

New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Wire

BUILDING PATHWAYS. STRENGTHENING OUR REGION.

Proudly servicing the counties of Bland, Carroll, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Montgomery, Pulaski, Smyth, Washington, and Wythe and the cities of Bristol, Galax, and Radford

At the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board, we believe in the potential of people and the value of building a strong, thriving region.

We provide customized solutions to meet the needs of our businesses, job seekers, workers, and partners.

WE CULTIVATE TALENT FOR THE REGION

In this Newsletter

Workforce in the Region

Discover how workforce programs are supporting local talent and employers.

Real People. Real Success.

Be inspired by stories of growth, resilience, and opportunity.

By the Numbers

See the ROI and regional impact of workforce programs.

Business Buzz

Explore growth, challenges, and connections across our business community.

Spotlight on Training Opportunities

Access skills-based training to prepare for in-demand jobs and career advancement.

Pursuing New Resources to Strengthen Our Region's Workforce

Learn how new grant proposals aim to expand training, support individuals, and build a stronger economy.

Op-Ed - Workforce Development Faces a New Era

Flexibility without funding: why local communities could be at risk.

Stay Informed



[Connect Here](#) or listen wherever you get your podcasts.

Resources

Regional Workforce Dashboard

[Access Here](#)

Work-Based Learning Toolkit

[Access Here](#)

Regional Economic Indicators

[Access Here](#)

Workforce in the Region

Serving:

Employers and Businesses
Job Seekers and Workers

Programs:

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), YouthBuild, Pathway Home Reentry, Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC), HRSA Healthcare, and Trades Gap (Congressional Award)

Targeted Focus:

Manufacturing; Healthcare & Social Assistance; Construction & Skilled Trades; Information Technology & Cybersecurity; Transportation, Logistics, & Warehousing' Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services; Agriculture & Agribusiness; Public Safety; Energy & Minerals; Education; Hospitality & Tourism

Youth, Adults, Dislocated Workers, Justice-Involved, Individuals in Recovery



Connecting Talent and Opportunity Across the Region

Job fairs are a vital bridge between job seekers and employers, offering face-to-face opportunities to connect, explore career pathways, and fill workforce needs. Across our region, job fairs brought together businesses ready to hire and individuals eager to work, reinforcing the power of in-person networking and real-time connections in building a stronger regional economy.

2025 WYTHE/BLAND CAREER FAIR

APRIL 16 | WYTHEVILLE MEETING CENTER
9AM-NOON (HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS) | 12:30-3PM (GENERAL PUBLIC)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.MAINTHEFAIRPROUD.ORG/JOE-FAIR

RESUME ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE APRIL 9, 1-4PM, WCC, 2ND FLOOR CARROLL HALL

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES

Access Home Health Care • AMR DEMCO CDS ERM
Austinville Linn Stone Company • J&J Transformer Solutions, Inc.
Blue Ridge Job Corps • Gattonville Home-Wayville • Clarke Precision Machine
Food City • Gentiva Hospice • Hitech Energy • Klockner Pentaplast of America
Marion Correctional Treatment Center • Mount Rogers Community Services
Mount Rogers RACE • Real Performance Machinery • Sam's Club
United SVI Federal Credit Union • Valley Tractor Addins • Virginia State Police
Virginia Tech Dining Services • Wal-Mart Supercenter (Longwood Easton)
Woodgrain • Westall • Wythe Co Public Schools • Wytheville Police Dept.
AND MORE

EVENT SPONSORS:

Supporters: Virginia Works, Wythe County Public Schools, Bland County Public Schools, Wytheville Community College, People, Inc.

Positions are available for ALL skill levels Entry to Advanced

NEW RIVER VALLEY JOB FAIR EXPO
APRIL 2, 2025 117 EDWARDS HALL, NRCC
5251 College Drive, Dublin, VA
9-10am (Students only) | 10am-1pm (Open to All)

RESUME ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE AT THE BASFORD WORKFORCE CENTER (A WEST MAINST. BASFORD)

