Programs
- Health Departments
- 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:

- The NR/MR WDB supports two Career Expos for regional 7th Graders
 - The United Way Southwest Virginia annual Career Expo in Abingdon
 - The Go Virginia Region 2 Talent Collaborative Career Expo in Salem
- 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. Approximately 15% of adults in the NRMR WDA did not possess a high school diploma or equivalency in 2020. This was higher than proportion of adults lacking the same credential in Virginia (11%) and the United States (13%) for the same year. Individuals lacking a high school education are among the most likely to be skills deficient. A 2003 study by the National Center for Education Statistics estimated that 13% of adults in the NRMR WDA lacked basic literacy skills. This compares to 12% of adults in Virginia and 12% of adults in the United States for the same year.

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 NRMWDB 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](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 NRMR 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 throughout 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.

Perkins Post-secondary

New River, Wytheville, and Virginia Highlands Community Colleges offer a variety of programs and services, such as:

- 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

Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, Inc. is the Program Operator for WIOA Adult and Youth services (in the NRV region). Their organization also provides:

- **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

People Inc. is the contracted One-Stop Operator and Program Operator for the Dislocated Worker (for all of WDA 2), plus Adult and Youth services (in the MR region). Their organization also provides:

- **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. Managers at each center (with the exception of the Comprehensive Center) are usually from the Agency/Organization that holds the lease for that location. At the Comprehensive Center, partners that are in the center full-time pay a pro-rated portion of the Center Manager's Salary (based on their share of the space).

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 Centers

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 NRMWDB’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 NRMWDB 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 \(vcwnewrivermtrogers.com\)](#)



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 NRMWDB, 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