



Meeting Agenda – February 18, 2026

CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME OF GUEST – Mike Miller, Chair

ROLL CALL

CONSENT AGENDA (Previously Distributed with Packet)

- Approval of December 3, 2025 Meeting Minutes
- Financials
- Operational Summary & Performance

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

CONSORTIUM BOARD UPDATE – Mary Biggs, Chair

FOUNDATION BOARD UPDATE - Mike Miller, Chair

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SUMMARY

PROGRAM SUMMARIES

- WIOA Title I Programs - *Beth Carico*
- Board Discretionary Grant Programs – *Angi Chandler and Marty Holliday*

BUSINESS SOLUTIONS TEAM SUMMARY - *Kimber Simmons*

SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS SUMMARY – *Marty Holliday*

PARTNER REPORTS

- Adult Education – *Trish Dover-Bedwell*
- Career & Technical Education - *Summer Stone*
- Community Based Organizations - *Bryan Phipps & Ginny Ayers*
- Institutes of Higher Education - *Perry Hughes*
- Economic & Community Development - *Katie Boswell*
- TANF Programs - *Vicky Collins*
- Title 1 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 - *Christi Altizer*
- Virginia's Employment Services - *Christy Lowe*

BOARD MEMBER TIME

Adjournment of Official Meeting - Mike Miller, Chair

Other Important Items: 2026 Meeting Schedule

New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area Joint Boards Meeting Minutes

December 3, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Miller and Chair Biggs, respectively, called to order the Joint meeting of the NRMW Workforce Development Board, the Consortium Board and the Workforce Development Foundation at 10:06 am on December 3, 2025 in person at the Wytheville Meeting Center and online via Zoom.

MOMENT OF REFLECTION

Chair Biggs lead the Boards in the Pledge of Allegiance and in a moment of reflection.

ROLL CALL

Ms. Renee Sturgill conducted roll call. The following persons were present and online, a quorum was present:

Consortium Board

Montgomery – Chair Mary Biggs
Bland – Cameron Burton
Galax – Sharon Ritchie
Giles – Perry Martin (Virtual)
Pulaski – Laura Walters
Smyth – Shawn Utt (Alt)
Washington – Charlie Hargis
Wythe – Brian Vaught

Workforce Board

Chair Michael Miller
Christi Altizer (Virtual)
Thad Austin
Ginny Ayers (Virtual)
Katie Boswell (Virtual)
Vicky Collins
Kelly Debusk
Jeff Dunnack
Jennifer McKenzie (Alt)
Patricia Dover-Bedwell (Alt)
Kim Hernandez
Mary Anne Halbrook
Jake Leonard
Christy Lowe
John Overton
Bryan Phipps
Cindy Robertson
Jay Williams (Virtual)
Larry Wyatt

Foundation

Chair Michael Miller
Laura Walters
Vicky Collins
Thad Austin
Jeff Dunnack
Mary Biggs
Cameron Burton

Staff

Jenny Bolte
Marty Holliday
Angi Chandler
Kathy Pickel
Renee Sturgill
Denise Lee
Sherri Hanshew
John Lowrey
Bam Felger
Marjorie Martin
Kimber Simmons

Guest

Logan Lorenzo
Patricia Bevil
Lisa Reedy
Leta Bradley
Beth Carico
Dominique Reeves
Victoria Beckner
Emily Linkas
Jennifer Claytor
Renee Moore Slayton
Allison Slayton
Karen Rhodes
Joyce McGuire
Robyn Crockett
Jennifer Houston
Linda Batchelor
Kimberly Keith
Brinda Rigney
Phyllis Conner
Laura Venable
Linda Nuckolls
Kim Catton
Paula Byrd
Rebecca Haynes
Kimberly McIvor
Fabian Garcia
Blane Clark

APPROVAL TO ALLOW MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE REMOTELY

Ms. Vicky Collins made the motion to allow members attending virtually to vote, Mr. John Overton seconded the motion, and the motion was passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Cameron Burton made the motion to approve the Agenda, Mr. Thad Austin seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

- Consortium Board Consent Agenda
Ms. Laura Walters made the motion to approve the Consortium Board Consent Agenda, including approval of the September 17, 2025 meeting minutes and the Financial Summary. Mr. Charlie Hargis seconded the motion, and the motion was passed unanimously by all those in attendance.
- Workforce Development Board Consent Agenda
Ms. Vicky Collins made the motion to approve the Workforce Development Board Consent Agenda, including approval of the October 22, 2025 meeting minutes and the Operational Summary. Ms. Kim Hernandez seconded the motion, and the motion was passed unanimously by all those in attendance.
- Workforce Development Foundation Consent Agenda
Mr. Thad Austin made the motion to approve the Workforce Development Foundation Consent Agenda, including approval of the September 8, 2025 meeting minutes and the Foundation Report. Ms. Vicky Collins seconded the motion, and the motion was passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

PY25 BUDGET UPDATE

Executive Director Jenny Bolte reviewed the PY25 Budget Update.

- Workforce Development Board
Ms. Vicky Collins made the motion to approve the PY25 Budget Update and to recommend the budget to the Consortium Board. Ms. Mary Anne Halbrook seconded the motion, and the motion was passed unanimously by all those in attendance.
- Consortium Board
Mr. Cameron Burton made the motion to approve the PY25 Budget Update as recommended by the Workforce Development Board. Ms. Laura Walters seconded the motion, and the motion was passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

PY25 CONTRACT MODIFICATION

- Workforce Development Board
Mr. John Overton made the motion to approve the PY25 Contract Modification. Mr. Thad Austin seconded the motion. Mr. Bryan Phipps abstained. The motion was passed by all other members in attendance.
- Consortium Board:
Ms. Sharon Ritchie made the motion to approve the PY25 Contract Modification. Mr. Cameron Burton seconded the motion, and the motion was passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

BOARD APPOINTMENT – WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Ms. Vicky Collins nominated Mr. Jeff Dunnack for appointment. Mr. Thad Austin made the motion to appoint Mr. Jeff Dunnack, Ms. Kim Hernandez seconded the motion, and the appointment was approved unanimously by all those in attendance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Director Jenny Bolte noted that her written report was included in the meeting packet and provided brief highlights on ongoing efforts to secure additional funding and participation in Appalachian Regional Commission leadership activities.