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES

Agape Home Healthcare LLC
Americare Plus
Blackburn/Christiansburg Pharmacy
Brown & Root • Carillon Clinic
Christiansburg Police Dept
Commonwealth Senior Living
Current Lighting • Elwood Staffing
EIS Technologies
Express Employment Professionals
Farrington Design Services
Freedom First Credit Union
Heritage Hall Blackburn
Heritage Hall/South Roanoke Nursing
Highland Ridge Health Center
Hollingsworth & Voss Company
Hurt & Profit Inc • Lottel Staffing Group
Montgomery County
Montgomery County Public Schools
Mount Rogers Community Services
AND MORE

SPONSORS:

NEW RIVER MOUNT ROGERS
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

NEW RIVER
Community College

2025 CROSSROADS CAREER FAIR

MARCH 27 | 9-11 AM ^{Students Only} & 11 AM-2PM ^{General Public}
CROSSROADS INSTITUTE, GALAX, VA

Need HELP preparing for the Job Fair? Resume Assistance will be available at Crossroads on March 26 from 9am to 1pm in the Cafe.

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES

ALBANY INDUSTRIES • BARKER MICROFARMS
BLUE RIDGE HOME HEALTH CARE • CARE ADVANTAGE
COOKS TRUCKING COMPANY • GALAX CITY SCHOOLS • GRAYSON NATURAL FARMS
GRAYSON REPAIR AND HEALTHCARE CENTER • HARDY BROTHERS, INC.
HERITAGE HALL LAUREL MEADOWS • LIFE CENTER OF GALAX
LIFEPOINT HEALTH • LUTTRELL STAFFING GROUP
MONARK • MINNICK SCHOOLS • MOUNT ROGERS COMMUNITY SERVICES
NEW RIVER CTC • NEW RIVER TREATMENT CENTER • REAL PERFORMANCE MACHINERY
RIVER NORTH CORRECTIONAL CENTER • ROOFTOP OF VIRGINIA
SABER HEALTHCARE • SENIOR HOME SHARE
VANGUARD FURNITURE • WLA, INC. • WORKFORCE UNLIMITED
AND MORE

EVENT SPONSORS:

NEW RIVER MOUNT ROGERS
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Event Supporters: Virginia Works, Carroll County Public Schools, Grayson County Public Schools, Galax City Public Schools, Wytheville Community College

The National Workforce Development Board is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Call 1-800-949-4101 or visit <http://www.dhs.gov/eo-12813>.
Do not use funding resources: <http://www.dhs.gov/eo-12813>

Get HIRED!
Career Fair

April 28, 2025 | 9am to 1pm
Event located at Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center

Healthcare • Manufacturing • Logistics
Human Services • Criminal Justice • Technology
Agriculture • Skilled Trades

Employers and Job Seekers,
register at:
vhccgethiredcareerfair.paperform.co

Details and instructions will be emailed upon registration.

Questions? Email emc@vhcc.edu or call (276) 779-2403.

SPONSORS:

SWVAM

Building Connections: Workforce Partners Learn How FastForward Training Opens Doors for Job Seekers



Workforce System Partners gathered at Virginia Highlands Community College to explore FastForward training options that help connect job seekers with short-term, career-focused credentials.

Virginia Community College System's FastForward program offers affordable, short-term training designed to prepare Virginians for in-demand jobs in fields like healthcare, skilled trades, and technology, helping people quickly gain the skills they need to succeed in today's workforce.

Sector Partnerships: Driving Growth Through Industry-Led Partnerships

All three sector partnerships are making important progress in building stronger connections between business, education, and workforce efforts. This grassroots effort brings together local employers, educators, and workforce leaders who are shaping solutions based on real regional needs and opportunities. To date, each has:

- Welcomed members through orientation sessions on the role and purpose of sector partnerships
- Reviewed regional workforce data, including quarterly reports and career lattices, and requested updates to keep information current
- Heard directly from regional education and training providers to better understand available programs, including two colleges, four career and technical education (CTE) programs, the Center for Manufacturing Excellence in Southwest Virginia, the Healthcare Academy of Southwest Virginia, and others,
- Identified critical occupations in their respective sectors to help align talent development efforts
- Engaged in valuable peer learning and information sharing to strengthen relationships and foster collaboration

Looking ahead, the next major step will focus on building out detailed career lattices for each sector. This summer, each partnership will form a Career Lattice Working Group, and we will be seeking participation from businesses and education providers to help ensure the lattices reflect real-world pathways and opportunities.

Together, these partnerships are creating strong foundations to better align regional talent with employer needs and to ensure our workforce continues to grow and thrive.



