

APPENDIX D

LOCAL PLAN TEMPLATE

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

NEW RIVER/MOUNT ROGERS

SUBMITTED BY

NEW RIVER/MOUNT ROGERS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

JULY 1, 2020 – JUNE 30, 2024

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Introduction

Background and History: The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board (NRMRWDB) has been engaged in the business of workforce solutions since 2000. The NRMRWDB holds to its formation mission of facilitating and coordinating workforce initiatives that enable economic growth and increase the standard of living of our regional citizens. This focus has required services and partners to evolve over the years and yet, anchors our work in the heart of developing a robust workforce that supports a growing economy in the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area (NRMR WDA) as well as across southwest and the rest of Virginia. Our work locally has been guided by a vision and mission that has been revisited over the years. Following the integration of our sector initiative work, expansion of the integration of workforce system efforts, and incorporation of the state’s focus, our joint Workforce Development and Consortium boards approved the revised vision and mission statements to guide our organization over the next three years. The vision represents our biggest and best thinking about how the region will look when we fully achieve our strategic mission. The goals help us build the path to that vision.

As the shift from the Workforce Investment Act to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the NRMRWDB began shifting from being a tactical board into a more strategic board. We have wholly embraced a more strategic vision by serving as leaders in the Workforce System who facilitate partnerships among agencies and organizations (who were once siloed), ensuring industry-defined connections between sector strategies and career pathways that meet regionally determined needs that are truly data-driven. In addition to understanding service to customers, we now have a strong focus on the Workforce System—ensuring that all its parts and pieces strategically operate in a comprehensive, integrated, and streamlined manner for both the business and jobseeker customer. As is demonstrated in our Strategic Plan, we connect everything we do to our vision and mission, subsequently striving to

project future needs and the funding opportunities connected to them. In other words, not only do we use LMI for current programming, but also we use a full set of data to establish future goals, create our strategic plans, establish performance improvements, and ensure excellence in the entire Workforce System. While it is necessary to focus on our current conditions, it is not a place in which our leadership resides—as we also focus on the emerging economic trends and labor market patterns, understanding and allocating our resources on the current workforce needs while setting plans in motion for the future needs of our industries. Our business partners, through our Business Services Coordinator and Business Solutions Teams, are instrumental in communicating their needs so we can make more informed decisions. We have systems in place to manage processes but put energies toward building capacity, creating strong connections among the Core and all discretionary programs as well as relationships with business and industry. As we phase into collective impact, we will no longer measure our success solely by short-term performance outcomes but by the performance of the collective Workforce System using regionally defined targets pertaining to progress toward alignment with economic development strategy, creation of career pathways, and development of innovative programming, which includes work-based learning for the long-term success of the workforce.

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

- Align the Commonwealth’s workforce system with economic development Action Items

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

These action items are addressed in the NRMWDB's Goals and Strategies. To help us in the formation of our goals, strategies, and action, we involved partners and stakeholders in a SWOT Analysis.

SWOT Analysis: Our first step was a SWOT Analysis, which occurred in November and December of 2020.

Input for the analysis was broadly acquired through a survey to all workforce system stakeholders, which received 74 responses. Approximately 82% of respondents said their knowledge of the workforce system was somewhat or very high. Only three respondents said they had no real knowledge of the workforce system. In order of most to least number of responses, most responses came from the following:

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

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

- Direct service providers to adult workers
- Education partners
- Chambers of commerce and economic development partners
- IT businesses
- Manufacturing businesses
- Healthcare businesses

Development of Goals, Strategies, and Action Items: From the SWOT analysis, we were able to determine our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, which helped us build on what we do well, address what we're lacking, strive to minimize risks, and to take the greatest possible advantage of chances for success. We then were able to develop goals to address the identified issues and build on our strengths. The goals provide a roadmap for fulfilling the strategic direction and are foundational to our work. We understand the responsibility for preparing our region's workforce and fully accept the accountability through performance measures that ensure the success as well as help us understand where to make adjustments when needed. We understand the need to strengthen service delivery by building strong partnerships that have healthy communicative relationships.

Strategic Plan: We then worked together through numerous meetings and writing sessions to fully develop our comprehensive three-year Strategic Plan. It was written with the mindset of being a dynamic document that is continually edited and updated, and it strives to be a roadmap toward the region's intended outcomes and anticipated impact. It is also a management tool that has two primary purposes:

- ❖ To present a wide-ranging compilation of the plan and its component parts. *It encapsulates the strategic planning process as well as the views and decisions of stakeholders.*

- ❖ To serve as a guidance tool for workforce development stakeholders. *Each section contains information about its component part as well as additional information about how the workforce system can use the information in the plan.*

Our plan represents efforts to align job training to integrated service delivery across programs, improve efficiency in service delivery, and ensure that our workforce system in the region is job-driven, matching businesses with skilled workers. The overall intent of our plan is to promote a shared understanding of the workforce needs within the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area and foster development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as sector-based strategies, system building, and career pathways, to address the needs of businesses and workers. Our Workforce Development System is intended to help individuals in the region reach their full potential, regardless of disability, ethnicity, or barriers to employment. We are charged with helping our residents obtain and succeed in family-sustaining wage jobs while meeting business needs for a skilled workforce.

The Workforce Planning included in our Strategic Plan demonstrates a process that analyzed, forecasted, and planned the workforce supply and demand. We assessed gaps and determined strategies and actions to ensure that we can fulfill our plan.

Throughout this document, we reference sections in our Strategic Plan. A link to individual sections or the whole Strategic Plan on our website is as follows: [Strategic Plans - New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board \(vcwnewrivermtrogers.com\)](#)

Section 1: Workforce and Economic Analysis

1.1 A descriptive analysis of the regional economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations.

Regional Economic Conditions: The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area (NRMR WDA) is composed of ten counties (Bland, Carroll, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Montgomery, Pulaski, Smyth, Washington, and Wythe) and three independent cities (Bristol, Galax, and Radford). Data from the American Community Survey (ACS) estimates that 371,593 people lived in this area in 2020. The NRMR WDA contained 147,238 households in 2020, according to the ACS. Married-couple households, nonfamily households, and single parent households accounted for 48.0%, 38.4%, and 13.6% of the Region's households for the same year. The NRMR WDA had an average household size of 2.4 in 2020. Approximately 34.8% of married-couple households and 57.4% of single parent households included children under the age of 18 for the same year. Average household income (AHI) in the NRMR WDA was \$66,692 in 2020. This was lower than AHI for both the State (\$106,023) and Nation (\$91,547) for the same year. Virginia Tech's Center for Economic and Community Engagement (VT CECE) interpolated regional household data and cost of living data provided by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to generate a weighted average living wage of \$13.85/hour (approximately \$28,807 annually) for a conventional full-time position (2,080 hours a year) in the NRMR WDA for 2019. Data provided by the United Way of Southwest Virginia suggest that nearly a third of working households in the NRMR WDA live above the poverty line; however, they do not earn enough to satisfy the minimum cost of household essentials, including food, housing, childcare, etc. The United Way classifies these households as asset limited, income constrained, employed (ALICE). The ALICE threshold represents the widening gap between the federal poverty level and minimum cost of household essentials, also known as the "survival budget." For instance, a single, childless worker in the NRMR WDA may earn above the federal poverty level (\$12,400) but still earn below the estimated survival budget for this Region (\$23,184). Commuting

patterns are also important to consider when getting an overall picture of a region's workforce. According to EMSI, the NRMW WDA housed 179,928 jobs and 178,854 resident workers in 2021, which suggests that at least some industries within the NRMW WDA rely on out-of-Region workers to satisfy their labor needs.

Existing and Emerging In-Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations: Target Industries & Occupations

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

Manufacturing: The regional manufacturing sector accounted for the second largest portion (14.2%) of total employment in the NRMW WDA; 25,530 workers were employed in businesses belonging to this sector in 2021. This sector was expected to lose 1,382 jobs from 2016-2021, according to an estimation based on the growth of the national economy and the performance of the national manufacturing sector during this period. Instead, 1,274 jobs were eliminated from the manufacturing sector from 2016-2021 (5% decline), losing 108 less jobs. However, EMSI projects a 6% employment growth (1,451 jobs) for this sector over the next five-year period (2021-2026). The manufacturing sector had a location quotient of 2.15 in 2021, which suggests that employment in this sector was more concentrated in the NRMW WDA compared to all regions of the Nation. The regional manufacturing sector supplied 23% of the Region's GRP in 2021 (\$3.30 billion). Five distinct clusters dominated employment in the regional manufacturing sector: transportation equipment manufacturing; chemical manufacturing; electrical equipment,

appliance, and components manufacturing; plastics and rubber product manufacturing; and wood product manufacturing.

Healthcare and Social Assistance: The healthcare and social assistance sector was the fourth largest sector in the NRMWDA by employment in 2021. This sector accounted for 9.6% of the Region's employment (17,300 jobs) during that year. The Region's healthcare and social assistance sector was expected to add 1,783 jobs from 2016-2021, according to an estimation based on national economic performance and the performance of the national sector. Instead, only 9 jobs were added across the regional healthcare and social assistance sector during this period. This degree of underperformance suggests that the regional sector was not competitive during the past five years. EMSI projects 9% employment growth (1,521 jobs) for this sector over the next five-year period (2021-2026). The healthcare and social assistance sector had a location quotient of 0.83 in 2021, suggesting that employment in this sector was less concentrated in the NRMWDA compared to the Nation. The regional sector also generated 7% (\$1.01 billion) of the Region's GRP during 2021.

Construction: The regional construction sector accounted for 4.4% (7,960 workers) of total employment in the NRMWDA for 2021. This industry experienced a net change of 354 jobs from 2016-2021 (5% increase), lower than national growth rate (8%) during this period. EMSI projects 3% employment growth (254 jobs) for this sector over the next five years. The construction sector had an LQ of 0.76 in 2021, suggesting that employment in this sector was less concentrated in the NRMWDA compared to the Nation. This sector generated \$465.45 million in 2021, which accounted for 3.2% of the Region's GRP.

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services: The Region's professional, scientific, and technical services sector accounted for 4.1% (7,307 jobs) of regional employment in 2021. This sector was

expected to see the addition of 696 jobs from 2016-2021, according to an estimation based on national economic performance and national sector performance. Instead, only 276 jobs (4% increase) were added to the Region's professional, scientific, and technical services sector during this period. Underperformance amid a period of national growth (10% increase) suggests that this sector was not competitive over the past five years. EMSI projects 7% employment growth (520 jobs) for this sector over the next five-year period (2021-2026). The professional, scientific, and technical services sector had a location quotient of 0.54 in 2021, suggesting that employment in this sector was half as concentrated in the NRMR WDA compared to the Nation. This sector generated \$526.4 million in 2021, which accounted for 3.7% of the Region's GRP.

Transportation, Logistics, and Warehousing: The transportation and warehousing sector was composed of 6,332 jobs in 2021, which accounted for 3.5% of total employment in the NRMR WDA. This sector added 1,193 jobs from 2016-2021 (23% increase), which is lower than the national growth (30%). EMSI projects 15% employment growth (949 jobs) over the next five-year period (2021-2026). The regional transportation and warehousing sector had an LQ of 0.71 in 2021, which suggests that employment in the regional sector is less concentrated compared to the nation. This sector supplied 2.6% (\$370.5 million) of the Region's GRP in 2021.

Employment Needs of Employers in those Industry Sectors and Occupations: **Manufacturing:** The regional transportation equipment manufacturing cluster accounted for 26.8% of employment (6,845 jobs) in the Region's manufacturing sector in 2021. This cluster was expected to add 252 jobs from 2016-2021, according to an estimation based on national economic and national cluster performance. Instead, this cluster lost 590 jobs from 2016-2021 (8% decrease) while the nation saw a 1% increase in jobs, which indicates that this cluster was not competitive. EMSI projects 3% employment decline (-202 jobs) for the

region's transportation equipment manufacturing cluster over the next five-year period (2021-2026). This cluster was highly specialized in heavy duty truck manufacturing (90.63 LQ), truck trailer manufacturing (46.50), motor vehicle steering and suspension components manufacturing (18.29), and motor vehicle gasoline engine and engine parts manufacturing (7.78) in 2021. Five additional industries had LQ values between 1.0-3.5 during the same year. The transportation equipment manufacturing cluster supplied 32.1% (\$1.1 billion) of the regional manufacturing cluster's GRP in 2021.

The region's chemical manufacturing cluster was composed of 2,778 workers in 2021, which accounted for 10.9% of regional manufacturing sector employment. The region's chemical manufacturing cluster was expected to lose only two jobs from 2016-2021, based on national economic growth and national cluster performance. However, the regional chemical cluster added 128 jobs during this period, which suggests that this cluster was competitive. EMSI projects 16% employment growth (446 jobs) for this cluster over the next five-year period (2021-2026). This cluster was highly specialized in explosives manufacturing (167.92 LQ), custom compounding of purchased resins (37.12), and artificial and synthetic fibers and filaments manufacturing (31.07) in 2020. An additional six industries had LQ values between 1.17-6.52 for the same year. The chemical manufacturing cluster supplied 18.7% (\$616.24 million) of the regional manufacturing sector's GRP in 2021.

The regional electrical equipment, appliance, and components manufacturing cluster accounted for 10.4% of employment (2,652 jobs) in the Region's manufacturing sector in 2021. This cluster was expected to lose 159 jobs from 2016-2021, based on national economic growth and national cluster performance. Instead, 244 jobs were eliminated (8% decline) during this period; this cluster was not competitive. EMSI projects a 2% employment decline (44 jobs) for this cluster over the next five-year period (2021-2026). The regional cluster was highly specialized in motor and generator manufacturing

(43.22 LQ), other lighting equipment manufacturing (28.34), power, distribution, and specialty transformer manufacturing (22.98), and commercial, industrial, and institutional electric lighting fixture manufacturing (15.61) in 2021. Two additional industries belonging to this cluster had LQ values between 1.09-7.28. The regional electrical equipment, appliance, and components manufacturing cluster generated \$300.2 million in 2021, which accounted for 9.1% of the regional manufacturing cluster's GRP.

The regional plastics and rubber products manufacturing accounted for 9.1% of employment (2,321 jobs) in the Region's manufacturing sector in 2021. This cluster saw a rapid growth from 2016-2021 adding 391 jobs to the region (20% increase). EMSI projects a 8% employment increase (178 jobs) for this cluster over the next five-year period (2021-2026). The regional cluster was highly specialized in rubber and plastics hoses and belting manufacturing (14.77 LQ), unlaminated plastics film and sheet manufacturing (10.58 LQ), and plastics bag and pouch manufacturing (10.40 LQ). Seven additional industries belonging to this cluster had LQ values between 1.24-6.88. The regional plastics and rubber products manufacturing generated \$285.4 million in 2021, which accounted for 8.6% of the regional manufacturing cluster's GRP.

Miscellaneous assemblers and fabricators (17.6% of sector employment), maintenance and repair workers (8.7%), and automotive service technicians and mechanics (5.1%) were the largest occupations by employment within the Region's manufacturing sector in 2021. Occupations with high annual openings, a measure of new and replacement jobs within an occupation were considered in-demand. The three occupations above were also the sector's most in-demand occupations for the same year. Miscellaneous assemblers and fabricators saw 706 average annual openings and 2,441 hires; maintenance and repair workers saw 247 annual openings and 962 hires; and automotive service

technicians and mechanics saw 173 openings and 370 hires in 2021. In addition to these jobs, industry machinery mechanics jobs saw 182 openings and 406 hires indicating the high demands.

