

New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Region

PY24 Q4 QUARTERLY
WORKFORCE REPORT



Introduction

Welcome to the Quarter 2 2025 Workforce Report.

This quarter's workforce development report focuses on the Region 2 Workforce Development Board's continued efforts to serve the local business community by providing tailored workforce solutions. As businesses across industries face evolving workforce challenges, from talent shortages to skills gaps; the Board has prioritized strengthening its engagement with employers to provide meaningful, results-driven support. Through a range of customized services, the Board helps businesses not only find qualified candidates but also invest in current employees, improve retention, and adapt to changing economic and industry conditions.

Among the services offered are recruitment event planning, which connects employers with jobseekers through targeted hiring events; labor market information, providing critical data on wages, industry demand, and employment trends; and incumbent worker training, which supports upskilling for existing employees. Employers also benefit from workforce consultations to align hiring and training strategies with business goals, job posting & matching services to streamline the recruitment process, and recruitment plan development for long-term talent acquisition. In addition, customized training programs are developed in collaboration with employers to address specific operational needs and skill gaps.

To better understand the impact of these services, the Virginia Tech Center for Economic and Community Engagement conducted outreach that included interviews with business leaders across the region. The responses gathered provide valuable insight into what is working, where improvements can be made, and how the Board can continue to evolve its business-facing services to build a more competitive, resilient, and inclusive regional economy.

Workforce Board Business Services

520

Recruitment Events Planned

224

Businesses Reached

TOP SERVICES PROVIDED

- **Recruitment Event Planning:** Organizing targeted events to connect employers with qualified jobseekers.
- **Labor Market Information:** Providing data on employment trends, wages, and industry demand to inform decision-making.
- **Incumbent Worker Training:** Offering training programs to help current employees upgrade their skills and retain employment.
- **Workforce Consultations:** Advising businesses on workforce strategies, talent needs, and available resources.
- **Job Posting & Matching:** Assisting employers in advertising openings and matching them with suitable candidates.
- **Recruitment Plan Development:** Creating strategic hiring plans tailored to meet a company's workforce goals.
- **Customized Training:** Designing training solutions specific to a business's operational needs and skill gaps.

6 MULTI-BUSINESS RECRUITMENT EVENTS

143 BUSINESSES REACHED

Recruiting events comprising multiple businesses connected a broad range of employers with jobseekers.

600

JOBSEEKERS



8 BUSINESS-SPECIFIC RECRUITMENT EVENTS

8 BUSINESSES REACHED

Specialized recruiting events were hosted to support the specific hiring needs of individual businesses.

TRAINING & OTHER SERVICES

Business Success Symposium Sessions

11

Attendee Served

99

Existing Worker Training

10

Workers Served

41

The Impact of Business Services

224 businesses served in 2022



Employers can save as much as **\$12,500-\$38,600 per employee through workforce development programs.**

Services can save employers **16-20%** of annual salaries by reducing turnover, while enhancing employee satisfaction and job quality.

Customized training programs can boost employee productivity by **15-30%**, saving companies **\$3,000-\$5,000** per worker annually.

Workforce training boosts innovation and service quality, driving **4-8%** revenue growth.

Proper training lowers workplace accidents and liability. With every \$1 spent on safety training, **\$4-\$6** is saved in injury and legal expenses.

Workforce development participation can qualify employers for tax benefits like the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), offering up to **\$9,600** per eligible hire.

Business Services Highlights

Somic America, Inc

Located in Wytheville, VA, Somic America is a Tier 1 supplier of suspension and front-end steering components for major automakers like Toyota and Subaru, serving customers in the U.S., Mexico, and Canada. With around 360 hourly employees operating 24/5 across three shifts, the company plays a critical role in meeting stringent safety requirements.

“Kimber makes the process easy; she understands our plant’s needs and supports us every step of the way.”

Workforce Challenges

Skilled Technical Talent

The shift toward automation requires hiring and retaining workers with strong math and computer skills, at competitive salaries.

Pipeline of Workers

Maintaining a steady flow of employees; both new hires and replacements requires constant effort and planning.

The company has built a productive partnership with the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board (NRMWDB), which has become essential for recruitment, training, and employee development. Notable collaborations include:

- Accessed incumbent **worker training** for maintenance staff and leadership training for female employees.
- Used **on-the-job training (OJT) programs** that help offset new employees’ wages.
- Participated in **WDB recruitment events**, the Workforce Symposium, and free mental health first aid training for HR staff.

“The WDB offers grassroots-level referrals and recruiting events that are critical to finding and developing talent.”

Business Services Highlights

Brock Hughes Medical Clinic

Founded in the late 1980s as a volunteer-led initiative, this community health clinic has grown into a critical mission-driven nonprofit healthcare provider in Wythe and Bland counties, offering a wide range of accessible health services:

- **Telehealth partnerships** through the Virginia Telehealth Initiative
- **Dental care** via Big Walker Dentistry, operated by the Bland Ministry Center
- **On-site pharmacy** for patient convenience
- **Health lifestyle education**, diabetes workshops, and a **medical assistance program**

"Kimber and Angie walked me through everything—paperwork, timelines, expectations. They made sure I was supported without extra burden."

Workforce Challenges

Staff Retention

Competitive salaries draw talent away

Funding Limitations

Reliance on grants, donors, and foundations for worker salaries



The clinic has built a productive and ongoing relationship with the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board (NRMWDB), which has become a key partner in staffing and training efforts. Notable collaborations include:

- Participated in **generational and networking workshops** hosted by NRMWDB
- Recently hired a **medical assistant** with salary support provided by the NRMWDB through the training period

"In general, the WDB doesn't wait for us to reach out—they come to us with ideas and support. That's invaluable."