Real People. Real Success.

The Power and Promise of Workforce Programs

Behind every job placement is a personal story of perseverance, transformation, and hope. Workforce programs are more than pathways to employment, they are lifelines for people facing real and often difficult barriers. Whether overcoming unemployment, reentering the community after incarceration, navigating family hardships, or gaining new skills later in life, individuals across our region turn to these programs for a fresh start. When people succeed, communities thrive. Workforce development helps individuals not only find jobs but also build careers, provide for their families, and contribute meaningfully to our local economy. These are the faces of resilience and the proof that when we invest in people, we invest in stronger communities and a brighter future for all.



Marjane came to the United States full of hope, but faced unimaginable challenges as she worked to build a life for herself and her young son in Southwest Virginia. When everything seemed uncertain, the CNA program through the NRMR Workforce Development Board opened the door to a new beginning. Supported by the program, Marjane completed her training, found joy caring for others in a Carroll County nursing home, and became a proud U.S. citizen in 2024. Today, she supports her family near and far, and is driven by a growing passion to continue advancing in the nursing profession — proving that resilience, opportunity, and hard work can truly change lives



Jonathan, is building a new life after incarceration. Determined to create a better future for himself and his three children, Jonathan has embraced reentry challenges with resilience. Just three months after release, he secured two jobs and is close to regaining his driver's license. Through the HBI PACT program, he gained valuable skills and found strong support from instructors and staff. Jonathan credits the program for helping him lay a solid foundation for success and is grateful for the opportunity to move forward with confidence and purpose.



MaKenna pursued CNA training to fulfill her passion for helping others and overcome personal challenges, including anxiety and self-doubt. With encouragement from her instructor and support from the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board, she completed her training and began working third shift at MCPA in Hillsville. The experience has been both rewarding and transformative. MaKenna is now confident in her abilities, financially independent, and eager to grow her career in healthcare while making a difference in the lives of those she serves



Tyler, of Pulaski County, is turning opportunity into action as he gains valuable hands-on experience through On-the-Job Training with Virginia Fence Builders. Supported by YouthBuild and Pathway Home, Tyler is developing real-world skills in a high-demand field while earning wages and building a track record of success with an employer. On-the-Job Training provides critical benefits, helping participants like Tyler transition from learning to doing, while giving employers the chance to train and invest in new talent. With each day on the job, Tyler is not only advancing his career but also laying the foundation for long-term stability and growth in the skilled trades.



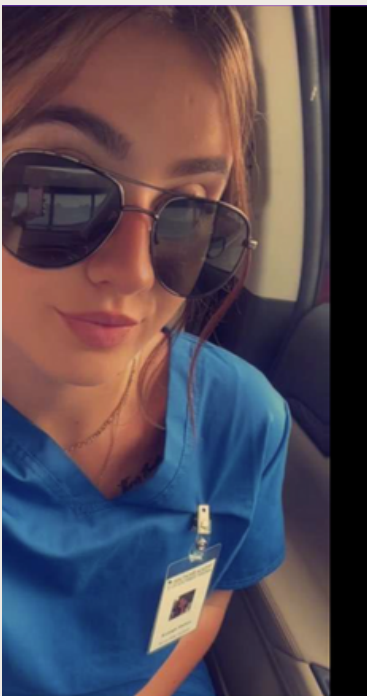
Daniel, pictured with his supervisor at Paramount, is living proof of how coordinated workforce programs create pathways to lasting change. After facing the challenges of incarceration, Daniel began his transformation while still at Bland Correctional, completing HBI PACT training and laying the foundation for a new career. Upon release, continued support from workforce programs helped him bridge the gap from prison to community. Today, he is employed at Paramount, preparing to move into his own apartment in Abingdon, and building both independence and stability. Thanks to seamless pre-release training and post-release guidance, Daniel is not just surviving — he is thriving, focused on growth, and creating a brighter future for himself and his community.



Toby's turning point came when he entered YouthBuild after facing the challenges of foster care and the uncertainty of early adulthood. Through YouthBuild, Toby earned his high school diploma through Penn Foster, completed HBI PACT training, and earned his driver's license, milestones that built both confidence and opportunity. With continued support, Toby entered the workforce, working his way from pizza maker to management and ultimately landing a full-time job at Amcor Rigid Plastics earning \$19.10 an hour. YouthBuild provided Toby not just skills but a pathway to independence and a future filled with possibility.