Healthcare: Registered nurses (13.4%), nursing assistants (9.8%), and police and sheriff's patrol officers (7.1%) were the largest occupations by employment within the region's healthcare and social assistance sector in 2021. The nursing assistant occupation led the sector in demand for 2021 with 295 annual openings and 1,493 hires. Registered nurses (196 annual openings and 706 hires), security guards (164 openings and 638 hires), licensed practical and vocational nurses (130 openings and 600 hires), and police and sheriff's patrol officers (119 openings and 384 hires) were the following most in-demand occupations for the same year.

Construction: Construction laborers (20.7% of sector employment), carpenters (14.9%), first-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers (10.9%), electricians (7.4%), and operating engineers and other construction equipment operators (7.3%) were the largest occupations by employment within the region's construction sector. These five occupations also led this sector in demand in 2021.

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services: Office clerks (15.7%), general and operations managers (12.7%), secretaries and administrative assistants (10.4%), bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks (8.4%), and first-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers (7.8%) were the largest occupations by employment within the regional professional, scientific, and technical services industry. These jobs were also the top in-demand occupations within the region's professional, scientific, and technical services sector in 2021.

Transportation, Logistics, and Warehousing: Stockers and order fillers (20.3% of sector employment), heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers (16.2%), laborers and freight, stock, and material movers (16.1%), and light truck drivers (7.4%) were the largest occupations by employment within the region's transportation and warehousing sector. The stockers and order fillers, laborers and freight, stock and material movers, and heavy and tractor-trailer truck driver occupations also led the sector in demand with 591, 419, and 383 openings in 2021, respectively.

A more detailed analysis of the regional economic conditions is available in Section 1 of our Strategic Plan. Attachment B provides an overview of in-demand occupations in our region.

1.2 A descriptive analysis of the knowledge and skills required to meet the employment needs of the employers in the local area, including employment requirements for in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

More than half of the jobs advertised in the NRMW WDA in 2021 were located in Montgomery County (33.8% of postings), Wythe County (10.2%), and Radford City (9.4%). Approximately 52% of 2021 job postings in the NRMW WDA did not list a minimum educational requirement, although many of these occupations may require an education credential that was omitted from the posting. Nevertheless, 22% of 2021 job postings required a high school degree or GED®, 7% required an associate's degree, and the remaining 19% required a bachelor's degree or higher. Similarly, 70% of 2021 postings did not list a minimum experience requirement. Approximately 11% of postings required 0-1 years of experience, 12% required 2-3 years, and 7% required 4 or more years of experience.

In-demand qualifications varied for each industry and occupation; information regarding in-demand qualifications for target industries is found below. Healthcare qualifications were also in high demand, according to job postings data. Basic Life Support (BLS) certification was the most in-demand qualification in the NRMW WDA for 2021; 5.0% of job postings listed a BLS as a requirement.

Approximately 2.7% of postings in the NRMR WDA required an Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) certification, 2.4% required Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), 2.2% required Pediatric Advanced Life Support, and 1.6% required Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) credential. Commercial Driver's License (CDL) was also in-demand qualifications in the NRMR WDA. 3.5% of job postings required CDL or CDL Class A Licenses. Qualifications related to other health qualifications; security and secret clearance; IT security; food service; and logistics were also in-demand in 2021.

Similar to qualifications, hard skills tended to align with specific industries and occupations. Nevertheless, the top-five in-demand hard skills in the NRMR WDA were nursing (9% of 2021 postings), merchandising (9%), housekeeping (4%), cash register (4%), and marketing (4%). In-demand soft skills were more universal. For instance, communications, customer service, and management skills were listed in 30%, 26%, and 23% of all job postings in the NRMR WDA for 2021, respectively.

Healthcare and Social Assistance: There were 8,545 postings for 4,251 job openings within the Region's healthcare and social assistance sector in 2021. Montgomery County, Galax City, and Pulaski County were the most popular locations for these postings. Approximately 2,182 healthcare job postings listed a minimum educational requirement in 2021; 18% of total job postings called for a high school diploma or equivalent, 15% called for an associate's degree, and 18% called for a bachelor's degree or higher. Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification was the most in-demand qualification for this sector in 2021; 20.7% of all health care postings required this certification. Additionally, 12.0% of postings called for Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) Certification, 11.1% required Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) certifications, and 9.6% called for Pediatric Advanced Life Support certifications. Top hard skills for healthcare postings in 2019 were nursing, CPR, trauma care, and neonatal intensive care unit. Communications, customer service, and management were the top-posted soft skills for the same year.

Manufacturing: There were 3,405 postings for 1,646 job openings within the Region's manufacturing sector for 2021. It is important to note that job postings for manufacturing occupations tend to underrepresent the actual number of job openings in this sector. Montgomery County, Pulaski County, and the City of Radford were the most popular locations for these postings. Approximately 880 job postings listed a minimum educational requirement in 2021; 26% of the total job postings called for a high school diploma or equivalent, 9% called for an associate's degree, and 18% called for a bachelor's degree or higher.

CDL was the most in-demand qualification for manufacturing postings in 2021; 5.1% of postings called for CDL or CDL Class A Licenses. Top hard skills listed in these postings were HVAC, Diesel Engines, Data Entry, Hand Tools, and Supply Chain. Additionally, communication, operations, management, and valid driver's license were the top-posted soft skills.

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services: There were 3,686 postings for 1,820 job openings within the Region's professional, scientific, and technical services sector for 2021. Montgomery County, the City of Radford, and Wythe County were the most popular locations for these postings. Approximately 1,265 postings listed an educational requirement in 2021; 18% called for a high school diploma or equivalent, 9% called for an associate's degree, and the remaining 42% called for a bachelor's degree or higher. The top-posted qualifications for these positions were security and secret clearance (12.3% of 2021 postings), CompTIA Security +, product certification (5.1%), Cisco Certified Network Associate Security (CCNA Security) (3.7%), DoD Information Assurance (IA) Certification (3.6%), and CompTIA A+ (3.6%). Top-posted hard skills in 2021 were accounting, computer science, automation, administrative support,

and finance. Communication, management, customer service, operations, and problem solving were the top-posted soft skills for the same year.

Construction/Skilled Trades: There were 938 postings for 472 job openings with the region's construction sector for 2021. It is important to note that job postings for construction occupations tend to underrepresent the actual number of job openings in this sector. Montgomery County, Bristol City, and Washington County were the most popular locations for these postings. The vast majority (66%) of job postings for construction occupations did not list an education requirement in 2021. Approximately 14% of 2021 postings called for a high school diploma, nearly 0% called for an associate's degree, and 19% called for a bachelor's degree or higher, which are likely for construction management and supervisor jobs.

The top-posted qualifications for these positions were Engineering in Training (3.4%), Professional Engineers (3.4%), Licensed Professional Engineers (2.1%), CDL (2.1%) and Certified Safety Professional (16.9%). Construction was the most commonly listed hard skill for construction postings, followed by carpentry, plumbing, electrical wiring, and stocks (inventory). Similar to other target industries, top soft skills for construction postings were communications, valid driver's license, management, and leadership.

Transportation, Logistics, and Warehousing: There were 4,701 job postings for 1,831 job openings within the region's transportation, logistics, and warehousing sector in 2021. Montgomery County, Pulaski County, and Wythe County were the most popular locations for postings. It is important to note, however, that the bulk of postings were generated by national transportation firms and are not location-

dependent. The vast majority of 2021 postings for logistics positions (81%) did not list an education requirement.

Approximately 29.5% of 2021 postings required a CDL or CDL Class A License. Other in-demand qualifications were related to driver endorsements for specialized freight, such as forklift certifications, tanker endorsement, and hazmat endorsement. The most frequently listed hard skills were warehousing, truck driving, merchandising, forklift truck, and Apple IOS. Desired soft-skills included customer service, valid driver's license, lifting ability, communications, and loading and unloading skills.

1.3 An analysis of the local workforce, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment.

Current Labor Force Employment: The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area (NRMWDA) had a civilian noninstitutionalized population 16 years and over of 172,642 in 2020, according to ACS data. The NRMWDA saw a labor force participation rate (LFP) of 55.0% in 2020, according to ACS data. LFP in the NRMWDA was lower than that of the State (65.8%) and Nation (63.4%) in 2021. Unemployment rate in 2020 was 2.4% in the NRMWDA, lower than the State (3.0%) and National (3.4%).

Labor Market Trends: The NRMWDA had a proportionally greater number of population 16 years and over not in labor force (45.0%) in 2020 compared to the State (34.2%) and Nation (36.6%) for the same year. Several factors were correlated with higher and lower LFP in the NRMWDA, including age, gender, poverty status, and disability status. The average median age in the NRMWDA was 43.1 years in 2020, according to the ACS. This compares to 39.7 years of age for the State and 39.6 years of the Nation during the same year. Population aged between 18-24 accounted for the largest portion of the Region's workforce (14.2%), followed by 55-64 (13.4%), which were nearing. Approximately 6.8% of population

were nearing retirement age (60-64) in 2020 and 19.4% of population were aged over 65 for the same year.

Educational and Skill Levels of the Workforce: Educational attainment was varied for people aged over 25 in the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area (NRMWDA). For instance, 12.3% of individuals aged over 25 did not have a high school diploma, 32.4% attained a high school diploma or equivalency, 29.5% had some college experience or an associate's degree, and the remaining 25.9% attained a bachelor's degree or higher in 2020 according to ACS data. A greater proportion of workers in the NRMWDA did not have a high school diploma compared to the State (23.9%) and Nation (26.7%). Workers in the NRMWDA, however, were less likely to have a bachelor's degree compared to the same geographies.

1.4 An analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the region to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in the region.
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There are a variety of workforce development activities in the region provided by Workforce System partners, which includes the development of partners, the community, businesses, and the workforce. The NRMWDB is at the forefront of bringing partners together for a collective impact.

Partnership Development: Through WIOA and discretionary projects as well as being included in other partners' programs and services, our partnerships are growing. We have regular times to communicate formally and informally with a strong focus on understanding funding restrictions, performance, goals, and limitations. Professional development is an important part of working together. The process is ever evolving as we are working to be inclusive of both large and small agencies, organizations, non-profits, and faith-based organizations. Each discretionary grant has its own "target population" and industry

sectors which may require the development of a new partner or further engagement of an existing partner. In the project development phase, discussions are held with the various partners on what their role and responsibilities will be in the project and this information is documented in a Partnership Agreement (see Attachment J for an example). Several discretionary programs have weekly meetings with frontline staff to raise up successes and to focus in on problem areas. This process has given the NRMWDB the opportunity to build stronger partnerships with agencies/organizations within the “workforce system” and provided the opportunity to connect and work with agencies/organizations that are not in the traditional workforce system. Professional development is used not only as a tool to raise the ability of staff to provide exceptional customer service to our customers, but to also develop a link between partners, programs and people. Going virtual has enabled a greater level of participation in the monthly Professional Development Series by partner staff across the large geographical area served by the NRMWDB.

Community Development: The NRMWDB is a member of the Accountable Care Communities of Southwest Virginia and North East Tennessee who work to improve the overall health and well-being of the region. They’re made up of community partners from local and regional businesses, community organizations, faith-based organizations, health care organizations, schools and more. Their focus area include: Childhood trauma and resilience, Obesity, Substance use, Tobacco use. A statement on the Recovery Ready Region should also be mentioned. We believe that providing direct services to individuals and their families so they can become self-sufficient through a meaningful career will strengthen the economy and ultimately develop the community. The NRMWDB is making concerted efforts to help develop the communities of the 13 jurisdictions in the NRMWDA. To do so, we are working with partners through detailed asset mapping to understand the people in the communities as well as their perceived community needs. Additionally, we are working with other agencies and

organizations to understand and potentially build the community's capacity in addition to working with economic development partners to be a part in facilitating business development.

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. Becoming certified as Work Ready Communities empowers jobseekers to prove employment readiness and supports businesses in recruiting better prepared workers.

Business Development: Discretionary funding, especially the U.S. Department of Labor's America's Promise Job-Driven grant, greatly aided the NRMWDB in supporting the needs of regional businesses through targeted skill development/enhancement of the regional workforce and future pipeline. Through this project, a Business Services Coordinator worked with the region's four Business Solution Teams to coordinate business services and engagement activities. Business Solutions Teams are comprised of workforce partners who serve businesses, chambers of commerce, and economic development. Having a dedicated Business Services Coordinator, the NRMWDB has been able to increase opportunities (and funding) that enable the workforce system to meet the needs of businesses to develop talent recruitment/retention, skill upgrade and other solutions based on the particular business needs. Business services can include Recruitment Services, Labor Market Information, Consulting Services, and Training.

Workforce Development: Two distinct pipelines in the NRMWDA address the skill and credential needs of business and jobseeker customers: (1) the Secondary Educational System, and (2) the Postsecondary Educational System.

The Secondary System: For the 2020-2021 school year, the NRMWDA had 27 high schools serving 10,970 students in grades 9 to 12. The latest graduation rate (2018-2019) was 93.9%, which excludes high school equivalency completers. Dropout rate is 4.0%. Each school division in NRMWDA offers CTE and dual enrollment programs. A total of 1,282 high school students (9% enrollment) completed a CTE program during the 2017-2018 academic year. Popular programs included: animal systems (124 completions); construction (112); personal care services (110); and business information management (98). Additionally, 3,087 high school students (22.1% of enrollment) participated in a dual-enrollment program with a regional community college during the 2019-2020 academic year. Each school division in NRMWDA offered CTE and dual enrollment programs for the 2018 academic year.

The Postsecondary System: The region is home to three state universities, three community colleges, and several proprietary higher educational institutions, including a Manufacturing Center of Excellence. All three community colleges offer FastForward programs, short-term training that directly lead to industry credentials and employment. These programs are aligned with labor market information, and students who complete and earn credentials could be awarded a \$1,000 stipend by the Virginia Ready Initiative. This extra incentive is a great selling point for transitions into and completion of postsecondary training and industry recognized credentials. Another community college career training initiative due to be implemented in July, 2021 is G3 (“Get a Skill, Get a Job, Give Back”), designed to provide more affordable training for individuals who have a low and moderate income. G3 provides extra financial for

individuals who seek training in the fields of healthcare, information technology and computer science, manufacturing and skilled trades, early childhood education, and public safety.

The NRMRWDB has discretionary grant programs and opportunities using an Integrated Education and Training (IET) model focused on in-demand occupations in demand industries. Each program targets individuals in the region who have specific barriers to employment (e.g. un/underemployed individuals who are low skilled, have a substance use disorder and/or have a felony or other “background” issues) and strives to help these targeted groups increase their employability skills and obtain employment. In partnership with our regional Adult Education and/or Literacy programs and others partners, these programs provide holistic and flexible programming that emphasizes personal responsibility and provides job skills training, work experience, job readiness training, supportive services, and other work-related expenses for careers that matter. This model helps achieve the directive under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to “help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in a global economy.” We also support and promote Incumbent Worker Training through all allowable funding (and seek additional funding to support this effort). Incumbent Worker Training affords us the opportunity to work with businesses to upskill their current workforce, ensuring that businesses have the talent to be competitive in their marketplace.

Sections 1 and 4 of our Strategic Plan provide more detailed information on workforce development activities in the region.

1.5 An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in 1.4 and the capacity to provide these services
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Strengths of the Workforce Development Activities:

Partnership Development: The NRMWDB has used their discretionary grants as an opportunity to reach out to a wide range of partners and/or to build a stronger relationship with workforce partners. Each project has strengthened relationships, improved processes to ensure a "customer centered approach" to serving both job seekers and businesses.

Community Development: The NRMWDB recognizes that workforce development does not happen in a vacuum. Workers (and future workers) are impacted and influenced by whatever is happening around them. Through projects like the Work Ready Community and ARC's POWER, the NRMWDB is taking a leadership role to improve the region's communities and working with other members of the Accountable Care Community and other organizations that the NRMWDB is involved with. We are standing with and working alongside of regional organizations (that are not necessarily "workforce organizations") to improve the conditions of our communities and to ensure that those individuals and businesses served have knowledge of and access to many needed resources.