PROGRAM SUMMARIES

- WIOA Title I Programs – Beth Carico
Ms. Carico provided brief highlights from the One-Stop System and Operations reports.
- Board Discretionary Programs – Angi Chandler, Kathy Pickel, and Marty Holliday
Ms. Chandler provided a brief overview of discretionary programs. Ms. Holliday highlighted that the ARISE grant officially began on October 1.
- Business Services Team – Kimber Simmons
Ms. Simmons shared brief updates from the Business Services Team, including the Board's designation as an approved apprenticeship intermediary and upcoming Business Solutions Team meetings.

PARTNER REPORTS

- Adult Education – Patricia Dover-Bedwell (Alternate for Barry Yost)
Ms. Dover-Bedwell reported that two GED graduations are being held this week, with thirteen individuals completing GED requirements since July 1.
- Career & Technical Education – Summer Stone
No report.
- Community-Based Organizations – Mary Anne Halbrook, Bryan Phipps, Ginny Ayers
Ms. Halbrook had no report. Mr. Phipps reported that services remain intact. Ms. Ayers provided a virtual update from Literacy NRV, noting continued work with the YouthBuild program.

- Institute of Higher Education – Perry Hughes
No report.
- Economic & Community Development – Katie Boswell
Ms. Boswell provided a virtual update on Onward NRV.
- TANF Programs – Vicky Collins
Ms. Collins reported a 48-hour delay in SNAP benefit issuance with no guidance provided and noted that SNAP benefits are authorized through 2026.
- Title I Rehabilitation Act of 1973 – Christi Altizer
Ms. Altizer reported virtually, highlighting adult career training efforts, credential attainment, services to high school students, and the need for apprenticeship and internship opportunities.
- Virginia Employment Services – Christy Lowe
Ms. Lowe reported that the Regional Director and Area Director were present.
- Job Corps
Vacant.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Chairs Mike Miller and Mary Biggs adjourned the meeting at 10:49 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kathy Pickel
Program Coordinator

New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board
Financial Report
Reporting Period: December 31, 2025

WIOA Administration

PY25 (Year 1) Funds Available	\$ 120,799.90
PY24 (Year 2) Funds Available	\$ 142,401.70

WIOA Adult Program

PY25 (Year 1) Funds Available	\$ 367,060.50
PY24 (Year 2) Funds Available	\$ 434,228.40

WIOA Dislocated Worker

PY25 (Year 1) Funds Available	\$ 265,013.10
PY24 (Year 2) Funds Available	\$ 314,964.90

WIOA Youth

PY25 (Year 1) Funds Available	\$ 455,125.50
PY24 (Year 2) Funds Available	\$ 532,422.74

(In School and Out of School combined)

Ticket To Work

Funds Available to Date	\$ 55,070.35
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Local Support

Funds Available to Date	\$ 25,647.10
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Foundation

Funds Available to Date	\$ 94,269.37
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NEW RIVER/MOUNT ROGERS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

CULTIVATING TALENT FOR THE REGION

WIOA Quarterly Monitoring Dashboard – PY25

Contractor: People Incorporated of Virginia

Reporting Period: ☐ Q1 (Jul–Sep) ☒ Q2 (Oct–Dec) ☐ Q3 (Jan–Mar) ☐ Q4 (Apr–Jun)

I. Participant Enrollment & Demographics

Category	Target for PY25	Quarterly Actual	Cumulative Total	Notes/Variance Explanation
Adult Participants	121	10	85	On target
Dislocated Worker (DLW)	37	14	50	Met Goal
Youth Participants	51	4	61	Met Goal
% Served in Each Jurisdiction*	Equitable Access	See Attachment	See Attachment	
Individuals with Disabilities	25% of the total	1	29 (15.10%)	Behind on Goal
Minority Participants	40% of the total	0	36 (18.75%)	Behind on Goal
Out-of-School Youth	75% of youth	1	48 (78.86%)	On target

*Attach a breakdown of participant counts by jurisdiction.

II. Participant Outcomes

Adult:

Outcome Category	Goal	Quarterly Actual	Cumulative Total	Notes/Variance Explanation
Credential Attainment	78%	62.85% (22 of 35)	62.00% (31 of 50)	Behind on Goal
Entered Unsubsidized Employment 2 nd Q after Exit	85%	70.00% (7 of 10)	89.47% (51 of 57)	On Target

Outcome Category	Goal	Quarterly Actual	Cumulative Total	Notes/Variance Explanation
Entered Unsubsidized Employment 4th Q after Exit	86.5%	82.60% (38 of 46)	80.32% (49 of 61)	Slightly below target
Measurable Skills Gain	65%	48.14% (26 of 54)	48.14% (26 of 54)	Making progress on the goal

Dislocated Worker:

Credential Attainment	79.47%	100.00% (5 of 5)	100% (6 of 6)	On target
Entered Unsubsidized Employment 2 nd Q after Exit	82%	66.67% (2 of 3)	76.92% (10 of 13)	On target
Entered Unsubsidized Employment 4th Q after Exit	87.8%	76.00% (19 of 25)	83.33% (30 of 36)	On target
Measurable Skills Gain	65%	66.66% (12 of 18)	66.66% (12 of 18)	On target

Youth:

Credential Attainment	60%	63.63% (14 of 22)	78.94% (30 of 38)	On target
Entered Unsubsidized Employment 2 nd Q after Exit	78.59%	72.72% (8 of 11)	75.55% (34 of 45)	On target
Entered Unsubsidized Employment 4th Q after Exit	80%	65.625% (21 of 32)	76.00% (38 of 50)	On target

Measurable Skills Gain	65%	29.41% (10 of 34)	29.41% (10 of 34)	Behind on Goal
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III. Programmatic Investment Snapshot

Category	Budgeted (\$)	Actual This Quarter	Cumulative Total	% of Total Budget	Notes
Participant Training Costs					
Supportive Services					
Incentives & Wraparound Supports					
Indirect Costs	11%				

IV. Strategic Innovations & Access

Area	Description of Activities This Quarter	Outcome/Impact
Digital Engagement Tools (e.g., Metrix, Conover)	Conover, NorthStar	Youth increase their work-readiness, and all participants enhance their digital skills for employment.
Employer Partnerships / Work-Based Learning	Provided to Kimber in the quarterly business services report	
Outreach Efforts	Outreach targeting Community College and public schools	People Inc. has been meeting with the community college workforce development departments – WCC, VHCC, and NRCC, and they have met with Adult Education. Additionally, People Inc. has been reaching out to curriculum/department heads regarding some of our in-demand occupations at community colleges and is beginning outreach/recruitment through public schools.