Business Services Highlights

Shelter Alternatives

Based in Blacksburg, Virginia, Shelter Alternatives is a leading residential design-build contracting company known for its commitment to quality craftsmanship, sustainable practices, and personalized service. With a team of four designers and a skilled construction crew, the company specializes in custom home building and smaller renovation projects.

“The Workforce Development Board is more than just a service provider; it’s a partner that helps us grow.”

Workforce Challenges

Field Management

- Finding qualified management talent for field operations remains a challenge.
- As construction roles shift from hands-on skills to include more core competencies, the pool of capable candidates has become more limited.

The company’s relationship with the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board (NRMWDB) has become an important resource for talent development and networking. Notable collaborations include:

- Accessed **on-the-job training** for a project manager candidate through NRMWDB outreach; a successful 6-month program.
- Initially connected with Karen Rhodes at a community meeting on apprenticeship programs.

“One of the services that the workforce development board provides is labor market information. They have an economist present the data in some formats that make it so much more impactful. It’s critical for making informed business decisions.”

Business Services Highlights

Volvo Trucks

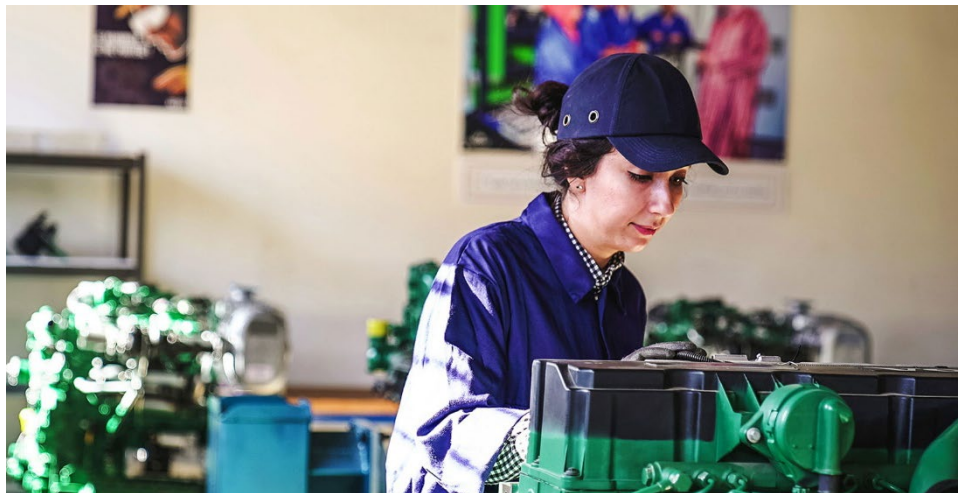
Located in Dublin, Virginia, Volvo Trucks' New River Valley (NRV) Plant is the largest Volvo truck manufacturing facility in the world. The plant employs approximately 2,700 hourly workers and 350 salaried staff across multiple shifts, supporting a complex, integrated production process. The facility specializes in the assembly of heavy-duty trucks and serves as a key supplier for the North American market.

"Volvo's number one compliment for the WDB is their willingness to help. If they can't do it themselves, they find someone who can."

The company has developed a strong partnership with the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board (NRMWDB), which has played a key role in both hiring and layoff processes. The NRMWDB helps identify opportunities for employees and connects them with the resources they need; such as training, job openings, and support services, throughout the Southwest Virginia region. Notable collaborations include:

- **WorkKeys training and testing** to establish consistent work quality; for example, specialized courses are crucial to meet Volvo's quality standards.
- Development of **virtual learning modules** to deliver both foundational and specific job knowledge.
- **On-the-job training (OJT)** opportunities, enabling employees to upskill while contributing to operations.

"Trainings offered for management are phenomenal—these one-day workshops help keep our leadership up to date."



Partnering in Economic Development

The Workforce Development Board understands that workforce challenges cannot be addressed in isolation. By working hand-in-hand with regional economic development partners like the Virginia Tech Center for Economic and Community Engagement (VT CECE), the Board is able to align workforce priorities with broader economic trends, identify emerging needs, and ensure that talent pipelines are responsive to real-time industry demand.



“By uniting research, planning, and implementation expertise across sectors, the Board is helping to build a resilient workforce ecosystem—one that is agile, data-informed, and deeply connected to the needs of both workers and employers.”

The Value of Partnership

This strategic collaboration ensures that the NRMR WDB—and its business, education, and economic development partners—have access to current, relevant data to guide investments, shape policy, and improve outcomes for jobseekers and employers alike. By leveraging VT CECE’s analytical expertise and visual tools, the NRMR WDB strengthens its capacity to lead with insight.

How Do They Partner?

Quarterly Economic & Labor Market Reports

Each quarter, VT CECE provides a detailed snapshot of economic and labor force trends across the region. These reports incorporate insights on critical workforce themes such as childcare, housing, transportation barriers, youth engagement, and sector partnerships.

Rapid-Response Data Support

To support the Board’s agility, VT CECE responds to “quick data requests” that often support grant applications, partner inquiries, or urgent economic development needs.

Interactive Labor Market Dashboard

In 2024, VT CECE launched a custom Tableau dashboard hosted on the NRMR WDB website. In 2025, this resource was enhanced to spotlight quarterly report themes and provide a dynamic interface for exploring:

- Career pathways and skills transferability
- Workforce and education trends
- Challenges like childcare, housing, & transportation



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