Christopher, pictured here with our HBI PACT instructor Bill, sought assistance during a challenging career transition. With personalized assistance and access to valuable training, Christopher charted a new course that blended his skills in communications and project management with his passion for residential construction. Today, Christopher has a fulfilling new career as a Project Manager at Shelter Alternatives in Blacksburg, which brings him joy and purpose. His story is a testament to the power of workforce programs in helping people find meaningful work that enriches their lives and strengthens the region's workforce.



For **Bryleigh** of Hillsville, supportive services made all the difference in turning a dream into reality. Through the YouthBuild program, she received help every step of the way — from earning her high school diploma to accessing a laptop, overcoming training setbacks, and securing scrubs for her first job. With this vital support, Bryleigh completed CNA training, passed her exams, and began a career she truly loves. Her journey reflects the power of workforce programs to not only provide skills but also to break down barriers so individuals can succeed, thrive, and find joy in meaningful work

A proud moment as Warm Hearth CNA Program graduates complete their journey through the Healthcare Academy and step into the healthcare workforce in the New River Valley.



With pride and purpose, CNA graduates from Wythe, Carroll, Grayson, and Galax complete Healthcare Academy training ready to bring care and compassion to their communities.



Roger found through YouthBuild how workforce programs can change lives and open doors to opportunity. After spending his early years in foster care, Roger found direction and purpose through the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board. He enrolled in YouthBuild and began working toward his high school diploma through Penn Foster, which he proudly earned at just 16. With supportive services and encouragement from the workforce team, he completed HBI PACT training, then continued his education at Wytheville Community College in Auto/Diesel Technology. Roger graduated college just before his 18th birthday and quickly secured employment at SpeedCo, where he is now building his career as a Level 1 Tech with ambitions to advance further. Workforce programs helped Roger not only gain credentials and skills, but also offered critical support — from tuition to gas — and pushed him to believe in his potential. His story reflects the true power of YouthBuild and programs like Penn Foster to help young people overcome barriers and create futures filled with purpose, pride, and possibility

Building New Futures: Home Builders Institute Preapprenticeship Certificate Training (HBI PACT) graduates from Bland and Marion Correctional Facilities complete training and take the next step toward meaningful careers and successful reentry. By opening doors to meaningful work and personal growth, reentry programs offer a powerful second chance, helping individuals transform their futures and contribute to stronger, safer communities. These life-changing opportunities are made possible through support from the the Appalachian Regional Commission POWER grant as well as a U.S. Department of Labor WORC and Pathway Home grants, the latter delivered in partnership with Total Action for Progress. Together, these investments ensure that justice-impacted individuals have access to training, support, and pathways to success both before and after release.





YouthBuild participants put their talents to work building a picnic table for Old Brick Church in Radford, providing a space for fellowship. Learning to give back teaches youth the value of service, strengthens ties to the places they call home, and instills pride in making a positive difference. As they build for others, they also build a sense of responsibility and belonging, qualities that make them not only strong workers, but engaged community members.



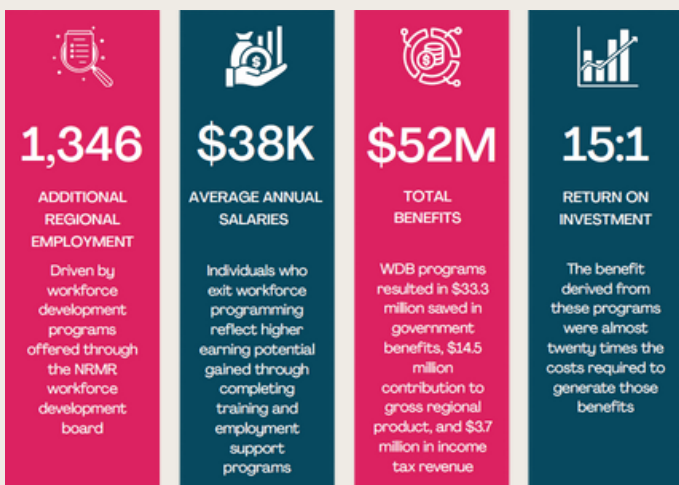
Giles County YouthBuild participants craft Tiny Libraries, small structures with a big mission: sharing books and sparking a love of reading across their community.