Area	Description of Activities This Quarter	Outcome/Impact
Cross-Partner Collaboration (e.g., referrals, co-enrollment)	Co-enrollment/partnerships	People Inc. has received an announcement that we will receive a SPARK Energy Grant – they will co-enroll WIOA youth with that grant once it is executed.

V. Concerns/Technical Assistance Needs

Submitted by Clay Stein: *Clay Stein*

Reviewed by (NRMW WDB Program Manager): _____

Date of Review Meeting: _____

Jurisdiccional Count as of the End of Second Quarter 2025

		Totals		Percentage
Bland County	Adult	3		
	Dislocated Worker	1	4	2.04%
	Youth	0		
Carrol County	Adult	10		
	Dislocated Worker	1	16	8.16%
	Youth	5		
Floyd County	Adult	3		
	Dislocated Worker	0	4	2.04%
	Youth	1		
Giles County	Adult	6		
	Dislocated Worker	0	10	5.10%
	Youth	4		
Grayson County	Adult	9		
	Dislocated Worker	0	12	6.12%
	Youth	3		
Montgomery County	Adult	2		
	Dislocated Worker	4	6	3.06%
	Youth	0		
Pulaski County	Adult	1		
	Dislocated Worker	9	11	5.61%
	Youth	1		
Smythe County	Adult	8		
	Dislocated Worker	7	30	15.31%
	Youth	15		
Washington County	Adult	9		
	Dislocated Worker	9	22	11.22%
	Youth	4		
Wythe County	Adult	7		
	Dislocated Worker	5	24	12.24%
	Youth	12		
City of Bristol	Adult	1		
	Dislocated Worker	3	6	3.06%
	Youth	2		
City of Galax	Adult	11		
	Dislocated Worker	1	20	10.20%
	Youth	8		
City of Radford	Adult	6		
	Dislocated Worker	3	12	6.12%
	Youth	3		
Other	Adult	9		
	Dislocated Worker	7	19	9.69%
	Youth	3		
			196	100.00%

Executive Summary – January-February 2026

Jenny Bolte

STRATEGIC FUNDING PIPELINE

Appalachian Regional Commission – Community Project

Skilled Trades Training Program

3-Year Project | \$300,000 | Begins March 2026

Addresses labor shortages in healthcare, construction, and manufacturing while expanding access for justice-involved and underserved populations.

Strengthens sector-based training aligned with employer demand and business retention.

Outputs: 100 participants; 80% (80) transition to employment; 50 businesses engaged

Regional Impact: Expands the skilled trades workforce, reduces employer vacancy pressure, and increases access to family-sustaining wages across high-demand industries.

Appalachian Regional Commission – POWER

POWERing Pathways

3-Year Project | \$2,000,000 Request | \$1,703,704 Match | Begins May 2026

Addresses workforce shortages in Healthcare, Manufacturing, Skilled Trades, and IT while removing structural barriers to employment.

Strengthens regional sector partnerships and earn-and-learn apprenticeship infrastructure.

Outputs: 450 participants; 360 credentials; 338 placements; 75 employers engaged

Regional Impact: Accelerates economic diversification beyond coal, replaces declining industry wages with sustainable career pathways, and strengthens long-term regional resilience.

PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT

U.S. Department of Labor – YouthBuild 2025

Build Your Career

40-Month Project | \$1,500,000 Request | \$375,000 Match | Proposed July 1, 2026

Addresses youth disconnection from education and employment across rural communities.

Strengthens long-term workforce participation through integrated education, credential attainment, leadership development, and healthcare and construction pathways.

Outputs: 66 opportunity youth enrolled; 80% (53) attain a credential; 75% (50) transition to employment or postsecondary within two quarters of exit; At least 10% (7) transition into Registered Apprenticeship; At least one unit of affordable housing constructed or renovated

Regional Impact: Re-engages disconnected youth into the labor force, reduces long-term dependency, and builds a sustainable pipeline of skilled workers in high-demand industries.

Strada Education Foundation – Advancing Workforce Mobility
Second Chance Skills Validation Pathway

18-Month Project | \$400,000 Request | Proposed March 30, 2026

Addresses the disconnect between demonstrated skills and hiring practices for justice-impacted individuals.

Strengthens employer-led skills validation and advances competency-based hiring models.

Outputs: Employer-recognized skills badges developed; Multi-employer adoption

Regional Impact: Expands equitable access to skilled trades careers, increases employer adoption of skills-based hiring, and positions the region as a leader in practical workforce innovation.

Jobs for the Future (JFF) – Advancing AI-Resilient Early-Career Pathways
Technology-Integrated Healthcare Entry Model

8-Month Pilot | \$100,000 Request | Proposed April 1, 2026

Addresses the growing gap between traditional entry-level preparation and technology-integrated healthcare expectations.

Strengthens structured healthcare entry pathways through applied digital literacy, responsible AI awareness, and employer-validated durable skills.

Regional Impact: Aligns healthcare workforce entry pathways with evolving workplace technology while preserving access and opportunity for early-career workers.