Business Development: The NRMWDB uses the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, B2B Engage©, to track services and outcomes. This database was implemented in the region using various State and Federal funds. Having such a powerful tool has allowed partners to work together to avoid a duplication of effort (partners in the system include: WDB staff, WIOA Title 1 staff, VEC staff, DBVI staff and economic development). The B2B Engage© system not only tracks activities/services provided to a business (what, when, cost and partners that participated in the activity), but also tracks needs assessment information that can be gathered from a business through various contacts (request for assistance from the business, a one-on-one meeting, general conversations at an event, job fairs, etc.).

Workforce Development: In the secondary system, there were 3,480 students in the 2018-2022 cohort in NRMWDA. Approximately 93.9% of these students graduated on-time and 4.0% dropped out over the course of the four-year observation period. The majority (71.7%) of 2022 high school graduates in NRMWDA had plans to continue their education. We have a unique circumstance for a rural area in that we have six higher education institutions in the regional footprint (three community colleges and three four-year universities) as well as an industry specific training provider (the newly formed Center of Manufacturing Excellence). These institutions offer a wide variety of programs to meet regional business needs from workforce/non-credit certificates, customized training to meet specific business/industry needs, to degrees at all levels. Availability of funding to support postsecondary training in the region is, at this time, plentiful, and there are many programs that can offer the much needed funding for training supportive services (e.g. child care, transportation, books, tools, certification fees, etc.). The Region is also home to two Adult Education providers (Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education and New River Community College's Office of Transitional Programs), which offer not only a path to obtaining the GED, but also serve as support in several of the NRMWDB's discretionary grants for basic skills upgrade, workplace readiness and to support students that had to enroll in virtual learning (due to the pandemic) that would otherwise struggle to be successful without the additional support provided by an Adult Education Instructor. There is also the Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley which is a community-based literacy program that provides free one-to-one or small group tutoring in reading, writing, basic math, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), digital literacy and preparation for exams such as the GED and U.S. Citizenship tests.

Weaknesses of the Workforce Development Activities:

Partnership Development: Tools to communicate effectively among partner programs continue to hamper true partnerships. Each agency and organization has its own database aligned with the

requirements of their funders. Workarounds are challenging and tedious, often meaning that staff enter data into more than one database. Further, there is sometimes a burden on jobseeker customers as they are required to complete duplicative paperwork. While the referral portal has been implemented, this tool is for the jobseeker customer and is not a cross-agency collaboration tool. We are working to encourage jobseekers to use the portal as we believe it will be beneficial to them; however, they have to be encouraged and supported by staff to actually complete it due to a lack of trust many jobseekers feel. We are hopeful that state and regional activities (such as the UniteUs initiative) may improve the efficiencies of our communications among partners.

Community Development: Knowledge of the workforce system (as a system and its individual parts) continues to be limited. Additional effort is needed to fully realize a “no wrong door” approach for all points of entry for a business, an individual, an economic developer, and all other partners. The NRMWDB recognizes there is nothing wrong with working with the person/agency/organization you know (and are comfortable with), but most in the community-at-large don’t realize that they can access a much wider variety of services through that one contact. Of course, there is still the problem that not all workforce agencies/organizations function as a doorway to everything else in the system at this point. Through our collective impact model and efforts, we continue to build on this concept, and we recognize that this effort will continue to take much time and effort.

Business Development: While the B2B Engage[®] system is a powerful tool for coordinating and managing business engagement and services, it can be challenging for staff to use consistently due to also having to also input the information into the VAWC. While B2B Engage[®] is more robust, is available for partners to use, and provides useful data immediately at our fingertips, the time requirement of entering data into two systems is challenging. Unfortunately, there is no method at present to allow the two systems

to “speak with each other,” so this duplication is necessary in order to have the B2B Engage® system.

We believe the benefits are greater than the burden of the extra time required to do so.

Workforce Development: With a nod towards the still agrarian nature of the region, Animal Systems was the most popular CTE program, with Construction following close behind. Despite the high CTE enrollments, very few young people return to the farm or go into the construction industry.

There was a disconnect between completions and demand in the NRMW WDA. More popular programs tended to be in less demand than programs with fewer completions. Professional and technical programs saw fewer completions despite high annual openings. For instance, there were 19 completions in construction trades programs in 2021 compared to 2,475 openings across related occupations for the same year. Similarly, there were 27 completions for manufacturing engineering technology/technician programs compared to 2,361 openings during the same year. Programs related to healthcare and liberal arts/social sciences saw more completions than openings in 2020. There were 426 completions for registered nursing programs compared to only 273 openings. Additionally, there were 60 completions for physical therapy/therapist programs compared to only 19 openings. Additionally, there were 261 completions in sociology programs compared to 228 annual openings, and 335 completions for speech communication and rhetoric compared to 226 openings.

Overall completions for 1-year academic programs and 1-2-year academic programs fell by 3% (521 completions) and 33% (467) respectively, while completion for associate’s degrees increased by 7% (1,219) in the NRMW WDA from 2016-2021, respectively. Nevertheless, allied health diagnostic, intervention, and treatment (127 completions), electrical, electronic, and communications engineering technology/technician (53 completions), and welding technology/welder (32 completions) were the

most popular 1-year academic programs in 2021. General liberal arts and sciences (242 completions), licensed practical/vocational nurse training (68 completions), allied health diagnostic, intervention, and treatment professions (24), and precision metal working (20) programs were the most popular 1-2-year academic programs for the same year. Finally, Liberal studies (587 completions), registered nursing (199), business operations support and secretarial services (48), physical therapy assistant (37), and industrial electronics technology/technician (36) programs were the most popular associate's degree programs.

Capacity to Provide these Services: Collective Impact has been the focus of the NRMRWDB for the last five plus years as we have worked to establish a model for the region's workforce development system to serve jobseekers, businesses, and the communities in our region. The additional funding and creative program design, through discretionary grants, has created the opportunities that allow the five conditions for collective impact to begin to manifest in the region. Each new program/project is designed to build on current regional strengths and partnerships through the use of Integrated Resource Teams (to serve individuals) and Business Solutions Teams (to serve businesses). Both teams are designed to bring additional partners into the collaboration for program success. These discretionary projects have also added funding and other resources that allow the workforce system to meet specific industry needs and/or the needs of special populations through the collective impact approach as well as the braiding and leveraging of regional resources (through partnership development). The lessons learned about the collective impact model is beginning to flow into standard practice in the workforce system.

The partners each have a maximum level of output they can sustain to provide the much needed workforce system services for our business and jobseeker customers. Limitations are prevalent and accepted, and we try to find "workarounds" to be able to accomplish goals and meet performance to

ultimately achieve a collective impact for all workforce system partners. While we strive to work at full capacity, it is absurd to think that that can always be the case. However, what is the case is that the NRMWDB has leadership and staff who are innovative and creative in problem-solving to work through challenges such as an inadequate number of staff due to funding restrictions, barriers in the community (such as lack of public transportation, a digital divide, and inadequate quality childcare), and funding not always in alignment with the real needs of businesses, people, and the communities in which they reside. To help develop the capacity of the NRMWDB and try to alleviate the aforementioned challenges, discretionary funding is a must. Without the additional funding (and the staff, tools, and resources they bring), the NRMWDB would not be able to work at an optimal level of capacity to accomplish the goals stated in this plan. Discretionary funding has allowed for the NRMWDB to have a Deputy Director and a Business Services Coordinator. Specifically for the discretionary grant programs, the NRMWDB has been able to hire additional staff who work through Integrated Resource Teams and strive to maximize all funding and resources. As the NRMWDB considers discretionary projects, staff go through a capacity planning session to determine how to balance the available hours of staff against project needs. To further our capacity, we use a project management tool, ProjectHub® and have worked closely with BusinessU to create a customer relationship management (CRM) for both the business and jobseeker customers. Weekly meetings for discretionary staff and monthly partner meetings are coordinated to aid in developing the capacity of the NRMWDB and all workforce system partners. Our SWOT survey responses highlighted the strong and innovative leadership role that the NRMWDB plays in the region. Staff are collaborative, passionate, and tenacious in pursuing funding and finding solutions to individual, regional, and systemic challenges.

1.6 Describe and assess the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area including activities for youth with disabilities, which must include an identification of successful models of such activities.

Strategy for Ensuring the Availability of Comprehensive Services: Currently, two program operators* provide youth services in all localities in the region. Annual monitoring evaluates a percentage of files for each Case Manager. Through monitoring, the WIOA Coordinator evaluates the availability of services and determines whether all program elements are being provided. Written findings are provided to the operators, and each finding must be addressed. Operators have developed detailed eligibility criteria to meet the needs of our regional youth population and to support the pipeline to employment for all young people with targeted programming for the most at risk in our region. Through strict fiscal monitoring, funds are appropriately used in our youth programs.

Also, the NRMWDB is operating a U.S. Department of Labor YouthBuild Construction Plus program titled *Build Your Career*, and, as appropriate, WIOA Youth are co-enrolled. The training uses an Integrated Education and Training (IET) model focusing on career pathways in Construction, Manufacturing, or Healthcare.

The Integrated Education and Training (IET) design model is by its nature integrating the two program components of Foundational and Occupational skills training. To directly support the primary goal of providing disadvantaged youth with opportunities to obtain education and employment skills in local in-demand jobs to achieve economic self-sufficiency, the *Build Your Career* design intentionally aligns partners, services, and resources to influence positive behavior change and empower youth through employment in meaningful careers. Project activities address barriers that often impede youth from successfully completing postsecondary training, earning credentials, and attaining (and retaining) employment. Case Management and Supportive services are provided to youth while they are actively enrolled in the program and throughout the 12-month follow-up for continued success.

Foundational and Occupational training uses a research-based best-practices hybrid model, providing both classroom and technology-based curriculum delivery for flexibility to accommodate youth with

part-time employment. Intended curricula for the Foundational (academic and work readiness) and Occupational components of our program design, depicted in Table 1, support maximum co-enrollments with local workforce preparation programs such as WIOA, TANF, SNAP ET, and Adult Education.

Because *Build Your Career* is a significant investment in youth, Mental Toughness is designed to be rigorous to determine applicant eligibility and suitability for the program. Applicants faithfully attending Mental Toughness, demonstrating a good attitude, working cooperatively, and completing the *Empower Your Future* curriculum will be assessed to determine their educational functioning levels as well as career interest and aptitude. They complete our assessment and intake process for enrollment in *Build Your Career*. When possible the YouthBuild participant is co-enroll in our WIOA Youth program provided by People, Inc for case management services and to offer a paid work experience during the occupational training component.

Our custom-designed *Career & Services Plan* assesses motivation, support systems, learning style and preference, barriers, family obligations, work schedule, availability for participating in training, and access to technology and the internet. It also describes the full training plan, back-up plans, and services the participant will need to work through obstacles that might interfere with success.

Following Dr. Beverly Ford's appreciative inquiry and motivational interviewing approaches, the *Career & Services Plan* will be built on the individual's strengths. After successfully completing all aspects of Mental Toughness, participants will begin Foundational and Occupational training, which is provided in an integrated way to support development of basic skills and employment readiness.

Foundational Training provides academic, leadership, and community service components. Project partners will have the shared responsibility of addressing participants' barriers to employment. The Adult Education program provides instruction to help participants advance their basic and critical work skills in preparation for a secondary credential (GED® or high school diploma) and the National

Career Readiness Certificate. They will also facilitate the Conover Workplace Readiness, Job Seeking Skills, and Job Keeping Skills program components. Case Managers assist participants in completing Conover's Personal Responsibility, Success Profiler, Anger Management, and Anxiety Management programs.

Conover is an assessment and curriculum system focusing on soft skills, social & emotional learning, and life skills that help people understand their own abilities, identify the areas they need to improve, and have a plan to gain the knowledge, skills, or tools necessary.

Participants are actively engaged in community service activities, called "Give Back Days," including working at the Habitat House. These community services opportunities help participants can gain valuable skills, including core construction skills often used in home maintenance, leadership, team work, and development of interpersonal skills very much needed to be a successful worker.

Participants will advance their workplace skills through participating in the Foundational and Occupational training components, construction of the dwelling for a low-income family, leadership, and academic training. Much emphasis is placed on team-building so participants can both give and receive support from their peers as well as develop soft-skills. Some participants may require more support (for substance use disorder, emotional disturbance, food/shelter insecurities, etc.) and may need to be connected to additional services in the region with other workforce system partners.

Our **Academic Component** includes the WorkKeys Curriculum[®], which includes Workplace Documents (measures skill levels in reading and using written text in order to do a job); Graphic Literacy (working with workplace graphics); and Applied Mathematics (applying mathematical reasoning, critical thinking, and problem-solving techniques to work-related problems) to help participants develop critical work skills. To help participants develop their leadership skills, we will use the leadership curriculum included in Conover's Success Profiler.

Occupational Training includes NCCER Core Introductory Craft Skills, HBI PACT, or NOCTI for the Construction Career Pathway; curriculum aligned with the Virginia Board of Nursing for Certified Nursing Assistant for the Healthcare Career Pathway; and MSSC's Certified Production Technician for the Manufacturing Career Pathway. After completion of their occupational skills training, participants are assisted in the transition to their follow-up goal. Our Business Services Coordinator assists participants desiring to go directly into employment.

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

**A new RFP will be released in January 2023 requesting proposals from organizations that can provide all WIOA Title 1 programs for the whole region. Starting July 1, 2023 there will only be one program operator for WIOA Title 1 Adult, DLW and Youth programs.*

Strategies to Ensure Youth Receive Access to Activities: Through collaborations, direct support, and monitoring, we ensure that youth clients are offered the Fourteen Elements available to them. Case

managers directly deliver tutoring for in-school youth, and Adult Education provides tutoring for out-of-school youth. Alternative secondary school offerings are provided through the local school systems. The WIOA Youth Program Operators provide summer work experience that is linked to the participant career goals/training. These work experiences, along with others (e.g. summer employment and internships) are also consistent with the youth's career goals and training. Regional training providers are enlisted to provide occupational skills training aligned with in demand industry sectors and occupations that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials. Program Operators provide leadership development opportunities such as community service activities and college tours. In partnership with other programs the availability of Conover professional soft skills assessments, WorkKeys® Assessments, digital literacy, and financial literacy are also offered to youth. Through the use of Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) organizations and agencies help with many supportive needs of youth. Adult mentoring is rarely used due to the geography of the region and lack of transportation for youth; however, the NRMWDB recognizes providing mentors is an area that can be improved upon and is enlisting the help of chambers of commerce and service learning clubs at our colleges and universities. The WIOA Youth Program Operators are providing this service and have created robust follow-up Action Items that keep participants engaged throughout the 12-month period. They use a variety of contact methods and provide continuous career information to the participants throughout the follow-up period. They refer participants to the local Community Services Boards for comprehensive guidance and counseling. Financial Literacy education is provided as part of work readiness through a variety of methods including Financial Empowerment and programs offered through Local Credit Unions. For the RSVP project, the Adult Education partners provide this service. Entrepreneurial skills training is touched on during work readiness; however, the NRMWDB recognizes that a more intentional approach is needed. For starters, program operators will make efforts to connect youth with experiential/work-based learning with adult entrepreneurs in the community in which the youth resides. At intake, operators review labor market

information with participants, which is included as part of their development plan. To help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training, operators use assessment such as WorkKeys® and Northstar Digital Literacy®. There is also a close partnership with Job Corps and Integrated Education and Training Programs through RSVP and POWER. Additional information on our strategies is included in Section 1 of our Strategic Plan.