Tiny Libraries transform neighborhoods into hubs of learning and connection, where everyone can take a book or leave a book, fostering literacy, kindness, and a shared sense of belonging.

YouthBuild is a comprehensive program that empowers young people ages 16 to 24 who face barriers to education and employment. Through a blend of academic instruction, occupational skills training, leadership development, and service opportunities, participants earn credentials, gain work experience, and prepare for in-demand careers. But YouthBuild is about more than skills, it's about transformation. Participants build confidence, purpose, and connection as they take charge of their futures. This connection to community is central to the program's mission. Recently, YouthBuild helps young people rise, while uplifting the entire region in the process.



By the Numbers



The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board's programs are more than services — they are engines of economic opportunity and regional stability. In 2023 alone, over 1,340 individuals moved from unemployment or uncertainty into meaningful careers, generating more than \$51 million in new household income and contributing significantly to local businesses.

This success rippled across the economy, creating 150 additional jobs, producing \$23.8 million in

economic output, and returning \$3.7 million in state and local taxes. Just as importantly, helping people achieve self-sufficiency reduced government spending by \$33.34 million annually through lower reliance on unemployment insurance, Medicaid, and SNAP. Altogether, every dollar invested in workforce development returned nearly 20 times its value, delivering a powerful 15:1 return on investment (ROI) for the region.

In addition to job seekers, workforce programs also supported 224 businesses through recruitment, training, and consulting — helping reduce turnover and drive sustainable growth.

At a time when federal funding faces serious threats, these numbers make one thing clear: workforce programs matter. They transform lives, strengthen communities, and power our regional economy.

Read the full report and Executive Summary here:

<https://vcwnewrivermtrogers.com/resources/documents-of-interest>



Spotlight on Training Opportunities

Our Workforce Programs Help People Earn Credentials and Build Skills — At No Cost

Whether people are ready to finish their high school diploma or eager to develop new skills, we offer programs to help them take the next step.

Penn Foster provides a flexible online option to complete a high school education and unlock new career pathways.

Metrix Learning gives people access to thousands of self-paced courses — perfect for building job-ready skills, advancing in their career, or helping businesses train employees.

These opportunities are available at no cost to individuals and businesses in our region. Know someone who could benefit? Help us spread the word and make sure everyone has access to these valuable tools for growth and success.

Getting started is easy. Visit vcwnewrivermtrogers.com/applications to enroll today.

Business Buzz

Spotlighting Growth, Challenges, and Connections



Austinville Limestone reached out to explore recruiting options and learn more about the regional job fair. Along with the Deputy Director of the Joint IDA of Wythe County, we met with the company as they were assessing local workforce interest in its key occupations. They registered for the Wythe/Bland Career Fair to gauge interest and are exploring services through our office and the Business Solutions Team. (A follow-up request for information came in early April.)

Austinville Limestone operates on the oldest active mining site in the eastern U.S., running an open-pit quarry to produce high-grade dolomitic limestone for construction, chemical use, and its main product line — pulverized and pelletized limestone for soil treatment.

We recently joined Smyth County Economic Development for a routine Business Retention & Expansion visit to MEC (Mayville Engineering Company) in Atkins, VA, a key manufacturer of fuel tanks for the commercial trucking industry.



During our meeting with the Plant Manager and HR Manager, we discussed company health, workforce needs, and possible impacts from the recent Volvo Trucks layoff. Fortunately, MEC is thriving. They've secured new business, added skilled hires from local layoffs, and achieved full staffing with strong retention.

Looking ahead, MEC is interested in upskilling opportunities, and we shared details on the Incumbent Worker Training program. They also plan to offer facility tours for local workforce partners to showcase their career pathways.