WORKFORCE SYSTEM ALIGNMENT AND CONVENING AUTHORITY

EO has recently expanded its workforce-related initiatives and convened a Workforce Innovation Workgroup focused on internships, apprenticeships, employer engagement, and broader workforce ecosystem strategy. While EO is a valued partner, the scope of these activities overlaps with functions that the Local Workforce Development Board is statutorily charged with leading, including regional convening, employer engagement coordination, work-based learning strategy, and system alignment.

To address potential duplication and ensure clarity of roles, I have formally requested an alignment meeting with EO leadership to discuss coordination, governance expectations, and next steps. People Inc., our WIOA Operator, has agreed to participate. As of the date of this report, we have not yet received confirmation from EO regarding participation in the proposed meeting.

Virginia Works has reaffirmed the LWDB's statutory role as the regional convener and strategic leader of the workforce system. This matter is being addressed proactively to maintain a unified and coordinated workforce system for employers, education partners, and jobseekers. This issue has

implications for system governance and long-term workforce funding alignment. Further updates will be provided as conversations progress.

SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

Healthcare Pre-Apprenticeship: A structured, competency-based on-ramp into patient-facing healthcare careers aligned with employer expectations and Virginia workforce priorities.

Impact: Improves entry-level readiness, increases employer confidence, and creates a scalable healthcare workforce pipeline for high-demand occupations.

Learner Experience Platform (UMU): Development of an integrated Learner Experience Platform to centralize intake, orientation, and training delivery across programs.

Impact: Increases operational efficiency, strengthens data integrity and reporting capacity, and positions the organization to scale sector-based training with consistency and accountability.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ARC Leadership Institute: Completed Session III: *Building Appalachia's Workforce Ecosystem*.

Focused on regional workforce strategy, employer engagement, and cross-sector alignment. Workforce Boards were not represented on the formal agenda; I raised this omission directly with ARC leadership.

Impact: Strengthens our positioning as a regional workforce convener and ensures workforce boards remain central to ecosystem development conversations.

Virginia Directors of Workforce Development Network – February 19

Meeting includes time with Virginia's Secretary of Labor and discussion with Virginia Works staff regarding the Maritime and Nuclear Workforce Development initiative.

Impact: Ensures early employer outreach and regional alignment with emerging state workforce investments.

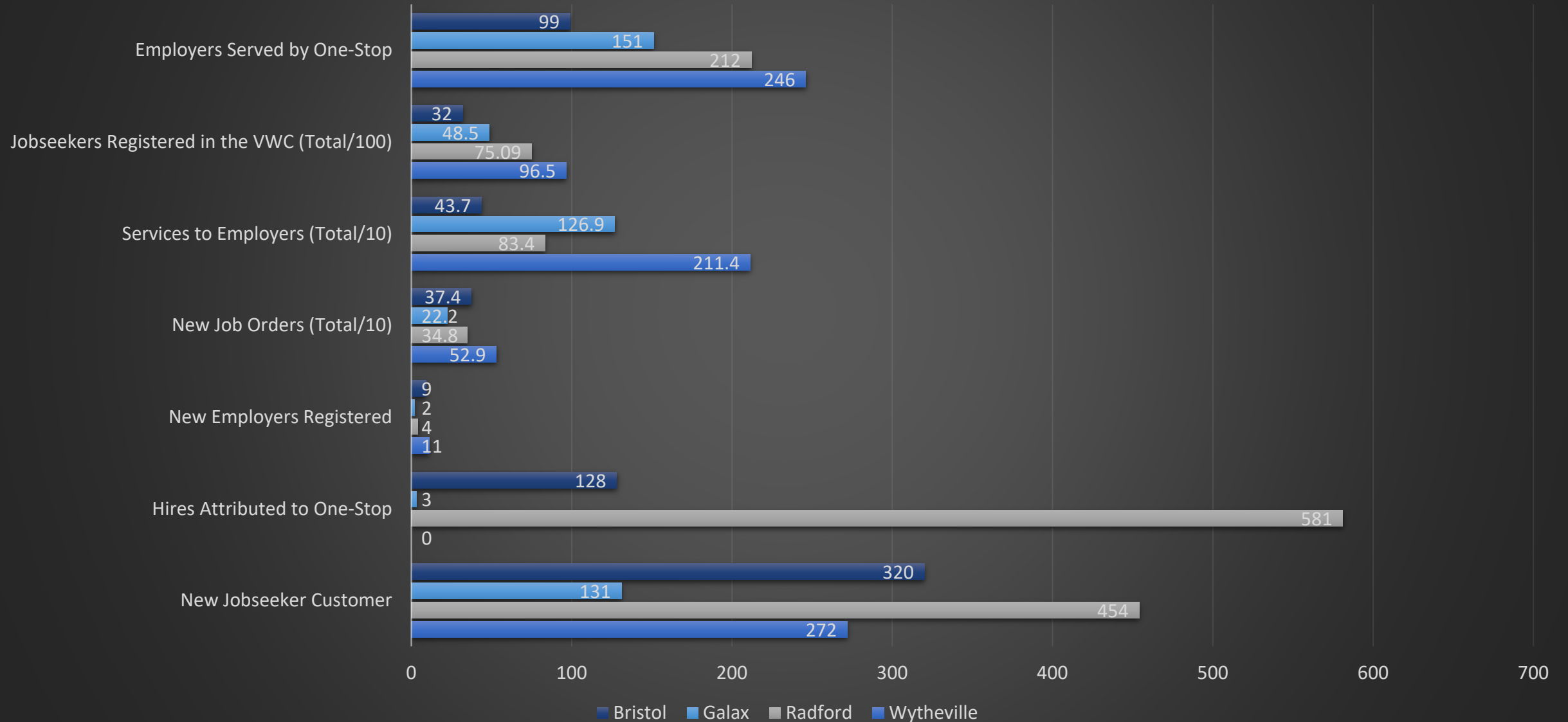
One Stop System Report

New River Mount Rogers Workforce Development Area II

Program Year 2025 – July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

One Stop Operations

July 1, 2025 – October 31, 2025



Center Activity

Staff Training

- JVSG Priority of Service Training
- Building a Learning Culture Training

Center Activity

- Intake and Orientation
 - Smyth Co, Wythe Co, Radford – District 28, Grayson Co, and Carroll County

Business Service Activity



Regional Teams meet bi-monthly

Abingdon, Galax, Radford, Wytheville



NRV BSU – Looking to Spring

Spring Career Fair Planning underway

- New River Career Expo
- Crossroads Spring Career Fair
- Wytheville Spring Career Fair
- VHCC Get Hired



VA Highlands BSU – New Chair

Shannon Mutter has stepped up to chair our BSU in the Abingdon region.