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

Strategies to Identify, Recruit, and Retain Out-of-School Youth:

Identification and Recruitment: Recruitment of Out-of-School Youth is often challenging because many of these youth are disenfranchised and typically disconnected from community programs and resources. Word of mouth is typically the most effective method—especially referrals from participants to their friends and family. To be successful with this method, we coordinate clear messaging through outreach flyers using the appropriate branding that depict eligibility, resources/supports, and goals. These materials are placed in areas where youth have access to them (e.g. laundry mats and local hang-outs) as well as sent to all organizations and agencies serving these targeted youth. Sometimes, however, word-of-mouth is not possible when new programs are being established. Staff and Program Operators

make presentations to agencies that serve drop-outs, unemployed, and low income persons such as: the Virginia Career Works centers, Local Departments of Social Services, Department of Juvenile Justice, Drug Courts, Adult Education Programs, Health Departments, Local Food and Clothing Banks, Churches, Public Housing, etc. Relationships with these organizations is strengthened through the use of Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) and regional Professional Development opportunities that are offered to all workforce partners in the region. Another important aspect of recruitment is our web presence—and those of our program operators. From experience, we believe that in-person meetings are more successful than contact through telephone, email, and even social media.

Retention: Developing and maintain a rapport with youth is the strongest retention strategy we have seen. These youth have barriers that have often prevented them from accessing and persisting in the opportunities in the region. Intentionally building trust and helping the youth address their barriers through connecting them to available supportive services help youth overcome their barriers. Having a safe space for peer-to-peer supports as well as incentivizing youth for satisfactorily complete milestones and goals are also very important in retaining youth and helping them transition to their next steps.

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

Policy Regarding Serving Youth who do not Meet Income Eligibility Guidelines: Our policy regarding serving youth who do not meet income requirements is addressed in our [Youth Services](#) policy posted on our website and states that “each eligible provider of a program of youth workforce activities shall ensure that an eligible applicant who does not meet the enrollment requirements of the particular program or who cannot be served shall be referred for further assessment, as necessary, and referred to appropriate programs to meet the basic skills and training needs of the applicant.”

Coordination Efforts: Partnership and Business Engagement as well as descriptive information about Integrated Resource Teams (IRT). The IRT approach, one of the key strategic service delivery components of the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI), a project of the U.S. Department of Labor in which the NRMWDB participated, is an informal agreement at the “customer level” that involves diversified service systems coordinating services and leveraging funding in order to meet the needs of an individual jobseeker. This strategic approach is customer-centered and supports the integrated nature of WIOA, resulting in enhanced coordination of services and supports to a jobseeker. While not all participants in NRMWDB programs have a disability, many do have barriers and the IRT approach has been identified as a best-practice to assist participants as they prepare for and transition into employment. Tools such as the ***Collaborative Funding Agreement*** (CFA), created in the America’s Promise grant, help the members of the IRT clearly understand the participant’s needs and who is responsible (financially and otherwise) for supporting each specific need. The CFA is a living document, shifting as the needs of the participant change throughout his/her experience in the program. A copy of the CFA is Attachment C. ProjectHub® is used to support collaboration and coordination efforts among team members. (For more information on IRTs use this link for the full Strategic Plan or just choose “Section 1” <https://vcwnewrivermtrogers.com/about-us/strategic-plan/>. Monthly the NRMWDB Executive Director host a Partner/Management Team meeting where all program/agency

managers/directors are invited to participate and share what’s going on in their agency. This was particularly helpful during the pandemic as these individuals were not seeing each other at in-person meetings in and around the region. It also allows partners that might not otherwise work with each other due to geographical constraints to hear what is happening in other parts of the region.

Efforts to Ensure Child Labor and Safety Regulations: Compliance with applicable child labor and safety regulations are addressed in our “General Terms and Conditions” included as a part of all approved Program Operator contracts for WIOA service delivery. Item 27(e) of this document addresses compliance with child labor and safety regulations, and the General Terms and Conditions document is posted on our website under the policies section.

Pay-for-Performance Policy: The NRMWDB does not use Pay-for-Performance.

1.7 Describe and assess the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.
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Access to and Delivery of Career Services: Adult and Dislocated Worker employment and training activities include a range of services to assist clients in obtaining meaningful employment with family sustaining wages. Program Operators provide career services at strategic locations and in the Virginia Career Works centers. Services include basic, individualized, and follow-up. The NRMWDB has two contracted program operators for Title 1 Adult and one contracted program operator for DLW. Adult & DLW services can be accessed (through a staff person) in all seven One-Stop centers as well as virtual services (through many platforms). A diagram of the how an individual accesses the system can be found in Section 5 of our Strategic Plan under the One-Stop Delivery System.

Basic Services include: (1) Outreach as well as intake and orientation to the information, services, programs, tools and resources available; (2) Initial assessments of skill level(s), aptitudes, abilities and supportive service needs; (3) In and out of area job search and placement assistance (including provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations and non-traditional employment); (4) Access to employment opportunity and labor market information; (5) Performance information and programs costs for eligible providers of training, education, and workforce services; (6) Information on performance of the local Workforce system; (7) Information on the availability of supportive services and referral to such, as appropriate; (8) Information and meaningful assistance on UI claim filing; (9) Determination of potential eligibility for workforce Partner services, programs, referrals; and (10) Information and assistance in applying for financial aid for training and education program not provided under WIOA.

Individualized Services include: (1) Comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs; (2) Development of individual employability plan to identify employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the customer to achieve the employment goals; (3) Referral to training services; (4) Referral to group counseling; (5) Referral to literacy activities related to work readiness; (6) Career planning and referral to individual counseling; (7) Case management for customers seeking training services as well as individual in and out of area job search, referral, and placement assistance; (8) Work experience, transitional jobs, registered apprenticeships and internships; (9) Workforce preparation services (e.g., development of learning skills, punctuality, communication skills, interviewing skills, personal maintenance, literacy skills, financial literacy skills, and professional conduct) to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training; and (10) Post-employment follow-up services and support (Is not an individualized career service but listed here for completeness).

Follow-up Services include: Regular contact with the participant (Adult/DLW is quarterly and Youth Discretionary Grants are monthly) to determine if the client needs assistance. When assistance is needed, Follow-up staff connect the client to the Case Manager or appropriate agency or organization. If clients indicate that they would like additional assistance because of salary, reduced hours, job satisfaction, conflict in the workplace, or other issues, then the request is documented in the internal tracking system for the monthly report. The client's case manager is contacted to provide the assistance. Follow-up is also used to confirm whether or not the client is employed or enrolled in an educational or training program. Follow-up staff retrieve Employment Verification and Credentialing Verification also during Follow-up.

Self-Sufficiency: In 2018, 51% of Southwestern Virginia households lived in poverty or were included in the "asset limited, income constrained, employed" (ALICE) population. These households contribute to Southwest Virginia's economy by earning, spending, and paying taxes, yet they still struggle to make ends meet. The NRMWDB's Self-Sufficiency and Employed Worker Policy used when determining eligibility for intensive and training services for employed individuals reflects the need to serve this population and states, "To better serve the total adult population in Area 2, the Workforce Development Board has determined that individuals who are a member of a family that is above the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) guidelines but not in excess of 200% of current guidelines may receive WIOA career services/training as an established priority service group. The Workforce Development Board will allow all adult participants, who are employed to be determined eligible under this provision."

Hard-to-Serve Populations Definition: The NRMWDB definition of Hard-to-Serve populations include individuals with multiple barriers to training/employment and include one or more of the following: (1)

receiving public assistance; (2) TANF eligible or are classified as low income; (3) basic skills deficient or lack a high-school diploma/GED®; (4) offenders; (5) disability; (6) substance use disorder; (7) homeless; (8) lack transportation; and (9) lack of safe/affordable childcare. The [Priority of Services](#) is posted on the Board's website.

Section 2: Strategic Vision and Goals

2.1 Describe the local board’s strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment). The goals should relate to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance.

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

Goal 1: *Build the region’s talent supply to align with current and anticipated business needs and ensure workers earn family sustaining wages*

Goal 2: *Increase opportunities for the region’s businesses to fill jobs in high demand occupations that are strategic to the region’s economy.*

Goal 3: *Increase outreach and recruitment efforts promote workforce services, stimulate career awareness, and promote Career Pathway opportunities of regional businesses.*

Goal 4: *Reduce workforce system barriers through collaboration and innovative solutions.*

2.2 Describe how the local board’s strategic vision and goals will support the strategies identified in the Virginia Combined State Plan.

The NRMWDB’s vision and goals fully support the strategies identified in the Virginia Combined State Plan. The NRMWDB’s Strategic Planning Committee reviewed the State Plan and designed Strategic Goals that were in alignment with the State Goals. These goals were approved by the NRMWDB and partners. Although the strategies are different than the State’s, they are local strategies and action items to support the goals and ensure success.

Goal 1: *Build the region’s talent supply to align with current and anticipated business needs and ensure workers earn family sustaining wages.*

Strategy 1.1: Increase the use of Career Pathways and Lattice Models for targeted industries.

Action Items

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

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

Action Items

1. Determine from businesses the education, skill, and credential levels needed for employment and integrate into the Integrated Education and Training programs.
2. Raise partner and stakeholder awareness through presentations and collaboration efforts.
3. Deliver equitable and universal services to jobseekers, including low-skilled adults, persons with disabilities, veterans, individuals with substance use disorder, justice involved, individuals 200% of poverty with dependent children, non-native English speakers, and unemployed and underemployed workers.
4. Partner with the Regional Adult Education programs, Career and Technical Education programs, community colleges, and vocational programs to provide concurrent and contextual workforce preparation activities and workforce training.

5. Include community college FastForward programs, integrating the Virginia Ready initiative, in the IET program offerings.
6. Incorporate opportunities and initiatives offered in the region and expand services for IET participants using Integrated Resource Teams.
7. Connect businesses with successful program completers through a variety of business and jobseeker events.
8. Coordinate and sponsor professional development opportunities to enhance the knowledge and skills of partners and stakeholders.

Strategy 1.3: Provide a minimum of ten jobseeker and business engagement events annually.

Action Items

1. Offer Reverse Job Fairs to highlight job seekers with in-demand skills and to promote in-demand occupations for businesses.
2. Sponsor social events for jobseekers and businesses to interact in an “informal” way (for “professional level” job seekers and companies seeking those job seekers).
3. Provide both in-person and virtual job/career fairs as needed.
4. Coordinate customized job/career fairs for specific companies and/or industries based on their specific needs.
5. Develop and implement a youth mentoring program to connect youth to regional business leaders.

Strategy 1.4: Increase the capacity of the workforce system by expanding the professional development of workforce professionals

Action Items

1. Offer two business engagement professional development opportunities annually to staff that serve businesses.

2. Offer two professional development opportunities annually that focus on increasing frontline staff's ability to serve job seekers, especially those with barriers to employment.
3. Offer one self-improvement professional development opportunity annually to all partner staff.

Goal 2: Increase opportunities for the region's businesses to fill jobs in high demand occupations that are strategic to the region's economy.

Strategy 2.1: Increase by twenty percent business engagement efforts.

Action Items

1. Propose a plan and services to mediate risk for companies that are identified at risk of lay-off through Business Solutions Teams and other sector initiatives.
2. Connect companies that are in a position of growth as identified through Business Solutions Teams and other sector initiatives to appropriate organizations, funding, and initiatives.
3. Provide Incumbent Worker Training and other Work-Based Learning opportunities to support business growth and transitions.
4. Coordinate customized company specific talent recruitment and retention efforts.
5. Continue to promote and use the KnowledgeToWork.com portal as a virtual career fair platform highlighting the competencies that are needed for in-demand occupations.
6. Host quarterly business workshops and/or webinars that provide businesses with relevant information about talent recruitment, retention, supervision, and others, as needed.

Strategy 2.2: Leverage the four Business Solutions Teams to identify and address the service delivery needs of businesses

Action Items

1. Use the Customer Relationship Management tool, B2B Engage®, as a method of coordinating business engagement efforts and information sharing.
2. Devise an early warning system to gather business information in order to meet the business needs in all phases of the business.
3. Collaborate with local economic development partners taking lead on business retention and growth initiatives.
4. Coordinate and sponsor semi-annual professional development opportunities to enhance the knowledge and skills of Business Solutions Team members.
5. Continue to focus on the “No Wrong Door” approach for businesses to connect to the workforce system in each micro-region
6. Engage with businesses in each micro-region to determine pain-points and to coordinate workforce and/or training programs that address their challenges.
7. Use the BSTs to develop hiring events, workshops and other events to support their micro-region businesses
8. Host a Workforce Exchange event quarterly for businesses to increase workforce system partner’s knowledge of the hiring practices and needs of specific businesses in the region.

Strategy 2.3: Through a sector approach, engage businesses and other partners, such as economic development, education and training providers, chambers of commerce, and community organizations, to align public and private resources to address business needs in those sectors.

Action Items

1. Provide annual LMI data to education, chambers, economic development and other organizations to ensure that the “in demand’ occupations for each sector are highlighted.

2. Support and participate in activities by industry organizations (e.g. Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing, the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council and the Appalachian Council for Innovation).
3. Provide outreach to targeted jobseekers to communicate information about in-demand careers in targeted industries and career pathways for businesses in the region, with special focus on underserved populations.
4. Communicate information about in-demand careers in targeted industries and career pathways for businesses in the region to high school students and graduates of postsecondary institutions to retain local talent, including those with disabilities.
5. Highlight businesses, industry sectors, job opportunities, and growth and transition supports through podcasts and other outreach efforts.

Strategy 2:4: Increase the understanding, accessibility, and usage of worked-based learning, in the region's high demand occupations.

Action Items

1. Promote to business the practice of job shadowing for instructors and students in CTE, community colleges, WIOA and discretionary grant projects, and others.
2. Promote to businesses and jobseeker customers through presentations and engagement activities Work-Based Learning, including Registered Apprenticeship, On-the-Job Training, Customized Training, Incumbent Worker Training, Transitional Jobs, Work Experiences, and others.
3. Work with a Department of Labor Apprenticeship Intermediary to develop an apprenticeship program.

4. Share best-practices models and regional Success Stories with stakeholders and businesses through various outreach tools, including newsletters, e-marketing campaigns, podcasts, and infographics.
5. Promote the Southwest Virginia United Way Ignite Program and other initiatives that offer opportunities for work-based learning for high-school students.

Strategy 2.6: Increase engagement and support to regional businesses that were particularly economically impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Action Items

1. Use intel from local economic development staff and chamber staff to identify businesses that might have been negatively impacted by COVID.
2. Create opportunities for those businesses to engage with the workforce system and each other for support, information sharing and services.

Goal 3: Increase outreach and recruitment efforts promote workforce services, stimulate career awareness, and promote Career Pathway opportunities of regional businesses.

Strategy 3.1: Increase use of social media and other tools to tell the regional workforce story and promote regional workforce programs.

Action Items

1. Set a schedule for regular postings to Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn
2. Use social media accounts to promote partner activities as well as board activities
3. Highlight Success Stories when available
4. Highlight Programs weekly
5. Increase staff proficiency by using resources to learn how to tell stories using data

Strategy 3.2: Increase workforce, community, education (including K12) and economic development partner participation in BSUs and sub-region Partner activities to serve businesses and job seekers in a more effective and efficient way.

Action Items

1. Engage board Staff in BSU Meetings to invite partners to participate.
2. Share meeting notes and highlight accomplishments made with partners seeking to engage.
3. Share successes and impacts at board meetings.
4. Facilitate opportunities for workforce, community, education, and economic development partners to develop relationships and discuss partner contributions to business and jobseeker services.

Strategy 3.3: Increase the effectiveness of work-based learning program outreach to businesses and potential participants

Action Items

1. Design an outreach campaign to identify the benefits of work-based learning to businesses and potential participants.
2. Create Success Stories highlighting the impact work-based learning had on employee effectiveness.
3. Share successes and impacts of work-based learning at board meetings and other events to raise awareness of its importance in training to upskill the workforce and provide customized training for businesses.