Pursuing New Resources to Strengthen Our Region's Workforce

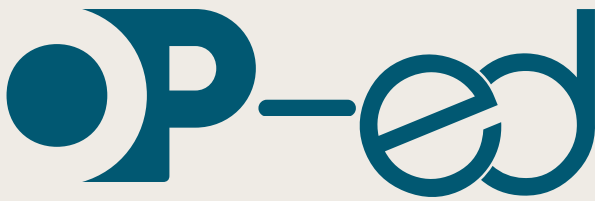
To meet the growing workforce needs of businesses, job seekers, and communities, the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board and Foundation have been actively pursuing new funding opportunities. Over the past several months, we have submitted more than 10 major grant proposals to federal and state agencies — all now under review. If awarded, these grants will help us:

- Expand training and credentialing opportunities
- Strengthen reentry, recovery, and behavioral health workforce services
- Support underserved youth and adult populations
- Grow partnerships and improve our operational capacity

Grant proposals submitted include:

- **Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)** — Ready Grants to Grow, ARISE, INSPIRE, and Area Development
- **Congressional Directed Spending Requests** — POWER (Reentry), YEP! (Youth Employment), and NeighborWorks Crew (Social Enterprise)
- **HRSA Programs** — Nursing Workforce Diversity and Youth Behavioral Health Pathways
- **Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development** — Digital Pathways to Success

If funded, these projects would bring much needed investment to our region, creating pathways to meaningful work and helping our businesses and communities thrive.



Workforce Development Faces a New Era: Why Flexibility Without Funding Puts Local Communities at Risk

As policymakers in Washington debate the future of federal spending, one theme has emerged clearly in the Fiscal Year 2026 budget proposal: a dramatic shift in how workforce development will be funded and delivered across the country. The proposal embraces a streamlined, state-driven model through the new Make America Skilled Again (MASA) initiative. At first glance, this may sound like a logical next step — local communities know their workforce needs best, and industry-aligned training has become an essential pathway to prosperity.

We share this commitment to skill-building aligned with employers' needs. Our region has long prioritized industry-aligned technical training and practical career pathways that lead directly to good jobs. The trades, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, construction, and logistics — these sectors all need a workforce equipped with real-world skills. Flexibility at the local level to align training with these needs makes sense.

But here's where concern grows. While the MASA framework offers flexibility, the budget simultaneously proposes to eliminate critical discretionary grants that are the lifeblood of local workforce efforts like ours. These grants provide essential support to help us reach and serve our most vulnerable job seekers—support that simply cannot be replaced through formula funding alone. The proposed elimination of Adult Education, which delivers foundational literacy and numeracy skills that unlock access to further training and employment, would also deal a particularly significant blow to our ability to prepare individuals for success. Additionally, other long-standing programs such as Job Corps, which provides educational and skill-building opportunities for disconnected young adults, and Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), which helps older workers re-enter the workforce, are also slated for elimination. Each of these programs serves important roles, and together their loss, combined with deep cuts to discretionary grant funding, threatens to undermine the comprehensive approach our communities need to prepare people for meaningful and sustainable careers.

These are not peripheral programs. They are lifelines. For individuals who lack a high school diploma, for older adults displaced from the workforce, and for young people in rural areas with limited opportunity, these programs provide the onramps to higher-level skills and employment. Cutting them while expecting local communities to meet ambitious new training goals puts workforce boards like ours in a difficult, if not impossible, position.

Workforce programs require outreach, partnership development, supportive services, and wraparound assistance that many participants rely on to succeed. Without adequate federal investment, the burden will shift entirely to states and local communities to fill the gaps — at a time when budgets are already stretched and local needs are growing.

At the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board, we are ready and eager to meet the moment. We understand our employers' needs. We have deep partnerships with training providers and local governments. But we cannot do it alone. Achieving a future where every person in our community — from youth to seniors — can access meaningful training and career pathways requires both flexibility and robust federal support.

This budget proposal opens an important conversation. As it moves forward, please help us raise our voice to ensure that greater flexibility does not mean fewer resources for the people who need them most. Investments in workforce development are investments in people, in communities, and in economic resilience. We stand ready to deliver, but we need the tools to succeed.



NEW RIVER/MOUNT ROGERS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

CULTIVATING TALENT FOR THE REGION

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board supports regional economic growth and community prosperity by fostering a collaborative and adaptable workforce system that connects businesses with skilled talent and equips individuals for career success.

Help Us Support Workforce Development

Share these stories. Stay informed.

Our programs transform lives.

And your voice matters.

Stay Connected.

Visit our website to learn more about our programs and services:



vcwnewrivermtrogers.com

Follow us on social media for the latest updates and opportunities.



New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board
NRMR Workforce Network



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Questions:



CareerHelp@nrmrworks.org