Layoff Activity

Company	Event	Affected Workers	Effective Date	Status	Rapid Response
Utility Trailer	Layoff	127 – Glade 90 – Atkins	10/2/2025 – 10/3/2025	Ongoing	10/2/2025 – 10/3/2025
MEC	Layoff	12	Unknown	Ongoing	None
Parkdale	Closure	68	9/30/2025	Ongoing	9/10/2025 – 9/11/2025
Bondcote	Closure	80	9/30/2025 – 3/2026	Ongoing	8/6/2025
Job Corps	Unknown Status	85	Unknown	Watching	RR held onsite 6/12/2025



Customer Satisfaction

- Job Seekers
 - Services Received at the Center
 - 3 – Very Satisfied
 - Were you informed of other services available to you through other agencies?
 - 3 – Yes
 - 0 – No
 - Comments:
 - “Great staff to help sign up for unemployment!”
 - “Great job to everyone. Very Helpful!”



WIOA Program Overview

July 1, 2025 – January 31, 2026

Prepared by Elizabeth Carico

Director of Workforce Development

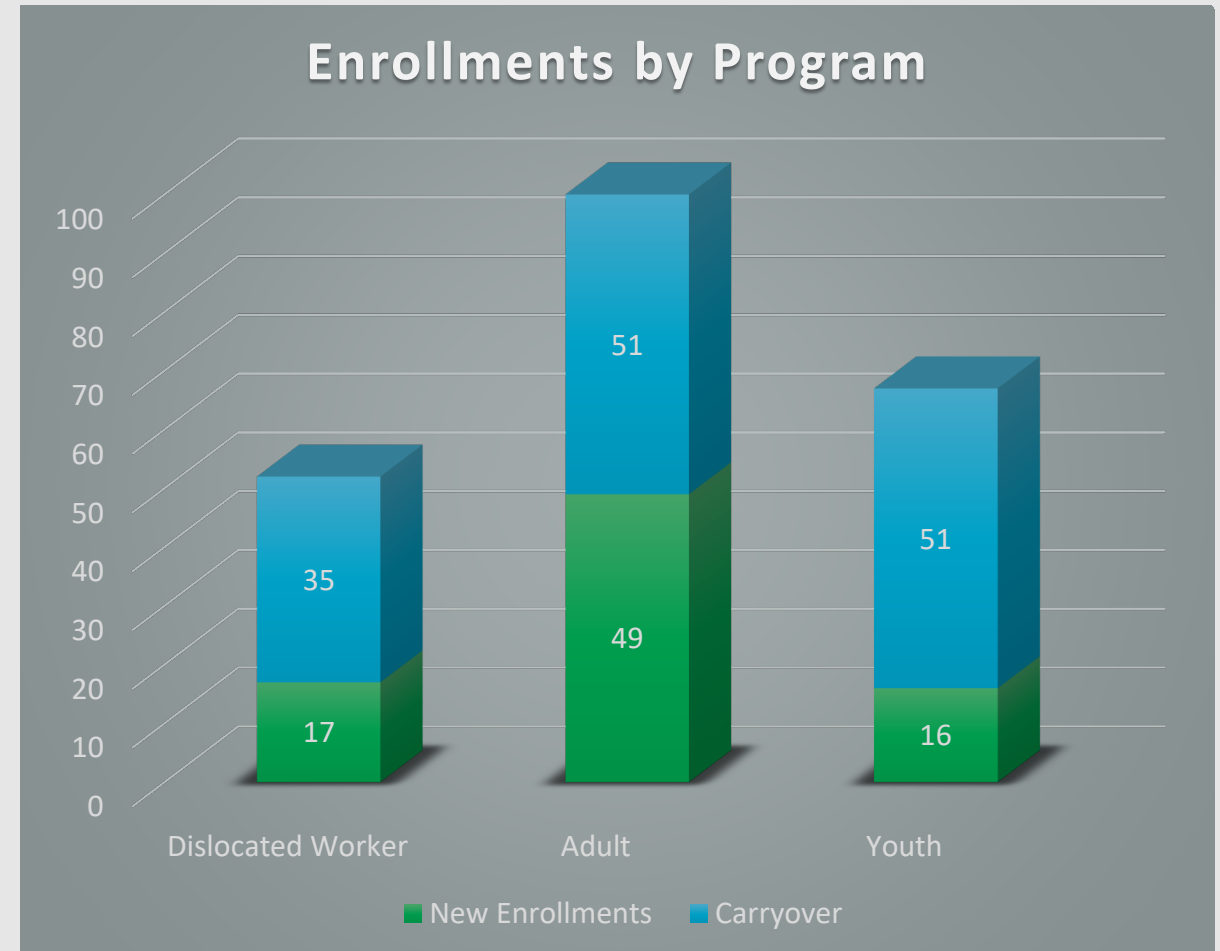
Title 1 Enrollments – Year to Date Program Year 25