Strategy 3.4: Use data and success stories to demonstrate the impact of workforce programs on the region.

Action Items

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

Goal 4: Reduce workforce system barriers through collaboration and innovative solutions

Strategy 4.1: Increase the use of Integrated Resource Teams to create customer-centered partnerships and improve employment outcomes for jobseekers.

Action Items

1. Coordinate services and leverage funding with partners to give jobseekers comprehensive, wrap-around services that are tailored to their unique needs and employment goals.
2. Seek out and collaborate with partners to provide more intensive services to jobseekers.
3. Use ProjectHub® as a tool to communicate and collaborate with partners to address the jobseeker's challenges to employment.
4. Develop shared forms and eliminate the duplication of data collection from jobseekers.
5. Develop ways to encourage and empower the jobseeker to be in lead of his/her IRT.

Strategy 4.2: Increase partnerships with services for worker commuting, maintaining sobriety, childcare assistance, housing, and other barriers that present challenges to successful obtainment and retention of employment.

Action Items

1. Using the collective impact model to become more knowledgeable of, collaborate with and support partner efforts to address worker barriers to employment.

2. Coordinate partner engagement activities, both virtual and in person, for information sharing and coordination of efforts.
3. Through the Recovery Ready Region initiative, increase partnerships with organization that support individuals with substance use disorder and build safety nets between them and the workforce system to create an environment that supports successful access to employment.
4. Work with organizations and localities to support the expansion of childcare opportunities in the region.
5. Work with organizations to increase transportation opportunities (public and/or others) for those needed the services for training and/or employment.
6. Increase use of Ticket to Work and other programs that support individuals with disabilities.

Strategy 4.3: Leverage discretionary funds and support innovative initiatives to remove the largest barriers to employment (e.g., affordable childcare, transportation, housing, broadband access)

Action Items

1. Evaluate the development of a non-profit arm of the Consortium Board to increase discretionary funding opportunities to support programs and initiatives to lessen barriers to employment and training
2. Coordinate and sponsor professional development to staff to advance their coaching skills to support jobseeker goals.
3. Use assessments to effectively determine, address, and monitor the jobseeker's life, academic, employability, and technical skills advances toward employment goals.
4. Collaborate and communicate with partners through Integrated Resources Teams using shared tools to provide an array of comprehensive services to jobseekers.
5. Develop and implement a Youth Mentoring Program.

Strategy 4.4: Strengthen alignment of service delivery with other workforce and community programs, such as corrections, social services, public libraries, businesses, and veterans' services

Action Items

1. Coordinate and sponsor professional development opportunities for staff and partners.
2. Use Integrated Resource Teams as a standard of practice.
3. Through the collective impact model, maximize resources by directing jobseekers to qualified partners to deliver service(s).
4. Seek out additional faith-based and non-profit partners in local communities and provide the information to partners in shareable formats.
5. Use the STRONG Accountable Care Community and ARC POWER initiatives to build partnerships with new organizations to increase services and safety nets for those with barriers to employment and training.
6. Partner with businesses where appropriate to support job seekers with work based learning opportunities.

2.3 Describe how the local board's vision and goals align with and/or supports the vision of the Virginia Board of Workforce Development.

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

- Align the Commonwealth's workforce system with economic development Action Items
- Ensure training programs are demand driven

- Provide Virginians with educational pathways that lead to economic independence and prosperity
- Create a best-in class delivery system for workforce services that is accessible and effective for jobseekers and employers alike

Included in Section 2 of our Strategic Plan is more information of the Goals, Strategies and Action Items.

2.4 Taking into account the analyses described in 1.1 through 2.3, describe a strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs and required partners to align resources available to the local areas to achieve the local board’s strategic vision and goals.

To align resources with our Core and required partners and achieve our strategic vision and goals, the

NRMRWDB uses a Collective Impact strategy. Areas of focus to accomplish a collective Impact include:

Service Alignment: Alignment and collaboration with “collective impact” in mind has been the focus of the NRMRWDB for many years. Since 2016, the region has worked to identify the resources in the region and documented it in two ways: A Regional Resource Map and a Workforce Services Matrix (Attachment K). This work is designed to ensure the availability of needed services and limit the duplication of services. This effort, however, is one that we are working to strengthen. Through a resource mapping, an ongoing task, we have identified available organizations and programs within the region. In addition, each new project (with funds) brought to the area, has components for collective impact. We achieve collective impact by building working relationships with traditional and “non-traditional” partners. Each new project has the use of Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) as the center of job seeker services (see section 1.4 under Coordination Efforts for more information) and the Region’s four Business Solution Teams are the heart of business services. For more on the BST see section 3.9.

Referrals: As the Integrated Resource Team process becomes standard practice to serve all jobseekers, the referral and alignment of programs serving jobseekers will happen more consistently. Other referrals

happen as front-line staff gather information from the individuals with whom they are working. They gain knowledge about services this individual may need, and they reach out specifically to appropriate organizations. Partners working together created a Referral Tool Kit (Attachment L). In the tool kit, each partner was able to provide how referrals were best made (and to whom, if there was a specific individual). This Tool Kit has been shared with all partners and is updated as needed/requested by a specific partner. The NRMWDB is also a part of the Unite Us Virginia and NE Tennessee initiative. The NRMWDB is encouraging all partners to also participate in the Unite Us network to create a more seamless approach to referrals, shared documents and case notes. In December Governor Northam allocated \$10 million in CARES funding to have Unite Us create Unite Virginia. Unite Us is a leading care coordination platform that enables healthcare and social services to seamlessly work together to build healthier communities. It is a well understood fact that having employment that pays family sustaining wages has a positive impact on the health of an individual and their family. The workforce system should be part of the Unite Virginia project.

The local area will also begin implementing a roll out of the Virginia Career Works Referral Portal in January 2023 to reach individuals that are not currently accessing the workforce system through partner agencies and organizations.

Information Sharing: Through regional “partner” meetings, Integrated Resource Teams, and regularly scheduled Business Solution Team meetings, various partners come together and share information and issues about their respective organizations and programs. These partners include a mix of those mentioned in section 3.1. For specific projects, the use of ProjectHub® (an on-line project management tool) is a parking place for various documents and a space for sharing other information that aid frontline staff. ProjectHub® encourages collaboration, simple task management, content collaboration, and reporting. The NRMWDB uses a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, B2B Engage®, to

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

Training and Cross-Training: The NRMRWDB believes in, supports, and offers regional Professional Development opportunities to their staff and all workforce partners in the region. These events not only increase the skills of the individual trainees, but they also build capacity for the region to serve our businesses and job seekers and build a sense of community among partners. Cross training on programs and how to access programs happens during regularly scheduled Partner and BST meetings. Regional Professional Development opportunities are offered to partners (WIOA Titles and others) once a month. A larger number of frontline staff are able to access these trainings as most of these are now offered on-line.

2.5 Describe the local board strategic plan designed to combine public and private resources to support sector strategies, career pathways, and career readiness skills development.

Regional Vision for Workforce Development: The New River Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board envisions a region where every business has access to a qualified, job-ready workforce and every citizen in the region has the skills needed to secure meaningful, sustainable employment, competitive wages, and career advancement through an integrated workforce support infrastructure. The NRMRWDB's vision for workforce development aligns with the Commonwealth's vision for workforce development, which is to "improve economic opportunity for all Virginians by serving those who are not yet earning a sustainable wage and, as important, by focusing the resources and mechanisms of our

workforce system to recruit people into the workforce and connect them to businesses in high demand industries.”

Protocols for Planning Workforce Strategies that Anticipate Industry Needs: Strategies to anticipate industry needs include (1) having a designated staff person to coordinate and increase services to the region’s businesses; (2) providing business services through four Business Solutions Teams located strategically throughout the region; (3) securing funding to support the needs of regional businesses through targeted skill development/enhancement of the regional workforce and future pipeline; and (4) maximizing technology for effective communications.

Business Services Coordinator: The NRMRWDB has a dedicated Business Services Coordinator who coordinates engagement activities and services. As such, she develops systems and coordinates with the region’s four Business Solutions Teams and other partners to provide services to businesses in the region. Services to businesses may include recruitment, screening, and referral to targeted jobs; presentations to business associations regarding regional workforce system services and labor market resources; coordination of special events for businesses; and providing labor market information to businesses. The incumbent is responsible for assuring that the needs of businesses are served by the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Area system, as well as the needs of job seekers. Interactions with others include peers at a regional level, such as VEC, DARS, DSS, K-12 CTE and community college representatives, business partners and committees, various businesses, Chambers of Commerce and business associations. Specifically, she works with members of the BSTs and other regional partners to facilitate business access to services; develops and maintains a system of targeted recruitment of workers for businesses which involves all BST partners and affiliates in this system; responds to business requests for services; coordinates activities with the One Stop System Operator and Center Managers to ensure

a good business experience in the One-Stop Centers; participates in the development and maintenance of a fee-for-service structure to businesses for services beyond those provided with grant funds; markets program services including participating in the development of a marketing brochure to businesses; participates in professional business groups to build relationships, market services, and gain ideas about offering and improving business services; coordinates business services in region with regional business service efforts; and collects and distributes labor market information.

Business Solutions Teams: Business Services provided by the Business Solutions Teams include (but are not limited to:

- Recruitment Services: Job Description Development; Job Postings; Candidate Screening & Job Matching; Job Fairs, Hiring Events and Other Recruitment Events (both multi-company and company-specific); Resume & Candidate Referrals; Work Experience & Intern Placement and pre-hire assessments.
- Labor Market Information: Wage Comparison Analysis (providing businesses a wage comparison between their jobs and similar jobs in the region and/or state) and Industry and/or Occupation Demand Analysis (providing businesses with annual and projected occupational demand numbers)
- Consulting Services: Workforce Services Consultations (discussion about company needs and available resources); Job Fair & Hiring Event Development; Diversity Consultations & Workshops (working with a company to develop ways to recruit a specific or diverse candidate pool); Customized Training Curriculum & Development Meetings; Business Facility Tours; Connecting businesses to non-workforce resource providers (such as GenEdge, the Manufacturing Technology Center, legal advice, etc.)

- Training: On-The-Job Training Placement & Funding Assistance; Incumbent Worker Training Assistance; Trainings/Workshops/Seminars

Discretionary Funding to Support Businesses through Targeted Skill Development: All discretionary grant funding includes business services—as they are instrumental in assisting jobseekers in securing employment—as well as funding to support incumbent worker training. To fully support the needs of our businesses, additional funds are necessary. Additional targeted skill development includes the use of ACT’s Job Profiling to help align the skills needed to training.

Technology for Effective Communications: We use the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, B2B Engage©, to track and measure services and outcomes. This database was implemented in the region using various State and Federal funds. Having such a powerful tool has allowed partners to work together to avoid a duplication of effort (partners in the system include: WDB staff, WIOA Title 1 staff, VEC staff, DBVI staff and economic development). The B2B Engage® System not only tracks activities/services provided to a business (what, when, cost and partners that participated in the activity), but also tracks needs assessment information that can be gathered from a business through various contacts (request for assistance from the business, a one-on-one meeting, general conversations at an event, job fairs, etc.). Further, B2B Engage® allows us to measure business service activities. In 2017 NRMRWDB staff created a baseline of engagement with businesses in the following industry sectors: Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Information Technology to help measure the effect of having a Business Services Coordinator serving the region. To see the chart tracking business services and penetration from July 1, 2017 through Dec. 31, 2020 see Section 2 under Demand Plan.

Needs of Incumbent and Underemployed Workers in the Region: Our Strategic Plan includes efforts to meet the needs of incumbent and underemployed workers in the region. Incumbent worker training is a critical business service (and outreach) tactic. The NRMWDB uses WIOA Title 1 Adult and DLW funds (when available) as well as discretionary funds to support this activity. The Business Services Coordinator is the contact for that activity and assists the business with requirements and the paperwork. Many of the regional economic development representative will reach out to the BSC and make a referral when encounter a business that can benefit from this service. Our motto on this activity is “Upskilling and backfilling” as in many cases a trained incumbent worker will get a promotion (eventually) and create an opening for someone else. Once the relationship is built between the BSC and the company (through incumbent worker training) they will also seek out the BSC for talent search activities.

In the spirit of the law, the NRMWDB has determined that there exists in our local area a sizeable group of individuals that lack economic self-sufficiency, commonly referred to as the ALICE population (previously mentioned). These underemployed individuals are a critical asset in being able to provide businesses with skilled talent. Our specialized training programs like RSVP and POWER that use an Integrated Education and Training model are typically a good fit for this population because they build in flexibility and support in the program design.

Development of Partners and Guidelines for Various Forms of On-the-Job Training: There is a strong emphasis on “partnership/alignment” in serving both the region’s business and jobseeker customers. The availability of work-based learning opportunities are shared and discussed at both Partner and Business Solution Team meetings. The use of the Integrated Resource Teams (discussed in depth in Section 1 of the Strategic Plan) and the use of the Collaborative Funding Agreement (see Attachment C) sets the tone for documenting and tracking of shared resources. Apprentices have long been a challenge

in the region; however, we have reached out to [net.America Corporation](#), a DOL Apprenticeship Intermediary, to aid in the development of processes to increase this particular work-based learning tool.

Standards and Metrics for Operational Delivery: Metrics are key performance indicators developed in our programs. Strategies listed in our Strategic Plan (Section 2) note the metrics that are important to the NRMWDB: adding value to the region through meaningful Business engagement and services; meeting the needs of job seekers with barriers; and return on investment of public funds brought to the region to name a few. Monetary and other resources, including private funds and in-kind contributions, are aligned to support the workforce development system and the generation of new sources of funding to support workforce development in the region. All funding the NRMWDB sources is to leverage activities that support the mission and vision of the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board. Funds fall in the four programmatic elements: Job Seeker Services, Business Services, Outreach and System Development, and Administrative (Oversight/Management). The Overlap between programmatic and administrative elements in the workforce system are represented in the graphic in Section 5 of the Strategic Plan under Leveraging Funds. The overlap between elements is not only efficient, but also it is valuable to access and integrate our workforce efforts. Often, programs that are directed at job seekers are influenced by the needs of our business partners and vice versa. Additionally, all our outreach and system development directly supports job seeker and business services. While the elements are not equally funded (shown by size of the circle in the graph mentioned above), the shared edges allow our workforce partners to provide a more comprehensive and integrated system and to adjust as needs and strategic focus shifts resources and collaborative energies over time.

The NRMWDB has long recognized that WIOA funds would not meet the variety of workforce issues that need to be addressed in the region. Since 2017 over \$10 million (of non WIOA funds) has been brought into the region to support and expand workforce development efforts. The NRMWDB's Deputy Director is a grant writer who seeks opportunities to generate additional funds.

In 2022 the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area Consortium Board (the CLEOs) began exploring developing a non-profit arm of the organization to aid in attaining other types of discretionary funding to support the region's workforce development initiatives.

Section 3: Local Area Partnerships and Investment Strategies

- 3.1 Provide a description of the workforce development system in the local area that identifies:
- The programs that are included in that system
 - How the local board will work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs to support alignment to provide services, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006
 - How the local board coordinates and interacts with Chief Elected Officials (CEO)

Programs Included in the Workforce System: The Workforce System in the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development region is comprised of the Four Core WIOA Titles along with various other programs that provide services to prepare an educated and skilled workforce.

Regional Programs and Services:

Program	Partner Organization	Authorization/Category
Adult Education	Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education New River Community College Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley	WIOA Title II Program
Community College	New River Community College Virginia Highlands Community College Wytheville Community College	Postsecondary Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs under Carl D. Perkins CTE Act of 2006
Community Services Block Grant	Mountain Community Action People, Inc.	Special Block Grants
Filling the Trades Gap	New River/Mount Rogers WDA CB	US DOL – WIOA (State Innovation Grant and Congressional Earmark)
Good Care Program	Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, Inc	US Health and Human Services Health Professions Opportunity Grant
Job Corps	Blue Ridge Job Corp Center	US DOL - WIOA
Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG)	Virginia Employment Commission	JVSG, authorized under chapter 41 of Title 39, U.S.C.

Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers	Virginia Employment Commission	National Farmworker Jobs Program
Pathways to New Beginnings	New River/Mount Rogers WDA CB	US DOL – WIOA and Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Workforce Opportunities for Rural Communities (WORC)
Pathways to a Strong and Healthy Region	New River/Mount Rogers WDA CB	Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) POWER
Ready SWVA	New River/Mount Rogers WDA CB and the United Way SWVA	US DOL – WIOA Governor’s Set-Aside
Rehabilitative Services	Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired	WIOA Title IV Program
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)	District Three Governmental Co-op Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, Inc. Goodwill Teneva, Inc	WIOA Title V Program
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Department for Social Services Localities: Bland, Bristol, Carroll, Galax, Giles, Grayson, Montgomery, Pulaski, Radford, Washington, Wythe	TANF, authorized under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act
Ticket to Work	NR/MR WDB	Social Security Administration
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
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.*	WIOA Title I Program
WIOA DLW Program	People Inc.*	WIOA Title I Program
WIOA Youth Program	Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, Inc.*	WIOA Title I Program

	People Inc. *	
YouthBuild – Build Your Career	New River/Mount Rogers WDA CB	US DOL – WIOA
Second Chance Act	no regional providers	Justice Department
HUD Training Programs	no regional providers	

*An RFP for new program operators will go out in Jan. 2023. New Program Operators will be set for July 1, 2023.

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. A 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 NRMWDA Consortium Board (CLEOs) and the NRMWDB 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, along with the Executive Committees of each board meet together at least once annually, ensuring that collaboration and joint decision making happens in the region.

<p>3.2 Describe strategies and services that will be used in the local area to: Facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area Better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development Strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs</p>
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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. See the Business Services Plan (Attachment E) for a more on procedures and protocols for engaging businesses.

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: On-site tours attended by BST members, Workforce Exchange events where businesses talk directly to workforce development professional about their talent needs and hiring practices, Developing and sharing Career Pathway Lattices, Various business roundtables/workshops on topics valued by businesses, Hosting

recruitment and hiring events at the request of businesses, Upskilling current workforce through incumbent worker training opportunities, Job Profiling to document skills & knowledge necessary for specific occupations, and Documenting and tracking business needs and services offered in the B2B Engage® customer management system.

The use of WorkKeys® Assessments and training programs like FastForward and other initiatives that use an Integrated Education and Training program model (e.g. POWER, YouthBuild, Innovation, WORC, etc) help us meet the skill needs of our businesses. By using the WorkKeys® Assessments, we can determine the skill requirements needed to learn and perform job-related tasks. Profiling jobs for our businesses will enable us to help businesses hire the precise talent they need. Upon receiving satisfactory skill levels, the jobseeker will receive a National Career Readiness Certificate®, which the business can also use (should they have their jobs profiled) to determine if the jobseeker's skills align with their needs.

All three of our community colleges offer short-term FastForward programs that directly lead to industry credentials and employment. These programs are aligned with labor market information.

Coordination between Workforce Development and Economic Development: Section 3.3 fully addresses the coordination efforts between workforce and economic development.

Linkages between One-Stop Delivery System and Unemployment Insurance: UI programs play an important role in the workforce system by providing temporary income support to eligible individuals, who are important customers of the workforce system. UI benefits allow unemployed workers to survive economically while engaging in work search activities for suitable work. The workforce system is a key source of services to support the reemployment of UI claimants. As a required one-stop partner program

in the Virginia Career Works Centers, UI makes a financial contribution towards center costs, but more importantly, UI claimants benefit from services provided by other partners in the center. A key role of the workforce system is to connect skilled workers with businesses that need them. Because UI claimants have recent attachment to the workforce, they are a significant part of the available labor pool for businesses.

The linkages between the one-stop delivery system and the UI 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. 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. Although Wagner-Peyser duties are back in the VEC, UI services are still a problem (new system and local VEC staff having limited abilities to assist the customers that come to the centers).

3.3 Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with economic development activities carried out in the region in which the local area is located (or planning region), and promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.

Coordinating Workforce Development Programs and Economic Development: The NRMWDB 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 relationship management system.

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 (for a description of the process, please see Section 3 under Collaboration with Economic Development). 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.

Micro-Enterprise and Entrepreneurial Promotion: While support for anchor business partners remains a critical element of our workforce strategy, growing micro-business and entrepreneurial supports across the region with strategic supports and target sectors is a significant growth area for us. Entrepreneurs and small business make up the majority of businesses in the region and 74% of businesses are owned locally. Micro and small businesses (employing less than 500), once startups themselves, also contribute to most the employment in the counties making up the New River Mount Rogers Workforce region. In

the past year the NR/MR WDB staff have been working with Virginia Tech's Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics on a project called Project SHOW (Small Business Health and Organizational Wellbeing. Providing input on servicing small businesses, outreach to small businesses and what type of program would be needed for small businesses. More about SHOW can be found here: <https://aaec.vt.edu/extension/show.html>)

3.4 Describe how the local board coordinates education and workforce investment activities with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

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 NRMRWDB providing information about the region's CTE programs. Staff directly network with the thirteen CTE programs to advance the partnership and communication so each of the programs, along with their community college counterparts, by sitting on their CTE Advisory Boards and providing them with the most current LMI data on occupations and industries in their respective regions. 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.

The NRMRWDB has partnered with regional universities for a number of years. With Radford University's School of Social Work, the NRMRWDB has been a partner for more than six years by hosting a Master's level intern. This collaboration has benefited the NRMRWDB 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 NRMWDB has a long-standing partnership with its Office of Economic Development (VT OED) and previously with VT *Knowledgeworks*. In the past year we added two new partnership opportunities with VT: Project SHOW (see Micro-Enterprise above for more information) and with CAREER: Engineering Pathways for Appalachian Youth: Design Principles and Long-term Impacts of School-Industry Partnerships with VT's School of Engineering as a member of their Advisory Board.

3.5 Describe how the local board will collaborate on local workforce investment activities with the community colleges in their area in the planning and delivery of workforce and training services.

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 2020, 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. Although this particular program is no longer offered in the region, it stands as a model that can be used in the future. 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.

3.6 Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities in the local area with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area.

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.

To that end, the NR/MR WDB has partnered with the United Way of SWVA and the Southwest Virginia Workforce Development Board to gain additional funding for the Ready SWVA Project, a multi-million dollar initiative to increase labor participation by addressing access to child care that is spearheaded by United Way of SWVA.

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* (see Attachment C) that documents who is doing what for each individual, ensuring that needs are met, with limited duplication of services. For a listing of potential supportive services that our job seeking customers may need see Section 3 under Coordination of Activities with Supportive Services.

3.7 Describe the plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of services provided by the State employment service under the Wagner-Peyser Act and services provided in the local area through the one-stop delivery system, to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.

Coordination with Wagner-Peyser services in the region remains strong and is a natural part of “business as usual.” WIOA Title 1 and Wagner-Peyser staff are co-located in the Bristol, Galax, Radford and Wytheville Centers. Each center has staff and/or partner meetings monthly for information sharing and cross-training between programs in that center. 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. Wagner-Peyser management/supervisory staff are part of the region’s monthly Management Team meetings where all regional partners meet to discuss what is happening around the region. Since the sub-award with the VEC for the NRMWDB to provide Wager-Peyser services for a limited amount of time, the partnership has only grown stronger as there is a better understanding of the day to day work of Wagner-Peyser staff.

3.8 Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities in the local area with the provision of adult education and literacy activities, including a description of how the local board will carry out the review of local applications.

Coordination with Adult Education and Literacy, 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. The Region has two Adult Education providers (Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education and New River Community College's Office of Transitional Programs) and one literacy program, Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley, which offer not only a path to obtaining the GED (and citizenship), but also serve as support in several of the NRMWDB's discretionary grants for basic skills upgrade, workplace readiness and to support students that had to enroll in virtual learning (due to the pandemic) that would otherwise struggle to be successful without the additional support provided by an Adult Education Instructor. Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education Program provides classes at the Virginia Career Works Wytheville (the Comprehensive Center) and at the Virginia Career Works Galax. An Adult Education program director sits on the NRMWDB and highlights adult education program activities and initiatives throughout the region at each NRMWDB meeting. Both Regional Directors attend the monthly Regional Partner/Management Team meetings and Adult Education representatives participate in the various BST meetings and business service events (which include providing staff for hiring/recruitment events for businesses). Two Board Staff review the local applications and provide feedback into the application's coordination with the Region's Strategic Plan. As partners in the region, the Regional Adult Education Program staff were invited to give input into the Strategic Plan. The NRMWDB will continue to support our Adult Education and Literacy 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. Board staff reviews and provides feedback on funding applications and encourage them to partner on all grant proposals.

3.9 Describe how the local plan shall:

- Specify the policies and protocols to be followed by all the region’s workforce development entities when engaging the region’s employers
- Address how the region’s workforce entities will involve employers in the formation of new workforce development activities
- Identify what activities will be undertaken to address employers’ specific workforce needs

Business Engagement Policies and Protocols: The NRMWDB’s Business Services Plan (Attachment E) provides guidance to the workforce system partners on how to engage the region’s businesses. We believe that services to the region’s businesses should be provided to the widest possible range of businesses, be individualized, and be efficient with a single point of contact wherever possible (or at least a “no-wrong-door”). 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 through the region’s Business Services Coordinator and the use of B2B Engage®.

Business Involvement in the Formation of New 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. Input from businesses is gathered in a variety of ways: Business Roundtable Discussions, Workforce Exchange events, Design and preparation for customized hiring/recruitment events, One-on-one business meetings for needs assessment purposes.

Activities Undertaken to Address the Specific Needs of Businesses: Activities the NRMWRDB 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, On-the-Job Trainings, and Apprenticeships supports, Providing Job Profiling and WorkKeys® Assessments, and Developing Integrated Education and Training Programs.

Outcomes Driven from Transactional to Transformational Relationship-Building Activities: B2B Engage® aligns with the focus of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the new approach to performance metrics that is geared around useful data to inform service delivery to business and industry. B2B Engage® customizes dashboards and reports for a continuum of measures from transactional relationship activities such as filling job orders to transformational activities such as investment by business and industry in sector strategies and training. B2B Engage® is built to address this continuum and aggregate the data to establish benchmarks that deepen and transform relationships with businesses to not only meet, but exceed performance goals.

3.10 Describe how the direction given by the Governor and the local board to the one-stop operator to ensure priority for adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient.

Priority of Service Section 134 (c)(3)(E) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires that with respect 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 200% 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:

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.

Following is a link to our Priority of Service Policy:

https://vcwnewrivermtrogers.com/download/policies_and_procedures/Priority-of-Service-Policy-Revised-5-12-21.pdf

Section 4: Program Design and Evaluation

4.1 Describe how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment.

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 to serve as remote One-Stops offering a variety of job seeker services). The Commonwealth provides the Virginia Workforce Connection (VAWC) system, and all Operators are trained to use it. The NRMWDB's WIOA Coordinator provides management and oversight of the VAWC system with staff and program operators. A Common Intake System is needed (across all four WIOA Titles and at least TANF), and the region has sought out opportunities to have one, but this remains a State issue that is not yet resolved. The NRMWDB's discretionary grants are using the same in-take process as WIOA Title 1, creating a more customer centered approach. 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 the tool plays in connecting clients to all the resources they need in one streamlined process.

Additional strategies to expand access includes our development of online fillable forms used for eligibility determination that can be used with screen readers for individuals with disabilities. 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. The NRMWDB recognizes that jobseekers need a variety of training options to accommodate schedules, interests, and their own personal goals. Program Operators cover all thirteen jurisdictions in the NRM 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. Through discretionary grants (POWER, WORC, YouthBuild, Innovation & the newly awarded Congressional Grant) the NR/MR WDB is serving very hard to serve individuals (very low basic skills, substance use disorder, disenfranchised youth and those with felonies) and partnering closely with Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education and Literacy Volunteers of the NRV and DARS to provide additional supports through the occupational skills training that the individuals are enrolled.

4.2 Describe how the local board will facilitate the development of career pathways, consistent with the Career Pathways Definitions.

The NRMWDA'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. The NRMWDB 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 where are the gaps). 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 NRMWDB has taken the following approach:

- Through various data collections sources (e.g. discussions, job postings, job descriptions, and job profiling*) Industry Specific Career Lattices that have been created for the region (based on business input) and are constantly being reviewed for changes (see the Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, IT and Skilled Trades in Attachment D). The Career Lattice graphics depicting the career pathway information (education/training, and credentials) will be shared for all partners and stakeholders to openly access in our website www.vcwnewrivermtrogers.com.
- 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.
- The use of ACT WorkKeys as a method to match the job seeker's knowledge and skills to those of the job profiled.

The Career Lattice graphics, ACT Job Profiling, and WorkKeys Assessments 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. More detailed information is included in Section 4 of our Strategic Plan under Career Pathways.

4.3 Describe how the local board will utilize co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs to maximize efficiencies and use of resources.

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. Co-enrollments 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.

4.4 Describe one-stop delivery system in the local area, including:

- A. The local board's 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 and jobseekers.

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. The region has one Comprehensive Center and six Affiliate Centers. Traditional partners in the NRMWDA 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 NRMWDA) *

A new RFP for a single program operator will be published in January 2023. A new (single) program operator will begin July 1, 2023

WIOA Title II: Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education (MR PD) and NRCC Office of Transitional Programs (NRV PD) (additional literacy services are provided by the Literacy Volunteers of the NRV).

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 a Strong and Healthy Region - POWER* (NRMRWDB), *Pathways to New Beginnings - WORC* (NRMRWDB), *Build Your Career – Youthbuild* (NRMRWDB), *Filling the Trades Gap – Innovations and Congressional and Ready SWVA – Governor’s Set-aside* (NRMRWDB)

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, Appalachian Council for Innovation, Roanoke/Blacksburg Technology Council, Southwest Virginia Technology Council, Economic Development: VEDP (Virginia Economic Development Partnership), Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development, Mount Rogers Regional Partnership, Mount Rogers Planning District Commission, Onward NRV, NRV Regional Commission, 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, , Accountable Care Community, 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, and the Center for Manufacturing Excellence

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 by:

- 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 NRMWDB meeting

B. How the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means.
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The region has seven Virginia Career Works Centers throughout the 4,300 square miles of the region.

The NRMWDB also promotes the use of the Commonwealth's Referral Portal (virginia.myjourney.com).

An on-line Scheduler is available and promoted for individuals to schedule services (in-person and virtual) at [Schedule Appointment with New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board \(as.me\)](#).

The schedule allows staff to facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and through the use of mobile computer labs (Roving Computer Labs).

The NRMWDB supports remote areas of the region with access to technology, training, job search, and programming. There are currently three 3-laptop labs with available mobile printing and hotspot service available for "check-out" by partners and community groups.. The NRMWDB also has two tablet

labs (7 iPads and 7 Acer tablets) to support business and job seeker training in the use of the technology and to provide opportunities to test drive these resources as companies in the region determine how to best enhance their technology in-house. The RCLs are currently heavily 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.

Another strategy used by the NRMWDB is the designated email address: CareerHelp@vcwnmr.com.

This email comes directly to the NRMWDB's WIOA Program Coordinator, 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.

The NRMWDB will also promote the VCW Portal for individuals that do not access services through the VCW Centers.