July 1, 2025 – Jan 31, 2026

Total Participants: 219

New Enrollments: 82

- Adult: 49
- Dislocated Worker: 17
- Youth: 16



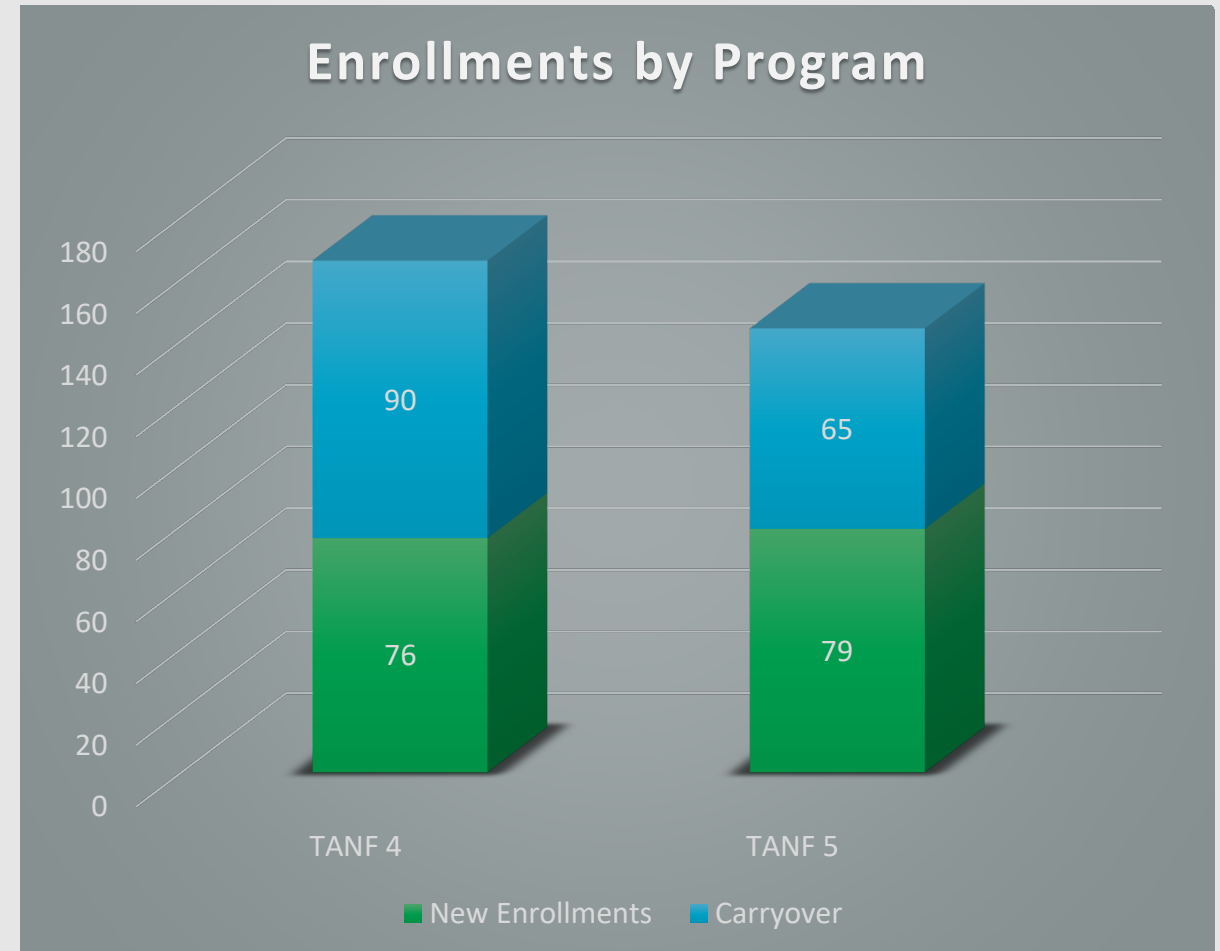
TANF Employment

July 1, 2054 – Jan 31, 2025

Total Participants: 310

New Enrollments: 155

- TANF 4: 76
- TANF 5: 79



Title 1 Activities

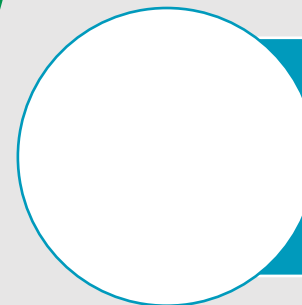
3 in Work
Experience

40 Enrolled in
Training

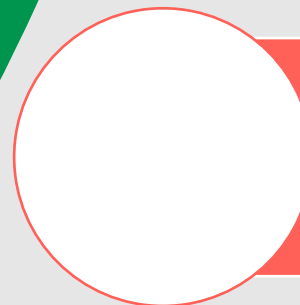
42
Credentials
Attained



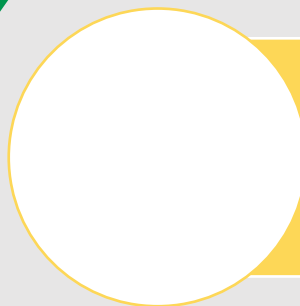
Outcomes



Placed in Employment:
PY25 – YTD: 72

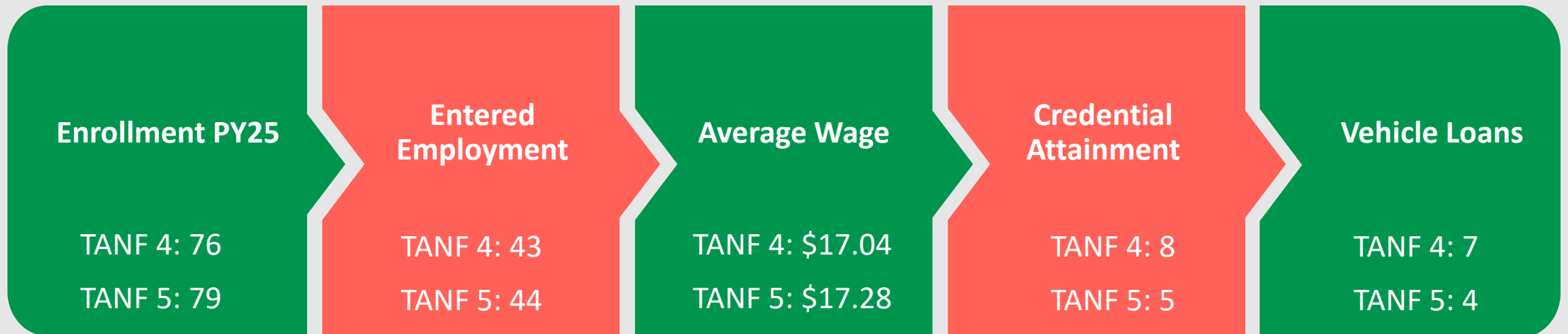


Average Wage:
PY25 – YTD: \$20.95



Credential Attainment:
PY25 – YTD: 42

TANF Employment Outcomes – YTD PY25



Customer Satisfaction:

“Without the support of these programs and the training assistance provided, I would not have been able to obtain my CDL or achieve my goals of providing for my family. These programs played a vital role in removing barriers, providing access to training, and helping me secure meaningful employment”

E.R – TANF Employment and WIOA Adult participant



Thank You



NEW RIVER/MOUNT ROGERS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

CULTIVATING TALENT FOR THE REGION

DISCRETIONARY GRANTS

February 2026

	ENROLLED		COMPLETE TRAINING		EARN INDUSTRY RECOGNIZED CREDENTIAL		OBTAIN EMPLOYMENT (YB or Placement)	
	Goal	Status	Goal	Status	Goal	Status	Goal	Status
YouthBuild 24 June 2024 – September 2027	66	59	53	34	53	35	46	34
Pathway Home 5 July 2024 – December 2027	150	89	98	43	90	43	90	42
ARC Ready	200	29	180	7	160	7	150	6
Reboot Recovery May 2025 – December 2027								
Trauma Reboot Course	----	36	----	36	----	19	----	15
Training and Job Placement	125	118	----	82	113	79	88	75

A One-Day Community Response: Preventing Youth Homelessness Through Partnership



Two young adults in our region were hours away from homelessness. With no safe place to stay and few options left, the very real possibility of spending the night outside was approaching quickly. One of the young adults, already connected to our organization through the Pathway Home program, reached out when the crisis escalated. What changed their trajectory was not a single program, but a shared sense of urgency across our community.

Within one day, the NRMR Workforce Development Board mobilized resources to coordinate temporary hotel accommodations, ensuring both young people had a safe, secure place to sleep that night. That immediate action provided more than shelter — it created a pause, a moment of stability, and the chance to plan rather than crisis-manage.

At the same time, partners across the system mobilized. People Inc. helped coordinate next steps and engaged its Rapid Rehousing Program to begin identifying longer-term housing solutions. Virginia Works, YouthBuild, and the WIOA Youth Program stepped in to ensure the young adults remained connected to education, workforce training, and employment pathways — critical anchors during a moment of upheaval.

Attention to basic needs helped restore dignity during a destabilizing time. People Inc.'s TANF program provided essential household items, hygiene supplies, and food resources. Tri-City Shuttle committed to transportation so appointments, services, and work responsibilities remained accessible. The Parole Office coordinated to ensure continuity of supervision and support, preventing service disruptions during this critical transition.

What stood out most, however, was what the young people themselves shared afterward: "For the first time, we feel like someone was truly in our corner." That sense of being seen, supported, and advocated for marked a turning point.

This one-day response, rooted in partnership, communication, and trust, prevented two young adults from experiencing homelessness. It demonstrates what is possible when systems work together quickly and compassionately — meeting urgency with coordination and replacing crisis with stability, dignity, and hope.



Our Participants Tell Their Story



Thank you so much for giving me the chance to share my story. I truly mean it when I say your program changed my life. The support I received came at a time when I felt like I had no one, and it filled a space that had been empty for a very long time.

Growing up without real family support shaped so much of my life. I had to figure out things on my own that most people have help with. It often felt like I was walking through everything by myself, trying to be strong even when I was hurting. That lack of support didn't make me a bad person; it just meant I didn't have the guidance, love, or stability many people take for granted. Life wasn't easy. I always wanted better, but I didn't always have the tools or people to help me get there.

When I connected with your program, it felt like my life finally had a chance to shift. For the first time in a long time, I had people who genuinely cared about me, believed in me, and wanted me to succeed. That meant everything. It felt like someone finally saw me — not where I came from or what I lacked, but who I could become.

The trainings, the support, the conversations, and the encouragement helped rebuild parts of me that had been broken for years. I learned how to communicate better, handle stress, stay organized, and believe in myself. More than skills, I gained confidence and hope. I began to feel like I deserved a good life too.

The journey wasn't easy. Starting over without guidance felt overwhelming. Finding steady work, transportation, and stability was a struggle. There were days I felt discouraged and questioned if things would get better. But I kept going. I stayed patient with myself and reminded myself how far I had come. Slowly, things began to change.

Finding steady work gave me a sense of security I had been missing for so long. Being able to take care of my responsibilities and stand on my own meant everything. Every step forward proved that I am capable — not defined by what I lacked, but by my strength and determination.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you. To everyone in the program who encouraged me, guided me, and believed in me even when I struggled to believe in myself — you gave me something I didn't grow up with: support, understanding, and hope. That changed me. It helped me become stronger, more confident, and more grounded in who I am today.

I'm still building my life, one day at a time. I'm working, staying focused, and continuing to grow. I'm open to more training and learning — anything that helps me keep moving forward. My dream is to become more stable and one day help others who feel alone or unsupported, just like I once did.

I'm truly grateful — not just for the opportunities, but for the kindness and belief that helped me become who I am today. Thank you for letting me share my journey, and for being part of it.



New River | Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board
Business Solutions Teams Report – 3rd Quarter PY 2025
January/February 2026

General Business Engagement

Recruitment Assistance

Job Fairs and Recruiting Events

- Worked with partners on plans for upcoming Spring Career Fairs – NRV Job Fair Expo (March 25), Wythe/Bland Career Fair (TBD), Crossroads Career Fair (TBD) and Virginia Highland HIRED (TBD).
- Talked with Central Seal – company from KY doing a road construction project in Abingdon. Referred to Abingdon Workforce Center for assistance.