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| <p>C. How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA section 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.</p> |
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All Virginia Career Work Centers are ADA compliant and provide services and equipment for jobseekers with physical and intellectual disabilities. Beyond the physical workforce center accessibility, the local One-Stop Center staff have training in disability etiquette and various EEO and ADA compliance, as well as are knowledgeable about resources available to customers with disabilities that may not be available

in the One-Stop and 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 Integrated Resource Team 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: The NRMWDB 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 jobseekers 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 service.

D. Describe the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.

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.

E. Describe how one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated technology-enabled intake and case management information system for core programs and programs carried out by one-stop partners.
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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, Title 1 WIOA Adult, DLW and Youth and the Board's discretionary grants are using the same, fillable intake form. 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 and Referral Tool to share information about specific services available.

F. Describe the services provided by each partner mandated by federal and state law, and other optional partners.

WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Program: The Title 1 Adult services are available through contracted Program Operators Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, Inc.* (in the five NRV localities) at the Narrows, Pulaski & Radford Center and People, Inc*. (in the 8 MR localities) at the Abingdon, Bristol, Galax & Wytheville Centers. DLW services are provided by People, Inc. in all 13 localities at the Abingdon, Galax, Radford & Wytheville Centers.

**A new RFP for WIOA Program Operator will be published in January 2023. A new program operator will be providing services beginning July 1, 2023.*

Services provided are:

Career Services	Training Services
Eligibility Determinations	Occupational Skills (e.g., classroom training)
Outreach, Intake, Orientation, and Assessment of Skills and Needs	On-the-Job Training
	Incumbent Worker Training

Labor Exchange Services, including Job Search Assistance Workforce and Labor Market Performance and Cost Information	Combined Workplace Training with Related Instruction Skill Upgrading and Retraining Entrepreneurial Training
Performance Measurement Data for Information On and Referral To Information on Filing for	Transitional Jobs Job Readiness Training Adult Education and Literacy Combined
Assistance in Establishing Eligibility for Services to Obtain or Retain Employment Follow-Up Services for at least One Year to Participants Who are	Customized Training in Conjunction with an

Youth Program: The Title 1 Youth services are available through contracted Program Operators Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, Inc.* (in the five NRV localities) at the Narrows, Pulaski & Radford Center and People, Inc.* (in the 8 MR localities) at the Abingdon, Galax & Wytheville Centers.

In order to support the attainment of education and career readiness for youth, the following 14 activities or “elements” to youth are provided:

- tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies leading to completion of secondary school;
- alternative secondary school services, as appropriate;
- paid and unpaid work experiences that have an academic and occupational education component, including summer employment opportunities and pre-apprenticeship programs;
- occupational skill training, as appropriate;
- education offered with training for a specific occupation or cluster;

- leadership development opportunities;
- supportive services;
- adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months;
- follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate;
- comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate;
- financial literacy education;
- entrepreneurial skills training;
- labor market and employment information; and
- activities to prepare youth to transition to postsecondary education and training.

**A new RFP for WIOA Program Operator will be published in January 2023. A new program operator will be providing services beginning July 1, 2023.*

Job Corps: 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 Job Corps in non-residency programming. Information about Job Corps is provided in all Virginia Career Works Centers in the region.

Students may participate in the Job Corps program for up to two years, though some may stay longer under specified circumstances. While at a Job Corps center, students receive the following services and assistance:

- academic, employment, and social skills training;

- work-based learning, which includes career and technical skills training and on- the- job training; and
- counseling and other residential support services, including transportation, child care, recreational activities, and living and other allowances.

WIOA Title II: Adult Education and Literacy: To serve these populations, the NRMWDA 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.

1. Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency.
2. Assist adults who are parents to obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children.
3. Assist adults in the completion of a secondary school education.
4. Assist adults limited English proficient populations to receive English literacy and civics education instruction.
5. Assist adults with computer literacy skills
6. Assist adults with improving their basic skills (if they already have a secondary education credential)

WIOA Title III: Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser): 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 vawc.virginia.gov. The Centers that house VEC staff are: Bristol, Galax, Radford and Wytheville. Employment Services available are at least those listed below:

- labor exchange services (e.g., counseling, job search and placement assistance, labor market information);
- program evaluation;
- recruitment and technical services for employers;
- work tests for the state unemployment compensation system; and
- referral of unemployment insurance claimants to other federal workforce development resources.

WIOA Title IV: Vocational Rehabilitation: 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 colocation at the Wytheville Comprehensive Center). Services includes, but not limited to: job training, special employment accommodations, resume help, and job-seeking coaching, support for starting a business, or assist independent living services for disabled veterans who cannot find work.

TANF: 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. TANF is designed to provide proven service approaches and strategies to help current TANF clients to prepare to enter, succeed, and advance in the workplace by providing a monthly cash payment to meet the family's basic needs.

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM: This program provides training for low-income, unemployed individuals who are 55 and older and is made available throughout the region by: Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, Inc., Goodwill of TENNEVA, and Government Three Coop. Information about and referrals to SCSEP are made from all Virginia Career Works Centers in the region. SCSEP participants gain work experience in a variety of community service activities at non-profit and public facilities, including schools, hospitals, day-care centers, and senior centers. The program provides community service hours to public and non-profit agencies, allowing them to enhance and provide needed services. Participants work an average of 20 hours a week and are paid the highest of federal, state or local minimum wage. This training serves as a bridge to unsubsidized employment opportunities for participants.

APPRENTICESHIP: 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. DOLI provides workers with job training opportunities for lifelong skills and helps employers meet their needs for highly skilled workers through a proven, cost-effective system of registered apprenticeship. DOLI assists employers in developing training programs and will provide guidance to businesses on recruiting qualified apprentices. Employers provide on-the-job training, and participants spend 4-6 hours per week in related classroom instruction.

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. **LVERs** address the **employment** and training needs of unemployed and

underemployed **veterans** by providing **job** search, placement, and related assistance that lead to quality **employment**. **DVOP** specialists provide intensive services to disabled veterans and eligible spouses, designed to facilitate participants' transition into meaningful civilian employment.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION: CTE programs are in the region's 13 public school districts and serve students in grades 6-12. 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. The 13 school districts each have various CTE programs at various schools teaching specific career skills to students in middle school, high school, and post-secondary institutions.

CTE is split into **16 career clusters** that apply to different high-demand careers. Not all clusters are offered at all school districts, but the following clusters are offered somewhere in the region:

1. Health science
2. Business
3. Sales
4. Finance
5. Information technology
6. Science, technology, engineering, and math
7. Manufacturing
8. Logistics
9. Hospitality
10. Government
11. Law
12. Agriculture

13. Human services

14. Construction

15. Training

16. Arts, audio/visual technology, and communications

G. Identify the Virginia Workforce Center Operator for each site in the local area.

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).

An RFP for new One-Stop Operator will be published in January 2023. A new operator may begin July 1, 2023.

H. Identify the physical locations of each comprehensive Virginia Workforce Center in the local area, and the co-location strategy for each center (current and planned).

The region's comprehensive Virginia Career Works Center is located on the Wytheville Community College Campus at 1000 Main Street (Carroll Hall), Wytheville, VA 24382

Program Staff at the Center:

- Title I WIOA Adult, Youth & DLW Programs: Fulltime
- Title II Adult Education: Part-time
- Title III Wagner Peyser: Fulltime

- Title IV Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services/Vocation Rehab: Fulltime (beginning May 2021)
- Veterans Services: Fulltime
- WDB Staff: (Business Services Coordinator/WISA and Data Specialist) Fulltime
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP): Part-time
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF): By Appointment/Referral
- Job Corps: By Appointment
- Postsecondary Education (on campus)

I. If applicable, identify the locations of Virginia Workforce Network affiliated sites, partner sites, or specialized centers.

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

4.5 Describe the policy, process, and criteria for issuing individual training accounts (ITAs) including any limitations on ITA amounts.

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 who 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 ITA Policy is posted on our website: vcwnewrivermtrogers.com/download/policies_and_procedures/Individual-Training-Account-System-Policy-1-1-2018.pdf.

4.6 If training contracts are used, describe processes utilized by the local board to ensure customer choice in the selection of training programs, regardless of how the training services are to be provided.

Again, individual empowerment through informed customer choice is one of the principles that guided the authors of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). All training eligible customers are given an aptitude and interest assessment (CareerScope®) with information about the results to aid in their decision making process. Customer are provided access to the “In-Demand” list to provide more information about their identified interest and aptitudes with the region’s occupations. The final tool to actualize this principle is the use of individual training accounts, which give adults the power to choose eligible training programs and qualified training institutions as a means of accomplishing their training and employment goals. A link to the ITA policy is above. The In-Demand list and eligible training providers is also linked on our website: [Approved Training Providers - New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board \(vcwnewrivermtrogers.com\)](http://vcwnewrivermtrogers.com)

4.7 Describe process utilized by the local board to ensure that training provided is linked to in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, or in another area to which a participant is willing to relocate.

Without sound data of where we are, we cannot reach our desired destinations. Over many years, the NRMRWDB and NRMRWDCB 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, we receive occupational data from which the In-Demand Occupation list is derived. We also receive valuable reporting each quarter that depicts insights into the needs of existing and emerging industries, general employment data, and pressure points, as well as targeted growth opportunities and gaps in the knowledge and skills of our workforce. All quarterly reports can be found at http://bit.ly/wda2_qtr_rpts.

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

4.8 Describe how rapid response activities are coordinated and carried out in the local area.

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

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

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

- Using Sector strategies and BST intel as early warning networks
- Utilizing the information gathered by VT OED to identify heavily concentrated industries and sectors and related training needs in the geographic area by conducting analyses of suppliers to assess risks and vulnerabilities from potential closings of a manufacturing customer
- Business Services Specialist to partner with regional/local Economic Development in proactive measures such as business visitation or layoff forecasting programs to identify indicators of potential economic transition and training needs in growing industry sectors or expanding businesses
- Connecting businesses and workers with short-term, on-the-job, and customized training and apprenticeships before or after layoff and prior to new employment
- Helping companies practice continuous improvement in processes and quality, constantly looking for opportunities for new products, customers, markets, and business models
- Partnering with other business focused organizations to assess risks to a company, propose Action Items to address those risks, implement services, and measure impacts of services delivered
- As stated in the Business Services Plan (see Attachment E) the Regional Rapid Response Coordinator is the main contact for all layoff/closure activities. Businesses planning to downsize/close will be put in direct contact with the Regional Rapid Response Coordinator. The Rapid Response Coordinator will contact the business and develop a plan with them on what, when and how they desire services from the workforce system. The Rapid Response Coordinator will inform the BSTs and other partners of any wanted/required activities and services.

Reemployment Services offered include (but are not limited to) Workshops and/or staff assistances for: Job search techniques, Career exploration, Labor market information, Interviewing skills, Résumé preparation, Debt/financial management, Job fairs, Rehabilitation services, Connection to programs that have funding to support retraining, Connection to programs that offer other transitional and/or supportive services.

Section 5: Compliance

5.1 Describe how the local board meets its responsibilities for oversight, monitoring, and corrective action for WIOA Title I programs.

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

Compliance: Compliance monitoring is conducted to ensure that program activities and expenditures are allowable and meet, or do not exceed, spending thresholds and to ensure that local board and service provider practices comply with federal, state and local - laws, regulations and policies.

Program Management: Review of program management involves an in-depth examination of program activities. It is intended to ensure that the delivery of employment and training services is effective and meeting the needs of diverse groups of customers. For example, checking to identify whether a participant's skills and abilities were assessed checking whether assessment results are used to inform development of the individual's employment and training plan and used to help the individual make informed employment and training decisions, is one method of in-depth program management review.

Performance: Performance reviews occur throughout the year and allow the reviewer to gauge whether minimum levels of performance are being met. Reviewers assess and identify issues that may affect attainment of negotiated levels of performance, such as employment outcomes and credential attainment rates.

Ongoing Evaluation: Evaluation is a comparison of planned versus actual activity and results. The State reviews spending and service levels (planned number of participants in each program category expected to receive career and/or training services and/or exit the program) on a quarterly basis. Reviewing proposed progress and spending throughout the program year allows time to adjust and incorporate strategies that will ensure planned service goals are met. In addition to quarterly reporting, specific evaluation activities may be conducted that focus on a service expectation; such as, reviewing and comparing outcomes between participants receiving only basic and individualized services against those who received occupational training services.

In addition to satisfying federal mandates for oversight and assurance that statutes regulations, and policies are being followed, monitoring is critical to ensuring a continuous improvement cycle in which advanced strategies and worthy practices are promoted and technical assistance and staff training needs are identified and addressed.

Monitoring identifies how well service provider staff understand:

- How to use operating systems to document participant progress, track services and expenditures, report outcomes and validate eligibility and other service delivery requirements;

- The makeup and design of the local one-stop system and how they are expected to interact with required and additional partners to streamline service delivery across multiple programs on behalf of shared participants;
- The overarching goals of WIOA, which include increased access, for all individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, education and training and about the many resources and support services they may access to help them succeed in the labor market; and
- Implementation requirements and local service delivery methods outlined in the State and local area plans, and more.

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

5.2 Describe how the local board conducts business in accordance with the Sunshine Provisions of WIOA staffing plans for the local board.

The NRMWRDB conducts business in accordance with the Sunshine Provisions of WIOA: The schedule of the NRMWRDB and NRMWRDACB meetings are posted on the NRMWRDB website. A few days before

each meeting, the full meeting packet is also posted and after the meeting, the meeting minutes are posted. All meetings are open to the public. In addition, during each WDB and NRMRDACB meeting, there is a public comment period (no prior sign-up is required).

Some of the WDB meetings are virtual only. Notice has been given of these meetings in the following ways: Meeting information which includes the link, times, and how to sign-up for public comment are posted on our website and on Facebook. Regional partners (including chambers of commerce, education, and other workforce partners are notified of meetings via email.

Meeting information can be found here:

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

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

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

5.3 Describe the methods and strategies used to ensure timely expenditure of WIOA funds.
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To ensure WIOA funds are expended in a timely manner, both the NRMRWDB and Elected Officials review Financial Reports at their regular meetings. Staff ensure that both Boards are updated on all

financial matters allowing them the opportunity to implement any additional action necessary to correct any projected deficiencies in our financial process.

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

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

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

The NRMWDB receives regular performance information about WIOA operators through the state system (Virginia Workforce Connection). All NRMWDB WIOA program operators are monitored annually by program element. All evaluation is patterned after the state format and follows the contracts

established with each operator. The evaluator reviews a sampling of records including client records, financial documents, and program policies. Using standardized assessment, the evaluator provides a report back to the operator regarding deficiencies, positive elements, and overall key performance elements. The WDB works with the operators who have deficiencies and areas of improvement to bring all programs into compliance and elevate performance of the WIOA program in the most effective manner.

5.4 Describe the process for neutral brokerage of adult, dislocated worker, and youth services. Identify the competitive process and criteria (such as targeted services, leverage of funds, etc.) used to award funds to sub-recipients/contractors of WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services, state the names of contracted organizations, and the duration of each contract.

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

The competitive procurement process initially starts with the development of a written Request for Proposals package approved by the Workforce Development Board and Elected Officials Consortium Board. A bidder's conference is scheduled for the issuance of the RFP. Thirty (30) days prior to the bidder's conference, all potential bidders, contained on the Board's bidders list, are sent a letter notifying them of the bidder's conference. Also, the non-mandatory bidder's conference is advertised in local

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

Criteria utilized to award funds to contractors of WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth services are outline on Proposal Evaluation Criteria sheets contained in the Request for Proposal package. **Copies of Proposal Evaluation Criteria sheets for PY23 can be found in Attachment F.**

Names of contracted organizations for PY'20, 21 and 22 and duration of each contract is as follows:

People Incorporated of Virginia

Adult Contract: 7/1/20-6/30/21, DLW and One-Stop Operator Contract: 7/1/20 – 6/30/21, Youth Contract 7/1/20-6/30/21 eligible for a one-year extension for a total of three years.

Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, Inc.

Adult Contract: 7/1/20-6/30/21 and Youth Contract: 7/1/20-6/30/21 eligible for a one-year extension for a total of three years.

All of the above contracts were extended for each year in PY21 & PY22. A new RFP for a single program operator will be published in January 2023 and awarded to begin July 1, 2023.

5.5 Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds.

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

5.6 Describe the strategy used by the local board to leverage WIOA funds with other federal, state, local, and philanthropic resources.

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

All funding the NRMRWDB sources is to leverage activities that support the mission and vision of the Boards. Funds fall in the four programmatic elements: Job Seeker Services, Business Services, Outreach

and System Development, and Administrative (Oversight/Management). The Overlap between programmatic and administrative elements in the workforce system are represented in the graphic depicted in Section 5 of the Strategic Plan. The overlap between elements is not only efficient, but also it is valuable to access and integrate with our workforce efforts. Often, programs that are directed at jobseekers are influenced by the needs of our business partners and vice versa. Additionally, all our outreach and system development directly supports jobseeker and business services.

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

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

5.7 Indicate the negotiated local levels of performance for the federal measures.

Performance Measure	Adult	DLW	Youth
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter After Exit	85 %	85%	78%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter After Exit	\$6,100	\$8,200	\$3,553
Measurable Skill Gains	70%	69.5%	60.5%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter After Exit	84%	83%	77.9%
Credential Attainment Rate	75%	72.5%	68.5%

5.8 Describe indicators used by the local board to measure performance and effectiveness of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), contracted service providers and the one-stop delivery system, in the local area.

Fiscal Agent: Services for the NRMRCB Fiscal Agent are reviewed by the elected officials and contracted annually. The Fiscal Agent Agreement, which outlines the scope of work and the Exhibit A, which details the scope of work, are agreed upon by both parties. Attachment G is the PY22 Fiscal Agent Agreement. The Fiscal Agent sends a notice to the NRMRCB Finance Committee of all expenditures for their review and approval. They then prepare and distribute checks that are paid bi-monthly on the 15th and last day of the month. All WIOA bills are paid at one of the above noted payment dates. Program Operators delivering services under WIOA are paid on a reimbursement basis. Payment to Program Operators is made after the funds have been requested from the State by way of the Cash Payment Schedule and received by the Fiscal Agent. Payment is made on a monthly basis. Indicators used to measure performance are based on the aforementioned payment system.

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

People, Incorporated of Virginia* provides a multitude of workshops and loans to the business customer, jobseekers, and low income WIOA participants. They are contracted for One-Stop Operator and Dislocated Worker Programs for all of the NRMRWDA for PY20 and that contract has a one-year extension option (that can be done twice). They are also the Adult and Youth Program Operator for the

Mount Rogers Planning District (Bland, Bristol, Carroll, Galax, Grayson, Smyth, Washington & Wythe) and that contract has a one-year extension option (that can be extended twice).

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

**An RFP for PY23 Program Operator will be published in January 2023 to begin contract July 1, 2023.*

One-Stop Delivery System: The NRMWDA covers over 4,300 square miles. In an effort to best meet the needs of jobseekers and businesses, we have a variety of “physical” entry points into the system as well as the NRMWDB website, which offers a virtual entry point into the system. Each entry point offers access to basic career services as well as a “no wrong door” approach to business services. At the regional comprehensive One-Stop and affiliates, where multiple partners are present, roles are clearly defined (who does what). The region has had “system alignment” discussions among the four WIOA Titles, 13 Department of Social Services, and three Community Colleges. The intent of this process is to increase opportunities for leveraging of funds and to limit duplication of services. A Matrix of the system, which can be found in Section 5, has been developed and used. In addition, the NRMWDB has staff devoted to creating an environment for increased co-enrollments and braiding of funding to ensure aligned jobseeker and business supports and offerings. To aid in this process the NRMWDB has the following staff positions funded through discretionary grants:

- *Two Program Coordinators* to work with job seekers, and other programs that support jobseekers, to ensure smooth referrals and co-enrollments through the Integrated Resource Teams and help develop a system for continual communication between partners about programs and policies that affect jobseeker services. These Coordinators work throughout the region meeting with partners and job seekers.
- *A Business Service Coordinator* is the point person to assist the four Business Solution Teams to develop actions and activities to engage and support the region's businesses and will communicate relevant business staffing needs/requirements (of businesses) to the Workforce System Navigators, partner career counselors and other frontline job seeker support staff.

5.9 Provide a description of any replicated cooperative agreements with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination.

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

The Executed MOU is Attachment H.

5.10 Describe the actions the local board will take towards becoming or remaining a high-performing board.

A high-performing board includes individuals who can provide broad strategic perspective while also bringing their specific experience and expertise to bear on regional workforce issues. It is also

important to bring in guest speakers to offer insight and perspective on a variety of topics and issues that impact the regional workforce and workforce system. The NRMWDB is designed to have a board range of expertise from members and to have guest speakers at each meeting providing additional information/perspective that impact the work that is before the board. In its effort to increase board performance, the NRMWDB's Chair will continue to encourage active engagement of its members at meetings and will invite guest speakers to present of relevant topics of importance to workforce development. Increasing the perspective and knowledge of its membership will enable the NRMWDB to make decisions that can positively impact the region.

Role and Focus: As the region's convener of the workforce system, the board clearly understands that they play an important role in facilitating and coordinating workforce initiatives that enable economic growth and increase the standard of living in our region. At each board meeting, workforce partners bring updates to the board about the focus, concerns, and happenings in their specific programs (this includes economic development). Updates on special workforce programs that are being led by board staff are also reviewed and discussed at every meeting. This process keeps board members informed and alerted to any issues that may need to be addressed. Business reps are chairs of every committee, ensuring that the board is truly "business led." Each new board member has the opportunity to attend an Orientation to the Workforce System and the board prior to their first meeting. They are given the opportunity to let the Board Chair know their preference for committee assignments as every board member sits on at least one committee. In its effort to increase board performance, the NRMWDB will remain true to its Mission and Vision when seeking funding and partnership and use various communications efforts to ensure understanding of the board and its role in the region. The NRMWDB understand it also is responsible for meeting the performance metrics of its funders. Although it will continue to strive to meet and/or exceed all performance metrics, it understands that

numeric data alone does not tell a story of success. The NRMWDB will continue to have an annual Return on Investment Report done to evaluate the board's impact on the regional economy and to find ways to measure the impact our programs had on individual and their families.

Effective Chairperson: The chairman sets the board's tone and direction as well as its performance. The Board Chair chairs the Strategic Planning Committee to ensure consistency of board vision. S/he creates the appropriate environment for full engagement by all members of the board, drawing out opinions and shaping discussions of sensitive issues. To ensure the effectiveness of our chairperson, we have two Vice-Chairs who have the opportunity to lead meetings and committees, gaining the necessary experience to become Board Chair if they so desire. In its effort to increase board performance the NRMWDB will continue to put emphasis on strong leadership in the selection of the Board Chair and Executive Committee.

Balanced Team: A board is only as good as its members, who bring the outside perspective and judgment on which the board's oversight function is predicated. We strive to have active members who can provide broad strategic perspective while also bringing their specific experience and expertise to bear. The NRMWDACB has the responsibility of appointing NRMWDB members. They ensure that all members appointed are "decision makers" in their organizations. Business representatives are nominated by the locality they will be representing and are from a business that is in an industry that is economically important to that locality. This process allows for a broad representation on the board. In its effort to increase board performance the NRMWDB will continue to support and encourage the NRMWDACB to continue this process as it provides a balance of perspectives from many businesses (large business, small business, woman owned business, minority owned business, etc.) from a variety of industries.

Culture of Trust and Respect: A board is not a collection of individuals and talents but a team. For it to function as such, candid communication and mutual respect are critical. Having open discussions and mutual respect ensures that probing questioning, constructive criticism, and challenging debate can take place. To create a culture of trust and respect, every member is given an opportunity to serve on at least one committee and all members are encouraged to provide input during and after the meetings. In its effort to increase board performance the NRMWDB Chair will continue to ensure opportunity is given for every member to voice their opinions. Important votes and discussions will be held in full board meetings and not just during Executive Committee meetings. Every board member will have the opportunity to serve a committee of their choice.

In addition to all of the above, the partnership between the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area Consortium Board (CLEOs) and the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board continue to impact the region in a positive way. The two boards will continue their partnership by:

1. The Chairs of each Board will attend the other Board's meeting and give a report on the previous month's activities.
2. The two Executive Committees will meet at a minimum of once a year to address any critical issues facing the region.
3. The two Boards will meet together twice a year, once to review contracts and funding awards and once for a Strategic Plan review.
4. Evaluate and possibly develop a "non-profit" arm of the organization to further support workforce development initiatives.

5.11 Describe the process for getting input into the development of the local plan and providing public comment opportunity prior to submission. Be sure to address how members of the public, including representatives of business, labor organizations, and education were given an opportunity to provide comments on the local plans. If any comments received that represent disagreement with the plan were received, please include those comments here.

The NRMWDB Strategic Plan was developed with the involvement and guidance from a variety of stakeholders, including board members, community members, staff, and regional partners. The NRMWDB has a standing Strategic Planning Committee made up of board members from both the NRMWDB and the NRMWDACB. The Strategic Planning Committee is charged with developing and overseeing the various plans of both boards.

To prepare for this Strategic Plan, the Strategic Planning Committee met to reflect on the NRMWDB's vision and mission, which underpins the approach to our work, and to review the current strategic plan as well as other regional initiatives. These meetings helped to establish the strategic direction and define the important work to be done in order to fully realize our charge in the region's workforce development system as well as how our work impacts the Workforce System in the Commonwealth. Regional partners received an email inviting them to provide comments on the posted Draft Updated Strategic Plan. The general public was notified through a public notice to read and comment on the draft Strategic Plan. **Public Notice was given through notice in the region's two large newspapers (Attachment I)** and in an email blast to all regional partners.

Public Comment Period ran from December 30, 2022 to January 15, 2023. No Comments were received from the general public.

5.12 Describe professional staff development strategies, including:

- Process used to ensure staff receive continuous training in workforce development practices
- Methods to ensure effective use of the Virginia Workforce Connection system of record and to adhere to timely data entry requirements for WIOA services
- Process to measure staff performance and delivery of high-quality customer service
- Process to meet and maintain staff certification and Virginia Workforce Center certification as required by Virginia Workforce Council Policy 300-06

Professional Development is critically important and matters to the overall success of the Workforce System. Besides providing career training for staff and partners to develop new skills and stay up-to-date on current trends, it also provides opportunities for career advancement. In an effort to advance the skills of our staff and partners, provide value to the workforce system, and deepen our relationships with partners, the NRMRWDB sponsors an ongoing series of professional development, provided each month, free to all. Sessions, ranging from topics such as Adverse Childhood Experiences to Labor Market Information, have been well attended with upwards of 40 participants. We firmly believe this effort is a win-win for everyone. Section 5 of our Strategic Plan includes a schedule.

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

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

At hire, staff receive a minimum of four days of initial classroom training in the areas of WIOA eligibility, assessment procedures, development and implementation of individual employment plans, occupational skills and supportive procedures, VaWC data entry requirements, labor market

information, file maintenance general case management practices, and Virginia Workforce Letters and local policies. Staff spend a considerable amount of time shadowing a senior staff member in a variety of areas such as intake/eligibility, client interaction, VAWC data entry, job development and general services provision. Also, staff is certified to administer the Test for Adult Basic Education through Virginia Commonwealth University, Adult Learning Resource Center and many are certified to administer the ACT WorkKeys® Assessments. All staff receive a training manual at the onset of employment. All WIOA Title 1 staff are encouraged to complete their Certified Workforce Development Professional training and certification as soon as possible.

Other training programs offered:

How to Conduct a GoTo Meeting, VAWC COVID-19 Topics, Updates, and Review with Brian Long. VAWC COVID-19-Topics Review with Beverly Suthers, Whole Family Approach Presentation-GoTo Meeting, Implementing Section 188-Equal Opportunity Provisions. Online CareerScope Review, WIOA Title I Regional Training, EmpowOR Referral Training, WIOA Title 1 Statewide Training, Part II WIOA Statewide Training VWL 20-06, Family Centered Coaching, OSS/IEP (Electronic), Brand 101, WIOA Activity Codes in VOS, Empower Referrals – making, receiving, following up, CareerScope training, EEO Part I, II, & III, Case Mgmt/Dr. Beverly Ford (multiple sessions), Family Centered Coaching (multiple sessions), VWL 20-07: VaWC System of Record and Electronic Case Files, Financial Empowerment Facilitator Training, Employment of Youth who are Blind Vision Impaired, or Deafblind, WIOA Form Review, Youth COVID-19.

Additional staff professional development is provided through Workforce GPS, the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (webinars), and through other local training providers such as Workforce 180, Fred Pryor Seminars, Dale Carnegie, and other training programs.

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

Center Certification: The NRMWDB's seven VCW Centers are all currently certified based on the Certification process is outlined by the Virginia Board of Workforce Development and State Policy.

July 13, 2021 the following VCW Centers had their local certification approved by the State: Wytheville, Galax, Narrows, Abingdon and Bristol. August 25, 2021 Radford and Pulaski had their local certifications approved by the State.

At the local level, the Board's One-Stop Operation's Committee (that has membership from both the WDB and the CLEOs) oversees the process. The Board involves partners in the process of ensuring all centers meet the required criteria. For ADA Compliance, the area recently completed the EEO review by the EO Officer of the Commonwealth with no findings and has contracted with Appalachian Independence Center to provide the physical review for ADA Compliance.

Statement of Compliance, Plan Signatures, & Fiscal Agent Designation

We hereby certify that this local plan was developed in accordance with the State guidelines, and that local board activities will be conducted in accordance with this plan and the provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, its attendant regulations and the applicable state laws and policies. We further certify that the plan was developed by the local workforce development board in partnership with the Chief Elected Officials (CEO), and with the benefit of an open and inclusive plan development process and the required public comment period.

Local Area Name / #	New River/Mount Rogers WDA / LWDA #2
Local Plan Point of Contact:	Marty Holliday
Address:	6580 Valley Center Drive, Suite 119, Radford, VA 24141
Phone/e-mail:	540-633-6764, marty.holliday@vcwnr.com

Michael Miller	
Typed Name & Signature of WDB Chair	Date

Mary Biggs	
Typed Name & Signature of CEO Consortium Chair	Date

The Chief Elected Official(s) designate(s) the following entity as the fiscal agent:

Entity: New River Valley Regional Commission _____

Contact: Kevin Byrd, Ex. Director _____

Address: 6580 Valley Center Drive, Suite 124 _____

Phone/Email: _____

Local Plan Required Attachments

Please provide the links to the documents listed below in the boxes marked “Click here to enter text.” If such links are not available, please include copies of the documents with your submission.

1. Current Chief Elected Official (CEO) Consortium Agreement: [CB Agreement - New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board \(nrmrwib.org\)](#)
2. Current CEO-Local WBD Agreement: [WDB Agreement - New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board \(vcwnewrivermtrogers.com\)](#)
3. Current Local WBD organizational chart [Organizational Flow Chart - New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board \(nrmrwib.org\)](#)
 - a. Identify board oversight and program administration
4. Copies of executed cooperative agreements between the Local WBD or other local entities and the local office of the Virginia agency/unit administering programs carried out under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination
 - a. [SAMPLE One-Stop Center MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING \(vcwnewrivermtrogers.com\)](#)
 - b. Cooperative agreements as defined in WIOA section 107(d)(11)
 - c. Other local entities described in section 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(B))
5. Local WBD Policies: provide the link to all policies on the Local WBD website
 - a. [Policies & Procedures - New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board \(vcwnewrivermtrogers.com\)](#)