Workforce Information/Consulting

Workforce Services Conversations

- Tekni Plex: Talked with new Sr HR staff about training needs. Are interested in Genedge training around
- Senior Home Share: Talked with management staff about training needs. Interested in a Train the Trainer project to assist with training current and future staff.
- Real Performance Machinery: Talked with HR staff about an apprenticeship in Machining and, possibility, one for Welding. Also talked about training needs – looking at CPA coursework for one employee. (Working with VA Works to become an Apprenticeship Intermediary)
- ABA of SWVA: Talked with staff about possible up-skilling training for current staff.
- Omnibuild Contractors: Talked with staff about training needs and multiple programs including IWT, OJT and other Work-based learning opportunities. Referred to Virginia Works for discussion about Registered Apprenticeship.
- Celanese: Worked with HR staff to do pre-hire and pre-promotion assessments.

Training

Incumbent Worker Training

- Current Projects with:
 - Spectrum Brands
 - HAPCO
- Information:
 - ABA of SWVA
 - Real Performance Machinery
 - Mohawk
 - Tekni Plex
 - Senior Home Share
 - Omnibuild Contractors
 - NRV Home Builder Association

Work-based Learning

- Work Experience Projects:
 - Town of Hillsville – Possible for Public Works
 - Presbyterian Children's Home of the Highlands – Clothing Closet
 - Timberland Contracting – Construction

Other

- Participated in multiple Sector Partnership meetings.
- Participated Connect Appalachia curriculum creation meetings.

Business Solutions Teams Meetings:
Virginia Highlands:

- January Meeting: Met via Zoom. Joined by representative of XCAL Tools. Talked about upcoming job fairs as well as invitations to other speakers. Next meeting will be in person at VHCC.

Crossroads:

- February Meeting: Met via Zoom due to the inclement weather and WCC closure. Talked about planning for the 2026 Crossroads Career Fair.

Wythe/Bland:

- February Meeting: Hybrid meeting. Talked about planning for the Wythe/Bland Career Fair. Also talked about recent regional layoffs. Talked about possible Business Engagement workshop for partners (looking at May).

New River Valley:

- February Meeting: Was a virtual meeting solely focused on planning for the NRV Job Fair Expo.

Sector Partnership Strategy Update

Purpose

Sector partnerships serve as the primary mechanism for aligning workforce investments with real-time employer demand across key industries. Through structured, employer-led engagement, partnerships generate actionable intelligence that informs training priorities, talent strategies, and system responsiveness.

Current Structure

Monthly virtual partnerships are active in:

- Healthcare & Human Services
- Manufacturing, Logistics & Warehousing
- Construction & other Skilled Trades

Each partnership follows a consistent engagement model designed to move from insight to action.

Strategic Engagement Framework

Partnerships operate within a continuous three-phase cycle:

1. Listen

Employers identify current workforce pressures, skill needs, and operational challenges.

Outcome: Validated sector priorities based on direct employer input.

2. Focus

Participants narrow priorities to issues that are both high-impact and solvable in the near term.

Outcome: Alignment of workforce strategies with industry-defined needs.

3. Act

Employers collaborate with workforce partners to shape targeted responses and pilot solutions.

Outcome: Implementation of employer-informed workforce initiatives.

This structured approach strengthens accountability, relevance, and measurable impact.

Impact to Date

- Increased employer engagement and participation consistency
- Clearer identification of sector-specific workforce priorities
- Stronger alignment between workforce services and industry needs

Connect Appalachia Employer Engagement Initiative

Purpose

The initiative helps regional employers expand their workforce by implementing **skills-first, recovery-ready, and second-chance hiring practices** that maintain safety and performance standards while addressing persistent labor shortages.

Why This Matters

Employers across the region face ongoing difficulty filling essential roles. At the same time, many qualified individuals remain underutilized due to barriers unrelated to job performance. This initiative connects untapped talent with employer workforce needs using practical, business-focused strategies.

What We Are Building (in progress)

- Employer training curriculum (6 Modules)
 - Module 1 was presented to the three sector partnerships in January
- Sector-specific implementation tools
- Supervisor guidance and response protocols
- Skills-first job description and policy templates
- Employer ROI calculator
- Sector partnership outreach strategy

Employer Value

Employers will receive practical tools to:

- Reduce time-to-fill vacancies
- Improve employee retention
- Expand qualified applicant pools
- Strengthen workforce stability

Conservative estimates indicate **\$5,000–\$20,000 potential savings per hire** through reduced turnover, vacancy time, and overtime costs.

Implementation Approach

- Pilot delivered through regional sector partnerships
- Training offered at no cost to employers (focus on both large and small employers)
- Early adopter employers will inform regional scaling

Expected Outcomes

- Increased workforce participation
- Improved retention in priority industries
- Expanded employer hiring capacity

Partnerships are slowly evolving from discussion forums into strategic implementation platforms.

Strategic Value to the Workforce System

Sector partnerships provide:

- Real-time labor market intelligence
- Direct employer voice in workforce investment decisions
- Mechanisms to align training resources with industry demand
- Stronger employer-system relationships
- A structured pathway from workforce insight to implementation

Next Phase Priorities

Over the coming months, partnerships will:

- Identify sector-specific workforce initiatives for pilot implementation
- Strengthen employer leadership roles within partnerships
- Continue building regional alignment across workforce areas
- Translate employer priorities into targeted workforce strategies

WORKFORCE SYSTEM PARTNER REPORTS

- Adult Education – Trish Dover-Bedwell
- Career & Technical Education - *Summer Stone*
- Community Based Organizations - *Bryan Phipps & Ginny Ayers*
- Institutes of Higher Education - *Perry Hughes*
- Economic & Community Development - *Katie Boswell*
- TANF Programs - *Vicky Collins*
- Title 1 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 - *Christi Altizer*
- Virginia's Employment Services - *Christy Lowe*



NEW RIVER/MOUNT ROGERS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

CULTIVATING TALENT FOR THE REGION

2026 Meeting Schedule

February 18th : Virtual

May 20th : Wytheville Meeting Center
-Joint Meeting with CLEO and Foundation

August 19th : Wytheville Meeting Center

October 21st : Virtual

December 9th : Wytheville Meeting Center
-Joint Meeting with CLEO and Foundation

All meetings will begin at 10:00am